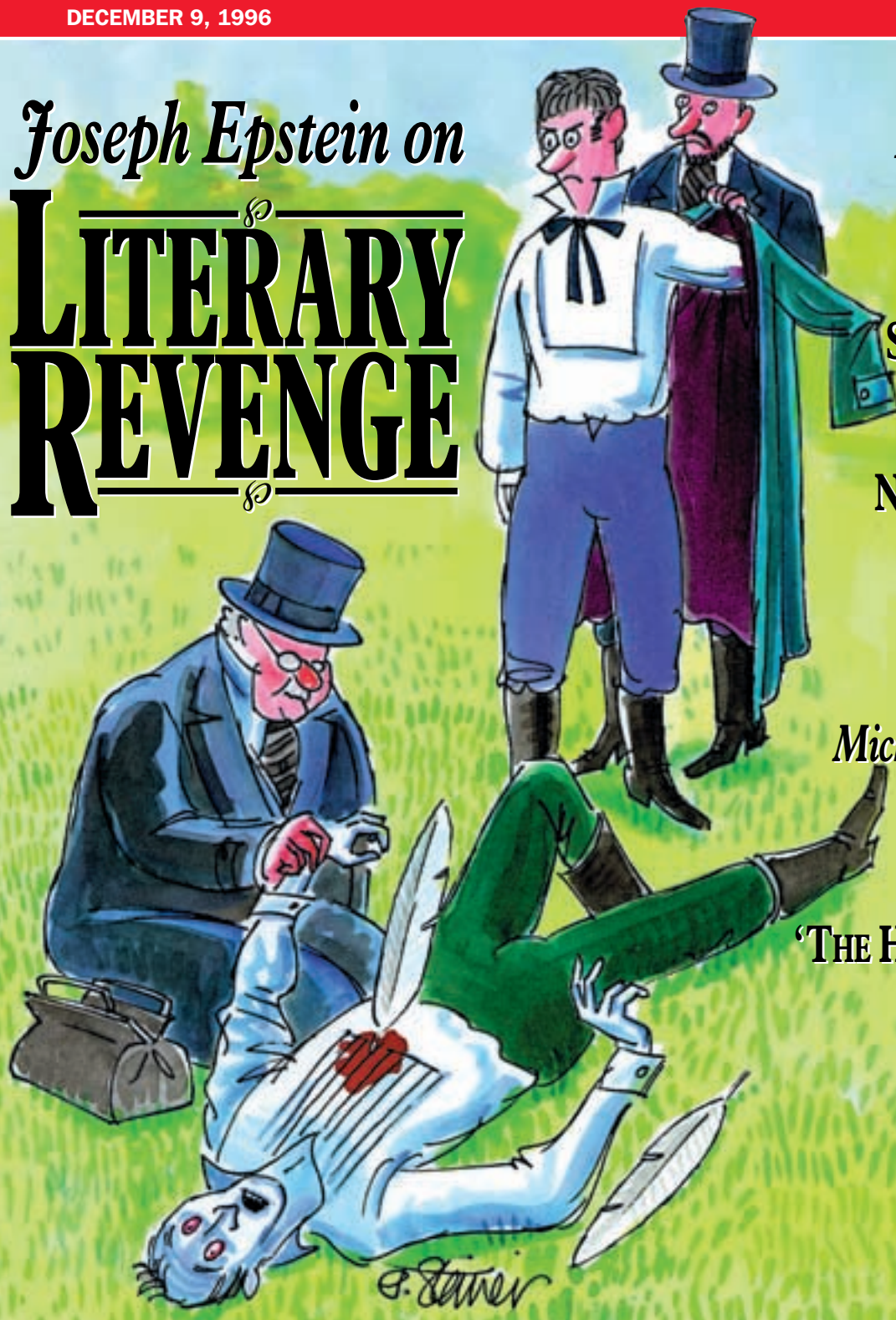
BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS (and Hanukkah too)

the weekly Standard

DECEMBER 9, 1996 $2.95

Joseph Epstein on

LITERARY REVENGE



Harvey Mansfield on MAX WEBER

Robert Kagan on SAMUEL HUNTINGTON

Robert D. Novak on NELSON ROCKEFELLER

Lewis Libby on 'THE IDEA OF JAPAN'

Michael Valdez Moses on SAMUEL BECKETT

Saul Rosenberg on 'THE HANDMAID OF DESIRE'

the weekly Standard

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BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS (and Hanukkah too)

Cover art by Peter Steiner

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It Takes a Rabbi

There's a whiff of 1974 in the air—July 1974, to be precise. That's when the National Citizens' Committee for Fairness to the Presidency held a star-studded fund-raiser in defense of the beleaguered Richard Nixon.

You don't remember the Fairness to the Presidency Committee? Rabbi Baruch Korff, a Nixon confidant, was the group's founder. Presiding at the fund-raiser, he exhorted the faithful to open their wallets and defend the honor of their commander in chief. In attendance was a host of reliables: Earl Butz, the secretary of agriculture who later would go one joke over the line; a pre-*Group* John McLaughlin, S.J.; Anne Armstrong, the future ambassador to Great Britain; future failed politicians Pat Buchanan and Bruce Herschensohn; and Bill Baroody, head of the only Republican think tank that counted in those days of late Nixonism, the American Enterprise Institute. A Baptist minister prayed for deliverance from a "malicious press corps." Lionel Hampton, still a Republican then, played his vibes. He even had a new number: "We Need Nixon." About three weeks later, Nixon was winging it back to San Clemente.

Now it is 1996, and another such committee is being formed, this time to carry water for a beleaguered Bill Clinton. The only apparent difference is that instead of a rabbi, a political hack will head the effort. Yes, in between performing in American Express ads, James Carville is launching a group that will, he announced on *Meet the Press*, "raise a lot of money" to counter "the right-wing agenda" of independent counsel Kenneth Starr.

No word yet on whether Barbra Streisand is preparing a new song, "People Who Need Clinton." And details are scant in other respects as well. That's where you can help.

We invite Scrapbook readers to give Carville an assist in his efforts to revive the lost spirit of 1974. Specifically, we think Carville could use an interfaith board of directors for his committee. We welcome your nominations for rabbis, priests, ministers, and, in a nod to 1996, Buddhist monks to serve on this board. Carville's committee, it further strikes us, could use a catchy name. Your suggestions are encouraged. Finally, nominations of musician and theme song appropriate for future fund-raisers are solicited. Please mail your best efforts to Help James Bring Back 1974, at The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036.

Taking Stockman

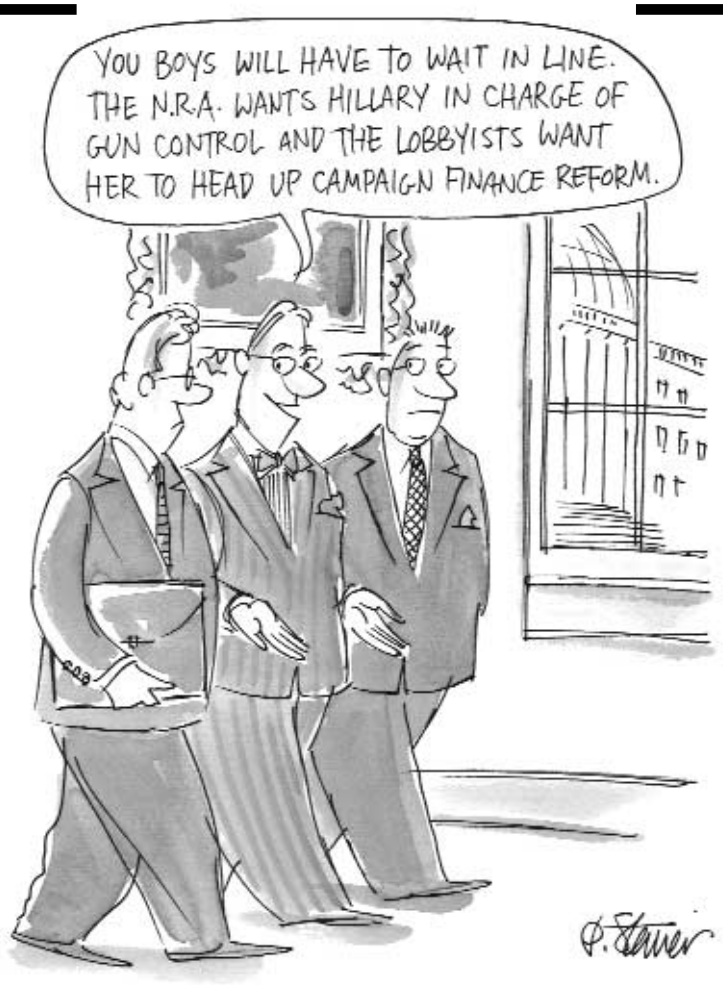
When the dust settles from the remaining runoff elections, Republicans are likely to wind up with 228 House seats, only two fewer than they had after the 1994 election (six more were added later by Democratic defections). The latest addition: the much-maligned Steve Stockman of Texas, whose reputation as poster boy for the militias was, according to Beltway wisdom, going to doom him this year.

Stockman was heavily targeted by organized labor and failed to reach 50 percent on November 5 (he got 46 percent), which under Texas rules forces a runoff on December 10 in a district that was redrawn by court order earlier this year. But things have turned Stockman's way. The Democrat who came in third on Election Day, Geraldine Sam, has endorsed Stockman, not his Democratic foe, Nick Lampson, who got 44 percent. "That makes an important difference," insists congressman Bill Paxon, chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee. Money makes an even bigger difference. "We'll spend whatever it takes," says Paxon.

Court rulings last summer in effect nullified the $70,000 ceiling on what the committee can spend in a single congressional race. Thus, it spent $500,000 to $600,000 in some races, such as the narrow reelection victory of Rep. J.D. Hayworth in Arizona. "We can do whatever we want to hold that seat," says Paxon.

While labor pours in money to help Lampson, Paxon says Republicans will match every dime. Moreover, having held the House helps. Voters know the winning team, says Paxon, "so the question is: Do they want their representative to be on that team?" It looks like the answer may be yes.

Scrapbook



A Dobbsian World

Michael Dobbs, the *Washington Post*'s State Department correspondent, don't know much about history—even recent history. In an editorial masquerading as a news story about the Clinton administration's human rights policy toward China last week, Dobbs badly mangled the Reagan administration's human rights record. Of Elliott Abrams, Reagan's assistant secretary of state for human rights and later for Latin American affairs, Dobbs wrote simply that he "was roundly disliked by the human rights community for subordinating their concerns to the fight against communism."

Never mind that fighting communism was—and is—an important element of any human rights policy. Dobbs forgets that it was Abrams who inaugurated the policy of pressuring Chile's dictator Augusto Pinochet, a policy that led to the restoration of Chilean democracy in the late 1980s. He forgets Abrams's role in ousting Haitian dictator "Baby Doc" Duvalier; his staunch opposition to the regime of Manuel Noriega in Panama; and his support for such moderate reformers as José Napoleón Duarte in El Salvador and Vinicio Cerezo in Guatemala and even for the left-wing Alan Garcia in Peru. Among those who remember, Abrams is also noted for his work on behalf of dissidents in some vicious dictatorial regimes in Africa.

Strong Fists and Coronets

Gen. Alexander Lebed, the man who negotiated peace in Chechnya, fancies himself not only the next president of Russia but also something of a political philosopher. After meeting Colin Powell on his visit to Washington just before Thanksgiving, Lebed declared: "Good generals make good politicians." You wish, Alex.

Dwight Eisenhower served two terms as president, but the list of generals who failed in politics is quite long: Douglas MacArthur, William Westmoreland, Pete Dawkins, George McClellan, Edwin Walker. . . . Lebed, who chatted about all this over dinner at businessman Fred Bush's house in Chevy Chase, Md., was on firmer ground on social philosophy. "Virtue," he said, "must be backed by strong fists."

We Are Proud To Announce . . .

Joining us as a contributing editor is John J. DiIulio, Jr., director of the Brookings Institution's Center for Public Management and a Princeton professor. Besides his many sterling articles that have already appeared in these pages—"The Coming of the Super-predators" was among the most-discussed articles of 1995—DiIulio is the author, with William J. Bennett and John P. Walters, of the recently published *Body Count: Moral Poverty . . . and How to Win America's War Against Crime and Drugs* (Simon & Schuster). Bennett and Walters's latest dispatch from the war on drugs appears on page 12 of this issue.

Casual

Liberal Sports: An Update

The Dallas Cowboys are touted as America's Team, but have you ever encountered a fan of the Cowboys in the Northeast or the Rust Belt or on the West Coast? Not often, I'll bet. There's a good reason for this, but not one you'd automatically think of. The fact that the Cowboys are a very good football team that regularly humbles foes from the Northeast, Midwest, and Pacific states plays a part, but only a small part. The real reason the Cowboys are loathed is they're a conservative team.

Yes, not only are there liberal sports (soccer, baseball, jogging) and conservative sports (football, boxing, wrestling), but there are liberal and conservative teams. How can you tell which are which? It's tricky, not to mention subjective, but four factors are determinative: the home, the owner, the fans, and the character of the team itself, including the coaches and the style of play.

Just listing these factors should be clue enough for you to figure out why the Cowboys are conservative. They're from Dallas, for heaven's sake, the most conservative big city in America. Owner Jerry Jones may not be a right-wing crazy, but he sure doesn't act liberal. Nor do the fans. And the personnel? Tom Landry, coach for decades, is a pal of Sen. Jesse Helms. Roger Staubach, the Cowboys' greatest quarterback, is a prominent Texas Republican and chum of Jack Kemp. Today's Cowboy crew features QB Troy Aikman—liberals are never named Troy—and coach Barry Switzer, a winning-is-everything type.

Important as it is, location isn't everything. The Atlanta Braves are the South's favorite baseball team, but they're not conservative despite their location and fans. In the Braves' case, the owners matter a lot: Ted Turner and Jane Fonda. Any team run by Turner, the world's richest tree-hugger and Christian-basher, is a liberal team. Turner and Fonda do the tomahawk chop at Braves games, driving Indian—oops, I mean Native American—activists nuts. But they're hardly politically incorrect. Turner is one of the Democratic party's biggest donors. On the other hand, Wayne Huizenga, who owns the Florida Marlins, is a buddy of George Bush and a Team 100 member, making the Marlins a conservative team.

Absent owner Peter Angelos, the Baltimore Orioles might be a conservative team, too. He made his dough on asbestos lawsuits and broke ranks with fellow baseball owners who wanted to stand up to the players' union. I once had to listen to Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, a San Francisco liberal but a Baltimore native, extol Angelos for siding with the greedy players. Liberals think players are working-class even when they're working for $30 million a season, like Michael Jordan.

Fans make a difference. All Philadelphia teams are conservative because nearly all Philly fans are Reagan Democrats. All Seattle teams are liberal because fans there invented the wave, a liberal innovation designed to keep spectators from following the action on the field. All Detroit teams are conservative because their fans are from the suburbs, which is Republican turf, and not the city, a Democratic stronghold. All Washington teams are liberal because the fans are, well, from Washington. The exception was the Washington Redskins of the 1970s under coach George Allen, father of the conservative Virginia governor. Allen and President Nixon were good friends.

A conservative playing style, however, is the best measure of a team's ideology. If a team is rough, as eager to indulge in violence as finesse, if it's opportunistic and obsessive about winning, it's conservative. Because of their proclivity for violence, all hockey teams are conservative. But that's not necessarily the case with football teams. The ones that really love to hit, like the always-brutal San Francisco 49ers, are conservative. Coincidentally, the 49ers' star quarterback, Steve Young, did a TV ad for the Dole campaign.

My pick for the most conservative team of 1996 is surprising, even to me. It's the New York Yankees, who won the World Series by whipping the liberal Atlanta Braves in six games. By the yardsticks of location and fans, they should be a liberal team. Besides, they're a kind of halfway house, bringing back Doc Gooden and Darryl Strawberry from drug rehab. Their owner, George Steinbrenner, is also a product of rehab, having been convicted, then pardoned, of an illegal campaign contribution to Nixon.

But the reason the Yankees are conservative is their style of play. They were entrepreneurial in the extreme, using speed and fielding and good managing to make the most of their skills. They pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps after falling behind 6-0 in the crucial fourth game of the Series. Better yet, their star relief pitcher, John Wetteland, was nicknamed Psycho. At least that was his old nickname. Now he's a born-again Christian.

Fred Barnes

The Battle for School Choice

I agree with Chester E. Finn, Jr. that Republicans have done an awful job of explaining their education policies to the voters ("How Republicans Lost the Education Issue," Nov. 25). Americans have a soft spot in their hearts for "public education," but the term "public education" needs to be correctly defined. Our society supports the education of our children because a democracy depends on a well-educated citizenry. This does not mean the government must provide the service.

School choice will provide the best education to all students by allowing each and every parent to determine what is best for his child. Establishing true choice in education through a market-based system will result in an improved product and an end to the lunatic schemes foisted upon schools.

Jim Rongstad
Woodbury, MN

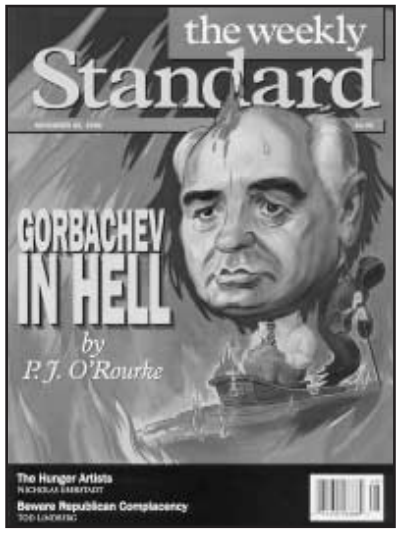
Paving the Path for Gore

The idea that Bill Clinton's reelection was inevitable may make Fred Barnes feel better about the remarkably poor campaign of Bob Dole and Jack Kemp ("The Inevitable Clinton Victory," Nov. 18). Members of the conservative movement and the Republican party, however, must take a more serious look at the causes of this setback.

The Dole/Kemp campaign could never settle on a consistent theme because the candidate himself did not have a real reason for wanting to be president. We cannot blame the mainstream media for this shortcoming. I would hope that in the next presidential election, the Republican nominee will take off the gloves and attack the Democratic nominee with the appropriate vigor. While Republicans should not engage in demagogic rhetoric, they must not shrink from defining their opponents. Bill Clinton was a liberal for the first two years of his administration, but he was allowed to sound like a Republican. Our party should have reminded the voters of gays in the military, the nationalization of health care, and the administration's many ethical and possibly legal deficiencies early and often in the campaign. Instead, we allowed the Democrats to define the GOP as mean-spirited extremists out to cut Medicare and starve the schoolchildren of America.

Unfortunately, charges that are unanswered become true in the eyes of the voters. Again, we cannot blame the media for this. If we do so, we will be having the same conversation four years from now in the days leading up to the inauguration of Al Gore.

Russ Jones
Marietta, GA



We *Like* Promise Keepers

Your suggestion that the Anti-Defamation League asked the Navy to refrain from sponsoring a rally by a Christian men's organization because it deemed the rally anti-Semitic (Scrapbook, Nov. 25) is false. The ADL never imputed anti-Semitism to any of the parties involved in the rally.

Our letter to the Navy stated the following: "ADL does not challenge Promise Keepers' right to proselytize or otherwise promote its religious agenda. However . . . as a governmental institution, the Navy is legally prohibited from any activity which has the primary effect of promoting or endorsing religion." ADL's concern with the rally involved solely these constitutional restrictions, which are basic to the protection of religious freedom.

Promise Keepers may well promote values beneficial to Navy cadets and men generally, but like any religious organization the group must further its message by its own efforts, not by government patronage.

Abraham Foxman
New York, NY

Arts and Music: Bravo!

As a professional musician, I have been consistently impressed with both the depth and the range of the articles devoted to culture and the arts in your magazine. Even so, Paul Cantor's outstanding piece about the Broadway play *Taking Sides* ("Springtime for Furtwängler," Nov. 25) took me by surprise, both in its insight and the commitment to the arts it indicates on the part of The Weekly Standard.

For a long time conservatives have been paying lip service to the idea that we must play an active role in the culture if our political ideas are to have any resonance. Clearly, this should include popular culture, but always with the recognition that there is also much deeper, spiritually enriching art, such as the conducting of Wilhelm Furtwängler. To achieve this, persuasive rhetoric is required, but also truly developed taste. Fortunately, your writers seem to have both.

Hyperion Knight
Brooklyn, NY

Value-Free Frustration

As a conservative, I join John Podhoretz in his disappointment at the failure of the GOP to raise a candidate for president who was responsive to the spiritual and intellectual needs of our nation ("Value-Free GOP," Nov. 18). A political agenda limited to value-neutral mindless economic freedom is unacceptable to virtually all citizens. The reelection of Bill Clinton was indeed awesome confirmation of this.

W. Lorraine Watkins, M.D.
Dawsonville, GA

Grass-roots moral conservatives have known that the GOP lost—or threw away—its soul way back when

Correspondence

President Bush repudiated Ronald Reagan's legacy. Every protest on our part was dismissed by Republican moderates and the liberal media as an attempt by the "extremist" religious Right to seize control of the party. As pro-choice conservatives pled for recognition, they disguised their determination to prevail over the party's pro-life position, a proven winner.

If it was Haley Barbour's plan to break the political back of the religious Right and send us home to our church communities, he succeeded when he inflicted Bob Dole upon us. Anyone who still believes Dole was the people's choice as the party leader is incurably naive.

MARIA NOLAN
MEADOWBROOK, PA

Religion As Trump

Concluding his review of Roger Shattuck's *Forbidden Knowledge: From Prometheus to Pornography*, Saul Rosenberg blandly indulges in what is becoming an all too easy trump among conservative intellectuals ("Two Cultures Still," Nov. 18). Professor Shattuck, he says, offers no real solution to the problem of dangerous knowledge because "It is clear that no vision of the human project can hope to restrain human ambition and curiosity unless it has a religious perspective." Then Rosenberg lifts not a finger to spell out how cognitive censorship from a religious perspective could possibly work in our extended republic. And so while the liberal sighs that conservatives just don't care, the conservative replies by saying that liberals just don't believe.

ALLEN ZOROYA
ALHAMBRA, CA

Songs from the *Roads*

David Gelernter's essay on Dorothy Lamour was very engaging ("Dorothy Lamour: An Elegy," Nov. 18). But Gelernter indirectly slights some very high-powered female screen presences of the period. Claudette Colbert, for example, who also recently departed leaving a few of us older guys faintly teary and wistful, was arguably the reigning queen of romantic sophisticated comedy far beyond lovely Ms. Lamour's reach. But no matter. I take issue with the reference to Bing Crosby's singing "cornball ballads" and getting by on "nice-guyism." Wrong on both counts.

Burke and Van Heusen were responsible for most of the *Road* songs. No less an authority than the musicologist and composer Alec Wilder considered Jimmy Van Heusen "a great writer." Johnny Burke was, if not a poet, exceedingly witty when called for and romantic when necessary. That the two guys got together is demonstrably a cause for celebration by those of us who are uncorrupted by rock-'n'roll and moved by songs that take away the breath, stir the senses, tickle the funny bone, thrill the heart, and, in many instances, haunt one forever.

To conclude, Bing's characters in all of the *Road* pictures were always phonies and con-men, anything but nice guys.

ELLIOT WEST
POST MILLS, VT

Celluloid Shakespeare

Regarding John Podhoretz's "O For a Muse of Fire!" (Nov. 18): The stage is a poor medium for Shakespeare? Cinema superior to theater because the special effects are better? Nuance impossible on stage?

When Shakespeare asked for "a muse of fire," he was inciting the audience's imagination. Podhoretz's lack of an imaginzation is hardly grounds for a movie review.

JON SHERMAN
WASHINGTON, DC

Agnostic Agonistes

In his review of my biography of the Devil ("The Devil's Biography," Oct. 21) Norman Podhoretz deems me—and appears also to damn me as—an agnostic. The word is picked out in bold type in the middle of his review.

In the preface to the book, I made clear that I was raised and remain a Roman Catholic. In the text I tried to take a step back from my own beliefs and investigate more broadly the appeal of the Devil since the time of Neanderthal man. To judge from Podhoretz's description of me, I succeeded only too well.

It is not for me to dispute the tone or the verdict of his review, but, old-fashioned Catholic that I am, I feel I must correct this simple but deeply unsettling factual error.

PETER STANFORD
LONDON, ENGLAND

NORMAN PODHORETZ RESPONDS:
My characterization of Mr. Stanford as an agnostic was based on the following statement in his preface: "For ninety-nine percent of the time I am coldly rational about the whole question [of whether the Devil exists]. . . . In that other one percent, my Catholic upbringing makes itself felt." That certainly sounds like agnosticism to me, and so does the tone and spirit of the book as a whole. But since Mr. Stanford is an "an old-fashioned Catholic," then I can only say, yes, he has indeed "succeeded only too well" in stepping back from his own beliefs.

the weekly Standard

Kowtowing to Beijing

There are obvious dark ironies. Bill Clinton took office in 1993 vowing to deal more firmly with "the butchers of Beijing" than had his Republican predecessor. He hasn't. In 1994, the president began an awkward reversal on the issue, abandoning the human rights conditions he had initially attached to China's "most favored nation" status in American trade law. This year, Clinton has completed his about-face, concluding that "realism" about U.S. national interests—above all else, the future of American corporate investment in a giant Asian economy—must trump our moral concern over the fate of the Chinese people. Beijing has spent 1996 systematically mopping up what remains of China's pro-democracy movement. Washington has spent 1996 making nice to Beijing.

George Bush did something very much like this in 1989, of course. Responding to public disgust over the Tiananmen Square massacre, he engineered some limited economic sanctions on China at the Group of Seven summit in Paris that July. But at the same time, Americans soon learned, Bush was dispatching Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger to Beijing to reassure the Chinese that we really didn't mean it. Which is what prompted then-candidate Bill Clinton to propose a more human-rights-oriented approach to China in the first place.

Plus ça change? Actually, no. Quite a lot has changed in China since 1989. And quite a lot has changed in U.S. policy toward China during the last few months, culminating in the just-concluded Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Manila.

Unsure of China's future political course, the Clinton administration has for four years dealt with President Jiang Zemin as merely a transitional figure—and held off bilateral, summit-level contact with Beijing's Communist party. No more. There will be two Clinton-Jiang summits in 1997 and 1998, it was confirmed in Manila on November 24. The U.S. government has apparently decided that it is useless to expect significant democratization in China in the near term.

The Clinton administration has also concluded that it can and should publicly forswear any interest in deterring China as a regional threat. Of late, the Chinese have rapidly expanded their military spending (and lied about it). They have baldly constructed a naval installation on the aptly named Mischief Reef—located inside the territorial waters of the Philippines. They have sold advanced weapons systems to pariah states like Iran. And, most infamously, they have landed missiles off the coast of newly democratic Taiwan. If the United States does not maintain a military presence in the Pacific as a counterweight to precisely this kind of saber rattling—and the Asian arms race it might otherwise inspire—there is no reason for us to be there at all. But President Clinton doesn't see things that way, it seems. "The United States has no interest in containing China," he announced in Australia on November 20. "That is a negative strategy."

Overseas succession struggles and regional strategic balance are "difficult issues." Human rights—especially human rights in China—are not so difficult an issue. China makes promiscuous use of torture as an instrument of state policy. It targets a million people a year, without formal charge or trial, for labor-camp detention. It bulldozes the home of anyone suspected of "illegal religious activity." All of this has always been clearly understood in the West. So the human rights posture of the United States toward China has always been clearly discernible. At any given moment, an American president is either pressing the point on principle—or licking Beijing's boots.

When George Bush licked Beijing's boots, he at least had the good grace to be embarrassed about it. Scowcroft and Eagleburger went to China *secretly*. President Clinton's new China initiative pays no such tribute to virtue. Hereinafter, his administration proclaims, we will kowtow in public—and derogate human rights in public, too.

Clinton's hour-and-25-minute Manila meeting with Jiang on November 24, an anonymous senior U.S. official later explained, was primarily designed to make clear to the Chinese that "they were engaged with a leader that has enormous respect for China. . . . There couldn't be any doubt about that." And did our enormously respectful president question Jiang about Wang Dan, the democracy activist whose 11-year prison sentence had been upheld just nine days earlier, after a 10-minute hearing at which Wang was not permitted to speak? Or about Shen Liangqing, Ma Lianggang, and Huang Xiuming, three more activists who just that day were being indicted on charges of "counter-revolutionary propaganda" and "incitement"? He did not. Clinton "made a general reference to the specificity with which we've addressed some of

these issues before," his aides pathetically claimed.

America must "try to avoid hectoring" China, secretary of state Warren Christopher says, with general reference to the specificity of human rights. "I think what we need to do," he suggested at Shanghai's Fudan University on November 21, "is to once again have intensive dialogue so that we can come to understand and appreciate each other's point of view on that subject." Moral equivalence—at long last, *again*? Yes. "The United States is far from perfect" where human rights are concerned, according to America's top diplomat. "Frequently when I talk to colleagues in other countries about the issue, I begin by talking about the human rights problems that we have in the United States and our own shortcomings. It tends to ease the situation somewhat if we recognize our own failures as we begin to talk then about shortcomings we see in other countries."

Let's see: On the one hand, we have a China that routinely applies electric riot batons to the genitals of its own citizens. And on the other hand, we have an America that . . . well, that what? Here's what. We now have an America led by an administration eager to shovel the truth about the world's greatest tyranny under the rug. For shame.

—David Tell, for the Editors

The Race to Replace Haley

by Matthew Rees

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Steve Merrill is the wildly popular Republican governor of New Hampshire who will soon be out of a job. He's retiring voluntarily—he won reelection two years ago with 70 percent of the vote—but he'd like to stay involved in GOP politics. That explains why in the course of a short conversation with a reporter he zings a couple of obscure GOP operatives in states far away from his. Merrill is running for chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Merrill had not officially announced when I chatted with him in the Chicago airport on November 23, but there was little doubt as to his intentions. He skipped many of the public events here at the annual meeting of Republican governors, opting to meet privately with reporters and others to talk about succeeding Haley Barbour, the outgoing chairman of the RNC. So far, Merrill is the best-known candidate in the contest to replace Barbour. But being the best-known doesn't guarantee success.

Indeed, the chairman's race is still in its early stages, and election day isn't until January 17. But that didn't prevent Merrill and some of the other candidates—Chuck Yob of Michigan, Robert Bennett of Ohio, David Norcross of New Jersey—from traveling here to do a little schmoozing with the assembled governors and political hacks. And even if you include the candidates who didn't bother coming to Grand Rapids—John Herrington of California was on a vacation in France—there's an unmistakable quality about the assembled candidates: underwhelming.

The slate four years ago included Barbour, who had run the political shop in the Reagan White House, Missouri governor John Ashcroft, and Spencer Abraham, a former chairman of the Michigan GOP who had headed the House Republican campaign committee. An impressive field, as confirmed by the fact that each of the losers—Ashcroft and Abraham—ended up with a bigger prize two years later: election to the U.S. Senate. With the possible exception of Merrill, none of the current crop of candidates for chairman stands much chance of being elected to the Senate anytime soon.

Campaigning for the job of RNC chairman is not a high-profile endeavor. You won't see lawn signs, bumper stickers, or television ads touting the candidates. That's because only 165 people vote: three national committee members from each state, the District of Columbia, and four U.S. territories. Thus candidates can win endorsements from all the elected officials they want, but these count for very little. Indeed, some committee members take offense at having a senator or governor try to foist a chairman on them. Campaigning tends to be a retail affair. "They're all running for class president," quips Ron Kaufman, a veteran GOP operative from Massachusetts and one of the select 165. Candidates try to make a face-to-face visit with every committee member, during which they assure the member how much attention will be paid to his state party. And they make an array of promises—particularly that money will go to the state party organization—that as chairman they almost surely would have to break.

Merrill, not surprisingly, is highlighting his experience in retail politics. "I'm a grassroots governor from the most grassroots state in the nation," he told me. New Hampshire's legislature is the largest in the nation with 424 members, and Merrill brags that during his four years as governor he never had a veto

overridden (of course, Republicans controlled the legislature).

Merrill is similar in appearance and demeanor to Lamar Alexander, but more conservative. Both have a thinning hairline, a cheery, wide-eyed enthusiasm for the political process, and glad-handing skills (Merrill called me by name, offered me a ride from the airport, and complimented this magazine's coverage of the presidential campaign). Merrill can also boast of his accomplishments during his four years in the statehouse. He's the only governor to twice get an "A" from the libertarian Cato Institute for his success at cutting spending and taxes.

While Merrill's conservative fiscal record is overshadowed in some circles by his failure to deliver his state for Bob Dole in the primary and by the fact that a Democrat was elected to succeed him, he faces a bigger hurdle: In the insulated world of the RNC, Merrill is considered an "outsider" because he's not one of the 165 committee members. That's trouble, as the selection of an "insider" is the natural inclination of committee members in years when a Republican doesn't control the White House.

Steve Merrill

Kent Lemon

What's bad news for Merrill should be good news for someone like Michigan's Chuck Yob, an insider who predicts "a national committee member is definitely going to win this race." But Yob is given little chance of becoming the next chairman. It was considered bad form when he jumped into the race after his state chairman, the popular Betsy DeVos, had indicated she was considering running (she has since withdrawn for family reasons).

But Yob is pressing ahead. He held a reception here and was working the lobby all weekend, distributing his three-dimensional orange business cards. No target was too small. Minutes after I arrived, he asked whether I'd like to interview him. Outfitted in a monogrammed shirt with elephant cuff links and an elephant-motif tie, he sold himself as a good old-fashioned Republican. "I have no agenda other than electing Republicans," he said, mentioning later that he will travel anywhere in the state to give a speech and once debated James Carville at the University of Michigan.

Norcross and Bennett are more likely as chairman than Yob, though neither is considered a heavyweight. Norcross was the RNC's general counsel under both Barbour and Reagan-era chairman Frank Fahrenkopf, and chairman of the New Jersey Republican party from 1977 to 1981. He's more reserved than Yob and Merrill and distinguishes himself from a field of conservatives by a slightly more moderate tone. He's not a pro-lifer and is critical of what he calls the party's "harsh message." "We sometimes need to be a loving mother as well as a stern father," he says. It's little surprise then that New Jersey governor Christine Todd Whitman, a leading moderate voice in the GOP, told me she'd "be very comfortable with David Norcross as chairman."

Of all the candidates, Bennett is the only one who can point to real achievements in terms of helping Republicans get elected. When he became chairman of the Ohio GOP in February 1988, no Republican held any of the eight offices elected statewide, and Democrats had a 60-39 majority in the state House. Today, seven of the eight statewide offices are held by Republicans, and it's the GOP that has the 60-39 majority in the state House. Bennett also speaks the language committee members want to hear: "I want to treat the RNC as a giant service bureau to the state parties." But there's some question whether he's smooth enough to handle the television appearances that have become a key part of the chairman's job.

There are a few others running or close to running—Tom Pauken of Texas, Jim Nicholson of Colorado, Jeanie Austin of Florida—but none of them looks like an immediate front-runner. Thus, unless a candidate with more stature, like former Minnesota congressman Vin Weber, jumps into the race, the ideal setup might be for Republicans to mimic the Democratic National Committee's organizational structure of the past year: A high-profile figure, Sen. Chris Dodd, was responsible for much of the fund-raising and media time, while South Carolina state chairman Don Fowler was the nuts-and-bolts political operative. There's some precedent for this (Sen. Paul Laxalt was "general chairman" in the early '80s), but after selecting such a successful chairman in Barbour—frequently described as the most capable the party has ever had—the committee members are confident they can choose right again. We'll see. ♦

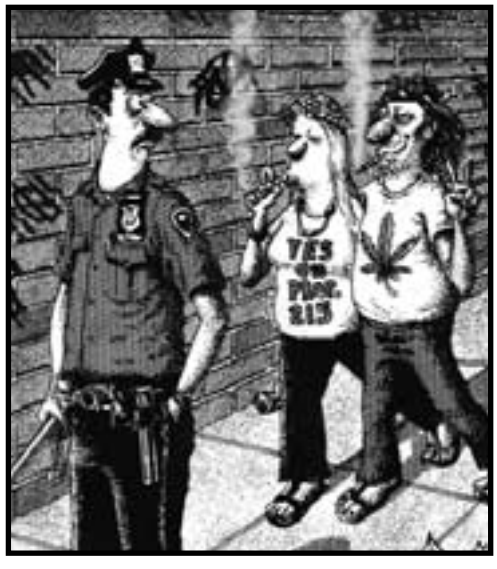
Medical Reefer Madness

by William J. Bennett and John P. Walters

As if cops didn't have enough problems, the Drug Enforcement Administration is up against a new obstacle. A DEA press release paints this scene:

> A patrol officer encounters a 16-year-old female accompanied by an 18-year-old male. Both state he is her "primary caregiver." Both are found to be in possession of marijuana and he readily admits providing it to her on the "recommendation" of a doctor at a local clinic for relief of "nausea."

Make all the players in this little drama Californians, and the patrol officer is powerless to intervene. Thanks to a ballot initiative legalizing the "medicinal" use of marijuana, California is now virtually unable to restrict marijuana use by people of any age. Proposition 215, which passed with little fanfare three weeks ago, also allows cultivation and possession by individuals who are not sick, provided they claim, as did the young man above, to be the "primary caregiver" of someone using marijuana to combat "any . . . illness for which marijuana provides relief."



Sean Delonas

The problem is that marijuana has never been scientifically demonstrated to provide "relief" from any medical condition—at least no more relief than other licensed drugs that are much less prone to abuse. This critical point was obscured in a campaign whose small band of wealthy out-of-state backers outspent the opponents of Prop. 215 seventy-five to one.

In fact, the notion that marijuana has demonstrated medical utility has been rejected by the American Medical Association, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the American Glaucoma Society, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, and the American Cancer Society.

Pot activists rhapsodize about marijuana's usefulness in "treating" glaucoma. But medical researchers believe otherwise. Dr. George L. Spaeth, first president of the American Glaucoma Society and director of the Glaucoma Service at the Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia, has "not found any documentary evidence which indicates that a single patient has had his or her natural history of the disease altered by smoking marijuana." Dr. M. Bruce Shields, president of the American Glaucoma Society and chairman of the department of ophthalmology at Yale University, expresses "reservations" about the use of cannabinoids to fight glaucoma, particularly since there are "many drugs that are much better than the marijuana analogues and that have significantly fewer side effects." Dr. Richard P. Mills, vice chair of the University of Washington department of ophthalmology, explains that glaucoma sufferers already have access to six "families" of glaucoma medication, at least one of which controls the disease in almost every patient. Dr. Keith Green, director of ophthalmology research at the Medical College of Georgia, has studied the use of marijuana and its active ingredient, THC, to treat glaucoma and finds "no evidence that marijuana use prevents the progression of visual loss."

Proponents also cite marijuana's alleged utility in controlling nausea. Yet Dr. David S. Ettinger, associate director of the Johns Hopkins Oncology Center, writes, "There is no indication that marijuana is effective in treating nausea and vomiting resulting from radiation. . . . No legitimate studies have been conducted which make such conclusions." As for nausea resulting from chemotherapy, the American Cancer Society states that "other . . . drugs have been shown to be more useful than marijuana or synthetic THC as 'first-line therapy' for nausea and vomiting caused by anti-cancer drugs."

Marijuana boosters often cite a 1988 study (Vinciguerra, et al.) showing that smoking marijuana helped 44 of 56 cancer patients who suffered from nausea. But this study lacked a control group, and 87 percent of the subjects experienced toxic side effects. Moreover, although the authors admit that "oral THC is an effective treatment for chemotherapy-induced [vomiting]," only 29 percent of the subjects who benefited from smoking marijuana had already tried oral THC. In other words, patients were asked to use marijuana before the scientifically approved remedies had been exhausted. The entire debate may be irrelevant, however. Notes Dr. Richard J. Gralla, director of the Ochsner Cancer Institute in New Orleans, "There has

been a revolution in the treatment and prevention of nausea since 1988."

Unfortunately, not only is marijuana *not* medicine, its use is especially contraindicated for many of the people who will be encouraged to use it by California's new law. Cancer patients' immune systems are weakened by radiation and chemotherapy, leaving them susceptible to infection, and marijuana use further compromises their immune systems. That's in addition to the drug's well-known harmful effects on brain cells, lungs, and circulation.

Yet, despite the evidence, and after 24 years of trying and failing, the pro-pot side carried the day. The California initiative passed with 55 percent of the vote, capping a 24-year effort by NORML and other groups to gain public sanction for widespread marijuana use on the basis of the drug's supposed "medicinal" qualities.

Why this sudden success? The difference is that in 1996 the potheads had access to that mother's milk of politics—money. Campaign finance laws place a $2,000 ceiling on individual contributions in national races, but the ballot initiative process has no such limitations. Foremost among the financiers and businessmen whose backing secured passage of Prop. 215 was George Soros.

Based in London and New York, Soros is a currency trader and investor with a fortune estimated by *Forbes* at $2.5 billion. He is also sugardaddy to the drug legalization movement, committing, by his own reckoning, more than $15 million to various groups since 1991, including $980,000 to the California initiative and the similar initiative that passed this month in Arizona. Groups funded by Soros contributed at least another $300,000, and Soros solicited at least one contribution of $200,000. In all, the organization that flacked Prop. 215, Californians for Medical Rights, raised $2 million for the campaign, including $750,000 in the first 19 days of October alone. In contrast, the opposition, Citizens for a Drug-Free California, spent a total of $26,000 and aired no paid TV commercials.

Soros and company are pursuing a stealth strategy designed to conceal their real agenda: legalizing all drugs. In a 1994 interview with *Rolling Stone* magazine, the president of Soros's Open Society Institute, Aryeh Neier, explained that Soros gave the pro-legalization Drug Policy Foundation a "set of suggestions to follow if they wanted his assistance: Come up with an approach that emphasizes 'treatment and humanitarian endeavors,' [and] . . . target a few winnable issues, like medical marijuana and the repeal of mandatory minimum [sentences]."

Soros was joined in the recent campaign by Arizona businessman John G. Sperling, who gave $630,000 to the California and Arizona initiatives. Sperling is adamant that doctors should be allowed to prescribe all drugs, including heroin and LSD: "I don't think that there should be any substance outside the pharmacopeia." Sperling is less clear on exactly why. When asked for studies that show the utility of these drugs, he cited anecdotal evidence: "You go from anecdote to anecdote to anecdote, and there are so

many people who say their lives have been changed for the better." Of course, nobody denies that marijuana's euphoric qualities would cause individuals to feel good (as would a few shots of Wild Turkey). The question for science is whether marijuana treats disease, not whether it makes people feel giddy.

Sperling disagrees. "The drug problem," he says, is "a public health problem, primarily. It only becomes a crime when you put people in prison for it." People who deny this are "either intellectually dishonest, stupid, or both, and that goes for most members of Congress, the president, and the man who wanted to be president."

Sperling is not alone. Former U.S. senator Dennis DeConcini served as the Arizona campaign's unofficial poster child, appearing in commercials and on TV news opposite drug czar Barry R. McCaffrey. Like others we interviewed, DeConcini was unable to cite a single scientific study showing marijuana's medical effectiveness. Not that this bothers him: "To me it's irrelevant whether you have a study or not," he says, so long as the law has "compassion" and requires a doctor's prescription (as it does in Arizona, but not in California).

Passage of the two initiatives notwithstanding, use of marijuana for nonmedicinal purposes remains a crime in California and Arizona. Unfortunately, as the DEA anticipated, the change in state law has weakened local law enforcement, and federal agents cannot be expected to take up the slack. There are 7,000 state and local narcotics officers in California, more than ten times the number of DEA agents in the state. And the federal agents concentrate on large traffickers, not users.

Even so, the feds may have a role in containing the damage from Prop. 215 and its counterpart in Arizona. Under a "public interest" provision of the Controlled Substances Act, the DEA can revoke the "registration" license every physician needs in order to store, dispense, or prescribe controlled substances. Historically, the DEA has worked in tandem with state authorities, but nothing in the law prevents it from moving unilaterally against the small number of pro-pot physicians who are likely to recommend marijuana for their patients. If the Clinton administration is serious about halting the rise in drug use among the young, its DEA will prepare to use this power.

DEA chief Thomas A. Constantine, for one, is clear-eyed on the issue. He likens medicinal marijuana to "snake oil," the harmful, all-purpose curatives sold by hucksters at the turn of the century. The analogy is apt.

Little more than diluted morphine, the likes of "Coats Cure" and the "Richie Cure" were eventually regulated out of existence under the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act. This law was passed at the urging of Progressive reformers after the wild success of the snake-oil scam had brought on America's first great drug epidemic. Progressives were occasionally criticized for worshipping at the altar of science, a claim unlikely to be levelled against the proponents of medical marijuana.

William J. Bennett is the former director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. John P. Walters is the former deputy director of that office. They are co-authors (with John J. DiIulio, Jr.) of **Body Count** *(Simon and Schuster).*

In the Future, Men's Abortions

by Neil Munro

It may seem obvious now, but as we review the events of the past year—from January 1, 2002, to December 31, 2002—it's worth remembering that just a few years ago nobody could imagine how success would force the feminist movement into a shotgun marriage with the pro-life movement.

The nuptials were announced on September 17, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Stanley Nichols of Modesto, Calif., had an unlimited right to abortion—the abortion of his paternal responsibilities for his out-of-wedlock child. Nichols's lawyers estimated that those responsibilities would have cost Nichols $1 million over the next 18 years.

The court cited as precedent its rulings in three long-standing decisions—the 1996 VMI decision, which barred almost any form of gender discrimination, and the *Roe* v. *Wade* and *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey* decisions, which gave women the right to physical abortion.

The *Nichols* v. *Moore* decision allows every man to legally abort any duties to his unborn children. The father's abortion of responsibility has to be completed before the child's head emerges from the mother, the court ruled. "If the decision to bear or abort the child is a woman's alone, so the decision to support that

child is the man's alone," concluded the 5-to-4 majority opinion.

The deciding vote for men's abortion rights was cast by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who had spent her career fighting for women's abortion rights and strict sexual equality before joining the court. Initially, she had decided to vote against men's abortion rights, but switched after the four dissenting judges proposed a radical new legal theory. The liberal dissenters, led by Justice Catherine MacKinnon, proposed the existence of previously undetected "black holes" in the Constitution that redirect away from men the Constitution's "penumbras and emanations" used in *Roe* v. *Wade* to justify women's abortion rights.

Chief Justice W.J. Clinton also voted with Ginsburg for the *Nichols* decision, writing in a concurring opinion that the court should "leave these most intimate and private decisions to the father, his doctor, his accountant, and his spiritual adviser."

The men's movement has greeted its victory with delight. "Women have the freedom to choose, but they don't have the freedom to make us pay for their choice. . . . We're off to Georgetown to spend the child-support payments," laughed ex-baseball player Steve Garvey, president of Planned Fatherhood and a prominent spokesperson for the Men's Coalition. It was also good news for lawyers, scores of whom started men's abortion clinics, including one in San Diego, Calif., that has begun a nationwide class-action suit to reclaim child-support funds paid out years earlier.

Two days after the court decision, a grab-bag of outraged feminists announced they wanted an alliance with the shocked pro-life community to reverse the court's decision. This new Fatherhood-NOW Alliance then spent seven days drafting a constitutional amendment to supplant the *Nichols* decision.

To satisfy the pro-choice camp, the amendment would force fathers to pay child support and would fund generous child-related welfare programs. To satisfy pro-lifers, the amendment would bar non-emergency abortions in the second and third trimesters and provide generous financial incentives for women to choose adoption over abortion. The amendment would impose strict regulation of the abortion industry and establish extensive informed-consent laws.

To deter later reinterpretation by the Supreme Court, the 1,000-word amendment makes extensive use of strictly defined mathematical symbols, is written in capital letters, and contains no words longer than three syllables. "If we don't restrict the court and its retinue of lawyers, they'll shrink political debate into disputes over money and transform ethics into attorney-advised self-interest," said a press release by the pro-life wing of the Fatherhood-NOW Alliance.

The proposed amendment has already won much-needed financial support from the condom industry. "If men don't have to pay for child support, they certainly won't buy our products," grumbled one executive from Trojan, Inc., as he handed over $1 million in advertising funds.

In response, the men's movement has also entered into a marriage of convenience with radical feminists via an ad hoc coalition called Sexual Autonomy for Everyone. The *dirigiste* university feminists of the coalition champion the *Nichols* decision because it helps to "sever the dangerous link between all our children and the testosterone-poisoned, phallocentric, hetero-sexist patriarchy."

The eventual result of this constitutional battle is still unclear. But even if the Fatherhood-NOW amendment is eventually approved by Congress and by two-thirds of the state legislatures, the men's movement is building a second line of defense against paternal responsibility: genetic-property rights.

They've had initial success. A judge in New Jersey last week certified a man's $30,000 lawsuit against his pregnant ex-girlfriend, which claims she defrauded him of his genetic material. The $30,000 payment is fair, the plaintiff said, because it matches the cost of adopting a child or of buying two rounds of treatment at a fertility clinic. "By getting her pregnant, I've given her a biological option. If she chooses to exercise the option by giving birth, she should pay the market price," he said in a press release.

***Neil Munro is a reporter for* Washington Technology.**

Fruitless Feminists

by Pia Catton

Stirred by the discovery of soccer moms, feminists are now on the lookout for minivan madonnas. "Family feminism," a new twist in America's most malleable social movement, seeks to enlist women who want to listen to their maternal urges rather than ignore them. Yes, with a PTA card in one hand and a NOW card in the other, mothers need no longer feel neglected by the feminist movement. Now, motherhood and feminism can "dialogue"!

The publication of novelist and columnist Anne Roiphe's manifesto for "family feminism," *Fruitful*, was the occasion for a panel discussion called "Motherhood and Feminism: A Dialogue" in Washington last week. Alas, there wasn't a lot of dialoguing going on, just a lot of rambling familial anecdotes offered by both panelists and audience. There was precious little debate about either motherhood or feminism; both were unambiguously accepted by everyone in the room as unambiguously good for women. And yet the source text for the panel was a book by a feminist dissatisfied with feminism's view of motherhood. "The irritation between mothers and non-mothers was swept under the rug of sisterhood," Roiphe writes in *Fruitful*. "The intellectual and emotional misfit between child care and feminism was observed but not solved."

But when fellow panelist Heidi Hartmann, director of the Institute for Women's Policy Research, asked Roiphe to clarify her criticism of the feminist movement in *Fruitful*, the author backpedaled and sidestepped at the same time. "Feminism did not move in a wrong direction," Roiphe said. "But somehow we lost focus."

Was it a problem that feminism "lost focus"—i.e., did not pay attention to the concern she describes in *Fruitful* as the most important thing in her life, being a mother? No, it was just that, in the movement, "some voices became more dominant over others." I asked her afterward if she thought those voices were still dominant. "I wouldn't have written the book if they weren't," she said. "The voices of family feminism have been overwhelmed." But this was not a sentence she spoke, or even came close to speaking, during the panel discussion (though she did turn sociobiologist when she informed the room that "we turned our attention away from the fact that we are a species").

And no wonder; many in the audience and on the panel would have eaten her alive for criticizing feminism. But simply adding another element to the feminist mix? Go right ahead! It makes no difference if Roiphe's "family feminism" contradicts other elements of feminism, because feminism is no longer an ideology requiring philosophical consistency. It's more like a lobbying group for anything women want at any time women want it.

Being "pro-women" has meant different things in different times. In the '70s, independence and autonomy were pro-women. In the '80s, "pro-women" meant opposing pornography and demanding speech codes at universities. In the early 1990s, "pro-women" meant "power feminism," which preached the idea that women aren't victims but are natural aggressors. Now, four years before the new millennium, "pro-women" means, in Betty Friedan's words, "chosen, affirmed motherhood."

As the decades of relativism roll by, the "pro-women" list grows longer, more complex, and contradictory. Pro-women stay-at-home mothers are every bit as feminist as pro-women lesbians. Pro-women advocates of a shortened work week and their small-business-owning sisters can hold hands and sing numbers from "Free to Be You and Me."

Anne Roiphe

Chas Fagan

Given all this comradeship, the movement just cannot understand one thing. The panel's moderator, Susan Bianchi-Sand of the National Committee on Pay Equity, said that the biggest problem facing feminism is lack of youth involvement. "Young women seem to think the job is done," she said. Since they have the opportunity to achieve economic security, they no longer need feminism (the ingrates).

What Bianchi-Sand does not understand is that the inconsistencies of feminism are what drive young women away from it. They seek a voice that offers clarity and understanding in a very confusing culture. What they do not need is a feminism that creates chaos. Feminism fails to attract young women not because the "job is done," but because there is no common job to accomplish. What was established wisdom in the '70s—the axiom that "biology is not destiny"—sounds nonsensical in the 1990s, when Anne Roiphe is able to say flat out that "some parts of the anatomy are destiny."

So where does this leave feminism? Which feminism? Whose feminism? What feminism? Forget feminism, and think "feminists" instead. The only way to make sense of feminists today is to think of them as women of the Left, accepting of any and all ways of life. But only pro-women ways of life, of course. ♦

Special Section

The Crime of Literary Vengeance

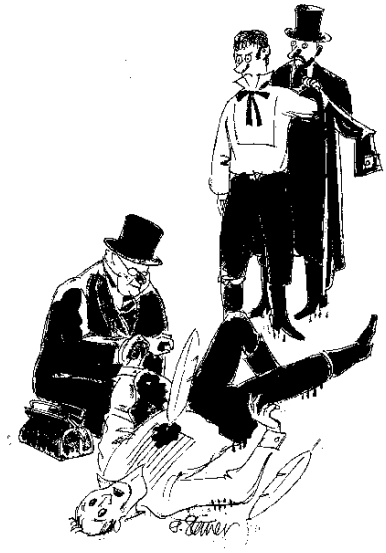
By Joseph Epstein

Roughly four-fifths through *Patrimony*, a memoir of his father and one of his best books, Philip Roth recounts his aged father, then in the grip of a tumor pressing against his brain and the victim of several small strokes, having, in his own word, "beshat" himself at Roth's country house in Connecticut. Roth has to clean up his father's mess, and indeed the old man himself. When Roth finally puts his father to bed, the old man pleads, "Don't tell the children." Roth replies, "I won't tell anyone." His father adds, "Don't tell Claire." Roth, reassuringly, answers, "Nobody."

Then how come I know? I know, of course, because Philip Roth broke his promise to his father. He wrote about the sad befouling incident, including his promise not to tell a soul. He wrote about it because it was, as they say in the trade, good copy, rich material. He broke his promise—a fairly sacred promise, one might have thought—because he is a writer. And writers, let there be no mistake, aren't quite human.

Those who live by the sword, the Bible reports, die by the sword. For writers, change "sword" to "word." In classical and Elizabethan drama, vengeance was a major subject and a great theme. As we move closer to our time, vengeance becomes less an action of the characters in plays and novels and more a part of the psychological motive behind the works themselves. Consider, for a moment, the following paragraph from the introduction to *Conceived in Malice* by Louise DeSalvo, a study of literary vengeance in works by Leonard and Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, Djuna Barnes, and Henry Miller:

> Every biography and autobiography I read while working on this project described revenge operating as an important motive in the creation of a literary work, and it seems a nearly universal phenomenon in the lives of writers. Richard Aldington, H.G. Wells, Rebecca West, Anthony West, Anaïs Nin, Violet Trefusis, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Roy Campbell, Christina Stead, Antonia White, Colley Cibber, Alexander Pope, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, the prime minister turned novelist Benjamin Disraeli, Henry Gauthier Villars, Colette, John Cheever, Mary Cheever, Jean Rhys, H.H. Munro ("Saki"), Ford Madox Ford, Violet Hunt, Henry Fielding, Bernard DeVoto, Marcel Proust, Anne Sexton, Gustave Flaubert, Nathaniel Hawthorne—all wrote one or more literary works to take revenge.



Peter Steiner

In a case of the victimizer victimized, Philip Roth has now been the target of a notable act of vengeance. He himself dropped lots of people from so-called real life into his novels—a whole cast of University of Chicago characters appears in *Letting Go*, and his first wife, who committed suicide, takes a pretty good clubbing in more than one of his books. Meanwhile, he has been used as a character in at least one novel I know, Janet Hobhouse's *The Furies*. There, it must be said, he gets off fairly easily. He is given the name Jack and is the lover of the young married narrator, who of him remarks: "I was anomalous in his life, amusing as long as I didn't step or make him step out of his range of comfort." The Roth character is cautious, selfish, manipulative, a bit of a rat if the truth be told, but what the hell, it's a big city out there.

No one is likely to say that Philip Roth gets off fairly easily in *Leaving a Doll's House*, the memoir of the second Mrs. Roth, the English actress Claire Bloom. "I hope he'll understand that it's a book about a wonderful man," the author told a reporter from *New York*. "A

remarkable, brilliant man with whom I was very fortunate to live all those years. I wouldn't have missed those years for the world." My guess is that, after the appearance of this book, as deliberate an act of literary vengeance as one is likely to find, Roth would be delighted to have missed those years—would be pleased to trade them in for the equivalent in hard time at Leavenworth.

Miss Bloom takes the aging boy novelist, as they used to say at my old racquetball club, on tour. His self-protectiveness, in her version, comes to seem not merely introverted, or even anti-social, but mean, small-hearted, really quite vicious. "Philip," she reports, "always gained the upper-hand in any argument. . . . There was a deep ambivalence in Philip toward full commitment. . . . He would do things only his way, and do them as and when he wished."

Claire Bloom
Leaving a Doll's House
Little, Brown, $23.95

Machiavelli wrote *The Prince*, but Claire Bloom appears to have been married to one, from whom she now wishes to extract vengeance. People used to talk a good deal about the Jewish American Princess, but insufficient attention has been paid to the Jewish American Prince, a greatly pampered boy used to tidiness in every department of his life: physical, emotional, spiritual. Roth has always seemed very much the type of this Prince. The Jewish American Prince is a man who likes his boxer shorts ironed, his meals warm with no one food running into another, his sex completely at the service of his fantasies. Meticulous in his person, he tends to have a dirty mind, and a dirty mind, as La Rochefoucauld reminds us, never sleeps. (Please not to inquire how I happen to know this.) All this nuttiness can be fairly amusing, I suppose, but I don't recommend living with it every day, especially if, to Jewish American Princely qualities, one adds the deeper madness of being a certain kind of artist. Maurice Ravel, a lifelong bachelor, recommended that artists not marry. No dope, Maurice Ravel.

In *Leaving a Doll's House* we are, of course, getting only one side of the story. It is, to be sure, a pretty damning side. It provides a sad portrait of Philip Roth in utter vulnerability during serious nervous breakdowns. Roth, it will surprise no one to learn, is a long-time psychoanalysand. When his and Claire Bloom's courtship begins, in 1976, he is on his way to his shrink, she to have tea with her yoga teacher. "Philip, you are insane, I am not," she tells him at one point in their disputations. In her book, she reports him as suicidal, shows him *in extremis*, devastated by depression, holed up in an expensive booby hatch. "Philip disintegrated before my eyes into a disoriented, terrified infant." When she has finished with him, she says he has the life he wants: "the life of a bitter, lonely, aging ascetic with no human ties."

The truly crushing case against Roth in his former wife's memoir is found in his treatment of his stepdaughter. He, poor Prince, found this adolescent "boring" and disruptive, both of his need for quiet and of his requirement of all her mother's concentrated attentions. Roth ordered Claire Bloom to send her 18-year-old daughter away, and, as she miserably confesses, she agreed to do so. It is at this turn in the book that we begin to understand that, in Miss Bloom, we are dealing with a pretty shaky and sadly flaky character in her own right. Earlier in her memoir she tells us about her previous love affairs and marriages—most notable in the former category, Richard Burton, Laurence Olivier, and (a one-night stand) Anthony Quinn; in the latter, the actor Rod Steiger and Hillard Elkins, the producer of *Oh! Calcutta!*—all of which serves to establish that she is a woman stimulated by unworthiness in men.

After fifteen years of living together, when Miss Bloom asked Roth to marry her, he in turn asked her to sign a pre-nuptial agreement that had her entering the marriage in a condition of almost perfect vulnerability. Only later, long after the fact, was his monstrosity revealed, when Miss Bloom learned that Roth had made an earnest play for one of his stepdaughter's girlfriends. What caused Roth to do such a thing, apart from the writer's need for inquietude, is difficult to say. But Miss Bloom is persuasive on the truth of her charge.

In Roth's novel *Deception*, not one of his distinct successes, the hero's wife is named Claire—or at least was until Miss Bloom insisted he change it. She is shown, in the novel, as an actress and, in Miss Bloom's words, a "remarkably uninteresting, middle-aged wife, who, as described, is nothing better than an ever-spouting fountain of tears, constantly bemoaning the fact that his [her husband's] other women are so young."

Miss Bloom's final case against Philip Roth is that he is, not so deep down as all that, a woman-hater. He is a manipulator with a larger agenda, at the top of which is his desire—make that, in his ex-wife's view, his "need"—to wound and humiliate women, who he feels will otherwise dominate and somehow violate his integrity, indeed his very being. A pretty sick kid, in short. Sad if true, I suppose, is the best one can say about so strong and conveniently feminist a view from so implicated a party as the former second Mrs. Roth.

At her book's end, Claire Bloom is on her own again, in possession of a very small settlement (that

damn pre-nuptial agreement!) and large malice toward the man who so badly misused her, though she has been giving interviews that suggest that deeper down she continues to have strong feelings for our man, the Prince. This book, in which she is able to make such public show of her anger and scores so many points against the man who she feels betrayed her, ought to have left her in good mental fettle. Nothing repressed, the shrinks hold, everything gained.

Yet one wonders, vengeance being at least a two-handed game, if she has heard the last from Philip Roth. The only thing she doesn't take up about their marriage in *Leaving a Doll's House* is her and Roth's sex life. She remarks that without her second husband, Elkins, "the dark part of my sexual nature would never have come into being," though she spares us the details. Her account of her life with Roth is similarly bereft of the details of sex; no accounts here of impotence, of non-Euclidian demands, or of anyone's having to sleep with a teddy bear. Perhaps this will be dealt with by Roth in a blistering return volley, probably in the form of a novel. One anticipates corpses strewn all over the joint.

Third parties have already intruded. In her memoir, Miss Bloom tells of Gore Vidal instructing her, after her second marriage, to steer clear of Roth: "You have already had Portnoy's complaint [her second husband, the effable Elkins]. Do not involve yourself with Portnoy." And now Mr. Vidal has supplied Claire Bloom with a handsome blurb for her book, the final sentence of which reads: "Now, with an eye as coldly fixed upon her own self as it is upon lovers and husbands, she records in a terse tell-all style of such candor that she even makes—inadvertently—her last husband, Philip Roth, into something he himself has failed to do—not for want of trying—interesting at last."

I should not like to gain a reputation for saying kind things about Gore Vidal, but he, unlike most literary men and women, is at least up- and out-in-front with his vitriol. He insults people directly. His exchanges with Truman Capote were wildly amusing, and he continues to make jokes over the latter's dead body. So natural is the spirit of put-down to Vidal that he can scarcely avoid insulting even people who are dear to him; I think, in this connection, of his accounts of Tennessee Williams. But all this, as I say, he does out in the open: In interviews, on television chat shows, in the middle of book reviews and essays, he finds time to shoot in a little jab, always nicely aimed below the belt.

Peter Steiner

Not all attempts to exact literary vengeance are made behind the arras of fiction. A splendidly egregious example of literary attack that has a nice feel of vengeance behind it occurred only a month or so ago when, in the October issue of *Boston Magazine*, Alexander Theroux blasted his younger brother, the novelist and travel writer Paul Theroux. The occasion for the attack was the publication of Paul Theroux's *My Other Life*, a post-modern, deliberately half-fraudulent series of autobiographical stories. It is therefore possible that the older brother's attack is a put-on, a family conspiracy—though I rather doubt it. Certainly, there is nothing impersonal about this attack. "He [Paul Theroux] has bowel worries and eats prunes for breakfast and once made inquiries to me about platform shoes," writes brother Alex. "No one I have ever met in my life is a worse, almost pathologically unsympathetic listener." When Cain slew Abel, at least only God was watching, not all of Boston.

The older Theroux brother's case against the younger is that he is cowardly, pretentious, self-promoting—a jerk to the highest power. "We in the family," writes Alexander Theroux, "don't mind his affected gentility, his smug and self-important airs, his urgent starf—ing insistence that he's a friend of lords and ladies, and only laugh at the fame he courts, the self-aggrandizement, inviting celebrities like Jane Pauley and Bryant Gumbel to his house, neither of whom, I believe, has ever quite managed to make it." On Alexander T.'s bill of complaint is the merciless way that Paul T., with his own strong taste for vengeance, "has satirized our brother Joseph,

caricatured our Mom and Dad, and rehearsed again and again the details of his divorce, which we are all of us tired of hearing about."

Paul Theroux's method is closer to standard literary procedure, which is to settle scores behind the disguise of characters in novels and in poems. There are some earlier precedents for this, but it really gets going at high pitch in the eighteenth century. Low birth, reputed loss of virtue, uncleanliness, bad skin—nothing was ruled out in the skirmishes between such figures as Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, and Lady Mary Wortley Montague. The latter once wrote, apropos of Pope and Swift, that "these two superior Beings were entitled by their Birth and hereditary fortune to be only a couple of Link Boys," or servants who hold up lanterns so one can pass along a dark street. Pope accused Lady Mary of being personally filthy, having a venereal disease, and being a whore. His entire brilliant career sometimes seems as if it floated on pure malice, his relentlessly perfect heroic couplets one long payback for injuries felt and imagined.

All but the saintly or the very dull have known the desire for vengeance, but the literary, with their greater skill with words and hence at formulating insults, are especially well situated to exact it through the pen. Wordsworth thought poetry "emotion recollected in tranquillity"; vengeance is emotion recollected in hostility. If, as the Sicilians say, vengeance is a dish best served cold, writers prefer it in an inky sauce.

So endemic is the taste for vengeance in the contemporary literary world that it has driven the editors of the *New York Times Book Review* to a fine, pervasive paranoia. When assigning books to review, they brood about the possibility of reviewers having secret motives, hidden agendas, God knows what. Only a few weeks ago, it was reported that the reviewer who blasted Scott Turow's most recent novel in the *Book Review* may have done so because she is helping Marcia Clark write her book about the O.J. Simpson trial, and Turow has been highly critical of the Los Angeles district attorney's office's conduct of the trial.

Exacting vengeance through their writing may be the closest to power that writers are permitted to feel. Vladimir Nabokov's character, the novelist Sebastian Knight, in *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, explains something of this thrill of power in a letter to his publisher, who is worried about a libel suit because of the novelist's portrait of a character based on the life of another writer. "There are in fact not many things in life comparable to the delight of satire," Sebastian writes, "and when I imagine the humbug's face as he reads (and read he shall) that particular passage and knows as we all do that it is the truth, then delight reaches its sweetest climax."

Dostoyevsky's portrait of Turgenev as the foppish liberal writer in *The Devils* is a stunning example of using fiction to slay enemies, in this instance a political enemy. Dostoyevsky allows no mercy for Karmazinov, the character based on Turgenev, who first appears "wearing a little quilted jerkin, a sort of jacket, with little mother-of-pearl buttons, but much too short, and which was not at all becoming to his rather well-fed tummy and the solidly rounded beginnings of his legs; but tastes vary." The Turgenev character lisps and mumbles, prances and preens, utters only idiotic opinions. Even when making a considerable jackass of himself, "his face simply said: 'I'm not the way you think, I'm for you, only praise me, praise me more, as much as possible, I like it terribly. . . ."

Literary vengeance is a subset of the larger practice of writers modeling their characters from life. In the twentieth century the practice has spread. Conrad used a great many characters in his novels and stories drawn from his experiences aboard ships in the East. James Joyce inserted Oliver St. John Gogarty, the physician and garrulous man-about-Dublin, into *Ulysses* as Buck Mulligan, and Joyce's estate was being sued for libel by the Dodd family as late as the 1950s. Noel Coward stung Somerset Maugham with his portrait of a writer of fading talent in his play *A Song at Twilight*, but then Maugham had done an even better job, in *Cakes and Ale*, on the English novelist and man of letters Hugh Walpole. In literary vengeance, one hand not so much washes as stabs the other.

Evelyn Waugh used his fiction to mock W.H. Auden and Stephen Spender for not fighting during World War II and, in the same trilogy, *Sword of Honor*, stuck several darts into Cyril Connolly. So deep ran the free-floating malice in Waugh that he didn't even require the motive of vengeance to display his skill in this line; when Brendan Bracken used his connections in the Churchill government to pull strings to get Waugh a three-month leave from the British army to write *Brideshead Revisited*, Waugh repaid him by drawing a comic portrait of him in the novel as the oafish Rex Mottram. Kingsley Amis regularly used fiction to knock down enemies and settle old scores.

Americans have not exactly refrained from this game. Hemingway wrote spitefully—and anti-Semitically—about Harold Loeb in *The Sun Also Rises*; and in *A Moveable Feast*, a work of non-fiction, he took out after F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ford Madox Ford, Gertrude Stein, and just about everyone else who ever helped him. Mary McCarthy, a specialist in the malicious, seemed unable to write about any except actual people, not least her second husband, Edmund Wilson, in *A Charmed Life*. All the characters in

The Group, her novel about her circle at Vassar, are similarly readily identifiable, and every one of them felt injured. But then Randall Jarrell drew a devastating portrait of Mary McCarthy in his one novel, *Pictures from an Institution*. Closer to our own day, in a fine act of literary vengeance, Nora Ephron in her novel *Heartburn* blew away her ex-husband Carl Bernstein and the English lady-friend with whom he presumably cheated on her. This list could be greatly extended.

But Henry James would not appear on it. Like almost every other writer, James drew from life—in *The Bostonians* rather directly so—but revenge was never a part of his *modus operandi*. On the contrary, he felt that anything like the malice that powers vengeance ought to be strained and thoroughly drained out of any writing that wished to make claim to being artistic. He once warned Vernon Lee (the novelist whose real name was Violet Paget) that she wrote "too much in a moral passion," adding the excellent aesthetic advice: "Cool first—write afterwards. Morality is hot—but art is icy!"

Several years later, Miss Lee satirized Henry James himself in a story titled "Lady Tal," through a character she named Jervase Marion and described as "a psychological novelist" and "an intimate of the world of Henry James and a kind of Henry James." James claimed never to have read the story but thought she had committed an act of "treachery to private relations." He wrote: "But I will not see her again. She has committed two crimes. She has invaded my privacy and she has put a human being into a novel without re-imagining him." Two sins, one personal, the other aesthetic, and both weighed heavily with James.

The crucial distinction about using actual people in fiction, plays, or other literary forms is between whether or not active malice has gone into the creation. Nailing someone through literature is almost always a mean, snivelling, quite vicious act. My dearest friend, the late Edward Shils, once was the target for vengeance in an essay in which he was given another name and where his writing was described as "dry as dust" and he is portrayed yelling impatiently at his aged and nearly deaf mother. Behind this act, I knew, was Edward's treating the author of the essay coldly; it may well be that harsh remarks he had made had got back to her. But he never forgot this act of vengeance against him and referred to it, as Henry James may have done, as "monstrous."

Peter Steiner

I recall mentioning this act to Saul Bellow, who knew all the *dramatis personae*, and he agreed that the malice quotient was very high. But, then, he wondered what the author eventually had in store for him—something much worse, he was sure. Bellow has himself used people from real life in all his fiction; there are people who say that he has re-imagined nothing, that nearly every character in every one of his novels and stories has a real-life analogue. I have known a few among them. Some have been treated kindly; others have been blown away.

But people who live in bone houses shouldn't eat ribs. I have published precisely seventeen short stories, and in them I have used a number of characters taken from life. In almost all cases, I hope, I have re-imagined these characters, but some, I confess, have been more imaginatively altered than others. The second-best arrangement is when one can insert a character in a story who is based on someone one loves or admires. Best of all is when one wholly invents a character, though there are some people who claim that writers invent nothing.

Sometimes real-life characters are so grand, so astonishingly fit for being put into fiction that one feels they were sent over by central casting. I once wrote a story about a black con man I had met in the Army who needed no touching up, and therefore I put him into a story I wrote without the aid of even a make-up man, changing only his name, confident in my snobbish—and, as it turned out, correct—assumption that he would never read the story. Coming upon characters in real life so vivid might seem a great advantage, but in fact it can have its drawbacks. Such

characters write themselves, they inhibit invention, they rein in the imagination—they are less a good deal than one might think.

But for all that I have borrowed from life, on only one occasion that I know have I written a story that had vengeance as one of its motives. ("No motive," the novelist John Gardner noted, "is too low for art.") It is a story titled "Another Rare Visit with Noah Danzig." A great many people who read it seemed to recognize straightaway the writer upon whom my character Noah Danzig was based—so many in fact that, when I was asked about his real-life model on a National Public Radio interview show, I said that he was based on a combination of Kareem Abdul Jabbar and David Ben Gurion. The joke didn't go over there, either.

In this story I deliberately set out to mock the pretensions of a famous American writer who was always complaining, in the midst of what seemed to me an unremitting flow of prizes and rewards, about the writer in America being ignored; about the vulgarity of contemporary publicity, in which he himself indulged rather extravagantly; and about the instability of modern private life when his own was an impressive, and so far as I could see largely self-created, mess. Added to the piquancy of all this—and here the unpleasant motive of vengeance creeps in—he and I had had a falling out, owing to what I felt was an act of frivolous disloyalty on his part. My story was in part designed, not to put too fine a point on it, to pay the old boy back.

Of course, literary vengeance, like public confession, can only be of interest if the person upon whom the vengeance is being wreaked is deemed worth the world's notice. When someone told Noel Coward, late in his life, that the drama critic T. C. Worsley had "come out" in his memoirs, Coward retorted: "There is one essential difference between me and Cuthbert Worsley. The British public at large would not care if Cuthbert Worsely had slept with mice." Nor is the world much likely to care if a writer, in one of his stories, draws a harsh portrait of his Uncle Louie, who owned the two shoe stores in Brooklyn.

The model for my character Noah Danzig, however, is someone about whom the world has decided to be interested. And such *réclame* as the story, at the time it was published, was able to garner was, I fear, due more to his fame than to my ability as a writer of stories. Is it a good story? I think that it is at least an amusing one. But would it be as amusing if not so clearly based on a living and notable person? I shall probably never know. And here perhaps is the penalty of allowing vengeance to get in the way of literature: It tends to leave a stain that doesn't quite ever wash out.

Henry James is once again the best guide. Writing about the *Journal* of the Goncourt brothers, a work characterized by the authors' annoyance with much of the world that came under their inspection, "mainly a record of resentment and suffering," James reminds us that "art is most in character when it shows itself most amiable" and "it is not amiable when it is narrow and exclusive and jealous"—and, one might add, vengeful. An act of vengeance is finally the return of a betrayal by a betrayal. Nothing much can come of this transaction, even when conducted under the flag of literature, except perhaps titillation for a small circle of readers who fancy themselves cognoscenti and a wound or two to the targeted parties. Vengeance in literature chiefly proves not that the pen is mightier than the sword, but merely that it can be a lot more irritating. ♦

Harvard Hates America

By Robert Kagan

At the turn of the last century, when the United States was emerging as the world's most dynamic and successful power, many of America's premier intellectuals were profoundly pessimistic. Although their young, vibrant, industrializing country was growing up all around them, they were convinced that "Anglo-Saxon civilization" was in an advanced state of pervasive and perhaps irreversible decline. Brooks Adams's bestseller, *The Law of Civilization and Decay*, argued that the explosion of liberal capitalism in *fin-de-siècle* America represented the penultimate "economic" stage of a civilization's development—a phase in which the creative spirit and "barbarian" martial virtues that had brought success in the past gradually gave way to an "effete" stagnation, a loss of productive energy leading to a final stage of rot and destruction.

Samuel P. Huntington
The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order
Simon & Schuster, $26

Adams's pessimism combined in equal measure a fear of the rising strength of other cultures and a deep insecurity about his own, an insecurity that bordered on self-loathing. This view was shared in

varying degrees by Adams's brother Henry and influential political friends like Theodore Roosevelt, John Hay, and Henry Cabot Lodge. They worried that other "civilizations"—perhaps "the Slavs"—in a less advanced stage of development might retain enough "barbarian" blood in their veins to allow them to conquer the world while an increasingly decadent America and Great Britain lost the will to resist.

These thinkers, giants in their own time, appear rather less impressive in ours. Their explorations in the then-immature field of the social sciences—Brooks Adams insisted his "law" was "scientific"—have seemed childish and simplistic compared with the sophistication and nuance of scholarship in our own time. Indeed, contemporary American scholars have mostly condescended to such pessimism by explaining it away as a relic of nineteenth-century intellectual faddishness—an example of how Social Darwinism and elite anxiety could successfully masquerade as serious strategic thought.

We may have to restrain our condescension. For now one of *our* giants, the distinguished Harvard political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, has advanced a view of the world strikingly similar to that of the Adams boys and their friends. In *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Huntington argues that the world is organized not around nation-states but around "civilizations," of which "the West" is but one of eight or nine. "The West" is in a penultimate stage of development, Huntington says—a "mature," golden age of prosperity likely to be followed by a final stage of destruction either by external invasion or internal collapse. Huntington believes some other "civilizations," "younger" and "more powerful," are at a less advanced stage of development and are poised to dominate the world of the future at the West's expense. Huntington insists it is both foolish and arrogant to imagine that Western ideas and principles are universal or to believe that they can be effective weapons in this "clash of civilizations." And

Samuel P. Huntington

Chas Fagan

Huntington concludes that the best the West can hope to do is shore up its own culture from within and hang on: "The central issue for the West is whether, quite apart from any external challenges, it is capable of stopping and reversing the internal processes of decay."

Huntington's thesis, like Brooks Adams's, has caused a stir in influential circles (the book is an elaboration of a famous article published in *Foreign Affairs* three years ago). But *The Clash of Civilizations* will probably hold up about as well as *The Law of Civilization and Decay*. Huntington's volume already shows the ill-stitched seams where intellectual fads of the moment have been sewn together with the pretensions of "scientific" analysis. Perhaps a few decades from now historians will also be able to identify the elite anxieties that produced this and other jeremiads by leading intellectuals in late-twentieth-century America.

Huntington's argument is based on sleight of hand. He takes a simple and commonly observed fact, exaggerates both its novelty and its significance, and hopes no one notices the resulting distortion of reality upon which his extravagant theory rests. Or, as a historian once wrote of Marx, what Huntington says that is true is not new, and what he says that is new is not true.

Consider Huntington's assertion that his "civilizational paradigm" describes a new force in the post-Cold War world. How new is it? The end of the conflict between the Communist dictatorships and the capitalist democracies has led to an increase in the importance of "civilizational" issues as a force in international relations. World attention has turned toward problems like African tribal conflicts that had been festering all along but had seemed insignificant during the Cold War.

But "civilizational" influences were certainly at work before and during the Cold War. The Balkans was a case study of the clash of civilizations at the turn of the century, when the Russians feared a "Teutonic drive" to the south spearheaded by Austria even as the Austrians feared a Slavic drive spear-

headed by Serbia. It is true that during the Cold War such concerns usually took a back seat, but they remained important—think of the way Richard Pipes sought to explain Soviet imperial behavior by describing Soviet foreign policy not as a new phenomenon, but as a continuation of strains in the Russian character hundreds of years in the making. Huntington himself approvingly quotes Fernand Braudel's assertion that for anyone who seeks to be an actor on the international scene, "it 'pays' to know how to make out, on a map of the world, which civilizations exist today, to be able to define their borders, their centers and peripheries, their provinces and the air one breathes there." But Braudel made that point in 1980—at a time when, according to Huntington, the "civilizational paradigm" was not yet appropriate for understanding international behavior.

The new salience of "civilizational" issues in the post-Cold War era was really more a matter of perceptions than a colossal shift in the priorities of nations and individuals. And the new attention paid to such issues was also a bit of an intellectual fad. With the bipolar world de-poled and the strategic-studies industry in decline, many intellectuals shifted to the study of "tribalism" instead. In his *Foreign Affairs* essay, Huntington simply posited nine giant tribes, called them civilizations, and declared his new paradigm. (The nine "civilizations" he identifies in the book are "Western," "Latin American," "African," "Islamic," "Sinic," "Hindu," "Orthodox," "Buddhist," and "Japanese.")

But for a new paradigm to be a "new paradigm," it must transform and revolutionize our understanding of the world, and so Huntington cannot just argue that the salience of cultural differences has increased in the post-Cold War era. He must boldly claim that tribalism on the grandest scale is pretty much all that matters today. The nation-state as the principal actor in the world is history, and international relations will never be the same.

The evidence Huntington cites for this radical shift in the way the world works is suspect. He lists 19 incidents from the first six months of 1993 that supposedly fit the "civilizational paradigm"—everything from "the failure of the West to provide meaningful support to the Bosnian Muslims or to denounce Croat atrocities in the same way Serb atrocities were denounced," to "the voting, apparently almost entirely along civilizational lines, that gave the 2000 Olympics to Sydney rather than Beijing."

But was "the West's" failure to act in the Balkans motivated chiefly by disregard for the Muslim victims or by the more familiar fear of incurring casualties in any conflict that does not immediately threaten national security? Did Western nations vote against holding the 2000 Olympics in Beijing because it is an Asian capital or because it is the site of the Tiananmen Square massacre and the seat of power of an unrepentant dictatorship? Wouldn't the West have been happy to see the Olympics held in "Japanese" Tokyo or "Sinic" Seoul, as it had been in the past?

Huntington is not interested in such common-sense answers. Instead, he sets out in pursuit of those who claim that the universality of Western principles is being embraced by an increasing number of peoples of all races and cultures. One gets the sense, in fact, that Huntington has decided to dedicate himself to disproving the central thesis of Francis Fukuyama's now-legendary 1989 article, "The End of History?"—that "we may be witnessing . . . the end point of mankind's ideological evolution

and the universalization of Western liberal democracy." In a new *Foreign Affairs* piece adapted from *The Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington calls Fukuyama's idea "misguided, arrogant, false, and dangerous."

In the course of tearing into the noxious idea that human liberty is a universal value and is spreading, Huntington oscillates between a Buchananite cultural conservatism—he worries about how immigration may sap the West of its distinctive Westernness—and the kind of extreme cultural relativism that would make any conservative's hair curl.

The relativism wins out. Like the American Left in the 1970s, Huntington denounces Western universalism as a form of "imperialism." Asians see things differently, he notes, and he sees nothing wrong with the assertion by Singapore's president that the "Asian Way"—that is, the limitation of political rights in the interest of order—is as right for Asians as democracy is for Westerners. Indeed, Huntington argues that in the era of the "civilizational paradigm," the preservation of world peace depends on the West butting out of other civilizations' business. (So much for the Hong Kongese and Taiwanese who didn't know they had crossed an uncrossable "civilizational" barrier when they began choosing their leaders democratically.)

Eager to expose the "vacuousness" of Western universalism, Huntington is mesmerized by the Chinese economic miracle. He considers it the definitive refutation of Fukuyama's thesis that there is no longer any viable alternative to Western-style classical liberalism. Liberalism has triumphed, according to Fukuyama, largely because any nation that wants to keep up with the great powers must undergo the process of modernization, which is impossible without liberalization. All other paths promising a route to success—traditional authoritarianism, fascism, and finally communism—have proven to be dead ends.

Not so with China, Huntington argues; China is modernizing, but it is not Westernizing. And with its vast population, vast territory, its stunning economic growth, and its politically repressed population, China is destined to surpass "the West" in the future—somewhere around 2025. It is more likely that Fukuyama is right and that China will eventually face the choice between being rich and free, or poor (and unstable) and tyrannical. But in any case, it is astonishing that Huntington believes he can chart the course of what may be the most turbulent nation of the twentieth century by following a straight line two or three decades into the future.

Huntington's prediction of China's future global mastery is as poorly grounded as his despair about the future of the West, and his general determinism, pessimism, and relativism are unlikely to stand up any better to the test of time than the work of his forebears a century ago, Henry and Brooks Adams. ♦

Half Nelson

By Robert D. Novak

Twenty years after he last held public office and seventeen years after his death, the name of Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller is mentioned in Republican circles mainly as a pejorative.

Rep. Peter King of New York sought to validate his credentials for assailing Newt Gingrich by noting that he had supported Barry Goldwater back when the future speaker was still a Rockefeller Republican (as indeed he was). Gen. Colin Powell spoiled his self-induction into the GOP by describing himself as a Rockefeller Republican (an apparently accurate description). To his dying day, Richard Nixon regarded me (quite incorrectly) as an unreconstructed Rockefeller Republican—citing this as reason enough not to grant an interview.

Cary Reich
The Life of Nelson A. Rockefeller: Worlds to Conquer 1908–1958
Doubleday, $26

Robert D. Novak is a syndicated columnist.

A Rockefeller Republican was really nothing more than a Cold War liberal—a believer in the power of government to solve domestic problems who took a hard line in the struggle against Soviet imperialism. Today this is a double anachronism. Everybody this side of Paul Wellstone harbors at least some doubts about the efficacy of governmental problem-solving; and there is no Soviet Union, now that the Cold War has been won.

Yet, Cold War liberal Scoop Jackson's name scarcely excites such passion in his Democratic party; in fact, it is not mentioned at all. What biographer Cary Reich describes as Rockefeller's enduring "power to fire up the most incendiary political passions at the mere mention of his name" for Republicans derives from their party's internal history. Rockefeller repre-

sents the financial and social elite of the Eastern Seaboard, which lost its grip on the GOP in 1964 and never regained it but still is resented in the hinterland.

Reich's biographical challenge is to breathe life and significance into a subject who left behind no movement and no dedicated band of supporters. The difficulty is compounded by the biographer's decision not to make short shrift of Rockefeller's rise and move quickly to his tumultuous and ultimately unsuccessful career in Republican politics beginning with his 1958 campaign for governor of New York.

Instead, Reich's *Life of Nelson A. Rockefeller: Worlds to Conquer, 1908-1958* is a definitive, exhaustive, and quite often exhausting account of the subject's childhood, young manhood, business career, and exploits as a Washington bureaucrat. Reich is a prodigious researcher and a graceful, entertaining writer, but Rockefeller's struggles with his father and his father's retainers do not sustain interest.

The book's value is in pointing up the improbability of what Rockefeller achieved after 1958: a leading role in the Republican party that could have led to the White House, save for his lack of personal discipline, and did include election to four terms as governor of New York, then appointment as vice president of the United States.

The name Rockefeller evoked a much stronger popular response in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s than it does today. Then it was a symbol of unlimited wealth ("rich as Rockefeller" was a phrase in a popular tune of the '30s) and of rapacious robber barons.

When Nelson was elected governor in 1958, his father, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., widely called "Junior", was "absolutely stunned."

Nelson Rockefeller

Chas Fagan

Reich writes that "deep down," the senior Rockefeller never believed that his son would win, "that he would ever overcome the stigma that, in Junior's mind at least, still shadowed the family."

Even more improbable was Rockefeller's emergence in Republican politics at the age of 50, considering his service a little more than a decade earlier under Franklin D. Roosevelt—first as a coordinator of inter-American affairs (an appointment of his own instigation, to a job largely of his own making) and later as assistant secretary of state for Latin America.

His go-between with FDR was his longtime adviser and helper, New York Democratic insider Anna Rosenberg, who told the president in 1938 that Nelson was "sympathetic. He feels quite differently from some of the other members of his family" (though in fact he contributed $33,000 to Alf Landon's 1936 Republican presidential campaign, more than his brothers).

Once they made contact, Rockefeller became a Roosevelt cheerleader, writing an impassioned defense of the WPA, the make-work New Deal project, to a critical congressional chairman and mailing a copy of the letter to Roosevelt.

In 1940, when Rockefeller's name came up for the new post of inter-American coordinator, Roosevelt noted that "Nelson would be fine" because he had given $25,000 to his presidential campaign that year. Of this, Reich could find no "independent corroboration" in either Rockefeller's or Roosevelt's papers. On the contrary, Nelson and his brothers had offered to back Republican Wendell Willkie in 1940, but their checks were returned because of the opprobrium of the Rockefeller name.

Once on board as a lieutenant of the president Republicans despised

as "that man in the White House," Rockefeller was a "consummate courtier," according to Reich. "Already a past master at the art of ingratiation—having honed his skills to fine art with Junior—Rockefeller was tireless in his devout flattery of the President." He sent a gushing congratulatory letter when Roosevelt defeated Willkie.

Inside later-New Deal circles, Rockefeller was drawn to the personality farthest to the left: Henry A. Wallace, first secretary of agriculture and later vice president. He put on Sunday-evening musicales aimed "at pleasing Wallace, the Latin music buff," sent him gifts, and sometimes visited him in his Washington apartment to partake of the utopian socialist's wisdom.

On one such visit, he heard the vice president mystically expound on the "corn civilization" binding the United States and Latin America against the "wheat civilization" of the rest of the world. As Rockefeller left, he told a companion: "There are no two ways about it. That man must be the next President of the United States."

Simultaneously, Rockefeller sought and achieved a relationship with the FBI and its director, the totem of the Right, J. Edgar Hoover—a relationship that became more intense with the advent of the Cold War.

After Roosevelt's death, with President Harry Truman a less pliable target of the Republican aristocrat's blandishments, Rockefeller "expressed concern," Reich writes, "that Truman did not really understand Communist tactics and how the Russians operate. Rockefeller thought it would be a 'grand thing' if J. Edgar Hoover were to educate Truman on that score."

There was no such education, and Truman fired Rockefeller. It would be seven years before Rockefeller returned to the halls of power in the Eisenhower administration, first as undersecretary of health, education, and welfare (in which role he was a big-spending liberal) and then as presidential assistant for Cold War strategy (where he was a militant anti-Communist).

There was no easy road to get there. He was not an early recruit in Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidential crusade. When asked by promoter Tex McCrary to contribute $25,000 for an "I Like Ike" rally at Madison Square Garden, Rockefeller replied, "Let me think about it." McCrary heard no more from him. After Eisenhower's nomination for president, Rockefeller's efforts to get involved in the campaign were blocked by New York governor Thomas E. Dewey.

But one of the richest men in the world, blessed with incomparable contacts, could not be kept out of the first Republican administration in a generation. As he had with Roosevelt, Rockefeller cut across regular jurisdictional lines and sought to work directly with the president. Eisenhower's Open Skies inspection proposal was a product of Rockefeller's idea mill.

"A progressive by nature, Rockefeller wanted a Republicanism with a social conscience, a Republicanism that accepted the need for government intervention to right society's wrongs," writes Reich. But he ended his Eisenhower-administration tenure as "an implacable hardliner," resigning after being isolated from the inner circles of power, in protest that Eisenhower's Cold War strategy was falling short.

Frustrated in two administrations, Rockefeller now saw elective office as the path to power. Indeed, Reich records a 1952 postelection conversation in which he told Herbert Brownell, the New York lawyer and Dewey-Eisenhower insider, that he wanted "to run for President someday. . . . Dwight

Eisenhower was still two months away from entering the White House, and Nelson Rockefeller was already planning the succession."

Reich relates a comic but humiliating incident when Rockefeller sought out Gov. Dewey in 1956 to ask about running for governor two years later. Dewey suggested a gradual succession: appointment as New York City postmaster, a run for Congress, and "then later, maybe then, you could run for governor." Rockefeller's version: "He slapped my knee and laughed out loud and said, 'Nelson, you're a great guy, but you couldn't get elected dogcatcher in New York.'"

Disregarding the advice, Rockefeller won the party's nomination (then decided by convention) in a brilliant tactical performance, superbly described by Reich, that must have made him think it would be easy to advance in a party he had ignored most of his life. The emergence of the blintz-chomping, pizza-eating Rocky who devastated the dour Democratic governor, Averell Harriman, ends the first volume of Reich's massively detailed work.

Having devoted eight years of his life to this project, journalist Reich gives the impression he doesn't really care much for the subject—particularly his "shrewd, designing side." Neither does the biographer stint in reporting on Rockefeller's seamier aspect, especially his continuous liaisons with attractive women, who invariably worked as his aides.

Reich, former executive editor of the *Institutional Investor* and biographer of financier Andre Meyer, makes no effort to hide his own ideological preferences. While seeming to approve of Rockefeller's big government excesses, Reich condemns his Cold War activism. He mercilessly assails what may be Rockefeller's greatest accomplishment in public life: his insistence on postwar regional agreements at the Chapultepec conference of 1945—a performance that permitted the creation of NATO. "Among those in the U.S. government who were already hunkering down for the start of the Cold War, Nelson Rockefeller was in the vanguard," Reich notes with obvious disapproval.

That mindset leaves doubt about how the biographer will perform in the second and more difficult half of his great task. That Rockefeller's ultimate failure in national politics was the product not merely of his politically disastrous remarriage but also of his isolation from the overriding trends of the Republican party and America may be something Cary Reich is unable to cope with in an objective and insightful way. ♦

Beckett Unbound

By Michael Valdez Moses

Samuel Beckett has long occupied a central place in the often ferocious disputes that have raged over the ethical and political significance of art in this century. Not long after international celebrity status was thrust upon him following the premiere of his revolutionary play *Waiting for Godot* in 1953, Beckett's work became the subject of acrimonious debates between some of the leading Marxist thinkers of the day.

James Knowlson
Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett
Simon & Schuster, $35

Georg Lukács, the Hungarian critic, insisted that Beckett's nihilistic works embodied the worst excesses of Western bourgeois decadence. Theodor Adorno countered that Beckett's writings, particularly *Godot* and the 1957 drama *Endgame*, were laudable examples of the way avant-garde art could serve as a challenge to the very economic structures and ideological assumptions all Marxists condemned. In the years following the Lukács-Adorno exchange, the controversy over the political significance of postmodern art has raged unabated.

In his compelling biography, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*, James Knowlson both does justice to the revolutionary aesthetic achievements of his subject and manages as well to convey how Beckett's achievement emerges organically out of a life often immersed in the great political changes and catastrophes of the century.

Born outside Dublin in 1906, Samuel Barclay Beckett was the second son of a prosperous Anglo-Irish Protestant family. Educated initially by tutors and at local private schools, Beckett spent the tumultuous years of the Anglo-Irish and Irish civil wars in the safe confines of a boarding school, where he excelled as both an athlete and student. Beckett subsequently went on to a distinguished university career at Trinity College in Dublin, and intended to pursue an academic life. In 1927, he was awarded a prestigious lectureship in Paris and there made the acquaintance of James Joyce, who

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would become his friend and mentor.

He returned to teach in Dublin but yearned for the bohemian life of the writer embodied by Joyce, and precipitously resigned his post in 1931, shocking and disappointing his family, friends, and colleagues. The '30s proved a desperate and dispiriting time for Beckett. As he struggled to find his voice as a writer, the former teetotaler took up drinking in a serious way and roamed Europe. By 1938, Beckett had settled permanently in Paris, but found his emergent literary career derailed by the outbreak of World War II. A scant 750 unbound copies of his first published novel, *Murphy*, had been sold to a bookseller before paper shortages during the war forced Beckett's British publisher to cease printing it—and most of those 750 copies seem to have been destroyed in German bombing raids before they could even be purchased by customers.

When the war ended, Beckett entered what he was later to call a "frenzy of writing." In less than four years he wrote several major stories, two plays (among them *Godot)*, and four novels, including his most substantial and enduring works of fiction, *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable*. His dramas of the late 1950s, *Endgame* and *Krapp's Last Tape*, were both critical and commercial successes, and Beckett's international reputation continued to grow exponentially, culminating in 1969 with the Nobel prize for literature.

Beckett had become a canonical literary figure in his own lifetime, and in the world's eyes he came to seem like a Beckett character: a solitary man made inhuman and detached by his struggles with the most basic questions of human existence, a cold abstract intelligence uncomfortable in the role of conventional playwright and novelist. How could it be otherwise for a writer who increasingly came to favor one- and two-character plays, the protagonists of which must cope with the most abnegating circumstances imaginable—two figures living in garbage cans in *Endgame*, a woman mired in a mound of dirt prattling cheerfully as it slowly rises to engulf her in *Happy Days*?

But it was otherwise. Knowlson interviewed Beckett several times before his death in 1989 at the age of 83 and had exclusive access to a mass of Beckett's unpublished correspondence and private diaries. As a result, Knowlson's *Damned to Fame* offers a far more balanced and moving portrait of the "reclusive" author than any we have seen, and it succeeds brilliantly in altering three widely shared assumptions about Beckett's life, work, and character.

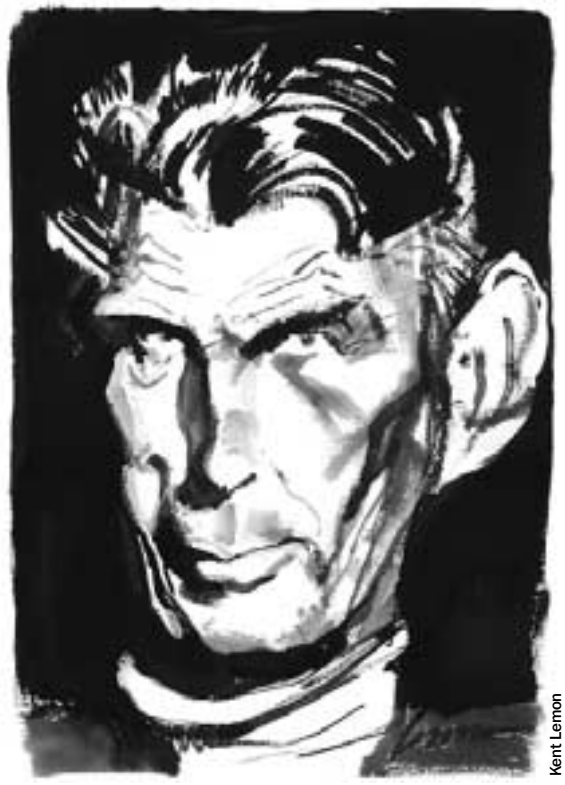
Beckett earned his reputation as a misanthrope and "arch-miserabilist" because he found it necessary to guard his privacy following the success of *Godot* so that he would have time to write. As a result, the press and his public thought him aloof, inaccessible, and morbidly incommunicative. But in truth, Beckett was an immensely witty, humorous, irreverent, generous, and passionate man much loved by friends and family, in whom he inspired lifelong respect, devotion, and love. With considerable tact and honesty, Knowlson reveals Beckett in all his complexity—at once the ascetic and sober devotee of his art and a truly free-spirited bohemian whose passions included hard drinking, sport (from cricket to tennis to boxing), and women. The story of Beckett's love affairs paints a far more human portrait of an artist deeply attached to the world of the flesh, even while his work seemed poised on the ill-lighted threshold of the world of the dead.

Beckett remained for most of his life an inveterate and unrepentant atheist, but Knowlson suggests that

his ethical conduct remained deeply informed by the morals instilled in him by his Protestant mother and his boarding school: "loyalty, honor, integrity, politeness, and respect for others." Most conspicuously, Beckett's life exemplified the virtue of charity. Beckett was willing, even compulsively eager, to offer to those in need whatever money, time, support, and sympathy he had at his disposal. He was generous to a fault even before he had reaped the reward of commercial success. During the grim postwar years in economically devastated France, a malnourished Beckett sometimes gave away what little food he could secure to less fortunate friends.

Later, Beckett acquired a reputation among his increasingly protective friends and relatives as the softest of soft touches. In the mid-1950s, in a Montparnasse cafe, Beckett was approached by a penniless vagabond who said to him, "My word, that's a fine jacket you're wearing, a lovely jacket." Without emptying his coat pockets, Beckett slipped off the jacket and gave it to the man. *Damned to Fame* abounds with such testaments to Beckett's character (though Knowlson notably leaves marital fidelity off the lists of Beckett's virtues, since his love affairs continued long after he was settled into his 50-year relationship with Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil, the woman who became his wife).

Knowlson also demonstrates that, contrary to critical opinion, Beckett was influenced as much by the great tradition of Western painting and classical music as he was by Western literature and philosophy. Take just two examples: Knowlson finds in Caspar David Friedrich's 1819 painting *Two Men Observing the Moon* the image from *Godot* of its two protagonists staring at a flimsy stage version of the moon, while in the radio play *Words and Music*, which dates from the early 1960s, Beckett pioneered the revolutionary concept of assigning to pure music the role of an autonomous member of the cast.



Kent Lemon

Samuel Beckett

Finally, and perhaps most important, Knowlson corrects the notion of Beckett as an apolitical artist. An early essay called "Censorship in the Saorstat" (the word puns on the Gaelic for Irish Free State but might be translated "the nation of sows") was a hilarious and vicious attack on the 1929 law that banned immoral and irreligious literature in Ireland. When World War II began, Beckett was visiting his family in Ireland, but he rushed back to Paris even as the German invasion of Europe was underway. An Irish subject, Beckett was legally classified as a "neutral" in the conflict, but in 1941 he joined the French Resistance and played a key role in one of the most important cells operating out of Paris. Beckett was responsible for translating and editing a vast array of intelligence reports on German activities gathered by members of the Resistance, and he personally delivered the transcripts to his contact, who transferred the information to microfilm before it was sent on to British intelligence in England. Knowlson provides a thrilling account of how Beckett and Suzanne (also a member of the Resistance) managed to escape from Paris after a double agent turned over the names of their cell's members to German counterintelligence. Many of Beckett's closest friends were not so lucky, languishing or dying in concentration camps. Spending the remainder of the war in a small village in "unoccupied" France, Beckett was to join yet another Resistance cell that assisted Allied troops in driving out German forces in the waning days of the conflict.

Beckett was a behind-the-scenes supporter of those who criticized the conduct of the French government and military during the Algerian war for independence in the late 1950s and 1960s. He steadfastly refused to allow his works to be performed in South Africa except before racially integrated audiences. And when the Spanish playwright Fernando Arrabal was imprisoned by the Franco regime on charges of blasphemy and treason, Beckett wrote a letter of protest and agreed to testify before a tribunal in his defense.

Knowlson considers Beckett to have been "basically left-wing and

anti-establishment," but he dutifully and admiringly recounts Beckett's profound interest in and support of liberation movements in Eastern Europe. Beckett gave financial support to the Polish dissident Antoni Libera, and with Beckett's tacit understanding, some of his monies were used to fund underground publishing houses critical of the Communist regime in Poland. When martial law was declared there in 1981, Beckett signed a public manifesto protesting the curtailment of civil liberties. In 1982, Beckett dedicated his play *Catastrophe* to the imprisoned dissident writer Václav Havel. It concerns a Protagonist, a silent figure who stands on stage responding passively to the orders given by the despotic Director, who inhumanely molds the abject posture of the Protagonist for public display. At the play's conclusion, the apparently will-less Protagonist defiantly raises his illuminated head to face the audience, directly challenging the Director's command that it remain bowed. When critics suggested that the political message of the play was ambiguous, Beckett fumed: "There's no ambiguity there at all. . . . He's saying: You bastards, you haven't finished me yet!" After his release from prison, Havel expressed his gratitude by dedicating his own play, *The Mistake*, to Beckett.

One of the deepest and most pervasive concerns in Beckett's work is his lifelong obsession with and search for unlimited freedom. At times, that quest might take the form of a metaphysical exploration of the meaning of freedom, while at others it centers on artistic, psychological, and even political efforts to attain the maximum degree of individual autonomy. Beckett's intellectual mentor and champion at Trinity College, Thomas Rudmose-Brown, took a liking to the young Beckett not only because of the demonstrable brilliance of his protegé, but also because the professor saw in his student a fellow "free spirit." Beckett would never forget one of Rudmose-Brown's pithiest aphorisms: The best government was the one "that charges you the least blackmail for leaving you alone."

Beckett, as both man and writer, devoted his life to subverting all forms of authority—religious, intellectual, cultural, and political—that presumed to restrict the freedom of the individual. Though his works bespeak a lifelong meditation on the failing light of reason, they also represent an equally powerful engagement with the struggle to expand and explore the utmost possibilities of human emancipation. Perhaps it is fitting, then, that Beckett's last major play to be published, written in the 1940s but appearing only posthumously, should bear the title *Eleutheria*—the Greek word for *freedom*. ♦

The Tragedy of Max Weber

By Harvey Mansfield

John Patrick Diggins, a provocative academic who writes primarily on American politics, has the happy faculty of raising your interest without entirely satisfying it. His latest book seems at first glance a departure from his previous work, but it isn't at all. For in *Max Weber: Politics and the Spirit of Tragedy*, Diggins offers an intellectual biography of a seminal figure of our century—and tries to make the case that Weber's ideas offer an alternative to an "American political culture almost innocent of irony and tragedy" that suffuses the country as the century comes to a close. Diggins first raises our interest with the biographical aspects of his book: Its portrait of Weber the man gives dignity and stature to Weber the intellectual. But the case he makes for Weber's relevance ultimately doesn't satisfy. For while Max Weber was unquestionably a great social scientist, perhaps the greatest we have seen, he had a profoundly flawed understanding of how America came to be, the ills that beset her, and where we can go to find a cure for those ills.

John Patrick Diggins
Max Weber: Politics and the Spirit of Tragedy
Basic Books, $35

Weber died in Germany in 1920 at the age of 56. His work, translated and championed by the leading American sociologist Talcott Parsons, has had an enormous influence in American universities, an influence that extends beyond the books professors read to the classes they teach. As a result, most people know something about his ideas—charisma, the Protestant ethic—even if they do not know his name.

Weber was profoundly troubled by the increasingly bureaucratic organization of the modern world. He believed bureaucracy was imposing dull routine, mediocre careerism, and legalistic overcaution not merely on bureaucrats but

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also on the rest of us. Bureaucracy is rational, all too rational, but it is directionless and therefore mindless. Indeed, for Weber, all of reason is mindless in the same way. For reason cannot tell us what to value; it can only arrange facts.

Social scientists and practical Americans believe the distinction between facts and values implicitly favors facts. Facts are true, after all, while values may be just so much hot air. Weber popularized the idea of the "fact-value distinction," but he derived an entirely different meaning from it. Facts are true, he said, but they are dead. They come to life only when they can be connected to a deeper and less rational force—by how much people value them. Values are therefore more powerful than facts because they inspire people. Here, as elsewhere, we can see the direct influence of his (and our century's) philosophic master, Friedrich Nietzsche.

While the stated purpose of the social sciences is the passive, objective description of the world, Weber could not quite stay within their frontiers. We can best see his struggle against the bonds of objectivity when we consider what charisma meant to him. Weber coined the term "charisma," an act for which the American people have honored him by using it as vaguely and enthusiastically as he himself did. With "charisma," Weber was making an effort to describe a fact—the strikingly irrational appeal of a strong leader. But he also wanted to identify a means of escape from the dead arm of bureaucracy that concerned him so much. And thus he imbued the *fact* of charisma with the *value* he attached to the inspiration provided by a great leader.

Indeed, if Weber was a great social scientist, it was because his social science was itself concerned with the question of greatness. Diggins maintains that Weber upheld the "spirit of tragedy," a mature outlook that combines both the passion of a tragic hero as he acts and his chastened sobriety after he fails. But since Weber himself never really defines tragedy in his works, Diggins must do it for him.

Chas Fagan

Max Weber

Here is Diggins's description of tragedy: Tragedy occurs when competing ideals come into conflict. These conflicts force us to face spiritual challenges that seem insuperable. At these moments, reason has nothing to say to us. If we wish to pursue greatness, we have two choices. We can either ignore the conflict by embracing one ideal with passion—the path to greatness Weber called the "ethic of intention." Or we can submit to the torture of the conflict by following the second path to greatness through a sober and dispassionate "ethic of responsibility." The first is tragedy as passion, the second tragedy as sobriety. Alas, ideals are harder to come by in a world in which everyone has the ability to separate facts from values. We look to reason for answers, but reason cannot prove an ideal true. And if we have no ideals, then those ideals cannot come into conflict, and greatness becomes impossible. Our sophistication about facts and values leads not to heroism, but instead to unearned satisfaction with petty goals easily accomplished.

For his description of a culture without heroes, greatness, or ideals, Diggins offers Weber as a prophet of the sophisticated unease that seems to characterize life in the United States these days. Weber was fascinated by America—his best-known book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, is in part a study of Puritan culture. He visited the States only once, in 1904, and traveled a route similar to the one taken by Alexis de Tocqueville when he came in the 1830s. At one point, Diggins says Weber may be a better guide to our country today than the author of *Democracy in America*.

Diggins does not elaborate on this point, and it is understandable that he doesn't, because a serious comparison between the two does not favor Weber. "With Max Weber, liberalism prepared itself for modernity," Diggins concludes. One might say in response that, with Tocqueville, liberalism was given an early warning against the sort of passionate hand-wringing, contrived tragedy, and male boasting we find in the work of Max Weber.

Look first at *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, which has had huge and undeserved success. According to Weber, the Protestant ethic was first instilled in Puritan times and over time gave capitalism its guiding "spirit." Capitalism needed that spirit because, in Weber's view, plain self-interest is not enough to compel a society's devotion to the capitalist system. Weber acknowledges that Protestantism itself is *not* devoted to making money; instead, he says colonial America was driven by a *corrupted* version of Calvinism, according to which financial success in this world is a sign of salvation in the next. What capitalism required and the Protestant ethic produced was a doctrine of "worldly asceticism"—you must make money, but you must neither enjoy it nor be swayed by the pursuit of pleasure.

This theory simultaneously deflates and inflates human intentions. Weber interprets all religion as worldly, as if it were not an aspect of human nature to seek something higher than the mundane. And since he thinks the successful pursuit of worldly interests requires self-deceptive obsession, the only way a person can become serious and successful is to be a fanatic. Weber admires America because it is crazy about something, and disdains it because that something is money.

Weber offers up the works of Benjamin Franklin as the best

example of irrational "worldly asceticism." That is an astonishing misreading. The discoverer of electricity was no ascetic; if anything, he was an epicurean. And far from being overly serious on the topic of money, Franklin's wonderfully canny writings are full of amusement at human weakness and ambition. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber confuses John Calvin with Franklin and does justice to neither.

Compare Weber's confusion with the calm good sense of Tocqueville. The French author also lays stress on the Puritans, whom he calls America's "point of departure." But Tocqueville is more interested in the way the Puritans brought democracy to the new world than he is in describing the ways they irrationally repressed pleasure. The Puritan influence, Tocqueville shows, was succeeded by the founding of the nation that established the uniquely American doctrine of "self-interest well understood." It was this doctrine, and not "worldly asceticism," that Ben Franklin passed along to his fellow citizens. Self-interest does not have to be glorified as, or mistaken for, God's command to stir democratic citizens to action in their own behalf. Democracy *itself* has a tendency toward honest materialism.

Democracy, according to the undemocratic Weber, is not actually rule by the people. It is rule by bureaucratic organizations, above all political parties, which claim falsely to represent the people. Modern democracy is governed by the idea that society must or should be controlled by reason, Weber says. And since such control must be organized in a rational manner, those who do the organizing—the bureaucrats—have the power. The bureaucrats in a democracy even organize and control the body politic that is supposed to rule them.

Tocqueville does not deny that America is subject to the same enfeebling tendencies as other democracies, and, like Weber, he deplores the effects of a large, impersonal government that encompasses our lives and leaves little for us to do on our own. Indeed, Tocqueville had analyzed the role of Big Government half a century before Weber even began writing. Big Government, Tocqueville explains, is not a feature unique to modern democracy. Rather, it was the creation of French kings centuries before and was governed by the very principle of rational control Weber describes. Tocqueville shows that Big Government, though born of reason, is in truth unreasonable. People desire it because in a democracy each individual feels weak and isolated, in need of a protector and a "tutor." But in trying to control every risk to which human beings are subject, Big Government promises too much and finally makes itself ridiculous. The people both submit to it and rail against it; they did so in the 1830s, and they do so today.

To turn away from the temptation of Big Government, Tocqueville seeks moderate, reasonable remedies, such as voluntary associations, religion, and decentralized administration. Weber, on the other hand, goes looking for tragedy resulting from some mighty clash of persons or nations that might give democratic life meaning. Indeed, Weber maintained that a class of men he called "master peoples" had an innate calling for world development—which suggests that he was not only no friend of democracy, but perhaps something more sinister.

Weber's impact on Germany has been much discussed since 1945. His idea of the "master peoples" was not racial in character, but it was intoxicating, especially to Germans licking their wounds after 1918. Even more intoxicating was his notion of charisma and its mutation of greatness into something excessive, irrational, and undemocratic. Charisma is a copy of heroism for times too sophisticated—or too feeble—to believe in heroes. It is primarily defined by its mysterious effect on those who are dazzled by it. A charismatic figure does not have to have great qualities; he need only be thought to possess them by mass audiences, who are poor judges. The ambivalent meaning Weber gave to charisma suggests that it combines the willfulness of a fascist bully like Mussolini and the superficial charm of a democratic smoothie like Clinton. It denotes phony greatness, which is the stuff of phony tragedy.

Weber did not see how deeply he had cheapened heroism when he separated it from excellence and made it a performance art. Weber fretted about "the castration of charisma" by bureaucracies and other forces, a phallic image that suggests charisma really is nothing more (and perhaps something less) than manliness.

Tocqueville, like Weber, felt the absence of greatness in democracy, and he too criticized the bourgeoisie for the pettiness of its ambitions. But he was wary of democratic vanity and demagoguery—which resemble nothing so much as Weber's charisma—because he thought these vices would be likely democratic responses to the flatness of democracy. He was also aware of the genuine danger to democracy from the tyrannical pretensions of great men. The idea of charisma treats these pretensions as though they were only rhetorical overstatements, and therefore it cannot warn us against the actual tyrannies that might follow.

It may be a tragedy that democracy and greatness are in tension.

Indeed, they may be incompatible. But if we want to consider the question seriously, we need a teacher whose understanding of both democracy and greatness is deeper than Max Weber's. ♦

Japan As We See It

By Lewis Libby

The curious island of Japan has long fascinated the West: in peace and war; in novels, paintings, plays, and movies. Ian Littlewood, in *The Idea of Japan: Western Images, Western Myths*, sets out to expose our time-honored myths about that country, not because they are untrue, but because they obscure "all the other things that are true." Japan, he contends, has grown too important to be ringed in clichés.

Littlewood does not pretend to tell us what Japan is *really* like; rather, he wants us to know how readily and consistently we engage in stereotypes about it. Nor are these stereotypes necessarily valueless, he says. They persist "because there is a basis of truth to them." So, he has put together an exhibition of perceptions of Japan, from the earliest Western visitors' accounts to James Bond and the ninja flicks. There is many a gem here.

For example, in recounting Japan's 200-year effort to exclude Western influence, Littlewood tells the story of the summary execution of a Portuguese trade delegation in 1640:

> They were executed to a man, along with all but thirteen members of the crew. These thirteen, witnesses to the execution, were sent back with a message to the Macanese, "Let the people of Macao think no more of us; as if we were no longer in the world."

That, ladies and gentlemen, is a strong response.

In fact, the inclusion of a few more of these early encounters might have been desirable. Many of the familiar names are here, but we have too little of, for example, Isabella Bird's travels through northern Japan in 1878; we have only her arrival in port, which is rather like emphasizing the experience of Lewis and Clark east of the Blue Ridge.

Ian Littlewood
The Idea of Japan: Western Images, Western Myths
Ivan R. Dee, $26

The preponderant strength of the book lies in its references to popular Western literature. In Ian Fleming's Bond novels, James Clavell's *Shogun*, Michael Crichton's *Rising Sun*, Fred Hiatt's *The Secret Sun*, and other works, Littlewood finds evidence of Western fantasies about Japanese women, Japanese aestheticism, Japanese violence, and—most disturbingly—Japanese otherness, the sense that the Japanese are alien, less than fully human. Because Littlewood argues that popular culture is more revealing of our attitudes than scholarly literature, it is a bit surprising that he left out Oliver Statler's influential *Japanese Inn*. Also, he might have commented on the impressions left on Westerners by Japanese works that are at least as well known in our culture as many of the Western works he cites: Filtered into the Western consciousness about Japan are the films of Akira Kurosawa and the writings of Yukio Mishima, Junichiro Tanizaki, and Yasunari Kawabata (who won the Nobel prize for literature in 1968). Littlewood's subtitle, "Western Images, Western Myths," might better be styled, "Images and Myths in Western-created Popular Media"; the two are not the same.

Littlewood makes no attempt to demonstrate that Western-created images of Japanese seductresses and martial artists differ significantly from those in Japanese media, as his thesis might seem to require. True, the Japanese do not refer to themselves as "monkeys," as Western propagandists did during World War II, but Tanizaki and Kawabata write of the pleasures of young Japanese women, Mishima is at least as interested in sensuality and suicide as any Western writer mentioned by Littlewood, and Japanese movies depict both sword-wielding heroes and villains.

As we consider all of the spy novels, murder mysteries, and the like, we have to wonder whether Littlewood is to some extent putting the rabbit in the hat. Do we, as he implicitly asserts, truly perceive characters in such settings as broadly reflective of real people? Popular culture is meaningful, but there is also common sense in the populace—along with understanding and tolerance.

And Littlewood, though he suggests it, never quite proves that our perceptions of Japan are less accurate than our perceptions of other cultures. It is far from obvious that we are more distorted in our views of the Japanese than we are in our views of, say, the Arabs, or the Latin Americans, or even our own American Indians. A similar survey of pulp novels and movies involv-

Lewis Libby, a Washington lawyer and a former official in the State and Defense departments, is the author of The Apprentice, *a first novel.*

ing these other groups might show equally egregious, or even more egregious, stereotypes.

At the end of the book, Littlewood invokes World War II and the atomic bombing of Japan to warn that if we do not challenge our historical stereotypes of the Japanese, "the same stereotypes will sooner or later produce the same reaction." He calls for more Western-to-Eastern contact, which most of us would probably accept, even if we would reject his historical diagnosis.

The Idea of Japan is an enjoyable and readable volume. It is incomplete—What *is* the true Japan, anyway?—but to be incomplete is not to be without merit. The book resembles a Japanese sketch, in which the artist paints only portions of the canvas, leaving whole realms covered by clouds. Whatever else he has done, Littlewood has given us an intriguing analysis of popular references to a country of enormous importance to us. Perhaps one day he will address more directly some of the questions he has raised. In the meantime, we are left to ponder the meaning of the stereotypes he has carefully exposed. ♦

The Graves of Academe

By Saul Rosenberg

In a passage that neatly captures both the nature and the problem of what is called "postmodern" fiction, a character in a John Barth story muses:

"Another story about a writer writing a story! Another *regressus in infinitum*! Who doesn't prefer art that at least overtly imitates something other than its own processes?"

Who indeed? The interesting thing about John L'Heureux is that, from the evidence of *The Handmaid of Desire*, his fourteenth novel, he does and he doesn't. At least that, presumably, is why, in order to mount an attack on the postmodern novel, he has written . . . a postmodern novel.

When Olga Kaminska, en route to take up a temporary position in the English department of an unnamed West Coast university (L'Heureux has taught at Stanford for many years) advertises to us by a casual remark that she can read the mind of the airline stewardess approaching her, we think: telepathy? science fiction? No, she's a witch! A few pages later, the author tips his hand, and it turns out that Olga, the central character in *The Handmaid of Desire*, knows what the other characters in the novel are thinking, because she is, in fact, the writer of the novel. Aha! we say, a self-reflexive meditation on the nature of writing—and our heart sinks in apprehension of a couple of hundred pages of self-referential prose. Our spirits rise soon enough, however, for what follows is a frothy, convoluted farce which, if less thoroughly engaged than Kingsley Amis's 1954 debut, *Lucky Jim*, or the best of David Lodge, nonetheless catches and skewers precisely the mad solipsist pretensions of humanities academia on the eve of the millennium.

John L'Heureux
The Handmaid of Desire
Soho Press, $23

Olga arrives at the university to find her new colleagues in a high state of sexual and professional confusion. The chairman of the English department, Robbie Richter, is having a literary-theory-induced nervous breakdown, which is interfering in complicated ways with Zachary Kurtz's plans to seize control and re-christen the department the Department of Theory and Discourse. Zachary's obsession with his professional schemes is destroying his marriage to Rosalie, but their new baby looks like it might save their relationship—until it turns out that what it really looks like is Gil Rudin, Zachary's colleague and Rosalie's sometime lover.

Meanwhile, in the realm of the less strictly heterosexual, Peter Peeks, a Californian-bodied, empty-headed undergraduate ("To me, Foucault is a god. I mean, that's really what he is, a god.") is having a fling with the hopeless "post-postmodern" writer Francis Tortorisi. Jealously spying on them is Maddy Barker, who in turn is lusted after by the lesbian Catholic Chicana-studies expert, Concepción. In a gloriously topsy-turvy twist, Concepción becomes uncertain of her sexuality—"Was she really different from a normal gay woman?"—but her bid for tenure is nevertheless secured when Eleonora Tuke irrefutably proclaims: "She's a Chicana and a lesbian and a good scholar in a minor field . . . but let us not forget that she *is* a Chicana and she *is* a lesbian. How many of us can claim that? Am I right? I'm right."

Beyond hopeless, you might think. But it is this generally ghastly crew of literary lunatics Olga intends to sort out, and sort them out she does, directing her characters out of the careful weigh-

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ing of probability and motive toward the heavens and hells she believes they have earned for themselves.

L'Heureux has a delightfully light touch with the crazies who have taken over the asylum, from Concepción and her "cell of post-Christian feminists" revising the Catholic Angelus prayer to exclude the verses "all about Jesus and therefore irrelevant," to Eleonora Tuke's endless blather about "video acrostics and virtual poetic reality and sound grids" (not to neglect Moo Rudin, whose new "Dick and Jane" for the children of interracial couples, *Dirk and Jahine*, has just been rapturously received by the publishers). Underneath the sparkling surface, however, L'Heureux is working away quite seriously at his central theme: What has gone wrong with the teaching and writing of literature, and what can we do to fix it?

As far as the first question goes, L'Heureux is quite clear that it is a moral as well as an imaginative failure that has brought us to this unpretty pass, in which all concerned with the business of literature play intellectual games on the sidelines, refusing to step into the arena in which Dickens and Tolstoy struggled—and conceal that refusal behind a claim that the arena does not really exist, that the power of fiction to illuminate human nature is an illusion.

As for the second question, L'Heureux is also clear that a straightforward return to a traditional understanding of literary practice can save us. Thus the salvation of Robbie Richter (the crazy department chairman) from his theory-induced madness, through the steady diet of good fiction Olga brings to his hospital bed concealed in the wrappers of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*. Thus, too, the set of lectures delivered by Olga, who takes over Robbie's course "The Problem of Evil: Hitler, Stalin, the Holocaust, and Ecology" (!) and devotes it to the steady subversion of postmodern insight through a traditional exposition of St. Thomas Aquinas. Seasoned observers of the academic scene will smile grimly over the confusions of Olga's students:

> "It's the environment," some of them said, "She's anti-pollution." Others felt she wanted people to take responsibility for moral discrimination, whatever that was supposed to mean. But there were others . . . who decided that her lectures implied the existence of an absolute standard of right and wrong, which they found disturbing. Absolutes, by definition, were not democratic. They were not multicultural. They were unfair.

Over the course of the term, attendance drops off precipitously, but Olga's concern has never really been with the students. With the faculty she is a complete success, parceling out destinies in judicious accordance with her characters' desires and deserts and, by the way, acting out for us, with her quiet hours sitting at home and her episodes of writer's block, L'Heureux's idea of the responsible writer at work.

It would be nice if one could simply celebrate L'Heureux's romp through the groves of academe and leave it at that. But the book mounts a serious argument about the nature and possibilities of fiction and invites therefore a serious response. And here we come upon some difficulties. First, insofar as L'Heureux's central theoretical point is surely that fiction is a *moral* art, it is troubling that some of the least attractive characters in the book are arbitrarily appointed to good ends. We understand entirely when Zachary Kurtz's crass career ambitions lead him to lose his wife and child and then to a rage-induced heart attack. But why—to take just one example—should he lose them to Gil Rudin, adulterer and sex-and-money-obsessed Hollywood mogul turned literary charlatan? We are not talking here about the doling out of good and bad destinies in accordance with some pious program. The central insight of the long history of the novel is that, in the absence of fire and flood and other apocalyptic events, character is destiny—and there seems to be no obvious relation between Gil's endlessly insulting crassness and the successful new marriage to Rosalie in which he waltzes off into the sunset.

Second, it is by no means clear that a simple return to traditional ways of thinking about literature will lead to any golden age of fiction and literary criticism. Something has happened (call it modernism, call it what you will) that seems to have made the emergence of a new Dickens or Tolstoy unlikely:

While most postmodern work is indeed perfect trash, we have not had T.S. Eliot and Joyce and Faulkner for nothing, and it would have been nice to have some sense from L'Heureux of a way forward that is not simply a way back.

Finally, and perhaps inevitably, the many postmodern passages in which L'Heureux, through Olga, meditates on the nature of writing are as fatal to the magical trance into which fiction can put the willing reader as they are in any of the postmodern productions L'Heureux mocks.

That these problems jar in so essentially lighthearted a production—that we care enough about them—is itself testimony to L'Heureux's achievement. But if a return to the powerful fiction whose absence L'Heureux so much laments requires only that writers put aside intellectual games and meditate honestly on character in action, one is tempted to ask why he did not simply do so himself. ♦

David A. Kessler, who extended the regulatory authority of the Food and Drug Administration over products from orange juice to tobacco, will resign early next year.
—Washington Post

Parody

Food and Drug Administration

Office of the Emperor

Dr. David A. Kessler, MD, JD, Ph.D, MS, BA, BS

My dear Mr. President:

The year: 1990. The place: the Rose Garden. The sky: gun-metal gray. The president was glum -- just another appointment ceremony. Then KESSLER was introduced. He emerged. To this day witnesses swear a beam of sunlight broke through, slanting into the Garden. Where once there was darkness, now there was light...

An unconventional way to begin a resignation letter? Maybe so. But KESSLER is unconventional (see WashPost 8-19-91, et seq.). Fearless (see "Sixty Minutes," 9-12-94). Principled (NYTimes, 8-21-91, et seq.). Always ready to kick some Big Business ass (Rolling Stone, 3-14-92). And frankly, not a bad-looking guy. At all.

With this letter, KESSLER informs you of his intention to resign. He wishes to spend more time with his family. KESSLER knows there is much left undone. The nation remains in crisis. Attached please find a 620-page memo itemizing KESSLER's pre-resignation agenda for the next eight weeks. Some highlights:

* Night after night, from a negligence bordering on the criminal, children as young as five are staying up well past 7 p.m. These are our most vulnerable citizens, and they're sleepy. In this "civilized" country, that nightmare must end. KESSLER has outlined a National Bedtime Strategy to be fully implemented by Jan. 15.

* The ease with which the caps to patent medicines may be removed in this country is a disgrace. Children eat baby aspirin by the handful. Their little tongues are turning orange. This will end. By year's end KESSLER will outfit aspirin bottles and other analgesics with a new high-tension metallic alloy and combination locks. Combinations will be readily available to those in need by dialing 1-800-KESSLER.

In addition, KESSLER will arrest a warehouse full of Killer Metamucil, begin the federal licensing of Tupperware, and, in response to your Confidential Presidential Directive #45.16, take emergency steps to end the heartbreak of mid-coital prophylactic slippage.

Yes, KESSLER will soon be gone. But the beam of light that first shone six years ago in the Rose Garden will light your bridge to the 21st century.

With humility,

David KESSLER