

the acquisition of knowledge itself are to remain apart from both religious and political authority." I have read, studied, and taught this play many times without ever coming within miles of this conclusion. In fact, the chorus concludes that civilization (the city) can only survive if man "fulfills [or "threads together" — there is a textual problem] the laws of the land (or the earth) and the sworn justice of the gods." Not exactly a manifesto for the ACLU.

One of the really vexing problems of *Antigone* is why a mere slip of a girl should choose to defy her uncle, the ruler, and bury a brother who had, after all, waged war on his own city. Hanson and Heath summarize Creon's abuse of power, in refusing to allow the burial of the dead Polynices, as "the tyranny of the state over the individual, the mindless chauvinism of a male supremacist." Unfortunately, *Antigone* is not acting as an individual but as the sole surviving heir of a family that has been wiped out. As Mary Lefkowitz has pointed out, *Antigone* is no feminist, only a faithful sister carrying out a familial duty. This is a subject that has been well elucidated by the pedants that Hanson and Heath seem to slight in their account of their profession. The superficiality of the analysis is all the more to be deplored since Victor Davis Hanson, at least, has made a genuine contribution to our understanding of Greek democracy.

In analyzing critics of higher education, the authors several times make light of conservatives without giving any sign of having read anyone to the right of Roger Kimball or Allan Bloom. Paul Gottfried, Jacob Neusner, and even fellow classicist E. Christian Kopff are simply not on their radar screen. Despite these flaws, *Who Killed Homer?* is an important book. The authors raise the serious questions and do not shrink from offering solutions. They are sure to be attacked (or, what is worse, ignored) by all the right people: union shop literary critics who stigmatize their critique as one of the "premature obituaries for Homer and for classical education, this time promulgated by distinguished APA members who don't like the work that other APA members are doing," and by conservatives who would prefer to rail against multiculturalism without, first, acquiring any culture of their own.

Thomas Fleming is the editor of Chronicles.

Cry, the Beloved Community

by Paul Gottfried

Someone Else's House: America's Unfinished Struggle for Integration

by Tamar Jacoby
New York: The Free Press;
613 pp., \$30.00



From the rave reviews in the *Wall Street Journal* and other vehicles of low-octane conservatism, it seems that Tamar Jacoby has produced a work for the ages. Like earlier marvels by Dinesh D'Souza, John J. Miller, and Francis Fukuyama, this study was made possible by funds flowing from neocon foundations, a gesture thoughtfully repaid by the recitation of the prescribed historical views. In accordance with the authorized version, we are told that the United States until the 1960's wallowed in racial injustice, but then came the federal government and liberals Martin Luther King, Jr., Bayard Rustin, Hubert Humphrey, and Lyndon Johnson to raise the collective moral consciousness. Though the later civil rights movement aggravated "black rage" and "white racism" (terms revealingly juxtaposed throughout the book), the concept of racial equality expounded by King supposedly holds the key to racial reconciliation. This visionary focus comes through unmistakably in Jacoby's 600-page narrative, tracing American race relations back to the beginning of the century while examining the situation in New York, Detroit, and Atlanta in particular. In this survey of what is depicted as mostly white cruelty to blacks, we are reminded of King's invocation in a speech in 1957 of a multiracial America gathered together in one "beloved community."

Jacoby's idea of two divergent civil rights movements is overstated. Already in the 1960's, King, among other black "integrationists," was calling for stringent racial quotas in both private and public employment and for reparations to be paid to blacks by white Americans. Such concessions were thought to be fully consistent with a "beloved community" that would include a once victimized black race entitled to temporary privi-

lege. And if there were in fact two contradictory civil rights movements, it may be assumed there would be legions of civil rights spokesmen and activists conspicuously leaving a movement which they believed had betrayed their ideals. Defections of this type did take place in the communist and Nazi movements, but, with very few exceptions, they did not occur in American civil rights politics from the 60's onward. Jacoby praises Andrew Young for renewing King's integrationist vision while seeking the Georgia governorship in 1990, and she attributes Young's defeat in the Democratic runoff with the present governor, Zell Miller, to "racial clannishness." But Miller was and remains both an explicit advocate of racial quotas and a critic of the Confederate battle flag, which Jacoby regards as a hate symbol. Not surprisingly, the "integrationist" Young has been equally zealous in embracing both of these positions.

Although Jacoby and her promoters believe that she holds independent opinions about black civil rights issues, it is hard to understand this claim. Despite her widely publicized ties to a self-described libertarian foundation, the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, Jacoby has much good to say about LBJ's Great Society. What she does find wrong with this costly and coercive "initiative" is that it did not go far enough: it was "only a beginning of the effort that would be necessary to make integration possible for the poorest black." And while she weakly criticizes affirmative action as "a Band-Aid on the cancer of black underdevelopment," she characteristically proposes her own wish list of remedial policies. An examination of this list in the last chapter proves the obvious, namely, the lack of any striking discrepancy between what Jacoby wants and what public administration is currently doing to solve racial problems. Despite the repeated complaint that the state may have tried too much too soon, it is not clear what Jacoby would have done differently, save to centralize public education more thoroughly in order to avoid the anti-Semitic black nationalism that engulfed predominantly black neighborhood schools in Brooklyn in the late 60's.

One place where Jacoby tips her ideological hand is her commentary on the New York mayoral race of 1973. Here she vividly contrasts the idealistic liberal victor, John V. Lindsay, to his Conserva-

tive Party opponent, William F. Buckley. Although Lindsay is portrayed as an “impractical” do-gooder and Buckley as a sober realist who knew that “government could not solve all the problems blocking black entry into the mainstream,” Jacoby does not hide her true feelings. Lindsay was expressing noble sentiments, though mistaken about specifics and clumsy about applying his ideals. But Buckley ran “a pandering campaign,” presumably because his supporters were Catholic ethnics and because he told harsh truths, a point grudgingly conceded by Jacoby, who observes that “not everything that Buckley said about blacks was wrong or racist.” The problem with this analysis is that Jacoby comes up with nothing Buckley said that was noticeably wrong; nor does she reveal anything Lindsay said that was strikingly correct. Her judgments are formed on the basis of a highly parochial sensibility. Thus the civil rights movement, we are led to believe, used to be a good thing until it turned against New York Jews and against Israel, at which point it became bad and deserving of contempt. But even then it was only bad in its derailed state, while those who continue to be “idealistic” about a socially engineered multiracial society, at least for the United States, are seen as praiseworthy.

Two of Jacoby’s “idealistic” heroes are Albert Shanker and Sandra Feldman, leaders of the American Federation of Teachers, who (we are told) stood tall when black nationalists were allowed to run schools in the Ocean Hill district of Brooklyn in 1968. While the black leadership, whom the New York City Board of Education refused to resist, antagonized the white, predominantly Jewish teachers, one might equally criticize what Jacoby calls the “educational establishment.” For more than 30 years,

Shanker and his union associates have tried to maintain a public school monopoly of American education run with minimal parental or neighborhood interference. They have raved against the danger of religion influencing American education and have been exemplary supporters of the big-government left. Nonetheless, Jacoby cannot find sufficient praise for Shanker in particular, as an upholder of educational standards in the turmoil of 1968. This “son of Eastern European Jews, raised in poverty in Manhattan’s Lower East Side,” said “bluntly what no one else dared to say: that the emperor had no clothes—that the activists on the governing board did not represent the district or the civil rights movement, that their vituperative anger would do no good for the city.” It is questionable that the board, consisting of public figures and black activists, had no support among blacks; or that their black nationalist ideology would be foreign to the evolving black politics of the time. But, even more, it is hypocritical to cast the noisily vituperative Shanker as the voice of reason. Unlike his black opponents in Ocean Hill, he would be around for years making noise, most of it unseemly and highly partisan.

Like her sponsors and blurbers, Jacoby is a leftist at heart who entertains doubts about the excesses to which her beliefs and policies can be and have been pushed. Only because a credible right has collapsed or been marginalized has Jacoby been able to appear as something she clearly is not, a “conservative,” for quibbling over race-based affirmative action and for decrying the anti-Semitism of some black separatists. But arguably her relentlessly integrationist vision may be more dangerous for established communities, white or black, than the toleration of separate racial and ethnic patterns of association. Separate communities do not necessarily hate each other, while groups which have been forced together may come to dislike each other intensely. And to solve the resulting tensions, ever newer “policies” will be inflicted upon an increasingly fragmented society. With due respect to Jacoby, it is absurd to argue that unless we are brought together through her dreams of integration, we shall be choosing “chaos” over “community.” For centuries Americans lived in authentic communities, as opposed to governmentally orchestrated ones, without falling into utter darkness.

One recent development that particularly offends Jacoby is a popular Southern sign that says, “We should have picked our own cotton!” Since the sign by implication laments the removal of blacks from Africa and their enslavement in the New World, I was initially puzzled as to why it might anger the author. My own explanation is that—like other liberals and neocons—Jacoby has adopted something like the Catholic concept of the *felix culpa* with regard to race. Mimicking the view presented in the Good Friday service, that the Fall of Adam was partly fortunate for bringing Christ, Jacoby and her ilk rejoice over the enslavement of blacks for leading to a multiracial America. That is the only explanation that seems to fit, given the author’s obsessive concern about getting back to the integrationist project which she insists has now stalled.

Paul Gottfried is a professor of humanities at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, and the author, most recently, of After Liberalism: Mass Democracy in the Managerial State (Princeton).

Genius in the Making

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

**Becoming Laura Ingalls Wilder:
The Woman Behind the Legend**

by John E. Miller

Columbia: University of Missouri Press;
320 pp., \$29.95



In 1993 the University of Missouri Press published *The Ghost in the Little House: A Life of Rose Wilder Lane* by William Holtz, who made a small sensation by contending that everything that makes the famous “Little House” books remarkable and memorable was actually the work not of Laura Ingalls Wilder but of her daughter, Rose Lane—the novelist, magazine author, and libertarian pamphleteer—who took what were originally disorganized and amateurish effusions by her mother and reorganized, expanded, rewrote, and polished them to

MOVING?

Send change
of address and the
mailing label from
your latest issue to:

**CHRONICLES
SUBSCRIPTION DEPT.
P.O. BOX 800
MOUNT MORRIS, IL 61054**