

makes explicit his assumption that such laws exist in the social sciences as well as in the so-called hard sciences, whether or not we have yet discerned such laws.

He proposes that whenever behavior is almost universally regarded as either good (e.g., helpfulness) or bad (e.g., theft), either right or wrong, moral or immoral, it is regarded that way because of its observed *consequences*. His hypothesis is that the species can discover the laws of the social sciences as it discovers the laws of the hard sciences, by observation, testing, and by sticking to stable, precise definitions of terms.

Truth is a recurrent theme in Harper's essays. It is clear from his writings that he had a passion not only for liberty and justice, but also for truth as an *even more* fundamental and libertarian value.

Harper argues that the repeatedly observed *consequences of abolished liberty* provide powerful scientific support for the hypothesis that liberty is the only arrangement which is in harmony with the laws of human nature, with truth.

And he points out, if it is the nature of truth to be internally consistent, then there can be no conflict between the truths which pertain to economics, liberty, and morality (the individual's exercise of *freedom* in choices which affect others). The harmony of economic principles, moral principles, and liberty is another of his key insights.

Harper's essays have the uncommon power to convince reasoning people of all ages that the "selfish" pursuit by individuals of their *own* goals under a system of true liberty (reciprocal freedom from coercion) is inherently moral, and is the only social arrangement which *can* foster peace, full-employment, human rights, charity, and other

important humanitarian goals—the very same "unselfish" goals presently credited to the Ignodogs but not to the libertarians.

Even teenagers will have no trouble reading and remembering Harper's essays—an enormously important matter if we wish to help them (and their parents) evaluate the apparently lofty slogans of the Ignodogs, and if we are counting on today's teenagers to become our future helpers in achieving liberty on this planet.

What Harper wrote in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s about inflation, price controls, "the just price," unemployment, "fair wages," profits, "special interests," subsidies, taxation, ownership, government, peace, etc., is just as applicable to *today's* news as it was to the news of those decades. By contrast, what most living economic pundits say today does not even hold for six weeks.

The fact that Harper's essays are "dated" should be regarded as another virtue, because this very fact should help Harper's new students to see that *timeless* principles (or truths) do exist in economics and in other human transactions.

In spite of Harper's wisdom and profundity, his work reveals the genuine humility of a truth-seeker, and provides an important model also in this respect for his students.

Another bonus is Harper's strong streak of whimsy, which is especially evident in his delightful essays, "The Graduated Gadinkus Tax" and "To Shoot a Myth."

A collection like this renews my appreciation for the technologies of paper-making, printing, and distribution. Large chunks of the accumulating capital of human wisdom are put at the service of all, for the equivalent price today of a restaurant meal, half a pair of shoes, or a ticket on a skilift. Both of the Harper volumes have been almost flaw-

lessly put together—with good organization, appealing layout, relatively large type, and generous interline spacing. The Institute for Humane Studies (IHS) did a first-rate publishing job, which this first-rate material deserves. I only regret that the books do not have an index, and are not wrapped in eye-catching and irresistible covers.

With these two volumes, IHS has provided liberty-lovers with a potent helper indeed, and now *we* either will or won't help to get the books into the hands of teachers of political science, "civics," history, economics, sociology, and philosophy, into libraries of all sorts, and into the widest possible circulation.

While relatively few of the rank-and-file Ignodogs *themselves* will read these 1,000 pages unless the libertarian movement becomes noisier, if *each libertarian* would read both volumes, he (she) would surely become a far more competent, confident, and persuasive noise-maker!

Egan O'Connor is a book editor, an activist in the peace movement, and a graduate student in biochemistry and nutrition.

## Women, and friends

---

BRUCE MAJORS

---

Among Women, by Louise Bernikow. Harmony Books, 296 pp., \$12.95.

LOUISE BERNIKOW'S *Among Women* is not a book of argument, but a book of observation. The central observation is that depictions of female friendships are not allowed in art, and the cultivation of female friendship does not go unpunished by culture.

A woman can have relationships with men. This can be the subject of literature, and it is, beginning with Eve

and her relationships with Adam, the Serpent, God, Abel, and Cain. Women can fight with each other over a man. This can be the subject of literature, and it is, beginning with Aphrodite, Athena, and Hera offering bribes and starting wars over who will be judged the fairest by Paris. Can two women be friends? Can they continue to be friends under the demands of dates, lovers, husbands, and children? World literature writes "No."

Bernikow observes this problem, and in the process begins to address it. First she makes female friendships present. She gives us the histories of the patriarchal transformations of European fairytales, bringing the original matriarchal folktales back into view. She collects the stories of female relationships that can be found—in literature, in history, and in her own life—and sorts them into chapters, each one about a different kind of relationship: mothers and daughters, sisters, friends, lovers, women in conflict, light and dark women. *Among Women* is both a book of, and a bibliography for, the stories of female interaction. Second, Bernikow provides models and assurances of female friendship. If female friendship becomes self-aware, remembering its own heritage and expressing itself through such institutions as political unions and employment networks, patriarchy might not be around to produce this—or any other—problem.

Part novel, part biography, part diary, *Among Women* is a pleasure to read, and a good light introduction to radical feminist thought.

---

Bruce Majors is a former SLS coordinator at the University of Chicago and an undergraduate philosophy major at the College of the University of Chicago (on leave) who works for the National Taxpayers Legal Fund.



Robert Redford's controversial directorial debut, *Ordinary People*, features Judd Hirsch as the doctor who actually helps his young patient (Timothy Hutton). Donald Sutherland and Mary Tyler Moore star as the boy's parents.

## On View

# A Helping Hand

DAVID BRÚDNOY

HE AIN'T HEAVY, FATHER; he's my brother: the wisdom of Father Flanagan's Boys Town, if memory serves. Our lives, however, are and have been case studies in isolation, well in advance of the awkwardly named Me Generation. Parity in relationships is hard enough, but the inequality that is intrinsic to any true helper-helped association is even more difficult to endure. Who, nowadays, can comfortably talk about the person who "uplifted" him? Who can say *the one who saved me* without cringing, unless of course he is speaking of God?

42 We are so embarrassed that

we consider it maudlin to talk about that person who made all the difference in any particular life, so embarrassed, in fact, that we're given to distancing these rare instances by calling the helper a guru and the helped a devotee. Almost any sort of connection between people is acceptable to moderns except one which frankly acknowledges a decisive, irreplaceable person who, from a higher level, reaches down and saves one from some awful destiny. Try it out at the next cocktail party and watch folks disappear.

The classic case in our time of the type of relationship I'm thinking of was that between Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan, *The Miracle Worker*. But, since that popularized study of a real story appeared, there have been few that approached it for its power, much less its authenticity. Psychiatrists "curing" their analysands are commonplace

in movies but not often found in movies worth more than a momentary glance. Think of that sentimental drivel a couple of years ago, *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*, to recall the standardized approach to this subject.

## Ordinary People

And then consider Robert Redford's first directorial effort, *Ordinary People*, which came to us early in the fall after a dismal summer of instantly forgettable movies. Much has been said and written of the sterling performances by Donald Sutherland and Mary Tyler Moore as the parents of a boy (Timothy Hutton) who has just come home from the hospital where he was recovering from a suicide attempt. And of Hutton much has been made, too, owing to this young actor's brilliant, seemingly effortless, portrayal. Nearly lost in the praise for the movie is the

sensationally effective work by Judd Hirsch as the psychiatrist, this arising perhaps from the overall fineness of the movie as well as from one unfortunate ingredient in it.

The Jarretts are archetypal Wasps, Dr. Berger (Hirsch), something of a Protestant's adoring vision of the beneficent Jew. Maybe the very idea of *gentile psychiatrist* went out with Jung; certainly *Jewish psychiatrist* has become a shared cultural cliché and in Redford's hands something of a hindrance to appreciating the film as a universally valid metaphor. The problem that bedevils young Conrad Jarrett is certainly not unique: it is generalized guilt, the sense of being undeserving of life and happiness. This is a sensation of almost epidemic proportion. What the psychiatrist leads his patient to understand is simply that most of us are not responsi-