



for aid to Bosnia—documents showing that the Saudi philanthropic offices were a front for al-Qaeda operations in the Balkans. Denial of the obvious still reigns in Washington, but not in Ledeen's mind. We are left wondering just why our leadership cannot label the Saudis for what they are.

Ledeen's strategy to defeat the terror masters is twofold:

control over their operatives because the mosques and schools "reinforced the incantation of jihad and supported a community of fundamentalist believers in which the terrorists could immerse themselves. The constant emphasis on jihad maintained the state of passionate commitment with which the terrorists arrived in America. . . ."

Ledeen is unsparing of former presidents Bush and Clinton. Bush is chastised for failing to finish off Saddam in 1991, which left us with the dangerous mess we face now. Mr. Clinton's inattention to matters of national security was both willful and comprehensive. Ledeen drives this point home: "His first DCI (Director of Central Intelligence) James Woolsey was a man of high intellect and impeccable character. But Woolsey was . . . no doubt astonished to discover that the president didn't want to talk to him. In two years on the job at Langley (CIA Headquarters), Woolsey managed exactly two private conversations with Clinton, a record for futility."

In fact, the lasting effect of Clinton's inaction is worse than even Ledeen says. Clinton's non-response to the growing number of murdered Americans taught Saddam and the other terror masters a lesson they have not yet forgotten: Even if you strike America, the reprisal may hurt, but not enough to drive you from power. If we had acted decisively during Clinton's presidency, many of the terrorist regimes would likely have fallen by now.

Ledeen is equally blunt in identifying other terrorists and their sponsors. Once again, the Saudis figure prominently. "If you read the news carefully, you will see that members of the Saudi royal family . . . are actively engaged in the operations of the terror network itself." Ledeen says that the Saudi intelligence agency served as al-Qaeda's liaison to its support network of charities and other funding sources. Ledeen proves this point by quoting NATO forces that found—in the offices of the Saudi high commissioner

use military force, and simultaneously prove Islamist success is neither irreversible nor irrevocable. Radical mullahs in the Middle East—and the American Midwest—preach their own version of the Soviets' Brezhnev Doctrine, which stated the irreversibility of communism. Once Lech Walesa and some other brave Poles disproved that, communism was on its way to the trash bin.

To defeat the terror masters, America must—in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia—prove that Islamist repression is neither inevitable nor irreversible. A free Iran or Iraq, with a democratic government, a thriving economy and profitable relations with the West would provide a lever to move the entire Islamic world. We will have to defeat many parts of the terrorist network by military action, but as Ledeen shows, freedom is our greatest weapon and the key to lasting change in the Islamic world.

Ledeen's book will be rejected both by those who cannot admit the misjudgments of the past, or won't recognize the facts of the present. Academics will pronounce it heresy, because many of his sources are unnamed, as you would expect of people in the intelligence community, the FBI and other government agencies. But Ledeen's personal credentials—his decades of service in the State and Defense departments and on the National Security Council, and his resident scholar's position at the American Enterprise Institute—establish a credibility few of his detractors will be able to muster. Even more, those who will attack this work will have to find greater consistency for their theories than Ledeen's in the facts of the last two decades, of last September and of what came after. That will be a heavy burden, indeed.

The War Against the Terror Masters should be used to reshape the debate—in the White House, in Congress and in the media—about who we must fight and how, no matter how inconvenient that may be. ■

FEELING SUPERIOR

Looking down is the best revenge

Snobbery
The American Version

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

New York: Houghton Mifflin/274 pages/\$25.00

REVIEWED BY
S. T. Karnick

There is no learning experience quite so delightful and memorable as the discovery of another person's flaws. That is probably what makes snobbery such a fundamental constituent of human relations. As essayist Joseph Epstein notes in his new book *Snobbery: The American Version*, the essence of snobbism is in "arranging to make yourself feel superior *at the expense* of other people." Thus he succinctly identifies both the impulse and its general means of expression.

The desire Epstein describes has been common throughout human history: the wish to have others look up to us. The means of fulfilling this craving are multifarious, but fall into two basic categories: the association of oneself with ostensibly fine things, activities, ideas and people; and the denigration of other people's attainment of these. Epstein defines snobbery nicely as "the art of demonstrating, blatantly or subtly, one's own moral superiority," thereby emphasizing what makes it such an important phenomenon: its status as the basis for an alternative, and decidedly diseased, moral code.

Taking a cue from W.M. Thackeray's mid-19th-century satire *The Book of Snobs*, Epstein makes his study a catalog of examples of behaviors he identifies as snobbish, using deadpan humor and self-deprecation of the sort readers of his many essays over the years will find quite appealing. The author identifies two types of snobs: "those whose snobbery consists of looking down

on others and those whose snobbery consists of looking up to, and being ready to abase themselves before, their supposed betters." In the realms he knows best—publishing, intellectualism and politics—Epstein provides many concrete examples of snobbery.

Most of the instances of snobbism given in the book, however, are actually better seen as examples of status-seeking, rather than snobbery *per se*. Epstein powerfully documents contemporary Americans' search for just the right colleges, restaurants, wristwatches, clothes, automobiles, political opinions and so on, and this material amply illustrates a basic national lack of seriousness. Buying nice things, however, can simply be evidence of good taste, discrimination and stewardship of one's blessings, as Epstein acknowledges. It is the motive behind the purchase that counts.

In addition, even when fulfilling snobbish desires, the acquisition of the finer things is just a small part of snobbism. It hurts oneself mainly, and one's spouse and children, by wasting time, money and energy. The larger and more directly damaging matter is in all the slights, snubs, sarcasm, putdowns, fawning, flattery, hypocrisy, dissembling and outright lies through which people continually attempt to establish and confirm their social status. The war for status creates its own moral calculus, a twisted ethic in which material goods and sensual pleasures are the most easily understandable totems.

Epstein does not pursue these moral implications very far, preferring instead to look for explanations based on social arrangements. He posits snobbery as a distinctively American phenomenon, and

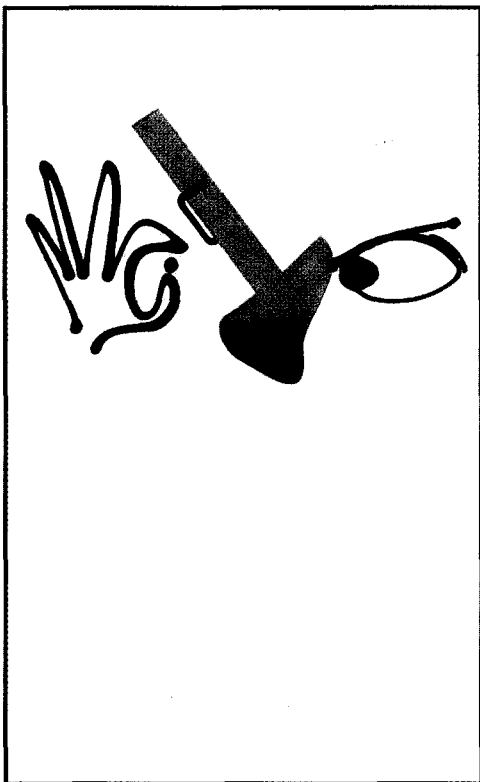
democracy as a major instigator of it. In a democratic society like America, he argues, there are many ways of rising, but "such is the spirit behind democracy that no one really believes that, apart from innate talent, anyone is intrinsically better than anyone else." Thus, he observes, American snob-bishness tends to be a matter of looking down one's nose at one's countrymen.

It is true, as Epstein observes, that the word *snob* does not appear to have arisen until the mid-19th century, when democ-racy was already firmly established in

America. In making his case, how-ever, Epstein claims rather too much, I think, for democracy as snobbery producer. He states that there are no snobs in Shakespeare, thereby ignoring Henry V's heart-breaking (though necessary) rejection of Falstaff in *Henry IV, Part II*, and many other such instances and characters in the Bard's works. Likewise, Epstein claims that there are no snobs in the Holy Bible, ignoring Israel's continual rejection

of its prophets, Jesus' blistering denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees, the shameless jockeying for position by Peter and the other Apostles and countless other such cases.

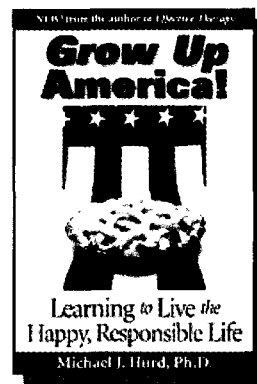
As these examples suggest, snobbery is a perpetual element of the human condition, although democracy is a definite enabler of it. Snobbery is the outward expression of a perturbation of the soul. It arises from the sense that one is better—inside, in one's essence—than other people are willing to acknowledge. Such status-envy is evident in the story of the very first human beings, Adam and Eve, and in that of their tempter. The snob, as Epstein notes, "can-



“...a voice
the world
needs to hear.”



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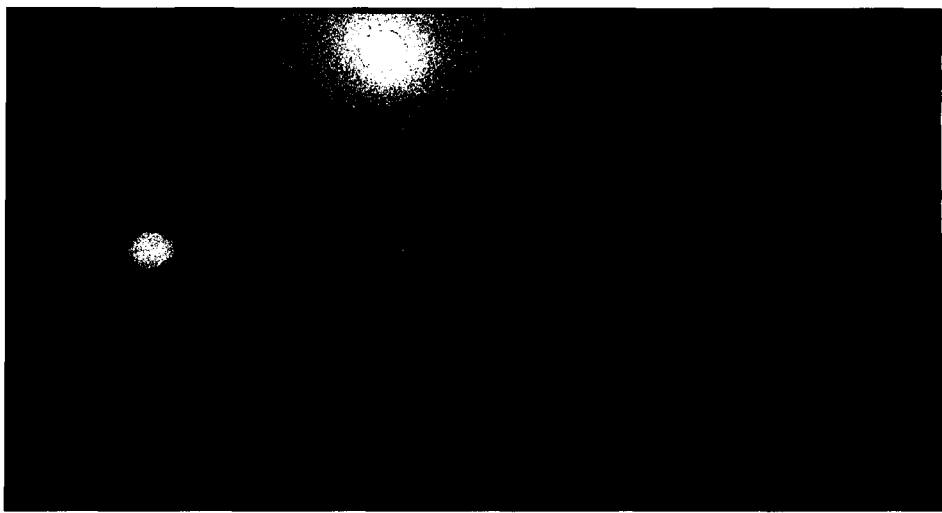
not seem to understand that only natural distinction and genuine good-heartedness are what truly matter. Snobs cannot see through the artificialities of social rank nor through the world's silly habit of offering prestige to many people who are utterly unworthy of it."

**Snobbery is about
superficial things. Moral
judgments reveal the
state of a person's soul.**

Epstein does not pursue this fruitful line of inquiry any further, preferring instead to condemn his own "harsh, essentially snobbish judgments." Dismayed at his inability to divest himself fully of snobbery, he asks:

When shown by an acquaintance a wretched new painting for which he has paid \$6,000, why do I think, 'One of a man's first obligations is not to be duped, and you, friend, haven't met it'? Why, when I learn of a colleague who is teaching Jack Kerouac, do I think about inciting his students to begin a malpractice suit against him? Why, when I read a young director of commercials say, in a newspaper interview, that the three words that describe him best are 'creative, compassionate and considerate,' do I feel the need to add that he seems to have left out 'smug'?

The answer, of course, is not that Epstein is a snob but that he has a very keen sense of morality. The actions he describes here are asinine and *should* be condemned, gently but firmly, lest their perpetrators continue in their folly and others emulate them. There is no need whatsoever to feel guilty about such thoughts; quite the contrary. There is a huge difference between snobbery and moral discrimination. Snobbery is about superficial things, and the snob delights in exploiting them for his own pleasure. Moral judgments are about important things, matters that reveal the state of a person's soul, and when delivered in a loving manner and taken seriously by the recipient, they benefit both the individual thus judged and the rest of society. ♠



Red Rabbit Is Rich

Red Rabbit

BY TOM CLANCY

G.P. Putnam's Sons / 618 page / \$28.95.

REVIEWED BY

Lawrence Henry

Those of us who love Tom Clancy love him for his spectacular virtues as a writer and acknowledge at the same time that he has spectacular faults. He sings the hymns of patriotic heroism better and more believably than almost any other writer and sets those paeans against fully complex renderings of government, the military, the intelligence establishment and world affairs. He can handle accounts of violence and battle and intrigue as capably as anyone. On the other hand, confronted with the ordinary challenges and tasks of fiction—convincing dialogue, introspection, the elementary positioning and manipulation of characters in a scene—his prose technique is so crude as to make your teeth ache.

His newest novel, *Red Rabbit*, puts all his weaknesses on display, at his usual daunting length. The novel, set back in Clancy time between *Patriot Games* and *The Cardinal of the Kremlin*, finds hero Jack Ryan, then age 32, on CIA assignment with his wife and daughter in England. Ostensibly working in the CIA's Directorate of

Intelligence, Ryan, an analyst, once again finds himself moved into field operations, covering the defection of a signals officer from the Moscow Centre office of the KGB. In the process, Ryan, and the rest of the CIA and the British Secret Intelligence Service, uncover a plot to assassinate Pope John Paul II.

For the novel, that poses a fundamental problem: Clancy has already thoroughly and masterfully created the whole Jack Ryan world for us. (Ryan, in current Clancy time, is president of the United States, and he got there convincingly.) The whole repertory company of Clancy characters is known to us: Ryan and his wife, Catherine; their best friends, Robbie and Sissie Jackson; the CIA superstar husband-and-wife team Ed and Mary Pat Foley; Deputy Director of Intelligence and Ryan mentor Admiral James Greer; and so forth. We have seen all these people grow and develop over two decades. We know where they are now. In *Red Rabbit*, Clancy must cast back to an earlier fictional time and show us these people in younger, less realized form—a daunting task for any novelist.

He tends to overshoot the mark. Jack Ryan, even in *The Hunt for Red October*, was never quite this naive or so slap-dash working-class in his conversation. Ed and Mary Pat Foley, in their first plum posting with Ed as chief of station in Moscow, come off a little better. The three big intelligence guys—

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