

CURRENT WISDOM

The Great Books Series

Proof that it didn't start with Nancy: Daddy was not a superstitious man but he believed in fortune-tellers when it came to finding a lost bird dog. . . . One time Daddy took me with him to see a large black woman who lived alongside a country road with some brightly painted crescent moons, stars and an enormous human hand tacked to the trees in front of her house. . . . I remember that she made us wait for a while before she would see us, which was a strange experience in itself for white people in a black woman's yard. When finally my father was invited in, I slipped in the door behind him. . . . The fortune-teller, by her comments, seemed to identify the dog. After asking several questions, she said, "Mr. Earl, you ain't never gonna see that dog ag'in."

He paid her a dollar, and we left. We rode in silence for a while, and then Daddy said, "I expect she's right."

She was.

[From *An Outdoor Journal*, by Jimmy Carter, Bantam Books, \$18.95]

Austin Chronicle

Another dithyramb for Jesse Jackson, this time from the political editor of the venerated *Austin Chronicle*:

The anger you just feel. In your gut. Souring your system with the knowledge that you know something is going on here and you know all too well what it is. But it is painful to face up to it. And, besides, what can you do about an empire in twilight? If you care, you recognize that these are not the times to stay the middling course. Bold action, radical thinking, genuine compassion, that is what is demanded of us.

Of the Democratic candidates running for president, only Jesse Jackson chooses that course. Certainly, there are myriad troublesome aspects to the thought of a Jackson presidency, but none as troublesome as the limp alternatives of "moderation" proffered by the other candidates.

As the tireless champion of the poor and minorities and disenfranchised, Jackson is the conscience of the presidential contest, the poet of the dispossessed, a man who makes common sense seem subversive. . . .

Jesse Jackson is the voice of the voiceless, the articulator of the dying hopes of desperate urban blacks, distressed family farmers, unemployed union workers, his is the eloquence of the hip-hop nation, that anxious, wounded, dreaming amalgam of ragtag people, a hoi polloi of democracy lip serviced literally to death. In a perfect world, Jesse Jackson may not be the candidate of choice. But in this imperfect world, with the brutal choices it offers us, Jackson is the candidate of necessity.

[February 26, 1988]

In These Times

The journal of the yuppie revolutionaries unveils a new clod *philosophie* preparing the way to a still greater future:

Astrid Lindgren, creator of Pippi Longstocking, has long supported animal rights. Several years ago the Swedish children's author campaigned against artificial insemination on the grounds it deprived cows of a normal sex life. Her efforts have since culminated in an animal protection law that Sweden's parliament is soon expected to pass. The legislation is based on the belief that husbandry technology should be adapted to the animal and not vice versa. The Swedish Embassy's Irene Noby told *In These Times* that the bill of animal rights includes these sections: "Docking of dogs' tails shall be forbidden"; "Cattle shall have the right to graze outdoors"; "Hens shall be let out of cramped cages (which fail to meet their basic needs)"; "Sows will be freed from farrowing pens (and provided separate feeding, sleeping and toilet areas)." It looks like pigs in Sweden will soon be enjoying a higher standard of living than the American homeless.

[March 23-30, 1988]

Interface

(New England's Center for the Fitness of Body, Mind, and Spirit)

The estimable Miss Margot Adler advertises her wares in an important catalogue of the goofball and the occult:

W2574 A Two-Day Workshop

Saturday and Sunday, July 23 and 24, 10am-6pm

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This workshop for women only explores goddess spirituality and women's spiritual empowerment. It combines joyful exuberance with time for inner meditation. We will chant, share songs, and create several group rituals. We will create sacred space and take an inner journey to meet the goddess within ourselves. We will also explore the uses of ritual, ritual tools, and the workshop will attempt to demystify "magic" and all the trappings of ceremony. The workshop will also explore an assortment of techniques for individual and solitary work, as well as work that can be done in groups.

This will be a joyful two days. Please bring a musical instrument, particularly drums, rattles, tamborines [sic], flutes, and cymbals. We will create a group altar, so bring something to place on it. A resource guide to women's spirituality will also be provided.

Margot Adler is a reporter with *National Public Radio's* "All Things Considered" and "Morning Edition."

[Spring 1988]

Los Angeles Times

From the world of the arts, more inscrutable doings:

Noted stage and film actor Ian McKellen, 47, in Boston recently to accept an acting award, explained to the *Boston Globe* his recent decision to acknowledge his homosexuality and to work openly for gay and lesbian rights in his native England. Talking with a casting director, he asked if he would have a chance at a particular part if he were known to be gay: "She said, 'Why not?' And I said, 'What if the director knew?' And she said, 'So what? He's gay—and so is his wife.' That was when I knew I would have no more of this hypocrisy."

[April 26, 1988]

Clarion-Ledger

(Jackson, Mississippi)

A sonorous communiqué from another stupefying sap headed for the clergy:

Homosexuality has historically been condemned in our society, but in light of the Kinsey report, this means that our society refuses to deal openly with the bisexual urges that a full 90 percent of the human population experiences.

Thus homosexuals have been forced by society's non-acceptance to limit their activity largely to gay bars and other exclusively gay gatherings. But where does this leave a man or woman who lives in a small oppressive town in which there are no gay bars? It leaves them in the bathroom, or the state park, or some other area that becomes known throughout the community as the area for anonymous homosexual activity.

In the recent set of arrests, people who may have been guilty of exposing themselves in a public place were arrested. But the real guilt lies with those who have made and support laws, written and unwritten, that deny others (and themselves) the right to freely express their God-given sexuality.

These arrests will certainly not stop sexual encounters in public places, but what I hope they will trigger is an effort by the university to offer its rather substantial gay population an organization through which gay people can safely come together and know one another. Anything less will be just one more mark against Mississippi's chances of achieving the civil rights of its people.

—Keith Gore Wiseman
Columbia Theological Seminary
Decatur, Georgia
[March 10, 1988]

Commonweal

Leigh almost makes an intelligent distinction but recovers admirably. Felicitations, Leigh:

This morning I read in the *Washington Post* about two twenty-five-year-old Pakistanis who had been sentenced to death. Their crime was adultery. Their fate is to be buried up to their necks and stoned until they are dead.

This afternoon I read the excellent article about capital punishment by Richard Dieter. Here in the United States, the fate of the two thousand men, women, and children on death row is to be gassed, hanged, shot, electrocuted, or injected until they are dead. For a few moments I wondered if my job as Director of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty isn't kind of trivial. After all, we are certainly more civilized than the Pakistanis.

But are the two systems so different because of the way the condemned spend their last few minutes of life? Of course not.

—Leigh Dingerson
[April 22, 1988]

Crain's Chicago Business

The venerated *Crain's* of Chicago exalts he who incontestably is the best-suited vice presidential candidate available—for the Democrats:

Gov. Thompson is proposing a futile strate-

gy to spur economic development: tax and spend. In arguing for a tax increase before the Chamber of Commerce of the Southern Suburbs the other day, the governor singled out Massachusetts and a couple of other states for special praise and declared, "What do (these states) have in common? Higher taxes than Illinois."

The governor was particularly enthusiastic about Michael Dukakis, whom he credited with engineering the "Massachusetts miracle," by which Mr. Thompson meant the media-enhanced story that Gov. Dukakis turned around Massachusetts' moribund economy and set it on the road to expansion in the 1980s.

[May 2, 1988]

Detroit Free Press

Dr. Gary Stollack heaves his incomparable verbal virtuosity into the cause of gender-free bliss:

Gary Stollack says forget Mother's Day. And while you're at it, forget Father's Day.

Instead, celebrate Care-Giver's Day and equality in child rearing.

Stollack, a psychology professor at Michigan State University, says having a separate Mother's Day and Father's Day perpetuates the myth that each parent has a different role.

With more parents sharing duties and more people other than parents giving care, all could be honored on one day, he says.

On Care-Giver's Day, people could thank neighbors, teachers, Cub Scout leaders, aunts, uncles or even psychology professors who deserve recognition.

"As far as I'm concerned, parenting, in a biological sense, ends when the sperm hits the egg," said Stollack.

[May 7, 1988]

Milwaukee Journal

One hundred twenty-five years after the Emancipation Proclamation and still prejudice grinds down the best of our idealists:

Madison, Wis. A man with a record of indecently exposing himself in laundromats and other indoor places may have been a victim of discrimination when denied county jobs as an outdoor laborer, a state official says.

Britton McKenzie, 41, who says he has an "addiction" to indecently exposing himself, applied for jobs in April 1987 as a laborer with the Dane County Parks Department and as a weed cutter with the county's Department of Public Works. . . .

State law prohibits employers from discriminating on the basis of criminal records unless an employer can show that an applicant's criminal record could have a bearing on the circumstances of the job. . . .

Judith Toole, an assistant county corporation counsel, argued that park laborers and weed cutters work "in constant view of the public which uses the parks and lakes for recreation during the summer." . . .

In a newspaper interview last year, McKenzie estimated he had exposed himself thousands of times.

[March 10, 1988]

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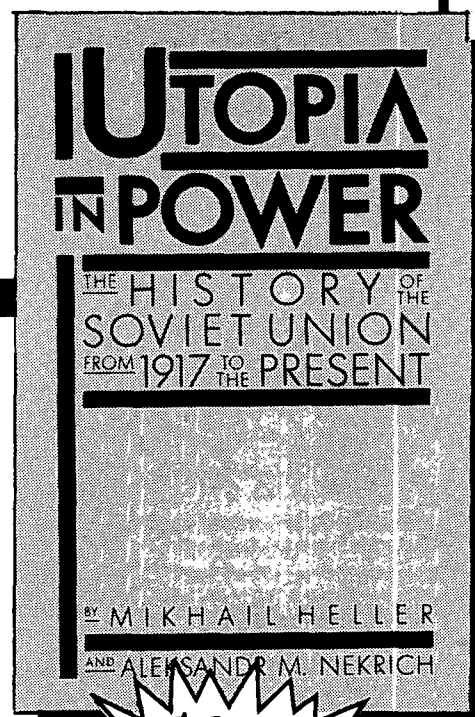
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