

Carthy. The former was not only free in his Catholicism, but free of it."

In the Catholic liberal's scheme of things, Kennedy's detachment from religion was his main virtue and advantage, since "Kennedy represented the first tenet of a Catholic liberal by being so exclusively secular in his political judgments." Indeed, so secular was Kennedy in his judgments regarding political affairs that when Protestant theologian Harvey Cox sang the praises of *The Secular City*, he claimed that Kennedy epitomized all the virtues of that City.

The real purpose of Cox's book is revealed in the last chapter, which addresses itself to Dietrich Bornhoffer's question, "How do we speak in a secular fashion of God?" We must no longer, Cox answered, speak of Him in terms of mythology or metaphysics, for they are dead too. According to Cox, only politics had stayed alive. "In secular society," wrote Cox, "politics does what metaphysics once did. It brings unity and meaning to human life and thought." Politics, as Wills observes, became "the only way left to talk of reality." Politics, that is to say, soon became absolutized,

for in Harvey Cox's "Secular City" God was dead and thus politics was forced to perform what only religion can and must do.

Ironically, "All those who had been glad at the death of God were sad at the death of Kennedy. God's death had been the death of mystery. . . . But Kennedy's death signaled the rebirth of mystery—the mystery of evil." Soon even Harvey Cox would be writing: "I used to believe, and even hope, that mankind might someday outgrow the religious phase and live maturely in the calm, cool light of reason. But people have been predicting the death of God for centuries. And I no longer seriously believe it will happen, nor do I hope it will."

But, alas, although Kennedy's tragic death signaled the rebirth of mystery, it did not end the confusion regarding the secular and spiritual realms, for increasing numbers soon began viewing politics as not only the proper instrument for achieving "The Great Society," but also as the means of our deliverance. What developed from this confusion concerning God and Caesar was, in the words of Wills, "a very one-sided arrange-

ment, based on mutual aggrandizement—the state will leave the church alone, so long as church never criticizes state." After all, Wills sardonically observes, "such criticism would be 'politics,' in which churches should not meddle. But agreeing with the state—to congratulate and celebrate it—is not 'politics.'" Thus religion is trapped, frozen, in its "perpetual de facto accommodation of power." It becomes "a social ornament and buttress, not changing men's lives, only blessing them; not telling men to do this or omit that, just congratulating them for whatever they do or do not do." Religion is invited to "praise our country, our rules, our past and present, our goals and pretensions, under the polite fiction of praying for them all." Religion, then, becomes *nothing* but a vehicle for the maintenance of order in society. And, alas, when this occurs, observes Wills, "the divine is subordinated to the human—God serves Caesar. This is what Americans quaintly call 'freedom of religion,' and what the Bible calls idolatry."

Haven Bradford Gow



Whadja Expect?

Time was when I liked being from Connecticut. Visiting other states, one heard such pleasant recognitions: "Oh, yeah, that's where nuclear submarines come from" or Colt firearms or ball bearings. No more. Now and for the foreseeable (and just when we'd finally lived down those phony nutmegs), the name of Connecticut is hopelessly coupled with that of—Weicker. (Expectorate it, please, like Micawber in the comeuppance scene reiterating "Heep!")

His Lachrymosity, please believe me, is not universally beloved out here. Some of us with long memories recall how he made his way into the U.S. Senate: He ran as a Republican; the endorsed Democrat was a free-lance clergyman and ADA paper-shuffler named Joseph Duffy, but a great many unreconstructed Democrats preferred an independent candidate, the moribund Thomas Dodd. It was a delightful campaign. While Weicker went about portraying him as a one-man Weatherman bomb-and-orgy squad, poor Duffy devoted his scanty energies to refereeing staff disputes over whether or not to bill himself as *The Reverend*; Dodd, mean-

while, bumbled along with chin up and smile bright and every hair in place, looking more like an embalmer's *chef d'oeuvre* every day. And so Weicker went to Washington, giving the last laugh to Dodd, who must be laughing still as he beholds the pompous clowns who censured him yawning and squirming through his successor's weepy tirades.

There he sits, pouting and prating of Morality, Decency, Fair Play, and the American Way. If he is not silenced, I fear, the television audience will rise up as one and go on a rampage of wife-beating, poor-box-robbing, lynching, sodomy, and ticket-fixing unprecedented in the annals of the Republic.

Now, whom does Senator Weicker think he's kidding? He knows perfectly well that Morality, Decency & Co. are mere suitable-for-framing rumpus room curios, no longer traded on the American exchange. For this he blames Richard Nixon, even more stridently than Mr. Nixon blames the drugged *jugend* who lately shambled through the pages of the Luce publications. All in all, I cannot help believing Mr. Nixon has the better case. Consider—he is an impressionable

boy from the hinterlands. He nails Alger Hiss, and while his own putative friends breathe their relief and turn to other matters, Hiss' chums launch what amounts to an industry. Several crises later, Mr. Daniel Ellsberg turns to crime and finds it not only profitable, but the key to all the best salons. He even hits the sawdust trail, joining a burgeoning crew of thieves, rapists, murderers, Indians, sworn overthrowers of the Constitution, and imported navel-contemplators, each and all of whom coin money by assuring the rubes that Nixon is a monster. Over on the cultural front, Nixon beholds children swooning over the likes of Mr. David Bowie, the English androgyne, and Mr. Alice Cooper, who simulates fornication with a snake on stage (a spectacle hitherto reserved for sailors passing through the Panama Canal). Tuning in the Top Forty, he hears *his* kind of music: The Andrews Sisters singing "Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy," only to be told it's not Patty, Maxine, and Laverne but Ms. Bette Midler, just now the rage of Manhattan's gay bathhouses (she goes right in and sings, you see, and the boys crowd around, chastely wrapped in their towels, you should have *been* there the night Mick Jagger stopped by).

Surveying rot and corruption on every side, poor Mr. Nixon must have concluded, in his rather simpleminded way, that he might as well have a little fun along with everybody else. Since it is power, not money or orgasms, that amuses him, he did, or permitted to be done, or was too busy to notice, all those things that so outrage Senator Weicker, whose indignation is marvelously limited, missing as it does every permutation of lewdness, debauchery, fraud, perversion, and simony in its singleminded

concentration on, of all things, corruption in government. Fretting about corruption in government, in times like ours, is like worrying about the possible spread of mononucleosis at a sex orgy. But, moan the Weickerites, government must set a good example. Bosh. A free and happy people needs occasional reassurance that the government is less honest, truthful, and virtuous than it is.

When government goes heavily into the goodness business, as under Roosevelt II or John Kennedy, and the news-merchants cooperate in the hoodwinking of the public, tyranny looms. Let a virtuous government sneak into power, and it straightaway grabs the citizen by the ears and tries to lift him up into the realms of light, cf. Robespierre (like Weicker a wearer of tinted spectacles).

I for one welcome the relatively minor and innocuous misdeeds of the Nixon Administration as healthy signs, portending as they do a decline in the moral tone of government, and a consequent expansion of the citizen's freedom, undreamed of since the days of Ulysses S. Grant.

Book Review

What Went Wrong With American Education

by Peter Witonski
Arlington House \$6.95

Ten years ago, on an uncommonly hot September afternoon, having spent thirty minutes perspiring in queue to register for an idiotic freshman geology course at George Washington University, I reached a decision. I concluded that while a few things in life are worth standing in line for, American higher

education is not one of them. Although that hastily-reached decision involved abandoning a generous scholarship, offending a number of well-intentioned educational bureaucrats, and inflicting a measure of short-term anguish on my immediate family, it turned out to be the right one. And, judging from my recent contacts with the academic world, and the devastating picture painted by Peter Witonski, what might have been a

rather eccentric move on my part ten years ago would clearly be the rational thing to do today.

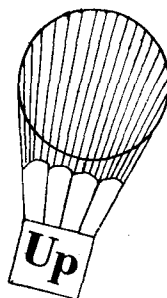
While a utilitarian function continues to be served by result-oriented departments such as engineering, chemistry, and medicine, the old goal of a true liberal education—the original aim of the university as an institution—has been drowned by successive waves of instrumentalists, social reformers, and substandard students and faculty, always in the name of some higher cause.

Perhaps the greatest irony of all these reform movements is that, besides destroying the traditional values of a university education, they have consistently failed to achieve their own avowed goals. In 1943, for example, that benevolent old fluff, James Bryant Conant, then President of Harvard, righteously proclaimed that "the primary concern of American education today is not the development of the appreciation of the 'good life' in young gentlemen born to the purple. . . . Our purpose is to cultivate in the largest possible number of future citizens an appreciation of both the responsibilities and the benefits which come to them because they are Americans and are free."

Unfortunately (but not unpredictably) the shift from traditional standards of educational excellence to mass social conditioning has resulted in more student alienation from American society, not less. Its only accomplishment has been to place more meaningless, devalued diplomas into the hands of more mediocre people than ever before. The parents who pay for this questionable operation seem to accept it as a moral duty, unquestioning. Intimidated by their ever more grubby offspring, and in hopeless awe of the higher education label, they continue to dump their post-pubescent charges into academia's lap in the vague hope that, after four years there, little Ernest and Ernestine will be ready to face life or matrimony without further parental bankrolling.

Yet they are often disturbed by the obvious results—more and more youthful meatheads leaving the university in even worse shape than they entered it. Like so many mounds of overlarded hamburger, they graduate, after four years of aimless oozing, having

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