

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Attendant Cruelties: Nation and Nationalism in American History, by Patrice Higonnet. Other Press, 384 pages, \$29.95

Patrice Higonnet praises American inclusion and open-mindedness, reminding us there has always been a strong link between "progressive America" and "forward-minded Europe"; but he laments that this inclusive strand in American life is overshadowed by an "exclusionary nationalism" based on messianic religiosity, rampant individualism, and violent militarism. For centuries this unholy trinity has justified wars of excessive cruelty against enemies perceived as evil, whether Indians, Southerners, Japanese, Germans, or Muslims.

Higonnet, Harvard's Goelet Professor of French History, condemns Presidents Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, and William McKinley as "war criminals." Although Abraham Lincoln was "humane," Higonnet wonders why he supported General Ulysses S. Grant "without regard for the frightful murderous suffering inflicted" upon his troops, or why Lincoln did not stop General William T. Sherman as he "ravaged the South." The author is critical even of those modern American liberals who advocate "soft power." They are simply cultural imperialists, seeking American hegemony by other means.

The most sinister figure of all in this shoddy book's indictment is George W. Bush, who "seized on the idea of a 'War on Terror' in order to realize his dream of a softly fascist America." The author's conspiracy theory includes the usual cast of characters: the "military-industrial complex," "the subterranean work of the so-called Jewish lobby," and the sinister "influence of the neo-conservatives." Many of the latter were students of Leo Strauss, "a German racial refugee," as Higonnet calls him bizarrely. Strauss's neocon disciples "replicated the thought of Sayyid Qutb, the first theoretician of Islamism," Higonnet claims, seeking not simply to "neutralize" their opponents but to "eliminate" them. And on and on he goes, giving new meaning to the term "a Harvard education."

—John Fonte
Hudson Institute

A Well-Regulated Militia: The Founding Fathers and the Origins of Gun Control in America, by Saul Cornell. Oxford University Press, 288 pages, \$30

American liberals used to claim that the Second Amendment's "right to bear arms" is a collective right, belonging to states rather than individuals. But during the 1980s this argument crumbled under the weight of new scholarship, some of it by liberals, questioning why "the people" should be read so differently from the rights invoked in the First, Fourth, Ninth, and Tenth Amendments. The movement to ban guns was left to search for new legal and scholarly ground for its propositions.

Saul Cornell, a history professor at Ohio State University and the director of the John Glenn Institute's Second Amendment Research Center, is one of the leading advocates of what has been called the "militia-conditioned individual right" theory. In *A Well-Regulated Militia*, he argues that a purely individual right to private arms never existed at the time of the American Founding, but neither did the collective right that liberals used to swoon over. Both, he contends, emerged during the 19th century, and a careful reading of the Second Amendment reveals instead a hybrid "civic right," with arms ownership practically limited to those participating in "a well-regulated militia" and subject to inspection and regulation. With this, Cornell offers today's policymakers a third way, the better to help the nation "move forward" on the gun debate—though gun owners know through hard experience to batten the hatches when they hear such talk.

By attempting, in effect, to backdate the origins of gun control into the early republic, the author sidesteps the difference between the benign regulations of that time and the more aggressive restrictions of the 20th century. Despite his attempt to claim the middle ground, Cornell still ends up with policy proposals—new federal gun taxes to "allow society to shift part of the cost of gun violence back to those gun owners who do not act responsibly," and mandatory insurance for gun owners—that have been standard fare among gun control enthusiasts for years. But his book gives American liberals a new vocabulary to use in pursuit of gun restrictions.

—Daniel C. Palm
Azusa Pacific University

Saving Persuasion: A Defense of Rhetoric and Judgment, by Bryan Garsten. Harvard University Press, 290 pages, \$45

Bryan Garsten, an assistant professor of political science at Yale, argues "that a politics of persuasion—in which people try to change one another's minds by appealing not only to reason but also to passions and sometimes even to prejudices—is a mode of politics that is worth defending."

Although all men are rational some of the time, no man is rational all of the time. Persuasion, therefore, requires "linking our position to [the] existing opinions and emotions" of other people. In one sense, then, rhetorical speech is fundamentally democratic, consisting "partly in ruling and partly in following."

Early chapters on Hobbes, Rousseau, and Kant demonstrate that liberalism contains an anti-rhetorical tendency rooted in the distrust of democratic judgment. Later chapters on Aristotle and Cicero (perhaps the two greatest teachers of rhetoric) provide an alternative view, one that the author argues is more appropriate for a regime such as ours.

Successfully weaving a beautiful—not merely a functional—civic cloth from people's passions and opinions, emotions and interests, requires more than skill in the art of rhetoric, to be sure. "Sensitivity to existing opinions can easily become capitulation to unjust prejudices," a danger that points to the need for statesmanship. Though Garsten neglects the particular principles that ought to guide the statesman, he shows why a politics of persuasion is both necessary and proper for our deliberative democracy.

—Murray S. Y. Bessette
Claremont, CA



Book Review by F. Carolyn Graglia

FOR THE CHILDREN

Marriage and Caste in America: Separate and Unequal Families in a Post-Marital Age,
by Kay S. Hymowitz. Ivan R. Dee, 192 pages, \$22.50 (cloth), \$14.95 (paper)

The Future of Marriage, by David Blankenhorn.
Encounter Books, 260 pages, \$25.95



OVER THE PAST FOUR DECADES, AMERICAN adults have seemed more concerned with enjoying their own existence than with the generation and welfare of children. Kay Hymowitz's *Marriage and Caste in America* and David Blankenhorn's *The Future of Marriage* address the consequences of this failure to attend to nature's scheme. The first book compiles Hymowitz's essays, most of them previously published in the Manhattan Institute's *City Journal*. Without footnotes or bibliography, it is less a resource for studying the issues than a lively discussion of the family today, which may appeal to those who are part of the problem but could be part of its solution.

Hymowitz contends that marriage's separation from reproduction and its redefinition as a "state-stamped intimate relationship between two adults"—the work of the feminist movement and the sexual revolution—has made children "incidental," no longer the focus of a union devoted to their rearing. Yet there is a vast divide between the educated middle-class women who are more likely to marry before bearing children and the less educated, frequently black, women who constitute the bulk of single-parent families. Hymowitz tells us that "children of single mothers are less successful on just about every measure than children growing

up with their married parents regardless of their income, race, or education levels: they are more prone to drug and alcohol abuse, to crime, and to school failure; they are less likely to graduate from college; they are more likely to have children at a young age, and more likely to do so when they are unmarried."

Soaring divorce rates and out-of-wedlock births (37% of U.S. births are illegitimate) have made ours a nation of separate and unequal families. On one side is the middle-class woman following a life script of schooling and preparation for work, leading to self-sufficiency, then marriage, and only then children. On the other is the lower-class, less educated woman for whom sex, babies, and life just happen. "Children in the top quartile," Hymowitz explains,

have mothers who not only are likely to be married but also are older, more mature, better educated, and nearly three times as likely to be employed (whether full-or part-time) as are mothers of children in the bottom quartile. And not only do top-quartile children have what are likely to be more effective mothers; they also get the benefit of more time and money from their live-in fathers.

This is the same two-family nation examined in James Q. Wilson's *The Marriage Problem* (2002, a work Hymowitz might have mentioned); Wilson depicts America, in Disraeli's famous words, as two nations that are "ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws."

BUT IS THE PICTURE SO ROSY FOR CHILDREN on the upper side of the divide? In our no-fault divorce culture, these children, although born to married parents, often end up being raised by a single parent. In fact, the propensity to divorce is apparently correlated with two-income families; Hymowitz notes that "traditional families, with breadwinner husband and stay-at-home wife, had the lowest rate of divorce." Women employed 80% of the time since the birth of their first child are twice as likely to be divorced as stay-at-home moms are.

In her essays "Dads in the 'Hood" and "The Teen Mommy Track," Hymowitz gives little hope for the renewal of a marriage culture on the inner-city side of the divide. The poor black men she describes are "neither searching for, nor expecting, durable companionship with the opposite sex." One adolescent explains: "I just can't see myself being with one woman." But these young men do want children insofar as they provide status as