

lectures, probably delivered among critical academicians, and this may account for the unwieldy prose in which the book is written. Appendix A may prove helpful for an understanding of the abstract and often eccentric terminology. The notes on "processual symbolic analysis"

provide definitions of such terms, and also references to previously published anthropological studies in which Turner has used such words. The book will probably be of greatest interest to social science theorists who study religious phenomena.

tome? Easy, answers the Wonderboy: Reich was "blacklisted because the very boldness and breadth of his last book were simply too much for the left-wing culturati." Heads the Wonderboy wins, tails the left-wing culturati lose. A convenient formula; doubtless it will come in handy to explain the almost certain blacklisting of the Wonderboy himself. In fact, moving from cage to cage in the Wonderboy's zoo, it eventually dawns on one how often the hideous pest within turns out finally to resemble not so much the figure whose name it bears as the zookeeper himself.

It makes little sense to try to argue why this or that worthy should not be behind the Wonderboy's bars. Galbraith, say; Is he really, as the Wonderboy maintains, "a typically American hayseed mountebank retooled for a modern audience"? I think not; especially as the Wonderboy's principal assertion that Galbraith is taken seriously by no serious economist is a demonstrable untruth. But enough! As Johnson wrote of the plot of *Cymbeline*, criticism is wasted upon resisting imbecility. Anyone who can write, as Tyrrell does, of the infamous Huston Plan hatched in the Nixon years that "Arguably it was an imprudent scheme . . ." does not deserve to be thought so profound a student of American democracy as to make worthy of sustained scrutiny his incessant, mean-spirited rant. Public nuisances, indeed.

## REVIEWS

JOHN DEEDY, formerly Managing Editor of *Commonweal*, is the author of *Seven American Catholics and Literary Places: A Guided Pilgrimage*, New York and New England (Andrews & McMeel).

IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ is *Hannah Arendt Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Political Science at Rutgers University*, author of *Ideology and Utopia in the United States: 1956-1976*, and editor-in-chief of *Transaction/SOCIETY*.

FATHER JOSEPH H. FICHTER, S.J., teaches in the *Sociology Department of Loyola University, New Orleans*.

ROBERT K. LANDERS is a newspaper editor in Connecticut.

PHILLIP CORWIN is a poet, novelist and critic who works for the United Nations.

## The undergraduate as H.L. Mencken

### PUBLIC NUISANCES

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Basic Books, \$11.95, 248 pp.

### Robert K. Landers

THIS IS A SILLY, repellent little book. Its author, who appears on the dust jacket the very image of a pretentious undergraduate solemnly at work on some extravagant thesis, evidently has tried to turn himself into a combination of H. L. Mencken, Malcolm Muggeridge and Westbrook Pegler; at least, he employs the odd argot and anachronistic stance of the first, apes the elegant lampoons and relentless world-weariness of the second, and aims to be as nastily abusive as the third. But the multiple transplants fail; Tyrrell succeeds merely in making himself that which he ardently imagines nearly everyone else he writes about to be: ridiculous.

The Wonderboy (to apply, more appropriately, to Tyrrell the appellation he applies to President Carter) gives us to understand that liberalism has let him down. "Somehow American liberalism had metamorphosed in the most astonishing way," he reports. "The public philosophy that had informed us with its discriminating intelligence and elevated values underwent a juvenescence. The capacity to discriminate was lost; the values grew from hideous to childish; the thing became a hollow sham. America was afflicted with not one Bryan but with multitudes. What is more, they specialized. Some called themselves environmentalists, some feminists, some consumerists. Still others specialized in education, business, national defense, race relations, and so forth. . . . What was worse, these quacks and wowers

were prospering not in the boondocks but in the universities and wherever the university was influential. Bryan advancing on the dirty-necked of backwoods Tennessee had no easier time of it than Ralph Nader or Betty Friedan advancing on Berkeley or Scarsdale." Whether it is liberalism itself or merely its deformation which the Wonderboy has come to deplore, he does not entirely make clear; but if he is a liberal, the Wonderboy is the sort of liberal who has come to be known as a neo-conservative and, as such, not a very persuasive advertisement for the breed. ". . . I believe," the Wonderboy intones, "that for the most part American democracy is far sounder than recent critics have allowed. After all, it has responded admirably to many legitimate criticisms raised against it [raised by whom, the Wonderboy significantly does not remark]. It has alleviated racial prejudices, aided the poor, and encouraged some tolerance for diversity. It has maintained a modicum of freedom and decency. What it has failed to do [and here the Wonderboy exhibits a little of his own vast appreciation for diversity, freedom and decency] is to deal prudently with the violent and idiotic pests who, if they had their way, would undo all this good."

And just who are these pests, these public nuisances, whom the Wonderboy would sweep into a capacious dustbin so that all might be well again with our pristine American democracy? Well, John Kenneth Galbraith and Theodore White, for an incredible two; but the Wonderboy's Enemies List is long. Among the other fearsome pests plaguing our society is the greening-of-America prophet of yesteryear, Charles Reich; still, one might ask, if Reich is so bothersome a nuisance, how explain the almost universal inattention to his most recent

---

## Contents

---

Volume CVI, Number 14

Correspondence	418
Editorials	419
Bakke to Weber to—?: <i>Isidore Silver</i>	420
In Kennedy they trust: <i>Peter Kovler</i>	420
The Basque problem: <i>Benjamin Martin</i>	422
The forest & the trees: <i>Thomas Powers</i>	423
Draft no, assassins yes: <i>John Garvey</i>	425

---

Limits of the superpowers: <i>Richard J. Krickus</i>	427
Liturgical silence: <i>J. Patrick Dobel</i>	430
McCarthyism West German-style: <i>Milton Mankoff</i>	436
The Screen: <i>Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.</i>	438
Lucky to be a Octobrist: <i>Stephen Darst</i>	439

---

## Books

---

The Vicar of Christ: <i>John Deedy</i>	442
The Last Half-Century: <i>Irving Louis Horowitz</i>	443
Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: <i>Joseph H. Fichter</i>	445
Public Nuisances: <i>Robert K. Landers</i>	446
Rivers of Darkness: <i>Phillip Corwin</i>	447

---

## Staff

---

Editor: James O'Gara  
Executive Editor: Peter Steinfeld  
Editorial Assistant: Anne Robertson  
Columnists: John Garvey, Frank Getlein,  
Abigail McCarthy, Thomas Powers  
Movies: Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.  
Poetry: John Fandel  
Staff: Linda F. Kayler, Harriette Balsky  
Advertising Manager: Ruth E. Taylor  
Publisher: Edward S. Skillin

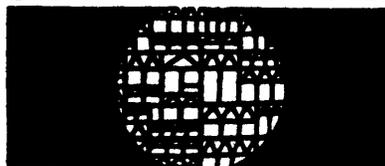
---

*Commonweal*, A Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts, is published biweekly, except monthly Christmas-New Year's and July and August, by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. Telephone: (212) MU 3-2042. Yearly subscriptions, U.S. and Canada, \$20; foreign, \$22. Special two-year rate: \$35; foreign, \$39. Single copy, \$1.

---

---

# commonweal



---

## CARTER REENTERS THE ATMOSPHERE

---

**A**T THIS WRITING, Skylab has crashed but the President is still in orbit. When he does reenter our atmosphere we hope it is with due fireworks but no further fragmentation of his leadership.

Despite all the disappointments, it is hard not to wish President Carter well. First, the nation so badly needs effective leadership. The public seems caught in a whirlpool of anger, cynicism, apathy, each response leading to the next in a cycle that makes it more and more difficult to break loose and steer some constructive course in regard to the major economic problems of inflation, unemployment and energy. Second, Carter's virtues as a president are but a hair's breadth from his weaknesses. Take the flap over cancelling his original energy address. Presidential policy should not be ruled by media scheduling, and it was a healthy relief to contemplate the President simply saying, I'm not ready yet, you can just wait until something as important as this is pieced together solidly. But was the whole business another example of administration ineptitude and indecisiveness? Or consider the series of conferences that then commenced at Camp David. In some ways Carter gained the nation's attention by an act of purposeful presidential silence far beyond what any number of speeches could have achieved. Was at last some genius for leadership showing itself? Or was all this conferring—so the suspicion grew as the Camp David interim stretched on—a substitute for tough decisions?

The Camp David conferences do give a certain clue to what the President needs. The energy problem is a *political* problem. It has its origins in the political decisions of the OPEC producer states and in the political will that, contrary to Western expectations and economic "laws," OPEC has exercised to make those decisions stick. Yes, there are purely technical and economic aspects to this crisis. We do appear to be exhausting oil reserves and running up against severe problems of cost and pollution no matter which way we turn. But every technical solution and economic analysis presents its uncertainties—and none can be translated into practice without political mobilization. The President's responsibility is not to serve as executive of a problem-solving task force that will select some "best" plan which will be self-propelling and self-operating once issued from the White House, but rather to serve as a *political* leader who will enunciate the basic values to which any technical program must conform and who will engage in a continuing effort of negotiation, explanation and mobilization à la Camp David.

The indecisiveness that has crippled this administration is not its wavering on this or that specific proposal—whether tax rebates, welfare reform, the Humphrey-Hawkins full employment policy, national health insurance, the original energy package—but a deeper indecisiveness about its fundamental values. Was it really going to insist on equity in bearing the burdens of combating inflation, on a steady movement toward greater equality and decent conditions for the poor, on accounta-