

and a wealthy Englishman—though here the cast is much larger and the contest is a foot-race across America. But the rare poignancy of *Chariots* derives from aspects of human experience deeper than athletic discipline: those who bought tickets for *Chariots* paid to see art; those, on the other hand, who buy McNab's novel will find only what the title promises—a run for their money. McNab tries very hard to elevate long-distance running in and of itself into a quasi-religion, but this irrational apotheosis of runners and running does not work well, lapsing at times into mawkish sentimentality about “the privileged few who can go close to reaching [their] own potential.” In one of the most brilliantly conceived sequences in *Chariots*, Liddell preaches a sermon while the camera illustrates the meaning of his words with simultaneous scenes of the Olympic games from which Liddell has absented himself. His text, and an appropriate gloss upon the whole of *Flanagan's Run*, is found in Isaiah, chapter 40: “It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers . . .” □

Psychotherapeutic Bactine

David Reuben, M.D.: *Dr. David Reuben's Mental First-Aid Manual: Instant Relief from 25 of Life's Worst Problems*; Macmillan; New York.

Dan Ackroyd, from the original *Saturday Night Live*, would have known what to do with Dr. Reuben's introductory chapter. Reuben's prose creates an urge in the reader to run to someone, anyone, and read whole passages aloud in the fast-talking

style used to sell things like Ackroyd's “miracle products.” Both Dr. Reuben's language and his logic seem to be aimed at somewhere around the sixth-grade intellectual level.

But, in all fairness, the book does contain meager flashes of common sense. Having rejected from the start what he considers pseudopalliatives such as psychiatry, drugs, religion, traditional self-help books, cults, and exotic solutions, Dr. Reuben proceeds to offer his own proposals for relieving the emotional distress of problems like anxiety, boredom, depression, etc. Stop worrying; take up a new interest or hobby; get (and keep) busy; these, in brief, are his respective solutions. Obviously they are the same solutions that people have known about for millennia. Despite his earlier renunciation of religion as being “out-of-touch with the realities of everyday life,” he has culled a great deal of material from Judeo-Christianity's main source book. A large portion of his advice on the resolution of personal problems, whether he's aware of it or not, rests on the “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” principle, and even more so on the old prayer:

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

For all his superficiality and simplism, Dr. Reuben does one thing worthy of note: in this age of blaming everyone and everything else for one's problems, he is an advocate of taking responsibility for one's own life. Even with a problem that often *isn't* the fault of the victim, e.g., unemployment, he counsels steps for action to deal with the situation rather than trying to locate a more abstract culprit. In his final chapter Dr. Reuben comes

down four-square in support of, of all things, a *traditional* life-style. He rejects the notion of freedom from all standards of normalcy, and he even lists what amounts to a secularized version of Judeo-Christian traditional morality. He concludes:

If you want to feel good, you have to act good. . . . You know what the choices are and you know what the consequences are. The rest is up to you! □

Gastronomic Delights and Soggy Leftovers

Jean-François Revel: *Culture and Cuisine: A Journey Through the History of Food*; Doubleday; New York.

Calvin Trillin: *Uncivil Liberties*; Ticknor & Fields; New Haven, CT.

An interesting controversy is currently raging in anthropological circles, not the one about creationism versus evolution, but about something very close to each *Homo sapiens*: food. The scientists are concerned with *Ramapithecus*, an apelike creature who was either still up in the trees or just moving down from them, who emerged on the scene some 15 to 17 million years ago. Obviously, no table scraps from the age remain (nor any tables); eating habits are being determined through the examination of teeth. One camp says, based on dental-wear patterns, that *Ramapithecus* ate primarily fruits, while another, which notes the very thick tooth enamel, claims the fellows ate, almost exclusively, nuts. Another related point in the prehistoric mode: ours is the only species that cooks its food; when the practice first started (did ancient

man drop foodstuffs into a hot spring and thus have the debut of the boiled dinner, or did he sup on meat braised in a forest fire?) remains to be determined.

Jean-François Revel doesn't go quite as far back as these anthropologists in *Culture and Cuisine: A Journey Through the History of Food*, but he does venture back to the Greeks, citing the tastes exhibited by Aristophanes and the references to edibles in Plato. Boiling versus grilling, however, is a topic. Revel's concern isn't exclusively with the precise ingredients of dishes, which is one way he differs from other writers about food, though recipes from as far back as the third century A.D.—from the *Deipnosophistai* (“The Dinner of the Savants”) by Athenaeus for preparing tuna—are included. *Taste*, both the quality of the food and the expectations of the historical palate, is a key concern, and so Revel recreates the flavor of the past through the use of texts—cookbooks and more imaginative literature—and illustrations in his sumptuous banquet. With the addition of this book to his oeuvre, the author of *Without Marx or Jesus* and *The Totalitarian Temptation* shows that he is truly a Frenchman: tendentious and a gourmand. His most recent text is a refreshing change from the ubiquitous books that admonish readers to starve or stuff themselves with noncaloric repasts fit only for those with anesthetized taste buds.

There is a notable difference between cuisine—even peasant or bourgeois—and *food*. Food is the sort of thing that an unmarried hungry person rummages about in his or her cupboards and fridge for—various canned things and frozen slabs—after a long day at work. One type of food that soars or sinks—there is no middle ground—is leftovers. This culinary rumination is con-

tinued because of Calvin Trillin, author of *American Fried* and *Alice, Let's Eat*, two clever books about modern nutriments. Trillin is also a columnist for *The Nation*; his column is entitled "Uncivil Liberties," as is the collection of select pieces from that slot. Typically, Trillin deals with political subjects in his periodical journalism: he is supposed to be funny. However, as much wit is manifest in most of his columns as is evidenced by the selection of the title for the book. As food for thought—which presumably the essays for that erudite journal are supposed to be—Trillin's fare is fit only for a Fifth Avenue *Ramapithecus*. □

Perceptibles

Michael Ullman: *Jazz Lives*;
Perigee Books/Putnam; New York.

Mr. Ullman's title is hardly a revelation, but he has composed a collection of profiles of and interviews with an impressive group of performers or kibitzers who are either still on the jazz scene, or have recently left it due to the inevitability of fate. He knows his subject and loves it, which—of course—gives him the ability to generate interest among all those who share with him the proud label of jazz aficionado.

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Arthur Plotnik: *The Elements of Editing: A Modern Guide for Editors and Journalists*; Macmillan; New York.

This slender volume is bound to elicit chuckles and nods of agreement from seasoned editors as they recognize Mr. Plotnik's delineations of the personality types (compulsive, neurotic, fanatic) and situations

(frantic, frenetic) with which they, themselves, have coped over the years. For beginning editors—indeed, for anyone in the myriad phases of journalism—*Elements* provides a general manual or guide—a sort of "Intro to Editing 101." Mr. Plotnik covers every major phase of editing both books and periodicals as well as such adjunct functions as photography and the selection of artwork. Among his worthwhile tips is a listing of reference books of value to any seasoned or aspiring editor—certainly Mr. Plotnik's volume should be on that shelf, too. (RW)

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Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year: 1982 Edition; Edited by Charles Brooks; Pelican Publishing Co.; Gretna, Louisiana.

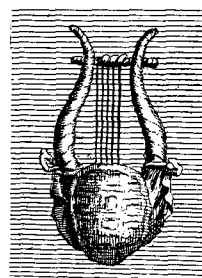
An ad that often serves as a filler in the pages of daily newspapers states: "Read an editorial today." While that declaration is simply motivated by page layout requirements, it is one that can loose a sting of remorse. After all, responsible, intelligent readers turn immediately from the front page to the editorial page, with no detour at the comics. Still, many of those conscientious readers are quite like the responding student in the old joke: "What do you like most about school?" "Lunch." Thus the cartoon on the editorial page, "political" in most cases, but not always (e.g., *The Wall Street Journal*). This collection contains more than 360 editorial cartoons that range in subject matter from Reaganomics to Charles and Diana, from MX missiles to medflies. The word *best* in any title, whether it be on a book or restaurant sign, is a key that things aren't always up to snuff. This case is no different. The lack of selections from Pat Oliphant and Jeff MacNelly—or

even Jules Feiffer (to be fair)—is a fly in an otherwise tasty soup.

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Harold Lindsell: *Free Enterprise: A Judeo-Christian Defense*; Tyndale House; Wheaton, IL.

As Dr. Lindsell explains in his preface, *Free Enterprise* is an attempt "to simplify the intricacies of economics, Marxism, the idea of freedom, and the reasons why Western civilization has come to its present state" so that they may be accessible to "as many lay people as possible." Accordingly, in his discussions of the firmly scriptural Judeo-Christian tradition of private ownership, of the hypocritical duplicity of "socialist Christians" and "liberation theologians," of the inevitable abridgment of liberty under socialism, and of the persistent failure of socialism to fulfill its promises or even to abide for

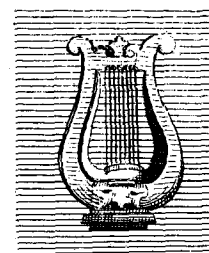


long by its own principles, Lindsell primarily summarizes arguments made more trenchantly and with more scholarly rigor elsewhere. Nevertheless, since academics and economists are not the only Americans who would feel "the yoke of socialism" if leftists were to prevail, the effort to popularize the moral, religious, and intellectual rationale for free enterprise is laudable. (BC)

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Phyllis Méras: *Carry-Out Cuisine*; Houghton Mifflin; Boston.

From A (Abbondanza) to Z (Zabar's), the gourmet-food industry is thriving. In what the media tell us are severe economic straits—and those in the unemployment lines will confirm that—still there are many who both can and will pay premium prices for well-prepared, often exotic, fare for their tables. In her very brief introductions to each recipe obtained from these specialty shops, Ms. Méras relates a



snippet of information about the establishment from which it came. Often included are the backgrounds of the proprietors and a little name-dropping of patrons (Ethel Kennedy, Lena Horne, Henry Kissinger). Taken together, it tells a tale of life (for some, anyway) in America of the 1980's. For instance, it bespeaks a society in which the food and transportation industries have combined to make available year-round virtually any foodstuff imaginable. (Who can afford to pay for the fruits of this technology, of course, is another matter entirely.) The selection of dishes in *Carry-Out Cuisine* also seems to indicate that, at least among the elite, the meat-and-potatoes meal is a thing of the past—no meatloaf recipes or tips for perfect mashed potatoes here. Instead, there is an abundance of instruction for preparing patés, salads, quiches. No surprise—after all, Ralph Lauren and Perry Ellis don't design their fashions in "added-