

# Eric Voegelin: *The Master Path Finder Revisited*

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SEVERAL WORKS have appeared recently devoted to an interpretation of the thought of Eric Voegelin.<sup>1</sup> But the one under consideration here is no doubt the best since it is the most comprehensive.\* Ellis Sandoz is well qualified to undertake this assignment; he wrote his doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Professor Voegelin and has since immersed himself in Voegelin's thought. In 1973 he conducted a large number of taped interviews with Professor Voegelin which he describes as an "Autobiographical Memoir"; he quotes extensively from this Memoir to great advantage as it permits Voegelin to explain the various influences upon his thought, the problems he encountered, and the reasons why he has often felt it necessary to revise some initial hypotheses. Sandoz has wisely adopted a chronological method of presenting Voegelin's thought since it is characteristic of Voegelin that he has constantly revised and expanded his thought in response to new materials and new insights. Voegelin's thought is "seen as the pilgrimage of a philosophizing man in quest of truth, not in isolation from the realities of politics and the exigencies of contemporary life, but in constant and responsive interplay with them." (pp. 3-4)

Sandoz characterizes Voegelin's thought as revolutionary and that accounts in part for the resistance which his thought has encountered among many intellectuals today. "Voegelin's revolutionary originality is that he is at odds with all schools of thought. He does not fit any of the convenient intellectual pigeonholes

.... His work is strikingly free of polemics, yet it clearly entails a rejection of all of the dearest Idols of the Cave of modern intellectuals here and abroad, most especially of positivism, Marxism and Freudianism. And these are not merely the idols of the intellectuals, but of a substantial segment of the educated public which has itself been educated at the hands of such intellectuals, not a few of whom are university professors..." (pp. 11-12) When Voegelin, for example, declares "that the history of philosophy is in the largest part the history of its derailment" (*Order and History*, III, 277) he is not likely to endear himself to academic philosophers. It is not only the revolutionary character of his thought that occasions resistance but the fact that most intellectuals and especially social scientists are simply illiterate and too prone to think ideologically. Intellectuals today too often think that they have disposed of thought by labeling it. Voegelin himself has said:

Once an argument has been classified as 'positional,' it is regarded as having been demolished, since the 'position' attributed to it is always selected with pejorative intent. The choice of the position selected is an expression of the personal antipathies of the individual critic, and the same argument can therefore be attributed to any one of a variety of 'positions,' according to what comes readily to the critic's hand. The wealth of variations afforded by such tactics is well exemplified by the variety of classifications to which I have myself been subjected. On my religious 'position,' I have been classified as a Protestant, a Catholic, as anti-Semitic and as a typical Jew; politically, as a Liberal, a Fascist, a

\**The Voegelinian Revolution: A Biographical Introduction*, by Ellis Sandoz. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981. xiv, 271 pp.

National Socialist, and a Conservative; and on my theoretical position as a Platonist, a New-Augustinian, a Thomas, a disciple of Hegel, an existentialist, a historical relativist, and an empirical skeptic; in recent years the suspicion has frequently been voiced that I am a Christian. All of these classifications have been made by university professors and people with academic degrees. They give ample food for thought regarding the state of our universities. (This statement appeared in an article "John Stuart Mill: On Readiness to Rational Discussion," in Albert Hunold [ed.], *Freedom and Serfdom: An Anthology of Western Thought* [Dardrecht, Holland, 1961], p. 280)

Sandoz rightly stresses that Voegelin's thought is grounded in common sense which is "a compact form of rationality." Too often intellectuals tend to think that the truth is to be sought in originality. But according to Voegelin, "The test of truth, to put it pointedly, will be the lack of originality in the propositions." (p.26)

An early chapter in Sandoz' book is devoted to Voegelin's biography and the course of his thought to 1938. Eric Voegelin was born in Cologne, Germany on January 3, 1901. In 1910 he moved with his family to Vienna where he remained until his flight to Switzerland and then to the United States in the summer of 1938. He attended the University in Vienna and received a doctorate in political science under the supervision of Hans Kelsen. He eventually became a professor in the law school. From 1924 to 1926 he held a fellowship which enabled him to study in the United States. He utilized this opportunity to attend the lectures of Alfred North Whitehead at Harvard and those of John R. Commons at the University of Wisconsin. He published his first book *Über die Form des amerikanischen Geistes* in 1928. The 1920s and 1930s saw the rise of irrational, demonic political forces and many intellectuals were so confined by their positivistic presuppositions that they were unable to understand what was happening. Eric Voegelin was determined to penetrate this phenomenon and to understand it. He was dismissed by the Nazis from

his position at the University of Vienna in 1938 and came to the United States where he taught at Harvard, Bennington, the University of Alabama and Louisiana State University. After teaching at Louisiana State University for sixteen years he returned to Germany in 1958. He taught at the University of Munich until his retirement in 1969. He returned to the United States and was associated with the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. He resides at Stanford and is still active and writing at the age of 80.

Like Plato, Voegelin recognized that the problem of political and social order could be traced back to the lack of order in the souls of individuals. This led him to the study of political philosophy, eventually to the philosophy of history and ultimately to the philosophy of consciousness. He embarked upon writing what was conceived by his publishers as an introductory text on the History of Western Political Ideas. The manuscript grew far beyond the proportions originally envisaged into what would have been a multi-volume work. But in the late 1940s Voegelin decided not to publish the history since he now thought that the project was methodologically flawed. Portions of the unpublished manuscript did appear in articles and a small portion was recently (1975) published under the title *From Enlightenment to Revolution*.

It was Voegelin's study of Schelling's posthumous *Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation* that convinced him that a history of political ideas was not the proper framework for understanding politics. Too often the history of political ideas is presented as an ongoing argument about commonly perceived problems of social order; it thus assumes a continuity of argument and a universal community of discourse which in fact does not exist. The sentiments, passions and experiences of which ideas are the crystallization tend to be ignored and arguments are generated about the validity of ideas as though the ideas had a life and a reality of their own. It is the experiences which give rise to ideas which should engage our attention if we want to understand both the human promise and the human predicament. Accordingly Voegelin put aside the

history of political ideas and embarked upon a much more ambitious undertaking. He became more and more convinced that it was societies and not ideas that were the real entities and that societies express themselves through a variety of complex symbols. More and more he turned his attention to the role of myth in history and to the relationships between myth, philosophy and revelation. In the Autobiographical Memoir Voegelin says in part:

The points at which the misgivings had to arise are obvious. In the first place there is no continuity between the so-called ideas of the Greek philosophers from the seventh to the fourth century B.C. and the contents of Israelite prophetic and New Testament revelatory writings. These two symbolizations touch different areas of experience and are not historically connected. Moreover, the farther one traces back the origin of ideas, the more it becomes clear that such symbolisms as myth and revelation can by no stretch of the imagination be classified as 'ideas.' One must acknowledge a plurality of symbolisms. An Hesiodic theogony, for instance, simply is not philosophy in the Aristotelian sense, even though the structure of reality expressed by myth and philosophy is the same...

I had to give up the 'ideas' as objects of history and to establish the experiences as the reality to be explored historically... The work on the 'History of Political Ideas' had not been done in vain, because it had familiarized me with the historical sources. But reorganization of the materials under the aspect of experience and symbolization became necessary. Hence, I gave up the project of a 'History of Political Ideas' and started my own work on *Order and History*. (pp. 80-81)

Voegelin was invited to give the Walgreen lectures at the University of Chicago in 1951 and these lectures were published the following year under the title *The New Science of Politics*. In part he said:

The existence of man in political society is historical existence, and a theory of

politics, if it penetrates to principles, must at the same time be a theory of history.... The analysis will... proceed to an exploration of the symbols by which political societies interpret themselves as representatives of a transcendent truth. (p. 90)

While the book reaffirmed the old science of Aristotle as still sound it was, indeed, much more than a call to return to Aristotle. Voegelin's purpose was to introduce readers to the "restoration of political science" but this necessitated finding "a theoretically intelligible order of history into which the variegated phenomena could be organized." (p. 93) Voegelin examined in these lectures the Christian symbolism by means of which the Western world sought to understand itself and focused attention upon the distortion of this symbolism in various forms of gnosticism—religious, intellectual and political. He showed how the Christian promise of salvation beyond history became in its gnostic derailment the promise of perfection both of man and of society in history. He elaborated upon the phenomenon of gnosticism in *Wissenschaft, Politik und Gnosis* (1959). The temptation to transmute the Christian promise of salvation beyond history into the promise of perfection upon earth in time is not, he shows here, peculiar to the Christian experience and faith but the same phenomenon can be found in Jewish, Islamic and Hellenic cultures. "The temptation to fall from a spiritual height that brings the element of uncertainty into final clarity down into the more solid certainty of world-immanent sensible fulfillment... seems to be a general human problem." In abbreviated form *The New Science of Politics* anticipated the present work in which he is engaged, namely, *Order and History*. What many regard as the political crisis of our times is shown to be a deeply rooted spiritual crisis that challenges the very substance of our humanity.

History, for Voegelin, is not antiquarian study; nor is it simply a prelude to what some would think of as our own 'enlightened' state of existence. Nor is Voegelin interested, like some other philosophers of history, in imposing a pattern of meaning upon past events. He denies that he or anyone else can ever say with

assurance precisely what the meaning of history is. Ultimately it is an impenetrable mystery. Voegelin wants to understand history as men themselves participating in history have understood it. He is interested in the consciousness of particular men grappling with the problems of existence and with the symbols they use to express their understanding of what it means to be human. The drama of humanity, as Voegelin understands it, consists in man's quest for the truth of order, a truth that "has to be gained and regained in the perpetual struggle against the fall from it" (OH, I, xiv). It is only through an awareness, however, of existence in untruth that we may be moved to discover the life of the spirit with which to challenge disorder. One of the greatest sources of disorder in our time is the metastatic faith that we can bring about through progress, social science or revolution that change in the order of being that will make it possible for us to reconstitute reality so that it will accord more with our desires. René Descartes' dream that through the knowledge yielded by the physical sciences we can become masters and possessors of nature has been expanded in modern times to include the last frontier, the conquest of human nature itself. Such a faith makes it, says Voegelin, "a matter of life and death for all of us to understand the phenomenon and to find remedies against it before it destroys us. If today the state of science permits the critical analysis of such phenomena, it is clearly a scholar's duty to undertake it for his own sake as a man and to make the results accessible to his fellow men. *Order and History* should be read, not as an attempt to explore curiosities of a dead past, but as an inquiry into the structure of the order in which we live presently." (OH, I, xiii-xiv)

*Order and History* has now appeared in four volumes with a fifth volume promised. The first volume *Israel and Revelation* appeared in 1956, the second and third *The World of the Polis* and *Plato and Aristotle* in 1957 and the fourth volume *The Ecumenic Age* in 1974. The first volume of *Order and History* opens with this sentence: "God and man, world and society, form a primordial community of being. The community with its quarternarian structure is, and is not, a

datum of human experience. It is a datum of experience in so far as it is known to man by virtue of his participation in the mystery of being. It is not a datum of experience insofar as it is not given in the manner of an object of the external world but is knowable only from the perspective of participation in it." The structure of order is not something men make but something they discover. Man is a participant in being, not a mere spectator, but "both the play and the role are unknown...even worse, the actor does not know with certainty who he is himself." (OH, I, 2) Man in the anxiety of his existence creates symbols designed to render intelligible the tension he experiences. Through the pressure of experience (history) symbols become more adequate to the task. "Compact blocks of the knowable will be differentiated into their component parts and the knowable itself will gradually come to be distinguished from the essentially unknowable. Thus the history of symbolization is a progression from compact to differentiated experiences and symbols." (OH, I, 5) The first symbolization of society and its order uses the cosmos as an analogue. Voegelin shows in considerable detail in his first volume how the civilizations of the Ancient Near East let "vegetative rhythms and celestial revolutions function as models for the structural and procedural order of society." (OH, I, 6) When the cosmological empires broke down, trust in cosmic order was shaken. But if the cosmos was not the source of lasting order, where was the source to be found? The breakdown of cosmological civilizations led to the emergence of religion and philosophy.

The period from 800 to 300 B.C. is a remarkable period in human history for during that period there occurs simultaneously but without apparent mutual influence the discovery of a truth that challenges the truth of the cosmological empires. "In China it is the age of Confucius and Lao-tse as well as of the other philosophical schools; in India, the age of the *Upanishads* and the Buddha; in Persia, of Zoroastrianism; in Israel, of the Prophets; in Hellas, of the philosophers and of tragedy. As a specifically characteristic phase in this long drawn-out process may be recognized the period around 500 B.C. when Heraclitus, the Buddha, and Confucius were contempor-

aries." (*New Science of Politics*, p. 60) It is characteristic of Voegelin's intellectual integrity that he is not unwilling to change his mind when the evidence compels it. In his most recent publication, *The Ecumenic Age*, he rejects Karl Jaspers' characterization of this period as the "axis-time" in the history of mankind and indicates that he has been obliged by further study and reflection to acknowledge that there are "important lines of meaning in history" that do "not run along the lines of time." (OH, IV, 2) "History is not a stream of human beings and their actions in time, but the process of man's participation in a flux of divine presence that has eschatological direction. . . . The process of history and such order as can be discerned in it, is not a story to be told from the beginning to its happy, or unhappy end; it is a mystery in process of revelation." (OH, IV, 6)

What was seen only dimly in the compact symbols of cosmological civilizations became articulate when, with the formation of Israel, "the world-transcendent God reveals Himself as the original and ultimate source of order in world and man." (OH, I, xi) The Mosaic leap in being revealed the Israelites as a unique people chosen by God, as the people in whose presence God reveals Himself as the ever-present helper. The cosmological myth is transposed to the form of revealed presence in history. In the conflict between God's order and Israel's empirical disorder as experienced by the Jewish prophets, men for the first time "experienced the clash between divinely willed and humanly realized order of history in its stark brutality, and the souls of the prophets were the battlefields in this war of the spirit." (OH, I, 461) Although the Prophets came close to differentiating the order of the soul from the order of the compact, empirical community, they did not achieve the clarity which was to be achieved by philosophy. Nevertheless, "In Jeremiah the human personality had broken the compactness of collective existence and recognized itself as the authoritative source of order in society." (OH, I, 485)

The emergence of the self-conscious soul as the source of order takes place with greater clarity with the emergence of philosophy.

The leap in being had different results in Israel and Hellas. In Israel it assumed the form of historical existence of a people under God; in Hellas it assumed the form of personal existence of individual human beings under God. . . . The universal validity of transcendent truth, the universality of the one God over the one mankind, could be more easily disengaged from an individual's discovery of the existence of his psyche under the gods than from the Sinaitic revelation of a people's existence under God. Nevertheless, as Israel had to carry the burden of Canaan, so philosophy had to carry the burden of the polis. For the discoveries, though made by individuals, were made by citizens of a polis and the new order of the soul, when communicated by its discoverers and creators, inevitably was the implied or explicit appeal to the fellow citizens to reform their personal conduct, the mores of society, and ultimately the institutions in conformity with the new order. (OH, II, 169)

Philosophy emerges when it breaks with the myth, approximately 500 B.C. Parmenides is the first to use the symbol "Being" and in this sense he is the founder of philosophy proper. The conception of Being, however, is not the consequence of philosophical speculation; it arises from the experience of mystical transport, in the participation of the soul in the life of divinity. But it is in the work of Plato that the soul as a sensorium of transcendence is articulated most clearly. Philosophy is seen as arising from "the resistance of the soul to its destruction by society" (OH, III, 68) and for Plato it has two functions:

It is first, and most importantly, an act of salvation for himself and others, in that the evocation of right order and its reconstitution in his own soul becomes the substantive center of a new community which, by its existence, relieves the pressure of the surrounding corrupt society. Under this aspect Plato is the founder of the community of philosophers that lives through the ages. Philosophy is, second, an act of judgment. . . . Since the order of the soul is recaptured through resistance to the sur-



rounding disorder, the pairs of concepts which illuminate the act of resistance develop into the criteria... of social order and disorder. Under this second aspect Plato is the founder of political science. (OH, III, 68-69)

The philosopher is the man whose soul is attuned to the divine measure, the sophist the man whose soul reflects the prevailing opinions of a disordered society. For this reason Plato is not to be regarded, as he frequently is, as but one philosopher among many, rather he is "man in the anxiety of his fall from being" and his philosophy "is not a philosophy but the symbolic form in which a Dionysiac soul expresses its ascent to God. If Plato's evocation of a paradigm of right order is interpreted as a philosopher's opinion about politics, the result will be hopeless nonsense, not worth a word of debate." (OH, III, 70) This conviction will not and does not please many contemporary academic philosophers and political scientists but unless one understands that Professor Voegelin means precisely what he says the whole thrust of his argument is lost. It should be emphasized that this is no mere assertion of Voegelin, it is supported by his entire work, a carefully documented study of how men in history have interpreted their own anxiety and elaborated symbols with which to express their experience of life in tension. Human existence is existence in tension.

Existence has the structure of the In-Between, of the Platonic *metaxy*, and if anything is constant in the history of mankind it is the language of tension between life and death, immortality and mortality, perfection and imperfection, time and timelessness, between order and disorder, truth and untruth, sense and senselessness of existence; between *amor Dei* and *amor sui*, *l'âme ouverte* and *l'âme close*; between the virtues of openness toward the ground of being such as faith, hope and love and the vices of infolding closure such as *hybris* and revolt; between the moods of joy and despair; and between alienation in its double meaning of alienation from the world and alienation from God. If we split these pairs of symbols, and

hypostatize the poles of the tension as independent entities, we destroy the reality of existence as it has been experienced by the creators of the tensional symbolisms; we lose consciousness and intellect; we deform our humanity and reduce ourselves to a state of quiet despair or activist conformity to the 'age', of drug addiction or television watching, of hedonistic stupor or murderous possession of truth, of suffering from the absurdity of existence or indulgence in any *divertissement* (in Pascal's sense) that promises to substitute as a 'value' for reality lost. In the language of Heraclitus and Plato: Dream life usurps the place of wake life. (From an unpublished ms. entitled "Equivalences of Experience and Symbolization in History.")

The one constant that Voegelin claims to have found in history is "the constancy of a process that leaves a trail of equivalent symbols in time and space."

Seventeen years elapsed between the appearance of Volume III and Volume IV of *Order and History*. Originally Voegelin proposed to write six volumes. Volume IV was to have been devoted to a discussion of Empire and Christianity, Vol. V to the Protestant Centuries and Vol. VI to The Crisis of Western Civilization. Instead Vol. IV is entitled *The Ecumenic Age* and the fifth and probably concluding volume is likely to be called *In Search of Order*. *The Ecumenic Age* clearly represents a break with Voegelin's original intention. "When I devised the program," Voegelin says, "I was still laboring under the conventional belief that the conception of history as a meaningful course of events on a straight line of time was the great achievement of Israelites and Christians who were favored in its creation by the revelatory events, while the pagans, deprived as they were of revelation, could never rise above the conception of a cyclical time. This conventional belief had to be abandoned. . . . For the very unilinear history which I had supposed to be engendered, together with the punctuations of meaning on it, by the differentiating events, turned out to be a cosmological symbolism." (OH, IV, 7) The project of *Order and History* as originally conceived had to be

abandoned. History was "not a story of meaningful events to be arranged on a time line. In this new form, the analysis had to move backward and forward and sideways, in order to follow empirically the patterns of meaning as they revealed themselves in the self-interpretation of persons and societies in history. It was a movement through a web of meaning with a plurality of nodal points." (OH, IV, 57) But Voegelin does not draw the conclusion that his original thesis was mistaken and he says nothing about revising it. We are confronted then with the anomaly of a break in a program which requires no significant change of the original thesis. From Voegelin's point of view he has simply expanded the scope of his analysis to include a broader range of materials. Human existence, for Voegelin, moves in perpetual tension towards the ground of Being. This is not meant to imply that the search for the ground is an inherently futile effort but it is to say that whatever is learned about the ground, even in the most intense mystical experience, cannot exhaust its richness. There is "no ultimate truth of reality that would transform the search for the ground into a possession of truth." (*Anamnesis* 150) Man's existence takes the form of a perpetual becoming. Instead of a course or story to be told from beginning to end, history, for Voegelin, is understood as an ongoing drama of man's encounter with and response to the revelatory presence of God in human consciousness.

We can be grateful to Ellis Sandoz for this labor of love. His book is an indispensable guide to the complexities of Eric Voegelin's thought. "The work of restoration of philosophy and of political science," writes Sandoz, "must not be mistaken for the proclamation of a definitive or ultimate truth in an apocalyptic manner. Voegelin claims to have detected and rectified an error of consequence with respect to the nature of philosophical thought, its meaning and truth. The claim is urged with scholarly precision and sobriety. Despite the magnitude of the claim, one is compelled to say that there is none of the enthusiasm or millenarian overtone in it that characterized Hegel, for example. Voegelin does not even faintly pretend that his work will free men of error in the future, that either

philosophy or history climaxes in his work; nor is he sanguine in the hope that his analysis will be persuasive to this or a subsequent generation. Indeed, he appears to be pessimistic in all of these regards. He claims only that, as far as he can see, both the diagnosis and the therapy are sound. In so claiming, he remains philosopher and physician and declines to become prophet and healer." (p. 187)

<sup>1</sup>See Alois Dempf and Frederick Engel-Janosi, eds., *Politische Ordnung und menschliche Existenz: Festgabe fuer Eric Voegelin*. Munich: C. H. Beck, 1962; Stephen A. McKnight, ed., *Eric Voegelin's Search for Order in History*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978; Eugene Webb, *Eric Voegelin: Philosopher of History*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981 and Peter J. Opitz and Gregor Sebba, eds., *The Philosophy of Order: Essays on History, Consciousness and Politics* (Festschrift for Eric Voegelin on his 80th birthday), Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 1981. Ellis Sandoz has also edited *Eric Voegelin's Thought: A Critical Appraisal* soon to be published by the Duke University Press.

## Two Items from an Austrian Legacy

**Epistemological Problems of Economics**, by Ludwig von Mises, *New York and London: New York University Press, 1981. xx-xi + 239 pp. \$20.00 (paper \$7.00).*

**The Theory of Money and Credit**, by Ludwig von Mises, *Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1981. 541 pp. \$11.00 (paper \$5.00).*

EVERY STUDENT of the methodology of economic science, or of monetary theory, be he novice or dedicated professional, should welcome these two volumes. Long scarce, rare and out of print, they constitute an important and significant part of the legacy bequeathed to us all by Professor Ludwig von Mises, whose influence has certainly not become less noticeable, nor less pervasive, by

his death. Indeed, Mises's importance among those who have come to be called collectively the "Austrian School of Economics," with its emphasis upon subjective elements in economic analysis, has become that of a giant intellect among giant intellects. His works continue to be studied and honored along with those of his predecessors—Menger, Böhm-Bawerk, and Wieser—and those of his colleagues and followers—such as Hayek, Kirzner, Lachmann, and Machlup—to mention only a few of the most distinguished.

Both *The Theory of Money and Credit* and *Epistemological Problems of Economics* were originally written and published in German during the early years of the twentieth century. The first edition of *Money and Credit* appeared on the eve of World War I in 1912; its timing can hardly be said to have been auspicious! The second German edition (*Theorie des Geldes und der Umlaufsmittel*), a revised and expanded version of the first, was published in 1924. The first edition, as far as this reviewer has been able to determine, was never translated into English. This new edition is the translation by H. E. Batson of the second German edition, and was first published in English in 1934, republished in 1952, and now once again in 1981. *Epistemological Problems of Economics* (*Grundprobleme der Nationalökonomie*), first published in German in 1933, consisted principally of a collection of essays originally appearing in German language periodicals during the middle and late twenties. This new edition is the English translation by George Reisman of the 1933 edition, published by Van Nostrand in 1960 as part of The William Volker Fund Series in the Humane Studies, and is now republished by New York University Press for the Institute for Humane Studies Series in Economic Theory. Both volumes are important adjuncts to Mises's best known *chef d'oeuvre*, *Human Action* (Yale University Press, 1949): the one in the somewhat specialized area of monetary theory, and the other in the more generalized and always stimulating subject of scientific methodology.

After reading *The Theory of Money and Credit* after the passage of many years, this reviewer was struck by the applicability of its content to monetary problems of the present

day. The monetary and financial problems to which Mises addressed himself seventy years ago are virtually the same we are confronted with today. Have we learned anything at all? Or have we refused to learn? Or, indeed, do we really want to learn? Moreover, the foresight and clarity which Mises's work displays cannot fail to impress many of those who read it in 1982 for the first time. The end, as the saying goes, is not yet.

One cannot help wonder if, in the field of monetary economics, the Austrian School is not long overdue for a reconsideration, revitalization, and resurgence. Historically speaking and, therefore, perhaps by chance, the Menger-Mises-Hayek contributions to monetary theory were overshadowed and, indeed, overwhelmed by the almost universal appeal of J. M. Keynes's persuasive and seductive *General Theory*. But this was also true of the more orthodox classical English and American empiricists as well, and they have enjoyed a new public hearing, a new popularity, a new focus of attention if not universal acceptance. Frequently in the past, Professor Hayek himself has admitted to being driven from the lists by the Keynesian juggernaut, by a feeling of hopelessness in attempting to find a politically acceptable (and saleable) solution to the recurrent inflations and the resultant recessions, depressions and unemployment. Recently, however, he has returned to a frontal attack on governmental monopoly of monetary instruments (in his *Denationalisation of Money*, Hobart Paper Special 70, London, 1978). If a suitable mechanism can be discovered which will turn the power to issue monetary instruments away from government and to the market, individuals surely will then have to choose among them. And such a situation would properly be a subject for catallactics, or human action and human choice. Perhaps the Institute for Humane Studies, which has recently begun to sponsor a series of seminars on monetary theories, had more than one motive in sponsoring this new edition of *The Theory of Money and Credit*. Let us hope so!

*Epistemological Problems of Economics* will undoubtedly be on the required reading list for followers of the so-called Austrian School. Perhaps even more importantly, it



can also be recommended to those whose methodology is essentially empirical. It is a worthy addition to the classics such as Max Weber's *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*; Karl Pearson's *The Grammar of Science*; Lionel Robbins' *The Nature and Significance of Economic Science*; Milton Friedman's *The Methodology of Positive Economics*; and F. A. Hayek's *Economics and Knowledge*. Those of Austrian persuasion who do not read German may wish to compare Mises's *Epistemological Problems* with Carl Menger's essay, "Toward a Systematic Classification of the Economic Sciences," in *Essays in European Economic Thought*, translated and edited by Louise Sommer (Van Nostrand, 1960). It is relatively rare and, as far as this reviewer can determine, is the only English translation of Menger's "Grundzüge einer Klassifikation der Wirtschaftswissenschaften," from the *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik* (Vol. XIX, 1899).

Even those who have already read one of the earlier editions of either book will find the relatively new Forewords (by Ludwig Lachmann for *Epistemological Problems*, and by Murray Rothbard for *Money and Credit*) useful, informative, well written, and stimulating. *The Theory of Money and Credit*, in particular, contains not only Rothbard's succinct new (1981) Foreword, Mises's own prefaces to the second German edition, the 1934 English edition and 1952 English edition, but also Lionel Robbins's Introduction to the 1934 English edition. Together these offer a welcome historical comment.

One concluding observation: current list prices do not permit one to forget the continuing experience of inflation, but the availability of both books in paperback may soften the blow slightly. The outstanding quality of *The Theory of Money and Credit*—its type face, cover, and format—equals that which we have come to expect and to appreciate from the imprint of *Liberty Classics*. Indeed, for this day and age of inflation, it is a bargain and a bibliophilic delight, as well as a worthy memorial to its author.

Reviewed by ARTHUR KEMP

## *The Shock of the New*

**The Pursuit of Virtue and Other Tory Notions**, by George F. Will, *New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982. 397 pp. \$16.50.*

"I LOVE EVERYTHING that is old—old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wines." So wrote the English poet Oliver Goldsmith over two-hundred years ago. Were he living today, Goldsmith would have found a ready companion in Mr. George F. Will, a man who, in the age of Sony Betamax and the Atari, confesses a preference for stone towers, heraldic coats-of-arms, and church bells. For Will is a conservative in the pure sense of the word: one who wishes to preserve the better things of the past, one who understands the importance of continuity to the health of any society.

This theme is suggested by the charming title of his latest book, *The Pursuit of Virtue and Other Tory Notions*, a collection of his *Newsweek* and *Washington Post* columns from the past few years. Unlike many, perhaps even most, of his conservative contemporaries in America, Will does not wish to be considered a nineteenth-century liberal; rather, he prefers the appellation "Tory." The word is not merely ornamental. As he states in his introduction, "I trace the pedigree of my philosophy to Burke, Newman, Disraeli and others who were more skeptical, even pessimistic, about the modern world than most people are who today call themselves conservatives."

As the title of the book implies, Will believes that America as a society is losing its respect for virtue, defined by the ancients as the tendency of the will toward the good, and thus is losing control of its appetites or passions. Every civilization, he notes, has a certain set of "of-course values," those values taken-for-granted, unquestioned, implicitly shared by all members in the community, the core beliefs that indeed define the community. As skepticism about human knowledge and mores spreads and the concomitant attack on these core beliefs is exacerbated, the degree to which the society's laws and institutions mirror these essential values diminishes. Cynicism about and hostility toward govern-

ment by its citizens is the inevitable result of such neglect of underlying principles, and the public splits into factions.

"A society that dedicates itself to the pursuit of happiness," warns the author, "had better dedicate itself, including its government, to the pursuit of virtues indispensable to ordered liberty. It has been well said that democracy presupposes that it is better to count heads than to break them. But the success of democracy depends on what is *in* the heads of its citizens." As Plato realized centuries ago, a just society is nothing more than a society of just individuals. A good society cannot exist apart from good citizens.

In sharp contrast to modern liberalism, then, Will believes that governments must concentrate on the duties and responsibilities of individuals to improve the community. Liberals too often assume that the answer to every problem is a law and that the law will result in a change of behavior. But the law, to a great extent, in a democracy depends upon the support it has from the citizenry: if they don't like it, they won't obey it, and there is no better example than Prohibition. Laws are the restrictions necessary for us to enjoy our liberty.

Inherent in such thinking is the distinction between freedom and license, a distinction continually blurred these days by fuzzy thinking. The word "freedom" has been debased by its recent attachment to any movements asserting some previously undiscovered "rights," in the process effectively redefining freedom to mean the absence of restraints or limits. Yet such a definition is the clear prescription for freedom's demise, for freedom means acting in accordance with the natural order. On a political level in modern America, this means acting in accordance with the very principles that define a democratic society; for instance, the belief in open elections or legislative assemblies.

Freedom thus does have its limits—must have if it is to survive. Consequently, acceptance of the freedom of speech does not necessarily include the extension of this right to Communists, because their political principles are inherently hostile to the principles of democracy. Will rejects the notion, so eloquently expressed by Oliver Wendell Holmes,

that the best test of truth is its ability to compete in the marketplace of ideas. He suggests that acceptance of the right to competition implies also the right to win—clearly rejected in the cases of Communism, Fascism, and other antidemocratic elements. For this reason, Will and those who agree with him had no difficulty rejecting the Nazis' claimed right to march in Skokie in 1979.

Even more irksome to the Left than Will's opinion that Nazis not be given public platforms is the emphasis he gives to manners, perhaps the most Tory notion of them all, a bourgeois affectation to the legions of angry young (and old) men bent on "social change." Manners, says Will, should not be seen as an end in themselves (a sign of decadence) but as a manifestation of the society's values. A gentleman, suggested Newman, is one who gives no offense, and Will would doubtless agree, for manners are the hallmark of a mature society. Manners enable us to engage in civilized discourse, to argue without ending up in a fight, to preserve the institutions essential to community life, for the laws are nothing but the codification of the society's ethics as reflected in their manners.

But if liberals do not like Will for stressing individual responsibility and duty instead of rights and social justice, many conservatives like him even less for what they perceive as his attacks on capitalism. "Capitalism," he writes, "undermines traditional social structures and values. It is a relentless engine of change, a revolutionary inflamer of appetites, enlarger of expectations, diminisher of patience." As Karl Marx observed in his *Manifesto*, capitalism was a revolutionary concept, wresting power and authority from the church and nobility and putting it into the hands of merchants and moneylenders, the producers of wealth.

Such constant change, a hallmark of the capitalist society, makes it all the more difficult to preserve traditional values and also to prevent the debasement of what is preserved. In the early days of capitalism, the results tended to be a great opening of human options, and unshackling of man's potential: work in the city might appeal to a young man more than the farm work that had hitherto been the occupation of his fathers for genera-

tions back. But there were other changes as well. Children went into sweatshops. Families moved, often frequently. The system had its critics: most likely there were those observers who decried the devaluation of the craftsman, taking his virtual disappearance from the division of labor to signify the death of Western man.

These changes have with time increased—geometrically—in the process gathering a momentum of their own, so that today the salient effects of capitalism have more to do with the *kinds* of options as opposed to mere *numbers* of options: they have become at the same time more refined and more gross. We live in an age when the tremendous advances in microsurgery are paralleled by the marketing of douches on television, the exploitation of preteen girls on behalf of designer jeans, and the phenomenal growth of pornography—of an increasingly perverse nature—to a four-billion-dollar-a-year industry. For pornography has also benefited by the free market. Whether one takes the supply-side notion that demand is only a result of the supply or the traditional idea that supply is a response to demand, the tawdry fact remains: pornography means dollars and involves large numbers of people.

Is Will, then, anticapitalist? Only if one holds that a person who warns that a knife can cut fingers as well as steaks can be said to be anti-knife. The market system is an efficient producer and distributor of goods, the best the world has ever known. For all its irregularities and inequalities, the Western free-market systems have virtually eliminated widespread famine and disease within their borders, increasing the standard of living at every social level. But the fact that the market makes no distinction between the production of condoms and the production of computers leads Will to look for something deeper, like virtue, considering man in a fuller perspective than just the “economic man” abstraction so dear to Marxists. And this, says Will, is why the conservative is important.

Aside from Will’s discourses on politics and the economy, a large chunk of *The Pursuit of Virtue and Other Tory Notions* is devoted to the more mundane but equally human aspects of Americana, from summer camping

trips to the birth of his daughter to his darling Chicago Cubs, those benighted preservers of day ballgames and natural grass. These essays on life’s littler things help flesh out the man behind the columnist, grounding the thinker in the here-and-now realities that prevent him from getting lost in pure abstractions.

Such discourses also serve to highlight man’s ironic nature, a nature irreducible to simple formulas, confounding poets, kings, and philosophers through the ages. It is a commentary on human nature that there exist men who, unmoved by the decline of the liberal arts, unconcerned about the political machinations of our country, and indifferent to shifts in the international balance of power, are nonetheless moved to tears by a ground ball up the middle.

Benjamin Disraeli, Will’s favorite politician, made the following comment: “I rather like bad wine,” he wrote, “one gets so bored with good wine.” The Chicago Cubs, with all their ineptitude, perfected to an unmatched consistency, are to Will what bad wine was to Disraeli: a real, necessary, and healthy diversion, a hint of humanness in a world intolerant of imperfection. Though not the most important things in our lives, they do have some importance, not only as a measuring stick to provide us with perspective, but also as a balance to our nature, which tends toward the excess.

What it all comes down to is that George Will is a pessimist in a time of utopians, distrusting liberals who promise paradise through politics or conservatives who offer the same through unfettered competition. Either way, the individual loses his dignity and worth, with the predictable result that his institutions start to decay. The answer, Will asserts, is to return to first principles, the values that enable a society to function as a civilization, which implies that appetites and passions of men must be checked. A society cannot impose this on a people; it must rather be the other way round: the social institutions and laws must be a reflection of the values of the citizenry. The challenge for the conservative is to meet the new without compromising what is best in the old.

Reviewed by WILLIAM MCGURN

## *The Jolliest Pessimist*

**Citizen of Rome: Reflections on the Life of a Roman Catholic**, by Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, *La Salle, Illinois: Sherwood Sugden and Company, 1980. 337 pp.*

IMAGINE an academic gathering, set at a typical American college campus a decade ago. The speaker mounts the podium and asks, "Why have we gathered together here?" And in reply to his own question, he has mentioned the assembly's contempt for the "vulgarity and banality of democratic liberalism." Under ordinary circumstances, such an occasion should have produced a massive crowd of under-graduate admirers, and a favorable notice in the *New York Review of Books*. But those words were not uttered under ordinary circumstances. The site was not an American college, but a convocation of scholars in Spain. And the speaker was not some luminary of the political Left, but a confirmed conservative, ultramontanist, and Carlist: Frederick D. Wilhelmsen. So, until the publication of this collection, the speaker's remarks went unnoticed.

The students who passed through our universities a decade ago were described by the older and presumptively wiser faculty members as a generation of admirable idealists, frustrated with the failings of their society. So their excesses were often excused, or even encouraged, on the grounds that they were seeking a more humane society. Any admission that the pandemonium on campus was a purely political matter would have caused gross embarrassment to the schools themselves, and so—with rare, honorable exceptions—no such admissions were made. Still, the evidence should have been clear to even the most permissive observer. If the students had simply been showing their frustration with the reigning social system, they would have lapped up all available critiques of that system. But in fact their admiration was confined to critiques from the Left. Marcuse was a campus superstar; Wilhelmsen was unknown.

If Wilhelmsen were a plodding writer, this obscurity would be understandable. But in fact he is a vigorous, witty stylist. And his

oratory is, if anything, more colorful than his prose; he is, as one wag put it, "the only living metaphysician who knows how to work a crowd." Throughout *Citizen of Rome*, the author maintains an extraordinary combination of humor, insight, and vim in his attacks on the reigning secular spirit. For example, he complains:

The secularists think they can eliminate human suffering, and for every cripple they send forth whole in body, they admit to their temples a man sick in mind. For every border raid they put down, they loose upon mankind a war more hideous than the last. They extend the franchise, and they cheapen the citizenry. They broaden the base of education, and they lessen the product. They suppress superstition, and raise up mobs of cynics.

The vigor of such prose is made all the more remarkable because it does, indeed, come from a metaphysician. Wilhelmsen's philosophical stance is built up from first principles, and his message to readers involves a whole organic attitude toward our earthly existence. Whatever one thinks of his views, one cannot accuse him of shirking difficult questions, or speaking merely to the prejudices of his audience. Unlike Marcuse and his ilk, Wilhelmsen delivers a marketable literary product without compromising his scholarly integrity.

Nevertheless, there is a simple explanation for the author's otherwise undeserved obscurity. If Wilhelmsen were a standard-brand reactionary, he might have enjoyed a certain minor notoriety. But his crime against the *Zeitgeist* is much more flagrant than that. He is a religious thinker—worse still, a Roman Catholic. And unlike the nominal Christian whose religion is in evidence only on Sunday mornings, Wilhelmsen bases his every thought on his faith. In a literary world dominated by anti-religious forces, and infected with the enduring anti-Catholic animus that has marked American intellectuals for years, such a philosophical stance is profoundly unwelcome.

In another of his books, Frederick Wilhelmsen has observed that a surge in interest in political theory generally signals trouble in

the body politic; when the government is operating satisfactorily, few people pay much attention to the issue. By the same logic, the recent spate of memoirs by Catholic authors is one indication of the crisis currently confronting the Roman Church. One cannot well imagine St. Catherine of Siena writing a book entitled *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood*. However, again unlike the myriad popular writers on the subject, Wilhelmsen does not blame Catholicism for whatever troubles he might have. On the contrary, he blames most of the world's ills on the failure to take Catholic doctrine seriously.

By vocation Frederick Wilhelmsen is a professor of philosophy, who has taught at several American Catholic colleges (most recently the University of Dallas), between his extended sojourns abroad. At times the reader feels that he is encountering a Spanish scholar rather than an American; Wilhelmsen studied at the University of Madrid, taught at the University of Navarre, and revelled in the Catholic atmosphere of Spain before Franco's death. By avocation, the author is a controversialist. The essays collected in *Citizen of Rome* unite vocation with avocation, allowing Wilhelmsen to pay scholarly obeisance to his mentor, Saint Thomas Aquinas; to comment on his travels in Iraq; to complain about the demise of the Latin Mass; and generally to express his dissatisfaction with contemporary liberalism. The volume that results is at times repetitive, at times disconnected, but rarely dull.

Among the various publishers to whom American conservatives are indebted, Sherwood Sugden is the unsung hero. Without his work, men such as Wilhelmsen, M. E. Bradford, and Christopher Derrick would be unavailable to the general reading public. Unfortunately, this edition is marred by several editorial lapses: abundant typographical errors, forbidding graphic design, unexplained asterisks; indeed the selection of essays within the volume betrays no organizing intention. Only gradually does the reader realize that this is a sort of autobiographical *festschrift*. Perhaps Wilhelmsen will never enjoy the same notoriety as some other social critics, but at least one discerning publisher has thought enough of his scattered thoughts to put them together for posterity.

For that service Sherwood Sugden again deserves thanks. Because sooner or later, when the current epidemic of secularism passes, students and scholars will be fascinated by the lonely voices of Christianity that speak out in this era. When the scholarly world rediscovers the ancient God-centered wisdom it has forsaken—as inevitably, eventually, it will—only a few of the currently popular authors will retain their appeal. “Silence without God is impossible,” Wilhelmsen explains; “that is why atheists talk so much.” His own writings, standing as they do in a direct line from the ancient scholarly traditions, form a tremendous contrast with all that empty secular verbiage.

Wilhelmsen as a thinker is always conscious of his standing in the tradition of Christian scholarship: his participation with hundreds of other scholars over the generations. As a consequence, he is not distracted—indeed, not even particularly interested—by the epiphenomena of our own century; his philosophy answers to a much broader historical and cultural standard. When he does address contemporary political questions, Wilhelmsen therefore stresses the belief that he is a citizen of another world, temporarily homesteading in this culture but not a permanent resident. On the issue of abortion, then, he finds it easy to say that an orthodox Christian should do everything in his power to stop the practice—*whether or not* his actions are legal by the existing political standards. Democratically enacted laws change; God's laws do not. And while Wilhelmsen might live in Texas as a matter of convenience, he resides in the Church as a matter of conscience.

Anyone who chooses this philosophical stance, and lives in accordance with it, encounters a painful dilemma. If he ignores the fact that his neighbors do not share his views, he will quickly isolate himself from real contact with his society. On the other hand, if he operates normally within that society, he must recognize how profoundly he differs from the prevailing social attitudes. He cannot expect his contemporaries to live as he does, and yet—unless he is prepared for ostracism—he cannot reprove them constantly for their failures to meet his goals. “A kind of distance



and ultimate alienation is the price paid for loving profoundly an orthodoxy and for loving friends who do not share it. This pain in things human is not felt by the fanatic."

Pain and alienation have taken their toll on Wilhelmsen. His speeches are bold, often even martial, but beneath the surface one can discern the speaker's realization that too few followers are listening. His essays are flavored with Christian hope, but that hope, in this case, is more nearly a theological virtue than a practical weapon. He will struggle (because the struggle is all that really matters) to inform and persuade his contemporaries. He will keep the flame of faith alive. But the reader cannot miss, in the author's tone, the implication that he knows his struggle naught availeth.

For the most part, Wilhelmsen's pessimism stems from his unusual interpretation of Christian philosophy; his goals are far more quixotic than those of other orthodox Christian thinkers. He is not only a Catholic but a confessed ultramontanist, not only a monarchist but an avowed Carlist. Moreover, he sees very limited hope in political action that does not re-establish the Catholic Empire. A Catholic living under a secular government, he claims, is like a fish out of water. In the days of the Holy Roman Empire, an individual citizen could organize his life around a schedule of feast days and fasts, worship and service, in which his social duties corresponded with his spiritual needs. But today the pious Catholic is cut adrift, living in his splendid spiritual isolation, an alien in his own culture. How can he make any sense of such a social existence?

On one level of analysis, Wilhelmsen is right to emphasize the antipathy between Christian and secular attitudes. Our own generation has seen a remarkable outbreak of open hostility between religious and irreligious forces in political life. Wilhelmsen was not alone in predicting the political clash that gave rise to the Moral Majority, but he shares at least part of the credit—both for his prediction and for his role in helping to galvanize Christians into action. The contrast between the Christian civilization that the West has inherited and the secular monopoly that the literati have tried to foist upon it is both

marked and dangerous. To recognize the danger is to appreciate the need for Christian thinkers to restore the philosophical underpinnings that shore up the old structure.

On another level of analysis, however, Wilhelmsen seems perilously close to the assumption that a different political system would make Christianity comfortable in this world. True, pious Christians are under siege by today's secularism. But the New Testament warns that they shall always be at odds with their society. What is their mission, then? The Catholic Church has always emphasized the inherent Incarnational dignity of life on this earth, and the need to sanctify ordinary life through prayer. In *Laborem Exercens*, Pope John Paul II has reemphasized this mandate, calling on his followers to transform their everyday work into something more than itself—to baptize the mundane, consecrating it to a higher spiritual purpose. Naturally, Wilhelmsen recognizes this solution. He acknowledges the school of thought that would "infiltrate the going order and Christianize it from inside itself, altogether without altering existing institutions or structures." But it is not enough for him. It is, he says, a mere tactic rather than a grand strategy:

If, however, this tactic is raised to the level of theory then it blends into Western political philosophy's general absent-mindedness about technology. Technologies are, to be sure, instruments that can be used well or poorly. . . .

But technologies, more deeply, change men and change them all the more significantly to the degree to which they do not know that they are being changed.

At this crucial point in this argument, alas, Wilhelmsen becomes confusing. To what extent is a technology identical with a culture, or vice versa? If man's nature is fixed by his Creator, how can it be changed by a technology? Most important of all, how can a technology transform the men who created that technology? These questions are never satisfactorily resolved. Insofar as any answer to these questions is suggested in *Citizen of Rome*, it becomes clear that Wilhelmsen is devoted to the ideas of Marshall McLuhan,

and sees them as important insights into the nature of today's culture and/or technology. Beyond that, it is difficult to make headway into some of Wilhelmsen's thoughts, such as his belief that "the post-modern world will be, is even now becoming, increasingly iconic. This new age will be quickened by the leaven of the Church, and the Pope will emerge as Icon of all icons, omnipresent in a world in which space and time have been so thoroughly altered that older concepts of both will have been rendered obsolete."

When he returns to less esoteric subjects, however, Wilhelmsen can speak in the voice of the best homespun common sense. No doubt this capacity is derived from his belief that "creation has always been unique, local, and therefore domestic." Although he is a philosopher by profession, he sees the nobility of life in many other quarters: in the piety of the Habsburg empire, in the bold anti-modernism of Franco's Spain, or in the quiet dignity of household life in the antebellum American South. True to his faith, Wilhelmsen sees the mark of the Creator in every domestic scene and rejoices with those who understand the fullness of created life.

Ironically, this recognition of God in everyday life can conflict with the need for a critical philosopher's analysis. In what is arguably the finest essay of the volume, Wilhelmsen points out that all human arts—practical, theoretical, or aesthetic—imply an effort to rework reality, whereas the truer pious reaction to creation might be a straightforward, unreflective celebration of its wonders. Like Thomas Aquinas, Wilhelmsen perceives the ultimate philosophical importance in the undeserved, unexplained gift of existence itself. The philosopher can inspect that gift from various angles, like a child inspecting a new toy. But the greater wisdom comes when he learns, like the child, to rejoice in it.

Wilhelmsen writes often, and lovingly, of wine. He claims, with at least a bit of seriousness, that "I would measure every polity by the excellence of the wine it grew and by the quantity of the wine it drank, for most assuredly the consumption of much wine is among the few infallible signs of liberty." And if these sentiments are exaggerated, then at least that distortion is consistent with the

author's philosophical goals. For all his pessimism about our civilization, and for all his contempt for its secular mediocrity, Wilhelmsen does not bow to the fashion for existential gloom. From his standpoint, to take one's fate too lightly would be a mistake; but to take it too seriously would be a heresy.

Reviewed by PHILIP F. LAWLER

### *"The Supernatural Destiny of Man"*

**Shakespeare as a Political Thinker**, edited  
by John Alvis and Thomas G. West,  
*Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1981.*  
306 pp. \$19.95.

FOR SOME TIME political philosophy has, even to save its own integrity, needed to rediscover the classical tradition as a basis for understanding the place of politics within the human enterprise. Largely through the work of Leo Strauss, Hannah Arendt, Jacques Maritain, and Eric Voegelin, this has been accomplished, at least for those with eyes to see. But in recovering the classics—Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, Xenophon, Cicero—there has been an embarrassed, unsettling silence about the place of revelation, of the Old and New Testaments especially, and also of Islam. Political philosophy in the modern era has believed it could be sufficient unto itself so that it was not even open to a hint of any intelligence not reduced to exclusively rationalist confines. The result was, since religion continued to be and even in many ways increased being a major factor in human affairs, in the lives of most men, in most places, and in most eras, an incapacity of political philosophy and those formally trained in it to account for the way men really act and why. Political theorists tried to explain human action in categories drawn exclusively from an understanding of man as abstracted from transcendent realities and considerations. This ironically resulted in a view of religion that described its

motivations and institutions as "political" and thereby prevented any adequate comprehension of why men really acted in major areas of their lives.

The narrowness of such modern political philosophy forced the Straussians and the Voegelinians, as the major proponents of the revival of the classics, to treat revelation with extreme care, if not actually in secret writing. No one wanted to "scandalize," as it were, the academic moderns by appearing to take revelation too seriously, even when it was clear that faith must be taken into account if political philosophy itself were to understand even itself and its own intrinsic limits. Athens, Jerusalem, Rome—even Mecca, as Strauss recognized—loomed in the background of a discipline that prided itself on imitating modern natural science. The endeavor of being like unto science, however, did not reckon, as Stanley Jaki has shown, with the relation of this same science to the doctrines of creation and finite essence, doctrines, theological or philosophical, refined within the tradition of revelation. Modern political philosophy, consequently, has not known how to broach revelation as an intrinsic element to its own integrity, to its own understanding of itself within Western intellectual experience. The "modern project," as Strauss called it, was simply to rid ourselves of revelation, to lower our sights, in order to erect a society according to norms which man could make "for himself," on the grounds that only what man could know of his own power was worthy to exist in the first place. The only trouble was that the elevated goals of the Christian tradition did not cease to lure the modern political thinker even when the faith that originated and sustained them disappeared. The fruitless effort to find a "natural" substitute for supernatural motivations is, in one sense, what the "left" is about in modern political experience, both its rationale and its terrible danger.

The merit of *Shakespeare as a Political Thinker*, and it is an inestimable merit, is to have discovered, almost from outside of political theory itself—though the relation of art to politics is, as Charles N. R. McCoy reminded us, a basic one—a way to treat legitimately the question of the relation of

classical, of medieval, and of modern thought without ignoring or distorting the Judaeo-Christian revelational factor, which itself, as much as the classics, made Western civilization unique and gave truth a further universal, not merely parochial or cultural, claim. This remarkable book lies squarely within the tradition of Leo Strauss in particular. That is to say, it lies within the only academic tradition that is intellectually willing and, more importantly, able to ask what difference Christianity makes to the classics and to modern theory. The Thomist tradition used to be a major factor here, as Strauss recognized, but with the exception of the papacy and a few advanced places like the University of Dallas, from where many of these essays originated, this tradition has largely been abandoned or rejected by believers themselves, who, under the aegis of liberation theology, or ecology, or liberalism, have largely embraced the "modern project" itself, as if the Enlightenment were what religion is now about. This book also represents one of the few remaining avenues by which revelation can begin to be understood even by the intellectual representatives of religion, who no longer understand what they are about in the world of politics.

These fifteen essays on Shakespeare, and on how political life appears in his tragedies, comedies, histories, and poems, are the most perceptive and brilliant efforts in recent decades to locate within the Western tradition a way to reintroduce the factor of revelation as an element with which to understand politics, its limits, what lies beneath (the family) and beyond it. The only comparable endeavor, I think, was the neo-Thomist movement of a half a century ago, a movement itself intrinsic to the understanding of the significance of this penetrating book. Shakespeare, however, has the advantage of having lain fallow for so many years, outside the usual ken of political thinkers, so that the abundance of what can grow out of his wisdom is both fresh and almost unlimited. We are not accustomed to reflect upon art as itself a way to comprehend politics, even though we recall that an Aristotle wrote the *Poetics* and Plato never ceased to worry about Homer.

Harry Jaffa's and Michael Platt's essays on

this relationship are simply remarkable. These essays were in part written for an Intercollegiate Studies Institute Conference at the University of Dallas, in part written for the book itself. They treat the major political works of Shakespeare—his tyrants, best kings, common men, bishops, matrons, and villains. The realization that Shakespeare is as profound as Cicero or Aristotle in political things should come as a surprise to no one. Yet, it is a surprise, as political thinkers have left Shakespeare largely to the literary scholars, just as they have left the Bible largely to the theologians, that is to say, in both cases, to people themselves largely ignorant of political things. Political science, the highest of the practical sciences as Aristotle called it in *The Ethics*, has in the modern era acted as if its area of reality were meant to narrow itself so that it focused only on the “political,” whereas it was meant, by its own reality, to expand itself so that it could see and account for all there was, even something that came from no known political source. Politics had to be humble enough to leave metaphysics and theology to their practitioners, provided these latter themselves, as Aquinas knew, understood, as politicians do, how most men really are. This is also why there is no Christian political theory without Augustine.

“In the plays set before the advent of Christianity,” John Alvis writes in the first essay,

human lives take shape from individual propensities responding to the laws of cities. In the plays set within Christian times, Shakespeare’s characters consult not only their native inclinations and laws of their state, but, concurrently, certain transcendent prescriptions decreed by their Scriptural God. To follow Shakespeare’s reflections upon human beings and citizens, one must reflect upon the political consequences of Christian belief. The political subject necessarily embraces the religious subject.

This is suprisingly like the metaphysical reflections of a Karol Wojtyla discussing the nature of politics and faith. The shadow of Machiavelli, moreover, is not ever far from the Christian characters in Shakespeare. That is to say, we also find in the great English bard modern

political theory precisely in its relation to the classics and to revelation.

In the beginning of *The City and Man* Strauss remarks that we ought to study the classics in order to grasp what man can learn by his own powers so that we could learn about the limits of the queen of the social sciences. John Alvis likewise concludes: “To know what extends beyond politics, it helps to know the full scope of the political realm. Shakespeare’s poetry assists us in understanding what surpasses politics by allowing us to grasp how far politics extends in the determination of human lives.” That politics ought to be a consummation of human lives, of the mortal while he is mortal, as Hannah Arendt would say, is no more than Aristotle’s dictum that we are by nature political beings. We do what we are. But that politics ought to consume *all* of human life is totalitarianism, in whatever form it might appear. It is probably no accident that no Shakespearean play depicts the life of a modern totalitarian state since the latter is produced precisely by a process that denies the classic and Judaeo-Christian revelational elements in man, the religious and political subject. Yet, Shakespeare knew tyranny and corruption, ambition and vanity at a depth that few if any have ever equalled. Jaffa rightly suggests that this Shakespearean art enables us to avoid such a politics of destruction, even though we may still choose in actual deeds not to avoid it.

The central theme of these essays seems to be, in essence, what is and what is not political. Once knowing this, the human mind, as Aristotle already implied, seeks to spend its life in wondering about the narrow light of the divine shining into its world. In this context, no doubt, Jaffa’s essay and that of Professor Allen Bloom are of special interest. Jaffa is surely correct in calling attention to the political implications of chastity, of what it means for love and for the city to found precisely a family. Nothing is quite so important for politics as the family, which itself is not political. This is why those theories that deny it, beginning with Plato, can be so dangerous. Bloom remarks, in his essay on *Richard II*, that “the exquisitely refined souls do not belong to the best political men.” This makes us wonder even with greater interest

about Shakespeare's treatment of Sir Thomas More. Bloom continues:

There are two sins mentioned in *Richard II*: the sin of Adam and the sin of Cain. They seem to be identical, or at least one leads to the other. Knowledge of practical things brings with it awareness that in order for the sacred to become sacred, terrible deeds must be done. Because God does not evidently rule, the founder of justice cannot himself be just.

We have here, I suppose, what Frederick D. Wilhelmsen worried about in his *Christianity and Political Philosophy*, the relation of Jewish to Christian intelligence, both revelational, both related to the classics, to modernity, and to each other.

For the Christian intelligence, as I have suggested elsewhere ("The Christian Guardians," *Downside Review*, January, 1979), the reality of a religious "elite" and of a drive to God and higher excellence is not designed to deny the normalcy of politics nor to turn against the usual expectations of common men. This is why monasteries are neither homes nor states. It is only when the monastic tradition becomes secularized in movements, parties, think-tanks, and specifically anti-family presuppositions that it can destroy politics. Caesar really is legitimate in the Christian tradition. He is just not everything, nor the highest. Thus Augustine's notion, that the City of God—alluded to by Strauss at the beginning of *The City and Man*—is not the proper object of worldly politics, prevents us, in our drive for the best, from using politics as its vehicle for its advancement and achievement. The experience of fallen men is included in the political experience, just as is Aristotle's experience of a real worldly human perfection. The current infatuations of Christian monks with politics rather than with transcendence is, as Jewish thinkers seem instinctively to sense, extremely dangerous, because they jeopardize both politics and transcendence. Jaffa's reminder of the family, of the unworldliness of love,—Hannah Arendt's point,—of the place of family autonomy, needs to be set also in the context of the City of God. Otherwise secular monks will end up destroying both family and state.

Louise Cowan puts her finger on this issue:

No man is able to perform his task perfectly; in the Biblical tradition within which Shakespeare's imagination works, all earthly things are flawed and yet all are carriers of something flawless. Shakespeare sees the human enterprise as a series of catastrophes, brought about by the clash of human wills; yet within this turbulent and painful chronicle he testifies to the gradual mysterious growth of the kingdom.

Shakespeare shows us that human communities and political regimes exist in order to further what Allen Tate has called the "one lost truth that must be perpetually recovered—the supernatural destiny of man." It is in the constant rediscovery of shared love—between all sorts and conditions of men—that the true meaning of human history lies concealed.

The recovery of "the supernatural destiny of man," which elites and mystics really seek to understand and to achieve, is alone what prevents these same elites, these choiceful elites, from turning on politics and destroying it by imposing truly transcendent goals among its demands. What is new about our era, as opposed to the Christianity of an Augustine, of an Aquinas, or of a Shakespeare, is that now we actually see Christians themselves betraying their own traditions of political limitations. This, too, is why the testimony of both Jews and Christians actually living under Marxist states goes unheeded in the West.

*Shakespeare as a Political Thinker* not only allows us to reintroduce the transcendent into politics, both in their proper place, but it also enables political theory to instruct theology on how to recover its own reality. "But in our age," Strauss wrote, "it is much less urgent to show that political philosophy is the indispensable handmaid of theology than to show that political philosophy is the rightful queen of the social sciences, the sciences of man and human affairs." Some twenty years after these remarkable lines were written. I think, this book on Shakespeare suggests, through the supreme dramatic artist of our tradition, that both theology and social sciences are in desperate need of their own handmaid. This handmaid is none other than political



philosophy now lying within the ken of the religious "subject" who knows that politics produces of itself no everlasting kingdom, even when proposed by "elites," by "theologizers," clerical or lay. While we can agree with Strauss that "it is not sufficient for everyone to obey and to listen to the Divine message of the City of Righteousness," reflection on the political thinking in Shakespeare will also teach us that it is not sufficient to neglect this same Divine message.

Reviewed by JAMES V. SCHALL, S.J.

## Contemporary Realism

**Realism**, by David J. Levy, *Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1981. 183 pp. \$17.50.*

THE WRITINGS of David Levy should be familiar to the readers of *Modern Age*. The cosmology which he calls "realism" is one that he has expounded several times in these pages, and in preparing his book, he draws freely upon his contributions to this journal. Such an overlap is undoubtedly justified by the high quality of his work. Despite his youth, Levy is one of the most learned and informative defenders of a particular school of conservative thought, whose principles should be known, among others, to readers of Thomas Molnar. The stated genealogy of the world-view in question is certainly impressive. Its exponents consider it broadly coterminous with the main course of Western thinking up until the nominalist break with the Thomistic synthesis of Christian faith and Aristotelian ontology.

Despite the homage paid to modern thinkers such as Eric Voegelin, Edmund Husserl, and Etienne Gilson, the neo-realists look back to the medieval schoolmen for authentic philosophy. It was they who, by teaching a doctrine of essence, made it possible to view man and nature as permanent bearers of in-

trinsic meaning, independent of the shifting judgments of individual minds. The contemporary realists invoke their medieval predecessors in the twentieth-century struggle against moral relativism, historical determinism, and the cult of the self. They fashion their intellectual axes with the critical thinking of those moderns who, like themselves, have found the dominant culture out of joint. Several generations of European neo-Thomists, from Jacques Maritain to Gilson to Molnar, embattled opponents of German idealism from Charles Maurras to Eric Voegelin, and the attack of phenomenologists such as Edmund Husserl and Alfred Schutz upon subjectivist philosophy, have all laid the basis for the neo-realism which Levy defends.

What are those "aspects of realism" now being stressed? Levy uses such terms as "sensitivity" and "openness" to experience, and he urges the need to accept the objective existence of the world and our connection with it independently of limited individual consciousness. In the early sections of his book he points to a continuing realist tradition from Plato and Aristotle through medieval Christian philosophy. It is primarily this tradition that he compares favorably with the prevalent subjectivity of modern thought. In the later sections, however, it is clearly Eric Voegelin whom Levy celebrates as the Platonic healer. Voegelin is cited as the tireless critic of all "isms" and ideologies who exhorts us to "remain open" to mystical, intuitive, and intellectual experiences. Although all the *iatrikē*, or healing medicine, prescribed may serve us well, surely Levy knows that he is picking his herbs from different jars. He starts off as a Thomist who also admires Husserl and Voegelin; and after eloquently assailing German idealism and Marxism, both real and Marcusean, he praises the "pagan humanism" of Albert Camus. Toward the end he also has kind words for Martin Heidegger, who proposes greater openness to the structure of being.

Levy's own receptiveness to a variety of ideas, however, may not be a sign of inconsistency. The various chapters of his book were composed at different times, but are held together by certain overarching con-

cerns. He preaches realism not only for its affirmation of being—or, in the Thomistic lexicon, “being informed by essence.” Above all he is looking for a critical vantage point for attacking modern tendencies of thought which I, as a sympathetic reader, deplore at least as much as he does. He properly assumes that the morally dessicated, power-crazed ideologues of our age have not arisen *ex nihilo*, that they bestride our culture as others’ intellectual heirs. Levy tries to explain our eroded sense of cultural continuity by calling attention to the German idealists, particularly Kant and Hegel. Despite my disagreement with aspects of his argument, I was impressed, particularly in Chapter Six, by his confidence and learning in treating such intricate topics as Kant’s analysis of perception and Adorno’s and Marcuse’s revolutionary dialectic. The critical observation offered about the subjectivist, and ultimately nihilistic, implications of Kant’s theory of consciousness is something I first encountered while reading French neo-Thomists as an undergraduate. Levy puts the very best face on a charge that I had once dismissed as the “sour grapes” response of French nationalists confronted by the fruits of Teutonic genius.

On the other hand, the presentation fails to convince me. When Levy discovers Kant’s subjectivist epistemology pervading the quasi-Marxist utopianism of the Frankfurt School for Social Research, I had to wonder about the overall plausibility of his brief. From a certain perspective, which is obviously not Levy’s, it is possible to perceive conceptual connections among thinkers the dominant tendencies of whose ideas are markedly different. For example, Plato, in the Eleatic dialogues, presents not only Parmenides’s theory of the unchanging oneness of being, but in stressing the contradictoriness of our shifting definitions of perception, helped to inspire Hegel’s *Logic*. One may even find in the arguments of the Sophist, Protagoras, as presented in the *Theatetus*, definite hints of modern secular humanism. Of course, I am not proposing that Plato, or Socrates, was a proto-Hegelian or Deweyite. The point is only that one must distinguish between genuine precursors and disciples, on the one hand, and overlapping ideas, on the other.

Levy repeatedly associates Kant and other German idealists with modern radical ideology by virtue of their subjectivist view of reality. The first part of the accusation is particularly problematic with regard to Kant, since his transcendental philosophy seeks to avoid (and does so successfully, in my opinion) having perception identified with arbitrary individual choice. Kant examined the formal structure of consciousness in order to locate the “universal conditions” for the possibility of all sensory experience. He made this attempt not because of what Levy considers the idealist “suspicion of the world.” On the contrary, he set out to demonstrate the universality of perception in the face of grave philosophical and scientific challenges. His early work as a mathematician had convinced him that time and space were not concepts abstracted from the objective world, as Descartes and Leibniz had once taught. They were instead, as Kant already states in his Latin Inaugural Dissertation of 1770, the “*a priori* forms to which all sensible intuitions were subject.” Kant later expanded this perceptual apparatus to include causality, which David Hume had shown involved a relationship that defied empirical demonstration. And he added still other cognitive forms to explain how data that impinged on our senses became part of a unified and shared perceptual experience. Such explanatory activity was intended neither to “overthrow the metaphysics of St. Thomas and his school,” a task which no longer interested most Western thinkers of the late eighteenth century, nor to fuel an attack on the concept of objectivity. What Kant intended, according to his modern commentator, Ernst Cassirer, was to show order and regularity in human perception. That Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and other modern utopianists have expressed their debts to Kant does not provide conclusive evidence of his shaping influence upon them. Such acknowledgments may simply indicate how selectively the Frankfurt School has read Kant—and also Hegel and Marx.

At the end of Chapter Six, Levy returns to an ancient opponent, which allegedly anticipated the idealist attack on objective reality. This enemy is the Protestant Reformation, and Levy believes: “We can trace a line from

Luther to the Frankfurt School which passes through Kant, Hegel, Marx, and a host of less influential thinkers." The author then adds: "In following the nominalistic currents of his time and rejecting the claims of natural theology and metaphysics, he prefigured in a theological scheme Kant's distinction between the impure world of phenomena and the epistemologically untouched and cognitively untouchable noumenal world of things-in-themselves. Both corrosive nominalism, which tried to destroy the medieval doctrine of essences, and the Reformation, which made sharp distinctions between the realm of grace and a fallen world, allegedly prepared the way, first, for German idealism and, later, for radicalism. Modern revolutionary ideologies, which view the objective world "with suspicion" and which demand individual protest against it, are but the latest "offshoot" of this process of intellectual corruption. The charge being levelled is not without its irony. Feuerbach, Marx, and the Communist literary critic, Georg Lukacs, have all attacked Kant and, less directly, Luther as teachers of dualism. Their dualism left the oppressed supposedly more disadvantaged by making them all the more resigned to an exploitative society.

That conspicuous dualism in Luther between spirit and flesh (based on Saint Paul's distinction between *pneuma* and *sarks*) seems indeed to have had conservative implications. The father of the Protestant Reformation urged submission to established authority, and he viewed the state as an instrument to curb human evil in a sinful world. His appeal to freedom was not a call to reform society in the individual's image, but focused on "inner freedom," which required the reborn Christian to bear witness to his faith. And yet, was Luther, or Calvin, any more dualistic theologically or ethically than those medieval churchmen and philosophers who, like Aquinas, considered the soul superior to the body? It was not the medieval church but Levy's archetypal dualist Luther who urged clergymen to abandon celibacy and who taught the spiritual equality between secular and ecclesiastical callings.

One might then wonder which side in the religious controversy of the sixteenth century

was more dualistic. Both sides assumed the presence of appetitive and spiritually sensitive natures in man and reflected, each in its own way, the dualistic anthropology characteristic of both Greek philosophy and Judaeo-Christian religiosity. About sixty years ago, the New Humanists, Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More, confronted by naturalist and neo-romantic thinking, proclaimed dualism as essential for a renewal of cultural tradition. Seeking to combine Platonic philosophy and various religious insights, they taught a philosophy of moral and artistic restraint. Above all, they asserted the need for an "inner check" to be placed upon human appetites and passions. Like Levy, the New Humanists scolded the German idealists, but, unlike him, they advocated dualism as an antidote to subjectivity.

Despite other reservations about Levy's thesis, I find myself agreeing when he chides modern radicals for an inveterate "suspicion of the world." Their view of themselves as being in continuous confrontation with all givens, save for perhaps a few Third World socialist states, does reflect an elemental dualism in their relationship to objective reality. Such dualists grieve over the distance between their social surroundings and their inner world, and their grief, as we know, eventually turns into outrage. That the West is currently inundated by such types seems self-evident, and yet those who seek an explanation might do better to turn to Voegelin than to Levy.

A study of gnostic and related mythologies should reveal much about the culture of radicalism, even though Marcuse and Sartre cannot be simply seen as fourth-century Christian heretics. The example of gnosticism is instructive because of its redemptive legend and its negative attitude toward the world that it encouraged. The gnostics, like Marcuse, but unlike Luther, Kant, and Hegel, despised the world as they found it. By the same token, they looked forward to a reconstructed reality that would be brought into line with their inner consciousness. Containing radical expressions of the transformational myth, both ancient gnosticism and the modern Left stand at the beginning and end of the Christian epoch. One appealed to the members of a disinte-

grating Hellenistic culture and the other now finds converts in a confused West.

According to Spengler, the members of old civilizations return to the "proto-mysticism of the womb." Whether or not we qualify as such a civilization (and certainly Spengler believed that we do), it may be more useful, in examining contemporary radical thought, to study compelling mythic visions—e.g., the recurrent dream of a unisexual, homogeneous humanity—than to re-grind, as Levy sometimes does, those axes bequeathed by French neo-Thomism. While it may be granted that ideas have consequences, the ideas and thinkers associated in his book with cultural disasters seem, for the most part, to be blameless of the charges made. The real problem today may be less what is seen as the last phase in an ominous intellectual development than the dangerous fantasy that has accompanied the breakdown of traditional religious belief.

Despite all my differences with the author, however, I rejoice at the appearance of his book. His is an ambitious, even brilliant, attempt to do intellectual history of a kind that modern conservatives sorely need. For too long we have maintained the appearance of unity in the face of disagreements that should be honestly aired. Among European conservatives there are now lines of demarcation evident between two schools, each one claiming medieval roots, the realists and the nominalists. The neo-nominalists, unlike the neo-realists, reject the view that the world must be seen in terms of essences or of universals. They stress instead the concrete and situational aspects of things while decrying the Left, and less directly the neo-realists, for an abstract, non-historical understanding of man. The controversies between these schools, which have ranged widely over epistemological, moral, and political questions, betoken a renewed vitality on the European Right. It is in the context of these controversies that one must finally place Levy's book. He is making an historical case for the value of realism as the basis of a modern conservative outlook. Needless to say, one may count on spirited responses to his work from other European conservatives.

Reviewed by PAUL GOTTFRIED

## Definitive Days

**Faces in My Time**, by Anthony Powell, *New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981.* 230 pp. \$14.95.

"'TIS BUT EARLY DAYS," says Achilles in *Troilus and Cressida*, when a trumpet's challenge does not get answered. In *Messengers of Day*, Anthony Powell's second book of memoirs, we had learnt in the same relaxed tones of the author's own "early days" as a writer, no call to the blood having got him started. Powell had more or less drifted into a publisher's job, then a novelist's—the latter because he'd become an avid reader. The jacket photo of *Messengers of Day* shows the author reading, and he calls the year he began writing, 1928, an "*annus mirabilis* of books that made an impact."

Now with his new volume, *Faces in My Time*, Powell's readers may want to record an *annus mirabilis* of their own, for here he opens up at last to offer some unmatched insights into the life of writing. There's something of a paradox involved, because the usual years of a writer's prime were inert ones in Powell's case. From his 35th till his 45th year he left his creative vocation aside. World War II was mainly responsible, and the war occupies the chronological middle of this memoir. It spans eighteen years all told, from the meeting of his wife-to-be, Lady Violet Packenham (1934), to the death of his friend Constant Lambert in 1951—the year *A Dance to the Music of Time* commenced.

The eighteen years comprise the definitive ones of his life. So it was natural enough for Powell to end *Faces in My Time* at a point where massive work gets undertaken—work to result in, arguably, the best novel of this half-century. Twelve volumes—twenty-five years' work—would go into completing *The Music of Time*: the longest novel in English. The memoir, on the other hand, tells a lot about non-writing, the "whole business of a novelist's incubatory periods."

What a man can absorb while coasting, or even during a series of false starts—this is the subject of the book's early going. While recurrent periods of being blocked are lived through, they don't produce restiveness, prob-

ably because their causes differ. Before the war, the main false step Powell took was toward the world of script-writing, and that led him to Hollywood. It turned out to be a pure dead end. But the block to his writing thrown up by the war was of a different order. In 1939, three years back from California, Powell had managed to produce *What's Become of Waring*, his most contrived novel, as he once admitted. A soldier-writer in that book joins the camel corps (suppressing his writer's bent). The move may have its comic side, but in one sense shows literary priorities being obliterated by Powell himself. He seems to have wanted to get that book written so as to draw a halt again. The impending war was producing a different man to face it. There was little question of putting a talent into cold storage; it was more like not having valued talent much in the first place. This is hardly an easy concept to state: yet one does perceive, during those reconstructed early war years, how an inordinately gifted writer like himself simply had no appetite to cherish the gift.

Two years after he joined the army, an opportunity came his way (not like the Hollywood one) from the mildly beckoning direction of Military Intelligence. Powell had started out in regimental soldiering. An essay he wrote while on a course, on "The Slav Character," brought on an unanticipated change. "Well and brightly written," the instructor had noted: Captain Powell's writing passed muster: Intelligence would take him on. Earlier, Lieutenant Powell had been subdued by the news that *Waring*, expected to move "like hot cakes," had stopped selling after 999 copies. That edition "resembl[ed] hot cakes only later, when the remaining stock was burnt to cinders in the blitz." It's interesting to put this shoulder-shrug alongside the words of praise Powell remembered receiving for the Slav essay. The life of a writer is always inchoate—the crucial piece of writing here not the well-made novel but just a classroom assignment, well discharged.

*Faces in My Time* had commenced with the same kind of candor, about unsureness while writing, suddenly to draw up with "All this professional talk is becoming tedious." But by then Powell had maintained that the

undertaking of any novel had to have all the misgivings of the first one: "the same concentration, sense of surprise at what is taking shape, constant apprehension that something has gone wrong, above all banishment of anything in the least like self-satisfaction." There is not much an artist can do, in short, about ordering up a novel. That is why a memoir like this doesn't come close to repining about the "stoppage" of inspiration. But if the war understandably required different harness, what then of the end of the war? In the midst of general relief, with the Powell family safe (Violet and the baby had lived along the V-1 flightpath), there came the prospect of a vacation in Devonshire. Powell writes calmly now of that letdown that comes when things should be looking up:

Sudden liberation from a cluster of responsibilities brought its own sort of fatigue. Out for a walk, I would suddenly feel scarcely able to reach the summit of a hill, though the anaesthetic Devonshire air may have had something to do with that. On waking in the morning the prospect of death seemed curiously inviting.

How measured all this is. The writer who could assert, without qualms, how fatal self-satisfaction is to art, could be trusted to see the corollary too, now he'd reached the other side of war service: "Even if the war had left a kind of jet-lag there could be no doubt one had been on the whole shaken up advantageously as a writer. . . . I never again suffered quite the same succession of bad days on end. . . ."

Still Powell remained stalled in the late 'forties, as he'd been around the Hollywood time of the mid-'thirties. If most of his comments on writing come from these flanking sections of the memoir, what they flank is the war itself, from which much inspiration would later flow. Here he is generous in confiding to what degree his *Music of Time* war novel, *The Military Philosophers*, owed its originals to figures met when he was a liaison officer. His "section" in the War Office dealt with the smaller Allied powers based in England. He witnessed—though spared from being "compelled personally" to take part in—British transfer of support from Mihailovich to Tito



in Yugoslavia (with Mihailovich “judiciously murdered” by his countrymen in the aftermath). Naturally the tone is serious, round-the-clock effort adumbrated, logistics problems alone enough to wear anyone’s mind out. But the picture is relieved by the portraits of some very funny men. Maybe the funniest is the section chief Carlisle, who becomes hilarious for supposing that he is the model for the great character Finn in *The Military Philosophers*. Such a histrionic man, Powell explains, couldn’t possibly have been drawn on without usurping the whole novel. So Powell turned to a backseat figure, a Major Ker (who had won a Victoria Cross in the first war). All Ker’s self-effacing characteristics go into the making of Finn, a fantastically aboveboard man who always plays down his old VC exploits. Everything about Ker was different from Carlisle; nevertheless, on the publication of the book, the now octogenarian Carlisle asked Powell to a luncheon party, where he disclosed that he saw himself as the model for Colonel Finn—though admonishing the author as they parted, “You know, Tony, you *oughtn’t* to have given me a VC.”

A man of lightning intelligence, who’d never get something so wrong as that, was the section’s assistant Alick Dru, with whom Powell made his deepest wartime friendship. Of Dru, model for David Pennistone in *The Military Philosophers*, more in a moment.

Because of the luck of circumstance, Powell was able to have a part in something enormously constructive in the war. It amounted to reminding a Belgian liaison officer of an acquaintance he’d made with one of Churchill’s aides, a man named Major Morton. Readers of *The Military Philosophers* will recall Nick Jenkins doing the same idea-planting, when some 30,000 members of the Belgian resistance ran the danger of getting in a shooting war with their own liberators (Montgomery’s forces). The way out was to evacuate them (they were restive young men); the problem, there was no time; the solution: overleap chain-of-command, get to Churchill via his private aide. Powell like Jenkins plants the idea on the Belgian military attaché—the scheme works, the disgruntled Belgians brought to England safely. Here is no question of taking an overdue bow, but rather, in

novel and memoir, of pinpointing the sometimes mystical timing of things that after all may go right when minds are working in concert. (That is what the theme of hearing secret harmonies in the music of time finally does come down to.) But a bemusing fact about Powell’s contribution to the war effort had something once again to do with writing. Powell had been promoted major and transferred from the War office to do *minute-taking*, of all things, at high-level meetings held at the Cabinet Offices. But he failed at this secretarial job and was dismissed. Carlisle took him back at the section—it meant returning to the underpaid rank of captain. But that is how Powell wound up working in Belgian liaison. Would Montgomery have shot loyal Belgians but for this odd reversal? It is anybody’s guess: Powell merely closes off the episode with the motto of an old Oxford tutor: “Only after a series of ghastly humiliations does one begin to learn the extent of one’s capabilities.”

The most interesting accounts on either side of the war recollections might be dubbed the author’s “MGM” and “John Aubrey” interludes. These link up thematically. Where the one baffled, the other finally released energies. What Powell had found in all the “film-world’s dealings,” he says, was “inanity.” There is a vignette of a meeting with Scott Fitzgerald at the MGM commissary, in which the centerpiece table where MGM “moguls” sit becomes the clear source of all the petrification. At first they remind Powell of Dutch genre painting, for instance “a group of appreciative onlookers at a martyrdom.” That is, till the lunch-hour bell rings, when they become affronted because the Powell-Fitzgerald party has not cleared out. They fix the Powell group with Medusa stares, wanting that table of malingerers vacated, like all the other tables from which their hirelings have dashed back to work. “Worse than that . . . we were talking and laughing as if nothing mattered less than the making of commercial films. A gloomy silence had fallen on the moguls’ table. . . . [They] looked puzzled; not so much angry as hurt.”

That sanative laughter, from the single unawed group left after the commissary crowd has double-timed its way out past the

magnates, is recallable at the end of *Faces in My Time* when Powell gives a thumbnail sketch of Soren Kierkegaard. His name may mean "guardian of the church," as Powell reminds us, but he was much less a worrier than, say, those moviemen who guarded their church-like movie lot at MGM. So if Powell can show the one group as a pack of worrywarts, he can just as neatly remind us of the easygoing side of the renowned Danish philosopher. The point is that deep thinking, genuine artists do not take themselves over-seriously. Thus Powell says that "so far from being an austere hermit, Kierkegaard (inheriting some capital when a young man) was for a time a dandy, a wit, a gourmet, a tease, who liked leg-pulling and getting tight." You'd have thought he might pass for a movie mogul—he certainly had the makings more than those dour hermits at MGM. Powell's own temperament understands the lightheartedness that goes along with deep talent (as for non-talent, he'd said earlier how seriously the talentless always took themselves, for instance, "how self-pity is an all but invariable element of the bestseller").

Things bring us near the conclusion of his book. It was because his friend Alick Dru was an amateur scholar of Kierkegaard that Powell was led to draw that sketch in the first place. Dru was, it might be argued, inspirational to Powell, not only at the War Office (where he combined *élan* with great efficiency) but also as a gifted man who did not guard his talent. Near the war's end he figures, by way of transition, as a counterpart to John Aubrey, the man, 250 years dead, on whom Powell would come to depend when he re-entered the life of writing.

This familiarity with Continental writers [said Powell of Dru] might have been used to great advantage by someone of more ambitious temperament. . . . Dru's preference for rambling about in a world of ideas, rather than putting what he knew to some more or less utilitarian purpose, gave him much of his unique character and charm. He would have been a less remarkable person had he been a more systematic worker.

The key fact about Dru is that he had no

mental image of himself to be lived up to. Men like Dru, analogous to Renaissance men, win Powell's esteem because of a kind of intellectual nonchalance. With his lightning-like mind, Dru more often than not would make a game of himself, carrying on regular "bouts of *je m'en fichisme*." (Powell's accents are the same when he tallies up the "ghastly humiliations" of his stint in the Cabinet Offices.) These were qualities shared by John Aubrey, the seventeenth-century antiquarian whose biography Powell wrote immediately after the war (having done sporadic research during the 1940's). *Faces in My Time* nears its end with Powell holding two conditions in a balance: the fact of "having been advantageously shaken up as a writer," plus the feeling that the writing gears might best be re-engaged by turning to a Renaissance type like Aubrey, "unbedevilled by the wars and politics of his epoch." What Dru seemed to add was a kind of living presence (so his letters bear out), as though here were a replica of the unsystematic Aubrey right in front of Powell. Those two easily ignitable minds seemed to help give release to a creative talent that had long been incubating. *To Keep the Ball Rolling* is Powell's general title for his memoir (though the individual volumes bear titles from Shakespeare)—in this installment the fascination has been with the ball when it has, for so long a stretch, been stopped.

Reviewed by JOHN RUSSELL

## Piety and Learning

**James McCosh and the Scottish Intellectual Tradition**, by J. David Hoeveler, Jr., Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981. xiv + 374 pp. \$25.00.

JAMES MCCOSH (1811-1894), philosopher, preacher, and college president, was essentially a mediator. In philosophy he sought a middle position between Kantian idealism and

Lockean empiricism. In religion he joined a passionate quest for rational understanding with warm evangelical zeal. In science he accepted the new evolutionary hypothesis without jettisoning Christian fundamentals. And in the field of education he opened Princeton, which he headed for twenty years, to new ideas and programs without abandoning all of its old ways.

Mediators, Professor J. David Hoeveler, Jr., reminds us in *James McCosh and the Scottish Intellectual Tradition*, rarely achieve permanent fame. Where the thinkers who engaged McCosh's attention—Locke, Hume, Kant, Mill—continue to challenge us today, McCosh himself is largely a forgotten figure in the history of thought. The twentieth century has by-passed the Scottish philosophy which informed so much of his work; and the synthesizing task which he regarded as important no longer possesses urgency for modern thinkers. Yet McCosh was in his own day a thinker of considerable stature. Even John Stuart Mill had to reckon with him. In Scotland, where he was born and spent his formative years, in Ireland, where he taught philosophy for sixteen years, and in the United States, where he became eleventh President of Princeton in 1868, McCosh was usually at the center of things in the religious, philosophical, and academic worlds. And the Scottish philosophy, which reached its culmination in his thinking, played a major role in shaping American academic thought during much of the nineteenth century. Hoeveler has done a splendid job in showing us just how influential McCosh was in his own day and in analyzing the various streams of thought that found a meeting-place in his outlook. To understand McCosh, he makes it clear, is to gain an insight into an important segment of American middle-class thought itself in the nineteenth century.

In Scotland McCosh studied at Glasgow University and the University of Edinburgh, came under the influence of both the rationalist Sir William Hamilton and the evangelical Robert Chambers, acquired a lifelong love for philosophy, and served as a Presbyterian gospel minister (with only moderate success) for seventeen years. It was during this period that he began the syn-

cretistic work that was to occupy so much of his intellectual life in the years that followed. He was drawn to both Hamilton and Chambers; and he was anxious to unite the two cultural traditions which they represented: the Moderatism of the Scottish Enlightenment (with its optimistic rationalism and benevolent Deity) and Scottish evangelicalism (with its emphasis on human limitations and a forgiving God). When the evangelicals seceded from the Church of Scotland (dominated by the Moderates) to form the Free Church movement in 1843, McCosh joined their ranks ("the greatest event of my life") and expended his considerable energies and organizing talents in forming new churches dedicated to piety and voluntarism. But he continued to insist that learning was indispensable to religion and that rational inquiry into fundamental truths was an important bulwark of faith.

In Ireland, where he spent sixteen years teaching logic and metaphysics at Queen's College in Belfast, McCosh came into his own as a thinker. At Queen's he continued his efforts to unite piety and learning, took on J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer, developed a system of thought ("intuitionist realism") that grounded knowledge of God and morality in both intuition and experience, and published his major works, including *Intuitions of the Mind* (1860), probably his best book. Here, too, he began adjusting his thinking to the new Darwinism. Though McCosh never abandoned his teleological view of the universe, he went further than most religious thinkers of his day in accommodating himself to evolution. He accepted the idea of development in nature; and he even approached (though he fell far short of) the doctrine of natural selection in the concept of "collocation," which takes note of the undesigned harmony of effects appearing in the natural world. Darwinism never frightened McCosh; his faith was too strong for that. "We give to science the things that belong to science," he announced at Princeton, "[and] to God the things that are God's." He also pointed out: "Ye'll not teach the young men that evolution is false; tomorrow ye may wake up and find that it is true." One gets the impression that McCosh welcomed new ideas challenging

traditional ones. Novel ways of viewing reality stimulated him into thinking furiously about fundamentals and he always ended his inquiries with his Christian faith on firmer foundations than ever. "Let me warn you," he cried in one talk on the subject, "the defenders of religion should be cautious in assailing evolution."

At Princeton McCosh continued to write and teach, but his achievements were primarily in the field of administration. His enduring legacy, in fact, lay in his work at Princeton rather than in the realm of ideas. Serving as President until he was seventy-seven, he was, according to Hoeveler, one of the most energetic leaders in Princeton's history. Under his leadership, the College of New Jersey was transformed into Princeton University (though his suggestion for changing the college's name wasn't adopted until after his departure). He expanded and modernized the curriculum, ended the faculty's inbreeding by bringing in distinguished scholars from the outside, introduced a measure of professionalism into the school, toured the country raising funds and recruiting students, and organized feeder schools for the undergraduate college. "He found Princeton a quiet country college," observed Woodrow Wilson, a McCosh student, "and lifted it to a conspicuous place among the most notable institutions of the country. . . . He laid the foundations of a genuine university, and his own enthusiasm for learning vivified . . . the place." Upon his death in 1894, the *New York Tribune* exclaimed: "To him more than any other man in its history, Princeton owes the reputation which it has today as a broad, unsectarian, progressive institution of learning. . . ." Yet as President of Princeton, McCosh combined academic reform with evangelical commitment. Daily chapel, Sunday church attendance, temperance pledges, and periodic revivals among the students were inseparable parts of the McCosh dispensation. "I am anxious," he once said frankly, "to keep philosophy right in this country."

Hoeveler's detailed study of McCosh in his three roles as academic philosopher, evan-

gelical preacher, and college administrator is admirable in every respect; it is hard to see how it could be bettered. His approach is fair-minded, judicious, critical, sympathetic, and thoroughly informed. Not only does he handle McCosh's ideas and their provenance with ease and clarity; he also grounds them in the social context of the day and relates them to the economic and institutional changes which were affecting the perceptions of the men and women whose spokesman McCosh became. There are also occasional flashes of dry wit. "There is something in the Scottish soul," Hoeveler remarks at one point, "that delights to be told how sinful it is." And elsewhere he explains: "Professors are seldom modest people, and so far as this was true, McCosh was a genuine professor."

McCosh was a professor all right: stubborn, vain, tyrannical. But like many professors he was also gentle and tender. McCosh, the man, comes alive in this book, as do the towns, cities, and the countryside (Hoeveler has obviously visited McCosh's old haunts in Scotland) which McCosh knew so well. But one regrets that he does not tell us more about McCosh's wife, Isabella. One exchange with "Old Jimmie" leaves us yearning for more. "It's the will of God," McCosh once told his wife about a decision he had made. "Indeed," murmured Isabella, "I'll be thinking it's the will of James McCosh." McCosh, as his wife doubtless knew, had a habit of referring to Princeton as "me College" and announcing to visitors admiring some of the new buildings on the campus: "I built that. It's mine." Yet he also possessed a genuine strain of Christian humility. When young Woodrow Wilson asked for his autograph in 1877, the aging President exclaimed impatiently: "Life is too earnest a thing to be spent in gathering autographs from supposed eminent men, whom I have found to be no better than others, or from mediocre men like myself who should be allowed to do their duty without being troubled by foolish requests from persons who should be doing something better."

Reviewed by PAUL F. BOLLER, JR.

## Democrats and Gentlemen

**The American Democrat**, by James Fenimore Cooper, *Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1981. xxvii + 252 pp. \$9.00.*

WHEN, IN 1838, James Fenimore Cooper published *The American Democrat*, the United States was emerging from the long shadow of colonialism. The political experiment embodied in the Constitution had proved itself sufficiently to quiet the old fears of the tumultuousness and instability of republican government. With Jacksonian Democracy had appeared a distinctively American style of politics, boisterous and egalitarian, giving scope to native types of demagogue and doctrinaire, as Cooper called them. ("The true theatre of a demagogue is a democracy," he explained, "for the body of the community possessing the power, the master he pretends to serve is best able to reward his efforts.") There were calls as well for cultural independence, the most famous being that of Ralph Waldo Emerson in his Phi Beta Kappa address of 1837.

To the extent that these developments had issued in a truly distinct society, however, it was arousing serious misgivings. Alexis de Tocqueville had given the most brilliant expression to these in *Democracy in America* (1835), and other foreign visitors added strictures variously judicious or acerbic. Criticism of America was not new, but it condensed at this time into a fairly well defined group. Its keynote was that American democracy, while perhaps filling in society's valleys, "leveled" its peaks, and tended always toward mediocrity, uniformity, and the sway of public opinion over rootless individuals. Later nineteenth-century "patricians" like Charles Eliot Norton, Henry James, and Henry Adams enlarged on the theme in their often idiosyncratic ways, and the extended palaver of the 1950s about "conformity," organization men, status seekers and the lonely crowd adapted it to an age of mass consumption. The wise decision to include H. L. Mencken's 1931 introduction to *The American Democrat* in this handsome new edition lets us gauge the extent to which Baltimore's scourge of democratic follies found a kindred spirit in Cooper.

*The American Democrat's* own contribution to this tradition, although it did not make its author popular with his countrymen, was carefully moderate. It is as notable now for Cooper's fundamental faith in American democracy as for his qualms about the direction that it was taking in his day. His complaints were not of the institutions established by the Constitution, which he supposed in accord with permanent principles, but of perversions of these institutions and principles—especially of the confusion of an equality of rights with equality of condition. Cooper, like John Adams and others who took a tempered view of popular government, was accused of aristocratic sympathies, but he harshly condemned "aristocracy" in the sense of a politically privileged class. With all its drawbacks, on the other hand, democracy had for Cooper the cardinal advantages of nurturing a common moral sense, and of conducing to "a general elevation in the character of the people."

Cooper's endorsement of democracy is qualified in ways that mark him as a conservative in comparison with such contemporaries as George Bancroft, certainly. He did not believe that God spoke through the people, and he would hardly have agreed with the Jacksonian historian that democracy is "practical Christianity." For fallible human beings, unable to duplicate the irreproachable autocracy of the "government of the universe," he pointed out, democracy is simply "less imperfect" than any other system. The conservative note is struck also in Cooper's emphasis on the right and role of property, which he considered "the base of all civilization," and perhaps most tellingly in his association of genuine individuality with custom and association. Not particularly an Anglophile, he was chagrined to report that this "individuality, as connected with habits," was most to be found in England and (among Christian nations) least in his native land. Men were more subject to "extralegal authority" in America than elsewhere, but it took the form of a pervasive, hardly escapable public opinion. In common with Tocqueville, therefore, Cooper argued that despite the broad political liberties of the United States, real freedom of thought was less there than elsewhere in the



civilized world. People "defer more to those around them"; we seem already in the land of the "other-directed."

Cooper's faith in democratic political institutions and his discontent with American democratic society establish a counterpoint that appears throughout the book. Conversely, its major theme is Cooper's effort to reconcile equality of rights with the natural and salubrious realities of social "station." In particular, he was concerned to find a role for the American gentleman—not the privileged role of the European aristocrat, but one in which "the advantages which accompany social station" could serve society. Cooper dissects the niceties of rank in greater detail than would seem necessary to most of us today, not omitting a comparative analysis of the virtues of French and English servants. However, his straightforward treatment of the facts of class are refreshingly free of modern hypocrisy; disdaining the already appearing American weakness for euphemism, he was scornful of those who called servants "help," or substituted for "master" the Dutch word "boss," meaning the same thing.

On more substantive aspects, Cooper's basic position was clear enough. The United States was laudably unique, he thought, in admitting "no other artificial distinctions than those that are inseparable from the recognized principles and indispensable laws of civilization." (This was a formula which sanctioned the exclusion of women from suffrage, although not slavery—an institution toward which Cooper took a moderate view but regarded as a regrettable exception to the terms of the American polity.) Above all, Cooper sought to couple legal equality in the public sphere with free play for superiority fairly won in the private. It was the substance of "the great American proposition," he argued, that "God has not instituted political inequalities," and has left men free to establish such social institutions as suit their needs. But all that the best institutions could accomplish, he also thought, was "to remove useless obstacles, and to permit merit to be the artisan of its own fortune," without necessarily consigning demerit to the full depths of its desert.

*The American Democrat* has little of the

brilliant insightfulness or vivacity of Tocqueville and none of the illuminating hyperbole of Henry Adams, certainly no Menckonian wit. It is more judicious and balanced than any of these, however, and more firmly rooted in its assumptions. It is almost unrelentingly abstract; one longs for some evidence of the novelist's eye for revealing detail, for at least the occasional reference to Martin Van Buren or Henry Clay. Clearly, however, this was no part of Cooper's purpose. He set out to provide a concise statement of the principles of American democracy and of its social ramifications, and this he admirably if rather starkly accomplished. Within his self-established limits, he does cover a great deal of ground. Discussions of commerce, currency, and the right of petition follow closely on a denunciation of American cookery (Cooper's characterization of Americans as "the grossest feeders of any civilized nation known" is possibly the most frequently quoted passage in the book); these sections are preceded by one on American language, more amusing than the rest of the book because more specific. "Cucumber," we are instructed, should be pronounced "*cow-cumber*," and "either" and "neither" as "*i-ther*" and "*ni-ther*." (Mencken scornfully demurred on the last pair.)

Social commentators fascinate later generations insofar as they can be seen as prophets. Cooper offers none of the spectacular prognostications of those who foresaw Russia and the United States sharing world hegemony (Tocqueville), or yielded Delphic hints of atomic energy (Henry Adams). To the extent that his comments on Jacksonian America cast a forward shadow, his foresight is forgivably mixed. It was not the happiest shot to suggest that democracy is the cheapest form of government, although in a period when the federal government had actually distributed surplus funds among the states, it was a plausible assertion. A brief sketch of judicial review betrays no anxiety about its possible abuse, but few if any Americans of the time glimpsed the potential of judicial "activism." Cooper will strike many present readers as most prescient in his remarks on the press. He did not question the value of a free press, but he saw how easily it could become despotic in manipulating public opinion, especially

when, as in the United States, its influence was little balanced by that of social or intellectual elites. He is scathing in his comments on the low veracity of American newspapers; the whole country "in a moral sense," he does not hesitate to say, "breathes an atmosphere of falsehoods." While Cooper was undoubtedly much influenced by his own unhappy experiences with the Fourth Estate, he perceived in the rambunctious journalism of his day, better than most of his contemporaries, the half-intelligent, careless power of what would one day be called the media.

Altogether, despite the obvious 1830s backdrop of *The American Democrat*, it surprises one with the measure of its topicality. If we no longer talk much about the tyranny of the majority, the tailoring of public opinion remains of general concern. The distinction between equality of rights and equality of condition is as much a part of political debate in our time as it was in Cooper's. The plight of the gentleman in a democracy is more uncertain than ever when the closest national conception of such a creature seems to be that of the "Preppie," but the problem of leadership to which Cooper was addressing himself is not apt to disappear. It is good to have available in this new edition the perennially sensible advice on these matters of the sage of Coopers-town, New York.

Reviewed by MICHAEL D. CLARK

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## New Breeds

*Teacher in America*, by Jacques Barzun, Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1980. xxv + 464 pp. \$9.00 (paper \$4.00).

JACQUES BARZUN'S *Teacher in America* was first published in 1945 and has now been re-issued by Liberty Press. To many readers, the author's preface, written especially for this edition, will be an adequate review in itself.

Professor Barzun puts his work in perspective, observing that the academic world that he wrote about three and a half decades ago has undergone vast changes and that there has been a "manifest decline" in university and secondary education. Indeed, he sees that "a working system has been brought to a state of impotence." But, despite great and destructive upheavals, teaching, he argues, will go on of necessity and the "difficulties" of what he likes to call the "hand-to-hand" encounter in the classroom remain. Therefore, Barzun offers his book to us again as a modest effort to confront these perennial challenges.

And he speaks to us with wit and intelligence, and just about everything he says makes sense, given his assumptions. However, although, in this re-reading, I was continually engaged and stimulated by *Teacher in America*, I felt at the same time, paradoxically, a distance from the book, at least from the first part that deals with approaches to various subjects. The state of education, described by the author with such deadly precision in the preface, makes his ideas for the most part appear utopian, given, as he says, a current "state of mind unsuited to teaching and learning." Hence, though teaching, or what continues to be called teaching, will go on, it can now, in most cases, hardly be what Barzun argued for in 1945.

To Barzun teaching is an intellectual encounter, an effort to develop in the student the habits of thought and attentiveness. All disciplines should be taught humanistically, that is, by putting the student in touch with the important minds in each area. Even learning a language is, in essence, absorbing a culture. This is an attractive and, I think, "correct" ideal, but, from my admittedly limited perspective, one that has become increasingly difficult to pursue. In fact, the public high school in New York City in which I've taught for nearly twenty-five years and which still sends its share of students to the better colleges has, in effect, officially ceased to be an intellectual institution.

A recent incident illustrates this. A few weeks ago my supervisor called me into his office and told me that, after reading some of my observation reports, he sensed that I was "struggling" in my classes, mainly, he

suspected, because (apparently) I still didn't understand what today's high school teaching demanded. I was told to forget high thinking and leave that to whatever Transcendentalists were still around. It's no longer important for the students to think about Brutus's conflicting motives in *Julius Caesar* or to discuss the opposing claims of patriotism and friendship. It's enough to make it clear what happened in the play and make sure the students get some correct sentences into their notebooks summing it all up. The competency tests have become more important than Shakespeare's *Weltanschauung*.

At first glance one might be tempted to see in this episode another example of the sort of academic corruption that Barzun claims has brought American education to its present sorry state. And, of course, the record of educators during the unrest of the sixties and seventies is hardly one to be proud of. The profession exerted very little leadership and continually caved in to political pressures. This cravenness, Barzun contends, contributed to the students' "open disaffection from the university and its faculty."

But this view misreads, I think, the true nature of the "revolution." The radical change that makes Barzun's vision of a teacher utopian has taken place in the nature of the student, and this has very little to do with what teachers or administrators have or haven't done. What I find lacking in the preface to *Teacher in America* is a consideration of the impact of the media culture on young people. It is electronics more than any academic malfeasance that has created the current disaffection.

In 1945 Barzun could write with confidence that the school represented the dominant culture and that the student was generally a more or less willing novice. In speaking of the required courses at Columbia College, he says, "The first two years, then, take the student and show him a mirror of the world."

But today's media, particularly television, have given young people a sense of "knowing" the world from their earliest years. Few of them feel that they need the school to show them what life is like; they've already seen it. Also, this knowledge, made up of sounds and images, is entirely non-literary in origin and

largely non-verbal. This is the prevailing culture. Consequently most students have an open contempt for the traditional curriculum and for the normal processes and methods of intellectual discourse. Therefore, what my supervisor was advocating was nothing more than a necessary accommodation to the new student body. It is my view that, at least in secondary schools, classroom experience is in the process of forcing most teachers to develop non-intellectual approaches to their subjects. And I can't imagine that the same sort of thing isn't happening in college teaching.

I also do not share Barzun's view that student unrest of the sixties and seventies was a protest against academic abuses. I see it, instead, as an effort, largely successful, to subvert scholastic discipline and standards. Those who took the call for reform seriously were often quickly disillusioned. For example, Bayside High School attempted to change its "rigid" curriculum by offering electives. One of my colleagues gave a "sure-fire" course called "Sports in Literature." But what he soon discovered was that, though students were interested in sports, they strongly objected to the rigors of reading, writing, and serious discussion.

In *Teacher in America* the author makes a distinction between the difficulties of teaching and the problems of the profession. The latter vary with the political climate as it affects salary, tenure, and other working conditions. Difficulties, on the other hand, remain constant when one mind encounters and seeks to modify another. But, as the intellectual content of our classes declines, so does real teaching, with predictable effect on the profession. My colleagues and I have quickly seen that we are not really needed to implement the "basic" curricula that are now evolving. It takes little imagination to envision a future in which para-professionals will conduct classes using work books and drill material with answer keys provided. This is the logical end of current tendencies. We are seeing the disappearance of the "difficulties" that once evoked the artistry of the teacher.

Several things follow from this. First of all, teachers in America probably must now see themselves as representing a counter culture. Therefore, our tactics, for the moment, must

be disengagement and consolidation, demanding, as Barzun suggests, a revival of the monastic spirit, which "betokens merely the mind concentrated on study in a setting without frills." I can already see modest stirrings of this. At Bayside High School we have established a Latin "mini-school" with classes and curriculum separate from the larger school. We are also in the process of establishing a great books discussion group for selected students. Similar programs are being implemented elsewhere. In other words, we are groping for ways to preserve our traditions in the face of a hostile climate. This hostility probably always exists and the only variation is in intensity. Current conditions make it more urgent than ever to heed Barzun's admonition to protect our "vigils," to preserve and enhance the possibilities of the intellectual life.

*Teacher in America* is in part a not too distant mirror on the problems that continue to impinge on the life of the mind—insensitive administrators, low salaries, politicians and activists eager to use the academy for their own ends, and what the author calls the "Ph.D. Octopus." To these problems I would add, most significantly, the new breed of student. For the moment all this has all but overwhelmed us, and the task at hand is to recreate, where and when we can, a time and a place to encounter the blessed "difficulties."

Reviewed by EDMUND JANKO

## *De-Mythologizing*

**Myths That Rule America**, by Herbert L. London and Albert L. Weeks, *Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1981.* xvii + 151 pp. \$13.50 (paper \$6.75).

WE DO NOT LEARN to tie our shoes each morning; individually we cannot function without habit. Similarly every nation, and, in a larger sense, every society, operates within a

framework of commonly accepted assumptions: ideas, mores, and norms of conduct. They may change from time to time, but at any given period the prevailing assumptions strongly influence the behavior of the nation. In this book, two professors of New York University, grouping the assumptions as "myths," assail those they regard as false, and in an inspiring conclusion plead for faith and will. London writes on our domestic scene; Weeks on our affairs abroad. Having lived through the riotous sixties at a university, it is small wonder that each author makes war on the pernicious myths which misled the students of that period and which, to some extent, still linger in our midst.

London begins by assaulting the "do your thing" vogue, which, masking as self-expression, borders on anarchy. In seeking the blessings of liberty for their posterity, the Founding Fathers, who understood that human beings are a mixture of good and evil, never contemplated freedom without restraint. The blessings of liberty must be balanced by discipline.

By exploring the myths of happiness, success, equality, work, poverty, psychology, and experimental art, London deplores the notion that everything is relative. He condemns the emphasis on individual self-fulfillment. In modern art the substitution of being different for creativity leaves him cold. He dislikes the welfare state, middle-class hedonism, and the translation of happiness into more and more material things. He decries the belief that notoriety is the mark of success. He approves John Locke's use of "happiness" as a substitute for virtue. "Surely," he says, "none of the founders would have argued for happiness at any price."

London's distaste for conspicuous consumption is apparent from this passage: "In Beverly Hills the car you buy is considered a function of your personality. The car is to that culture what predestination was to the Puritans. It determines where you go to school, who your friends will be, what attitudes you'll have, and what will be written in your obituary." To put it another way: Happiness is having a Cadillac (more recently a Mercedes) for a coffin.

Yet London praises the work ethic and ad-

mits the usefulness of the Horatio Alger legend of hard work and decency rewarded by riches. Nor does he deny that the burning desire to rise above the common herd drives aspirants along the road to excellence. In puncturing the myth of equality, London says: "It [is] worth recalling John C. Calhoun's argument that inequality of condition is the natural product of equality of opportunity." He adds: "The incentive for 'getting ahead' has always been inequality."

That London does not reject the American dream of attaining success and wealth from a lowly beginning becomes evident in his attack on the "small is beautiful" myth, which regards as harmful the development and growth of our land to provide us with an abundance of "the good things of life." He is equally at odds with the myth that we are impotent to control our destiny. Like President Reagan, London is a can-do man, who would press ahead in the pioneer spirit that guided the United States to its place in the sun.

Americans striving for wealth, position, power, preferment, and honor by their countrymen surely are not phenomena of our recent mores or even of the twentieth century. George Washington, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and all the Founding Fathers avouched that self-interest is the paramount motive of mankind. London is well aware of this fact of human nature and of how society benefits from the relentless efforts of its individual members to reach the heights. But even more than unrestrained freedom, the attributes of a capitalist society need the curbs of religion, philosophy, and a tacit community adherence to the *do's* and *do not's* which the Judaic-Christian religions regard as the cornerstones of goodness. "Man shall not live by bread alone."

Of all the domestic chapters, my favorite is *Myth of Technology*, concerning which so many have expounded so little. London gives technology due credit for the material betterment of our lot and agrees that being ahead in the arms race goes to the roots of our existence. But he demolishes the "myth of technological impotence" in ascribing to machines a "momentum of their own." Technology cannot solve questions that transcend the material; the answers lie within ourselves.

"The belief that we are only part of a grand design puts our humanity in an appropriate perspective."

In affairs abroad, Weeks begins by undermining the myth of the World State. The task is an easy one because assimilating, as do the World Federalists, the experience of the contiguous thirteen states—alike in language, ethnic origin, customs, law, and cultural heritage—to the diverse quarreling nations of the globe—is so patently erroneous. Still, even such a realist as the late Professor Hans J. Morgenthau yearned for the relinquishment of sovereignty to a supra-national agency, which would possess the only means of nuclear destruction. If Morgenthau could not long enough to forget that the supra-national agency would be composed of people, and through a coup might come under the control of a Stalin or a Hitler, the persistence of the myth warrants the shafts Weeks sends flying against it. But it is enough to note that the gulf between Leninist states dedicated to placing communist parties in control of all governments by violence on one side and democratic governments on the other cannot be bridged by a world government.

Long ago Morgenthau tore to tatters the "merchant of death" illusion that wars are caused by big business. He demonstrated that business had been against wars, and was indeed the appeasing class, both in England and in the United States. Weeks does a fine job in assembling examples and statistics to bring Morgenthau up to date. Ancient wars for booty and territory were sometimes profitable to the victor, but wars by the United States are now so expensive that waging them for material profit has become economically stupid. Weeks points out that during the years we were warring in Vietnam, from 1965-1970, corporate profits fell 16.8 percent, having risen 64.2 percent in the preceding five years. Corporate stocks fell 36.5 percent from 1965-1970; they had risen 48.5 percent the previous five years.

In any appraisal of the communist ruled states, the alpha, and in most cases the omega too, is the study of V. I. Lenin. On this subject Weeks is an expert, with the added advantage of reading Russian. Lenin translated the Marxian myth of class warfare drawn by



the locomotive of history into a working ideology for obtaining control of all governments. His prime tool was subversion, and war was not to be disdained. Pacifists were idiots; all betterment of mankind was through violence. The communist end justified any means, including deceit and killing. Lenin approved Trotsky's defense of terrorism in reply to Karl Kautsky. In telling of the myths surrounding the subject, Weeks emphasizes these central themes, which need constant reiteration. On this subject it is good that President Reagan has called a spade a spade. Weeks does a useful service in showing the continuity of Leninism through L. I. Brezhnev. The leopard has not changed its spots.

In attacking the myth of American neo-isolationism and in linking it "to another blind spot in the American psyche: ignorance of geopolitics," Weeks, while justly chastising the New Left, has given it an attractive target at which to aim. Our Vietnamese War was not immoral. The North Vietnamese leadership was mendacious, cruel, and amoral, as devoted communists are expected to be in pursuing the aims they assume to be noble. It does not follow that the war—especially as we waged it—was wise. Nor can I think of any doctrine in international politics that has brought more misery to the world than geopolitics. For from suffering from ignorance of this pseudo-science, we have been endeavoring, if somewhat ineptly, to apply it. Alfred T. Mahan said that while it is wise to look for things that are alike, it is also wise to look for things that are different. Nuclear weapons with intercontinental range might have modified Mahan's thesis of the dominance of sea power. Of course, geography has not become obsolete. If the United States should attempt to fight a land war with the Soviets in the region of the Persian Gulf, the nearness of the U.S.S.R. and our distance of 7,000 miles from the scene of action would defeat us. To a lesser extent, the situation in Europe is the same, but to believe that a war between the United States and the Soviet Union will not become nuclear is to indulge hope as against a sober estimate. Geopolitics, though based on geography, is different. If geopolitics ever had any validity, it has lost it in the nuclear age.

In a short but eloquent final chapter, both

authors plead in effect for Russell Kirk's "permanent things."

We are free only when constrained by moral standards. . . . It would be a fatuous exercise to believe in moral will without also having faith in God. For if there is no God, morality is whatever you want it to be. . . . Repetition and practice constitute our experience more than we realize. . . . America's future . . . can be what we want it to be. . . . Our hopes are not interred by grave-diggers who remind us that historical forces have passed us by. . . . Our history was no accident. Great accomplishments resulted from great vision. What we propose is a national effort to rediscover our myths, particularly those myths that give grandeur to this nation.

Reviewed by LAURENCE W. BEILENSEN

## *A Century of Chinese Rebel Writers*

**The Gate of Heavenly Peace**, by Jonathan D. Spence, *New York: Viking Press, 1981.*  
461 pp. \$19.95.

THIS WORK by a distinguished Yale sinologist deals with the writings, activities, and sufferings of rebel Chinese writers during the years between 1895 and 1980. It is an admirable example of sound scholarship. Professor Jonathan D. Spence's critical observations are of less value than the material he presents and readers in search of an insightful critique of Chinese literature would do well to search elsewhere. The bias of the author is that he considers the struggle of the Chinese Nationalists, both on the mainland and later on Taiwan, to preserve their freedom from communist rule "tragic" and presumably deplorable and unnecessary.

Despite these limitations, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* contains much of great interest and value. The entire period was one of bureaucratic stifling of creative writing, a pro-

cess that reached its climax under Mao Zedong. The turn-of-the-century impact of modern civilization on the Chinese literati, partly because of censorship and partly because of the linguistic barrier, was random and erratic. Lin Shu, who translated Charles Dickens into Chinese, hailed William Shakespeare and Rider Haggard as "the exceptional geniuses of a great civilized nation." Lu Xun, who died in 1936, but was revered throughout the communist era as one of the greatest of Chinese writers, admired Rider Haggard, the Sherlock Holmes stories, and *La Dame aux Camelias*.

Some of the early Chinese voices of rebellion sound as pathological as Franz Fanon. Mao Zedong, for example, in his first published work (1917), urged a creative "savagery" that would enable his fellow intellectuals "to leap on horseback and shoot at the same time;...to shake the mountains with one's cries, and the colors of the sky by one's roars of anger..."

Anger against Chinese backwardness, bound feet and the servitude of Chinese women, the rule or archaic custom, caste, corruption, and venality was combined with hatred of foreign arrogance toward the Chinese. When these pent-up hatreds finally destroyed the Manchu regime, which Voltaire a century earlier had thought one of the most admirable governments on earth, the land was fragmented among warlords. Hunger, violence, and oppression were, if anything, worse than before.

A modern, more or less liberal Chinese state seemed to be emerging under Chiang Kaishek. Then Japanese aggression shifted power back to the warlords and an often corrupt military class. Not all the writers who were appalled by this malaise turned toward communism. Some went to Yen-an. Others joined the Nationalist forces in their wartime capital of Chungking. Among the latter was the immensely gifted Wen Yiduo. Appalled at the corruption of the military and at the sight of conscripts chained together, dying on the roadside without food or medicine, he turned his energies inward to a vast history of Chinese classical poetry.

Hyperinflation reached astronomical levels. Wen Yiduo had to also teach at two schools

and work nights carving decorative seals to keep his family alive. Even so, he was earning no more than a coolie. He became a leader of the Democratic League that sought to unite the two Chinas in a sort of democratic socialist coalition. He was murdered by assailants who were never apprehended.

The Nationalist regime during and immediately after World War II was a loose coalition of regional generals, incipient warlords, honest intellectuals, and government officials who wanted to transform China into a modern western-type society. Hyperinflation played a major role in the swift disintegration and demoralization of this regime since the intellectuals and the honest element in the bureaucracy were almost totally expropriated by the inflation. Having already lost everything, they imagined they had little to fear from the Communists.

Spence does not ask what steps the United States took to prevent the ruinous inflationary expropriation since the topic is beyond the scope of his book. In fact, a joint Chinese-American currency stabilization board was created by the Roosevelt administration, the Chinese member of which, Chi Chao-ting, had been a Comintern advisor in China, and the U.S. representative of which, Solomon Adler, would later be named in sworn testimony as a Soviet spy.

Years later, I asked a high official in the Chinese Embassy whether they had been ignorant of the loyalties of this team and whether it had ever occurred to them that Adler and Chi might work to create hyperinflation, not to cure it. I was informed that they were, of course, aware, but that these people were crammed down their throats by one of Roosevelt's top assistants, Lauchlin Currie, who would in turn be named as a Soviet secret agent.

One of the most important writers who chose Yen-an was Ding Ling. As a known communist propagandist, she had been arrested by the Guomindang in 1933 and held without charges for three years. She and her lover were lodged in a comfortable house. After she claimed to have abandoned her communist convictions, she was urged by her captors to spend her time in creative writing. Ding Ling escaped and made her way to

Yenan. At first she regarded the communist enclave as a heaven on earth. Soon she began writing critical stories about the heartlessness, arrogance, and inhumanity of the Maoist bureaucracy. She perceived these things at a time when such sycophants of the Maoist tyranny as Edgar Snow were writing palpable lies about Red China's democracy and humanity, her prison reforms, the parallel between the modest and humble Mao Zedong and our own Abraham Lincoln.

Ding Ling's freedom was of short duration. She was punished by being sent into the rural areas to work and live as a peasant. When she returned, she seemingly had learned her lesson. She wrote lifeless novels about heroic, incorruptible communist cadres. She denounced former friends when ordered to do so by the Party. She observed and praised the lynch trials of rich peasants indicted and condemned by mobs on Party orders and frequently beaten to death on the spot.

She rose high in the Party's literary bureaucracy. Yet it was plain to the discerning eye that her spirit and individual creativity had not been entirely stamped out.

When Mao launched the Great Cultural Proletarian Revolution, Ding Ling was first beaten up and abused, then imprisoned in a small cell, where she "ate, urinated, defecated and slept," and was kept in total isolation. During the first year, she was given the four volumes of Mao's *Selected Works* to read, and during the second year, selections from Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. After five years of total isolation, she was released, now an old woman in her seventies, but sane, alert, and able to write again:

I had no pen [she recollected]. I had no paper. If I had something that I wanted to say to someone, there was no one else in the room but myself. From the day of my birth, I had never experienced isolation like that. Before, during our Cultural Revolution, if during the daytime I had been abused or beaten... still at nighttime I could return to my own shed; and, if Chen Ming was there we could share our experiences, offer each other some comfort, and give each other support. The bitter tears could flow out; one didn't have to

hold in all the bile. But shut up in that room, from daytime to nighttime, from nighttime to daytime, one had the choice of sitting facing the wall or of pacing between the walls. That loneliness was like a poisonous snake gnawing at my heart.

Along with others who suffered equally hard fates, Ding Ling was released after Mao's death and the arrest of the Gang of Four. Younger writers, who have urged that China become a democracy, have recently been imprisoned. What the future holds for China's billion human beings remains an enigma.

Reviewed by NATHANIEL WEYL

## *The Best and the Brightest*

**Of Kennedys and Kings: Making Sense of the Sixties**, by Harris Wofford, *New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1980. 496 pp. \$17.50.*

In 1950, when he was only twenty-four, Mr. Harris Wofford and his wife published *India Afire*, which, among other things, suggested that American civil rights leaders adopt the tactics and strategy of Mahatma Gandhi. This support for the civil rights movement and the "emerging nations" would dominate virtually all of Wofford's political activities during the 1960s that he has now chronicled in this memoir. When the black boycott of the busses of Montgomery, Alabama began in 1955, Wofford became a staunch ally of the boycott's leader, Martin Luther King, assisted King in writing *Stride Toward Freedom*, and helped arrange King's trip to India in 1957. In the late 1950s Wofford was counsel to Father Theodore Hesburgh on the Commission on Civil Rights. According to Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "this experience convinced Wofford that the untapped resources of executive action offered the best immediate hope for new civil rights progress."

His interest in India brought Wofford into close collaboration with Chester Bowles, the

former American ambassador to India and an influential voice in the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Bowles vigorously advocated reshaping the nation's diplomacy away from a preoccupation with the Soviet Union and the Cold War and towards a greater interest in the underdeveloped regions of Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Bowles supported the presidential candidacy of John Kennedy, while Wofford became a speechwriter for the future president and edited *The Strategy of Peace*, a collection of Kennedy's speeches on foreign policy.

Kennedy's election gave Wofford the opportunity to expand the civil rights movement and transform American diplomacy. He had organized and coordinated the civil rights section of Kennedy's campaign and after the election was appointed the Special Assistant to the President for Civil Rights. He helped establish the Peace Corps and, in 1962, moved to Addis Ababa to become the Peace Corps' Special Representative for Africa and director of its Ethiopian program. "The Peace Corps," Wofford writes, "had from the beginning seemed to me the liveliest embodiment of the New Frontier." (More sceptical observers would reserve that distinction for the livelier Vietnamese War that also reflected the crusading spirit of the New Frontier.) Following Kennedy's assassination, Wofford returned to Washington as the Peace Corps' associate director and had a hand in establishing the Office of Economic Opportunity, which conducted the war on poverty. This quintessential New Frontiersman resigned from the Peace Corps in 1966 and, appropriately enough, became president of a new experimental college in Old Westbury, Long Island.

*Of Kennedys and Kings* is more than a mere recounting of its author's involvement in the New Frontier and in the Great Society. It is also a passionate defense of Wofford's two political lodestars, the civil rights movement and the "third world." Thus Martin Luther King is the black hero of the book, while its white heroes are Sargent Shriver and Chester Bowles, rather than John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. Wofford is not a partisan of Kennedy, largely because the latter did not share his anti-militarism and crusading en-

thusiasms. Thus he faults Kennedy for not pursuing the Peace Corps concept, for not being more vigorous in supporting the civil rights campaign, for authorizing the Bay of Pigs invasion, and for firing Bowles as Undersecretary of State in the "Thanksgiving Massacre" of 1961. Kennedy's failure to make better use of Bowles, Wofford claims, "demonstrated a flaw in the President's own intelligence at least as great as the failure of the outside intelligence provided him by the CIA, the Pentagon, or the State Department. He badly needed someone close to him who had 'a basic moral reference point.'"

Throughout *Of Kennedys and Kings* there is a persistent distaste for the macho image projected by the Kennedys. Wofford surmises that this might have come back to haunt the Kennedys because of their support of CIA efforts to murder Fidel Castro. Kennedy's assassination, Wofford speculates, could have been a reprisal as a result of this inane plan. (He also believes the F.B.I. might have been implicated in the killing of Martin Luther King.) In any case, Wofford contends, Robert Kennedy held himself personally responsible for his brother's death and his subsequent efforts to end the Vietnamese war and revitalize domestic reform impulses were related to this sense of guilt. Wofford, a zealous supporter of the "new" Robert Kennedy, welcomed his call for the creation of a new politics, and described him as "one of the most appealing and promising men in the history of American politics." "I wanted him to be President more than anyone I had ever supported," he concludes.

It is clear that Wofford has never left the 1960s. For him it was "an extraordinary time of social invention and constructive politics" marked by de-Stalinization in the Soviet Union, reform within the Roman Catholic Church, and a Peace Corps and a war on poverty in the United States. Americans witnessed "a surge in the spirit of national service, with people in surprising numbers really interested in what they could do for their country." A more balanced view of the decade, however, would take into consideration the fact that those who migrated to the banks of the Potomac in the hope of doing good ended up by doing very well indeed in

terms of fat government salaries and perquisites, while the rest of the country was saddled with higher taxes, onerous regulations, and social programs of dubious value.

Wofford would have us believe that, for the first time in many years, "talent and intelligence were widely enlisted to work on the nation's problems." But the efforts of the "best and the brightest" were no more successful in the domestic realm than they were in managing our affairs in Southeast Asia. The test of any policy lies in its impact and not in the education or the intelligence of its sponsors. It is typical of the defenders of the New Frontier and the Great Society to take the reformist goals of the 1960s at face value without investigating their effect in the real world. He is also nostalgic about the sixties because it was "a time of peaceful competition and cooperation in the exploration of space, when man first set forth toward the moon and nuclear tests in the atmosphere were finally banned." Wofford argues that the Cold War has sidetracked the United States from its responsibility of aiding the third world, that America should identify with the forces of social and economic change in the underdeveloped nations (he approvingly quotes John Kennedy's absurd statement in the 1960 campaign that "this world-wide revolution which we see all around us is part of the original American revolution"), that the tendency to propose military solutions to political and diplomatic problems is invariably mistaken, and that the United Nations continues to be the last best hope of mankind.

Wofford laments that his dream of a new American diplomacy was shunted aside by the militarization of foreign policy under Kennedy and Johnson. Instead of asking fundamental questions about the direction of American policy, the two administrations generally focused on the mechanics of leadership. This tendency often led to the use of military means as in Cuba, in the Dominican Republic, and in Vietnam. Wofford is probably correct in arguing that American diplomacy of the sixties suffered from a surfeit of CIAism and militarism. In contrast, the recent impotence of the United States has stemmed in part from the decay of its armed

forces as well as the reluctance of its leaders even to consider military options, both part of the legacy of the Vietnam conflict. One would not expect Wofford to be displeased by this. As Edmund Burke once remarked, "It is a general error to suppose the loudest complainers for the public to be the most anxious for its welfare."

Reviewed by EDWARD SHAPIRO

## *The Imperial Sway*

**Peter the Great, His Life and World**, by Robert K. Massie, *New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1980. 909 pp. \$19.95.*

A MAJOR UNDERTAKING requiring many years of study, Mr. Robert K. Massie's *Peter the Great, His Life and World* conducts the reader through short, distinct, and pungent chapters. While not a fully serious but rather a popular historical work, it contains excellent presentations of historical character studies enriched by informative scholarship. The book is divided into five major sections: Old Muscovy, The Great Embassy, The Great Northern War, On the European Stage, and The New Russia. Appendices encompass a genealogy of the Romanov Dynasty, 1613-1917, and notes. Massie, in short, has composed a lively and entertaining biography that reads like good literature; it is a difficult and commendable accomplishment, though handicapped by a poor index.

A proper, learned scope of study is always maintained with a judicious balance of historical content and dramatic context. Nothing important, including stories both tragic and comic, has apparently been overlooked. Though a bit simplistic in his moderate and fair analyses of events, Massie's book shows a mastery of the principal subject. Occasionally the author's thoughts are mixed with a partial romanticizing of events and images thrown into a Slavic whirlpool of intrigue. The imperial sway of the fortunes and favors of over thirty years of warfare is



displayed boldly. Massie takes a more favorable view of Peter I and rejects debatable analyses often developed through plausible innuendos. Yet, he underestimates Peter's father's contribution to the policy required for modernizing Russia.

After all, it was a bizarre and a seemingly *amoral* age when human dwarfs and giants, surrounded by pageantry and pomp, were the extravagant, hapless toys and breeding specimens of kings! Peter the Great illuminated an era peopled with flamboyant or, rather, "hippie" monarchs who enlarged their domains with gaiety and sadness and with much color and madness. He and his half-brother Ivan came to power through a double coronation arranged by the unscrupulous Regent Tsareva Sophia, who governed for seven years; the coronation was a "curiosity unprecedented" in the entire history of European monarchy. The Streltsy, a kind of Russian Praetorian Guard, revolted early in the life of the young and troubled Tsar, with bloody consequences. This event was to shadow the days of the Russian thunderbolt, and also result in the historic building of St. Petersburg.

Ironically, the prideful Muscovite boyars, who supported Peter during his bid for complete power in 1696, thought that he would restore the good old days to Mother Russia. The boyars could not predict that he would want to create a liberal nation-state dedicated to modernization but *not* to Western constitutionalism. Peter was fascinated and delighted by foreigners, especially those who lived outside Moscow in the *Nemetskaya sloboda*, the German settlement. His early and unconventional experiences encouraged the remarkable visit of the Great Embassy to Western Europe.

This Tsar was a semi-savage, talented figure, empowered constantly by forceful, indomitable energy and indefatigable curiosity. He wished to Westernize an essentially Asiatic people, instilled with Slavic Christianity, by instituting a shocking revolution from above; to galvanize national efforts so as to gain needed outlets to the Baltic and Black Seas; and to centralize political power so as to enforce and ensure tsarist absolutism. The third goal destroyed all formal vestiges of local self-government accompanied by, and further

provoking, enormous brutalities: Peter as antichrist, not reformer. The native Russian capacity for pain is seen by the "noseless, earless, branded men, evidence of the Tsar's wrath and his mercy" that hopelessly "roamed the edges of his realm."

Gottfried von Leibniz, a true *philosophe*, had a positive vision of Peter (like Hegel's dramatic revelation about Napoleon in Jena). Massie only once strongly raises the serious question of the Tsar's observed, innate brutality and possible sadism. Although Massie has been thorough, his bibliography lacks such books as Paul Avrich's *Russian Rebels* and Robert N. Bain's *First Romanovs*. The author could also have benefited from a supplementary reading, for example, of Michael Robert's *The Swedish Imperial Experience, 1560-1718*. Along with the older studies of Waliszewski, the modern standard works on Petrine Russia are, of course, also present.

Peter, however, was not performing alone on the world stage. Some vital, complex force of political life was captured and beaten by ambitions, made proportionate by sulfurous acts of will-power, and matched to solid regal determination. Sweden's Charles XII was much like Peter during his adolescent years, but later the dauntless Swede became "the king who drank nothing stronger than watery beer." As an always overconfident monarch, he committed the same military mistake as did both Napoleon and Hitler. The decisive Swedish defeat at the Battle of Poltava in the Great Northern War, moreover, "permanently shifted the political axis of Europe." With Russia victorious, the triumphant conclusion of that struggle ended with the Treaty of Uusikaupunki (Nystadt). The Tsar, with some irony, would have wanted a son more like Charles instead of his ill-fated child, the Tsarevich Alexis Petrovich, who vehemently rejected his father's innovative ways and aggressive reforms. Peter, one suspects, thought he could singlehandedly invent elaborate public institutions or conjure up political order in a rationalist manner.

The outrageous ferocity of his reforms can be observed when he declared that "all noblemen who failed to report for service were outlaws"; The Tsar admired and valued

"merit, loyalty and dedication to service," not proud peerage or noble status. But as the strange irony of misconceived history would have it, one Vladimir Ilych Ulyanov (Lenin), a later recipient of the Tsar's past reforms, once signed himself as "Nobleman Vladimir Ulyanov." It was the expendable serfs of Russia who bled and suffered the most from the so-called reforms because almost all of them were made, in 1721, hereditary serfs. Among contemporary thinkers, Massie notes that Alexandr Solzhenitsyn regrets the Ecclesiastical Regulation of that same year that governed the Russian Orthodox Church up to 1918 and made it a pliable and willing tool of political corruption. In addition, the Tsar's blasphemous rites, performed by mock clergymen, were part of an attempt to secularize the thinking of his countrymen, though the author neglects seeing that particular point.

At least one historical tragedy, which can be sadly detailed, concerns the desire of Johann von Patkul to start a war for the liberation of his Livonian homeland. He foolishly summoned eager Russian wolves to fight old Swedish dogs, the dreadful consequences of his desire practically destroying Livonia in the strange process of liberating it. The Treaty of Altranstadt, between King Augustus II of Poland and Charles XII, sealed the fate of Patkul; he was delivered into the open hands of the vengeful Swedish king. In a civilized age of routine atrocities, Patkul's scheming head ended by oddly decorating "a post by the highway." Massie leaves unanswered the question as to the necessity of Peter's constant warfare or whether good alternatives existed. Western civilization equalled military success. His "interest in importing Western technology was mistaken by naive Westerners for an opportunity also to export Western philosophy and ideas." Many Westerners, blinded by optimism, have often misinterpreted the real intentions of Russian autocrats.

Peter, the *stupor mundi* of Russia, created the Secret Office of Preobrazhenskoe (shades of KGB) as a special security police, in itself a lasting contribution to Russian political science. Massie does not attempt to draw any parallels with Stalin. In such a problematic

case there is only a stirring pain, which may beget further pain and poison, well within the depth of the vice of tyrants. One of the Tsar's more notable accomplishments, however, was the building of St. Petersburg, "the first spot where Peter set his foot on the Baltic coast." Domenico Trezzini became a master builder where "an unhappy stream of humanity" constructed "a city built on bones." Another achievement was the Balkan, pan-Slavic myth, sealed by the Peace of Husi, that Russia alone would be the brave champion of Orthodoxy. Much mischief and grief have come with distilled vengeance from that potent myth, which breathed a vagrant longing into the wild, haunted Balkan earth and air.

Peter's legacy of strengthened State power affected the future of his heavily burdened people, but Massie insists that "no Russian ever finds peace in his soul anywhere else on earth." If any true Russian should easily find peace, as perhaps Solzhenitsyn would say, he must be six feet underground by now and feeling the varied blessings of honest Russian soil in his soul.

Reviewed by JOSEPH ANDREW SETTANNI

## *Law and its Matrix*

**Social Order and the Limits of Law: A Theoretical Essay**, by Iredell Jenkins, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980. xiv + 390 pp. \$25.00 (paper \$6.95).

HOW IS POSITIVE LAW related, in its origin, structure, and purview, to the natural and social orders? Professor Iredell Jenkins's thoughtful, mellow volume is the product of a powerful and original mind that has pondered this immense topic, the importance of which can scarcely be exaggerated, over a period of many years. Although this book comprises nearly 400 pages of intricate reasoning, it is by no means ponderous or turgid. Professor Jenkins writes with elegant lucidity, and, not infrequently, with great force.

Because of its breadth of scope, closeness of sustained argument, and potentially seminal impact in the field of political and legal theory, the book will doubtless be compared to John Rawls's *Theory of Justice* and Robert Nozick's *State, Anarchy, and Utopia*. Indeed, insofar as it seeks to ground political theory far more thoroughly and explicitly upon first principles than do either of these works, it exceeds them in philosophical profundity.

Jenkins's system rests upon metaphysical foundations that may be characterized as broadly Whiteheadian, although Whitehead himself is merely accorded passing reference in a couple of footnotes. It is probably safe to say that what the author has done is to develop a metaphysic of his own that has been influenced to some extent by Whitehead and that fits into the general tradition of process philosophy. Other parts of his system have affinities (which he acknowledges) to contributions by Hayek, by Unger, and by other social and legal theorists. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, it is a production of such striking originality that the term *sui generis* would not be misapplied to it.

This "theoretical essay" begins with a major hypothesis suggested by the conjunction of two metaphysical assumptions (the uniformity of nature and organic evolution), a jural postulate (that law is a principle of order), and an empirical datum (that positive law is a strictly human phenomenon): "Positive law is a supplemental principle of order that arises and develops in the human context when other agencies and forces become inadequate to the conditions and the challenges that man confronts."

Order has four constituents, all equally basic and significant, that represent the ultimate dimensions of being or reality: the Many (the plurality of distinct entities), the One (the wholes of which these entities are parts), Process (the activities in which these entities engage), and Pattern (the uniformities and regularities that run among the entities). When the Many is emphasized, the function of positive law is to facilitate the achievement of personal ends and the execution of mutual agreements; when the One is emphasized, the function of positive law is to guarantee the integrity of the State; when Process is em-

phasized, the function of positive law is to promote the manifold transactions that are necessary to maintain society as a going concern; and when Pattern is emphasized, the function of positive law is to prescribe a nexus of antecedents and consequences, so that men can anticipate and plan. But "any action that positive law takes with respect to any one of these dimensions is inevitably going to reverberate throughout the others."

The matrix of positive law consists of these dimensions of order as manifested in three "regimes" or states of affairs, Necessity, Possibility, and Purposiveness, that pervade reality and are "compresent throughout nature." Although they represent stages of development in the process of becoming, they are not radically distinct or sharply separated from one another. In the regime of Necessity, the dimension of the Many is expressed as similarity; of the One, as subordination; of Process, as action and reaction; and of Pattern, as rigidity. In the regime of Possibility, the dimension of Many is expressed as differentiation; of the One, as participation; of Process, as self-determination; and of Pattern, as flexibility. In the regime of Purposiveness, the dimension of the Many is expressed as cultivation; of the One, as authority; of Process, as responsibility; and of Pattern, as social coherence and continuity. "Positive law is an organized instrument through which man seeks to refine and discipline his native purposiveness and thus to meet the challenge with which possibility confronts him."

While all this may seem terribly abstract, artificial, and even arbitrary, this impression is dispelled by the way in which the author, in the course of the book, brings his categories to life and gives them plausibility, illuminating their subtle and multifarious interrelations in a sort of richly textured counterpoint.

Jenkins distinguishes three modes of law: 1. Expository laws describe an *actual* order of things and events and predominate in the regime of Necessity. 2. Normative laws describe an *ideal* order of things and events and predominate in the regime of Purposiveness. 3. Prescriptive laws mediate the *passage* from actual to ideal order and predominate in the regime of Possibility; positive law falls within this mode. Since the

regimes obtain throughout nature, and since the modes of law reflect and are correlated with these regimes, it follows that they, too, are compresent throughout reality. "That is, every law is at once expository, prescriptive, and normative, combining in itself elements of each of these abstract types," for "every law refers at once to actual conditions, a process of becoming, and an ideal outcome." Positive law is dynamic: "In the very act of compromising the rival pressures of Necessity and Possibility, the legal apparatus invokes the regime of Purposiveness." This reform then becomes the established state, generating new protests, and the process goes on continually.

Laws, whether expository, normative, or prescriptive, are inherent in the structure of things long before they are recognized and formulated by man; "they are primarily principles of an objective order and only secondarily subjective formulations of the mind. . . . Their existence is a function of and is integral to the order that holds in nature." In this statement, with its Aristotelian flavor, Jenkins seems very close to natural law theory, although he hesitates to call his essay an exercise in natural law because he feels that the term, in its contemporary usage, has connotations alien to his position.

Jenkin's theory of legal obligation seeks to bridge the gap between legal positivism and legal idealism. He holds that what makes law obligatory is an end beyond itself—something to which law is an instrumental value. He calls this something "the lived relationship," a kind of implicit but authoritative compact that we enter into when we interact with others as moral beings. Its authoritative nature cannot be demonstrated; it is simply a given—a sheer, ultimate fact about human nature. It is only through participation in such relationships that we acquire and express our humanity; they establish bonds that we, to the extent that we are moral beings, recognize cannot be broken unilaterally without wrongdoing. The authority of positive law derives from and is supplemental to this prior authority, the lived authority relationship. "Process and Pattern define the social structure [the terms of the compact] that the One [those who exercise authority] is to serve and

the Many [those who acknowledge it] to support."

Although Jenkins holds that positive law is sovereign in that "the only appeal beyond it is to force in the form of revolution," it is neither autonomous nor omniscient but draws its strength from the web of lived relationships from which it has emerged and which it exists to undergird. As a *supplemental* principle of order "it is superimposed upon but does not supersede other more intimate and familiar principles of order: family, friends, church, school, union, profession, and so on." Of late, however, the legal apparatus is being asked to intervene in areas of personal and social life best served by other agencies in other ways. "The result is analogous to our frequent mishaps with electrical appliances: we so overload the legal apparatus that it short-circuits, creating a spectacular display of fireworks but effecting nothing save its own wreckage."

While the book is not formally divided into two parts, its earlier chapters are devoted to explicating a systematic theory of law in both its ontological and social aspects, whereas its later chapters spell out the practical implications of that theory. Much of this spelling out consists of demonstrating the self-defeating consequences of the tendency to expand the purview of positive law, and of illustrating (as in Jenkins's analysis of *Wyatt v. Stickney* and of the arguments for privileged admission in the *DeFunis* and *Bakke* cases) the unintended repercussions of onesided programs of reform that focus narrowly upon certain dimensions of order or regimes of becoming while losing sight of the matrix as a whole. Especially perceptive is Jenkins's discussion of the concept of rights, in which he points out that the content of rights has been radically extended to encompass not merely basic freedoms and immunities with their correlative restrictions on the State, but also a potentially unlimited range of positive benefits and services, the provision of which, falling upon the State, must necessarily enlarge its powers at the expense of those personal liberties that constituted the stuff of rights in the older understanding of the word. "If all of the claims that are now being advanced as human rights are to be recognized by law and

transformed into legal rights, then it seems clear that traditional individual rights will have to be seriously curtailed." Yet this would contradict the very nature of law, for "law arises as the principle of an open order, and it denies itself and its *raison d'être* if it seeks to impose a closed order."

The author is profoundly (although not abstrusely) conservative in his understanding of social order, marked as it is by stress upon the fundamental role of familiar, extra-legal institutions, and by suspicion of sweeping and precipitate change. He is at the same time profoundly (although not dogmatically) libertarian in his emphasis upon the *limits* of law and of the State. Although I assume that he did not consciously set out to effect a fusion between conservatism and libertarianism, I venture to say that not since the late Frank S. Meyer's *In Defense of Freedom: A Conservative Credo* (1962) has their organic connection been so masterfully delineated. The legal apparatus, even though indispensable and necessarily sovereign, is shown to be severely restricted in its capability to promote the substantive goals of justice in any positive way; indeed, it is heavily dependent upon other instrumentalities both to make up for its inadequacy and to support it in the areas of its competence.

The conditions of cultivation, authority, responsibility, and continuity largely escape direct legal action. The realization of these goals requires that human character be firmly molded in definite ways and that human conduct be channeled along specific courses and governed by established standards. And these are undertakings that must be carried on by other social agencies: they lie within the province of morality rather than law, and the tasks they impose have traditionally fallen primarily upon the triad of family, church, and school, with secondary support from custom, tradition, the neighborhood, and professional and vocational associations.

The effectiveness of law depends heavily upon the contributions of these other institutions; so law must respect their integrity and coordinate its efforts with theirs.

More particularly, law must inhibit the tendency, which is now running strong, to obtrude itself into the operations of its partners, forcing its standard upon them and challenging their authority in their own domains.

One is here reminded of Abraham Kuyper's doctrine of "sphere sovereignty," except for this: Whereas that great turn-of-the-century Dutch statesman contended that the various social spheres, including the State, exercise their autonomous but interdependent and complementary roles *under a divine mandate*,<sup>1</sup> one finds no reference to divinity in Jenkins's essay. While one would not necessarily look for theological allusions in an ordinary book on social or legal theory, their total absence is conspicuous in this one which, after all, proposes to relate law to "the ultimate dimensions of being." The author does not appear to be hostile to religion as such, as witness his inclusion of the church among the fundamental institutions that foster lived relationships and social order. And certainly for him man is no mere "accidental collocation of atoms." His category of Purposiveness would, in fact, seem to suggest a Divine Intelligence inherent in the very structure of reality, but the suggestion is not pursued or even made explicit.

What makes this deficiency especially disappointing is the integrating pull that the concept of transcendence could have exercised in Jenkins's system. He speaks eloquently about justice as an essential but never fully realized ideal, and penetratingly about the need for delicate balancing among the elements in his matrix and mutual correction among ideologies, goals, and views of man. But such balancing and mutual correction, it seems to me, implies a transcendent referent in terms of which all human values stand under judgment and are seen as relative and partial. Can the ideal of justice itself serve as such a referent? Jenkins evidently thinks so. But many would insist with Reinhold Niebuhr that behind the ideal of justice stands the loving will of God, "a more transcendent source of unity than any discoverable in the natural world, where men are always divided by various forces of nature and history.... In



prophetic ethics, the transcendent unity of life is an article of faith. Moral obligation is to this divine unity; and therefore it is more able to defy the anarchies of the world."<sup>2</sup>

Be this as it may (and I hasten to concede that religious faith is itself all too often a vehicle for the absolutization of relative values, leading to disorder and injustice), *Social Order and the Limits of Law* remains an extraordinary achievement—a magnificent capstone to a long and illustrious philosophical career.

Reviewed by ROBERT V. ANDELSON

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<sup>2</sup>See Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), p. 96 and passim. The lectures were delivered at Princeton University in 1898. *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), p. 113.

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## *"Eunomics"; or, Good Law*

**The Principles of Social Order: Selected Essays of Lon L. Fuller**, edited with an Introduction by Kenneth I. Winston, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1981. 313 pp. \$19.75.

LON L. FULLER, who died in April of 1978, was Carter Professor of General Jurisprudence at Harvard Law School during much of his distinguished career as a teacher and philosopher of law. But Professor Fuller also practiced what he preached; during the Second World War, he was a lawyer with the prestigious Boston law firm of Ropes & Gray, and many years thereafter he served as a labor arbitrator in addition to fulfilling his scholarly duties. I go into these details of biography as a way of suggesting that Fuller's long-time interest in the variety of legal processes—processes that he came to think of in terms of "the principles of social order"—was prepared for him not only by his native curiosity concerning the ways of the law, but also by his countless experiences with the sinuosities that

the ways of the law all too often trace through our lives. Add to this firsthand knowledge of the peculiarities of the Anglo-American legal system, the fact that Fuller leavened his perspective on the law by studying both the European fashion in continental legal systems and some of the more exotic kinds of legal orders made available through the reports of legal anthropologists, and one begins to see how Fuller can be fairly characterized, as he sometimes is in this collection, as a "legal naturalist" and a "legal pluralist."

Yet it is by another label that Fuller is best known in legal and philosophical circles; he is, I suspect, perhaps the most notable, certainly the most voluble, of the twentieth-century defenders of "natural law theory." And in this century there have not been many of this sort of person around; surely we live in the age of positivism (legal and otherwise). As a natural law theorist, then, Fuller was outnumbered. Still, he maintained the position that natural law theorists have traditionally maintained, namely, that law and morality are inextricably connected or related. How they are so connected or related—the nature of this connection or relation—is, of course, something upon which natural law theorists are apt to disagree even among themselves, but that they are so connected or related is a point all of them accept in some guise or other. According to natural law theory, then, an immoral "law" is no law at all. Legal positivists, on the other hand, claim that there is no such connection or relation between law and morality. They argue, rather, that while the law and morality may occasionally overlap or coincide, there is no necessity for there being such legal and moral coincidence in order for a law to be legally valid and, thus, enforceable. A bad law, according to the positivists, while no doubt morally reprehensible, remains the law (and entitled to the respect we accord any law) unless and until it is legally repealed or annulled.

Fuller's contribution to this perennial clash between theories of natural law and positive law took the form of an insistence upon the necessity for there being a connection between law and morality "in some sense." What this specific sense of the claimed law was, Fuller never succeeded in making clear to the

satisfaction of his critics or, I might venture to say, even to many of those who felt that his point was well-taken and one that deserved a full hearing, especially in the halls filled with the clamor of positivist voices. The best Fuller was able to do in this regard, however, remained his attempt to show in some detail (see Chapter II of *The Morality of Law* [1st ed., 1964]) that there is an “internal morality of law,” one which was so inherent or essential to law that it could fairly be said, as Fuller claimed, to be that which made law possible. But the vagaries in this formulation of the natural law position were never worked out by Fuller, and I think it is conceded these days that Fuller’s noble effort failed.

Anyone turning to this book for further clarification or defense of this cryptic notion of an “internal morality of law” will, I believe, be disappointed, at least initially. In these pages there is little or no discussion of that notion which has not been previously available somewhere in Fuller’s admittedly scattered publications. Eventually, however, readers of this work should find their initial disappointment assuaged when they realize that the book offers us something quite worth having in its own right—a collection of previously published and unpublished materials arranged around a single, central theme in Fuller’s jurisprudential system. This theme is one that Fuller came to develop in his later writing because, as he saw it, such a development would create the context in which his claim concerning the necessary connection between law and morality could find a place, one that would reveal its truth. The theme of these essays is not, then, that of the clash between natural law theorists and legal positivists. Rather, this selection of essays has to do with Fuller’s views on a topic that he called “eunomics,” a neologism coined to designate “the science, theory, or study of good order or workable social arrangements.” (Or, we might simply remember the meaning of its transliterated Greek stems, *eu* and *nomos*: “good law.”) According to Fuller, then, the purpose of this book (as he imagined it, but never lived to see it finished) “is to examine not simply the principles of social order, but the principles of good social order.”

These principles of social order can be

thought of as various ways or methods (sometimes competing, sometimes complementary) for ordering or arranging the interactions of human beings in society; hence, Fuller chose to conceive of them under the generic term, “social processes.” But Fuller was not a sociologist—he was a lawyer and a philosopher of law—so his abiding interests and deepest efforts went, by and large, toward the examination of a certain species of social processes, namely, legal processes. In his work, he identified at least nine such “legal processes”: 1. The coordination of expectations and actions that arises tacitly out of human interactions in society (such as customary law); 2. Contract; 3. Property; 4. Legislation (which he sometimes called “officially declared law”); 5. Adjudication; 6. Managerial direction (such as administrative law); 7. Voting; 8. Mediation; and 9. Deliberate resort to chance (“tossing for it”). Each one of these kinds of legal processes creates certain kinds of social orders and seems to be best fit for use in addressing certain kinds of problems, because each has its particular forms and functions, its special purposes and participants, its juxtaposition of various roles and rules, all leading synergistically to the creation of different social structures, different ways of living and ordering life. And what Fuller aimed to accomplish by examining these legal phenomena in all their variety was a heightened appreciation of both the powers and the limits inherent in each legal process—and a heightened ability to use these procedures once we have gained such an appreciation that might guide our uses of them. Therefore, Fuller spent his time asking the following sorts of questions of the legal processes that he investigated: What does adjudication (or legislation, or customary law, etc.) do well, and what not so well? How, in a given situation, might resorting to mediation (rather than, for example, to adjudication, or to legislation, or to an election) serve our purposes or values or interests? What do we gain from imposing a lottery process on ourselves in one situation while resorting to a contractual process in another situation, and what do we lose? What kind of problem or conflict does this legal process best address, and what kind

of social order (or disorder) might we achieve by means of it? It is through the pursuit of this kind of comparative study of the variety of legal processes, both within our society and between our society and other societies, that Fuller hoped to budge—finally—the topic of the nature of law. He felt that the debate over this issue had degenerated, in large part because it had for too long been the exclusive preserve of those who wielded facile formulations of the essence of law (such as the conception espoused by the classical legal positivists: Law is the command of the sovereign backed by sanctions). Any of these formulations might well catch one aspect of the nature of law, but only at the expense of leaving many other aspects—all equally important—out of the picture, not only unrecorded but even unnoticed.

There were many reasons, according to Fuller's diagnosis, for the general antipathy, or at least apathy, with which studies of the natural plurality of law and its processes, such as his, has been greeted. Most theorists of law, for example, fail to acknowledge the extent to which it is a purposive phenomenon; or they fail to see that our experience of "means" and "ends" in life is one not of their strict separation, but rather of their being constantly yoked together, such that "neither makes sense without the other." I am not going to continue this particular line of discussion concerning Fuller's systematic study of the nature and the variety of legal processes—and, thus, of the law—or his extended diagnosis of the ills of current jurisprudential tendencies; perhaps it will suffice to say that this collection of essays excellently serves its purpose of introducing its reader to this neglected feature of Fuller's philosophy of law. (And I would be remiss if I did not also note, at least parenthetically, the fine efforts by the editor of this collection, Professor Kenneth Winston of Wheaton College in Massachusetts, on behalf of this volume, which have measurably increased its value. Professor Winston not only has organized the sometimes disparate materials of this book such that they actually do compose an integrated theme on the topic of "eunomics," but also has supplied helpful introductory headnotes and footnotes throughout the text, as well as having fur-

nished an introductory essay that I find to be the most suggestive treatment of Fuller's jurisprudence that we yet possess.)

I want to close this consideration by noting that Fuller's concentration on the forms that law can take—its processes and the orders they produce—leads him to posit a rather unique role for the lawyer in society. The lawyer often is called upon, Fuller says, to perform as a kind of "architect of social structure." Now, this emphasis on the lawyer as a social architect should not be read, as it might justifiably be taken in reading some others, as an endorsement or an approving reference to the current craze for using law as a tool of social engineering. No such insidious meaning is intended by Fuller. Instead, as Winston puts it, Fuller was "oppos[ed]...to viewing law as a form of social engineering, which seems to involve a central coercive agency enforcing specific ends. [Rather, a] minimalist conception of legislation is... consonant with his view of legal ordering as emergent out of individual choice and interaction." But such choices and interactions are bound to be guided, for better or worse, by the counsel and the assistance of those experts and professionals—lawyers and law teachers—who have spent their lives working on and studying the materials of the law (i.e., legal processes and their products). It is, then, with this knowledge in mind that Fuller fits the role(s) of the lawyer into his conception of the proper uses of the legal means and ends at our disposal. And Fuller's vision of the lawyer properly plying his trade leaves us, as any self-respecting law teacher loves to leave his students or readers, with a challenge, an aspiration:

Looking at his work from this... vantage point, I think he [the "young lawyer"] will... come to see that a profound morality justifies what may be called, in the broadest sense, the adversary system and the game-like spirit that goes with that system... Without losing any of his zest for the game, he will want to play it now in a somewhat different manner. In negotiation, instead of seeking primarily to gain some advantage for his client, he will see his most important task as that of search-

ing out those procedures by which apparently conflicting interests can be reconciled. In arguing cases before the courts, he will see his job, not as one of mere persuasion, or of a facile manipulation of legal doctrine, but as one of conveying to the court that full understanding of the case which will enable it to reach a wise and informed decision.

Reviewed by THOMAS D. EISELE

## *A Northern View of the Slave South*

**The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted:  
Volume II, Slavery and the South,  
1852-1857**, edited by Charles E. Beveridge  
and Charles Capen McLaughlin, with the  
assistance of David Schuyler, *Baltimore:*  
*Johns Hopkins University Press*, 1981. xxi  
+ 503 pp. \$27.50.

AS THE SECTIONAL controversy over slavery intensified during the late antebellum period, a host of travelers descended upon the land of cotton and magnolias to record their observations of a people and society which seemed to hold an exotic fascination for those beyond its boundaries. Of these visitors, one of the most perceptive and dispassionate was Frederick Law Olmsted, by birth and heritage a Connecticut Yankee. Later celebrated as "the father of landscape architecture"—he designed Central Park in New York City and Yosemite in California, the campuses of Stanford and Berkeley, and the Capitol grounds in Washington, D.C., among others—Olmsted manifested that catholicity of interests that characterized eminent men of both sections in nineteenth-century America. Humanist, litterateur, gentleman-farmer, traveler, social commentator, Olmsted was a remarkable figure whose prolific writings illuminate many of the complex issues which his countrymen confronted during the traumatic era in which he lived.

In this, the second of a projected twelve-volume edition of the most significant of some 60,000 extant Olmsted papers and letters, the focus is on Olmsted's career as writer, editor, and traveler during a period of mounting sectional conflict. Commissioned by Editor Henry Raymond to write a series of articles on the South for *The New York Times*, Olmsted embarked on his first excursion to the South in December 1852. His itinerary on this four-month journey carried him down the Atlantic seaboard to Savannah, across the Gulf south to New Orleans, up the Mississippi to Memphis, and thence homeward through the so-called back country. Nearly a year later, Olmsted undertook a second and longer journey to the South, spending most of his time in Texas where he was captivated by a colony of German free-soil settlers near San Antonio and became obsessed with the idea of carving one or more free states out of West Texas. Buoyed by his experiences in Texas, he departed that state in mid-May 1854 and returned to New York by way of Natchez, Tuscaloosa, Chattanooga, and Richmond. In all, Olmsted spent some twelve months in the slave states.

In the course of his southern travels Olmsted wrote seventy-five descriptive letters, printed in three series, for *The New York Times* and *The New York Daily Tribune*. These letters, in turn, formed the basis for three extended, book-length travel accounts—*A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (1856), *A Journey Through Texas* (1857), and *A Journey in the Back Country* (1860)—that scholars have long regarded as among the most reliable of the eyewitness narratives of southern life and institutions written by outsiders on the eve of the Civil War. Together, these books, and a one-volume abridgment that appeared in 1861 under the title *The Cotton Kingdom*, provide an unparalleled contemporary portrayal not only of the people—slaveholders and nonslaveholders, free and slave, black and white—but also of such facets of southern society as agricultural practices, travel conditions, and public accommodations.

In addition to his travels and writings on the South, Olmsted was engaged in other endeavors during the years encompassed by

this volume. In April 1855 he became a partner in the New York publishing firm of Dix, Edwards and Company. As managing editor for ten months of *Putnam's Magazine*, he labored assiduously to make that periodical the premier literary journal in the country. He spent much of the following year in Europe as a literary agent, traveling extensively on the continent, and residing for nearly five months in the exhilarating atmosphere of London. Returning to New York in the fall of 1856, he found the firm of Dix, Edwards in dire financial straits. Following an unsuccessful attempt at reorganization in the spring of 1857, the company succumbed to the general economic distress which swept the country later that year. However, events in Kansas had already provided Olmsted with another outlet for his seemingly boundless energies. Two years before, he had become associated with the endeavors of the New England Emigrant Aid Company to supply arms to free-soil settlers in that troubled territory, and now he became increasingly involved in schemes to colonize nonslaveholders in the Southwest. But these efforts, as well as Olmsted's preoccupation with the South, virtually ceased following his fortuitous appointment as superintendent of New York's Central Park in September 1857.

The editors have included in the present volume noteworthy personal and business correspondence from the years 1852-1857 as well as "all of Olmsted's significant statements on the South, slavery and the sectional crisis that did not appear in his three well-known volumes of travel accounts." Most of the latter are drawn from the series of articles written for the New York press and constitute by far the most valuable documents in this volume. The personal letters shed some light on the author's business concerns and his involvement in the antislavery movement, but most are very brief and excessively annotated. In all, there are seventy-seven documents, organized chronologically in seven chapters, in this volume of the *Olmsted Papers*. In addition to thorough, scholarly annotations of each document, the editors have included a biographical directory of persons most frequently mentioned in the correspondence and three appendixes, one of which contains day-by-day annotated itineraries of Olmsted's two

southern journeys. Also useful is a splendid analytical introduction by Charles E. Beveridge, who served as senior editor of this volume.

In many ways Olmsted exemplified the typical northern attitude toward slavery and related issues. Like the majority of his countrymen, he was opposed to slavery but not an abolitionist (he described himself as "a moderate Free Soiler"); he was vociferously against the expansion of slave territory and exceedingly hostile to the Fugitive Slave Law, yet he was essentially racist in his attitude toward the Negro. Like other Northerners, his opposition to slavery solidified in the emotional atmosphere of the 1850s. In short, by examining Olmsted's writings on slavery and the South during the mid-1850s, one can better understand the forces which propelled the nation inexorably toward civil strife at the end of that fateful decade.

Though not an avowed abolitionist, Olmsted viewed slavery as an abomination that he was duty-bound to oppose. It was his hope that emancipation could be effected gradually through the voluntary efforts of Southerners. In the meantime, outsiders had the right—indeed, the duty—to plead for an amelioration of the moral and intellectual condition of the Negro under slavery. Olmsted was not impressed by southern efforts to civilize and Christianize the slaves, for there was in the institution itself an inherent tendency toward "degradation of conduct and character." While conceding that the material conditions of slave life were not harsh—food "generally abundant" though coarse, work "light," punishments less severe than those commonly administered to sailors—Olmsted consistently emphasized the brutalizing impact of bondage upon the "soul and mind of the Negro." In the last number of his series, "The South," the Yankee observer wrote what may be considered his bottom line on the evils of slavery: "In my judgment of its ultimate influence, there is no institution in the world, no form of tyranny or custom of society, that is so great an injury, so great a curse upon the whole family of man; nothing that so darkens the evangelical light of Christ, that so obstructs the path of civilization, that so hideously distorts the fair features



and manacles the noble form of just, manly, and beneficent Democracy."

Thus, blacks were not the only victims of slavery. Everywhere he traveled Olmsted found evidence of the debilitating influence of the South's peculiar institution upon its people and economy. He described the nonslaveholders as "unambitious, indolent, degraded and illiterate." Nor were the masters themselves immune to the blight of slavery. Constant association with the institution had rendered them careless, impulsive, inexact, superficially hospitable, and increasingly prone to violence. His New England mind could scarcely fathom "the utter want of system and order" that characterized southern society. Finally, in marked contrast to the assertions of Fogel and Engerman in their recent cliometric study of the slave South, Olmsted was convinced that slave labor was woefully inefficient in comparison to free labor and that slavery had a "universally ruinous" effect upon the southern economy.

Olmsted was perhaps the most perspicacious of all contemporary commentators on the antebellum South. His observations have profoundly influenced succeeding generations of historians. It is important, then, that scholars have access to significant writings by Olmsted that did not appear in his published travel accounts. And that, of course, is the great service of this volume. At the same time, however, it should be remembered that Olmsted articulated a decidedly sectional viewpoint—albeit one informed by personal observations—toward the events which imperiled the Union in the 1850s. Just as he became increasingly agitated by passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the violent behavior or proslavery forces in Kansas, and the Dred Scott decision, so too were Southerners similarly outraged by northern defiance of the Fugitive Slave Law, the arming of free-soil settlers in Kansas, and the intemperance of abolitionist attacks upon the South and her citizens. It was in this atmosphere of mutual mistrust and recrimination that civil war became inevitable.

For the most part, the editorial procedures of the *Olmsted Papers* are unexceptionable. The editors have selected the documents judiciously, the organization is logical, the

various devices inserted to aid the reader serve that function admirably, and the scholarship (with insignificant exceptions) is impeccable and occasionally ingenious. My only reservation concerns the degree of annotation. Following the unfortunate precedent established by other heavily funded and abundantly staffed editorial projects, the editors of the *Olmsted Papers* manifest a propensity for excessive annotation. While the necessity for comprehensive identification of virtually every person, event, or literary piece mentioned in the documents is perhaps debatable, the repeated notation of first names of individuals previously mentioned—sometimes in the preceding document—and even listed in the biographical directory is annoying if not absurd. But such distractions are inconsequential when measured against the intrinsic worth of this volume, which reflects credit upon both the editors and publisher. Students of nineteenth-century America will eagerly await publication of subsequent volumes in this distinguished series.

Reviewed by WILLIAM K. SCARBOROUGH

### "Many a Holy Text"

**Victorian Devotional Poetry: The Tractarian Mode**, by G. B. Tennyson, *Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981. xii + 268 pp. \$17.50.*

IT IS HIGHLY improbable that the poetry which is the subject of Professor G. B. Tennyson's study will again attain the popular renown and the critical consideration that it formerly enjoyed in the Victorian Age. When measured against the indifference and disregard of our own times, it is with some astonishment that we reflect on the centrality and ubiquity of such collections as Keble's *The Christian Year* in the Victorian household. These works, which were chiefly written as devotional accompaniments to the *Book of Common Prayer*, satisfied an appetite for consola-

tion that the present age seems to have repressed or expunged. Tennyson's appreciative tone in this book suggests that an attitude of condescension toward this poetry, despite its minor status, is not legitimate. Keble's *The Christian Year*, which at the height of its popularity was owned by one out of every sixty persons in Britain alone, compels us to reevaluate our notions of "mass" or "popular" culture. Whatever artistic shortcomings may be apparent in these works, they maintain a competent and, at times, praiseworthy level of poetic facility; and the fact that the sentiments they contained were of such wide appeal inevitably leads us to conclude that the "pop" culture of the nineteenth century was more attuned to the fundamental realities of the human condition than the "pop" culture of our time. The burden here is that man does not live by bread alone and that true fulfillment and joy are more readily to be found in self-denial and transcendence than in the instant gratification of the ego or of the senses:

The trivial round, the common task,  
Would furnish all we ought to ask;  
Room to deny ourselves; a road  
To bring us daily nearer God.

Against this popular sentiment, our own mass ethic of consumerism and self-indulgence witnesses a decline in spiritual awareness and authenticity that should keep us from assuming supercilious airs toward Tractarian verse.

Still, the almost instant oblivion accorded this poetry after the first World War is partially understandable—and it is not, as one might suspect, altogether owing to the secular orientation of the modern age. The poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, for example, enjoyed a steady advance in reputation in the twenties and has never entirely lost its cult status. The reasons for the neglect of Tractarian poetry are, perhaps, threefold: first, that "soothing tendency" which Keble consciously fostered in *The Christian Year* ill accords with the disenchantment of our age. For us, great poetry—and especially great religious poetry—depends for its success on convincingly confronting and rising above all those elements in human experience which are antagonistic to a reverent frame of mind.

The religious poets whom we tend to venerate—John Donne, George Herbert, Hopkins—wring their affirmations out of the depths and, in consequence, reflect our own spiritual misgivings. This is not to say that poetry which reposes upon the stability of a doctrinally secure faith cannot be successful. (Even in Dante the fainting fits, hesitations, diffidence, and despair which periodically assail the poet in his journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise give credence to those numinous encounters which wrench the poet into a higher sphere of being.) Keble's shortcomings in this regard are clearly acknowledged by Tennyson. Comparing Keble with Donne or Herbert, Tennyson comments: "One is reminded of the remark about the difference between a biblical angel and a Victorian one. The former strikes terror and appropriately says to the beholder, 'Fear not'; the latter seems to say to the observer, 'There, there.'"

Another feature of Tractarian poetry—especially the poetry of Newman in the *Lyra Apostolica*—that is apt to strike the modern reader as superannuated is its engagement with doctrinal issues in such High Church, pro-Catholic poems as "The Sign of the Cross." Modern Christian apologists—such as C. S. Lewis—in their exposition of a "mere Christianity" that transcends doctrinal distinctions generally eschew any direct engagement with the aesthetics of worship or the refinements of dogma as tending, on the whole, towards divisiveness rather than devotion. In an age whose chief religious preoccupation is the "eclipse of God" the matter of crossing or not crossing oneself seems of secondary importance. And, of course, the third objection which may be raised against this poetry, and one which Tennyson deals with time and again in this book, is the indifference of the Tractarians to the intricacies of poetic craft or to the relations of form and content. This indifference, as Tennyson demonstrates, was built into the Tractarian aesthetic, an aesthetic that regarded poetic creation not from the point of view of verbal artifice (as being too distracting in matters of devotion) but rather in terms of the uses of poetry in the "awakening of some moral or religious feeling."

The difficulty is that the creation of such a feeling tends to become formulaic and that, in point of fact, a poet who regards as primary the attainment of nobility, holiness, or edification and as secondary the careful cultivation of craft is apt to vitiate the former in proportion as he neglects the latter. A single line from Hopkins, "I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day," which renders acutely and disturbingly the dark night of the soul that is the subject of the poem, would be regarded as an overingenious indulgence by the Tractarians. Yet Hopkins's inspiration, as Tennyson convincingly argues, is directly traceable to Tractarian theory and practice.

Perhaps it is unfair to criticize the Tractarians from the perspective of the "New Criticism" and its descendants. After all, these men—Keble, Newman, Isaac Williams—were conscious of the limitations of "occasional" poetry that, as Tennyson observes, "performed its services if it succeeded in pointing the reader to something beyond itself." Tennyson convincingly reveals the dimensions of Tractarian poetry through a lengthy and illuminating discussion of two Tractarian touchstones: *Analogy* and *Reserve*. Both of these categories contain theological as well as aesthetic implications. *Reserve*, as explained by Williams and as exemplified by Keble, is an acknowledgment of the indirection of God's revelation to the world and an expression of humility and circumspection in the reception of that revelation. In consequence, poetry conditioned by "*Reserve*" does not call attention to itself but to its subject. *Analogy* is related to *Reserve* by virtue of its claim that God's presence may be grasped through His creation and that all of nature is susceptible of hallowing by the poetic imagination:

When round thy wondrous works below  
My searching rapturous glance I throw,  
Tracing out Wisdom, Power, and Love,  
In earth or sky, in stream or grove.

The derivation of Tractarian aesthetics from Romantic poetry is unmistakable, and Tennyson frequently calls attention to this fact. Keble, after all, was born in the same year as Shelley and his theories owe much to Wordsworth and Coleridge. Why is it, then,

that Romantic poetry, written in the absence of institutional affiliations, more frequently brings us into contact with the numinous in human experience than does the more explicitly "religious" poetry of the Tractarians? "*Reserve*" and "*Analogy*" are arguably more forcible in a poem like Shelley's "Adonais," where the developing imagery leads the reader beyond the threshold of conceptual knowledge to assent in a transcendent reality, than in those Tractarian poems which make frequent and explicit reference to Biblical parables, Church ceremonies, and religious artifacts. Why is this so? Running throughout Tennyson's study, like a pedal point, is an implicit worrying over this "dissociation of sensibility" in the nineteenth century. Why was it possible for Donne and Herbert to write great Christian poetry that is indisputably major, whereas Keble and Newman, for all their influence, remain indisputably minor? This question agitates Tennyson repeatedly and leads to some of his most thoughtful and probing passages on the relations between religion and literature. For example, in tracing the aftermath of Tractarian influence in Christina Rossetti and Hopkins, Tennyson observes: "In Hopkins there is also a firm conviction that poetry should serve religion, though this conviction was clearly won at greater expense for Hopkins than it was for the Tractarians who perceived no conflict between the two."

Tennyson's achievement in this work lies not only in his demonstration that the poetry and thought of the Victorian age were penetrated with the convictions of Tractarian aesthetics, but also in his reassessment of and meditations on the relations between artistic achievement and spiritual edification:

The establishment, or what the Tractarians would have felt was the re-establishment, of the intimate link between religion and literature remains their most distinctive contribution and ultimately looms larger than the poetry they themselves were able to produce. For, although the idea may at first seem merely quaint, it is one that any serious student of the nature of literature must contend with. If literature is anything more than

neurosis, or stimulus-response, or a toying with the painted surface of the universe, what exactly is it? Does it have anything to do with the deepest spiritual needs of humankind, and if so, are not those needs as much involved with religion as with literature? Further, if there is an involvement between the two, what is its nature? Why have the two enterprises been intertwined since earliest times? Can one stand without the other? Can one subsume the other? At the very least, Tractarin poetic theory raised these questions for the age and continues to raise them for later times. That alone is a notable accomplishment.

Reviewed by STEPHEN I. GURNEY

## *Dante for the Twentieth Century*

**Dante the Maker**, by William Anderson,  
*London, Boston and Henley: Routledge &  
Kegan Paul, 1980. 497 pp. \$45.00.*

IF DANTE WAS "the central man of all the world," as Ruskin called him, we must now be much aware that the phrase means "of the western world." It is from Ruskin's phrase that William Anderson starts, and he implicitly accepts the limitation, when he says that the *Commedia* "has probably exerted a wider influence than any other great work of Western literature."

It is important to remember that the *direct* influence of Dante has been far from constant throughout the centuries. Eugenio Montale makes the point that the poet "was regarded as semi-barbarous and almost incomprehensible a few years after his death"; he did not hold the stage and Voltaire treated him with contempt. It was the medievalism of the Romantic movement and, more generally, the historicism of the nineteenth century, which brought him back to prominence. The indirect currents flowing from this master figure of European poetry have, however, never been still and Mr. William Anderson is right to count among them the drive towards individual characterization which is evident

from Chaucer to Balzac and the modern novel. For those for whom poetry is a central interest, the twentieth century has found another reason for honoring Dante. This is the clarity of his language, which profoundly influenced Pound and Eliot in their discarding of nineteenth-century poeticism. It is primarily this interest which has sent so many twentieth-century readers back to the text and which constitutes its accessibility.

For the *Commedia* is at once the most and the least accessible of long poems. If the surface, line by line and page by page, is of astonishing clarity, not to say luminosity, neither as a whole nor in its parts will the work let the reader rest there. Not only is there a wealth of historical and theological reference which calls for explanation, but what is said clearly is also said darkly and a sense of the "four levels of meaning" is the starting point for endless exploration and debate which six centuries have not exhausted. No one would be foolish enough to claim that Anderson was fully acquainted with all the arcana of Dante scholarship. What he has done is to put together a compendium of main considerations current in this vast literature, inevitably giving it a somewhat personal flavor by emphasis on the aspects which interest him most.

There are advantages and disadvantages about such a procedure. On the one hand, it is convenient to have so much matter between two covers, so that a newcomer can see something of the complexities involved; on the other hand, the personal bias must threaten to push aside the work in favor of the explanations. Anderson has written several books, including *Castles of Europe* and *Cathedrals in Britain and Ireland*; he has been a journalist and he is now the publications manager of the Nuffield Foundation's Science and Mathematics Projects. A man of varied parts, therefore, and one can well believe that it has taken him "several years" to write this book and that in doing so his leisure has been fully employed. One wonders for whom, exactly, the book was intended. The beginner had better spend his time with the text and/or a translation, picking up such clues as he needs from a suitably annotated edition; the Dante scholar will have taken the general field for granted and, when he is not picking nits from

the parts which relate to his own speciality, will look for the personal contribution the author has to make. This letter centers, rather boldly and some would say rashly, round the nature of Dante's creative processes—an obscure subject at the best of times and for the least of writers. One must be slightly uneasy at seeing it discussed so extensively, even by someone whose knowledge extends to the “roles played by the two cerebral hemispheres of the cortex in the human brain.”

A study of any depth in the work of any poet involves some acquaintance with the conditions of his age, even if, as in the case of Shakespeare, the biography is hardly known. With Dante the problem is acute. Wherever we pick up a thread, it runs deep into areas few of us know adequately, and indeed areas of which the most learned plottings are mere sketch-plans. The scope for the partial explanation—as with the Dark Lady of the Sonnets—is large and the ground treacherous. The historian, the theologian, the philosopher, the scientist, all have their field days there, and few there are who do not go beyond Dante to make some point of their own. It is not now possible to establish more than very roughly the perspectives and relativities the poet had. Of his view of Roman antiquity, Anderson does well to point out that it must have been colored by the presence of huge Roman ruins which must have looked gigantic beside the shrunken medieval towns. We see antiquity not only through the modern world but also through the Renaissance, even the Reformation; for Dante, one might almost say that Livy and the New Testament are of equal authority. Dante “put his faith in facts and not ideas”—to quote Montale again. There is a need both to assimilate some of his ideas and to shed them, or at least to hold them in suspense as we do our own, if we are to see the *poem*, which is in no sense a sum of the ideas but a concrete world arranged as it is because of particular sets of historical conditions, intellectual and physical.

A theory of poetic inspiration, as much as any other theory, is dependent on the theology, philosophy, science, and literary practice of its time—whether our time or

Dante's—and cannot be any more central to the understanding of the poem itself than are any of the elements it draws on. The temptation to discuss such a figment, in relation to Dante, is greater than with other poets because there is so much theoretical material lying around to confuse one from the start. Whoever thought of explaining Shakespeare's inspiration? The idea is grotesque partly because Shakespeare himself has spoken on the subject only incidentally and poetically, but also partly because the Elizabethan age, though so different from our own, is not dark enough for us to suppose such secrets to be hidden there. The introduction into the argument of Coleridge and Rilke, incomparably lesser figures, is as likely as not to point in the wrong direction, as it seems to me the mention of Blake certainly must. For Blake's visionary faculty was eccentric in a way Dante's, in 1300, was not, and moreover it issued in writings which, whatever riches they may offer to those who think they can *explain* them, are as poetry far below the *Songs of Innocence and Experience* which, splendid as they are, hardly challenge comparison with even the less significant passages of the *Commedia*. And once explanations of the *Commedia* lose sight of the superlative literary quality of the work, they risk becoming a hindrance to the reader. The immediacy of poetry, that quality which made T. S. Eliot say, in his essay on Dante, that “genuine poetry can be communicated before it is understood,” seems to escape Anderson—which no doubt is what makes him tolerant, in translation, of a post-Victorian poetic diction and a “syntactical variety” unrelated either to contemporary speech or to the original Italian.

Dante followed Virgil and was always alive to the reproof of his master; when Virgil left him, Beatrice guided him instead. It is in a different spirit that Anderson says: “I hope I have given some outline of what an efficient and retentive mind” Dante's was. The scholar who gives us this or that fact about Dante's world may help us to read the *Commedia* better; a writer who claims to go behind the work to the creative process, and to “the degree of consciousness in the artist at the moment of experience” shows a degree of



presumption which Dante as well as Virgil would have reproved. But if there is too much in the conclusions of this book which is approximate and unscientific, there is much information on the way which will be of interest to any reader of Dante.

Reviewed by C. H. Sisson

## *A Bleak State*

**A History of Post-War Soviet Writing: The Literature of Moral Opposition**, by Grigori Svirski, translated and edited by Robert Dessaix and Michael Ulman, *Ann Arbor, Mich.*: 1981. 456 pp. \$17.50.

MR. GRIGORI SVIRSKI'S book is lively and passionate, and this is the best that can be said about it. In recent years, a number of similar books have appeared, written by Russian émigrés of all professions. These books could only appear in vanity presses if they had been written by Western authors. They demonstrate to Western audiences how to engage in the delightful Russian pastime of hipshooting and meandering around various subjects without providing a consistent argument about anything.

Svirski recollects office anecdotes to give a survey of Soviet literature since the Second World War. The anecdotes of the 1970s are largely missing because the author apparently has been in the West for several years now. Svirski's recollections go back to chance meetings in the offices of the Union of Soviet Writers and in the writers' rest home in Yalta. The frequency and the circumstances of these meetings, rather than the originality of the writers themselves, seem to have determined the amount of space devoted to each author. This gives Svirski's book a "shake the hand that shook the hand of John L. Sullivan" flavor. In addition, many plots of novels and stories have been summarized. But there is virtually no literary analysis and consistency in the point of view. The total product is a medley of impressions that are invariably

repetitive, a shortcoming which the editors have been either unwilling or unable to eliminate.

Svirski offers virtually no discussion of Solzhenitsyn on the grounds that "mountains of books and articles" have already been written about him. Hillocks of books and articles have been written about other writers as well, but this fact has not prevented Svirski from writing his book.

For all his criticism of Soviet jingoism and mindlessness, Svirski is clearly a child of Soviet Russia and he has so far been unable to shake off the style of thinking to which the Soviet state has accustomed him. Like the much-vaunted nineteenth-century critic Belinskii, he tries to evaluate the artists by how close they come to telling the truth about the social system. He denounces Dmitrii Panin's *Sologdin's Notes* that questions the positive role of the Russian intelligentsia in history (one of the worst heresies, according to Soviet dogma). The Soviets must be glad to see him say so. Svirski forgets, however, that all those Surkovs and Fadeevs whom he so emphatically condemns are also the intelligentsia, and that generally all social, political, and other movements in Soviet Russia have been run by the intelligentsia. The illiterate peasants and the city workers simply do not produce large numbers of people who have the leisure and know-how to organize, publicize, and become effective. Svirski also seems to be unaware that Panin's argument can be found in a much more coherent and documented form in the West, in books such as Tibor Szamuely's *The Russian Tradition*.

The shortcomings of Svirski's book illustrate the bleak state of Soviet letters. In both its "orthodox" and "dissident" parts, Soviet literature holds on to adolescent experiences and nineteenth-century techniques. Its crude didacticism thrives on inarticulate characters who can be made into victims or heroes by authorial commentary. In Soviet books, descriptions of human motivation, plotting and character building, are invariably predictable. The desire to "remain within the bounds of what is permitted" (Aleksandr Bek) is one source of poor quality. Ignorance and what the Russian author Aleksandr Zinoviev has called the entropization of Soviet society,

is another. "The truth, the unadorned truth" of which Svirski writes with such elation, would not necessarily make good books even if it did appear in Soviet literature in all its Platonic glory. It can make good documentary writings, however, as witnessed by the works of Solzhenitsyn, Eugenia Ginsburg, and a handful of others. However, the "profundities" proffered by authors such as Tendryakov, Belov, Nekrasov, Rasputin, Bek, Kazakov, and dozens of others, consist mainly of folk sayings and proverbs which were coined centuries ago. As examples of good writing, Svirski quotes the following: "Insincerity is artificiality in the creation of something. . . . The history of art and the first principles of psychology cry out against artificiality in the writing of novels and plays" (Pomerantsev). Or, from Tendryakov's story deemed to be "the most profound and meretricious work to come out during the last twenty years in the Soviet Union," the following quote is given: " 'Nikolai Yegorovich! Vasya felt the blood rushing to his face. 'A man is dying! It's not up to me to tell you this. We need a tractor and a trailer. Unless you let us have it, he'll die. . . . ' " You guessed it—he died. The author is, after all, critical of the government, and in the works of such authors characters are likely to come to a sad end.

Svirski seems to be unaware of the schematic and unimaginative structure of this story, and of many others. He does not seem to notice that, depending on whether a Soviet writer is orthodox or critical of the regime, the plot line and character development fall into two distinct categories. In dissident stories, or stories critical of the regime, the characters have doubts about the alleged perfection of the system. They express these doubts by means of folk sayings, and they never overcome their difficulties. They usually end badly, too. Lesson: the system is not perfect, or even stronger: the system is not good. The reader is expected to agree.

In "orthodox" stories and plays the characters have doubts but they overcome them more or less easily, with a substantial help of folk sayings and proverbs. Lesson: the system is satisfactory, but life is, of course, difficult. The reader is expected to agree. In sum, without a sympathetic reader, Soviet prose

and drama, and to a large extent poetry, sound like unintentional scripts for a comic show.

Only now do we begin to assess the full impact of the Soviet cultural and social holocaust. Economically, the message has been driven home by a series of failed five-year plans. But culturally such a radical change of perception has not yet occurred, partly because of the divisions of the Red Army that stand behind each work coming from the Soviet Union, both orthodox and, ironically, dissident, and partly because the teachers of Russian literature in this country have a professional stake in maintaining the *status quo* and in claiming that some works of Soviet authors stand on their own as imaginative literature. One cannot teach *only* Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, after all. For years, many of us have attended seminars, lectures, and poetry readings delivered both by those Soviet poets, novelists and intellectuals who came to the West on a visit, and by those who have had the good sense, and good luck, to emigrate permanently. We have waited vainly for the spark of inspiration to shine forth when the next pundit comes to town. Svirski's book makes one rather confident that we need not bother to attend those lectures any longer, but rather to proclaim that the emperor is, in fact, naked.

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Reviewed by EWA M. THOMPSON

## *American Literature*

**Literary Democracy: The Declaration of Cultural Independence in America**, by Larzer Ziff, *New York: The Viking Press, 1981. xxviii + 333 pp. \$20.00.*

PROFESSOR LARZER ZIFF'S subject is American literature between the Panic of 1837 and the Civil War, the period during which, as he sees it, American writers "developed a distinct way of imagining the world." His focus is upon

Poe, Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Whitman, and Melville, but he also pays considerable attention to Harriet Beecher Stowe, George Lippard, Margaret Fuller, and George Washington Harris, whom he considers "one of the greatest American writers of his day," cruelly handicapped by the fact that the nature of his material made it impossible for him to acquire more than "a readership that fell short of the full stretch of his genius."

These writers differed from their predecessors not only in abandoning the idea "that American literature must be either practical in purpose or classical in form to the new idea that it was the voice of the latest forces of the land," and this could not have been achieved without the preliminary development of "a new nationalism" providing "a positive dynamic sense of American identity." Primarily, then, Ziff's is "a descriptive narrative of how a major literature arose in the United States" during the period indicated, but he has not outlawed either literary or linguistic analysis nor is he indifferent to "about *why* it happened."

Among his predecessors, he makes his bow to F. O. Matthiessen in *American Renaissance* and to Van Wyck Brooks in the "Makers and Finders" series, but he differs from Brooks in being primarily concerned not with "the flavor of the world" his writers inhabited but rather with the way these matters, especially in the area of "cultural anxieties," "worked their way into the form and texture of literature" and from Matthiessen in centering his attention not upon "the aesthetics of American Romanticism" but rather upon the "cultural context" of the works with which he is concerned. It is interesting that he should make no mention of the once widely influential Vernon Louis Parrington, who, like him, was greatly interested in the cultural backgrounds of literature but who, only occasionally, as in his enthusiasm for James Branch Cabell, gave any indication of being primarily interested in literature itself.

Of the flavor of Ziff's book I cannot hope to give more than suggestions in a brief review. He sees Emerson as representing the "mythic" rather than the historical "nature of our existence," and it was quite suitable that the address on "The American Scholar," often

called our cultural declaration of independence, should be delivered in the year of the great Panic; this was the time to make the assertion that "man is not the creature of history" and that "it was not history that was at fault but those who lived history rather than their own lives." Though Emerson saw "essentially the same conditions" as Marx and Engels, he remained "totally distrustful of collective action as the remedy," and when he was pressed to single out the one original American idea, he found it in the "dogma of no-government and non-resistance," the "only true majority" being the individual's own sense of right. Thoreau, though, in his way of life, far more of a "come-outer" than Emerson, was nevertheless more "consistently political in the goal of his writing," for he "believed he was constructing a program for Americans." In this he resembled Whitman; both "wrote politically in the sense that they addressed an audience envisaged as fellow citizens of their American world, and in consequence they were political in that they were engaged in telling people how to manage their lives."

Thoreau responded to the fecundity of summer beyond what many of his contemporaries would have rated decorous and came to believe that in wildness lay the preservation of the world, yet essentially he was not trying to send people into the wilds but only to incite each man to accept and to follow the nature of the "essential self, which retains its rhythms independent of location so long as one is alerted to listen to them." Though he was one of the pioneer American conservationists, "he did not oppose using nature for human life" but simply "condemned abusing it for profit beyond sustenance." Nor were his resemblance to and his admiration for Whitman accidental, for though Whitman seems far removed from Thoreau's New England Puritanism, "he was shaped in the verbal tradition of the Friends, which was an extension—to the point of lunacy, the Puritans believed—of the Puritan perception."

A book which covers so much naturally leaves the way open for dissent here and there. The shadow of what E. E. Stoll used to call "the bad news from Vienna" seems to fall across Chapter Eight, where the author leaves the impression, on my mind at least, that he

imputes Hester Prynne's heresies to Hawthorne or makes her the spokesman for her creator (this is not supported by what he writes elsewhere), and his use of Poe to support his main thesis seems undercut by his admission that Poe did *not* express the dominant concerns of his time ("Poe himself, after discovering what became of Pym, said farewell to the restrictions of America and sought attachment to the supernal").

Obviously, then, this is the kind of book that cannot be fairly or authoritatively evaluated upon its first appearance; to assess its seminal potentiality we shall have to wait until we can determine to what extent it will influence and be taken up into the current of scholarly opinion. Life, of which literature is a form or an expression, is always larger than any explanation thereof, and it must be clear to all his readers that Ziff's heroes are those early American writers who chance to be currently fashionable. But Longfellow, Lowell, and Whittier (and especially Whittier) all made extensive use of American materials, and he would be a brave man who should venture to deny that there was literary nationalism in them. It is due to Ziff to say that his references to all three writers are knowledgeable, but he never mentions "The Biglow Papers" nor yet Longfellow's commencement oration on "Our Native Writers" nor his 1832 *North American Review* article on "The Defence of Poetry," in both of which he anticipated some of the ideas Emerson would voice in "The American Scholar."

The value of this book is not, however, entirely dependent upon whether or not the reader accepts its central thesis; even dissenters will find much worth pondering in the author's careful probing of the various figures he takes under his critical lens. I do not wish to be understood as disparaging what he says about his major figures when I suggest that many readers may find him even more valuable on the lesser fry; I simply mean that, in view of what has already been done, we *need* him more for George Lippard, Margaret Fuller, and George Washington Harris than we do for Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, or

Melville. (This is true to a lesser extent for Mrs. Stowe, to whom scholars have, in large measure, made up during recent years for the neglect and disparagement she suffered earlier in the century.)

Ziff's account of Margaret Fuller is refreshingly free of both male condescension and female special pleading (she has suffered from both). To him her career shows "enormous intelligent energy seeking some form of social effectiveness." He believes that under other conditions she might have become a creative writer and that she had just succeeded in "attaching passion to intelligence, will to action, self to history" when death intervened. Harris, whom both Mark Twain and Faulkner knew well, revolted against the "genteel tradition" long before most of us knew there was such a thing in "his celebration of the primal, his ability to slide persuasively into the epic and out again, his keen eye for animation, his subtle ear for the offbeat, anticlimactic, comic line, and his capacity to symbolize in incident the nexus of antiintellectualism, sexual vigor, antiauthoritarianism, and cruel physical force buried in the psyche of the folk." And Lippard was to the American novel something like what Hearst was to American journalism. He named Philadelphia "the Quaker City," made "the castle of gothic horrors . . . a metaphor of the city," and wrote *The Monks of Monk Hall*, "the most popular novel in America prior to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*." If he was "a hack writer," he was sensitive to abuses which many better writers overlooked, and his "social vision did provide the first telling images of modern political paranoia."

Ziff's references are nearly all to his authors themselves and to background materials; there are very few to critical studies, especially in serials. This may indicate uncommon originality on his part, but I greatly doubt that his reading has been narrow. Rather, I should conjecture, he possesses unusual ability to absorb his reading and make it his own.

Reviewed by EDWARD WAGENKNECHT

## Marx Against Darwin

**Le Grand Affrontement: Marx et Darwin,**  
by Yves Christen, Paris: Éditions Albin  
Michel, 1981. 268 pp.

THE CENTURY-LONG conflict between Marxism and Darwinism can be envisaged as the main contemporary form of the continuing clash between science and pseudo-science, between the rule of reason and the dominion of unreasonable dogma.

The author of this comprehensive, scholarly, impressive, and original work is a young French biologist who abandoned his research in genetics and immunology at the Institut Pasteur to become a professional writer on the interrelationships between biology and human society.

Dr. Yves Christen is author of *l'Heure de Sociobiologie*. He is also editor-in-chief of the *Sciences d'Aujourd'hui* collection that is bringing French readers not only contemporary surveys of the physical and life sciences, but also the major philosophical writings of such Nobel laureates as Werner Heisenberg and the late Prince de Broglie.

Marx and Engels had little use for Darwin's great synthesis of the life sciences, but they saw the political and pecuniary advantages of riding on Darwin's coattails. They alleged that both men had made parallel intellectual discoveries that revolutionized man's conception of the universe of living things. Followers of Marx perpetuated this hoax and gave it general credence. Sir Isaiah Berlin in his overrated 1959 volume, *Karl Marx*, tells us that Marx "offered to dedicate his book to Darwin, for whom he had a greater intellectual admiration than for any other of his contemporaries, regarding him as having, by his theory of evolution and natural selection, done for the morphology of the natural sciences what he himself was trying to do for human history. Darwin hastily declined the honor...."

Almost every phrase of this turgid prose contains a falsehood. I have shown in my *Karl Marx: Racist* (1979) that Marx sneered at Darwin and his theories and considered the crackpot ethnologist, Pierre Trémaux, an in-

comparably greater figure. Marx's rejection of Darwinism was due largely to the fact that evolutionary biology is incompatible with the anti-scientific methodology of dialectical materialism. Marx considered the Darwinian stress on the struggle for survival as an apologia for the existing social order.

Above all, Christen observes, Marx not only held racist views but also espoused a subterranean racist philosophy of history. Marx hailed Trémaux's alleged discovery that "the backward negro is not an evolved ape, but a *degenerate man*." He and Engels advocated "the most determined terror against Slavic peoples" and joyfully foresaw a "race war" in which "entire reactionary peoples" (Slavic and Balkan, of course) would "disappear from the face of the earth." He referred to Russians as Kalmucks and to Frenchmen, two of whom had married his daughters, as crapheads ("crapauds"). All this was combined with a gutter anti-Semitism that the late Julius Streicher would have envied. Naturally, views of this sort would have been repugnant to Darwin, who belonged to that enlightened upper class which was affiliated with the Liberal Party and which Trollope depicted in his political novels.

Christen has pursued the matter a bit further and shown conclusively that Marx never offered to dedicate the English edition of *Das Kapital* (Volume I) to Darwin. Conclusive documentary research reveals that Darwin's letter of refusal referred to some anti-religious tracts by Edward Aveling, the lover of Marx's daughter Eleanor, an adventurer of whom Marx approved, but who was characterized by Karl Kautsky as "an evil creature," by Eduard Bernstein as "a despicable rogue," by George Bernard Shaw as "a thief," and by the talented South African novelist, Olive Schreiner, as a man who inspired her with "fear and horror." It is true that Marx sent Darwin a copy of his *magnum opus*. Christen informs us that 717 of its 822 pages remained uncut.

This book traces the ambivalent and ambiguous relationships between Darwinism and Marxism from Marx's death in 1883 to the present. The Darwinians aroused sympathy in socialist circles because they were on a collision course with the Church of England and



most of the religious establishment of Christendom. The fundamental issue was not the veridicality of the Genesis chronology, but whether man was created by God or evolved from ape-like ancestors. The basic meta-physical issue was whether the universe had been created for a moral purpose or whether it had evolved in accordance with natural laws which had no teleological or anthropocentric components.

Accordingly, there was an early affinity between many Darwinists and many Marxists until the Ice Age of dialectical materialist orthodoxy under Stalin. Karl Pearson, a founder of mathematical statistics and Galton's heir-apparent in the eugenics movement, was a student of Marx and a member of the Fabian intellectual clique. An American socialist, Arthur Lewis, welcomed August Weismann's discovery that acquired characteristics could not be inherited because of the insulation of germ cells. "If it were true," Lewis wrote in 1908, "that the terrible effects of the degrading conditions of life to which the lower class is subjected were transmitted to their children by heredity, to become fixed characteristics after several generations, the hopes of socialists for a regeneration of society would have been difficult to justify."

Socialists argued against the right to abortion, asserting that whether or not any fetus is brought to full term is a matter which society, not the mother, must decide. During the early years of the Bolshevik regime, the Russian section of the eugenics movement was the largest and most influential in Europe. These radical eugenicists did not accept the social Darwinism of such conservative thinkers as William G. Sumner, who inferred from the struggle for existence that the rich and powerful were the morally fittest members of society.

Prince Peter Kropotkin, the anarchist philosopher, speculated that the ability to persuade people to cooperate had displaced or would displace brute strength and ferocity as survival prerequisites. These views seem to foreshadow some of Edward Wilson's later speculation concerning the role of social altruism in sociobiology.

Future Nobel laureate Hermann Muller

went to the Soviet Union during the twilight of this strange pseudo-entente between Marxism and eugenics at the request of the Kremlin. He praised the unparalleled advances of the U.S.S.R. in conquering the physical environment. (What advances? one may ask. The Gulag forced labor camps perhaps? Like many professors, Dr. Muller had a neonatal innocence about the facts of social life.) These prodigious achievements, Muller argued, should be *dialectically* matched with a eugenics program for breeding geniuses who would carry the torch of Soviet civilization even further forward! He proposed that the state allow Soviet women to be inseminated with the frozen sperm of dead geniuses, all posthumously certified to have been mental prodigies and moral paragons by the appropriate arm of the Soviet bureaucracy.

But the honeymoon with the Darwinians, the geneticists, and the eugenicists was over. The clownish figure of Trofim Lyssenko dominated Soviet biology, proclaiming fraudulent miracles backed by unscientific theories. Soviet scientists in biology and genetics either paid homage to the new charlatans and denounced colleagues who failed to follow suit or else were rounded up and sent to forced labor camps where some of them perished.

Muller, being an American, was simply kicked out of Russia. He wrote a book defending what he had tried to accomplish and was one of the few intellectuals of the 1930's who had the valor and the vision to proclaim the fundamental similarity of the Hitler and Stalin dictatorships. Nevertheless, in that book, *Out of the Night*, Muller rhapsodized, "In an enlightened collective society, stripped bare of superstitious tabus and of sexual slavery, how many women would be avid and proud to bear in their loins and rear a son of Lenin or of Darwin?"

The Ice Age not only snuffed out some of the more creative Soviet scientific minds, but forced them to make obeisance to the gibberish of dialectical materialism and the sacred writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. It lasted almost half a century. There are some indications of slow glacial retreat, but they are merely partial, and much of Soviet science is still sliced or racked on its Procrustean bed.

Marx made a great show of having created "scientific socialism." Yet the Founding Father's ignorance of science was matched only by his credulity and unerring instinct to espouse crackpot theories. He dabbled in phrenology, rejected Pasteur's discovery that germs caused disease, believed in the spontaneous generation of living things in sterile cultures, scorned Darwin, but extolled Trémaux, claimed that Moses had actually been a renegade Egyptian priest who led a band of lepers, etc.

His martinet *alter ego*, Engels, devoutly elaborated the master's misconceptions, devoting his precise, pedantic mind to creating a closed system of scientific method based on dialectical materialism. His *Dialectics of Nature* and *Anti-Dühring* would keep Soviet and Communist science in chains for about a century—that is to say, up to the present.

Darwinism was rejected mainly because its mechanism of species variation by the accumulation of minute changes conflicted with the Marxian dialectic and its tempo of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. All natural processes must represent the clash of opposing forces and the resolution of that conflict on a higher plane. Modern demographic theory was summarily dismissed in the Soviet Empire (though not in the somewhat less unintelligent Mao Tse-tung regime) on the grounds that Malthus was a toady of British capitalism and that overpopulation is impossible under socialism. Engels rejected the Second Law of Thermodynamics for equally preposterous reasons.

Trofim Lyssenko, who reigned over Soviet biology with such calamitous consequences between 1937 and 1966, "denied the existence of chromosomes, of intraspecific Darwinian competition, defended the theory that acquired characteristics can be inherited" and claimed to be able to transform wheat into rye.

The know-it-all Engels had proclaimed that Pasteur's experiments disproving the possibility of spontaneous generation of life were frivolous and without merit. Following in his footsteps, the Soviet Union discovered the scientific genius of Mme. Lépéchinškaia who claimed to be able to transform crystals into bacteria. After her death, her daughter,

Olga, continued this noble work and was similarly honored. All this occurred, not in the dark ages of Stalinist paranoia but in the 1960's. The infestation of French intellectual life by Marxists reached such appalling proportions that in 1968 a university professor of biology at Marseilles devoted a full hour's lecture to the Lépéchinškaia discoveries.

Until 1979 the Soviet Government officially rejected the plate theory of continental drift which today dominates geology. Since then the Russians have made grudging concessions that there may be something to it. The trouble with the theory is that it contradicts Engels' dialectical vision of geology as a field in which change is the product of clash and cataclysm.

"The theory of relativity is manifestly anti-scientific," Kremlin science spokesman Maximov pronounced in 1948. Einstein's works were banned in Germany for about a decade and in the Soviet Union for several decades. Rejection of Einstein's physics did not, unfortunately, prevent the Soviet military from developing nuclear weapons. Computer programming and cybernetics were officially damned as "obscurantist," until the Soviet military told the ideologues that without computers they would lose World War III.

These instances could be multiplied. Christen points out that not a single scientific discovery of any validity has ever been made by means of dialectical materialism. The younger generation of Soviet and satellite intellectuals reportedly considers dialectical materialism gibberish and, in Poland recently, university students demanded that compulsory attendance at dia-mat courses be terminated.

The dead hand of Marxian secular superstition no longer throttles Soviet science as it did during the Stalin era, but a vast corpus of scientific literature is withheld from Soviet students for ideological reasons. Original and creative work often has to be translated into the doublespeak of dia-mat. Not since the Middle Ages has the human mind in more or less civilized countries been misshapen by this sort of puerile nonsense.

We learn from Christen the extent to which the French scientific community has been infected with Marxism-Leninism. Where Soviet

scientists prostitute themselves to palpable falsehood to survive and do their work, Western Communist scientists have no such excuse.

Christen quotes an interesting observation from *Das Kapital* which may serve to reveal some of the inner psychological differences between Marx's *Weltanschauung* and that of Charles Darwin: "In history as in nature, corruption is the laboratory of life." Darwin accepted sexuality, struggle, the intricate and ever-changing patterns of natural processes with the serene pleasure of the dispassionate observer. Marx's world-view, by contrast, was dominated by rage and envy. Long before he professed any sympathy for the proletariat, he depicted the world in his poetry as a barren, putrefying arena of death.

Christen's study is a book of major importance that should be translated into English and into the other languages that free peoples speak and read. It is in pleasant contrast to the pedantic and hagiographic studies of Marx and Marxism that pour from the presses and that do so little to enhance the intellectual life of modern man.

Reviewed by NATHANIEL WEYL

## *Dilemmas of the Russian Revolutionary Tradition*

**Russia's Failed Revolutions: From the Decembrists to the Dissidents**, by Adam B. Ulam, *New York: Basic Books, 1981.*  
vii. + 453 pp. \$18.95.

IN THE SPACE of a brief review it is impossible to do justice to Professor Adam B. Ulam's massive survey and analysis of the last century and a half of Russian political history. For, despite the more restrictive title, that is what this book amounts to. Accordingly, I will cover three basic things: a brief glance at the seven chapters of the volume, a focus on several

outstanding and recurrent themes, and a comment on the view of history that animates this and other works of the author.

### I

CHAPTER I deals with the abortive revolutionary coup of the Decembrists in 1825. Ulam points out the ambivalence of the conspirators and their lack of a mass political base. Chapter II passes quickly over the rather gloomy reign of Nicholas I and portrays the 1860's and 1870's, showing how an imperfect liberalization, punctuated by Alexander II's freeing of the serfs in 1861, remained trapped within the confines of the autocratic system. Half-way measures satisfied neither the phalanx of reactionaries for whom any change was a prelude to disaster nor the radical intelligentsia typified by Alexander Herzen. Caught in the middle and excluded from power, liberal and moderate forces could never develop real sophistication and political pragmatism as found with their counterparts in other countries.

Chapter III is a fairly standard rendition of the abortive 1905 revolution, which makes it a sort of dress rehearsal for the more lasting cataclysm twelve years later. Chapter IV depicts Nicholas II's flubbing a virtual last chance to modernize the political order, while beginning to tackle the grave social and national problems of the imperial colossus. As a counterpart to this, Ulam praises the statesmanship of two governmental leaders whose failure to complete reformist programs tragically reflected the basic flaws of the regime and the social order. Count Witte, an adept at economic modernization, was dismissed from office largely because he was *persona non grata* with the Czaritsa, Alexandra. Minister Stolypin, skilled in the arts of political maneuver, was slain by an assassin's bullet in 1911. Chapter V describes the impact of World War I on the weakening imperial edifice and shows how the bureaucratic morass and mediocrity allowed the Russian armies to snatch stalemate from the jaws of victory.

Chapter VI is perhaps the best of all because it beautifully depicts the ouster of the moderate forces (Kadets, Right Mensheviks, Right Socialist Revolutionaries, etc.) by the

radicals (Lenin and the Bolsheviks) in 1917. Among the several points worthy of mention here is Ulam's contention that war-weariness and outright defeatism were weaker and slower to grow than many accounts of the end of the dynasty and the provisional government would suggest. Indeed, and this reflects the experience of other revolutions, the czarist government's inability to win the war was perhaps a more potent cause of disaffection than the hardships and brutalization attending it. Lenin, in fact, made some initial and nearly fatal miscalculations on this score. A second point is Ulam's skillful evocation of the euphoric or festive ambiance that prevailed in the first weeks after the revolutionary breakthrough. Despite violence and polarization revolutions produce a carnival-like atmosphere that accounts by social scientists commonly neglect or underplay. The main Russian manifestation of this euphoria was effusive oratory that continued around the clock. A third point is the interplay between the political naïveté and myopia of the moderate elements and the almost cynical realism and percipience of Lenin.

Of course, one could question including Chapters V and VI in a study of Russia's "failed revolutions." But Ulam has an answer, if not a wholly satisfactory one, for this. He argues that 1917 must be considered at least a partial failure insofar as the aims of the initial (non-Communist) February Revolution—freedom and constitutionalism—were not lastingly achieved. Thus, he is driven to call the Bolshevik coup in October a "counterrevolution." This is too much, however, since it defines the aims of the revolution somewhat tendentiously within a basically liberal framework. (This problem also afflicts Hannah Arendt's *On Revolution*.) That Lenin as one kind of revolutionary kicked out some other kinds of revolutionaries and instituted a repressive regime does not make the event a "Counterrevolution." Cromwell and Robespierre did the same thing, but were no more counterrevolutionaries than Lenin.

The closing chapter on "Stalinism and After" deals with Stalinism, de-Stalinization, and the emergence of dissent. Ulam's account stresses the substantial changes that have followed March 4, 1953 and suggests that fur-

ther liberalization was a partial cause of Khrushchev's removal in October 1964. The Brezhnev-Kosygin regime represents neither a full return to Stalinism nor much of an advance to freedom. The basic contradiction of the contemporary U.S.S.R. is that the obvious irrelevance of the ideology makes the effort to maintain it still more vigorous.

## II

FROM THE POLITICAL standpoint, three overarching themes run through Ulam's treatment of the last 150 years of Russian history: The political idiocy of the regime-reactionary forces; the political naïveté of the liberal-moderate forces; and the political romanticism of the radical-revolutionary forces.

From Nicholas I to Nicholas II (1825-1917) the czars and their supporters were blindly committed to absolute autocracy. While liberalism and parliamentarism advanced in the West, Slavophiles and others denied their relevance to Mother Russia. Czar after czar rejected even mild concessions to constitutionalism, not so much out of power-lust, but through a "divine-right" political formula. Reforms were "gratuitous gifts" from the monarch, not practical expedients or basic human rights. This sort of intransigence of principle dissuaded Nicholas II from a serious and sincere rapprochement with constitutionalism with the Dumas after 1905.

The liberals' political naïveté was not wholly of their own making. Since autocracy precluded the rough-and-tumble of a real politics and since liberalism generally disqualified one from bureaucratic office, Russian liberalism tended to be abstract and visionary. The chastening experience of actual political responsibility was foreclosed to some of the best minds and hearts in the state. A fatal instance of liberal ingenuousness was a kind of *pas ennemie à gauche* that kept liberals from seeing dangers to their left. This is what happened to Paul Milyukov, for a brief period foreign minister after the February Revolution.

The political romanticism of the radicals and revolutionaries involved a gross overestimation of what would and could be gained through revolution. Reformism was ruled out as a compromise with evil and a worthless substitute for total virtue. Such a mythical

quality attributed to revolution easily degenerates into the ends-justifies-the means. Sergei Nechayev is, of course, paradigmatic, but Lenin's "moral is what is good for the revolution" suggests something similar.

One ironical note that Ulam repeatedly marks, and applies even to Stalin's tyranny, is the force of the autocratic myth even with liberal and radical opponents. Like the professed atheist who feels a strange sense of awe in a rare visit to church or surprises himself praying in a pinch, the legitimacy of one-man rule had a residual hold over its ostensible deniers. The dictators have in some ways simply stepped into the shoes of the czars.

### III

ULAM VOICES scepticism about theories that attribute historical outcomes solely or even mainly to the work of vast, impersonal forces. Personality, he is sure, is an independent variable of often decisive import. But ironically, outside of Lenin and perhaps Stalin, Ulam sees the impact of personality on Russian-Soviet history as the diametric opposite of the Carlylean "great man." The succession of czars from 1825 to 1917 lacked heroic figures like Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, or even Catherine. It was weakness, narrowness of vision, and indecisiveness that plagued the last four czars and their governments.

We can grasp Ulam's point better if we consider Sidney Hook's contrast between the "event-making" and the merely "eventful" man. The former is able to sense the openings for action that the historical situation presents and to intervene successfully in a way that reflects his distinct personality and goals. The merely eventful man simply happens to be in the right (or perhaps, wrong) place at the right time. Thrust forward by events or exposed by social position, he is at sea among the welter of immediate challenges and opportunities. His sense of timing is askew and his values incoherent. Whether victim or beneficiary, he is no true maker of history.

As autocrats, the Russian czars were in a unique position to be either event-making or eventful men. Those covered in Ulam's history were clearly all the latter. The most egregious case is the tragi-comic figure of

Nicholas II. He was the most perfect and pitiful foil to Carlyle's heroic leader. A man of good will, patriotism, and some admirable personal traits, he was the worst possible man to rule a seething multi-national empire at a time when both ethnic nationalism and the "social question" were exploding into their twentieth-century configurations.

Intransigent where policy demanded composing differences, flaccid where firmness was essential, his decisions reflected his own mediocrity. While Ulam rightfully prunes down the Rasputin legend, his own narrative shows how the triadic relationship between the "holy man," Nicholas, and Alexandra was symptomatic of the political malaise of the old regime. Nicholas was bad enough; Nicholas prompted by Alexandra (and indirectly by Rasputin) was catastrophic.

The event-making man of the story was Lenin himself. Students of revolution often divide leadership into ideologists, agitators, and administrators. Some say that each type dominates in a specific phase of revolution or that each demands a specific sort of personality. Lenin's greatness lay in his ability to combine all three roles and to find loyal subordinates who could shoulder some of the resulting burden. Lenin made the difference and Ulam's treatment does not depart much from his earlier more elaborate analysis in *The Bolsheviks*.

The sharp contrast between the last ruler of the old regime and the first ruler of the new raises some interesting questions for Ulam. What if a more talented czar than Nicholas II had been on the throne? Or what if Lenin's stroke had occurred a decade earlier? I have generally felt that without World War I the old system would not have collapsed when and how it did and Lenin would have been denied the chance to display his consummate political skills. Ulam questions part of this thesis and he may be right. The old-fashioned empires all went one way or the other and Marxism in one variant or another is a formative force of our time.

But we can still ask whether the revolution could have been avoided or could have taken a course different than the one culminating in Stalinist totalitarianism. It does appear that things could have worked out differently. The



crisis of 1905 was warning enough of radical defects in the antique autocratic system. Had Nicholas seen further and better than he did, a more decisive move towards representative and responsible government might have appeased moderate critics, while improving the governance of the great empire.

Nonetheless, we must not forget, as Ulam often reminds us, that the Russian Revolution was a non-Russian revolution too. Ethnic nationalism of Poles, Finns, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Georgians, Armenians, Jews, and a variety of Turkic and Muslim peoples was growing. Could even a constitutional state accommodate these burgeoning claims for autonomy or statehood? Revolution, autocracy, or dismemberment seem the only ways out as the present-day Soviet leaders know but cannot admit openly.

More specifically, what about the October victory of Lenin and the Bolsheviks over Kerensky's provisional government? Ulam's conclusion, and he is most certainly correct, is that Lenin was the indispensable man. He outmaneuvered all political opponents and forced "adventurist" policies down the throats of his less resolute Bolshevik colleagues. Both the ambitiousness of his goals and his ability to realize them went well beyond those of other leaders on the scene. It is a very good bet that without Lenin the Bolsheviks would not have come to power in the whole of the vast land-mass that is now the U.S.S.R. and thus without him the history of our era would have been a dramatically different one.

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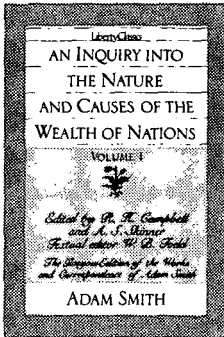
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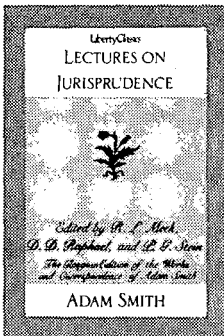
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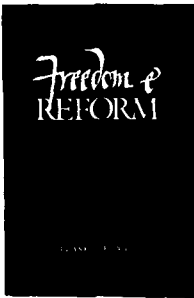
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