born poor, neglecting to mention that his father owned three automobiles, a considerable stable at the turn of the century. The size of his father's "little shop" ranged from five or six workmen to fifty or sixty when it became his father's "factory." The story of how his company's prancing-horse emblem came into being is equally cloudy, as are a welter of other incidents. At noon, before a roomful of drooling Ferrari buyers, he could pose as a national treasure. That evening, at one of his haunts in the company of old friends, he could fart, belch, curse, and chase women with the energy of the Modenese *paisano* he claimed—at times—to be. Yates, through the eyes and memories of more than a hundred former Ferrari employees, friends, and enemies, and through the observations of contemporary journalists, gives us a clear picture of a puzzling figure.

Ferrari, by some yardsticks, lived a hell of a life. His only heir died young. By all accounts a pleasant young man, Dino Ferrari became closer in death than in life to his father, who would begin every day with a visit to Dino's tomb (once violated by would-be grave robbers, who apparently sought to hold the corpse for ransom). Ferrari credited Dino with designing a V-6 engine, a credit that Yates demonstrates conclusively to be a canard. After examining in detail the lingering rumor that Dino died from inherited syphilis, Yates ultimately dismisses it for lack of evidence.

Ferrari's other son, Piero Lardi, was born to his mistress. Piero was later acknowledged by the elder Ferrari and, as Piero Lardi Ferrari, given a place in the organization, although he was subjected to shrieks of "Bastard!" by Laura Ferrari, Dino's mother, on those occasions when she spied him at work in the factory.

Laura Ferrari is a story in herself, and was either a former streetwalker or the prim daughter of respectable citizens, depending on which version was in vogue. Laura and Ferrari maintained a chilly marital relationship for decades, unaided by Ferrari's mother, who had little affection for Laura. Yates has a weakness for overusing a good anecdote here: we learn on at least three occasions that Laura Ferrari missed a belt loop or two as she aged; and that she was wont to steal tips and bread from the tables of restaurants. But this is nit-picking when set against the scope and sweep of the work as a whole.

Ferrari seems to have attracted a few cronies, but no true friends. He treated the men who drove his cars—with the possible exception of the Canadian Gilles Villeneuve, the Englishmen John Surtees and Mike Hawthorn, and Tazio Nuvolari, who starred for Ferrari's Alfa Romeo team—as expendable chattel. He described his work in life as manipulating men, not building cars. He would set driver against driver, taking advantage of their enormous pride and destructive egos. Often, death resulted. On these occasions, Ferrari would grieve publicly, only to brag later in private about his stellar performance as a mourner.

Debunking the myth that Ferrari lived to create great road cars (and revealing that Ferrari said privately that he thought the people who bought them were spendthrifts, fools, and worse) should make Yates the Salman Rushdie of Ferrari fanatics. In case that is not enough, Yates takes a further step that will not endear him to followers of the prancing horse: he reveals that an inordinate number of Ferrari victories were recorded at times when competition ranged from poor to mediocre. This has always been the nature of big-time motor racing, but the news that Ferrari often fattened up on sub-standard opposition—the facts and figures back this up—will not find willing eyes and ears among the Ferrari faithful.

Even the most slavish of devotees, however, will enjoy the detailed racing history that is so well complemented by a social (or anti-social) history of the Ferrari team. The reader meets fascinating drivers: the great Nuvolari, for whom Ferrari spent a lifetime seeking a replacement; five-time world champion Juan Manuel Fangio; Niki Lauda, the buck-toothed Austrian who won fourteen races in four seasons for Ferrari, and who last made the news when one of his Air Lauda passenger jets crashed in Thailand; Count Alfonso de Portago, surely goaded to his death by Ferrari; and world champion Phil Hill, the high-strung Californian who won a tragic championship in 1961 after his Ferrari teammate Wolfgang von Trips was killed on the track. The personality parade goes on and on, each new marcher underlining the difference between the adventurers who sought fame on the Grand Prix tracks of the 1950s and 1960s and the colorless, if talented, technicians who do it today.

The book is saturated with technical information—this being, ironically perhaps, its only off-putting quality for the general reader. But that is the dilemma that faces any biographer whose subject is intertwined with objects, cars in this case, that are themselves the subject of countless books. To please the auto enthusiast, the mechanical trivia is necessary; to please the general reader, the sex, intrigues, and personality quirks must be included. All are to be found here, to the delight of the reader who combines a love of automobiles with a modicum of curiosity about Ferraris, racing drivers, and the Grand Prix circuit.

On Sunday, August 14, 1988, Enzo Ferrari died at his home in Modena. Three weeks later, Gerhard Berger, an Austrian, drove his Ferrari to victory in the Italian Grand Prix at Monza. In the swirling crowd of delirious fans, a banner showed itself: "Ferrari, we followed you in life, and now in death!" Ferrari lovers will continue to wave similar figurative banners, standards that will flutter undampened by the revelations of *Enzo Ferrari.* □

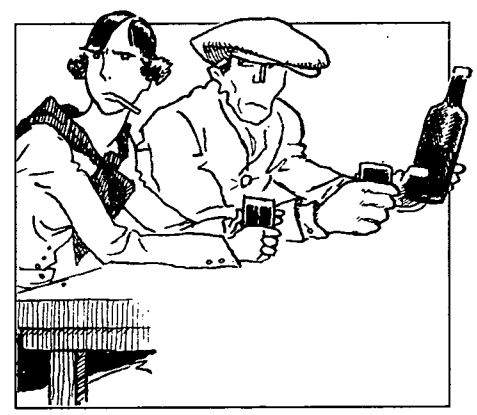
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT: HIS RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY

Frank Freidel/Little, Brown/710 pp. $24.95; $15.95 paper

Alonzo L. Hamby

Who needs or wants "heroic biography?" a reviewer of Frank Freidel's volume asked recently. After all, any modish scholar-historian knows that "the significant questions" involve not Great White Men, nor even personalities as such, but rather the oppression inflicted upon women, minorities, and the American working class during the past century of Corporate Liberal dominance.

Of course, as is so often the case, most of those unfortunates who live outside academia see things differently. The literate public craves good biography. This book provides it. Traditional and tight-



ly focused, it is the best one-volume narrative yet written of Franklin Roosevelt's presidency. A young radical and isolationist at the University of Wisconsin in the 1930s, Frank Freidel mellowed into an admirer of FDR during the postwar era and has devoted most of his career to this biography (three earlier volumes covered Roosevelt's pre-presidential life). Like most academics the author is a man of liberal sentiments. Not surprisingly, his criticism of his subject is restrained.

Freidel devotes less than a third of his space to the New Deal, indicative of increasing recognition that, of FDR's achievements, it was World War II, not the New Deal, that led to the most decisive shifts in American life. Liberal historians, the author among them, have never asserted that Roosevelt beat the Depression; they have preferred instead to dwell on FDR's reforms, compassion for the unemployed, overwhelming popularity, and success in effecting the most important American political realignment of the twentieth century. If pressed, most will declare that Roosevelt fell short because of a regrettable lack of imagination that caused him to ignore John Maynard Keynes's advice to run even more enormous budget deficits. (It must be remembered that as a proportion of federal revenues, Roosevelt's deficits were the greatest in peacetime American history.)

Although conservatives go largely unheard in the academic debate, one finds among numerous policy advocates (e.g., George Gilder) and historically oriented economists (Murray Rothbard, Herbert Stein, Gene Smiley, Richard Vedder, and Lowell Gallaway) a conservative critique of the New Deal that deserves more attention. Roosevelt, it asserts, was sincere when he affirmed a faith in capitalism; but he did so from the viewpoint of inherited wealth. Most of his subordinates, although not conscious socialists, neither understood capitalism nor empathized with the day-to-day problems of businessmen who had to make profits and meet payrolls. In pursuit of their own vision of the just society, they persuaded themselves of the merits of planning by a (supposedly) disinterested class of academics and independent professionals. When one gets beyond a surface layer of politicians, the New Deal emerges quite clearly as the most ambitious effort undertaken up to that time by an anti-commercial intelligentsia to manage a national economy.

New Deal policies may have aborted recovery by nibbling at the capitalist system around the margins: through the imposition of higher taxes, especially on capital gains and undistributed corporate profits; through insufficient efforts to revive international trade (the reciprocal trade program amounted to more symbol than substance); and through a rhetorical policy of business-bashing that surely was economically counter-

Alonzo L. Hamby is professor of history at Ohio University.

productive, if politically effective and psychologically satisfying. This attitude was easy enough to acquire in the midst of a depression that seemed to confirm the failure of business leadership and, indeed, of largely unmanaged market capitalism.

Remarkably, however, the New Deal intelligentsia never had much public support or sympathy. They appeared insufferably elitist to a nation that had not yet been taught to revere the Ph.D. The most ambitious New Deal effort, the National Recovery Administration, alienated thousands of small businessmen, who quickly discovered that putting a Blue Eagle in the window meant coping with miles of regulations and red tape and complying with wage and hours requirements they could not afford. When the Supreme Court declared the agency unconstitutional in 1935, it did FDR a favor. The planning that remained was confined to areas, such as coal and transportation, in which the dominant business and labor interests sought government protection from the ravages of competition.

The idea that the economy needed management by social scientists gradually faded, until World War II brought it back. It is suggestive that, although something like the huge economic bureaucracy of the war clearly was necessary in order to allocate scarce resources, it cost Roosevelt and the New Dealers dearly in votes. Americans, by and large, did not want management from above, rather a government that gave them benefits.

By discerning this current in the public mood, FDR turned economic failure into political success. Roosevelt was the most successful coalition builder in twentieth-century American politics because he provided benefits to powerful interest groups—subsidies to farmers, federal backing for labor, social security for the elderly, and help for the jobless (whose numbers made them a *de facto* interest group).

At times the President appealed to greed and envy, as when he "welcomed the hatred" of the rich in his speech accepting the 1936 Democratic nomination. On occasion, the New Deal job programs were little more than political boondoggles. In Kansas City, for example, the WPA conducted a dog census (ostensibly a rabies control measure), and the organization of "Boss Tom" Pendergast used federal funds to pay part of the cost of paving the bed of a stream that meandered through the town's fashionable south side; this pseudo–flood-control project used tons of cement produced by Boss Tom's own Ready-Mixed Concrete Company.

Still, government work relief put cash into the pockets of many desperate people and led to the construction of public buildings, schools, dams, and roads that the country really needed. How many conservatives today would throw out the tangible monuments of the thirties? How many would deny public assistance to those needy who worked for it?

The New Deal had its costs. For the short run, its relief and entitlement programs may have gotten in the way of economic recovery. As Freidel points out, the Social Security tax drained $2 billion out of the private economy during the program's first year and thus contributed to the sharp recession of 1937. In the long run, the New Deal was the first step in an ever-growing agenda of "social programs," many of which have been unproductive and aimed at a middle class conned into thinking that someone else is paying the bill. To blame Roosevelt and those around him for the excesses of the Great Society, however, would be to blame them for consequences that by and large they neither foresaw nor sought. The New Deal idea of the welfare state had a sense of limits that today's generation of Democrats would do well to contemplate.

They would do equally well to think about Roosevelt's record as a foreign policy leader who combined national self-interest and idealism to revolutionize foreign policy. Few conservatives today could stomach the dominant view of foreign affairs—barren in vision, isolationist in politics, protectionist in trade—espoused by their counterparts of a half-century ago. As late as 1940, its most respectable and intelligent spokesman in the Senate, Robert A. Taft, could declare that Nazi dominance of Europe would be preferable to war.

Then as now, such worldly innocence was matched only by that of assorted radicals and "progressives" who, interestingly enough, shared Senator Taft's working assumptions about the irredeemable corruption of Europe and the inadmissibility of power as an instrument of national policy. Ideologues of both left and right prevented Roosevelt from waging an effective foreign policy until the hands of the clock were at five minutes until midnight for the cause of freedom in most of the world. By then, it was necessary for what was left of Western democracy to ally with one devil, Stalin, in order to defeat others that were even more menacing.

Again, Roosevelt's *modus operandi* was not always pretty. He surely "lied to the American people" when he declared in the 1940 campaign that "your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wahs" while moving the country step by step toward a near-certain military confrontation with Nazi Germany. Before we get too excited about Roosevelt's lack of candor, however, we might do well to recall the record of a recent President who promised never to lie to us. The significant question is whether it was an overriding national interest to defeat the Nazis. Those who think it was may be grateful for Roosevelt's deviousness; those who think otherwise can deplore it with whatever clarity of conscience they can muster.

What of the most sensational and oft-repeated accusation against Roosevelt—that he invited the Japanese to attack Pearl Harbor? Freidel is too brusque in his dismissal of the charge, but almost certainly correct. There is no solid evidence that Roosevelt knew of the impending sneak attack; if he had, he likely would have ordered a state of high alert. Any assault by Japan would have guaranteed war. Why not start it off with a decimated Japanese naval air force and a few sunken enemy aircraft carriers?

How about the alleged cession of Eastern Europe to Stalin at Yalta? Freidel's interpretation is fair and sensible: Roosevelt did have too rosy a view of the USSR during the war and did mistakenly think that by either charm or guile he could hold together the Grand Alliance afterwards. FDR ceded nothing to Stalin on paper but was cognizant that, with the Red Army on the ground in Eastern Europe, he had little leverage. Roosevelt knew quite as well as would Eisenhower during the Hungarian uprising eleven years later that neither popular sentiment nor the national interest could sustain the effort it would take to dislodge the Russians. But in fact the Yalta agreement promised free and democratic government for the liberated European nations. Most likely, Roosevelt hoped that Stalin would display decent restraint and content himself with a "Finlandized" sphere of influence.

"In this capacity as leader of a nation at war," Eisenhower wrote, "he seemed to me to fulfill all that could possibly be expected of him." In the end, it was Roosevelt's ability to lead by inspiration

that accounted for his standing as the most important American politician of the twentieth century. Millions of Americans perceived him during his lifetime as a personal savior who had in one fashion or another given meaning to their lives and helped them in times of trouble. A smaller number of millions hated him, of course, but, while frequently cautious, he understood that leadership amounted to more than the highest possible Gallup approval rating. The ways in which he fashioned his appeal tell us much about the modern presidency.

Neither an ideologue nor a detail man, Roosevelt was a relentless improviser who cheerily compared himself to a quarterback who would keep calling different plays until something worked. It is commonplace enough to say that he was a "great communicator," and, in the pre-TV era, FDR's golden voice and Harvard accent seemed neither corny nor off-putting. But just what did he communicate?

His rhetoric reveals a constant affirmation of the ethic of God, work, family, the flag, and the superior virtue of America. It is possible that this ethic had as much to do with his popularity among working-class ethnics as the economic benefits he dispensed. He displayed a great talent for projecting warmth and concern for ordinary Americans. He manipulated the White House press corps masterfully. Above all, he conveyed a sense of optimism in the hardest of hard times. Secure in his position, he radiated that security to others.

These characteristics ultimately protected him from his failures and those of his subordinates. No President before or since presided over so many economic and military setbacks (often minimized by historians who know of the eventual happy outcome). Few ran administrations characterized by so much open bickering and surface disorganization. Remarkably, little of this ever rubbed off on him. He was the quintessential Teflon President, using the persona he sent out across the airwaves to attract a huge amount of support, admiration, and affection.

One of his admirers, a young Illinoisan named Ronald Reagan, learned early on how to use a microphone effectively, then went out to Hollywood and developed the art of personality projection in front of a camera before making his way into politics. Reagan never renounced the essentials of Roosevelt's policies—a welfare "safety net" and a strong U.S. foreign policy in opposition to totalitarianism. He also became a spokesman for traditional values. A politician with a common touch, he thrived on the affection of a majority of Americans. Dogmatists at both ends of our ideological spectrum may be outraged at the suggestion that Reagan was more a product of the Roosevelt tradition than the leader of a counterrevolution against it. But it is no mere happenstance that he would become only the second President since FDR to serve eight full years in the White House. □

MUSCLE: CONFESSIONS OF AN UNLIKELY BODYBUILDER

Samuel Wilson Fussell/Poseidon Press/252 pp. $18.95

Leon J. Podles

In 1983 Sam Fussell graduated from Oxford and took a publishing job in Manhattan before his planned enrollment in American Studies at Yale. This tall, thin young man, the son of literary critic and war writer Paul Fussell, had been raised in Princeton, attended Lawrenceville and Oxford, and had been sheltered from urban American life. His size (6'4"), skinniness, and academic demeanor made him a target for all the nuts and con men that infest Manhattan. He was literally scared shitless. He came down with chronic diarrhea, as well as pleurisy. His parents had just divorced and he had nowhere to go. He was tired of being hurt physically and emotionally by life. He decided to take up bodybuilding.

It was quite a change from Oxford and Princeton. Ever the academic, he researched the subject in the bodybuilding magazines before he took the plunge. The gym at the Y was not what he expected. It was full of homosexuals and maniacs busy constructing shells to protect themselves from reality. He built himself up to 257 pounds and was able to bench-press 405. He left his publishing job (to avoid getting fired for throwing a co-worker through a door) and lived off a small inheritance. He moved to California, studied under the professionals, and became a trainer in a gym. He filled himself with steroids. He entered shows, and fortunately lost. Perhaps it was the disappointment that brought him to his senses. He realized that he had started at too late an age (26) ever to have a "great body," and decided to quit in order to return to the family tradition of scribbling.

During his bodybuilding episode, his mother tried to comfort herself by telling her friends that it was a form of art. She was right. It is a type of art: Mannerism. The ideal male figures in Greek and modern art bear little resemblance to the bodybuilder's. The antecedents of bodybuilding are to be found in the Hellenistic and Renaissance Mannerism that displays a taste for the distorted, the exaggerated, and the perverse, which sets in when perfection cloys. The bodybuilder, with his bulging biceps and starved waist, is to the normal athletic male body what Pontormo is to Raphael. The bodybuilders are conscious of their artistic precursors. The poses they use in bodybuilding shows are derived from famous Mannerist statues, such as the Hellenistic Farnese Hercules and Michelangelo's David.

In writing this book, Sam Fussell recasts his experience with a self-conscious artistry reminiscent of his father's. Paul Fussell's books on war put forth the persona of The Hero without parading his own courage: he admits to near-cowardice during his battlefield experience in France in 1944. He joined ROTC because he didn't want to display his soft body in gym. He ended up in a rifle platoon, saw the men he led blown apart, and was himself severely wounded. He shows himself as the hero who leaves normal life for the world of combat, there to wrestle with death and attain a wisdom and a sympathy denied to ordinary men. He is like Gilgamesh, Odysseus, and Beowulf.

Throughout his book, Sam Fussell uses the metaphor of bodybuilding as military action. He speaks of men being "in the trenches too long," and of a buttock scarred from steroid injections as looking like an aerial photograph of Ypres. Like the soldier in combat, Sam Fussell attains something of wisdom. He has a sense of irony, and realizes the ersatz nature of this heroism, but he does come to realize the folly of building shells as protection from pain, and is able to return to normal life.

Sam Fussell places his escapade in the context of self-invention, the particularly American belief that you can make yourself whatever you want to be. He wanted to be a musclebound bully, so he made himself one. The Princeton background did not fit into this persona, so he invented a new one. When asked about his father:

> I couldn't very well pipe up and say, "Oh, he's a literary and cultural critic, perhaps you're familiar with his latest—it's just out in paper you know, *The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism*." No, that wouldn't do. I had to find something stronger, something nobler.
>
> "He's dead," I said.
>
> "Was he a lifter?" Nimrod asked suspiciously, pausing with his fork at his mouth.
>
> I was in over my head, but I couldn't stop

Leon J. Podles is a writer living in Baltimore.