

The Vision of Charles de Gaulle (1977) by Lois Pattison de Ménéil, comes to quite different conclusions. She rejects the view that de Gaulle's policies may all be reduced to one goal, promoting the *grandeur* of France, and considers the Fouchet Plan, which contemplated an indissoluble "Union" with executive and legislative organs, "clearly the prototype for de Gaulle's vision of future pan-European co-operation." While opposed to a complete surrender of national sovereignty, de Gaulle was equally opposed to anarchic drift, if for no other reason than his knowledge that only by some united structure could Germany be tied to Western Europe.

Barzini's questionable views on specific aspects of de Gaulle's policies are redeemed, however, by flashes of insight into de Gaulle's general impact, such as: "de Gaulle gave the French the monarchy many of them longed for under every republic, and, at the same time, the republic many of them longed for under every monarchy."

There are comparable insights and generalizations in the chapters on "The Flexible Italians," "The Careful Dutch," which also discusses both kinds of Belgians, and "The Baffling Americans," the discussion of which would make this review approach the length of Barzini's book of 265 pages.

In his conclusion, Barzini explains why the notion of a merely economic European union "is a dead-end street." He ridicules the philosophy, predominant in Europe after the Second World War, that the economy is the principal motor of history, and that an ever growing GNP is a sufficient means of salvation. Nevertheless, he does not consider that philosophy, nor the nationalism of the French, to be the principal obstacle to a united Europe.

For Barzini, the principal obstacle is "the German problem" created by the partition of Germany into an Eastern and a Western half. "No great nation," he writes, "can survive cut in half." The unification of Europe without Germany would be impossible, but unification with Germany would entail "acceptance, for all members, of the German problem." In the invocation of the concept of a "great nation," and in the significance attributed to the division of Germany, Luigi Barzini sounds almost Gaullist himself. In reality, few Western Germans under the age of 50 or so seem to be any more concerned about reunification with Soviet-occupied Germany than they are with prospects for the "An-

schluss" of Austria.* But they are concerned about the survival of human rights and decency in their country; and they know, for the reasons so eloquently presented by Barzini, that a unified Europe would be the surest protection of that survival against a military attack launched from Soviet-occupied East Germany.

In believing that the partition of Germany is the principal obstacle to European unification, Barzini seems

*The separation of East Germany from West Germany is no more an obstacle to European unification than the separation of Austria from West Germany. It is generally forgotten that after the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after the First World War, Austrians overwhelmingly voted for unification with Germany, and that the vast majority of them welcomed the *Anschluss* under Hitler. The notion that Austria is not a country of German nationality and culture, or that there are greater differences between Austria and Bavaria than, say, between Bavaria and Schleswig-Holstein, is a myth.

STATECRAFT AS SOULCRAFT: WHAT GOVERNMENT DOES

George F. Will / Simon and Schuster / \$13.95

Adam Meyerson

George Will's first full-length book will greatly disappoint admirers of his newspaper and magazine columns. *Statecraft as Soulcraft: What Government Does* displays little of Mr. Will's customary precision in thought and language, and it is only rarely enlivened by the wry wit that makes his columns such a joy to read. His trademark of citing obscure and often beside-the-point quotations can be quaintly charming in a short column surrounded by matter-of-fact articles on fleeting daily events; here, however, he carries his quotesmanship to an extreme that borders on self-parody. Most disappointing of all, he fails to use the opportunity afforded by book length to explore more deeply some of his most provocative ideas.

There are two potentially important arguments in *Statecraft as Soulcraft*, both familiar to readers of Mr. Will's columns. The first is his call for "a conservative doctrine of

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to have swallowed unwittingly the argument for unilateral disarmament and neutrality by the same German pacifist fringe that he castigated in his chapter on the Germans: namely, that only West Germany's ties to NATO and the European Community prevent the Soviet Union from giving its blessing to a Germany of 79 million inhabitants.

The consummation of Barzini's happy vision of a United Europe may have to wait, as Barzini says it must, but it must wait for a change of heart and resolve, not for some miracle on the Elbe.†

†It is a pity that the pleasure of reading *The Europeans* is marred by the book's exceptionally slovenly editing. To give only a few examples: "La" mal francais, instead of "le"; Par "le" guerre (instead of "la"); attribution to de Gaulle of the expression "l'Europe des etats," instead of "L'Europe des patries"; "a bigger bang for a dollar," and a garbled quotation from Heinrich Heine: "Denk ich an Deutschland in der Nacht, bin ich um meinem Schlaf gebracht"; instead of, "dann bin ich um den Schlaf gebracht."

the welfare state," an affirmative vision among conservatives of what government should do. He writes that "[t]wo conservatives (Disraeli and Bismarck) pioneered the welfare state, and did so for impeccably conservative reasons: to reconcile the masses to a . . . dynamic and hierarchical industrial economy." Today, he goes on, American conservatives must embrace the welfare state both to be consistent with their own principles and to have any practical hope of advancing conservative values.

On grounds of principle, Mr. Will suggests that the welfare state is indispensable to social cohesion and hence should be dear to conservative hearts. He argues that "a limited but clear ethic of common provision" can unify society and strengthen patriotic feelings. "A structure of public entitlements can do what private property alone cannot do: it can give everyone a stake in the stability and success of the social system."

On grounds of prudence, Mr. Will contends that like it or not the welfare state is here to stay, and conservatives should therefore accept it and

shape it to conservative values. As examples, he urges conservatives to lead "the fight for a welfare state that supports rather than disintegrates families." He also hopes that "a conservative welfare state will use government to combat the tendency of the modern, bureaucratic state to standardize and suffocate diversity"—for instance by tuition tax credits for private schools.

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It's an intriguing and potentially powerful argument, but Mr. Will makes no effort to articulate the vision of the welfare state that he chides other conservatives for not articulating. He is unfaithful to his subtitle. Apart from brief mentions of public support for education, laws against racial discrimination, the interstate highway system, food stamps, and tax deductions for medical insurance, he gives no inkling of what he thinks government ought to do. Nor, for all his criticism of American conservatives, does he show how his list of programs differs from what other conservatives propose.

Mr. Will's argument would be stronger had he fortified it with some empirical evidence. Do welfare state entitlements in fact provide the social stability he claims they do? Did Bismarck's welfare state really save Germany from class war and totalitarianism—at least until Hitler? The argument would be more convincing had Mr. Will come to grips with the contrary claim—that ever-rising expectations of public entitlements encourage a proliferation of interest groups, each seeking its own special handouts. "Granted," he concedes, "a welfare state can aggravate the centrifugal tendencies of modern society. By enlarging the political allocation of wealth and opportunity, it can raise the stakes, and the temperature, of politics, making the state itself much more a focus of contention than a force of cohesion." Characteristically, he declines to elaborate ways of avoiding this danger.

In like fashion, he ignores most of the nettlesome questions confronting policy makers in the welfare state. How to prevent safety nets, for

example, from undermining the responsibility of individuals and families to take care of themselves as best they can. How to pay for the programs: generally oblivious to economics, he seems to assume that ever-rising entitlements can be paid for without undermining the creation of wealth that income redistribution ultimately depends on. And for all his references to the Founding Fathers—including a series of gratuitous pot shots at James Madison—Mr. Will avoids what one might expect would be a central question for any conservative doctrine of the welfare state in America: the proper division of responsibilities between national and local governments.

The second major argument of *Statecraft as Soulcraft*, aimed mainly at liberals, is that law must somehow concern itself with the moral character of the citizenry. Again, Mr. Will doesn't spell out what he means.

For example, he calls for distinctions between permissible and impermissible speech, but he gives no guidelines as to how those distinctions should be made. Citing the elimination of obscenity laws, the availability of abortion-on-demand, and the prohibition of compulsory and even voluntary school prayers, he bemoans "the steady withdrawal of the law from concern with the citizen's state of mind." He praises desegregation and the civil rights laws of the 1960s as "the most admirable achievement of modern liberalism"; among other things, they were "successful attempts to change . . . individuals' moral beliefs by compelling them to change their behavior." But otherwise he shrinks

from saying what the state should do to encourage virtue:

No reasonable society wants to erase the distinction between the question "How man should live?" and the question "What behavior should be mandatory?" But it is impossible rationally to stipulate *a priori* limits to the sweep of the law in matters of morality. Such limits must be set by prudential, not theoretical, reasoning. This does not mean that policy shall be unprincipled. It means that its

principles must be derived from a sense of national purpose and from evidence as to how law can contribute to the fulfillment of these purposes. So, where does one draw the line? I do not know.

One hopes Mr. Will will venture an answer to such questions before publishing his next book. He has so much to teach conservatives and liberals alike, it's a pity he doesn't always follow his arguments through. □

THE END OF THE WORLD NEWS

Anthony Burgess / McGraw-Hill Book Co. / \$15.95

Reid Buckley

I was first steered to Anthony Burgess back in the 1960s. He had been at the writer's trade a few years only, so there were but a thousand and sixty of his works to choose from. My introduction was *The Wanting Seed*. Excited, I went out and bought nine of his earlier novels, which I devoured, saying to myself: "One of these days he is going to produce . . ." Not another brilliant novel, but a wholly satisfactory one.

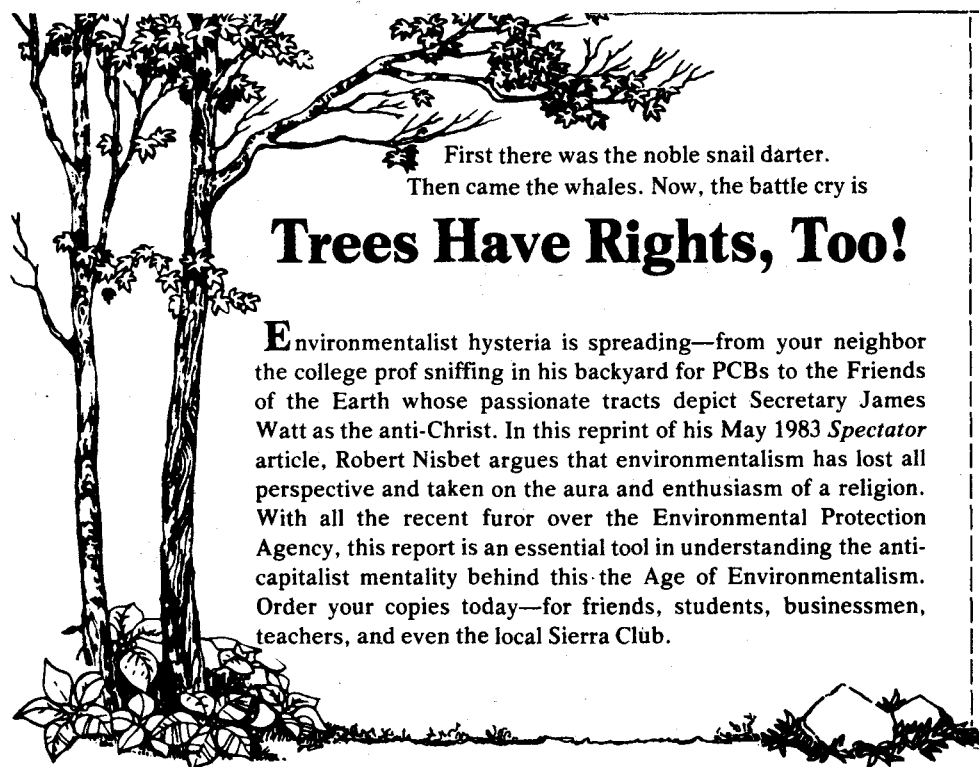
With *Nothing Like the Sun*, his marvelous invention of a life of Will Shakespeare, he came close; but those that I've read of his dozen novels since continue to disappoint. Though they are very different, Mr. Burgess frustrates in the manner of Wyndham Lewis, whose crafts-

Reid Buckley is a novelist.

manship was also superior to his product.

Burgess, one would swear, has it all. He is fecund and prolific (dear God, *is* he!) and a master of language. There seems to be almost nothing that he cannot say, and so say it that it sticks to the tastebuds deliciously long after. (On occasion not so deliciously, as in "there was a rich scintillancy of maggots in the belly hole.") The Rabelaisian Courtland Willett of the current opus pours scorn on the undermanager of a department store (who stood by while Willett was being attacked by street hoodlums), calling him "a slabberdegullion druggel [ooh!], a dod-dipoljolthead, a blockish grutnol, and a turdgit. Also, of course, a coward." Dig that *blockish* grutnol, and who but Burgess (son of Joyce) would have thought of slabberdegullion as a modifier for druggel? When Willett is fired for his insults, he takes his Santa cap (he has been working as a storefront Saint Nicholas) and thrusts it onto the undermanager's head, "dousing him like a candle." Can't you see it?

Mr. Burgess's wit is wicked, he is hilarious, and his characters, when he bothers, are *observed*, by which I mean that they are so incarnated by the imagination that he seems to be writing biography. His personae are often zany; they can be delightful; yet, somehow, there's the wanting love that he dramatizes so eloquently in *The Wanting Seed*, one's emotions are rarely engaged, one is rarely brought to feel about the characters or truly care for them, so that their predicaments (and their lot) scarcely ever entail more than our amused attention. Like Mr. Burgess himself, the reader remains at a remove.



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