

what she calls the educational establishment and its bureaucrats at the national, state and local levels, and all those whom she disdainfully calls the "amorphous" profession of education.

Mrs. Marshner feels that the Supreme Court, by separating morality from religion, has paved the way for such progressive programs as secular "moral education," "value instruction," "value clarification," secular humanism and situation ethics. These new ways of teaching morality have fostered the view that values are not absolute and eternal but are the outcomes of a process of value clarification and attainment. This "progressive" value theory is blamed by Mrs. Marshner for creating the normless society in America where anything goes.

Whereas Mrs. Marshner's diagnosis may be based on objective evidence, her prescription for the cure is a bit simplistic. She seems to have a nostalgic yearning for the good old days when one-room schools run by solid members of the community taught everything to youngsters interested in learning. Romantic as this notion may sound, it is impossible to recreate. In an age of rapid social, economic and technological change which has created big government, big systems and big pressure groups perhaps this is too much to expect. □

Commendables

Our Serious Past

Philadelphia Merchant: The Diary of Thomas P. Cope 1800-1851; Edited by Eliza Cope Harrison; Gateway Editions; South Bend, Indiana.

Thomas Cope was a merchant, civil servant and philanthropist. He now provides valuable, even entertaining glimpses into the events of the early 19th century, thanks to Gateway Editions' decision to employ him in this

capacity after more than a century. He takes us on summer picnics, shares with us his concern for his family, informs us about his indignation at injustices. It quickly becomes obvious that Cope's major concerns were little different from ours of today. He considered slavery of the body, we contemplate slavery of the mind. He worried about the possibility of a yellow fever epidemic, we fear cancer. But his attempts to understand and evaluate human nature and society, uncomplicated as they were, are as valid today as they were 150 years ago. If a diary contains this kind of ambition, its usefulness and relevance never ages.

Simple but Complex Verities

Edward O. Wilson: *On Human Nature*; Harvard University Press; Cambridge, Massachusetts.

By saying, "Man is alive"—we state a given truth which is both simple and abysmally complicated. By trying to explain the life of man as representative of a certain biological species and, at the same time, within the context of a social body composed of many men—we enter a field of knowledge and scientific endeavor called sociobiology. Professor Wilson is one of the most eminent scholars in this relatively new discipline and his book attempts to teach and theorize simultaneously. It is quite a successful attempt, the more so as Professor Wilson's findings, persuasions and conclusions have a praiseworthy flavor of nonconformity and defiance against some of the most obnoxious shibboleths of established, even sacrosanct, intellectual fashions.

The abundance of thought and data in Professor Wilson's book may be a little intimidating at first glance, but one should always keep in mind that human nature is a subject on which each one of us has a very personal expertise; therefore, even the highest scholarly

Thomas Cope walked in a world where ladies were ladies and gentlemen were gentle men (*not all the time*). Our natural reaction to such a state of things is a hazy comfort that there was once a time when human beings could deal with their problems without resorting to demonstrations and drugs. Mr. Cope acknowledges that not everyone was happy at all times, but then men and women didn't *expect* to maintain a continuous state of euphoria. It may be that this radical notion is one whose time has come again, though it will have a tough time fighting its way through the cultural patterns that enshrine degeneration as pastime. (BK) □

authorities must acquiesce to some sort of parity with the humblest laymen when they decide to identify some verities in this area.

The most refreshing aspect of Mr. Wilson's work is a certain wry and ambivalent antideterminism which quite unexpectedly links existential freedoms and values to mankind's genetic codes, rather surprising for a branch of science so long accused of being derived from mechanistic philosophies. The Darwinian gloom of anthropology and sociology is thereby successfully challenged, and all those who crave a bit of optimism in the future of humanity find Professor Wilson to be a cheerful, though earnest ally. □

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"HOW GOOD IS THE GOOD
NEWS?"

In Focus

A Fashionable Steel-and-Glass Jacobin Club

Daniel Patrick Moynihan with Suzanne Weaver: *A Dangerous Place*; Atlantic-Little, Brown Books; Boston.

by Kenneth Kolson

We all know what Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan has to say. And we know to expect him to say it in his inimitable way. Like Lyndon Johnson's "Treatment A," which rarely failed him in one-on-one arm-twisting situations, the Moynihan Treatment, which is performed only in public, is irresistible. Arms oscillating, pencil poking, eyebrows quivering, voice undulating and ejaculating, juices spraying—the world's only 250 pound, splay-legged leprechaun is, when airborne, a spectacle the likes of which has not been seen since the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. And what was said of the Fair may as justly be said of the Moynihan Treatment: as an educational force and inspiration it will do its good "by the exaltation that it will inspire in every man, woman, and child who may have any emotions, and even he who has none, that may come to view it."

Never has the Moynihan Treatment had a more salutary effect than at the United Nations, where it took a furious wind indeed to blow out the pollution left by thirty years of hypocrisy, charlatanry, and brutal intimidation. For eight tempestuous months (can it have been only eight months!), Moynihan, a relentless, blustering bagpipe of moral indignation, employed his incomparable talents to challenge, most audaciously, the tyranny of opinion that had transformed the U.N. from a motley cacophony into a fashionable, and most dangerous, steel-and-glass Jacobin Club.

Ambassador Moynihan's finest hour

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—indeed the finest hour in the history of the international organization—occurred in the wake of its blackest, most shameful deed: the adoption of the resolution which equated Zionism with racism. The vote was 67 to 55, with 15 abstentions.

When this sordid business was finished, Moynihan took the floor. "It was our speech wholly," Moynihan writes in *A Dangerous Place*, which is part journal and part commentary on his tenure at the U.N. and on the proper place of human rights in our foreign policy, "Washington having had the sense to leave us be." Moynihan opened with words that had been written for him by Norman Podhoretz: "The United States rises to declare before the General Assembly of the United Nations, and before the world, that it does not acknowledge, it will not abide by, it will never acquiesce in this infamous act." As if devoted to single-handedly arresting the failure of nerve that has incapacitated the West even as it gazes into the eyes of its assassins, Moynihan roused his rhetorical powers and unleashed a display of oratory so extravagant, so furious, that the moment is, and will be, remembered as much for the exhibition put on by the Ambassador as for the infamy that provoked it. That was just the point.

The argument of the speech is as compelling as the ostentatious show was awesome. It focuses on the harm that will inevitably be done by the resolution to the cause of human rights. The danger is, first, that the resolution "will strip from racism the precise and abhorrent meaning that it still precariously holds today." This distortion of the language is sure to insidiously undermine the idea that racism is an evil to be vigilantly combated. As political scientist Charles H. Fairbanks put it in a memorandum written for Moynihan's

use: "To call Zionism a form of racism makes a mockery of the struggle against racism as the emperor Caligula made a mockery of the Roman Senate when he appointed to it his horse."

The second pernicious effect of the U.N. resolution will be its erosion of those claims on which the independence and the legitimacy of nations now rest. "Today we have drained the word 'racism' of its meaning. Tomorrow, terms like 'national self-determination' and 'national honor' will be perverted in the same way to serve the purposes of conquest and exploitation." When this happens, Moynihan warns, it will be the small nations of the world that will suffer. For "how will the small nations of the world defend themselves, on what grounds will others be moved to defend and protect them, when the language of human rights, the only language by which the small can be defended, is no longer believed and no longer has a power of its own?"

The most profound point in Moynihan's speech is contained in the third threat which this resolution poses to human rights, to wit: "the damage we now do to the idea of human rights could well be irreversible." Moynihan goes on to explain that the very idea of human rights is inextricably wedded to social contract theory; to the idea, hatched in the 17th century, that man is a being who can be conceived of as having lived in a prepolitical state, a state where his rights—if he has any at all—accrue from this national condition and not from his political circumstances. Thus the destruction of this idea—this philosophy in which Western civilization is rooted—means nothing less than the destruction of human rights, because it means the destruction of the *idea* of human rights, just as surely as the U.N. resolution contributes to the destruction of the language in