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A DIALOGUE WITH
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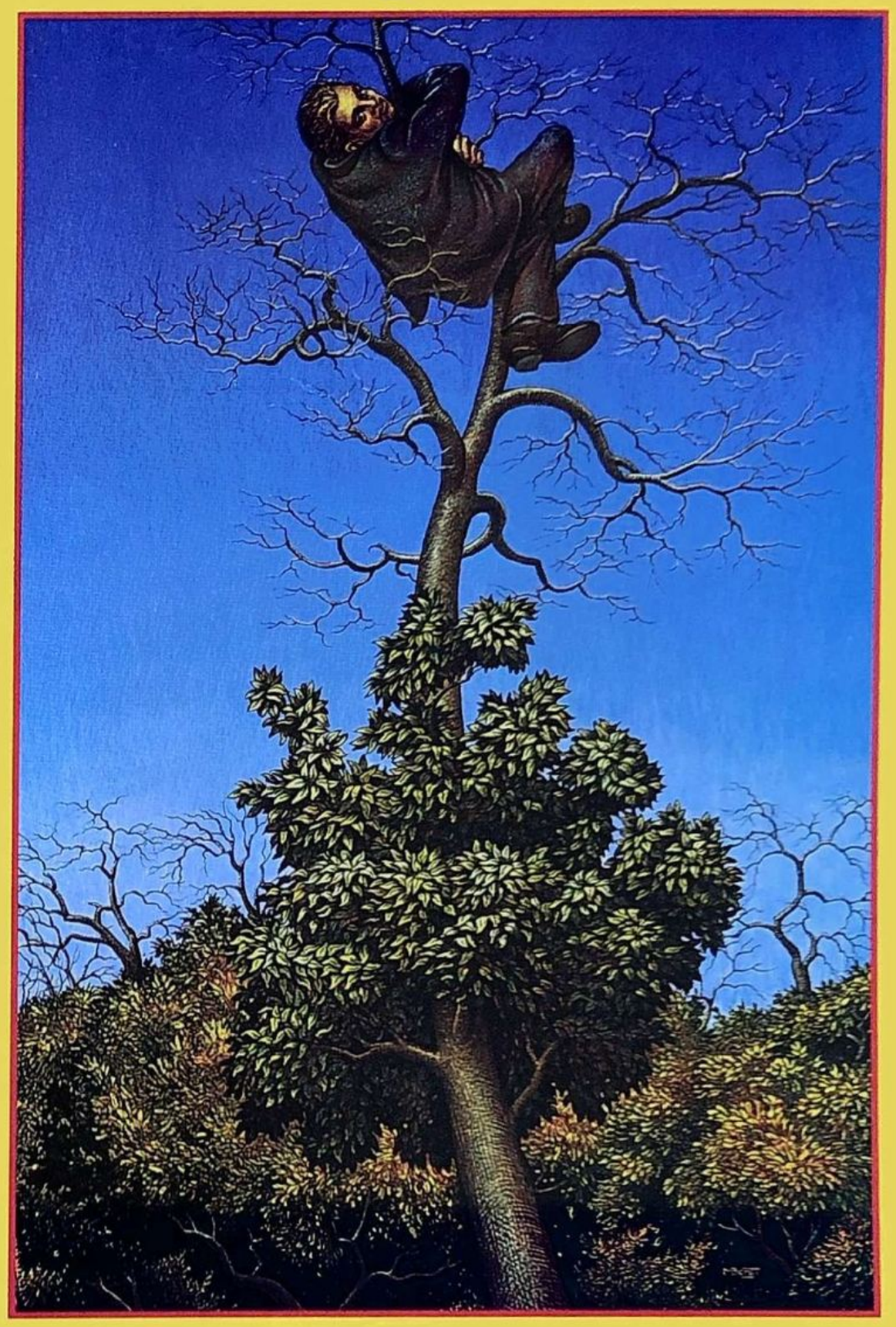
Sexual McCarthyism...

... AND AMERICA'S ETHICAL SCHIZOPHRENIA

Michael Bader • Michael Lerner
Jo Ellen Green Kaiser
Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

... AND THE RETURN TO SPIRITUALITY

John Dominic Crossan • Matthew Fox
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The Meaning of the Holocaust

Social Alienation and Human Suffering by Peter Gabel

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Colin Powell on America's Youth • David Hollinger on Multiculturalism & the Jews
Pop Culture Icons – Michael Moore, Jerry Springer & Dr. Laura
Michele Wucker on Massacre in Hispaniola

Religious awareness, according to Rabbi David Wolfe Blank, includes, embraces, and suggests:

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- An openness to unusually profound states of experience
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- A sense of surrender into a greater awareness
- A paradoxical state of relaxed trust and animated engagement

In Loving Memory of
Rabbi David Wolfe Blank

David Wolfe Blank, one of the great lights of Jewish Renewal, died in a car accident in September at the age of forty-seven. Ordained as an orthodox rabbi by a Habad hasidic kollel, Rabbi Wolfe Blank brought the wisdom of *hasidut* to hundreds of congregants, first at the Aquarian Minyan in Berkeley and then to Etz Or in Seattle, and to the many people whom he taught at Elat Chayyim Jewish renewal center. David was a spiritual advisor to TIKKUN magazine, and his insights, warmth, and humor were a delight. His translations of prayers helped unpack the spiritual potential of Judaism and brought us closer to the next stage in the evolution of human consciousness. We hope to print some of those translations in future issues.

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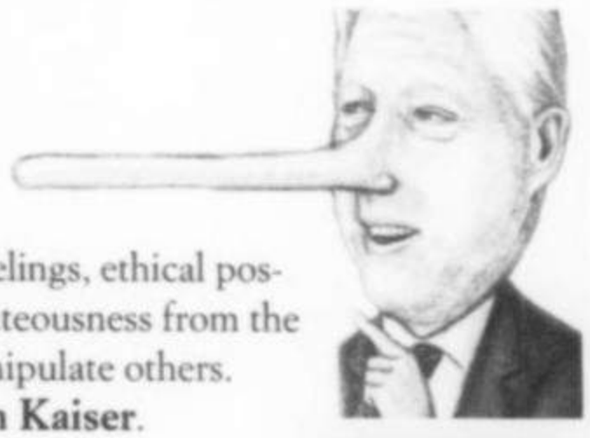
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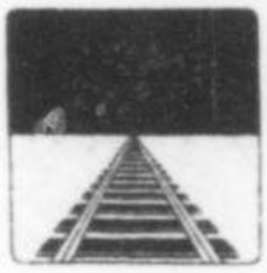
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Letters to the Editor

Is Pop Culture Poisonous?

To the Editor:

Danny Goldberg's defense of pop culture is so much bloated rationalization.

Violence and sex have always been staples of popular entertainment. What is new is the effort by those in the movie and TV industries to deliberately blur boundaries that were implicitly kept apart. Every twelve-year-old boy knows what is smut and what isn't. But today's TV dramas incessantly present soft-core porn as if it were something else. Talk shows muddle the distinctions between private and public discourse while parading perversions as normative behaviors. There used to be a time when programs on the speculative and paranormal were accompanied by disclaimers. Today, an endless barrage of TV documentaries featuring the occult, the pseudoscientific and the weird are presented as fact.



Producers are pushing the margins to the limits in a desperate search for higher ratings and profits. With it has gone any respect for the truth, good taste, and the vulnerability of children.

JOSEPH CHUMAN
Hackensack, NJ

Goldberg responds:

Like other critics of modern entertainment, Mr. Chuman focuses on the "producers" and not on the audience, who are presumably either too immature to have minds of their own, or too immoral to have valid taste. Such a self-righteous and condescending attitude is unlikely to give culture critics access to the hearts and minds of the very people they seem to wish to "save."

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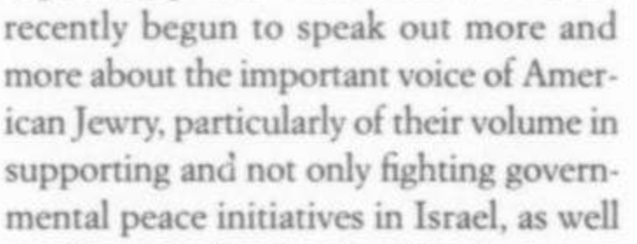
TIKKUN's Role in Israel

To the Editor:

I enjoyed both the discussion about the UJA and American fundraising in your July/August issue ("Just Say 'No' to UJA? A Roundtable") and the editorial on Israel at 50 ("Strategy of the Israeli Right: Keep the U.S. Out"). I have recently begun to speak out more and more about the important voice of American Jewry, particularly of their volume in supporting and not only fighting governmental peace initiatives in Israel, as well as the central role that the American administration should continue to play in the Middle East peace process.

I encourage you to continue with your loud voice of support for Israeli liberalism and peace efforts, and I congratulate your efforts until now.

YOSSI BEILIN
MEMBER OF THE KNESSET
Israel



Physicians for Human Rights

To the Editor:

I am very glad that TIKKUN magazine exists to alert people to the problems that we face in Israel. I'd also like your readers to know about a very positive thing that is happening: The Physicians for Human Rights in Israel. Let me explain about who we are.

Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR) is a non-profit, voluntary organization, whose mission is to secure the right of all individuals to equal access to health care services regardless of political, national, or religious considerations. Physicians for Human Rights was founded in 1988 at the height of the Intifada by Israeli and Palestinian physicians who realized that the issues of human rights and medical care are integral parts of the same struggle. It was apparent that human rights violations in the form of systematic and official denial of access to medical care; the intentional infliction of bodily injury, torture, and neglect of prisoners; grossly substandard medical care and facilities in the occupied territories and East Jerusalem; and administrative detention and solitary confinement were issues that demanded attention. Therefore PHR was founded to address these very issues.

PHR is the sole human rights organization which focuses exclusively on the issue of medicine and human rights in Israel. Since its founding PHR has built bridges between Israeli and Palestinian medical professionals and communities. Scores of prisoners and Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem turn to PHR for assistance every year. More recently, PHR has begun to address the tragic plight of foreign workers in Israel and their lack of access to adequate health care services. PHR's team of skilled intervention workers fields numerous complaints from those most adversely affected by the medical human rights situation in Israel and is very often successful in reaching a suitable conclusion.

While direct intervention in individual cases is a large and integral aspect of PHR's work, we also know that improvement of the human rights situation demands systematic change. To this end, PHR actively lobbies before government bodies on behalf of its positions and engages in public campaigns designed to raise public awareness and effect change by exerting pressure on policy makers. Over the past ten years PHR has built a reputation as an aggressive defender and advocate of medical human rights while at the same time influencing public opinion and effecting major policy change.

PHR's programs consist of a wide range of projects designed to improve medical human rights on both an individual and collective level. PHR projects include:

A bimonthly, free, mobile health care clinic in the occupied territories which brings volunteer physicians to areas lacking in adequate health care facilities. PHR provides primary care examinations, appropriate medications, and referrals to Israeli hospitals and private physicians, free-of-charge, in Israel.

Often Palestinian patients, in desperate need of treatment, are denied access

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to care in Israel and East Jerusalem for "security reasons." In such situations PHR intervenes on behalf of such Palestinian patients and is very often successful in securing permission for the individual to enter Israel and receive the care needed. PHR also successfully negotiated a settlement with the military authorities which established medical guidelines for the military to follow when issuing entry permits. The guidelines guarantee that medical issues will be reviewed by medical personnel rather than military personnel.

At times of closures Palestinian medical personnel are often denied access to their medical facilities in East Jerusalem, thus paralyzing the Palestinian population's primary medical care centers. After filing a high court petition against the military authorities, PHR was successful in reaching a settlement, which, in part, allows for immediate entry of essential medical personnel to Palestinian hospitals in the event of a closure. PHR continues to monitor the situation and deal with violations of the agreement.

PHR actively campaigns to defend the rights of East Jerusalem residents and guarantee equal access to health care services for its residents. The Israeli government is involved in a campaign to revoke the residency status of large numbers of East Jerusalem residents. This policy of "Silent Transfer" creates many difficulties for East Jerusalem residents including the loss of health insurance for residents and the denial of health insurance to thousands of newborns and young children. PHR directly intervenes in individual cases and is in the process of litigating this matter, on a collective basis, in the Israeli courts.

PHR provides medical services and counseling to prisoners and former prisoners who are victims of torture and abuse. Israel, though formally opposed to torture, often uses interrogation methods which can be described in no other terms than torture. At the same time Israel houses thousands of prisoners, Israeli and Palestinian, who suffer neglect and abuse while imprisoned. PHR, upon receiving a complaint of torture, dispatches a medical doctor to the prison. The doctor gathers information and prepares a report to be used in any legal action to end the torture. PHR also reviews all medical files, recommends appropriate treatment and, if necessary, provides access to treatment for prisoners who are mistreated or neglected.

PHR is a member of the coalition active in ending the practice of administrative detention. At present Israel is holding, in prison, at least 130 individuals (in past years Israel has held thousands of individuals in administrative detention). In some cases these prisoners are held for years at a time, with no trial, sentence, or access, of any type, to the judicial process. PHR opposes this practice on the grounds that a democracy does not imprison people without due process of law. In addition PHR opposes this practice on the grounds that the conditions of administrative detention—not knowing why you are in prison and if and when you will be released —constitute a grave danger to the physical and mental health of the detainee.

PHR provides health care services, counseling, and advocacy assistance to foreign workers living in Israel. Israel, like many other countries with advanced economies, has a large population of legal and illegal foreign workers. Unfortunately this population suffers greatly from exploitation, discrimination and grossly inadequate access to health care. PHR intervenes directly in individual cases of workers, and lobbies the government with suggestions for alternative policy. In addition, PHR has opened a free medical clinic for foreign workers and their children.

PHR maintains a special "Children's Medical Fund" which assists in financing medical procedures for Palestinian children in Israel and abroad. Since its inception in 1992 the fund has assisted many children to obtain medical procedures which have been life saving or have greatly improved the child's quality of life. The fund is now operated as a joint project between PHR and the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees.

PHR's establishment is based on the vision of an Israeli and Palestinian community which actively works together to advance human rights and equality in the region. To make this vision a reality PHR

realizes that it must work to expose those areas where Israel falls short of its obligation to respect the human and individual rights of those members of society who are the weakest and least empowered to protect themselves. To accomplish this PHR not only points to the shortcomings of Israeli policy but also acts to implement solutions on an individual and on a societal basis.

Unfortunately our resources do not allow us to attend to all of those who require our care and all too often we encounter obstacles that can only be overcome by systematic change. The work that PHR does is often tiresome and difficult. However, we are neither at liberty to ignore the weak and oppressed among us or to refrain from coming to their aid.

LOUIS FRANKENTHALER
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
AND RESOURCES
PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
Tel Aviv, Israel

Rethinking Referenda

To the Editor:

In her response to my article "Rethinking Referenda" in the last issue of TIKKUN, Julia Bloch argues that it is not the referendum as such that threatens democracy in states like California, but rather its use by the Right. I see little reason to argue with her. Far from confusing the referendum as it "really" is and as it operates in practice, I agree in the article that the referendum is a tool with powerful democratic potential and offer two instances—South Africa and Northern Ireland—in which it has worked well to promote democracy. Bloch thinks those of us concerned with the welfare of society's least powerful members should mobilize the people to engage issues of the day. Again, I agree. My point is simply that until and unless people are so engaged, the referendum will continue to construct false legitimacy for any group with money and power.

Putting aside labels, my view is not that "people are fundamentally inclined to racist, sexist, homophobic, or xenophobic ideas," as Bloch suggests. On the contrary, the American people generally do the right thing when fully engaged in public life. The problem today is not that voters are "easily duped" by rightist referenda, but rather that they are mostly engaged in private matters.

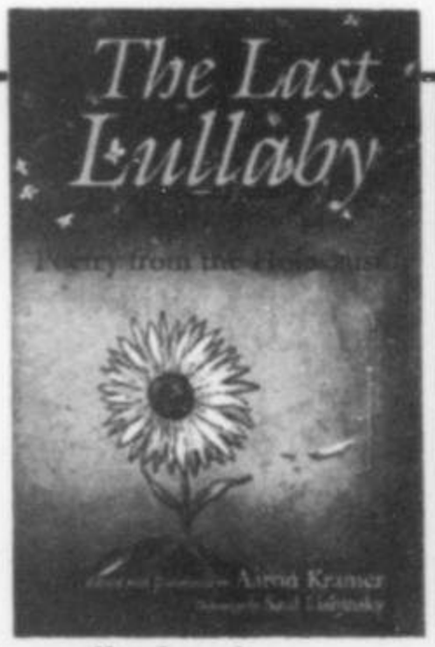
I doubt very much Bloch's claim that "the increasing use of referenda signifies that people really are concerned." Voter turnout remains embarrassingly low, and those who do vote fail to give issues like affirmative action the serious attention they deserve. For example, polls I cite in the article show that small variations in wording could have changed the outcome of the California referendum on affirmative action. The people are neither stupid, duped, nor particularly susceptible to the Right; they are simply not fully engaged.

I agree with Bloch that the problem with the referendum in states like California is its improper manipulation by elites, not anything inherent in the referendum itself. Just because I worry about the ability of powerful groups during normal politics to buy legitimacy does not mean that I cynically distrust the people or paternalistically snub democratic forces. Both in theory and during moments of national decision in countries like South Africa and Northern Ireland, the referendum has proven its legitimacy as a democratic tool. But however sound the referendum may be as a matter of theory (and as used abroad), serious practical considerations make me hesitate to second-guess the founders and prescribe its use here, even during constitutional moments. For instance, it is notoriously difficult to determine whether and when a constitutional moment is afoot. And because representative elections have historically functioned as issue-referenda during periods of heightened democratic participation, a formal referendum process may be superfluous. None of these more practical concerns implies cynicism or elitism. They only mean that our current, constitutionally-sanctioned representative structures may better ensure that what we hear during political decision-making is the voice of the American people, not the ventriloquism of money and power.

NELSON TEBBE
New York, NY

The Last Lullaby

POETRY FROM THE HOLOCAUST

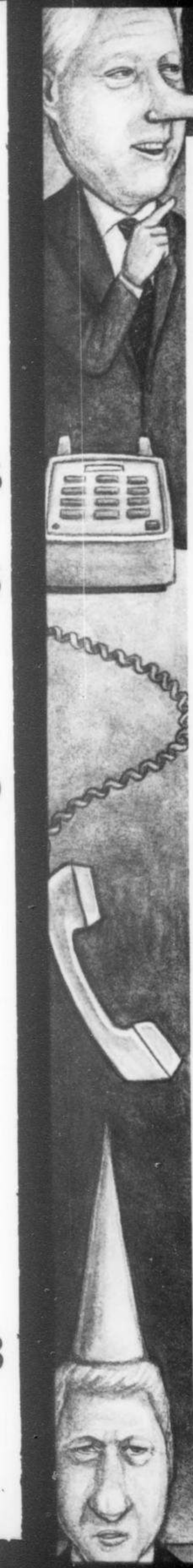


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Sexual McCarthyism and Ethical Schizophrenia

Rabbi Michael Lerner, Editor

The big story in the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal is no longer Bill Clinton's irresponsibility and recklessness, but the hypocrisy and self-righteousness that the Lewinsky episode has loosed into the public sphere—and the danger that it will leverage a new repressive political climate. Nobody is much surprised when this happens from the American Right. Their agenda of staging a peaceful coup d'etat has been manifest in the history of bogus charges against Clinton (remember that Whitewater turned out to be a sham?). Now, that agenda has been matched by their determination to use Clinton's sexual irresponsibility as "proof" that the ethos of the 1960s leads to immorality and that the only possible alternative is a return to sexual repressiveness.

The new sexual McCarthyites would, if given the chance, investigate everyone's sex life in order to ensure that our personal lives fit their standards. Frightened by their own sexual hungers, which they feel they can only adequately keep in check through a combination of powerful religious and criminal law constraints, these sexual maniacs of the Right have filled public discourse with the very thing they allegedly want to keep under control. It's scary that the media quickly brushed aside the exposure of sexual improprieties on the part of some of the most self-righteous accusers of Clinton, doing their best to collude with the public spectacle in which those most longing for sexual fulfillment deny their needs even as they simultaneously focus on nothing else but the sex lives of others. Because these sexual inquisitors have political power they have been able to wage a powerful war against the pro-pleasure ethos of the 1960s. Yet our response cannot be merely political. These are people in deep pain and unless we address the pain we will never stop their political rants. Peter Gabel's analysis of the dynamics of the Holocaust in this issue of TIKKUN gives us some of the relevant categories for understanding these issues—the denial of desire and the frustrated hunger for mutual recognition are central elements in what we see happening in the American Right.

The reason why it was so hard to stop the McCarthyism of the 1950s was this: it was hard to defend the Communist Party, not only because of its slavish intellectual subordination to the policies of the Stalinists in Russia, but because of its rampant dishonesty. People felt that they had been lied to and manipulated by communists who had been part of their unions, political organizations, and social groupings, and yet always concealed their deeper loyalty to "The Party." This feeling of having been betrayed is what crippled many decent people so that they were unable to resist the far-worse impact of McCarthyism as it gradually destroyed the hopefulness and optimism that are central for any progressive political or social movements.

The new sexual McCarthyism could have devastating impacts for that same kind of reason. I don't only mean to refer here to the way that Clinton has been lying about the Lewinsky matter and lying about the lying. While polls show continued approval of the way Clinton has been handling his job, and while African Americans continue to appreciate the way that Clinton did not follow the anti-affirmative action trend, many of Clinton's constituencies have been feeling betrayed a long time before the Lewinsky issue appeared. Compared to the Republican option they may wish to support Clinton in office, but many have felt disempowered and unable to show any real enthusiasm for what the Democrats are about because those Democrats, particularly the President, have rarely fought for the principles and policies in which they claimed to believe.

For those of us who hoped that his Administration would give a second chance to the generation of the 1960s to shape public policy, Clinton has been almost from the start a traitor, abandoning everything he told us he stood for, and placing his self-interest above any set of principles. The Lewinsky matter is the most trivial of a long set of betrayals in which Clinton portrayed himself as an embodiment of that which was most humane in the progressive social change movements, while actually pursuing policies whose primary goal was to grease the path for American corporate expansion (health-care reform turning into expansion of insurance company-dominated managed care, welfare reform turning into an assault on the very principle of using government to rectify the destructive impact of the free market, human rights abroad yielding to the imperatives of open-trade with China and to facilitating American corporate penetration of other markets where they would be free of ecological restrictions or workers' demands for living wages, ecological promises turned into meaningless rhetoric). Clinton has been lying to us for years—and we've known it, resented it, but accepted it.

Why did Americans let him get away with all this? Because Clinton's underlying motivation—that he had to



abandon his principles for the sake of his political self-interest—appealed to the very principle which underlies so much of American "common sense": the notion that "looking out for number one" is the only rational policy, and that ethical concerns must necessarily be secondary to anyone who is being "realistic."

The truth is that most of us have had plenty of moments in our lives, both in the course of making a living or a career and in the course of our own personal dealings, in which we've chosen to abandon our highest principles when we thought that our self-interest required it. Clinton is just an extremely obnoxious example of an ethos that shapes virtually everyone in American society—not just the moral relativists of the liberal world, but equally the pompous voices on the Right who have never been willing to demand that the corporate interests they serve should be subjected to any criteria of moral responsibility when they destroy the ecological life support systems of our planet, pollute our political life with massive donations to candidates who will do their bidding, or treat their workers as disposable garbage.

It's all so easy to be harshly judgmental about people who make these choices. Yet we live in a society which totally rewards selfishness. When movements for social change are in decline, most of us come to think that we "have no choice" but to subordinate our idealism to self-interest. Powerful corporate executives polluting the environment or politicians selling out their ideals will often honestly tell you that they want to do the right thing, only they think that they will lose their power entirely should they be less focused on protecting themselves and their own interests.

Now add the hypocrisy: our demand that our political leaders present themselves as being on a higher moral plane than everyone else. They must pretend that they are not involved in the ruthless pursuit of self-interest even as they transparently are doing just that. And we are outraged if they do not play along with this charade. The consequence is that we guarantee that our successful politicians will be liars, with the most successful ones being those who are equally lying to themselves and really perceiving themselves to be on a higher moral plane.

Indeed, recognizing this, some apologists for Clinton say: "What do you expect? Don't we all know he had to lie in order to play the game of politics?"

But that's just the problem: we are all co-constituting the world of hypocrisy and the sins of self-interest when we claim that there was no rational alternative. Once we buy this notion of no alternative, there's a slippery slope into using others to advance our own self-interests. Once we spend all day in the world of work selling ourselves or our products and learning how to manipulate others so that they will think of us the way we need them to think, buy our professional services or the products we produce, or see us as useful cogs in their corporate hierarchies or bureaucratic apparatus, we are unlikely to be able to stop this way of dealing with others when we come home. We've learned to treat others as objects for the sake of our own needs. Is it so surprising, then, that we get an epidemic of using others in our personal lives as well, so that friendships begin to feel less solid and loving relationships increasingly are seen as useful as long as they satisfy our own needs? Indeed, this provides the experiential basis for the claims of the Right that the ethos of pleasure-seeking in the 1960s has led to sexual exploitation. The truth is that there has been more sexual exploitation and many of us (including the Dan Burtons and the Henry Hydes of the Right) have been engaged in it. But the source of this exploitation is not the affirmation of pleasure, or the insistence on women's liberation, or the demand for an end to the oppression of gays, but rather the internalization of the ethos of selfishness and de-humanization of the other that is embedded in our daily life experience in the competitive marketplace.

The alternative then:

1. Challenge the ethos of selfishness and materialism in every aspect of our lives. This means not only the politics of meaning demand for a "new bottom line" in the public sphere, but also a systematic self-examination and repentance for the ways that we personally embody that ethos in our dealing with other human beings, not only in our sexual lives but also in every aspect of our connection with others.

2. Reject the demand that our leaders, teachers, healers, spiritual guides or culture heroes be on a higher ethical plane than the rest of us. It would be more realistic to acknowledge that everyone in our society is deeply flawed, and that at least until we have succeeded in changing the bottom line in our economic lives so that people are no longer rewarded for their ability to manipulate others and instead are rewarded for how much love and caring they are able to embody, ethical flaws are as likely to appear in our leaders and teachers and healers as in everyone else. Elites of power have relentlessly sought to "unveil" the moral flaws of liberal or progressive political leaders and this unveiling has fueled the growing cynicism about politics. We'd be better served by acknowledging from the start that everyone can be shown to be flawed if we look hard enough, and that we have no expectation that our leaders will not be similarly flawed.

In this instance, difficult as it may seem, we need to develop compassion for Bill Clinton. It would help a lot if Clinton were to come clean and talk about the whole history of his opportunistic abandoning

of his principles for the sake of his interests. It is this pathology, which he shares with everyone else in this society, which really needs to be exposed. Talking honestly about the entire history of his presidency and the forces that pushed him to deeper and deeper opportunism would be the one act of atonement that might lead him to actually accomplish something positive in his last two years in office, an act of political courage that might offset the deepening cynicism about public life which at the moment is likely to be Clinton's most enduring contribution to American society.

3. Compassion for our flaws should be mixed with gentle support for each of us to move forward beyond our flaws and weaknesses. Otherwise, compassion can become yet another dodge that allows us to hide from any ethical pressure. We at TIKKUN reject the moral relativism which prohibits "judgment" about right and wrong. Instead, we embrace the Jewish concept of atonement: that we are all people who have sinned, that our sins are often the product of the distortions in economic and political worlds that need to be transformed, that we have to take mutual responsibility for each other, and that at our core we are not sinners or evil but good and loving people who have gone astray and need gentle and loving support in finding our path back to our deepest and truest selves as reflections of the God in whose image we have been created.

Unless we openly pursue these three goals, we will continue to face a kind of ethical schizophrenia in which we act outraged at the betrayals of others while knowing full well that we are, on a lesser scale, involved in our own betrayals of our principles on a daily basis. It is this splitting of consciousness into two distinct realms, neither of which will allow themselves to know of the existence of the other, that permits the incredible self-righteousness of many who condemn the Clintons.



Ultimately America needs far more than a repentant president. We need a national period of atonement in which the entire society could ask itself how to transcend the ethos of selfishness and materialism and adopt "a new bottom line" so that we would no longer judge ourselves and each other as successful unless we had managed to incorporate our highest ethical values at the center of our lives. If we could enter into such a period of Atonement with an attitude of true compassion, acknowledging that most of us are deeply flawed and have violated our highest ideals at times, and if that acknowledgment could become a more central part of our daily lives and our thinking about each other and our leaders, we might finally be in a position to really challenge the selfishness that is endemic in our daily lives even at the very moment that we are passionately and hypocritically denying our attachment to it.

For progressives to seriously suggest a Month of Atonement as a better way to spend our national resources than squandering them on impeachment proceedings is also to affirm a deeper religious commitment—a belief that the world can really be healed and transformed, and that the possibility of such societal transformation is why it makes sense to stay involved in political movements. A social movement for atonement and for compassion would have far greater resonance than either the impeachers or the "let's put it behind us" Clintonites are likely to muster. And in refusing to allow atonement to be reduced to individual sins, we could begin the process of social reconstruction which would be the only possible redemption for this whole mess.

High Crimes & Jerry Springer

The Psychopathology of a Public Hanging

Michael Bader

Watching the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal unfold is like watching the *Jerry Springer* show. At first, we're compelled to watch, then we feel horrified and vaguely soiled, and finally we want to run away. The formula is the same: someone exposes highly intimate behavior and fantasies—usually of a sexual nature—to public scrutiny and ridicule. The talk show guest reveals that she slept with her daughter's boyfriend; the audience is outraged. Bill Clinton involuntarily reveals that he likes phone sex; we're all appalled. There is almost an obligatory quality to our condemnation. Even liberals who want to fight back against the cruel right-wing essence of the Starr report have to preface their political critiques with moral critiques of Clinton. This morality holds that Clinton's behavior is sordid, inappropriate, besmirches the dignity of his office, and/or is just plain "sick." This is a valid position on its face, of course. But since such compulsive infidelity is actually so ordinary in our culture and the sexual behavior reported is so bland and prosaic, the sources of the widespread moral outrage and shock have to be more complex.

Michael Lerner is correct when he argues that the cynical nature of both Clinton's sexual behavior and his cover-up is a very faint reflection of his more fundamental cynicism about and betrayal of the promise of a 1960s idealism. But I think that the intimate nature of Starr's revelations also has evoked in many of us an experience of vicarious humiliation that has its own special dynamics. When we watch someone embarrass himself in public, we tend to feel a great need to distance ourselves at the same time that we are transfixed by the spectacle. We're

transfixed because it is our worst nightmare come true; we want to run away for the same reason.

We all work hard to avoid feelings of shameful self-disclosure: to keep private those thoughts, feelings, and actions that we think will be critically judged by others. The revelations about Clinton's sexcapades—like those of Jerry Springer's guests—actualize the very situation that we're psychically working to avoid all of the time. We all have experiences and fantasies that we are convinced would repel others if they were exposed. Bob Dylan once wrote, "If my thought-dreams could be seen, they'd probably put my head in a guillotine." This is particularly true when it comes to sexual fantasies. We have desires for all sorts of sex with all sorts of people. We don't all act on all of these wishes, although many of us do act on at least some of them. For complicated psychological and social reasons, we feel tremendously guilty and ashamed of these sexual impulses. We feel almost as guilty about the thoughts and wishes as we do the actions. That's why we keep them private, secret even to ourselves. We're afraid of being humiliated and punished, or of humiliating and hurting others if these feelings come to the surface. When someone like Clinton is forced to publicly reveal his peccadilloes, we vicariously experience his shame. We feel exposed and humiliated on his behalf.



But only for a moment. We immediately try to master these feelings or to get rid of them. One way we deal with this vicarious humiliation is to purge ourselves of any similar feelings by projecting them onto others and becoming morally outraged at "them." We do this with Jerry Springer's guest who reveals her sexual interest in her daughter's boyfriends on television, and we do it with Clinton. We then can enjoy the imaginary feeling of camaraderie and anonymity offered by our spectator status. As spectators to "their" depravity, we feel connected to each other and to some clean moral community. We judge "them" and feel ourselves subtly superior. There is an "us" who would never be so sleazy and who, if we were to be so sleazy (we self-righteously claim), would sure as hell be smarter about it! We can't get over how outrageous that woman on *Jerry Springer* was, or how repulsive Clinton's cigar fetish appears to be. At the moment we're feeling this, we're pretending that we can put ourselves outside what Freud called the "psychopathology of everyday life," the tragically conflicted, anxiety-ridden dimension of human existence—at least human existence in this alienated culture of ours. We feel as if he or she "out there" is wounded—and we're not.

Secretly we know that we are, though, that we're wounded and handicapped just like Clinton and those freaky people on TV. But we have no place to talk about it, except to our therapists. There is no place in the public world where people can talk about their pain EXCEPT on these terrible TV and radio shows, and there only in the most bizarre form. Eventually, "we" give up on "them" as hopelessly screwed up, but we never have to face or work through the shame we feel about our own very personal versions of these stories. Our own shame about being messed-up remains intact. We're horrified that Clinton is so sick, but continue to deny our common flawed humanity.

This is most evident, of course, in the sanctimonious judgments of Clinton that we hear from the politicians and pundits, from Orrin Hatch to Sam Donaldson. These are people on whose consciences must lie "crimes and misdemeanors" so high as to make Clinton's cigar look like rosary beads. One (almost) wants to ask them: How do they like to "do it"? How many of them have always been faithful? How many opponents or competitors have they destroyed, or feelings have they hurt? How much do they treat others as made in the image of God? What are they ashamed will some day come to light? Do they ever feel guilty about their impulses? Their pious attacks on Clinton's "repulsive" behavior sound like the self-righteous outrage that Jerry or Jenny or Geraldo or Montel whip up in their audiences in response to the pathetic sociopaths and perverts that appear on their (wildly popular) shows.

In these moments of moral indignation we see the results of a process—sometimes consciously calculated and other times involuntary—of projection and externalization that is very familiar to psychoanalysts. We re-experience internal conflicts as if they were external ones. We desperately wish we were better people, that we didn't have problems to be ashamed of, thoughts and feelings that invite the critical judgment of others. We wish we were above and beyond reproach, that we were, in a sense, perfect. We're not. We wish others were perfect, and they're not. The shame over this failure is severe. In this case, it has taken the form of an exaggerated disgust with the public disclosures of Clinton's sexual behavior.

The answer is not to give everyone a free pass. Compassion and empathy toward ourselves and others, however, is a crucial step in the process of change. Without it, we can't tolerate our own moral failings enough to understand where they come from and how they prevent us from realizing our highest ideals. But we have to maintain a tilt toward goodness, toward health and transcendence. In this case, for instance, we can't turn away from holding Clinton accountable for using his power over Lewinsky for selfish sexual gain. Similarly, Monica Lewinsky's struggles with her own self-esteem which led to a sexualized idealization of and dependency on a powerful man reflect a damaged psyche.

This is a problem that she actively re-enacts; she is not a passive victim and we need to confront the fact that this pathology leads her to hurt herself and others.

Tilting toward goodness means that while we condemn the right-wing agenda behind Starr's attack on Clinton, we might also use the moral and psychological failings of these two people to start a national dialogue about how men and women can hurt and use each other and devalue themselves in our society. We might be better able to see that these processes exist in some form in most of us, not just in "them." If we're going to lay a moral hammer on Clinton, let's do it for the right reason. The political cynicism that Clinton has embodied as president is what should be attacked, not Bill Clinton as a person. While the man's politics might be founded on lies and so be worthy of our condemnation, we need to be caring toward him as a person, and not act out our own self-criticisms and disappointments on such a grand and dangerous scale.

We need a Ba'al Teshuvah President

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

A president is the *Rosh Ham'dinah*, the head of the country. As we stand before God we are all one, from the head to the hewers of wood, the clear-cutting lumber barons and the drawers of water who lower the water table and pollute our streams. The issue before us during the High Holy Days this year has been a possible impeachment of humanity before the heavenly court.

After all, it is not only Israel that is "*arevim zeh bazeh*," but in our commonwealth all of us, Democrat and Republican, black and white, rich and poor, are *arevim* in collusion and accessories both before and after the fact. We are arevim in all its translations: 1) responsible, 2) mixed and sharing, 3) taking delight in one another, and 4) having a shared *eruv*, sharing a common domain.

Let us look again at the sentence from the *de profundis* (133): *Im avvonot Tishmor Y-ah Ado-nai mi ya'amod?* [If You God were to keep count of sins Lord who could stand?]

In our tradition we are told of Satan accusing us and having access to all our records. What if each one of us would have to be interrogated by a Starr? I dread how each one of us would look if each twitch of a muscle and shifting of eye were recorded for all to see. When would we begin to try to do our fig-leafing, our cover-up? And if we could, would we not try to get those who have evidence against us to keep from testifying in such a way that puts us in the worst light? Even you, Moses—did you have to kill the Egyptian? why did you smite the rock, how could you take a Kushite wife? You said not to add or to detract from God's Law, and yet you did add your own two cents from time to time. We all stand to be judged.

The call to serve in public office these days is madness. How could one be driven to serve if one did not have a huge *yetzer ha-ra,* an ego that is rapacious for glory and "a place in history"? Can you imagine the Faustian inflation of every object of desire available to one so great as a commander-in-chief with the power of so many lives at his fingertips? During the early years of the Soviet Yevsktzya, my rebbe, Reb Yossef Yitzchaq, was threatened by a special prosecutor with a gun in his hand. Calmly the rebbe said: "This *strashunyok* can intimidate only one who has many gods to serve and only one world to serve them in. I, who have only one God to serve and many worlds to serve Him in, am not intimidated by it."

Politicians, however, who want to be nominated and elected must serve many interests and make covenants with the powerful and self-interested just to get past the primaries. Even before one gets sworn into office one has been sworn to serve the various kingmakers behind the scenes. Who would want to serve under these conditions? Is it because the seams of the seamy side have begun to show that Clinton betrayed the interests of those who want to hide the deals behind the scenes? If each legislator and official had to show their commitments prior to taking office, no one would be able to claim the right to represent his/her constituents. If all the calls on Capitol Hill in the last years were sifted for content that had nothing to do with the welfare of the people of the country—and if that would automatically disqualify one from office—who would still be serving in Washington?

The scum of our society floats to the top of the pot, the White House. It is our own crap that broke out on the pimple of our head of state. Clinton is the persona of our collective and sick soul, the mirror of our own self-sabotage. Sick people need healing, but there is no way in which a person like a president could be known to have consulted a people-helper for help in coping with stress and moral dilemmas. Yet the maintenance of one's sane inner life without periodic help and guidance is impossible under the schedule of the office. One who would still work under these conditions without help for one's inner person is bound to do something crazy from time to time.



I am not looking for more groveling and apologizing from the president. I am looking for him to give the



vice president his powers for a week or two so he can retreat, consult his best values, and get the help to do the inner system repair he needs so that he can save the *shalom beyt* of his family and cabinet and the valuable parts of his mandate. Only by clearing such time can he see how far from the part of his soul that holds values he has strayed and begin the process of *teshuvah*. If he could get back on the track of his values, he would not be a lame duck; if he survives this crisis he would be the first *Ba'al Teshuvah* president.

Did not our sages say: David's sin was basically to demonstrate that an individual can undergo *teshuvah*, and Israel's sin with the Golden Calf was there to demonstrate that a whole people can make the great repair?

Not to excuse him or myself do I write these lines, but to urge me and him to live up to our commitment. I weep for him, for Hillary, Chelsea, and Monica, for the loyal staff that got screwed—I weep for me and will look deeply into my collusion with my own inner and outer board of directors. *Halevai* I will be able to consolidate my obligations to my false gods under the umbrella of my commitment to the covenant I will renew with my God this Rosh Hashanah.

Affairs of State

Jo Ellen Green Kaiser

Hasn't enough been said about Bill and Monica? Like many Americans, I don't care if Clinton had an affair. One of the great, too-often-forgotten advances of feminism was to declare that marriage should not define who we are and what we do. These were two people who wanted something from each other and, for a while, got it.

I care more that Clinton lied, but not because I am shocked that he tried to cover up a tawdry affair or even that he tried to protect himself from the inquisitorial zeal of Kenneth Starr in the grand jury proceedings. I probably would have done the same. What I really care about is that Clinton has consistently lied on matters of policy. This man who presented himself as the great liberal hope has become another Bush on foreign policy and another Reagan on domestic policy. What I care about—as a feminist—are Clinton's affairs of state.

Our stock market, the "safe haven" where only weeks ago Congress and our president planned to "invest" our retirement savings, is gyrating wildly and on the verge of complete collapse. Why? Because the deflationary fiscal austerity policies practiced at home by Alan Greenspan and advocated abroad by our president made it easy for corporations to find venture capital and to keep their costs low, but prevented governments from investing in their own people and infrastructure. As a result, ordinary people have gained nothing from the biggest economic boom in the last quarter of this century, and yet will feel the brunt of the looming economic bust.

The same is true on the social front. New Democrats like President Clinton correctly criticized big government for making individuals feel powerless. Their solution, however, was to dismantle bloated bureaucratic social programs and replace them with—nothing. Thus we got "health reform" that ended up being no more than a green light for HMOs, and "welfare reform" that created a larger homeless population and an increasing number of children in working class families who are malnourished. Aren't these offenses for which this president should be held accountable?

Perhaps the worst offenses of the Clinton regime have come in the realm of foreign policy. Just weeks ago, we bombed a factory in Sudan, a country so poor and so desperate for investment that they are willing to overlook the source of those investments. Sudan may, in that way, "harbor terrorists," but it is hardly a Libya or an Iraq. We were told at the time of the bombings that that factory made chemical weapons. Now, reports trickle out on back pages and muttered under newscasters' breaths that the factory may have been making life-saving drugs after all, the only pharmaceutical manufacturing plant in the entire country. Is bombing such a factory not an abuse of power?

The biggest abuse of power in this administration, however, is one Congress cannot and will not check, because they are party to the offense. That is the scandal of campaign finance in this country. Were Bill Clinton and Al Gore the only guys out there hustling for money in exchange for "favors" from every corporation, every foundation, even, possibly (and impeachably), every foreign country ready to lend a willing bill? When campaign costs for local elections soar into the hundreds of thousands and only billionaires can contemplate financing runs for the presidency, only candidates in the pockets of corporations can run with the confidence that they will have a shot at office. The result is media-driven campaigns filled with middle-of-the-road pap designed not to offend the campaign's corporate sponsors. Is it any wonder voters stay home in droves? Our democracy has become an oligarchy—isn't Clinton's willing contribution to this shift in power an offense to our Constitution? And isn't it an offense Congress is guilty of as well?

Sadly, the offenses Clinton is guilty of are so common, so accepted, that no one would think of them as grounds for impeachment, while Clinton's legalistic attempt to weasel out of what could have been a day's worth of bad publicity is.

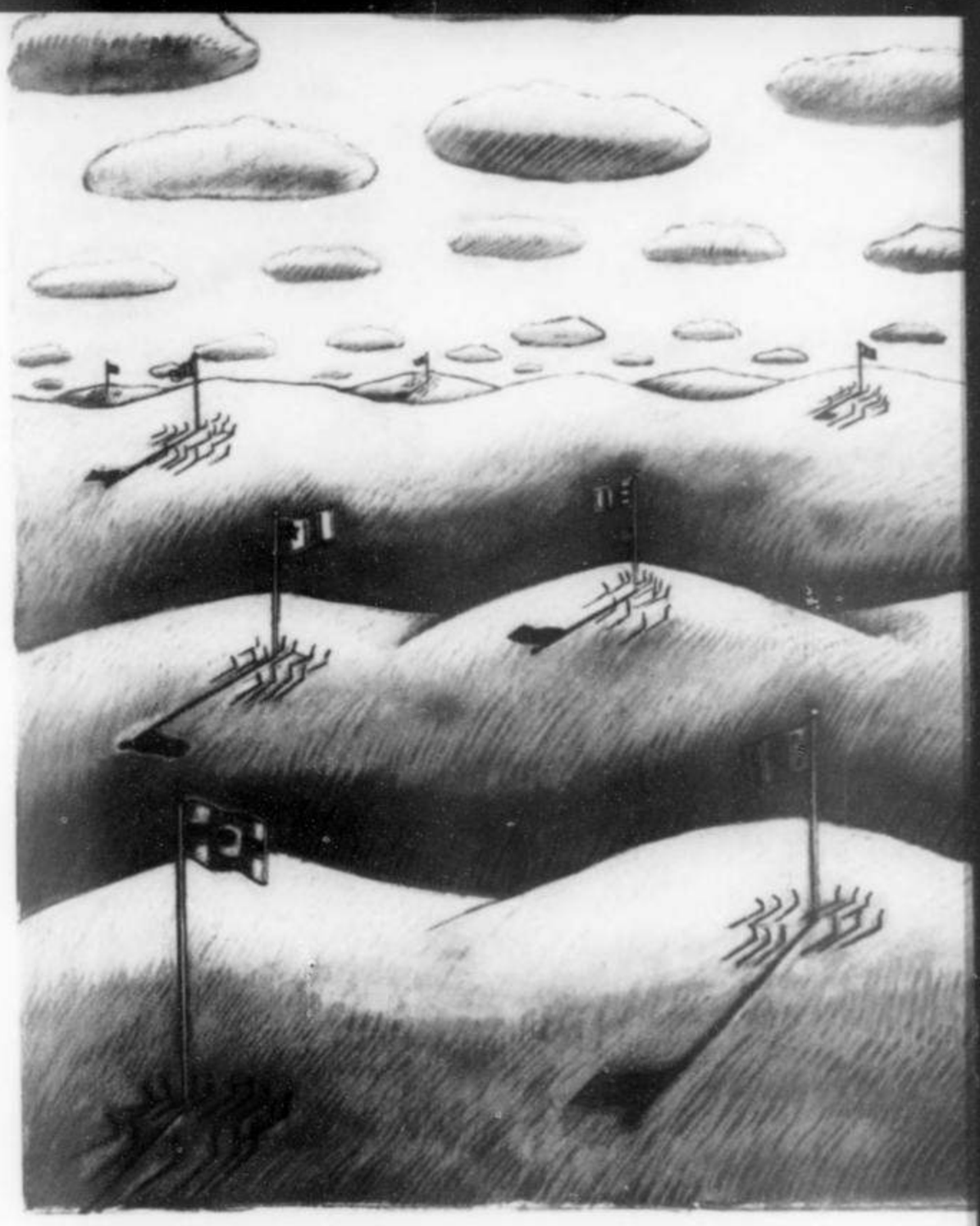
The real scandal in this country is not what Monica did for Bill, but what Bill has done for the powerful in this country at the expense of the weak. ❑

HEART OF THE MATTER

The Meaning of the Holocaust

Social Alienation and the Infliction of Human Suffering

Peter Gabel



EDITOR'S NOTE: *Although Peter Gabel's article is ostensibly about the Holocaust, its analysis provides a theoretical framework for understanding much more. By exposing the structure of human needs and desires that pervade twentieth-century life, Gabel shows us the fundamental role of the hunger for recognition and meaning. We urge our readers to use these tools whenever you confront some aspect of contemporary social reality that seems puzzling or opaque.*

Can the politics of meaning help us to understand the Holocaust? The recent articles in TIKKUN by Daniel Goldhagen and Zygmunt Bauman demonstrate such a need because both of these articles make assertions about the meaning of the Holocaust that the authors themselves cannot account for. Goldhagen's now famous claim that the German people as a whole were willing executioners wants to locate the meaning of the Holocaust in a relentless, culturally pervasive anti-Semitism. He argues that this anti-Semitisim was literally a historical constituent of German consciousness that through cultural conditioning long preceding Nazism came to, in part, define Germanness itself. But even if this were true (and I do not believe that it is), it would only lead us to the question of what this type of nationalism built on dehumanization *means* for those who are taken over by it. Unless we are to assume that newborn children are blank slates upon which any conditioning can simply be imprinted in a way that then "fills up" their consciousness, we are pushed to ask deeper questions about the meaning of that conditioning process itself, about whether it is an expression of some distortion, denial, repression, humiliation that would inherently transcend the formation of German identity as such and point toward a more universal problem.

Bauman's thought-provoking counter-position is that analyses like Goldhagen's are actually expressions of a "hereditary victimhood" on the part of post-Holocaust Jews—that these Jews want to find meaning in a martyrdom borrowed from a holocaust that they did not themselves experience, leading them to elevate "survival" above all ethical values and to color the world as being comprised of one-dimensional persecutors capable of providing them with the victim-centered meaning that they seek. He shows how Goldhagen's version of the Holocaust as primarily the story of the voluntary actions of Hitler's Jew-hating helpers involves a distortion of the evidence Goldhagen uses to support his own position and a blindness to the very substantial evidence that contradicts it. According to Bauman, Goldhagen distorts his evidence in this way because he, and people like him, are reassured by the sense of meaning gained from their hereditary victimhood and so cannot be fulfilled unless the world continually reveals open hostility, violent conspiracies, and the ever-present possibility of another holocaust. Yet in reading Bauman's piece too we are simply pushed to the deeper question of what this paranoid sense of meaning itself means.

If this Jewish survivalism is counter-rational and even potentially dangerous to Jewish survival itself (since it is arguably an aspect of Jewish consciousness in Israel that makes another war in the Middle East more likely), then the sense of meaning provided by this preoccupation with survival and victimhood must itself be accounted for by some deeper meaning, some immanent distortion and self-deception, that would make it "worth it" for these post-Holocaust Jews to pursue such a contradictory and potentially self-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RICHARD ROSS

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destructive course of conduct. Understanding that deeper meaning requires going beyond the particular form of Jewish identity characteristic of post-Holocaust Jews toward revealing that universal underlying meaning of which it is but a particular manifestation.



The politics of meaning aims exactly at understandings of this type. We seek to illuminate distortions of the longing for meaning as manifestations of that very longing, as pathological particular incarnations of a fundamental universal need. That need for meaning itself emerges from a desire that is at the heart of our very social existence—the desire for a mutual recognition through which we become fully present to each other as social beings in connection, fully confirmed in the relation Martin Buber called "I and Thou." In the unalienated social existence to which we aspire, meaningfulness is the realization, through a potentially infinite number of particular cultural embodiments, of the I and Thou of mutual recognition. That is why movements for social justice are inherently meaningful—as they "rise up," these movements generate the very experience of becoming-present-to-each-other through a confirming recognition that grounds the call for the correction of injustice, which is always manifested as a denial of this I-Thou relation, in a particular social-historical context. At the same time, it is the emergent awareness of injustice as a denial of the I-Thou relation that exerts an ethical pull on the wider culture and in turn pulls the movement, as realization of the desire for mutual recognition, into existence.

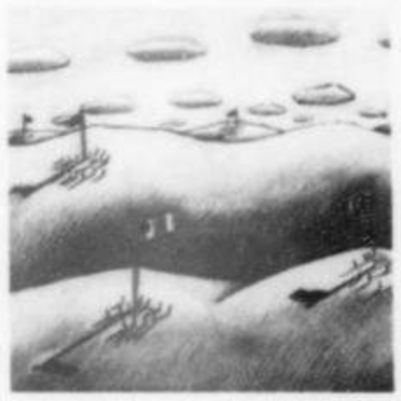
The great problem that we face, and here we begin to reach the question of the meaning of the Holocaust, is that the aspiration toward the affirmation of mutual recognition that exists within all of us remains subordinated to the legacy of alienation that makes the other appear to us as a threat. Rather than ascribe the source of this problem to, say, the distrust fostered by the competitive capitalist market, I think it is more accurate to understand this problem as located in the spiritual evolution of being itself, and in the as yet incomplete struggle of being to know itself as Love that realizes itself through the affirmation of the other, through the I-Thou relation. The achievement of this relation in its full social manifestation—that is, in a manifestation that is able to attain a confidence that can surpass the doubt of alienation and become the foundation of a fully human social history—requires a movement of social development that is at once spiritual, political, and material, and we may well be in an ecological race against time to succeed in building such a movement.

But insofar as we have not yet achieved it, the other remains to us a threat to whom we must deny our desire for full relation, since the revelation of that desire requires a letting-go of the withdrawn ego that would leave us vulnerable to an unthinkable humiliation. And insofar as we retain the withdrawn ego, we appear to the other as threatening also—as "one of the others" like the other whom we ourselves perceive as threatening us with the humiliation of non-recognition.

The entire process of acculturation that each of us has gone through in the formation of our present social selves has carried the weight—across many generations—of the threatening nature of the other. It has led us to develop a painful social split between the artificial self of the outer persona and the concealed inner self full of the hidden longing for recognition that the outer self, in its very artificiality, denies and renders inaccessible to the other's gaze. And in its paranoia, the withdrawn inner self must constantly monitor its outer presentation of self through a perpetual unconscious self-observation, simultaneously enacting the outer persona and scanning that enactment, which is always at risk of being seen through because of the inherent contingency—or if you like, uncontrollableness—of every actual encounter with the other. Think of the television newscaster's pseudo-familiarity and the panicky quickness with which he or she instantly corrects any slight slip of the tongue or misstatement, or the occasional completely incoherent "jokes" exchanged on these local news shows that the newscasters instantly "cover" with laughter as if the jokes made sense. These behaviors reveal—in both their artificial enacted quality and in the near-instantaneous corrections of any "role-mistakes"—the threat of humiliation posed by the surrounding others. And we are all newscaster-like to some degree, claiming to the other to "really" be the outer persona we appear to be while concealing, individually and together, the fragile inner self that both longs for and fears being seen.

I am saying that this is the general social climate that envelops us, the human race, across nationalities and across our cultural particularities. There is, of course, a much more hopeful and positive way of representing the situation that would emphasize the beauty and joy of being alive, the love and recognition that we have been able as individuals and as cultures to achieve, and the upward spiritual and political movement toward each other that we may be able to discern. But my aim in writing this article is to try to understand the dark side of our present social existence, and especially the paranoia in the face of the other and the terror of humiliation that still haunts our every interaction.

Faced with the painful contradiction between our desire to realize ourselves through the other in the I-Thou relation and the prohibition against doing so that appears to be the lesson of our conditioning, the withdrawn self is driven to imaginary solutions—that is, to solutions that are withdrawn from the actual, concrete terrain of embodied self-other interactions and are lived out in the withdrawn security of the mind. To the extent that the outward persona enacted for the other retains the characteristics of an artificial role (the newscaster, "Dad," the president's need to "look presidential," and so forth), the withdrawn self seeks the protec-



tion of anonymity, presenting a performance without actual ontological presence. To maintain this inaccessibility while still seeking to satisfy our longing for the completion of authentic social connection drives us to collude in creating imaginary communities "in our heads," in an inner existential space that is literally behind the bodily enactments of our personae. In other articles in TIKKUN I have given many examples of these imaginary communities and the immense social power they acquire because of the essential longing for social connection that they address: Ronald Reagan's beatific invocation of "Morning in America"; the conservative appeals to "family values"; the sense of belonging and acceptance offered by the God and religious embrace of the Christian Right; the sense of connection to community elicited by inflated or hortatory patriotism and accompanying invocations of our bond with the "Founding Fathers."

These communities are imaginary in the sense that they are not enriched by the mutual presence of the I-Thou relation. Though they purport to constitute a "We," they do not manifest the presence to each other in concrete lived experience that characterizes the reciprocity of a real "We." Instead they reflect a disembodied shared allegiance to an image cathected "in the mind" and literally withdrawn back from the real relation to the other, an allegiance that is then incorporated into the artificiality of the outer persona through such signifiers as uniforms, pledges, narrative clichés (for example, the American history taught in civics classes to young teenagers), clubs, marching bands, and the like. Assisted by the passing on of intergenerational authority to those who coordinate the intergenerational transmission of these images, they provide us with fantasies of connection in the service of protecting us from the threat of humiliation posed by the real other. That is why belief in these images is directly or indirectly compulsory, not just in the normally coercive rituals of the pledge of allegiance and the Lord's Prayer (at least in their schoolroom versions), but in the covert prohibition against challenging the purported "reality" of the social façade, the "reality," say, of the claim that "we" are Americans living in a land of freedom, opportunity, and happiness. The cultural fascination with the post-1960s remake of the movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (the Donald Sutherland version rather than the 1950s, anti-communist Peter Lawford version) resulted precisely from how well it conveyed this prohibition against revealing the truth of our alienation: the alien Pods seek to take over the world by replacing actual humans with identical fake replicas who in turn organize to ferret out those remaining humans who cannot conceal the signs of their actual humanity.

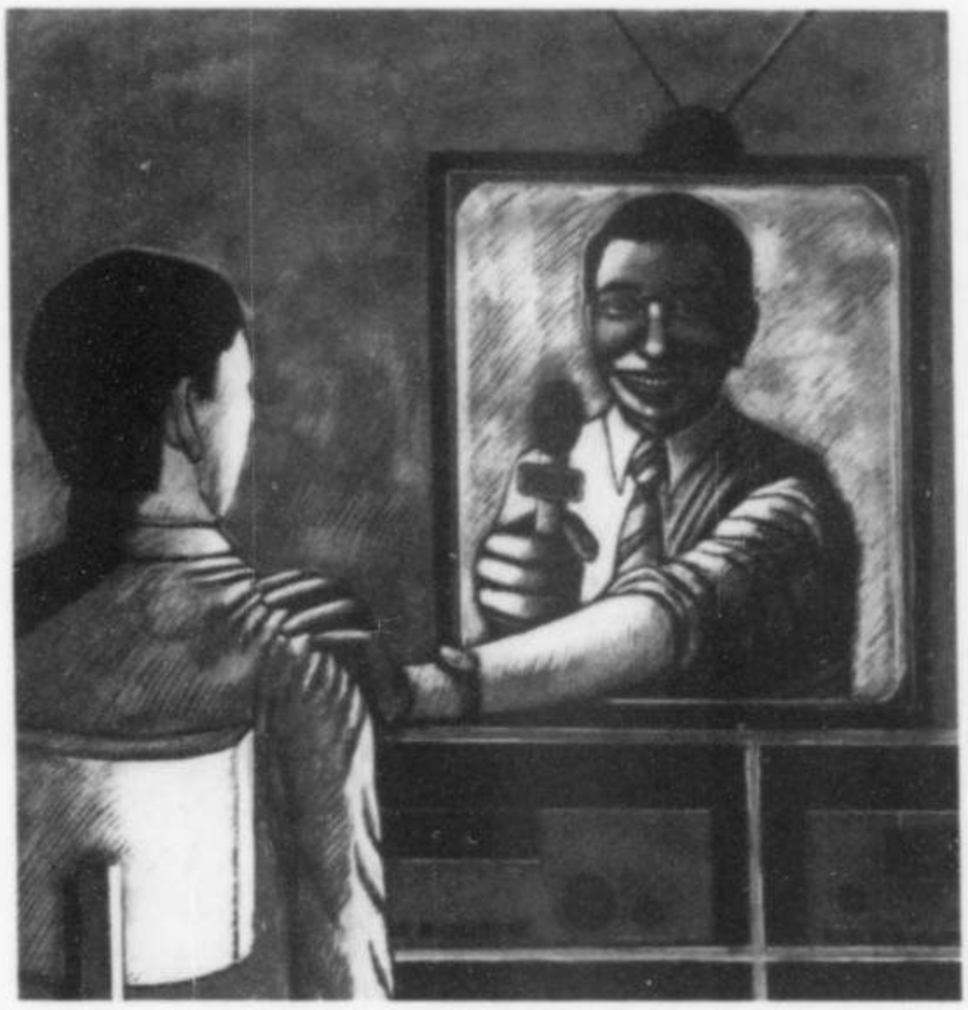
The Nazis were an imaginary community, a special intensification of the imaginary unity of "the German People." When I say "the German People" are imaginary, I am not denying that there are elements of actual relation and mutual recognition in the common language, culture, and history that really does connect them, that makes them feel German together. I am saying that this connection retains the spiritual impoverishment of the centuries of alienation we have yet to surpass. Whether we understand the origins of this alienation from the other in the material struggle for survival or as the consequence of sin and a fall from grace or as an expression of our evolutionary lack of spiritual development that made God-consciousness and the awareness that Love is the realization of Being only primitively available to us, nationalistic communities like "the German People" are not characterized by the mutual presence and recognition that imbues the I-Thou relation. Forged out of violence and war, pervaded by hierarchical images of status and divisions of class, race, and gender that contradict the capacity to fully experience the other as a "Thou" in a true relation of recognition, "the German People" with its "Fatherland" and its patriotic songs is a connected unity only as an image in the mind—in the existential reality of each present moment's social interspace, it remains corroded by the fear of each person in the face of each actual other, just as is true of "the American People" in this country. And this was the case also in post-World War I Germany.

Now we come to the crucial point. For insofar as communities are imaginary, they are unconsciously haunted by the very absence of connection which they have been constructed to deny. The threat of humiliation and nonrecognition posed by the mere existence of the actual other toward whom we are at the same time inherently pulled by the desire for mutual recognition that constitutes us as reciprocal, social beings—this threat is what has led to the protective divisions in the self that I described earlier. And just as the artificial persona enacted toward the other must claim to be real in order to deny the other access to the longing of the withdrawn self within, so the imaginary community that purports to satisfy our socially inherent need for connectedness and recognition must be outwardly manifested as real in order to seal off the pain of our actual isolation and the desire for and fear of the other that accompany it. Yet the collusion that allows and even forces these false appearances of self and community to be taken as real cannot actually make them so. It only renders what is real socially invisible or what we call "unconscious," but it does not get rid of what is real—this longing to be seen and confirmed through relation with the actual other, the conditioned terror of disconfirmation and humiliation, and the volatility and passion of these conflicting impulsions that constitute the energy field of real social life in its concrete existential dimension. And this reality haunts the collective allegiance to the imaginary communities that are intended to cover it up through the reciprocal collusion that denies it.

In present-day America, the emptiness of both mass culture and political life reveals the way that social alienation can at times achieve a relative stability. The general absence of authentic connection, of the presence to each other that characterizes the profound transparency of the I-Thou relation, the bland rotation of the outer-role systems, and the imaginary communities that purport to unite us which today are transmitted mainly by television ("we" all supposedly watched the final episode of *Seinfeld*; according to "our" spokesperson, "we Americans" have more opportunity today than ever before; etc.)—all of these aspects of our contemporary culture sometimes seem so natural that their alienated character becomes almost invisible. Indeed, the very success with which social emptiness is managed today suggests that liberal late capitalism may aspire to solve the threat posed by a direct encounter with the other by trying to postpone it forever: by ironizing all seriousness, assimilating social existence itself to its televised representation, and disseminating legal drugs like Prozac that really do make meaninglessness feel better. That Francis Fukuyama could seriously suggest that the current period of moral void and spiritual and political disengagement is "The End of History" is an indication that this idea of infinite postponement is not so far-fetched.

But the situation in Germany in the 1920s and early 1930s was very different from our own. World War I had been a war of imaginary communities—nothing quite validates my description of the non-rational psychodynamics underlying social alienation than the absurd irrationality of that war's origins and the utterly predictable catastrophic suffering that it would cause. Like the Vietnam war in which, as Tom Hayden has so eloquently put it, fathers sacrificed the lives of their real sons in order not to lose their connection to the image of America that they had gained in World War II, World War I revealed our capacity to disattend to easily foreseeable real consequences in order to preserve our allegiance to imaginary community. And as I have indicated, the reason for this is the real terror of the negation of our very social being, as yet so under-confirmed in history, that makes the dissociation from reality "worth it." In this context, the defeat of "the German People," coupled with the further humiliations of the reparations, the accelerating "worthlessness" of "the German currency," and the challenge to the very existence of a "German community" by Marxists intent on revealing it as epiphenomenal in relation to the underlying reality of the international class struggle, all of these forces threatened to disintegrate the imaginary recognition that each German experienced as "national pride."

When the world achieves the spiritual development that will, when it is achieved, permit a self-evident confidence in the confirmatory nature of the I-Thou relation, the type of recognition associated with pride and humiliation will be surpassed or significantly altered in its meaning. But in a world still addicted to imaginary communities as a defense



against the threat posed by the actual other, the "belief" in the imaginary community uses the inflating character of pride as a means of keeping out of awareness the fear of humiliation that this "belief" is meant to deny. In the absence of a spiritual-political social movement that might have addressed the alienation that produced World War I and the mourning and healing needed to truly recover from it (and neither the League of Nations nor Marxism were capable of this kind of analysis and response), no social base existed that could soften the psychological effects of the Germans' loss of pride in their national identity. To desire in your being the recognition of the other and the blessed grace and completion of the I-Thou relation, and then to feel as a result of your conditioning that you are actually nobody in the face of a dominant other who will use the vulnerability of your desire to humiliate you—that is not a tolerable option, not even an option we can bear to become fully conscious of. And as a result, the degraded "German People" were drawn to a Nazi party capable of re-inspiring a sense of national pride powerful enough, at the imaginary level, to re-expel the threat of the other's non-recognition and humiliation from their conscious experience.

But while the grandiosity of Nazism was able to restore each underrecognized "little man's" sense of pride, worth, and self-recognition as "a German," as "one of the German people," the Nazi community remained an imaginary unity whose special character consisted in having been virulently infected by the humiliation that gave rise to it. Its violence, its megalomania, its preoccupation with purification, its desire to assert a world-dominance that would last forever—all of these elements of Nazi culture so clearly reveal a drivenness to get rid of some haunting inner demon—that sense of ontological inadequacy that is in fact a universal



feature of social alienation but that had broken through into consciousness sufficiently to traumatize the Germans of the Weimar Republic. It had to be gotten rid of, this threat of humiliation; and yet—and here is the crucial point—it could not be gotten rid of because it was itself a constituent element of Nazi consciousness. Glassy-eyed, goose-stepping, and inflated into a prideful rage, the SS officers, like the young women feeling an erotic thrill as they watched the spectacle of the rally, were enacting themselves as if they were part of an upsurge of authentic affirmation and recognition. But they were deceiving themselves. The Nazis were an imaginary community, haunted by the same fear of humiliation and lack of true affirming reciprocity as other such communities, but the necessity of their grandiosity made the denial of their vulnerability to the threat of the actual other more urgent and more difficult to achieve.

Psychoanalysis has long recognized that one way to reconcile incompatible parts of the self is to engage in splitting and projection. In her book, *For Your Own Good*, Alice Miller presents a thoughtful application of these concepts to the Nazi personality structure, but remains within the boundaries of conventional psychoanalysis. In the framework that I am presenting, we shall see that the Nazis did indeed engage in splitting and projection, but in order to deny the existence of the absence that haunted them—haunted their inflated outer personae and the imaginary nature of their grandiose unity as a master race. Let me repeat once again, because this is very important: to be absent in this way is to seek to be not present to the actual other, to withdraw one's innocent longing for the actual other's affirmation of one's authentic being and to seal off that longing behind the glassy eyes and rigid musculature of the external persona, so that in spite of the choreographed external unity of those enormous Nuremberg rallies, the core of each person's actual social presence remained pulled back into his or her head and removed from the inherent vulnerability of the truly embodied relation. And since this "outerness" of the Nazi movement was infected with the breakthrough of the humiliation that had given rise to it, it faced a perpetual threat that had to be warded off with great urgency.

This warding off of the threat of humiliation by the actual other took many forms, such as the disciplinary rigidification of the internal hierarchies of the Nazi party with its compulsory and decisive salutes and the internal use of the Gestapo, the SA, and the SS, all of which facilitated the maintenance of what might be called "disciplinary hegemony"—that is, the effective use of terror to monitor and secure the outer collusion of the German people as a whole in maintaining the appearance of unquestioned allegiance and "belief." These Germans were themselves actual others in the sense that I have been using the term—that is, each was an "existent," an inherently *relational* being with a consciousness capable of nihilating (in social combination, accidental or intentional) the false outer unity of the Nazi's pseudo-community. Warding off the threat of humiliation consisted first, therefore, of assuring—through real organization—the absolute allegiance among the Germans themselves to belief in the reality of the hallucination of their connection—the realness, for example, of Hitler's hallucinatory invocation of "the Blood" that incarnated Nazi-German unity.

But the most important method of warding off the inner demon that so infected and threatened to dissolve this imaginary unity was to try to split off the threat of being revealed as false (an ever present threat emerging from the fear posed by the ever present pull towards authentic recognition that can arise only through the letting-go of our withdrawnness and the becoming-present-to the-other in full relation) and to project this split-off threat onto other imaginary communities that were defined as the source of the threat to "the German People." To those of you who are familiar with the idea of splitting as a psychological defense, this may sound straightforward and even simple, but it actually involves a subtle transposition that is of great social importance. For in splitting off the internal demon and projecting its threat onto an external, demonized other, the Nazi transposes the haunting internal threat of humiliation of the fragile and withdrawn inner self (by its exposure, through the transparency of relation, to the actual other) into an *external* threat to the Nazi's "outer" imaginary community itself. This has the effect of not simply denying the inner absence that threatens the heart of Nazi identity, but rather of acknowledging the felt presence of the threat and then externalizing it and changing its object to fully remove it from the concrete domain of real social existence. In place of the ever present threat to the actual withdrawn self by the actual other that haunts and therefore divides the Nazi's being and that therefore can neither be acknowledged nor eliminated, the process of splitting off and projection allows the Nazi first to secure the undivided "reality" of the Nazi's outer imaginary community and second to make this imaginary community the threatened object in place of the vulnerable and frightened soul within. Through this ingenious, hallucinatory transposition, the Nazi can attempt to actively master a fear of humiliation which he must otherwise passively suffer and in relation to which he is otherwise helpless to affect: through it, he "unifies" himself, enables himself to actively acknowledge the threat that would otherwise have to be denied by expelling that threat from the self and projecting it in the form of a contemptible infection into the demonized other outside the self, and he gains the capacity to actively mobilize his energy, in the form of a truly "blind rage,"



against a threat that has now been transformed from a threat to the soul of exposure and authentic humiliation into a threat to the pseudo-integrity of the Nazi's outer persona and the imaginary community itself to which it belongs. Acknowledging the threat and transposing it in this way strengthens the Nazi's self-deception: it allows him or her to say, "We are perfect, real, and pure, and we will stamp out the 'them' who are external to us and impure and seek to infect us with an alien presence that is not in us."

As Bauman points out in his critique of Goldhagen, there were many groups who served as carriers of the Nazis' split-off projections, including those deemed mentally deficient, physically disabled, or sexually deviant, but the Jews were the primary demonized others. And certainly the selection of the Jews for this purpose has everything to do with the history of German anti-Semitism, which is to say with the history of the Jews having to absorb these same split-off projections in times of "normal" alienation, which did not produce a holocaust however much violence German Jews had to routinely endure. But one of the main points I wish to make here is that whatever the scope of the historical anti-Semitism that made the Jewish people the most likely object of Nazi demonization, within the distortions and conflicts of the Nazi mind the Jews were imaginary, as imaginary as the Nazi's master race of Germans themselves were. By this I mean that Nazism, as a catastrophic manifestation of alienated consciousness whose recurrence remains a possibility so long as the ubiquitous pain of social alienation and the longing for mutual recognition remain so poorly understood and so little responded to, produced a consciousness sufficiently cut off, through denial, from even the impoverished relational empathy that characterizes our experience of the actual other here in the real world that the Jewish people became an "It" to them, to again use Buber's terminology.

Or to state this still more precisely, insofar as the Jews functioned as the externalized carriers of the Germans' own inner demons in the service of denying these demons, the Jews' existence as Thou had to be denied as well. Any felt relation to the Jews' actual humanity would have inevitably entailed some resonance of the *mutual* recognition that is constitutive of the true relation and so would have revealed the underlying humiliation that had already been the traumatic source of the hyper-inflation of the Nazi's artificial persona. Thus the Nazis needed to try to convert the Jews from actual others (and here I mean not "Jewish" others as such but simply vessels of social humanity) into It-Jews, the imaginary demonic community described in *Mein Kampf*.

This effort at total dehumanization was, of course, impossible, based as it was on a denial of reality, and it was this impossibility that makes intelligible the development from the anti-Semitism of the 1930s to the Holocaust itself. For while the process of splitting off and projection allowed the Nazis to enact a stamping out of the impurities that



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threatened to expose the unreality of their communal identity, it was only an enactment, an imaginary "cleansing" that not only could not "work" but necessarily revealed itself as not working every step of the way. If you foster a spirit of generalized anti-Semitism or even a Kristalnacht in the service of the denial of your internal demons, and if these attempts at mastery change nothing, the psychological defense itself requires that more be done to eradicate the infection. Thus the "Final Solution" comes to seem like the only thing that will work—actual extermination of the substitute object that has been designated as the threat to the Nazi and to the community of Nazi Germany. It is probable that unconscious guilt also plays a part in this inevitable acceleration of expulsive measures: the construction of the Jews, through splitting off and projection, into an imaginary, dehumanized collective being with whom one is not in relation as a community of actual others is also impossible in any real ontological sense—the projection of the It-identity is simply a denial of the Thou relation, of the human presence of the Jews as actual others. The more violence that is done to them without "eliminating the problem" haunting the Nazi's grandiosity, a problem that includes the guilty unconscious knowledge of the humanity of the actual others being degraded and brutalized, the greater the future violence required to maintain the continuing denial of that humanity and the greater the wish to exterminate that humanity altogether.

But what then of the "average German," some of whom are today the seemingly normal parents and grandparents of German friends of my generation? In my opinion, it is precisely the passive-active, knowing-unknowing compliance of the average German that should dispel the notion that the Holocaust was a uniquely German phenomenon, the product of a uniquely distorted or evil culture. Precisely what I have been trying to show is that the Holocaust is an intelligible manifestation of an alienated world in which the desire for mutual recognition and affirmation is systematically denied, in which the fear of the other as an agent of humiliation rather than the source of completion of our relational being envelops each of us in "misrecognition"—that is, in an artificial social environment that coerces each new generation to seek to remove its full social presence from the reality of social existence.

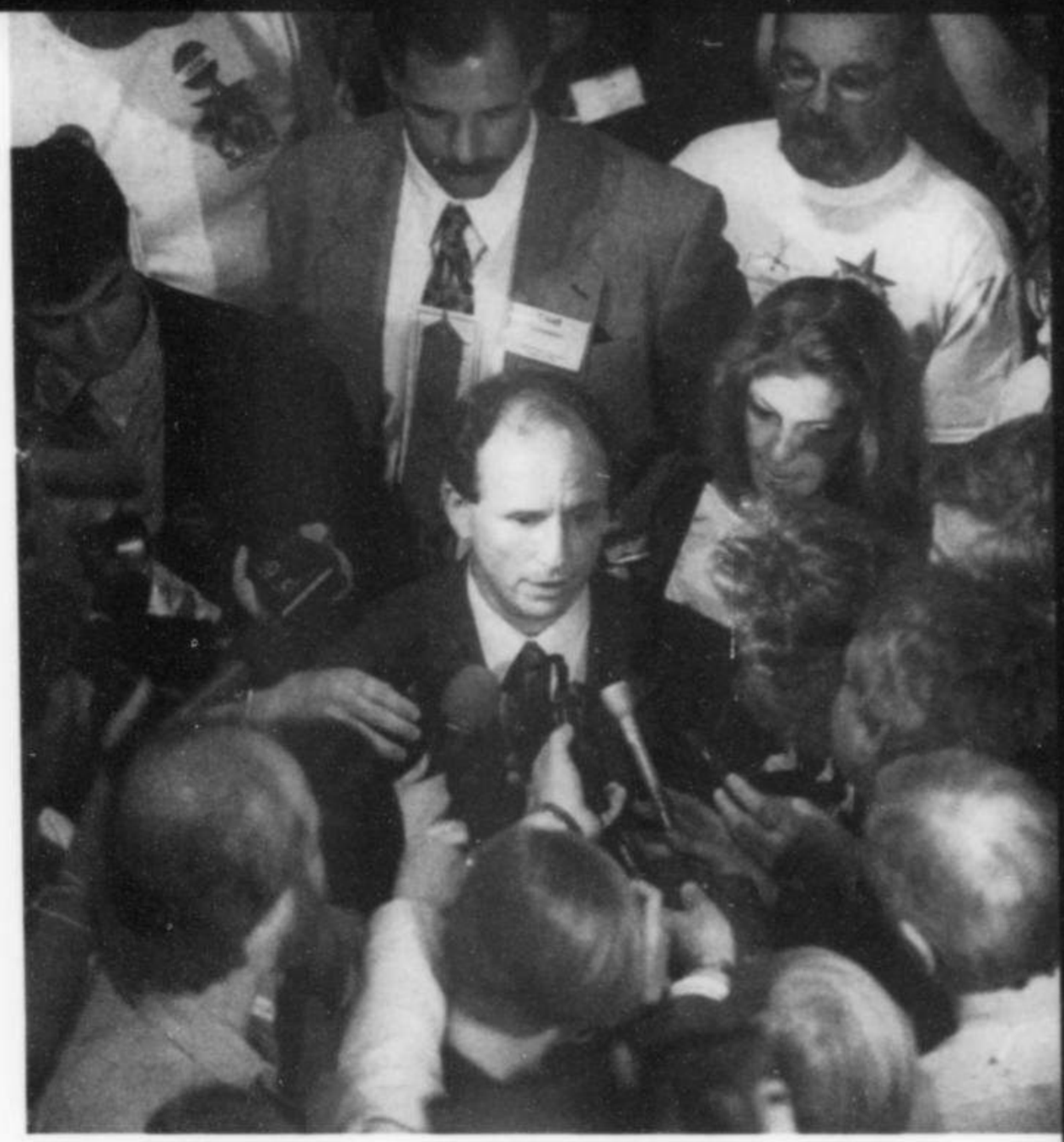
The true social presence within each of us, withdrawn into our heads and concealed from revelation through the body, rendered unconscious by being denied the blessing of recognition that it deserves, forced to deny its own longings by a preceding generation imprisoned in its own alienated conditioning and condemned to reproduce this denial in the next generation, destined to blindly navigate its way from birth to death through the opaque distortions of a visible world that is driven by the contradictory imperative of seeking to empty itself of the very transparency to the other the desire for which impels it forward—that is the "existent" that is lost and frightened and volatilely conflicted behind the armor of our embodied social manifestations. It would not only be perfectly possible but even typical of the alienated consciousness I am describing for the "average German," only loosely anchored to reality, to go-along-at-a-distance with a dimly understood dehumanization that could be producing an actual mass murder. If at that historical moment Nazism was ontologically reassuring and even "exciting" in its restoration of "national pride," and if in any case the Nazis were in charge and seemed to establish the conditions for ordinary Germans' alienated security as withdrawn observers not having to be present, and if these ordinary Germans were accustomed to regarding the public world as an irreal and largely imaginary spectacle, is it so surprising that they would collude unconsciously—in a perfectly normal way—in the dehumanization of the Jews? Wouldn't it have been more remarkable if they had been capable of emerging into the kind of relation to the reality of the actual other that would have allowed them to experience the immensity of the suffering and horror for which their "normal" collusion was to blame?

The Germans are not absolved from moral responsibility by this analysis. On the contrary, the ethical call that the future makes upon the present, that God's universe makes upon its current manifestation, is to strive to become present to the other as a Thou and to make visible the unity and sacredness of all Being. The Germans' continuing failure to heed this call and to take responsibility for the Holocaust is revealed by their incapacity to engage in a true period of national mourning for the Holocaust, a serious collective spiritual encounter with an awareness of their sin as a lived reality of suffering that actually took place. This has nothing to do with public officials "apologizing for the Holocaust," but calls instead for a stark spiritual break with the reproduction of an alienated everyday life that made the Holocaust possible.

But for us to believe that we could not have done what the Germans did is to ignore our own everyday participation in the failure to recognize the other, the failure to truly seek to affirm against the mistake of our cultural conditioning our longing to achieve a lived relation to the other as a Thou. When, during the Gulf War, the media replayed again and again the technical proficiency of "our" cross-haired bombsights and laughed each time with one of "our" generals at the Iraqi bus driver who narrowly missed extermination, we revealed to ourselves Hannah Arendt's banality of evil and participated in it as "average Americans." Whatever the difference between a war and the Holocaust, that bus driver was not "our" enemy. He was an actual other, a vessel of sacred humanity, dehumanized by a spiritual impoverishment for which we are all responsible and which we all must try to heal. ❑

FRESH HOPE

A Dialogue with Paul Wellstone



In our September/October editorial we welcomed Paul Wellstone's candidacy for President, noting that Senator Wellstone will be an articulate representative of the progressive political perspective that is frequently ignored by the media when it frames the range of "responsible" political alternatives in America and that his candidacy will lead to a higher level of political discourse than the mush we expect from traditional Democratic Party candidates. We added that we believe that a focus on progressive politics alone is inadequate, however, because it does not speak to the deeper psychological, ethical, and spiritual issues that are central in shaping the political behavior of most Americans.

After writing that editorial, editors Michael Lerner and Peter Gabel met with Senator Wellstone and discussed his reactions to our critique.

LERNER: Although we at TIKKUN share many of the aspects of a progressive politics, we believe that the way those politics have been defined by most people on the Left tend to be tone deaf to the psychological and spiritual needs of the American public, to equate "spiritual" with "flaky" or "reactionary," and to reduce human needs to material or economic needs.

While most Americans support the progressive notion of "equal opportunity," they simultaneously resent this narrow focus because of the implicit message being given to them that "YOU have made it and already achieved the good life, so you are being selfish if you don't put more energy into sharing what you've already achieved with others." Their reaction: "I don't feel as if I've 'made it' because my life is economically precarious and stressful, and what's more, the material well-being I have achieved hasn't really brought me much fulfillment. I need more material security, but even more important, I need to feel that my life has meaning and some higher purpose. But what these liberals and progressives are talking about is more 'opportunity' to compete with others in the competitive market. Since I've already had that opportunity and don't really think it's so great, I have come to the conclusion that these progressive folks don't really know much about what is wrong with America.

"What's wrong," they continue, "isn't that most of us need more opportunity or better skills in the competitive market—what's wrong is that everyone is competing and acting like everyone else is a competitor, and nobody can trust anyone else because everyone is just 'looking out for no. 1.' It's the selfishness and materialism that surrounds me that makes me feel scared, insecure, and makes me feel like I don't know who I can really trust. One thing for sure, I don't trust those progressives, because they don't seem to have a clue about what's really hurting or worrying me, even though I'm glad that on the economic level they are fighting for some basic benefits that I also really want, like social security, health care, and greater job security and health and safety at work." In short, people are telling us that while they agree with the progressive economic agenda and its commitment to equal opportunity and inclusion, they don't feel deeply addressed by progressives because progressives don't speak to the spiritual crisis in their lives or to what we call a politics of meaning.

I don't think I'm talking only about economics—this is a politics of values.

WELLSTONE: Well, when I speak about the need to provide every child with a decent education including the preschool preparation for kindergarten that some children get and others do not, or the need to provide every citizen with decent quality health care, I don't think I'm talking only about economics—this is a politics of values. Sure, it's about economic opportunity, but it's also a call for our community to be our best selves by identifying with our highest values.

I've spoken to union workers about what I call "the new isolationism" in America, an isolationism not in foreign affairs but in human affairs. It used to be that we would understand of those most down-trodden that "there but for the grace of God go I." But today we are told we must face

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all our problems by ourselves. Basically, the refrain of this society has become: "You are on your own." I talked to a friend last night who has Parkinson's disease—and she told me that the health care system's basic response is "You are on your own." If you have a child who is developmentally disabled, "You are on your own." I want to challenge this.

So I want to put together the hard hitting bread-and-butter politics along with the issues of a politics of value. And I also want to raise a set of issues that aren't even on the table today, starting with monopoly. Take telecommunications. Look at the concentration of power and control in that arena. That's economic, populist, citizen politics to take on the influence of money in politics.

This is not going to just be a "message" campaign. We are going to have a great staff and we will be a formidable political force—it's amazing the turnouts we've been getting and the range of people who say they are going to support this campaign. We are going to have a very serious grassroots effort. But the words have to be memorable. People have to hear words that not only sound right but feel right. I think it's in part the economic message, but it's also in part the message about community, about who we are as a nation, about how to live a life in which you don't have to separate the life you live from the words you speak, be that in your relationship with your family, your community, your country, or your world. I don't want to give an inch on a "family values" agenda, for example, and I agree with Cornel West and Sylvia Hewlett's message that we should as a nation make sure that parents are in a position to do their best by their kids. That has a lot to do with nurturing, protecting, and caring. So I don't see any conflict between economics and ethical issues—I think we have to do both.

People have to hear words that not only sound right but feel right.

LERNER: Both Peter Gabel and I were invited to speak to the Democratic Caucus of the House of Representatives before the 1996 election, and afterwards many of the hundred or more Congresspeople in attendance were very enthusiastic. We also proposed a progressive pro-family agenda. But when that agenda actually came forward in September, it was merely a rehash of various programs for economic entitlements that would provide services for those who could not afford to buy family-related services (like child care or elder care). Of course we believe that such entitlements must be a part of a progressive pro-family program—but not its essence. Everyone with an ounce of sense knows that the crisis in families in America is not restricted to those who don't have enough money. Families across the board are in crisis, because they are trying to build loving relationships in a society that undermines love and privileges selfishness and materialism and "looking out for no. 1." Because the ethos of the competitive marketplace generates this way of thinking, a pro-family perspective must challenge this dominant set of values by proposing an alternative set of values, must call for a society based on love and caring rather than on selfishness and me-firstism.

If you want to address the family crisis, ask what it is in our society that makes it so hard for people to see each other as created in the image of God, as fundamentally valuable for who they are and not just for what they can do for you. During your campaign I urge you to talk about the way our economic marketplace encourages people to treat each other as vehicles for their own needs rather than as beings who generate a sense of awe and wonder, and the way the marketplace thus undermines our ability to make real commitments to others (since increasingly our "commitments" are only market calculations that say "I'm with you as long as you are the best available deal"). Talk about the way that this ethos of selfishness and materialism is what really undermines loving connection and you've got yourself a way of speaking about the family crisis that speaks to the values crisis in this society.

WELLSTONE: Above and beyond the question of how to grow the economy there is a legitimate concern about how to grow the quality of our lives. That's part of what I'm addressing when I challenge the new isolationism and the "You are on your own" mentality (as though we are not supposed to notice the other 7 billion people on the planet). I challenge the current political thinking that sees community solutions as though they are almost a sin (because each person should be left to themselves to deal with everything). So I'm not merely dealing with economic solutions—I will challenge this kind of value.

Part of my focus on volunteerism is an important part of the values I want to encourage, as long as it's not put forward as an alternative to social policy. I myself am very decentralist as opposed to supporting centralized and bureaucratized forms of public policy.

I don't know if I will try to make the connection between the particular economic system we have in this country and the way it pushes people off base in terms of values—I don't think that will be the way I make the argument. However, although I have a different way than you have about how to best articulate the values piece, I disagree with your editorial in its assumption that I will have a straight and narrow economistic and stale campaign framework. I have loved talking about a politics of values—it's not just economics, there has to be something more, both community wide or nationwide, in terms of how people live their lives every day.

GABEL: My mother will be ninety-one and she has Alzheimer's disease. One of the most significant things that has happened to her since the onset of this disease several years ago was the appearance in her life of a young artist

who comes to visit her and volunteers her time to help my mother paint. The worst aspect of Alzheimer's is the disconnection from other human beings, the isolation, and the lack of feeling worthy. This young artist has helped my mother, who can can no longer have a real conversation, to paint some forty-six quite beautiful paintings! Our Politics of Meaning public policy for elders would want to encourage this kind of activity. A policy that only talks about social security, and that focuses primarily on how much the benefits should be or how to best insure its future financial viability, while important, misses the need for elders to be recognized for their wisdom, to be loved and cared about.

In San Francisco, where I live, I have strongly advocated for the city to either require or strongly encourage public service on the part of high school students to establish intergenerational bonds of connectedness in the spirit of love and caring that goes beyond economic security issues. By the way, that is also a way to address the problem of teenage gangs. You can't address that problem just by a jobs program—you have to provide kids with the same sense of meaning that they currently get from gangs. In gangs kids find pride, connection, and a sense of worthiness, and job training programs rarely provide that. Whereas give them a sense of contributing to others and you have given them something that is a real alternative to the meaning that they otherwise might find in a gang. That's a seniors policy that goes beyond economics.

WELLSTONE: But if I were not to talk at all about the outrageous privatization proposals for social security, I wouldn't be taken seriously.

LERNER: We want you to talk about that level, but also to do that within a larger framework of meaning and values.

WELLSTONE: Right, so we agree that it's not one or the other. But your point, Peter, is very correct. What you are doing is appealing to the goodness in people, and that's exactly what we need to do more of in this society. For example, in Minnesota we have several hundreds of thousands of students in service learning in the schools. I fully support this. But I don't want community service to be the alternative to good public policy—because I've seen some students dichotomize in such a way that they essentially are saying "community service, good; politics and action around public policy, unsavory and bad." Michael, you yourself have written about how people make themselves more powerless than they need to be—I don't want to encourage people to make a distinction that leads them to give up on politics or think that they can't take on the issues of power.

GABEL: Community service *is* social activism and taking on power, because it spreads a form of connection between people that tends to weaken the more alienated relationships between people that leads them to feel unable to be involved in challenging concentrated power.

WELLSTONE: I understand. Fair enough.

GABEL: I think the giving component is very important in the conceptualization of what we are trying to encourage, rather than talking about it just as "service learning." The capacity to give of oneself speaks to a spiritual dimension of a person's being, if you can evoke that dimension in how you talk about these things.

To return to the example of the artist working with my mother, what is missing is the imprimatur of the government. The artist now experiences what she is doing as a purely private act, whereas I think the mayor ought to be recognizing these kinds of acts as part of what "we" in the City of San Francisco are doing for each other—that would



connect her work with a sense of public purpose that would deepen and transfer its meaning.

WELLSTONE: I love it.

LERNER: This connects to another theme that progressives rarely understand: the difference between objective caring and subjective caring. Liberal and progressive governmental programs have delivered a set of economic benefits or social programs, what I call "objective caring." But the way these programs are delivered is often insensitive and without any attempt to get the recipients to actually experience themselves as being cared for. Government employees hired to implement objective caring are never rewarded, and are often punished, for taking time to show subjective caring. No wonder, then, that many people experience government operations as bureaucratic and alienating. (Think of your own latest experience in the post office or when trying to get some needed service from a government bureaucrat.) Instead of developing a constituency for government programs, liberal programs have lost support for government because they have never paid attention to creating in people a sense that government was actually a vehicle through which other people in your community were trying to show that they cared about you. Imagine how different it would be if government bureaucrats knew that they were going to be publicly honored by their friends and community to the extent that they had excelled in showing caring behavior to the public as they delivered social services.

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FRESH HOPE



WELLSTONE: I may not have the same labeling of these ideas as you. But I once wrote about my own experience as a community organizer and I came to the same conclusion as you: economic rationality wasn't really what motivated people. When people came together in these community organizations they came to view themselves in such a different light because they were helping other people and could see themselves as really being a good person—this gave them more satisfaction about how they were living their lives. I think this holds true in government as well.

As I listened to you, Michael, I thought of the program we started in Minnesota, the block nurse program. I've often wondered why we aren't doing more to allow people with health problems as they age to continue to live at home or in greater dignity. So government pays for a block nurse to visit people at home, but also to train the neighbors in ways to help the person stay at home, backed up by periodic visits of the block nurse, backed up when necessary by medical specialists.

Finally, although I think policy is very important, I want you to know that my experience in politics is that people rarely know all your policy positions, but they support you based on whether they like you or not. I have had people in Minnesota who were committed Republicans tell me that they watched how I and my wife Sheila took care of our parents when they were ailing, and that because they decided we were good people they decided they'd vote for me. That's how people actually make decisions. And the more you can make your own life the basis of your self-presentation, without in some sickening way promoting it, how you've lived your life and what your values have been and how you've lived by them and connect that to larger issues, the better you will do politically.

LERNER: Yet your opponents are certain to try to shift the discourse to presenting you as a big government liberal spender. Unless you can communicate to people that you really know that they have a legitimate beef against the way big government liberal programs have operated, you will be quickly dismissed as not a serious candidate but only a recycling of the failed liberalism of the past. I think what you need to do to deal with this mischaracterization of who you are is to acknowledge that people really have been disrespected and not treated right by government, without drawing the conclusion that that is an inevitable consequence of government.

WELLSTONE: You're right, but it drives me crazy to see a person like Gingrich take up the language of empowerment. Of course, we also have to make a case against the right-wing's incorrect arguments against government. I'm certainly aware that there is going to be a massive effort to marginalize my campaign by saying "old big government spending liberal." It's not true, and there are a lot of ways to take it on, but what you've said is certainly part of that. Ideas still matter, so if you come up with language and ideas that genuinely move people it makes a huge difference, even in this age.

LERNER: Would you support a Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which would require corporations to reincorporate once every twenty years, and that stipulates that corporations would only get a new corporate charter if they could prove a history of social responsibility as measured by an Ethical Impact Report?

WELLSTONE: I'm very cautious about constitutional amendments for many reasons, one of them being that it takes a very long time to make something like that actually happen.

LERNER: How about the Social Responsibility Initiative I've proposed which could be introduced into Congress, and into state legislatures, and local city councils, which would require corporations which are filing bids for public funds (for example, to fulfill a contract for something the government needs) to file an Ethical Impact Report. The initiative would instruct the awarding body that it must award the contract to that corporation which, while otherwise able to fulfill the terms of the contract and which is among the low bidders for the contract, has the best history of social responsibility.

WELLSTONE: I like this proposal and its call for greater accountability for larger corporations. I think what you are doing is really expanding the definition of an environmental impact statement, and I think this is on the mark. It makes corporations think more deeply about the consequences of their decisions and engages the public in recognizing the way some of these companies make decisions that have revolutionary consequences for our lives without ever feeling any need to consult us.

It's not a proposal for government to take over corporations, but it calls for serious accountability. I really like it. It's similar to what I tried to do when I added an amendment to a bill by one Senator who had called for a requirement that we focus on the impact of each piece of legislation we passed on "parental authority." I introduced a second degree amendment which would broaden this to analyze the impact of legislation on children. So I like this kind of concept of extending accountability not only in the public sector but in the private sector—and involving citizens in the process.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM COLE / AP PHOTO

The mood of people in this country goes in two opposite directions at this point. People are increasingly disengaged, cynical, and disillusioned. But that's not because people don't care about the decisions that crucially affect their lives. I think having the Social Responsibility Initiative or other initiatives that get more people involved in taking control of their lives is really very good.

We need a new kind of citizenship, so that we can see citizens as themselves earning the rank of patriot because of their involvement in their community affairs. We as a society need to be encouraging people to focus not just on individual wants but on serving the larger community, on people who are working together to create a better city or even to better the nation as a whole. So I want to call for a new century of citizenship. This is not being naive or romantic—we are talking about democracy, the most important thing we have in this country.

LERNER: One thing we've heard from people inside corporations is that they often find themselves conflicted between their own ethical vision and the need to maximize the bottom line of the corporation. What the Social Responsibility Initiative would do is to give these people a new source of support, because they could then argue to their corporate stockholders that paying more attention to the ethical impact of their corporation was going to make them more competitive for future governmental contracts.

We must not separate the lives we live from the words we speak.

WELLSTONE: That's right. It's important for us to not caricature people in the business community. I've met many people in the business community who really believe that they are trying to serve both their business interests and the interests of the larger community. But at the moment, they tell me, they are often put at a competitive disadvantage for trying to do this. So if you build more of this kind of reward for ethical behavior and public accountability, you create a more level playing field for people who really want to be involved in giving a larger role for their ethical decision making. Your idea would give many business people a greater incentive to pay attention to the ethical consequences of their decisions.

LERNER: What's your suggestions for how to deal with the globalization of capital and its increasing ability to dictate terms to local communities who wish capital to remain there? What strategies would you have?

WELLSTONE: I have been in profound disagreement with the president, the vice president and this entire Administration on these issues. First of all, I disagree with the way they frame the question. I don't think this is a debate about whether we as a country are willing to participate in an international economy. Of course we are! No one is talking about building walls on our borders. But the question is whether, in this new international economy, there will be any rules. I think there is a very strong link between human rights in other countries and a fair international economy for Americans. There ought to be strong restrictions on child labor laws in other countries, fair labor practices, environmental regulations, and human rights guarantees, so that corporations can't take advantage of the denial of these basic human needs in other countries to find a cheaper way to make their products, thereby disadvantaging American workers. We need these human rights built into our trade agreements with other countries. So we need to re-negotiate the terms of existing agreements.

Secondly, people have every right to be skeptical about what the new global economy is bringing for them and their families (including their realization that it's hard to compete against twelve-year-olds making twelve cents an hour in some foreign sweat shop). When I look at some of the economic prescriptions given by our international monetary organizations which are closely aligned with some of our big corporate interests (no conspiracy suggested), the advice seems to be "devalue your currency and cut your benefits to your citizens, reduce wages, and general austerity." Supposedly this is going to help them. Well, they export products at a price at which we can't compete, but meanwhile they are unable to develop a middle class at the wages being paid so they can't consume what we in the United States produce. That means there's little market for our goods. This kind of international economy does not lead to a general upward development, but downward development in all countries, including the United States.

Finally, we need to focus more on home-grown economies and more self-reliant communities where more of the capital is kept inside small communities. We need to support small businesses, local co-ops, and this kind of thing.

LERNER: What could we expect from a Wellstone presidency in the way of standing up for peace should Netanyahu continue, in the post-13 percent withdrawal phase, to do all he can to ensure that "final settlement talks" never result in significant Palestinian self-determination?

WELLSTONE: I have consistently supported the peace position, and have resisted those who tried to mobilize the Congress to support the Israeli right and to undercut the peace process. There is no future in Israeli and Palestinian children killing each other for years to come. In my advocacy for human rights I have not hesitated about being openly critical of Israeli human rights abuses. I am a strong advocate for peace.

LERNER: Bill Clinton is also a strong advocate of peace but is not willing to use the power of the presidency to push Israel because of the political consequences he might face from right-wing elements in the American Jewish community. How would you be different?

FRESH HOPE

WELLSTONE: I've been very outspoken on these issues and will continue to do that as president.

If this peace process breaks down, we will have to find other ways to move the parties forward. I'm not sure what particular proposal I would make, but I will not forget the Palestinian people and their human rights, because I support human rights in all countries around the world. There has to be a way to reach the goal of reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis, because I believe in human dignity.



LERNER: Is there anything else that you think our readers ought to know about your candidacy?

WELLSTONE: I think we ought to remember what Emerson wrote: "The true test of civilization is not the census nor the size of the city or the crops, but the kind of man [and I'd add woman] the country turns out." The kind of national goal we ought to be thinking about is way beyond national product—it is how do we as a nation help our children to be the best kinds of people they could possibly be? And that's very close to what you, Michael and Peter, have been writing about in TIKKUN and *The Politics of Meaning*.

That's why I think your editorial in September was wrong about me, because I am not just interested in technocratic policies, but really am concerned about values and community and the new way to understand patriotism that you've been talking about, and I do want to make that a huge part of what I will be talking about in this coming presidential campaign. I learned this when I was a community organizer—that although people very much care about specific issues and do want to win specific economic self-interest issues, people also care about a different sense of self-interest, one which is more connected to what will make people feel proud of themselves and their lives.

LERNER: In this issue of TIKKUN, Paul, we are challenging some of the dominant assumptions in the self-righteous way that President Clinton is being assaulted. While we have long been critical that he abandoned the policies that led so many of us to be hopeful when he first came into the White House, we cannot ignore the hypocrisy of those who act so outraged at his obnoxious sexual behavior. We have long insisted on an attitude of compassion toward our leaders, recognizing that they will inevitably be as flawed as everyone else in our society and hence will necessarily be "wounded healers." A society that demands that its leaders be on a higher moral plane than everyone else is a society that will require that its leaders be liars. The fact is, Clinton's irresponsibility is a particularly awful living out of the principle of selfishness, me-firstism and a willingness to treat others as objects to advance one's own interests that is the dominant ethos in American society and as such is something in which most of us participate. If anything, this suggests to me the need for a collective atonement rather than projecting all our anger onto Clinton. We are right to condemn his behavior, but we ought to do it with a lot more humility and compassion.

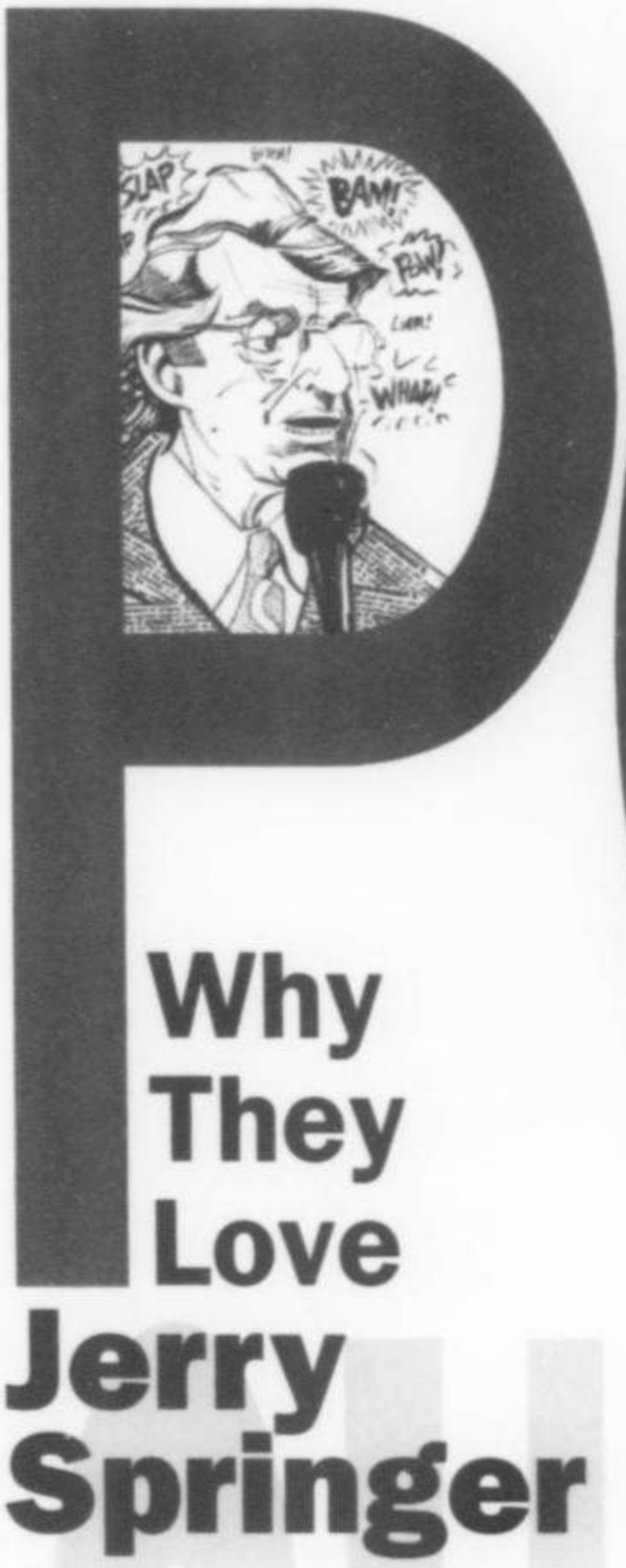
WELLSTONE: Well, I've read your editorial in this issue and it makes a lot of sense to me. But I also have some differences with it.

While I agree with you about the importance of forgiveness and compassion, I think that in emphasizing that point we should not allow ourselves to forget another important point: that we must not allow ourselves or our leaders to separate the lives we live from the words we speak. That is really part of the path of the patriot. While we may not agree with each other about the principles that we espouse on different issues, I still feel that it is very important that people try to act on their principles. All the points about social context should not obscure our own commitment to this fundamental—that we want to hold on to this principle and push towards its fulfillment even when we can be compassionate about the ways that we may not have fully gotten there yet. Let's say loudly and clearly that where we want to go is to have people live lives in which they embody what they say they believe in.

But I do agree with something else that you say in your editorial in this issue. You are challenging how we've lowered our ethical expectations in our society in ways that lead people to say "Hey, you've got to do what you've got to do to survive and make it." They are assuming that politics and values cannot coexist. And this is not only true of the public sector—in the private sector as well there is too much willingness to assume that leaders will necessarily abandon their values for the sake of their own success. And that's a shame, because the expectations are too low for public life and for our economic life as well.

This kind of dichotomy between what we hold to be appropriate for our personal lives and what we hold to be appropriate for politics and the world of business is not a good thing for our nation. I think it's time for us to take up the values debate and make clear that all the focus on nurturing, caring, and serving that we are so proud to see embodied in family life needs to be taken beyond the family and into our public life. Those family values, the loving and caring behavior we say is good for families, are also good for our nation, for public life, and for our economy. So in that sense, your idea of "a new bottom line" really does speak loud and clear at this moment. If there is any good that might come from this current nightmare happening in our country, it would be by moving in this kind of direction and raising our expectations. ❑

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POP

Why They Love Jerry Springer

Joshua Gamson

The Jerry Springer moment is over, one hopes—he came into prominence already smelling like a has-been—but I still sit around getting excited by his huge-selling *Too Hot for TV* video, and hoping that the creepy, funny lessons of Springer's popularity don't get lost.

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Analyzing Dr. Laura

Helene Goldberg

Dr. Laura has the largest and most lucrative psychotherapy practice in the world. Every day 18 million people tune in to one of the 450 radio stations that carry her syndicated program. Some 50,000 of them call in for help. Most must make do with reading

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AN INTERVIEW WITH Michael Moore

Jack Newfield

Michael Moore is a filmmaker and satirist of corporate greed. His best known films are *Roger and Me*, about General Motors and *The Big One*, about Nike's exploitation of child labor and human rights abuses.

Moore was also briefly editor of *Mother Jones*

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POP CULTURE

Jerry Springer

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I know I'm supposed to be scandalized by trash TV, by the pathetic state of American public discourse and all that.

So how is it that I find myself, a reasonably polite, over-educated college professor, time and again screeching in delight at the end of the video, which features strippers pouring chocolate sauce and pudding on themselves sandwiched between clips of very angry people slugging each other, cursing each other out, and grabbing each other's hair with such strength that clumps fall onto the stage?



I like a good head slap as much as the next stuffed-shirt, but it's actually Springer's "final thought" that has me squealing. It turns out, not surprisingly, to be a hilarious, hodge-podge defense of the mayhem that preceded it, and of the violent spectacle he hosts on his maniacally popular "talk show" every day (recently toned down after a predictable it's-the-end-of-civilization-as-we-know-it outcry). "The politicians and companies that seek to control what each of us may watch," he argues at one point, "are a far greater danger to America and our treasured freedoms than any of our guests ever can or will be."

Whatever. That claim is, of course, completely ridiculous. Everyone involved—me, you, Jerry's guests, his viewers, and Springer most of all—knows that *Jerry Springer* is as much about democracy as *Wheel of Fortune* is about spelling. Plainly, the show is about ratings, just as everything on commercial television, from the legitimate news programs that ritualistically distance themselves from the tabloids to Springer's polite daytime competitors like *Oprah*, is about ratings. And it's just a bit trivializing of the First Amendment to self-righteously wrap it around formulaic, pro-wrestling fare in which people smack each other upside the head for sleeping with each other's girlfriends, kids, husbands, mothers, and boyfriends who are "really" girlfriends. For this they fought the revolution?

Still, there is something unintentionally revealing about Springer's defense. In a convoluted, disturbing, backwards way, tabloid talk shows and other outrageous forms of popular culture really are about "freedom." Buried in the superficial fighting-for-show and pseudo-therapeutic pap is a serious, class-tinged battle over who gets to do what in public, who gets to speak and how. It's Springer's brilliance, and Howard Stern's, and the fart-loving *South Park* creators', to have profited from this fight by building on an impulse that thrills even me: the desire to give the finger to the self-appointed gatekeepers of public space and the chaperons of middle-class public propriety. And they do it right there on the turf of the moral guardians, on TV, taking a big dump right in their living rooms. Springer's guests break all the "rules" of middle-class culture: pumped up by the producers and the audience, they come out swinging rather than seeing a couples' counselor, shout and swear rather than talk, expel emotions rather than express thoughts, wave their dirty laundry around in public rather than washing it in private. While on sanitized, "proper" talk shows like *Oprah* and *Rosie O'Donnell* people are kissing each other's butts, on Springer's, refreshingly, they are kicking them.

There's an understandable pleasure in that. There is a distinct thrill in watching those rules get broken, not just for a pseudo-rebellious middle-class guy like me, but especially perhaps for classes of people who are rarely seen on television, who, when they are seen, are often then told that they are "trash" to be cleared off the screen, or who simply don't identify with the stiff rules of middle-class culture. These periodic explosions of "impolite" programming are about more than just the cold propping-up that comes with class voyeurism—I feel better about my life because I'm not like the "trash" on the screen—and more than just the bloodthirst of thoughtless mobs, although those are certainly part of the picture. However silly the show itself, however empty and ugly the rebellion, what has powered *Springer* is a reaction against the moves by some people to make rules that keep other people in their place, invisible and unheard-from. Outrageousness is just the medium of that reaction.

The sad part of such a situation is that the shutting-up and making-invisible of big chunks of the population—the very situation that has made the *Springer* spirit such a hit—is actually a serious problem. The public space of television is not in fact a very open one. Shows like *Springer*, while pretending to champion the disenfranchised (people who, as

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ILLUSTRATION BY STAN SHAW

Joshua Gamson is associate professor of sociology at Yale University and the author of Freaks Talk Back: Tabloid Talk Shows and Sexual Nonconformity *(University of Chicago, 1998).*

POP CULTURE

Analyzing Dr. Laura



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one of her three bestselling books. She has her own website at www.drlaura.com where the loyal can buy all the calendars, mugs, sweatshirts, and tapes they might need or desire. If she is not more popular than God, she is at least as certain of her moral rectitude, and much better at self-promotion.

Her listeners tune in avidly to hear her harangue troubled callers for being wimps and whiners. And Laura hates whiners (unless she's doing the whining). To tell the truth, she doesn't have much patience for most of her callers. She is unable to listen for more than a few seconds without making someone sound foolish, weak, or evil. While other pop therapists urge attention toward the "inner child," Laura is more in tune with her own "inner harpy." She can do without empathy too. She is a scold and her listeners seem to love it. In a field that often valorizes ambiguity and complexity, Laura speaks with the certainty of a seer or a demagogue. She is the anti-shrink. She has no patience for the current psychobabble of victims and survivors. What is the point of understanding a problem? Just GET OVER IT.

Some of her simplicity seems refreshing, especially when applied to others. It is reassuring that no matter how intractable our own problems might seem, other people's problems are just plain dumb. Dr. Laura's approach: If you are a drug addict, stop. Don't get pregnant if you are not married. Don't even think of having an abortion. If you are poor, get a job. If you are a mother, however, quit your job and stay home with your kids. If you are a single mother: a) see above—don't be, or b) get a job that allows you to support you and your family and and still allows you to stay home with your kids (being a radio shrink fills the bill), or c) give the children up for adoption to a good religious heterosexual family. It's OK to be homosexual, but don't try to raise kids (heterosexuals make better parents). Don't let your kids have sex or take drugs. If they do, cut them off. If you had an abusive childhood, get over it. How much simpler than spending months or years exploring and understanding these issues in order to solve them. Laura does it all in few minutes: just long enough to assign blame.

Though the predicaments her listeners bring run the gamut of human problems, Laura's advice rings but a single note: She offers a simplistic morality, Dr. Laura proclaims that the right ethical choice is easy. Again and again she condemns her listeners for putting their immediate expediency before their values; for blinding themselves to their own weaknesses; for whining about having chosen the wrong partner. She takes a tough stance toward others, but how about towards *Doctor* Laura herself? By calling herself *Doctor* Laura, Schlessinger allows her listeners to believe that she speaks with the authority of a psychologist or psychiatrist. Her only doctorate, however, is in physiology. Though this may not constitute a punishible infraction of the profession's legal code, it is, at the very least, ethically questionable.

If she were just one more neurotic, self-aggrandizing therapist, Laura would merely be a sitcom character. But there is a dangerous price paid for her astounding success. Laura draws her listeners by toying with their hunger to believe that for all their personal pain and confusion and the suffering they see around them, their world is comprehensible, just, and moral. Laura's self-righteous indignation plays on a universal hope for a moral universe, a hope that becomes more desperate as society turns its back on its own moral obligation to help those in need. The truth is that the less humane our society gets, the more need we feel to justify its authority. Just as children of abusive parents find it less threatening to blame themselves than their parents, people who suffer the most are first to blame themselves for their pain. The victim—and victims almost universally believe they must deserve their suffering—complies with the injustice.

People call Laura because they are in pain and need help, but they also believe that they don't deserve to be helped. Thus when Laura twists the knife a little deeper into a suffering caller, blaming the victim, she absolves the rest of us for a moment from our own guilt. She also confirms our belief that we don't really deserve help. She constantly reminds us that "God helps those who help themselves." But what about the helpless? The price of her absolution is that we too turn our backs on those in need, and, at the same time, deny our own inner cries for help. Every problem is an occasion for swift response—something to be eliminated, not understood. Her anti-psychological rapier slashes through our Gordian tangle of guilt but leaves us scarred in the process.

Laura's enormous popularity bolsters a widespread and disturbing movement in our country to trivialize psychological problems. Her powerful appeal mirrors two prevailing and dangerous deceptions. First is the mistaken belief that emotional problems are, on the whole, malingering or a result of moral laxity. Many of her callers may share Laura's scorn for complex psychological explanations, but they still suffer from failed relationships and yearn for love and community. They feel bad and they turn to Laura for help they are not sure they deserve. Laura's smug piety affirms the

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possibility of a better life if they'll only accept full personal blame for their problems. Their guilt over their own suffering leaves them exquisitely susceptible to Laura's attacks.

The second deception Laura's success feeds on is that long term psychotherapy is ineffective. It has become an oft-repeated and acceptable deceit that psychotherapy is mere quackery; this position is upheld not only by the uneducated, but is gaining acceptance in cynical academic circles as reflected in the writings of Frederick Crews and Jeffrey Masson. Laura encourages her listeners to believe that her invectives and platitudes are the best help they can hope for, and that the expense of real psychotherapy is a self-indulgence—a waste of time and money.

Now it is true that not all therapists are equally good, but the truth is that there is an enormous body of reputable research that confirms that psychotherapy and psychiatry are remarkably effective treatments for the entire gamut of emotional problems. In an extensive survey organized by *Consumer Reports*, over 90 percent of those who used the services of a psychotherapist for problems ranging from everyday unhappiness to severe mental illness said that they were helped. Contradicting Laura's contempt for long-term psychotherapy, the survey confirmed that those who stayed in therapy the longest were helped the most. Further studies show that, on the whole, psychotherapy is often more effective than many other common medical interventions. Even the most serious mental illnesses respond to a combination of therapy and psychopharmacology: for many it may come as a surprise that these treatments are about 80 percent effective in treating manic depression, depressive disorders, and panic attacks; even the success rate for treating schizophrenia is 60 percent. Depressive disorders respond equally well, in the long run, to psychotherapy with or without medication. Compare that to the improvement rates of heart treatments such as angioplasty and atherectomy at 41 and 52 percent respectively. How sad then that many people's only experience with psychotherapy is the radio ravings of Dr. Laura, and that they have to settle for her platitudes rather than get real assistance.

Not too surprisingly, undermining our faith in psychotherapy is even more popular with the health insurance industry than with disaffected intellectuals. The for-profit managed care business that is currently cannibalizing our communities must be overjoyed by Laura's popularity. Populist cynicism toward psychotherapy allows health insurance companies to redline psychological problems and provides them with a shortsighted windfall. Health insurance companies are delighted by anyone who can convince us that psychological problems are self-indulgent malingering. After all, psychotherapy can take a long time, and health insurance companies like to treat even major surgery on an outpatient office-visit budget. Laura's instant "treatment" bolsters their strategy to trivialize mental illness and deny coverage for long-term treatment. Insurance companies thrive on our belief that there is no real help for our pain. But we foot the bill since the quality of life for all of us has been savaged. For most, denial of psychotherapy results merely in unnecessary unhappiness and frustration, but, ultimately, for society as a whole, the costs are far greater: Families are shattered by untreated mental illness. Our schools have become combat zones. Our streets teem with those too disabled even to beg. Our jails and courts are choked.

These are some of the costs of conflating psychology and morality. Once psychological problems are depicted as moral failings, the issue becomes punishment, not treatment. As we close our hearts and minds to the possibilities of rehabilitation and redemption, people with untreated psychological problems fall within the province of the criminal justice system. In fact, mental hospitals have been replaced by prisons; and right now L.A. County Jail is the largest mental health facility in California.

Dr. Laura is second in popularity only to Rush Limbaugh on the airwaves, and though she protests that she is apolitical, many listen to both for the same reasons. Like Limbaugh, her vitriol undermines our empathy for others and ourselves, and thus contributes to a general climate of political repression. Laura, however, is more than just a ranting radio pundit. By representing herself as both a doctor and moral arbiter, she misleads her listeners and violates the ethics of the profession she represents. As a healer, Ms. Schlessinger would do well to remember Hippocrates' cardinal tenet, "First, do no harm." Certainly, blurring the distinction between psychological problems and moral transgression hurts the victims it vilifies and violates the more complex and humane values that form the basis of any real psychotherapy. While Laura has succeeded in passing herself off as a doctor to treat a growing societal malaise, she is, in fact, a symptom of the illness itself. ❑

JERRY SPRINGER *(continued from page 26)*

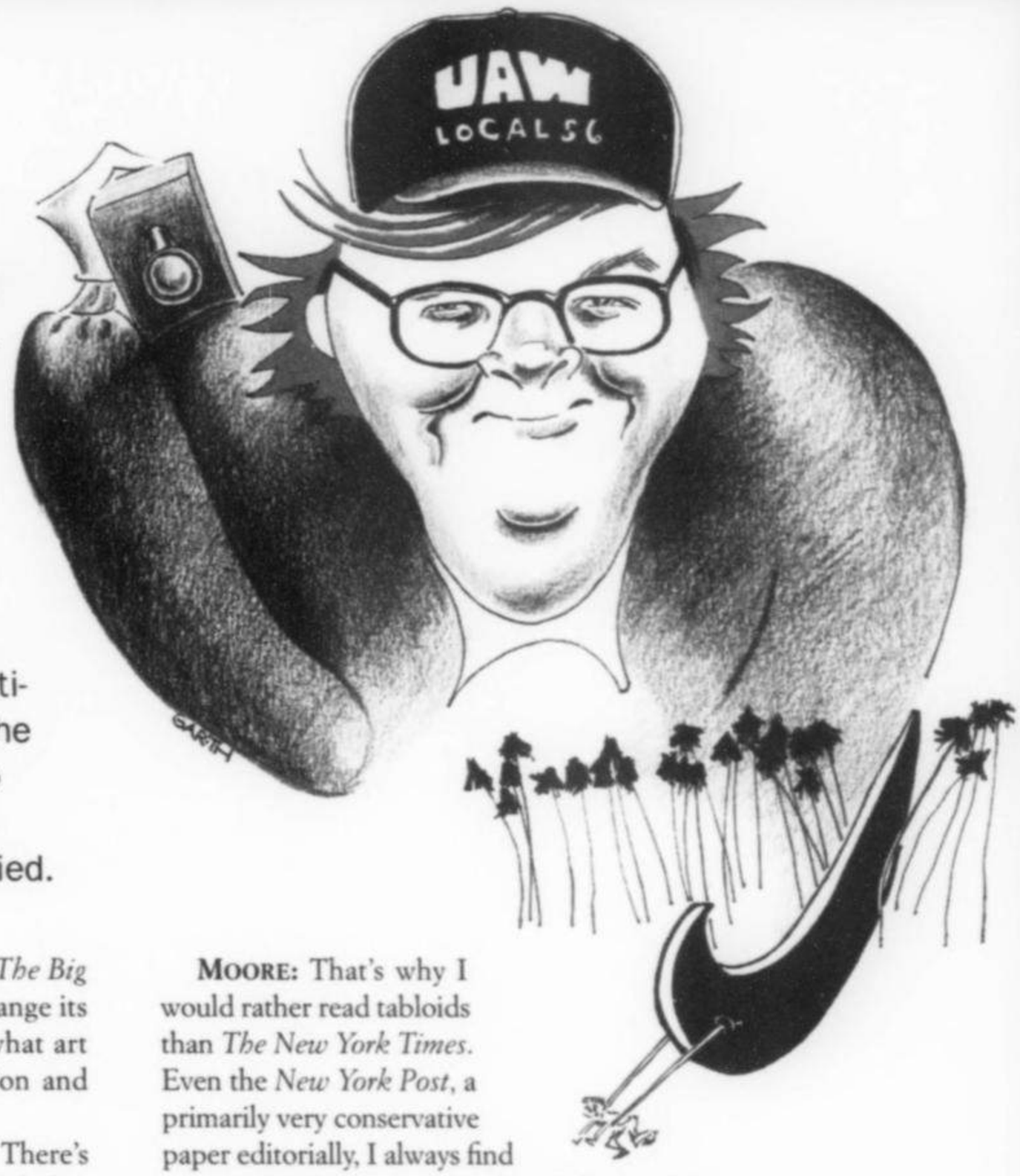
Springer likes to put it, "don't speak the King's English"), offer a pitifully narrow, cruddy little spot in which speaking isn't even really an option, and in which breaking the rules of public space, rather than challenging them, counts as both "democracy" and entertainment. After all, the display of outrageous, hostile, out-of-control emotion is the price of admission; the freedom to embody class stereotypes, or gender stereotypes, or sexual ones, is not a huge gift. That so many people, both as guests and as watchers, so enthusiastically embrace such a shallow, cramping opportunity—even when, as they often are, the shows are cartoon-like comedies—ought to tell us something. This frighteningly narrow range of public images being offered for people of lower and stigmatized statuses to portray, this screechy kind of voice in which marginalized people must literally scream in order to get public space, is the best deal on the table. That, not all the amusing stories on the screen, is what's scary. That is the scandal of Springer. ❑

POP CULTURE

AN INTERVIEW WITH

Michael Moore

(continued from page 25)



magazine and was a founder of an underground newspaper in Flint, Michigan, where he grew up.

Moore is a champion of the working class, as well as a crusader against anti-Semitism. Before he became famous, he went to Bitburg, at his own expense, to protest President Reagan's visit to the cemetery where Nazi SS men were buried.

NEWFIELD: You are an artist who made a film, *The Big One*, that forced a global corporation, Nike, to change its child labor policies in the Third World. Is that what art should be about, doing good through information and enlightenment?

MOORE: I don't think all art has to be that way. There's very little art that attempts to do that, so I guess I wish that there was more. But, I think the primary job of the filmmaker is to entertain the audience. If you're asking people to leave their house, and get a baby-sitter, and spend a lot of money to come see your movie, they should have a decent time for those two hours. I don't want them to get there and have to listen to some polemic that they can get by reading a book or going to a political rally.

NEWFIELD: Many other artists understand that essential lesson; people like Bruce Springsteen and John Sayles know you have to have some entertainment value as part of the package, don't they?

MOORE: Right and I think that's why someone like Springsteen has reached a very wide audience without diluting the political message. He understands, first and foremost, that people are going to a concert or buying a record because they want to listen to good music. I think that if you make the art or the music or the film engaging, entertaining, the message comes through much stronger than if the message is primary and entertainment is secondary.

NEWFIELD: That's sort of the formula of what I do, tabloid journalism. There is an entertainment element to it—drama, emotions, humor.

MOORE: That's why I would rather read tabloids than *The New York Times*. Even the *New York Post*, a primarily very conservative paper editorially, I always find an entertaining paper to read, and always pick it up.

NEWFIELD: Who are your models for the popular satiric art you make? Who do you look to as a mentor, teacher, or role model?

MOORE: Well, Springsteen is a pretty strong influence. I've always been a huge fan of his, and really admired what he's done. As far as filmmakers, there are just filmmakers that I like, like Stanley Kubrick. With *Roger and Me*, I made a conscious decision that I wanted to make a documentary that people who don't go to documentaries would watch, and I don't know if that had been done before. There are certainly great documentary films that I really enjoy by Errol Morris and Peter Davies, for example. But I didn't really look toward anyone other than myself for what I wanted to do. You know this as a writer; you have your audience in your head and so you're writing to that audience. To me, that audience are those people I grew up with in Flint, Michigan. We don't have art houses in Flint; we go to movies and eat popcorn. So I wanted to make a movie where you could enjoy the popcorn, and maybe walk out thinking about something.

NEWFIELD: There is a tradition of working class culture and art in America. I mean, Woodie Guthrie, maybe Frank Capra, and—

MOORE: Right, absolutely. These are people that I became familiar with in the last fifteen years.

NEWFIELD: After your sensibility was formed.

ILLUSTRATION BY GARY THARLER

Jack Newfield is the author of six books and a columnist for the New York Post. *He has completed a three-hour documentary film on Robert Kennedy that aired on the Discovery Network.*

MOORE: Right. We were not taught, or exposed to, working class art in Flint. We were not even told about our own sit-down strike in the Thirties. I had an uncle in that strike. He never talked about it. It was the oddest thing.

NEWFIELD: He was like a Vietnam vet who didn't talk about Vietnam?

MOORE: Yeah. I didn't realize as a child growing up in Flint the extent of subtle oppression that takes place—to the point that you don't acknowledge, or almost want to deny, that which brought you to where you're at. Because it's painful. Because you don't recognize your own worth in a place like that. So there's nothing about the sit-down strike in the Flint schoolbooks, or Woodie Guthrie or any other people like that. I know this sounds strange because you probably think I was steeped in all of this coming from where I come from, but honestly....

Here, I'll give you an example. Back in Flint during the strike [last summer], I was over meeting with the union officials and the local union leaders. One local union guy says to me, "Yeah, Bruce Springsteen called us the first week of the strike. He said he wanted to help, but we didn't call him back because we figured, well, who are we really? He doesn't really want to do anything for us. Why would he do something for us? We're just in Flint." Even in the middle of the struggle with GM, even the elected union leader didn't feel that he—or they—were worth the phone call from Bruce Springsteen. They didn't even believe it when it happened, when Bruce had actually called them. And I just thought, boy, we should put that slogan right on the city limits sign to Flint: "Who are we really?"

NEWFIELD: Both of us have working class origins, and I think it's led us both to have this somewhat heretical position of arguing for years that affirmative action should be based on class as well as gender and race. Can you expand on some of your experiences at *Mother Jones* and elsewhere, in trying to advocate that somewhat politically incorrect position?

MOORE: See, I didn't realize it was a politically incorrect position. I thought that this was a really good and radical thing to do. I remember the first day I was at *Mother Jones* as editor. We had a staff meeting, and I was explaining who I am and what I wanted to do with the magazine. And I said, "We're going to have a very strong affirmative action policy here regarding gender and race, but especially regarding class. We're going to bring people into this magazine who come from the working class, who do not have a college education, and through these people we will reach a wider audience than the converted." People were shocked and stunned and immediately expressed their anger to me: How dare I put class into affirmative action? I said that I actually thought that making class a priority addresses the root of the issues of feminism and race that we're all concerned about. That ultimately we have to see this as a society that's set up between the haves and the have-nots. Where the few that are the rich set up situations in which the races are at each other's throats. Where women are kept in a place where their labor can be used for less money. All of this comes back to the issue of class. And if we address class, then we'll take care of a lot of the other problems. I lasted there about four months.

NEWFIELD: Was this a factor in your early exit?

MOORE: Yes, because I actually followed through on what I said I was going to do. I immediately brought in an autoworker from the assembly line in Flint as a columnist, name's Ben Hamper, and I put him on the cover of my first issue. He started writing about working on the line and other concerns of an autoworker. Very funny column, very poignant. I remember the owner of the magazine coming in one day, holding a copy of this guy's column in his hand, and saying to me, "I can't believe you're publishing this crude, rude column." I said that our mission was to reach out to a broader audience, to the working class. Well, not at the expense of fiction in the next issue.

NEWFIELD: Why is this notion so threatening to the liberals and radicals of good education and good breeding?

MOORE: Because they come from the upper class or the upper-middle class, whatever they want to call themselves. They come from money, and they've never really had to worry a whole lot, and they've always had an affirmative action program for themselves. Dad went to Yale, so sonny gets into Yale, and his son will get into Yale. That's called affirmative action for the upper class. They hire each other and keep the whole thing going. I noticed after *Roger and Me* that the few people who attacked me, or who were critical of the film, were not right-wingers or conservatives, they were well-to-do liberals who were servicing other well-to-do liberals.

NEWFIELD: Like who?

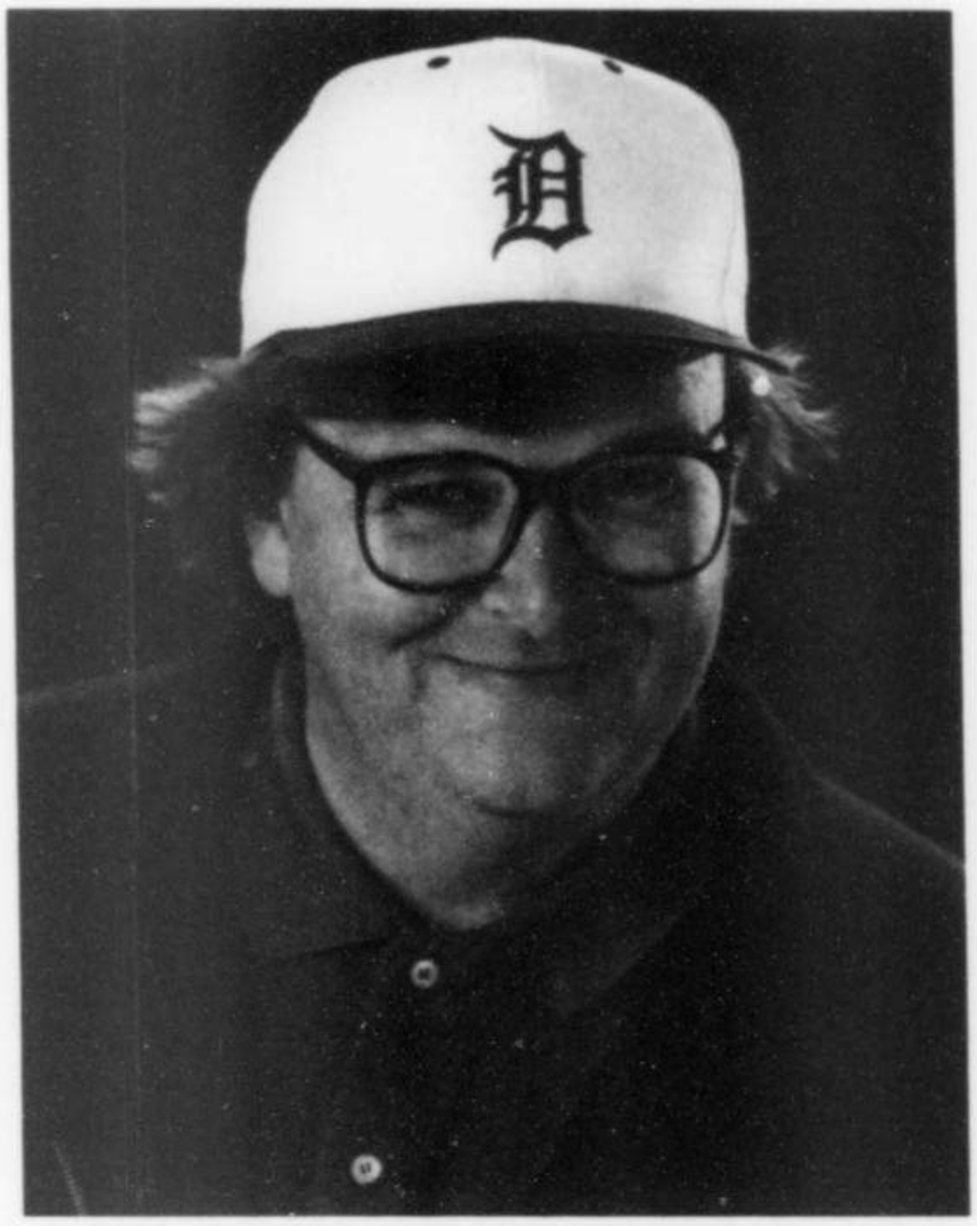
MOORE: Pauline Kael, and the film comment magazine that's published out of Lincoln Center. Those were the two main attacks on the film.

NEWFIELD: Do you think this was a factor in the film not getting an Academy Award—even though it won the Film Critics' Awards in New York and LA?

MOORE: If you make a really good documentary, and if the public enjoys it, you are guaranteed not to be nominated. The committee wants to punish those films that reach a wide audience. Therefore Errol Morris' films have never been nominated. *Shoah* was not nominated. *Hoop Dreams* was not nominated. *Atomic Cafe*. You can go down a whole list.

NEWFIELD: Let me shift gears a little bit and ask how you got Phil Knight to go on camera after you did *Roger and Me*? What is your trick to getting these powerful CEOs to think they can trick you and your camera?

MOORE: I think, again, that this is a class issue. In *Roger and Me*, the people who talked to me and who regretted talking to me afterwards were people who looked at me and my



crew and just thought, "Look at these guys. This'll never be on cable access." I just don't look like the kind of filmmaker that's going to give them any trouble. And they operate with the assumption that because I'm on the outside, because of my class, I don't have an uncle in the business who's going to help me through the door. I don't know an agent. I don't know anybody in Hollywood. So, without even thinking about it, they assume: whatever he shoots won't be shown because the system isn't set up to service him getting to the point where his film would actually be on the screen. So, they're completely relaxed.

NEWFIELD: Did you lull them to sleep with the way you dress, by showing up with your baseball cap? Is that it?

MOORE: No, this is the way I've always dressed, ever since I was a teenager.

NEWFIELD: Does that lead them to underestimate you?

MOORE: They probably do. Usually if somebody comes from NBC, or wherever, they have a suit and a tie on and a hundred-dollar haircut. But that's their problem. It's interesting, there is kind of this tacit agreement between the media and those in power. Those in power realize that the media will not actually screw them or make them look bad. You talk to people who work at TV stations, and they get the same kinds of comments on tape that I do, but they don't air it because they don't want the guy to look too bad.

Why would they talk to me after *Roger and Me*? That's probably a greater mystery. In Phil Knight's case, I didn't even go to him. He called me. I'm on a radio show in Portland, Oregon, and he calls into the show. He and his PR guy are sitting around, and they invite me out there. I think they just assumed that they're smarter than I am, and that they're certainly smarter than Roger Smith. They know how to handle this guy, and they thought they'd have some fun with it.

NEWFIELD: What was Knight like before and after the interview, or since he retreated and says he's changing his policies in Indonesia?

MOORE: Well, halfway through the first interview I think he had the sense that he had trapped himself, that he was stuck in a morass that he didn't want to be in. Then he made the promise to me that he would consider putting jobs in Flint if I could get the people to work there. He had to let me back in a second time to show the tape of the people who had worked for him. After that, he became very upset. Before the film came out, Nike did a number of things to try and convince me or Miramax not to air these scenes in the film.

NEWFIELD: What did they do?

MOORE: Their PR director flew to New York and asked me to join him for breakfast. I said OK, free meal. I met him, and he says to me, "What will it take to have two scenes removed from this film?" I was really stunned. "What will it take? Is this a money offer? Or what? Free shoes for life?" He says, "No, Phil is very … we've received a copy of the film." This is before the film was out! "And we've reviewed it, and we would like the two scenes taken out where Phil says that he doesn't care if fourteen-year-olds are working in the factories. And the line where he says, 'You're so worried about these poor little Indonesians, in five years one of them will be your landlord.' Because he felt that that sounded kind of racist once he saw it." I said, "Well, I'm not going to take anything out of the film." I didn't tell him to say those things.

NEWFIELD: What is your feeling about people like Michael Jordan and Spike Lee and their involvement with Nike and their lack of public pressure or criticism, or even private pressure, probably?

MOORE: I know for a fact that Spike has privately pressured Phil Knight. In fact, Phil Knight told me off-camera that Spike has let him know that he's very uncomfortable with Nike's policies. There are so few black Americans who get to make any money that I'm uncomfortable attacking Michael Jordan for his lack of action on this.

NEWFIELD: Probably because he's such a positive role model in so many other areas.

MOORE: Well, in some other areas, yeah. But, I think it looks a bit disingenuous to the black community for a white person to go after one of the few black people who have made it when the root of the problem is not a black man but a white man named Phil Knight and his board of directors, who are mostly white. People rarely bring up examples of the other people who are white who have contracts with Nike. Andre Agassi and others. So, I wish that Michael Jordan would do something. I tried to set up a private screening of the film just for him. Just so he would watch it. Because I believe that at his core he is a good person and

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN ROBERT WILLIAMS

has a conscience, and if he knew the whole story would do what he could do to help. At least, I want to believe that.

NEWFIELD: As a champion of labor and working people, how do you feel about this scandal in the Teamsters union? Do you think good people just decided that the ends justified the means?

MOORE: Yes. Good people who fought for decades to make that union democratic and clean were rightfully fearful that the old forces, represented by Hoffa, Jr., were going to undo all of their progress. They rationalized that the scheme they came up with was necessary in order to beat back a tremendous force that was going to undo all of the good stuff that had happened. They shouldn't have done that. I understand why they did it. Nobody was stealing money to go and build a nice home for themselves or get bigger cars. They were doing what they were doing because they wanted to save their union.

NEWFIELD: But it led to their enemy, probably, becoming the president of the union.

MOORE: That's absolutely correct. Once again, proof that the ends do not justify the means.

NEWFIELD: At one point in your life you considered becoming a priest and went to the seminary. Does that period of morality and faith still play some role in your politics?

MOORE: Yes, it does. My parents were both Irish Catholics. They're in their late seventies now, they still go to mass every day, and they raised us kids with some very basic beliefs about how we treat people and how we see the world. They weren't political people, but they were people who believed in the importance of acting on conscience and standing up for what you believe in. At the time that I went away to the seminary, I was in high school and the Vietnam war was going on. The Berrigan brothers were my heroes, so I thought that this was a way to make a difference.

NEWFIELD: A lot of leaders that you and I admire, from Martin Luther King, Jr., to Cesar Chavez to Saul Alinsky, I think, had some church roots to their values.

MOORE: Yes, it's still very strong, and I still go to church. Not all the time—it's difficult to find a Catholic church that does not offend me on certain moral and political grounds. But they exist, and there is a very liberal, radical wing of the Catholic church that is still pretty strong. Then there's a much larger group of Catholics who have just chosen to ignore the idiocy of the edicts from Rome on birth control, abortion, women's rights.

NEWFIELD: You're a very funny person, a satirist. Do you think one of the problems with the American left is that it's lost its sense of humor?

MOORE: Absolutely. What happened? We were the ones who were funny.

NEWFIELD: You think that the Left got lost culturally before it got lost politically?

MOORE: Yes, and thus [the Left] began to separate itself from the American public. If I run into someone on the Left today, they'll say to me, "I never caught your show because I don't own a TV." I just look and I say, "Well, good for you. Don't you feel great separating yourself from the masses of Americans you want to lead to the revolution?" "I don't own a TV." No wonder the public hates the Left. The public has accurately perceived that the Left loves humanity but hates people.

When I first came to New York after *Roger and Me*, they had me come speak over at 1199 [the National Health and Human Services Employee Union]. It was some big lefty group, and there were a thousand people in the hall. I said, "Has anybody seen the number one film in America right now: *The People Under the Stairs*? It's a horror film by Wes Craven. Raise your hand if you've seen it." Not a single hand went up. Now this was the number one film at the box office at the time. And I said, "No, you wouldn't go to see a film like that. Agh, a horror film, a Wes Craven film, agh. That's for those people at the shopping mall. Let me tell you what the film's about. It's about poor people who get screwed over by their landlord and come back to haunt him in all of his tenement dwellings where he's ripping other poor people off." I said, "This is a left-wing political film, but you won't go see it in part because you don't really want to be with the people. The American people are ahead of you. They get this."

This is what really gets me. I see the American public—it is actually very liberal. Look at any Gallup Poll: the majority are pro-union, pro-choice, pro-women's rights, pro-environment. You think that this would be a perfect time to organize and really get this country on a progressive track. I just don't get why the Left doesn't see that and become part of that instead of being up on the mountain-top thinking that they've got to lead it. Now, the Left not only lacks a sense of humor, they've become almost a parody of themselves. I don't know if I should say this, but, I got this letter from the people at *The Nation* a few months ago asking me if I would join them on a cruise. On a Caribbean cruise, to hold seminars during the day and then dock at St. Kits at night.

NEWFIELD: Did you try to make a counter proposal of a bus ride to Flint?

MOORE: I just couldn't believe it. I said that there's no way I'm going. A month later, I see an ad. Have you seen the full page ad in *The Nation*? They're all good people, people I like, going out on this boat. I don't understand it.

See, certain people on the Left believe that because my stuff is based in comedy, it trivializes the issues. I believe exactly the opposite. By using comedy and satire and sarcasm, I'm going to reach more people with a political message, and in fact, the message is even more pointed. It's a direct, frontal assault. When the average American watches Phil Knight in that film it will have more impact than a thousand leaflets, or a march in front of Niketown. Because it is the face of evil.

NEWFIELD: Thank you. ❑

Spirituality in America

Michael Lerner

If the current cynicism about politics and social change deepens, one likely beneficiary will be the various spiritually-oriented communities that have grown decisively in the past two decades. This is not a momentary reaction to the Clinton/Starr fiasco, but a deeper disillusionment with politics. Clinton contributed to this disillusionment by refusing to fight for the principles he articulated, but its roots go back to the failure of the social movements of the past three decades to sustain themselves and embody their visions. Too often, those movements talked the talk but could not walk the walk.

Yet the turn to spirituality is not just a retreat but simultaneously an important step forward. The contemporary resurgence of interest in spirituality is an encouraging indication that tens of millions of people remain dissatisfied with America's dominant ethos of materialism and selfishness. We live at the end of a century in which the competitive economic market has demonstrated its powerful ability to shape the dominant consciousness of the planet. That market consciousness has convinced many that the highest goal of life is to consume, that the proof of one's own self-worth is how much power and money one has at one's disposal, that the "natural" inclination of each person is toward selfishness and egotism, that every other person is a potential rival for scarce economic or emotional resources, that societies should be constructed primarily to protect the individual so that s/he may pursue her own self-interest without external constraints, that progress means the increasing scientific conquest of nature and its transformation into forms that can be used or sold to others, that the goal of knowledge is to increase control and domination of the world, and that the rational way to look at others is in terms of what they can do for you to advance your own agenda.

Spirituality is, first and foremost, a way of orienting to the world, a way of being and knowing, that emphasizes awe, wonder, and radical amazement at the glory of creation and the splendor of the universe. Without rejecting the important place for science and for control of some aspects of our physical environment, spirituality emphasizes the limits of our control, the need to learn to live in harmony with the rhythms of our planet and of the universe, and the need to recognize the sanctity of other human beings and to treat them as essentially valuable not for what they can do for us but for who they are as beings who reflect the ultimate spiritual or divine energy in the universe. Without negating the importance and value of individual difference and individual freedom, the spiritual orientation simultaneously stresses the unity of all human beings and the unity of all being.

One of the tragedies of the American progressive social change movements has been their hostility to spiritual and religious movements. Unable to recognize the potential critical thrust of spiritual understanding, focused exclusively on the way that religious traditions have been associated with patriarchy and authoritarian forms of oppression, rightly concerned about religious groups who seek to use state power to impose their religious agenda, the liberal/left forces in America have positioned themselves as critics rather than exponents of a progressive politics of meaning.

There is a danger. Some forms of spirituality focus inward and refuse to challenge the inherent materialism and selfishness of our economic and political institutions. For a significant section of the growing spiritual movement, political concerns are seen as antithetical to "inner work." Equanimity or peace of mind becomes the highest goal, and spiritual passion for *tikkun*, for building a world of love and caring in which every person on the planet is treated as equally precious and equally a manifestation of God-energy, is dismissed as something that will come later, after we've gotten our inner lives together (but that "after" never comes, because work on inner lives is necessarily and appropriately a life long venture).

TIKKUN spirituality is rooted in the Torah path. We seek to build a spiritual life that is deeply nourishing on the personal level, and that encourages an attitude of awe and wonder. Yet we simultaneously seek to link that spiritual nourishment to social movements that will heal the distortions in our economic, political, and social institutions. Our politics of meaning is an attempt to create "a new bottom line" in which ethical, spiritual, and ecological values will replace the materialism, selfishness, and cynicism of contemporary American life.

In each issue of the magazine we seek to explore new directions in spiritual thought and practice and invite our readers to find a path that makes sense to you. ❑

ILLUSTRATION BY RUSS ANDO

Spirituality or Sanctity?

John Dominic Crossan

Is there anything, at the moment, that spirituality does not or could not mean as long as it supports spirit over flesh and individual needs or desires over social systems or structures? But how, exactly, in such a situation, do you distinguish between spirituality and sentimentality or, indeed, between spirituality and Prozac?

I propose here to bracket the very term "spirituality" and to use another one with a more precise definition. That alternative term is "sanctity," that state in which the human will is in union with its God. I have no presumption that spirituality is bad and sanctity is good. But spirituality is now over-extended into meaninglessness and it might be helpful to start again with a new word. (Actually, I would define spirituality in exactly the same way as I did sanctity, but let that go for the moment.) By using the term sanctity, the focus is shifted immediately and initially to one's God. The question is this: What is the character of your God? Our sanctity, after all, could make us but the killer children of a Killer God.

There are constitutive events or documents that make us who we are and there are even core moments or phrases within them that become normative criteria for all the rest. Such moments or phrases may, whether we like it or not, come home to haunt us. And it seems quite fair to privilege them so that attendant elements are interpreted and judged by them rather than the reverse. "All men are created equal" is one such permanent challenge. And if, on a more personal level, you tell me that you never lie, I will judge you and all else you ever say by that admission. As I read the Bible of both Judaism and Christianity, such a privileged text is Psalm Eighty-two.

This psalm presents us with a magnificently and serenely mythological scene as God sits down in heavenly council to judge the gods ruling the nations here below. The divine CEO meets with upper management to discuss downsizing. But, in this case, downsizing means that they are all fired for malpractice in office, for mismanagement of earth. "You are," God concedes, "gods, children of the Most High, all of you," but you will now be allowed to die just like mortal princes. The indictment is as clear as the judgment. You have "judged unjustly and shown partiality to the wicked" or, more precisely, you have failed to "give justice to the weak and the orphan, to maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute, to rescue the weak and the needy, and to deliver them from the hand of the wicked." Therefore, God has taken personal charge to insure justice for the nations of the earth.

Certain conclusions flow from that extraordinary psalm. First, unjust situations do not simply create a world less kind and gentle than it should be. They entail cosmic catastrophe since, by their presence, "all the foundations of the earth are shaken." Second, the reason they ensure catastrophe is that they are not just individual or personal cases but systemic or structural processes. That is most evident in an expression like "the weak and the orphan" (the usual biblical dyad is "the widow and the orphan"). Orphans are not personally or individually vulnerable so much as systemically or structurally vulnerable. They lack the normal protection of the patriarchal father and are structurally liable to exploitation and oppression. The twice-widowed Babatha, for example, whose archival documents were discovered by Yigael Yadin in the Nahal Hever cave where she and others had hidden from the Roman legions during the Bar Kosiba Revolt, fought for seven years—unsuccessfully—to obtain more than two denarii a month for her minor son Jesus from his state-appointed guardians.

Third, this now-in-charge God of all the earth is a God of systemic justice, or, put conversely, that which stands against systemic injustice is the God of all the earth. But that does not seem to be a matter of decree or decision, of law or command, of choice or option. It is more a matter of character, being, and nature. This God could not be other, and just as the law of gravity is not what gravity decides but what gravity is, so the law of God is not what God decides but what God is. Neither, therefore, can the Land, the People, the Covenant, the Kingdom, the Son, or the Gospel *of that God* be other than manifestations of divine justice on earth.

Sanctity, in such a context, is terribly if not terrifyingly obvious. It is the submission of human justice to divine justice, of human will to divine will, or, better, of human being to divine being. If spirituality focuses on individual problems rather than social structures and on personal struggles rather than cosmic systems, it can never be equated with sanctity and will never encounter the biblical God of Psalm Eighty-two. And the foundations of the earth will go on shaking. ❑

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The Spiritual Practice of Blessing

Marcia Prager



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Jewish tradition enjoins us to bring holiness, *kedushah*, the sacred, into EVERY aspect of our lives.

If every aspect of our existence is an opportunity to experience God, how shall we live when we discover God permeates all, from the galactic to the microscopic? How shall we respond—personally, as a society, as a species—when we begin to understand not only our lives but all existence as a sacred gift?

Such kedushah, such a sense of the sacred, actually seems at times within our reach. We all have moments in which we are jolted out of our habitual anxiety, when we surrender control and let go of self-conscious judgments.

In those moments we can just "be." We can feel refreshingly open, clear, and complete. Our mental clutter and confusions fall away and we remember with great joy our oneness with all that is. At such moments the whole universe dances inside us!

In Hebrew this gentle attunement is called *mochin d'gadlut*—literally "big mind" or expanded consciousness—moments in which our hearts open to awe, wonder, and infinite possibility. In *mochin d'gadlut*, we are filled with God and every moment is a miracle unfolding.

We strive to hold onto this expansiveness of spirit. But it is difficult and all too easily we slide back into the more limited spiritual condition of *mochin d'katnut*, "little mind," constricted consciousness. Accustomed to layers of distress, disappointments, and boredom, we "get by." We discover that we can avoid being hurt by diminishing our capacity to feel.

Gradually becoming numb to both joy and pain, our lives appear manageable.

This is the condition described as *galut,* alienation and exile from God. When we look at small children we see their sense of wonder, their openness to the miraculous. But we notice, as we grow habituated to the world and its daily pressures, that our own moments of ecstatic delight diminish. When we allow all the daily miracles to be passed by, our openness to the abundance of Divine blessing withers.

We realize we have traded away our own aliveness and we long to find our way back. How strongly we need to counteract those dulling life pressures.

And still more! In order to nourish kedushah, any spiritual endeavor must not only act as an antidote to the dulling circumstances of life and keep alive our three-year-old's sense of wonder, it must actively develop our awareness and sensitivity and nurture a maturation of consciousness.

This is the path of blessing.

The Jewish practice of blessing (*brakha*) derives from our tradition's desire to promote joy and appreciation, wonder and thankfulness, amazement and praise. A brakha is, we might say, a kind of "gratitude yoga" we can employ not only on a daily basis but moment-to-moment. It is in itself not at all strenuous. It doesn't require a minyan, ten worshippers; it doesn't require travel; it doesn't require that we have any accoutrements, or a special mantra, or that we become a yogi, an adept, a tzaddik, or a buddha. It merely asks us to engage in a moment of delayed gratification, using the respite as an opportunity for something else to occur.

Jewish tradition teaches that the simple action of a brakha has a cosmic effect, for a brakha causes *shefa*, the "abundant flow" of God's love and goodness to pour into the world. Like a hand on the faucet, each brakha turns on the tap.

How delicious it is to live in God's goodness. Too often we walk uncaring and unconscious through our jobs and lives, oblivious to the love that surrounds us and is us.

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When, however, we live in the abundant flow, we know ourselves to be loved and supported unconditionally. Only then do we become free both to receive and give fully.

Each acknowledgment of divine abundance cycles more blessing into the world. Thus all of life is enriched. Jewish consciousness carries a deep awareness that in order for the cycles to continue—whether those of an individual human life, community life, the seasons, or the universe—they need to be nourished. When we fail to cultivate a practice of appreciation as potent as our capacity to appropriate, we become despoilers, destroying both ourselves and the whole. When we use the world as if it belongs to us, we use it as we would a possession. The practice of blessing recognizes that consuming without returning the gift of our conscious awareness makes us in a way like thieves.

A brakha completes our energy-exchange with God. We are partners in a sacred cycle of giving and receiving in which we are not only "on the take." When we offer our blessings we raise up sparks of holiness, releasing the God-light housed in our world back to its Source. We receivers become the givers, and the nurturing flow is sustained. When, on the other hand, we receive but fail to give, we become clogged, sick, and destructive. When we fail to praise, it is we who suffer. Without gratitude we become bored and depressed. This teaching, so fundamental to the Jewish practice of blessing, is movingly reflected as well in the poetry of Rumi, the Sufi poet, "Your depression is connected to your insolence and refusal to praise! Whoever feels himself walking on the path and refuses to praise—that man or woman steals from others every day—is a shop-lifter!"

Imagine that at every moment we each embraced the world as the gift it is:

An apple is a gift; the color pink is a gift; the blue sky is a gift; the scent of honeysuckle is a gift. Hidden in every experience is a gift, obligating us to heart-filled appreciation, to songs of gratitude. We are called not merely to notice casually now and then that something is special and nice but to sustain and deepen a profound gratitude. Indeed the more we acknowledge our gratefulness, the more we temper our tendency to be users, despoilers, arrogant occupiers.

We are on our way to kedushah.

Blessing God

In common folk practice, when someone sneezes, we may say "Bless you." The expression has its roots in the hope the words will ward off evil. To bless someone is to wish the person good fortune or to pray that Divine Providence will be favorable. Why then would someone offer a blessing to God? The notion seems absurd; God doesn't need blessing and anyway, how could a human being bring God good fortune?

When we offer "blessing" to the Source of Blessing, we offer our gratitude not only for a particular gift but for the opportunity to experience our connection with the whole of life. Our brakha opens us to the shefa of divine goodness moving through us, filling us and flowing back to God. We partake of the world and are invited to experience God within everything.

This practice conveys a radical teaching: Neither the food we eat nor anything we find in the world is as inert as it may seem! Becoming aware of this takes us almost by surprise, yet at the same time seems more like a recollection of something we have always known. Discovering God's aliveness in our world can feel as if a veil has been lifted and a joyous clarity returned. Ironically our minds usually conceal this perception. We create mental constructs objectifying the world and obscuring its Godliness. On the path of blessing, we are reminded that the whole world is an expression of divine energy.

The sixteenth-century kabbalist Rabbi Moshe Cordovero said, "The essence of divinity is found in every single thing—nothing but It exists. Since It causes every thing to be, no thing can live by anything else.... Do not say, 'This is a stone and not God.' God forbid! Rather all existence is God and the stone is a thing pervaded by divinity."

Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl, gifted disciple of the Baal Shem Tov (the eighteenth-century mystical master who inspired the eastern European Jewish spiritual revival known as Hasidism) proclaimed: "God is garbed in everything! No place is empty of God!" He taught, regarding the verse from Isaiah—"All the earth is filled with God's Glorious-Presence"—"Glorious-Presence, that means garments." That is, the whole earth is filled with God's garments! All physicality is an enrobing of Divinity, each subatomic particle of creation housing a spark of God.

The flow of divine energy into the world is sometimes compared to the flow of sap in a tree. The limbs of the tree are the pathways through which the life-giving God-energy courses. One word for sap in Hebrew, *s'raf*, literally means "burning energy" or "fire," alluding to the sparks of sacred fire within everything.

Rabbi Isaac Luria, the great sixteenth-century master of Kabbalah—Jewish mystical teaching—urged us to see every physical object or being as sustained by the spark of holiness within it. When we eat, our bodies extract vitamins and minerals, but, he reminded us, it is not these that keep our souls alive! The human soul, he taught, recognizes and extracts the holy spark and from the spark is truly nourished.

When we walk the path of blessing we begin to recognize the presence of these holy sparks in everything and everyone around us. Day by day the world becomes more alive, more magical, more miraculous! We partake of its gifts and with joy we lift up the holy sparks to fly freely back to God. With each brakha we also grow in awareness of our own miraculous soul spark: God garbed in the essence of our own being.

Sending blessing back to the Source of Blessing is far more than just a "thank you card" of gratitude or praise. With our brakha we participate in the flow of divinity through the world. ❑

Notes on Jewish Spirituality

Rabbi Gershon Winkler



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The eighteenth-century Rabbi Nachmon of Breslav taught that the body yearns to know the experience of the soul, and that the soul, in turn, yearns to know the experience of the body (Likutei MaHaRan, Ch. 22, para. 5). Spirituality, then, is the practice or exercise of including the bodily senses in soul experience and the soul senses in bodily experience. Dating way back into and probably beyond talmudic times, this way of spiritual practice was pretty much integrated into everyday routine from praying to studying to sipping grape juice. When you prayed, you swayed. The Talmud records how Rabbi Akiva (second century) included his body in prayer to the point that he'd begin praying in one corner and end up in the opposite corner clear across the room (Babylonian Talmud, Tosefta Birachot 3:7).

At the same time, when you would feast your eyes on a person of beauty you would include your soul by reciting a prayer acknowledging the spiritual quality of the gift of beauty (Babylonian Talmud, Tosefta Birachot 7:7). When you would feast your body on dinner, you would recite prayers of acknowledgment of the divine source of your food, thus including the soul in the experience of the body (Babylonian Talmud, Tosefta Birachot 4:1). The kabbalists through the centuries would always prelude a physical act with an incantation that declared the act as one of unifying the Godhead with the Shechinah, Creator with Creation, God Transcendent with God Immanent. The prayer goes like this:

> "For the sake of the unification of the Sacred Wellspring with its earthly manifestation/dwelling (Shechinah) by means of this act, performed in awe and love, with the intention of unifying the Name *yud hey* with *vav hey*."

Reciting this invocation is a powerful way of bringing our physical awareness and spiritual awareness into a synchronicity that spells spirituality. We can bite into an apple as a purely physical experience, or we can bite into an apple as a spiritual experience, depending upon what we are invoking when we eat. Even reciting a prayer is no guarantee of spiritual nurturance unless the recitation is done with awareness as opposed to unconscious, rote muttering.

Spirituality is as much about the body as it is about the soul. The physical universe is more than merely an arena *in which* we evolve spiritually, it is the very means *by which* we evolve spiritually. It happens here. It happens not in the Garden of Paradise, but in the Garden of Paradox. The body is not only a vehicle for soul manifestation, it is a sacred facilitator of soul realization.

No person, no retreat or workshop, no book, no teacher, can transmit spirituality to you, can unravel for you the layers of ego and id that hide your soul self. No one but you can do your own spiritual work, and no one person's spiritual work resembles in any way that of another. Each of us is here for reasons unknown to our selves, let alone to others. Each of us is a mystery unique from any other person's mystery. As Martin Buber wrote: "The mystery of another

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lies deep within him, and it cannot be observed from without" (*Die Stunde und die Erkenntnis*, p. 155).

We are definitely living in the Amos Era, the period predicted by our prophet Amos, pronounced Ah-moss, who saw a vision in which people were thirsting and hungering, but neither for bread nor for water but to hear the word of God. "And they shall wander from sea to sea and from the north to the east, running to and fro in search of the word of God, and they shall not find it" (Amos 8:11–12) because it isn't to be sought, it is to be experienced by stepping back from desperation and by looking at what is near to our *kishkehs* rather than at what is waving at us promisingly on distant horizons. We need to allow the voice from within to be heard above the tumult of the noise from without.

Spirituality as a blanket movement with the idealized intention of sweeping all of us up in one fell swoop of spiritual consciousness is doomed to failure. Hasidism tried this and failed dismally. There were some great rebbes but very few great Hasidim. Nowadays, Jewish renewal is refreshing, but as a movement it brings up a lot of questions around its ability to perpetuate what it had set out to achieve several decades ago when it was a little *schtiebel* on Emlen Street in Philadelphia. Rather than concentrating on creating ever-unfolding spirituality, it has become a movement concentrating more and more on defining itself, and on creating ever-unfolding organizational policies and principles.



The quickie spiritual kick is a result of our contemporary cultural accent on instant-ism.

Spirituality does not happen through fads and fashions, through instant hit-and-run processes. It happens through long, patient, step by step and very individualized processes. I am often asked by Jews into shamanism if Judaism has quickie methods of facilitating soul journeys like some other groups do. My response is that Judaism is into foreplay, and that the longer the foreplay the more satisfying and fulfilling is the actual spiritual experience at the time of consummation (Reishis Chochmah, Sha'ar HaAhavah, 4:4). The quickie spiritual kick is a result of our contemporary cultural accent on instant-ism. Everything is microwaveable, everything is available in instant form—instant coffee, instant rice, bread machines, touch tone. Think about this the next time you get upset because your laptop took fifteen seconds to boot itself instead of instantly. But this is where we are at and this is what our soul selves have to contend with, a quickie mindset that has all but forgotten the concept of foreplay.

Personally, I have not subscribed or in any way been drawn to contemporary modes of spiritual realization and enhancement. The only mode that has worked for me has been the ancient teachings and examples of my predecessors, from personalities in the scriptures to personalities in my own lifetime who have taught me by the example of the quality of their consciousness and of their spiritual practice in daily life. Virtually all of the ancient teachings about how to live a spiritually rich life have been accompanied by real-life examples of real people, whether it is a story about a great Jewish master like Rabbi Shim'on ben Lakish or about a non-Jewish goat herder like Damma ben Nesina. The Talmud is nondiscriminatory about its choice of examples when it comes to teaching about spirituality because spirituality is not synonymous with religion nor is it dependent upon religion nor determined by religion nor defined by religion. It is defined by action, by how you choose to live your every moment. "I call to witness the sky and the earth," declared an ancient rabbi, "that anyone can acquire the Holy Spirit, be they man or woman, freeman or slave, Jew or non-Jew—everything is determined by one's actions" (Midrash Tana D'Bei Eliyahu, Ch. 9). Joseph Campbell put it this way: "Religion often gets in the way of religious experience." Or, as Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote: "The prophets were those who in the name of God stood up against that which most people to this very day call religion" (*God In Search Of Man*, pp. 230–231).

The best path to a deep Jewish spirituality is to study the rich treasure of anecdotes about the early masters that fill the pages of the Talmud and Midrash, that fill the pages of Buber's *Tales of the Hasidim*, or Elie Wiesel's *Souls on Fire*, that fill the pages of my memory of my father, of my grandmother, of my ninety-year-old Rosh Yeshiva back in Jerusalem. Their inspiration is so piercing that it lays out for me a path in a way that is far more clear to me than books and workshops and seminars. Our best teachers are our stories. Our whole faith is predicated not on creeds and principles of beliefs but on stories. Without those stories, Judaism would have been for me freeze-dried, badly needing water added and to be stirred. "More precious are the conversations of the servants of the households of the ancestors than the Torah of the descendants" (Midrash B'reishis Rabbah 60:11).

As for "commandments," I don't think God cares whether you tear toilet paper on Shabbat or not. Rabbis do. The instructions of the Torah are meant as means, not ends, guidelines, lessons, road maps. They are there to help us,

ILLUSTRATION BY RUSS ANDO

not hinder us. This is not my bent on it, but the perspective of our ancient teachers, in fact the very teachers who elaborated and interpreted the "commandments." I cite myriads of samples of this in my book *The Way of the Boundary Crosser*. As Abraham Joshua Heschel put it: "The fact remains that, as central as is law, only a small part of the Bible deals with the law" (*God in Search of Man*, p. 324).

Just as some Jews get too hooked on the law, a lot of people today are hooked on the promises by contemporary spiritual salespeople of solutions, personal success, power, growth, miracles, etc. Many people want out of their immediate failures and problems, and so-called spirituality promises them exactly that. Sometimes that promise is made in brochures, sometimes it is made not by the teachers or retreats or seminars but by the seekers themselves who are under the false illusion that spirituality is some kind of magical instant cure for whatever ails them, that all they need is a sweat lodge ceremony or a shamanic drum journey, and poof! they're saved. This is the limit of those who talk about equanimity without addressing the larger social realities.



At the same time, the gift of contemporary spirituality is that it has reversed the trend to ignore the individual for the so-called higher good of the collective. Inner peace of mind is essential to transforming the larger social environment. My personal tumult reverberates across the planet wreaking havoc of unimaginable proportions, sort of like the theory of the butterfly flapping its wings causing a breeze which swells into a typhoon somewhere thousands of miles away.

At least in Judaism, this form of spiritual focus has always been essential. The Torah pushes for individual awareness no less than it does for communal responsibility and participation. As a nation, we were headed for the "promised land," our land promised to our ancestors and to us. Yet, there was enough individual space in our nationhood for the tribes of Reuven and Gad to choose to not settle in Israel but to remain on the eastern bank of the Jordan (Numbers, Ch. 32). In the frenzy of nationalism the individual was never to be lost. In time of war, the officers pushed through the throngs of military recruits exempting all those who had just gotten married but hadn't lived with their brides at least a year, those who'd planted vineyards but hadn't had a chance to savor the fruits of their labors, those who'd just built themselves new houses but hadn't had a chance to actually live in them, those who were afraid, and so on. "If I am not for myself," taught Hillel, "then who is for me? And if I am only for myself, then what am I?" (Babylonian Talmud, Avot 1:14). I am important, and so is my community, my planet. There is a way to dance to the music of both, a way to respond to the needs of either without neglecting neither. The tribes of Reuven and Gad settled outside of Israel, but their able-bodied men joined the nation in settling the promised land before returning to Jordan to set up house (Joshua 22:1-4 and 9-10).

In my experience in spiritual work, people can move from a focus on inner work to community social action and vice versa. For some of us, involvement in social change catapulted us into involvement in our inner spiritual life, and for others of us it was our focus on our inner spiritual life that led us to involvement in social change. Each of us needs a different kind of stimuli, a different kind of spring board to do our process.

I live in an area of the southwestern United States that has some similarities to parts of the Third World. In this area many people still remain very much connected to all life as part of a single, delicate web of balance, requiring therefore that one's inner spiritual work be deemed as critical as any external social endeavor. In the world that I live, I find that people are nurtured in their inner spiritual life very much by the land, by their very intimate relationship with the earth, which, in turn, spurs them toward social involvement in a way that is positive and compassionate. They don't seek social change necessarily, only social responsibility, and it is this that they strive to convey to their children.

Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan was my father's teacher back in the old days when he left the safe confines of Denmark to study Torah in Russia. Reb Yisroel put it this way: "We're only here for the weekend." That is my mantra. My spiritual practice, it follows, is then about stepping out of the whirlwind of daily routine three times a day minimum to behold the magic of the ordinary, the gift of the moment, and to live in awe of the mystery of my weekend here.

Healing the planet, I feel, cannot happen by becoming overly anxious and paranoid about global warming and global this and global that and all that doomsday stuff. That

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Spiritualities of Depth

Thomas Moore



The spirit is a creative and dangerous thing. Without spirit we have no vision, no impulse to move forward, no energy to make and do, no curiosity about the world and ourselves, and no need to live well and make our contribution. As a participant in a recent class of mine put it, without spirit we muck around in the soul. And yet, at the same time, spirit wages war, tramples all fellows on the way to success, trumpets its superiority, holds all to its vision, and falls into rigid literalizations of authority, tradition, language, and hierarchy. At times one wonders if the creativity of the spirit is worth the ravages of its aggressiveness.

At thirteen I left the comforts of home to enter a Catholic monastery, where I learned something about the beauty and joy of the spiritual life and also suffered the blows of its jealous authoritarianism and its numbness to ordinary human pleasures. I learned the beauty of spiritual architecture, music, literature, ritual, and the ordered life. But I also learned the sternness of authorities, their mistrust of family life, the rigidity of belief, and the masochistic delights of self-denial. The upward-directed spirit seems to love hierarchies and organizations and has a deep distrust of organic, familial, unfolding life.

But this spiritual urge toward transcendence—the desire for higher consciousness, enlightenment, truth, and uncontaminated moral purity—is only one brand of spirituality. There are other ways to be spiritual, ways that don't aim so high and therefore don't risk distancing themselves from the humanity found in the human body, the family, nature, and the ordinary life. Spirit emerges, or as tradition sometimes says, emanates from ordinary things and situations, just as a certain kind of spirit rises up in a football stadium or at a family gathering.

Interestingly, the spirituality that rises from ordinary life has often been ritualized and celebrated in religion. Marriage is a familiar example. The spiritual aspects of marriage become visible in courtship rituals and then in the deep human urge to give weddings strong religious, family, and social potency. This spirituality, rising from ordinary days of married life, marked by rites and habits proper to a particular marriage, honored at anniversaries and celebrated in the rites of sex, witnesses to the depth of the married life.

A family has its own spirituality found in its old and developing stories, the characters of past and present, living and dead, who represent its saints and rogues. Family gatherings, especially when focused on food and storytelling (gossip, remembrances, problems), have a sacramental quality. The family dinner table is a genuine breaking of bread, and the break-up of family cohesiveness causes a loss of spirituality. The simple neglect of common meals and traditional gatherings shrivels the soul, which needs unspectacular spiritual nourishment the way the body needs food.

Nature, of course, exhales a spirituality that can be healing and restoring and can mediate our need for the sublime and for divinity itself. Nature is particular as well in its spiritual expression. A river exudes a spirituality different in quality from that of a mountain or a desert or an ocean or a tree or a spring. Holy wells, mountains of pilgrimage, and enshrined trees show that religion unselfconsciously is tuned in to the spirits of nature. When we treat nature belligerently and indiscriminately we not only damage the literal earth, we also deprive ourselves of a necessary source of spirituality.

I am especially sensitive to the spirituality of the farm. The ancient Greeks honored a spiritual figure, the arche-

ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN KLINE

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typal and sainted farmer, Aristaeus, and many cultures ritualize their planting and harvesting with lunar rites and with images of a corn or grain spirit. I sense the spirituality of the farm in the sweet and acrid aromas of a barn and in the presence of cows and other farm animals. I need to see farmland and farm animals regularly or else I lose touch with something essential in my make-up. And yet, the development of a secular culture entails the loss of farms and those ancient spirits who nurture our humanity.

I could go on and on sketching out the many sources of spirituality that may be dimmed in our awareness either because of the brilliance of our transcendent and universal notions of spirituality or in our secularistic blindness to the ordinary religion in daily life. There is spirituality to be found at work, at play, in sports, music, theater, and books. A library is a place of spirit, and so, too, is a hospital.

We in America are losing our deep spirituality even as many celebrate an apparent renaissance of the transcendent kind. I am not so enthusiastic about the supposed renaissance because I see much narcissism in it—the tendency to add spirituality to physical fitness, good diet, and emotional balance in the project of making a superior self. We still look for the excellent spiritual tradition, the most celebrated leader and teacher, the most secure grasp on the truth, extraordinary techniques, and some kind of universal, whole, unified consciousness. I trust more the multifaceted, ordinary, simple, deep, unambitious spiritualities of the woods, the farm, the family, the home, honest work, children, local commerce, and the ordinary yet deep sacredness of married life.

We no longer build shrines and honor the stories of local spirits. Holy days have become holidays. Hills no longer reach to heaven; they are obstacles to development. Our rivers and lakes are not only polluted with chemicals, their spirituality has been lost to pragmatism and commercialism. Fortunately, still in this rapidly secularizing world there are communities which keep the old traditions and for a little while longer can remind us how to cultivate a deep spirituality that feeds our humanity and keeps our marriages and communities profoundly connected.

I don't know what will happen when these exemplars vanish. We will either become rootless in our secularism or dehumanized in our universalist, transcendent spiritual attention to the empty ether. On the other hand, it wouldn't take much to recover an appreciation for the invisible but palpable spirit that emanates from the ordinary world around us. We need a relationship with that world of spiritualities through story and ritual, simple imaginative stories and simple effective rituals.

Only when ordinary life and deep spirituality come together do we find our humanity, or community and interdependency, a basis for morality, and our saving compassion. Such simple and ordinary habits are all we need to survive and thrive. ❑

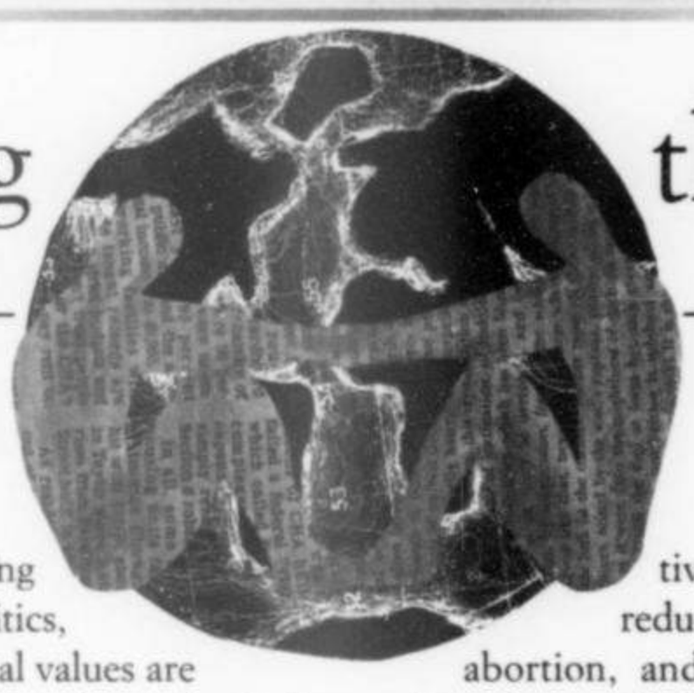
NOTES ON JEWISH SPIRITUALITY *(continued from page 39)*

will not heal the planet. The planet is alive and as such she needs as much joyfulness and celebration for her healing as any of us. We need to spend more time celebrating her than we do lamenting her. Our story is about how the whole earth went to pot but all it took was one family's faith in life and in the world to resurrect her. It was Noah and Na'amah and their kin. It took nothing else. This is what we need to get back to today—each of us needs to become Noahides and reconstruct our arks, our faith in the preciousness of existence, and to celebrate it.

I see two forms of spirituality, internal and external. Internal spirituality is something each of us carries in our suitcase as we do our walkabout on this planet. When we find ourselves lacking it, we need only peek inside our Samsonite or remember that we're schlepping one. So when you feel burdened with a heavy heart, a weighty mind, think of it as what it is: your spirituality. Without it, life would be a breeze, completely inconsequential, superfluous, meaningless, irrelevant, and you would go desperately looking for a tree of forbidden fruit to eat from so that you could get catapulted into the real world. External spirituality is different. It's more like take-home food. You go to a retreat, a seminar, a class, a rebbe, a guru, a medicine woman, get some spark from their flame to supplement your own, but then you need to take it home and add your own spice and digest it from your own dishes and with your own utensils. Too many seekers leave their food at the restaurant or gobble it up too quickly while on the run.

Still, one can learn from others. So here is what I recommend for your spiritual diet. In film, I would highly recommend "Laurel and Hardy" films, the earliest of Woody Allen's works, and all the "Pink Panther" movies with Peter Sellers. I recommend two of my most recent books: *The Place Where You Are Standing is Holy* and *The Way of the Boundary Crosser*. I also recommend Michael Lerner's *Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation*, which I feel is an important guidebook to the quality of spiritual and social consciousness that is not only the kernel of what has become Jewish renewal but is also an important work that I hope will remain repeated reading for generations to come, sort of an alarm clock that comes with batteries and a built-in battery charger. Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi's *Paradigm Shift* is a vital backdrop for anyone attempting to spark renewal in their lives, hearts, communities, and general spiritual practice and consciousness. But still I personally prefer silly movies to any books, including my own. What contemporary spirituality lacks probably more than anything else is humor. If we can't laugh at the folly of being human and at the cosmic clowning around that goes on around us constantly, then what is the point of being spiritual? As the second-century Rabbi Shim'on bar Yochai said to Rabbi Abba: "The deepest wisdom can come only from silliness" (Zohar, Vol. 3, p. 47b). ❑

Changing the World



Corinne McLaughlin

Many of us today are yearning for a different type of politics, where our deepest spiritual values are honored—and more importantly—embodied. We want a politics that truly serves the common good and creates a sense of national community. We want a politics that aligns us with a transcendent purpose as a nation.

But are spirituality and politics mutually exclusive? Although many people point out the problems created by religious fundamentalists in politics, there are actually many positive, non-dogmatic examples of a new spiritually-based politics emerging around the country. Spirituality includes—but is not limited to—traditional religious approaches. Religion is concerned with beliefs and practices, whereas spirituality is more concerned with inner experiences and how we actually live our beliefs.

In promoting the separation of church and state, our Founding Fathers never meant that we were to avoid all mention of spirituality in politics. Rather, they intended that government shouldn't interfere in the practice of religion, and should prevent one religion from becoming the dominant state religion.

In doing the research for our book, *Spiritual Politics*, we found that an effective new politics is emerging in many places around the country today that embodies values common to the world's spiritual traditions. This new politics is distinguished by some key ideas:

1 **Using a "higher common ground" process for resolving conflicts and making policy.** Most spiritual traditions respect the grain of truth on each side of a conflict and promote healing, reconciliation, and forgiveness. The training of initiates in ancient mystery schools included training in paradoxical thinking—holding two opposite ideas at the same time. The Buddhists teach the Noble Middle Path between pairs of opposites. In the Jewish Kabbalah, The Tree of Life, the middle pillar, guides seekers between opposites. In Taoism, yin and yang are held in dynamic balance.

Multi-stakeholder dialogues, which involve all parties in a collaborative discussion, are proving to be the most effective way to develop viable policies and reduce conflict on divisive issues such as race, abortion, and the environment. For example, the Washington D.C.-based Search for Common Ground helped opponents on both sides of the abortion debate find common ground by working together to prevent unwanted pregnancies and to make adoptions more easily available. And Moral Re-Armament "Hope in Cities" initiatives have helped promote racial reconciliation in Richmond, VA, Hartford, CT, Portland, OR, and many other cities.

2 **Promoting "best practices"—positive solutions to social problems that are spiritually-based.** Many of these new solutions have been pioneered by "civil society" groups (non-profit organizations) which represent a powerful third force beyond government and business and embody the spirit of service found in all religions. Their spiritually-based solutions are effective because they address the whole person—body, mind, and spirit—and change lives, rather than just provide food or shelter.

The spiritual values embodied by these non-profit groups are the key to their success. To give a couple of examples: Sojourners, a group in Washington, D.C., has helped juvenile gang members give up violence and drugs and find a new life. The Human Service Alliance in Winston-Salem, NC, provides a nursing home and free medical care to hundreds of seniors, using a totally volunteer staff.

3 **Working to change consciousness.** Our negative patterns of thinking are the deeper cause of problems in our world. As medical researchers are discovering how our thoughts affect our health, we need to explore how our collective thoughts are affecting our collective social health. Adversarial, separative thinking impacts our world very negatively and keeps recreating the problems we attempt to solve. If we want to create truly lasting peace, we must focus on a more positive future that we want to live in, and each release our inner hostility towards adversaries.

For example, The Foundation for Global Community (formerly Beyond War), based in Palo Alto, CA, successfully enlisted hundreds of teams around the country to help Americans reframe their thinking about nuclear war. They taught us to see nuclear war as obsolete, because no one could actually win a nuclear war. This was an innovative

(continued on page 44)

ILLUSTRATION BY JOSH MacPHEE

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WHERE TZEDAKAH BEGINS: Feeding Hungry People

Danny Siegel

I can tell a person's age by how he or she finishes this sentence, often heard in childhood from a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle: "Eat everything on your plate because they are starving in..." Older people answer, "Europe." Others say, "China," "India," "Africa," "Biafra," "Ethiopia," or "Right down the street." Whatever the answer, we can do something about that, far beyond what we ever considered possible, and in a relatively simple manner.

Jewish tradition demands of us that we not waste edible food. The name of the mitzvah is *bal tashchit*, which means "senseless waste." I believe it is time to go into high gear on this particular mitzvah.

Some Stories, Some Facts and Some Figures

According to a study released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1997, Americans waste 97,000,000,000 pounds of edible food each year—one-fourth of all the food produced for edible consumption. (Be stunned. Even be skeptical and say the USDA exaggerates for whatever reason. Say it is only 23,000,000,000 pounds of food. The question remains: What shall we do about it?)

1. Mrs. Fields Cookies has a policy: if an item has not been sold within two hours, it is set aside and donated at the end of the day to a worthy agency feeding hungry people.

2. In 1995, seven Pizza Hut™ restaurants in the Springfield, MA, area donated 28,496 pounds of food.

3. Starbucks makes sure that any new franchise that opens has to have in place an appropriate location to receive the leftover items they donate.

4. Hilton Hotels Corporation sent out an eight-page company-wide directive that states in part, "Our hotels often have prepared food available from over-production that can be donated to charitable organizations for service to their constituencies. All owned and managed hotels are to support this effort by donating surplus food to suitable organizations in their area to establish and implement a program and procedures in accordance with this SPI [Standard Practice Instructions]."

Danny Siegel is the author of twenty books including Good People, *a collection of essays about everyday people who are Mitzvah heroes and* Tell Me a Mitzvah, *Tzedakah stories for children.*



ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN KLINE

5. Leftovers from Baltimore Orioles games at Camden Yards are donated.

Three Easy Steps:

The mighty list grows mightier. We can add to the list.

1. Contact Food Chain, The National Food Rescue Network. They are an umbrella organization for *tzedakah* food pick-up services in many of our communities. 912 Baltimore, #300, Kansas City, MO 64105, Attn: Christina A. Martin, email: rescuefood@aol.com, website: www.foodchain.org, 816-842-6006, toll-free information: 800-845-3008, fax: 816-842-5145. If they do not have an associated group in your city, call the local shelter or soup kitchen and see if they have a local pick-up and delivery contact person. If they don't, be prepared to start with a grassroots, at-least-pick-up-150-bagels-before-they-go-into-the-dumpster project.

2. When talking to any food establishment, have in hand a copy of the liability (i.e., non-liability) law regarding food donations commonly known as "The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act." The relevant passage [section (c)(1)] reads as follows: "Liability for damages from donated food and grocery products. (1) Liability of person or gleaner. A person or gleaner shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability arising from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of apparently wholesome food or an apparently fit grocery product that the person or gleaner donates in good faith to a nonprofit organization for ultimate distribution to needy individuals."

3. Find a food establishment, connect them with the pick-up service, set things in motion, and know that you have done one of the primary great mitzvahs.

Closing Stories

The Bad News: **1.** Maccabiah Games in New Jersey a few years ago: front-line people wanted to donate the enormous quantities of leftover food. A high-placed person erroneously stated there was a question of liability. End result: hundreds of pounds of food thrown out.

2. Also a few years ago, a major Jewish organization had a convention in Washington, DC. No pre-arrangements were

made with the caterer. End result: hundreds of pounds of food thrown out.

The Good News: **1.** One of the United Synagogue Youth Israel Pilgrims this summer worked a wonderful, creative variation on this theme. Her people pick up bagels from one bagel store at the end of the day and the next morning take them to the waiting room outside the intensive care unit at a local hospital. Wow!

2. The Governor of Florida, Lawton Chiles, made a call this spring to David Levitt to thank him. David is sixteen or seventeen years old, and for his bar mitzvah he launched a project to have the Pinellas County Public Schools donate leftovers from the cafeterias. The amount of food donated far exceeds 500,000 pounds. This year the Florida Legislature passed a statewide law to apply to all schools in Florida, signed by Governor Chiles. He just wanted to call David to thank him for his encouragement in making this happen. (To contact David so you can do the same in your communities: email celebrate9@aol.com or phone 813-398-1766.)

3. Ramaz Yeshiva in New York has donated more than 250,000 pounds of food from the school lunch program in the past few years. It is a project of the fifth grade class, and it is very simple to do. (I keep thinking about all those adults who can't seem to figure out how to do it, and there's this bunch of fifth graders who always answer my question, "How did you do it?" by saying, "It's simple.")

Addendum: Preventing Wasted Medical Supplies

American hospitals throw out incredible quantities of perfectly usable surgical supplies because manufacturers are unwilling to continue warranty to these opened, though still uncontaminated, items. As a result, hospitals will not use them for subsequent operations. Dr. William Rosenblatt's REMEDY (which stands for Recovered Medical Equipment for the Developing World) gathers these items and ships them to the Third World, the former Soviet Union, and other countries where they are desperately needed. Dr. Rosenblatt began with the Yale hospital where he is an anesthesiologist, and since the project's inception in 1991 more than $1,800,000 worth of supplies has been donated by his hospital alone. More astonishing is how much the network grows. There are now 157 hospitals that have joined this marvelous project. If you think you know a hospital that is interested in doing this mitzvah, contact REMEDY. They have the system worked out from Alef to Tav, A to Z. Ask for a copy of their teaching packet: REMEDY, 3 TMP, 333 Cedar St., POB 208051, New Haven, CT 06520-8051, e-mail remedy@biomed.med.yale.edu, web site: http://gasnet.med.yale.edu/~remedy/, phone 203-785-2802 or, after hours: 203-785-4242 x 3-9553, fax: 785-6664, Attn: Dr. William Rosenblatt or Darryl Kuperstock. ❑

CHANGING THE WORLD *(continued from page 42)*

and effective strategy for peace building.

Other groups, such as The Center for Visionary Leadership, are helping people study the deeper spiritual causes of current events and crises and promote solutions. (For example, the Center is co-sponsoring with ReCreation Foundation a major conference on Spirituality and Governance in Washington, D.C., on April 27, 2000.) Events can be a rich source of collective learning if we're willing to explore the lessons being offered through shared national experiences. Events reflect the inner forces at work in consciousness. Native Americans call this "Reading the Book of Life."

For example, the O.J. Simpson trial was a type of nationally televised psychotherapy on the issues of domestic violence, hero worship, and racism. Collective disasters provide major opportunities to learn compassion for victims, as well as to learn the consequences of some of our actions—"As you sow, so shall you reap," as the Bible says—or "karma" as the Hindus say. When the Mississippi River flooded major portions of the United States several years ago, for example, sewage dumped in its tributaries backed up and returned to the towns that had dumped it.

4 **USING PRAYER, MEDITATION AND REFLECTION to invoke spiritual help for our leaders, for public policies, and for crisis situations.** A spiritually-based politics recognizes that we humans do not have to struggle with our problems alone, as help is always available from higher dimensions when it is asked for. There are many examples of intervention by higher spiritual forces throughout history, such as the help received by the Allies during the Battle of Britain in World War II. George Washington said he was guided by an "Invisible Hand" in establishing a new nation. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt had a vision of Mohammed who told him to create peace in the Middle East, and this inspired him to negotiate the Camp David Accords.

Many groups, such as Pathways to Peace in Larkspur, CA, and ReCreation Foundation in Ashland, OR, organize prayer vigils to ask for spiritual help in crisis situations. A major prayer vigil around the world in 1995 helped support the peace process in Bosnia at a crucial juncture.

The Faith and Politics Institute in Washington, D.C., provides reflection groups to support Congressmen and their staff in being true to their deepest values when confronting difficult issues such as campaign fundraising.

Other spiritually-based groups help citizens invoke the soul of our nation—that which embodies the highest ideals and vision and which serves the good of all, regardless of personal cost.

The power of Spirit within each of us is a source of great strength and wisdom. Within each of us is a special gift that we can uniquely contribute to making a better world. Let us empower ourselves to be effective change agents by reuniting our politics and our spiritual values. ❑

There is No Wealth but Life

The Moral Meaning of the Longevity Revolution

Theodore Roszak

There is no wealth but life. Life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. That country is richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings.

—John Ruskin

When in 1947 W. H. Auden named our century the "Age of Anxiety," he might have been looking both backward and forward in time: back to the trenches and death camps of two World Wars; forward to the balance of terror, ethnic cleansing, and international terrorism. We have lived through a time that has added the terms "genocide," "Hiroshima," "class warfare," "final solution," "ecospasm" to our political vocabulary. And even so, as we enter the twenty-first century, a single life-enhancing fact has more to do with shaping our future than any of the horrors we inherit, a demographic statistic that is simply stated and undisputed.

More people are living longer.

Who would have expected so bright a prospect to emerge from so dark a period? I cannot help but believe that those whose lives were cut cruelly short by war or persecution would want us to make the most of this great victory over despair. Yet, it would seem that many of our most prominent leaders are not ready to receive the gift of longevity. Politicians and economists throughout the industrial societies are not at all certain we can afford long life and good health, though in many ways an increased life expectancy has been the very justification we have been given for paying the price of the industrial revolution and all the human suffering caused by the breakdown and reorganizing of older societies in the past two hundred years. At the 1997 G7 Summit of Industrial Nations, heads of state bemoaned the aging of their work forces. They warned that something drastic must be done about the impending crisis—though nobody knew what. As the economist Richard Leone wryly observes, "The widespread failure to die in a timely fashion has inspired countless predictions of political chaos and economic ruin in the industrialized countries."

In particular, once-booming Japan is said to be teetering on the edge of a demographic abyss. Its population now has a record-setting average age of forty; retired adults above the age of sixty-five outnumber children below the age of fifteen. There is little hope that this ratio will ever be reversed. Like Germany, France, and the Scandinavian countries, Japan's fertility—now at 1.42—has dropped well below the population replacement level. *The London Observer* reports that "the shrinking [Japanese] family is a threat to productivity, pensions, and the welfare system, and in turn is being blamed for consumers' increasing tendency to save rather than spend—which worsens the current economic downturn." In response, some local authorities in Japan are offering financial incentives for larger families. A family that produces four children receives a free car rental and $1500 cash.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID BALL

Theodore Roszak is the author of The Making of a Counter Culture. *This essay is based upon his new book* America the Wise: The Longevity Revolution and the True Wealth of Nations, *published by Houghton Mifflin.*

Meanwhile in our own country the cost of senior entitlements for the nation's "greedy geezers" is widely regarded as a "fiscal train wreck." One economist writing in *Barron's* magazine sardonically laments, "this longevity is killing us!" Conservatives are especially frantic about the rising cost of Social Security and Medicare, the country's largest welfare state programs. They have good reason to fear for the future—though not on fiscal grounds. Aging undermines their ideological position. As the baby boom generation heads into retirement, the demographic tide is clearly running ever more strongly toward the sort of big government that right-wing politicians deplore.

All the while, opportunistic entrepreneurs are already tooling up to exploit the promising senior market. "It's a great time to be silver!" they announce, as they expertly package and promote a retirement lifestyle that will devote our later years to no better use than buying luxury condos, indulging in pleasure cruises, and purchasing swankier cars. If the hucksters succeed, the longevity revolution will amount to little more than another dismal chapter in the history of the consumer society. Just as the merchandisers once sought to turn the counter culture into an "over the counter" culture of money-making fads and fashions, the same risks face us now. Commercialism is the besetting vice of American society. There is no question that it will continue to distort every opportunity we have to act with moral intelligence.



Lamentations about the aging of the modern world are as futile as they are unjustified. The fastest growing segment of the world industrial population is now seniors above the age of eighty-five. Survival to the age of one hundred is no longer remarkable. Some biotechnicians even speak seriously of reversing the aging process in ways that may add not years but decades to the life span. In the October 22, 1997 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, two leading microbiologists warn that all policy decisions regarding population and longevity must now take seriously the "conceptual shift" that has taken place in the genetics of aging. "The possibility of extending the maximum human life span," they announce, "has gone from legend to laboratory." The momentum of a century of crusading public health and medical research is behind the life expectancy we enjoy. Every ounce of skill, capital, and labor we invest in healthy children, good nutrition, the safety of the streets and workplace, medical care, and environmental sustainability yields more long-lived people. Every person who stops smoking or never starts, every child who is inoculated against contagious disease, every man and woman you see jogging in the park, has a better chance of living longer than their parents.

The longevity revolution is as simple to understand as putting two plain facts together. *As the size of families shrinks in all industrial societies, every succeeding younger generation will now become smaller than the last. But every-body who gets born will inherit a greater and greater opportunity to live longer.* Thus, barring another Black Plague, the result will be to extend the demographic ratio steadily toward greater age. No government is going to repeal medical science; no population that has access to political organization is going to permit its chance for a longer, healthier life to be sabotaged for the sake of profit or wasteful growth. It may take a while before we learn how to turn the longevity revolution into a coherent political agenda, but it is only a matter of time before we wake up to the fact that aging is the manifest destiny of industrial society. The sooner we accept the fact that longevity is inevitable, the sooner we will begin to realize that long life, far from being a cost, is the major benefit for which millions have been toiling since the dark Satanic mills began grinding away.

Is more life any guarantee of better life? Obviously not. Just as youth can be wasted on the young, so age can be wasted on the old. A long life burdened by poor health—worse still, a long life filled with folly and boredom—is surely not worth living. But more life does offer the opportunity to learn, to grow, to change, to serve, and to realize one's best gifts. Though it is grounded in the health of the body, the longevity revolution is essentially a spiritual transformation. With the growth of an older population there comes a more discriminate use of our resources. Older people see life from a very different angle than the heedless young or the scrambling middle-aged, and so they choose different values. Age changes people—if not uniformly, then at least in ways that can be generally characterized. The senior population has, by and large, left careers, money-making, and child-rearing behind. It has become much more preoccupied with health, companionship, and the uses of leisure. Those who can afford the cost turn to extended education, cultural events, and travel. These are choices that encourage introspection and the moderation of consumption habits in favor of a closer focus on home and family, and perhaps on the meaning of life. They are choices that all but provoke us to wisdom.

Wisdom, of course, is never guaranteed, but it is at least more likely to appear among those who have a backlog of experience to draw upon and who find themselves less entangled in the illusions of youth or the short-sighted avarice and competition of the marketplace. Elders may have had a lot to teach us in the past, but their wisdom made far less difference when the senior population was smaller, less educated, less propertied, less assertive. Now, as we approach an era of senior dominance, the values of the mature cannot be marginalized. If those values are pursued in community, with a sense of solidarity and generosity, the longevity revolution may serve as the spiritual force our society so badly needs. The Gray Panthers, for example, have always insisted that their agenda of compassion and justice must be intergenerational.

The potentially dramatic effects of the longevity revolution signal that it is more than merely a fortuitous development, a transient spin-off of our industrial power. There is an ecology of aging, a subtle pattern of biospheric forces that works to make wisdom a greater factor in our social choices. Any full analysis of longevity may begin with demographics, but it must also integrate the ideas and ideals, the values and views that people take with them into their senior years. Within such a perspective, matters that are often treated in a purely statistical manner assume a very different force. And some imponderable matters, like wisdom, that have never been taken into account become paramount. Treating longevity as an ecological factor also has significant political implications. It helps us answer the question: *who* (predominantly) is the population we are counting? And that has everything to do with the society's future.

Wisdom is likely to take a particular shape in the coming period as the baby boomers, who went through a remarkable experience as a generation in the 1960s and 1970s, become the elders of our society. Boomers have more education and more awareness of themselves as a distinct group than any generation of elders in history. In the past, certainly before the New Deal of the 1930s, the old were seen as dependents and did not regard themselves as a generation that could act together. In the future, a significant number of new elders will be people who were part of the protest movement of the 1960s and 1970s or who at least witnessed that era of dissent. They may once again come to see themselves as activists when they no longer have to face the age-appropriate tasks of getting their work life together or raising children.

In taking their place as the next older generation, boomers will face a particular challenge. The political right has already begun to question whether the old should receive any entitlements at all. Conservatives argue that Social Security and Medicare will sap the spending power of the young. Seniors will surely defend their claim to pensions and health care, but that defense is not based in selfishness. Nobody ever made a personal fortune from entitlements. Medicare payments, we should remember, do not find their way into the pockets of the retired; they are paid out to pharmaceutical houses, doctors, for-profit hospitals, insurance companies, and laboratories. The stocks of these companies are found in the portfolios of the wealthiest people in the country. Our retired population is not concerned with profit, but with independence and dignity. They do not want to become burdens to their children; their effort to defend entitlements is a compassionate and cooperative one; it invokes very different values than the predatory behavior that prevails in the market.

Activists of the coming older generation may recast the entire issue of entitlements by asking why the wealthiest society in human history should not redistribute wealth, not just to the elderly, but to anyone who has been left out. When conservatives say we cannot afford entitlements, the next generation of seniors may respond by demanding that we eliminate poverty for old and young alike. Whether we achieve that goal through programs like Social Security or through a negative income tax like the current Earned Income Tax Credit is simply a detail.

In attacking senior entitlements, the Republican right wing may be doing a great deal to jump start this radical reappraisal of our national wealth and to create a sense of solidarity that will increase among the elderly in coming decades. I do not underestimate the degree to which the dominant ethos of our society encourages a certain level of selfishness and "looking out for number one." Selfishness can play out among the elderly just as it has in every other generation. But right-wing attacks may be helping to create, for this next generation of elders, a renewed sense of "we." The new elders may be more likely than any who have preceded them to understand that "the true wealth of nations" lies in offering people a longer and healthier life.

The elderly could be our next colonized employee pool.

Speaking from my own liberal perspective, I can see any number of dark spots on the political horizon. The next elder generation is bound to include its share of Reaganite conservatives, reluctant to pay more taxes or expand government programs. (We should recall, however, that on the one occasion in 1984 when Reagan suggested repealing Social Security, he was forced to retract the proposal immediately in the face of solid elder opposition.) Perhaps there will be other unfortunate results. There will almost certainly be attempts by employers to hire retired people at lower wages. Retired workers, after all, have less need of job security and promotion since they are not building careers; many need no benefits because they have Social Security and Medicare. The elderly could be our next colonized employee pool. How such matters turn out is a matter of what we work for and fight for. But this much is certain: the virtues we associate with age—wisdom, caution, deliberation, prudence—will prove to be the very opposite of the compulsive, world-beating energy that built the market economy. As the demographic pattern of high industrial society shifts toward the senior years, these are the virtues that are bound to gain greater weight in our counsels of state. It has always been the role of elders to raise the great questions of meaning and purpose that loom large as death approaches. As we grow older we naturally become more inward and contemplative, wondering what it has all been for: the effort and the anxiety, the hard pursuit of success and acquisition.

"You can't take it with you." As familiar as the phrase may be, it is one of those clichés that happens to be indisputably true. Knowing how true is the very meaning of wisdom. And wisdom is the only wealth that lasts beyond our worldly term. ❑

SPIRITUALITY

My Wife Died Unexpectedly Last March

Bernie Glassman

My wife died unexpectedly last March.

We had just arrived in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to begin a new life. We had moved the hub of the Zen Peacemaker Order, which we had co-founded, to Santa Fe and bought an old house which needed lots of work. But it had a central courtyard, hacienda-style, and lots of room for our dogs and a big garden. Nestled in the shadows of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, it was a perfect refuge for a couple planning to be on the road for much of the year.

We arrived on Monday and moved into our house on Tuesday. The following Sunday, as we were hanging pictures on the wall, Jishu complained of chest pains. She was hurried to the hospital, where the doctors verified that she had suffered a major heart attack. For the next four days she seemed to get stronger and better. But on Thursday night Jishu suffered a second heart attack, and she left this form of existence on Friday night, March 20th, the first day of spring, four days shy of her fifty-seventh birthday.

People ask me how I'm doing. It takes a while for me to reply, for it's hard to answer them in words. Finally I tell them I'm bearing witness.

But how do you feel, they ask me.

I'm raw, I tell them.

Do you feel sad?

I shake my head. Raw doesn't feel good or bad. Raw is the smell of lilacs by the back door, not six feet away from her relics on the mantle. Raw is listening to Mahler's Fourth Symphony or the songs of Sweet Honey in the Rock. Raw is reading the hundreds of letters that come in, watching television alone at night.

Raw is letting whatever happens happen, what arises, arise. Feelings, too: grief, pain, loss, a desire to disappear, even the desire to die. One feeling follows another, one sensation after the next. I just listen deeply, bear witness.

I do some work; it's very little in comparison to former days. I am careful about how much time I spend with students and associates, for I know how easy and comfortable it is to let that raw state slip and let myself be distracted by work and talk with well-meaning friends. So I, long accustomed to being on the road, have stayed home. There are only a few people around me.

I live in a house chosen by my wife, reflecting her tastes and wishes. My own choice would be a studio in New York City's Bowery, not a house in a canyon overlooking a river. Those were the things Jishu wanted, and Jishu is gone. So I live in her house—I call it Casa Jishu—and do the things she would have loved. I greet the dawn coming over the mountains, watch the hummingbirds, prune the lilac bushes. Each time I think of the smile on her face had she been here to do these things. Instead I do them, bearing witness to her presence and her absence.

How am I doing?

I'm bearing witness. And the state of bearing witness is the state of love. ❑

Roshi Bernie Glassman is co-founder, along with his wife, Jishu Holmes, of the Zen Peacemaker Order. He is the abbot of the Zen Community of New York and the Zen Center of Los Angeles, and the author of Bearing Witness.

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"We must look deeply into the souls of the soldiers who have returned from war so we can see the real suffering that war causes.

We must learn to listen in a way that we can understand the suffering of others, to see the real losses, the real casualties of war.

Just by listening deeply, we can already alleviate a great deal of pain. The veterans in this book are the light at the tip of the candle illuminating the way.

When we come to understand the true nature of war, loving kindness will begin to surface, and healing will begin. Then a force for change will be released."

Thich Nhat Hanh, from the Foreword

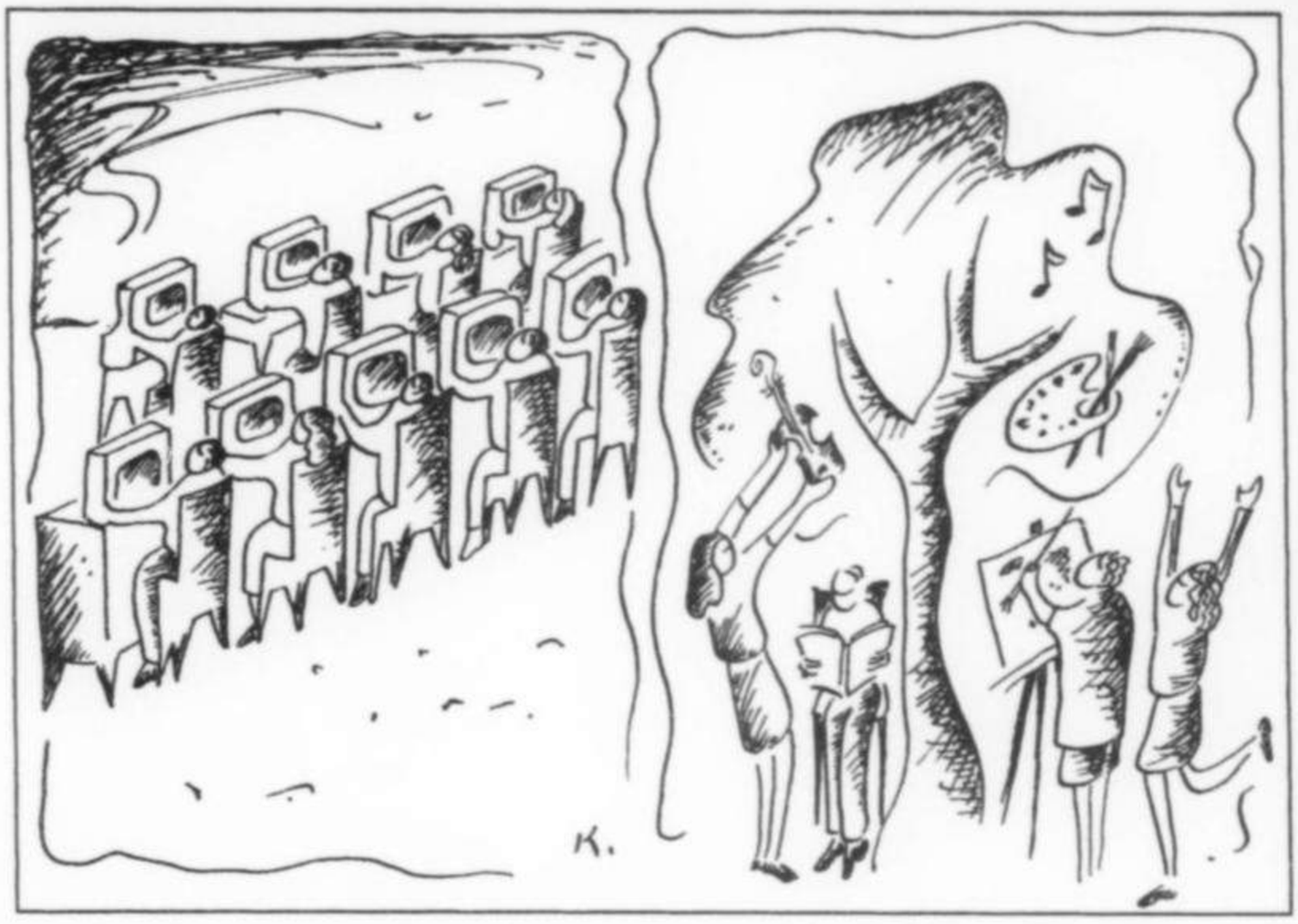
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SOUL AND SOCIETY

A Spiritual Renewal of Education



Matthew Fox

Education is everywhere in crisis. This is true not just in the failed schools of our inner cities but also in our "successful" schools where we are spending huge sums to turn out graduates who lack a moral conscience to match the power of their skills to destroy, to make greedy profits, and to despoil the earth for future generations. It shows in our preference for competition over mentorship and eldership.

The crisis in education is not just an *American* or even a *Western* dilemma, as the Dalai Lama observes when he says: "Our whole educational system is in a crisis. It can't adapt. In fact this crisis extends to industry and politics."

Since spirituality has been so neglected in academic education in the modern era, we might borrow the Freudian principle of the return of the repressed to ask: Can spirituality assist us in leading us out of this bondage? Can spirituality return us to the spiritual experience that learning is and is meant to be? The fundamentalist push to put prayer into the classroom (which recently lost a vote in the House) might not even have occurred if a secularized modern era had not eliminated altogether the ancient belief that *our minds are holy and that using them is a prayer*. The idea that learning is a prayer can be found both in the study of Torah and in the Dominican tradition where Thomas Aquinas had a running fight with the monks of his day who insisted that liturgy was more important than study. "No," said Aquinas, "Study is prayer too." By study we learn to return our gifts to the community more fully and more deeply. I propose the following five ways to begin the renewal of education.

1. For the Celtic poet W.B. Yeats, "Education is not about filling a pail but about lighting a fire." Fire is the metaphor for the chakra energy—true education must set all our chakras on fire. With Descartes, European educators were seduced into believing that education was all about the head, all about the "left brain." What about the heart? What about the guts? What about our sexuality? What about the rest of creation, represented by the first chakra? Lighting a fire means igniting the ancilla animae, the spark of the soul, and thereby creating a being on fire. And what is that fire? Thomas Aquinas says that "Compassion is the fire that Jesus came to set on the earth." I think that compassion is the fire that Buddha came to set on the earth; and Isaiah; and Sojourner Truth; and Mohammed; and Dorothy Day and more. All education worthy of the name is education in compassion. That is why it takes fire—a kind of passion—to keep it going. We teach compassion by teaching interdependence.

What is behind Yeats' observation is a *basic trust that all beings want to learn*. Learning is as natural—and as necessary for survival—as eating or drinking. It should be just as delicious. The school's role is primarily to *motivate,* to excite the mind—when that happens, the individual will learn provided there are teachers able to show the discipline of learning and to demonstrate the excitement of ideas. Yes, the fire.

2. "Awe is the beginning of wisdom" says Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. Fire comes from awe. So do passion and compassion. In the presence of awe we are in the presence of Great Mystery greater than ourselves. In the presence of awe the heart opens up and grows larger than fear (thus *courage*, a "large heart," in French). And Heschel is insisting that wisdom is possible—indeed, that wisdom is essential. E.F. Schumacher warned us that today we are "far too clever to survive without wisdom." How is wisdom different from mere knowledge? Why is wisdom so rare today? Why is there so little room for it in the forms in which we learn and teach?

Because wisdom is feminine. *Sophia* (in Greek) and *Hokum* (in Hebrew) are feminine. She walks the vaults of the sky and journeys in the sands of the deep according to the Book of Sirach. Thus she is cosmological, she cares about the *whole*, not just the part. She is always universalist (thus fundamentalism will never find her) and she is a lover of life, of the erotic. Education needs to make room for

ILLUSTRATION BY RUTH SOFAIR KETLER

Matthew Fox is author of twenty-three books including Original Blessing, The Coming of the Cosmic Christ *and* The Reinvention of Work. *He is the founder of the new University of Creation Spirituality in downtown Oakland (www.netser.com/ucs).*

eros, for love of life, for wonder, if wisdom is to return. The body must be honored for its own wisdom and its own access to truth. No one controls awe; it is bigger than us. That is why it moves us.

3. A necessary way to teach awe is by way of teaching the new cosmology. Creation stories have always recounted the awe of existence, the wonder of creation, the gratuity of our being here—until of course the modern age told us we lived in a machine and we are all here by accident. This illusion is being dispelled by science itself today. Who can take in the wonders of the pictures from the Hubble telescope and be indifferent to our existence? Cosmology heals because it puts us in a larger context than merely human history. No matter what humans do to one another, the universe *has* loved us unconditionally. Grace happens. That is awesome. Can we teach this?

Today we know that we are all fifteen billion years old, that we contain hydrogen atoms from fourteen billion years ago; that we are related to every galaxy, atom, planet, and supernova in the universe because it all began from one tiny point smaller than a pin-prick; that most of the elements of our bodies were birthed in a supernova explosion five and a half billion years ago; and that our bodies are themselves temples of awe as much as the universe itself is a divine temple.

A first grade teacher I met recently told me she spends "95 percent" of her time trying to bring awe alive again in the kids. The death of awe is the death of wisdom. The modern age and its forms of education and mass media can readily kill awe. Nothing is more dangerous, nothing more able to bring despair, than the death of awe. Education that ignores awe kills the soul. It is lethal—to ourselves and to other beings. And it is everywhere.

4. Another sure way to bring awe and wisdom alive again is through *honoring the creative process*. Creativity is always awesome, whether we are talking about the growing of food in gardening, the telling of our story in poetry or rap, the birthing of our moods in color and paint, or the dancing of our wonder or our pain. In creativity our actions link up to the creative work of the universe. Discovery and excitement happen. What we now know about the universe is that it has been profoundly creative from the get-go.

Does education consider creativity important? Our school systems tend to treat creativity as a luxury item; when there is a budget crunch it is the theater and art and music departments that are the first departments cut. Creativity is a way to deal with despair and pain and misery—it provides a language and contours for dealing with grief in all of its manifestations, including anger. I met a woman in Ohio who was asked by a judge if she could invent a school where he could send tough kids instead of to prison. Reading my works at the time, she invented a school where all the kids do from nine to four is creative arts: theater, video, rap, paint, dance, music, clay. What are the results? First, they come! (Not a bad idea if you want the next generation to be learning.) Second, they get involved and even beg to stay over and do more on weekends. Third, they learn self-discipline and then they are ready to learn other dimensions of what school can teach. A cheap way to solve many youth problems? And the social problems like crime and prison that follow from education not reaching many young people? You bet. And a lot cheaper than prisons.

Meister Eckhart warns that "becoming fruitful as a result of a gift is the only gratitude for the gift." If we want to teach gratitude, then we better start teaching how we become fruitful.

5. Picking up on Eckhart's theme is Rabbi Heschel again who warned us most prophetically that "Humanity will not perish from lack of information but from lack of appreciation." We live in a culture that proudly commends itself for its "information technology." We are indeed inundated by information in this "information age." But Heschel brings us back to reality: appreciation is more important than information. We must be educating in gratitude or we are not educating.

How do we develop a pedagogy for appreciation? Cosmology helps here too. Once we begin to know where we are and how we got here, then we might be grateful for our existence. As we relearn how interdependent we are with every other being, from ozone to forests, from soil to whales, from bees to hot lava, we might begin to reawaken thankfulness. Ritual is the gathering of those who want to give thanks; to participate in ritual we must work though such obstacles as fear or hate or despair that interfere with appreciation or gratitude. Unfortunately, it often takes a trauma to awaken gratefulness—a death or a near death, a sickness or a loss or a doing without.

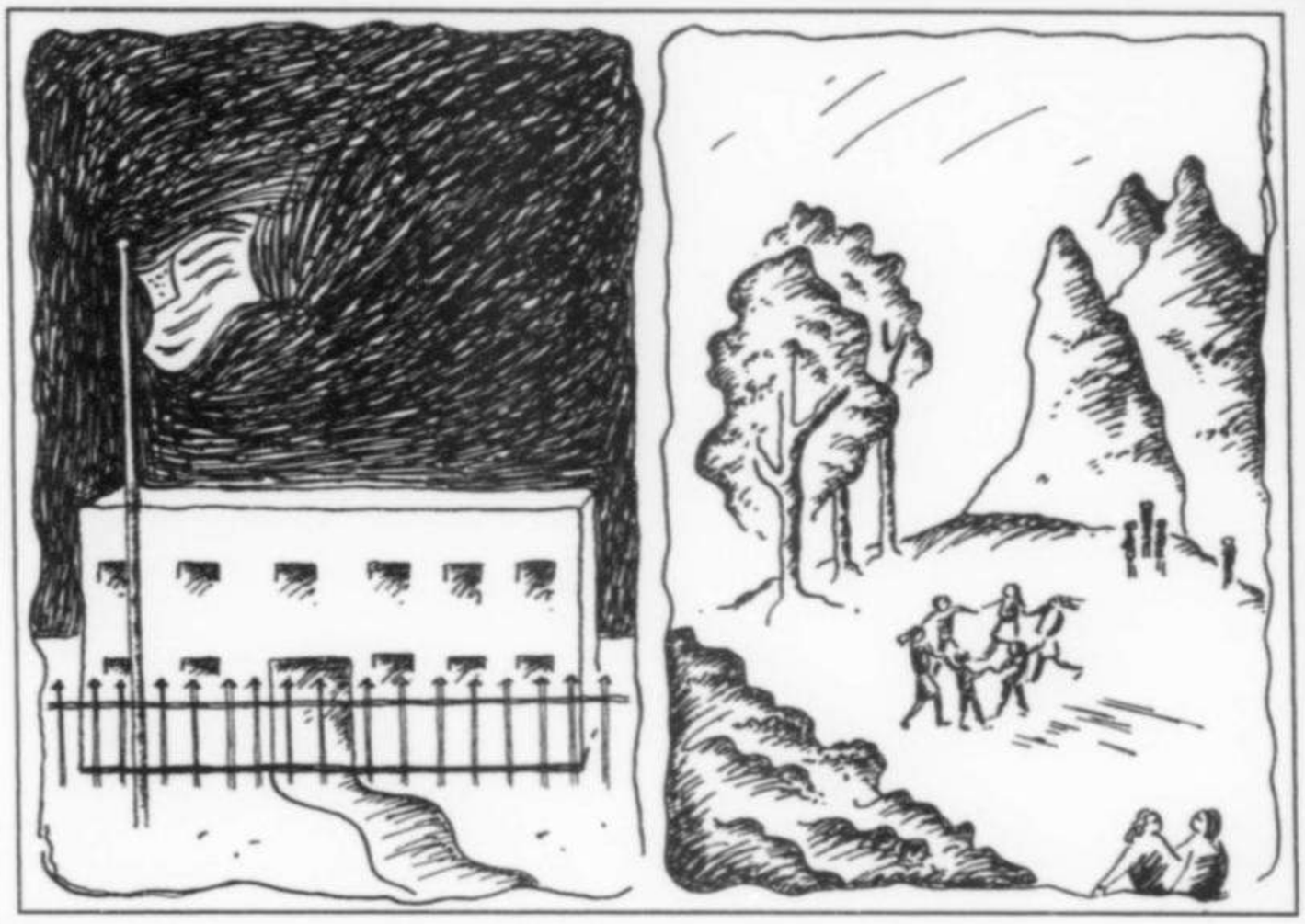
Appreciation is an attitude we take with us through life. When we grow in gratitude we have truly grown. Or, as Meister Eckhart put it, "If the only prayer you say in your whole life is 'thank you,' that would suffice."

. . .

I believe we have in these five principles the basis for a revolution in education, indeed, the basis for a postmodern pedagogy. We are busy applying them at our University of Creation Spirituality in graduate programs for adults, because wisdom, unlike knowledge, is not something adults give to children. Adults must be busy learning themselves in order to *unlearn* bad lessons from the past and to unleash their own wisdom so as to recognize it in the young. All educators, be they teachers or administrators or accrediting officials, must themselves get re-educated today in the fires of awe, wisdom, creativity, cosmology, gratitude. Only then will the young have a chance. Only then will we be responding to Heschel's challenge that education "must be of the soul, not just of the mind." ❑

EDUCATION

Putting Spirituality in Public Schools



Marlin Foxworth

America's public schools badly need a spiritual transformation. Ironically, that transformation is needed because the schools are doing a major part of their job—reflecting the society from which and for which they were created—so well. If we are to redress the lack of spiritual sustenance in education, we must address some fundamental components of our current social thinking, including: the reason we have a separation of church and state in the first place, a social ethos of selfishness and materialism, a confusion of culture with race, and the historically defensive attitude of teachers and administrators when asked to confront what is, by any standard, an overwhelming set of tasks.

Our society, almost unwittingly, has made our public schools into an institutional guardian for the separation of church and state. The original purpose for this separation was to preclude public institutions from proselytizing for a specific religion. The contemporary result, however, has been that students are not only shielded from religiosity in general or any given religion in particular, but that no attention to spirituality has been allowed into public schools at all.

One of the following assumptions always seems to be cited to justify leaving the spiritual out of public education: 1) parents will take care of that part of education; 2) religious pursuits should be left up to the individual; or 3) religion is simply not an issue that can or should be addressed by public institutions.

At the base of these assumptions, however, is the mistaken belief that religion and spirituality are identical. Religion is produced by spirituality, rather than the converse. Spirituality is not peculiar to "a people" or to a religion but is what makes us all "people." It is universal.

There is no way to educate without including the whole person. Yet there is no "whole person" without the spiritual. When public schools are expected to exclude the spiritual from their educational process and curricula, we are creating a policy that is antithetical to sound education. Since it is in the spiritual that the highest meaning, both individual and collective, is to be found, the absence of spirituality equals the absence of education as it should be. Without addressing the needs of the whole person, education is necessarily limited in its possibilities.

If we are to pursue spirituality in public schools, we first need to confront other ways in which society limits its definition of what a person is and can be. To start, we must confront the reality that our society is powerfully locked into an ethos of selfishness and materialism that blocks people from reaching for their highest spiritual needs. Instead, many Americans appear to despair of building the kind of society they really want, a society based on spiritual values, love, caring, and ethical sensitivity.

That despair leads to the perception that pursuit of a social system steeped in spirituality is unreal and, therefore, nonsensical. Consistent with that despair is the perception that schools are to prepare students for success in the real world rather than for the creation of an ideal one. Public school education increasingly is expected to focus on preparing students for success in a "second choice" society that has abandoned spiritual values.

Should you ask most teenagers what the purpose of an education is, the answer most consistently forthcoming is, "to get a better job." The major source of criticism of public education comes from business people who claim that schools are doing an inadequate job of preparing students for tasks at the workplace.

Since it is reasonable to assume that most people working for a living in our country went to its public schools, that perception of inadequate preparation is contradicted by the agreement among the same business people that we are in a healthy economy. What is missing from our schools more than perceived adequacy in preparing students for work is the absence of a curriculum that will enable students to assess our economy, the meaning people find in it,

ILLUSTRATION BY RUTH SOFAIR KETLER

Marlin Foxworth, Ph.D., is Superintendent of the Hayward Unified School District in Hayward, California. He is also an adjunct professor in the Education Leadership Program at St. Mary's College, Moraga, California.

the demeaning that also results from it, and its impact on our spirituality as a people.

It is sensible for public schools to prepare students to be productive workers. It is certainly no less important to prepare students to question why an economy is called "healthy" when we see more and more people pushing shopping carts filled with empty aluminum cans. While getting ready to get a job, students also need to be able to figure out why, in the midst of such economic largesse, there is so much poverty and why it is visited so disproportionately on people of color. No less important than learning how to pursue a good salary is learning how to address the reality that some women receive a smaller salary than men doing the same job. While learning how to be a good employee for companies doing business internationally, students also need to learn why it is acceptable for U.S. businesses to lay off U.S. workers, move their manufacturing facilities into other countries, and radically maximize profits while radically minimizing wages. While learning to work, students should learn what must happen in the workplace for it to provide not just the most money, but the most meaning.

A large part of such an education must include a redefinition of what the "real world" is and who is in it. America's public school students come to class with a breadth of experience far more varied than the curricula, teaching methodologies, and the values and assumptions on which they are based represent, in part because educational institutions have not been able to change as rapidly as does the society in which the schools reside.

Consider the situation I face: twenty years ago the California school district I serve as superintendent was almost entirely white Anglo-Saxon Protestant in composition. Today, of our 22,065 students in kindergarten through the 12th grade, 77 percent are children of color. Approximately 47 percent of our students have a primary language other than English and about half of them are limited English Proficient. Thirty-four languages are spoken in the district. Of our 21,000 adult school students, over 50 percent are people of color. Many of our students come to us from countries torn by war.

Unfortunately, the well intentioned effort in public schools to value and celebrate such diversity is contributing, unwittingly, to the diminishing possibilities for public schools to be a locus for the pursuit of meaning and spirituality. Diversity tends to be defined in educational circles as the sum of the inevitable differences in our varied skin pigmentations, hair textures, languages, cultures, and races. Given that such variety is inevitable, this definition leads to the belief that we can never be one people, and the goal of social relations becomes nothing more than peaceful coexistence.

The flaw in this approach is the assumption that pigmentations, textures, languages, cultures, and races are the structural elements of inalterable and irreversible human difference and separation. The point is not that one person's skin is of a different color or hair of a different texture than another's, but that they both have skin and hair. It is not that something substantively different comes out of one skin color or hair texture as contrasted to another, but that all of us have skin color and hair texture into which things are read and about which assumptions are made.

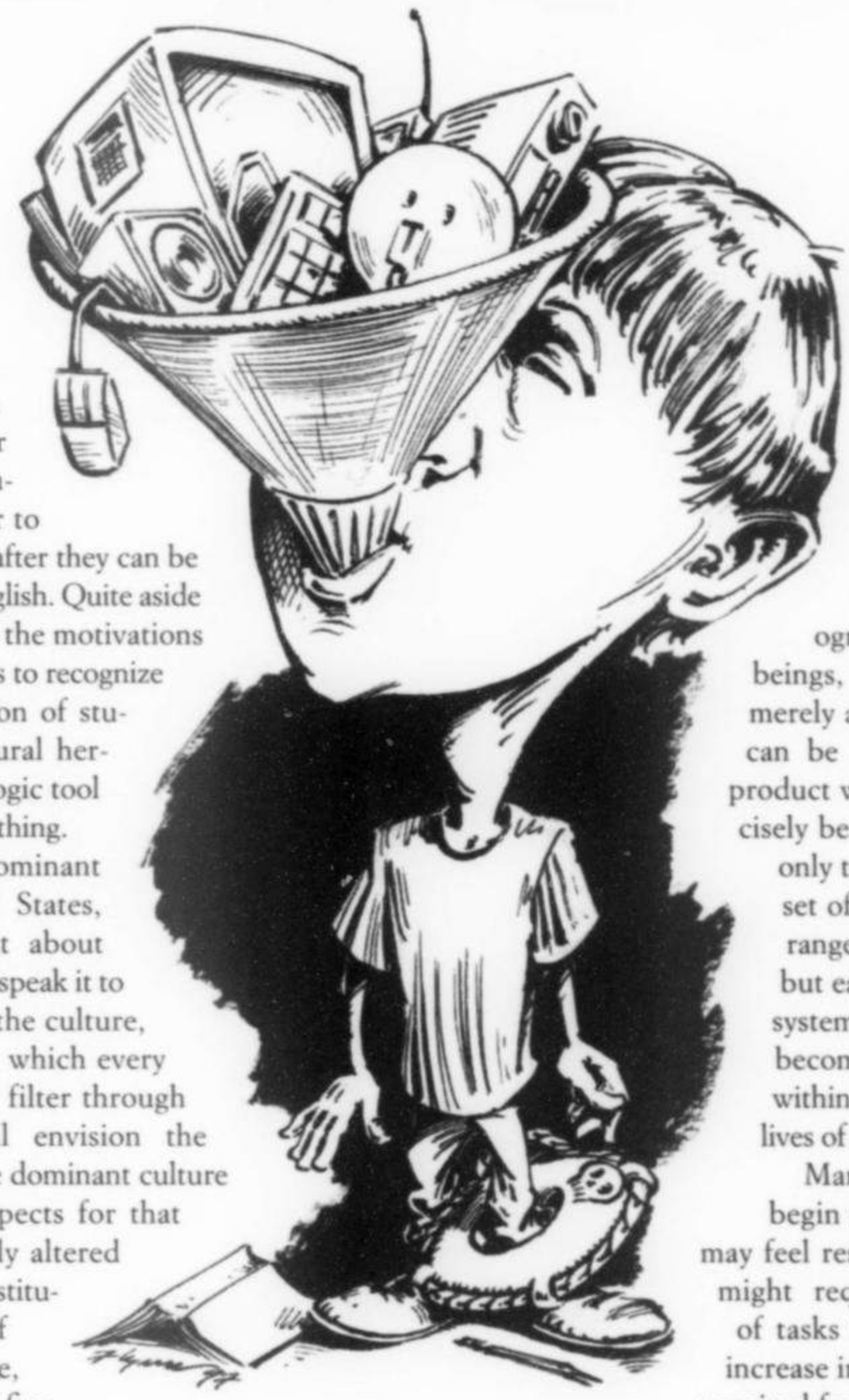
The point is not that one of us speaks English, another Spanish, and another Vietnamese, but that we each have a system of sound that has meaning. It is not that one of us has some ancestors traceable to a different continent than another of us. It is that each of us has a set of human experiences, varied in detail and nuance, none more or less human than another, through which we see our prospects for meaning and respectful social treatment and from which we conclude the appropriateness for group affiliation.

The concept of race, itself, damages the prospects for finding meaning. Race is a social, not a scientific construct. Historically, the utility of the concept of race has derived from what is read into and assumed about combinations of hair texture and skin pigment and the social stratification that correlates with or results from those interpretations and/or assumptions. Maintaining a concept of race accrues to the benefit only of those who benefit most materially from such stratification.

This concept of race produces a syllogism which has strong currency in our society and which, therefore, influences what public schools produce and what meaning our students can glean from school experience. If my race and your race are different and if our views of the world are each tied to our respective races, then each of us is absolved of the responsibility of seeing the world through each other's eyes because we cannot.

If we are unable to see the world as someone in another race does, then we are left with what Presidents Bush and Clinton have pushed for: racial tolerance. Racial tolerance works as long as what we need in order to find dignity and meaning does not mean that I have to give up some of what I have. For example, ethnic or women's studies programs are tolerable unless and until one or a combination of the following occur: 1) their existence reduces resources available for curricula and pedagogy consistent with perspectives of the dominant culture; 2) they become required courses.

This concept of race is antithetical to the pursuit of dignity and meaning in public schools. Instead, it should be replaced with the concept of culture. Culture is learned and is, therefore, learnable. A focus on culture yields a recognition that the difference in people is not in how we are structured as human beings, but in the social tools we use to express the reality that we are all exactly, historically, perennially, universally, and inalterably the same. Recognizing and celebrating our identical sameness as human beings along with our cultural differences, rather than focusing on "racial differences," will enhance the prospects for public schools



to contribute to the pursuit of meaning and spirituality for students and educators alike.

A recent initiative passed in California highlights this issue. Proposition 227 requires that limited- or non-English proficient students be given only a year to learn English so that thereafter they can be in classes taught only in English. Quite aside from any consideration of the motivations behind this initiative, it fails to recognize that the forced obliteration of students' language and cultural heritage is not a sound pedagogic tool for genuine learning of anything.

Since English is the dominant language in the United States, there is everything right about teaching those who do not speak it to do so. At the same time, the culture, including language, from which every student comes is a major filter through which any student will envision the prospects for engaging the dominant culture in any society. The prospects for that engagement are negatively altered when public schools, as institutional representatives of that dominant culture, move from struggling to refine a process for blended cultural inclusivity to a blunt, simplistic demand for sameness. Suppose a student can't learn English in a year but, nonetheless, must take all classes in that language anyway. Not only will s/he be more likely to fail and drop out of school, but their educational experience will be even less useful in their search for value and meaning, both within themselves and with those who share with them a common social origin and primary culture.

Similarly, that pursuit of meaning can be inhibited by the current attempt in state and national education policy circles to ignore the subjective experience of students, irrespective of ethnicity, and to focus exclusively on academic standards. Students often come to school in a great deal of pain from their lives in troubled families and from the sometimes frightening interactions they have had on the streets of both our cities and suburbs. The pain they bring with them to school interferes with their ability to learn. Yet teachers and school systems are increasingly under pressure to ignore this dimension of their experience and to simply teach basics, as though that can be done successfully with students whose pain level is so high that they find it difficult to concentrate on the material being presented to them.

Our students come to class with needs that must be addressed or, at least, acknowledged before they are likely to make good use of what we are offering in the way of instruction. We have to recognize who they are as human beings, rather than look at them merely as very clever machines that can be programmed to acquire a product we call knowledge. Yet, precisely because we have been trained only to teach students a particular set of skills, addressing the fuller range of human needs is anything but easy. There is little within our system that would prepare us to become agents of change, both within the school system and in the lives of our individual students.

Many would not know how to begin making such changes: some may feel resentful that their work now might require a broader definition of tasks without any corresponding increase in pay or decrease in the time required for traditional forms of educational work. In effect, schools are being expected to take on the problems of the larger society that other societal institutions cannot or will not face. For example, when I started as a teacher in the 1960s, we did not have to deal with teenage pregnancy, AIDS, students coming hungry to school every day, drugs, gangs and gang conflict, violence, or guns. Our teachers today are asked to take on this host of societal problems during the same hours that they are being paid to teach academic subjects. Ironically, the people in the larger society who are asking us to address all these societal issues often are the same people who are complaining simultaneously about our failure to help students do better academically.

It does not take long for teachers and administrators to recognize we are being asked to do an overwhelming set of tasks. Since we educators are no different from other people, we often feel despair about the prospects for changing society. Consequently, we frequently accommodate reality as it exists and take a defensive stance to protect ourselves from these overwhelming demands. Unfortunately, this leads easily to real resistance to changes that could reason-

ILLUSTRATION BY JIM FLYNN

ably take place in schools, changes that would allow greater sensitivity to the spiritual and meaning needs of our students and of ourselves.

Teachers' unions and administrative organizations (some are now unions) were formed initially to protect their members from systemic abuses, including the insistence that more or varied tasks be taken on without sufficient training and/or additional compensation. Although those of us in such organizations personally may have a favorable predisposition toward a meaning- and spiritually-oriented school system, there is no comparable predisposition in the structure of our organizations. Essentially, those organizations are set up as Us-vs.-Them, serving to advance OUR interests and to block THEIR interference in OUR pursuit of them. In light of that reality, innovation is sometimes blocked on the grounds that it might create new requirements without corresponding compensation.

Organizations protecting school district teachers, administrators, and other staff also are increasingly pursuing power and control of the systems in which the employees work. While such organizations secure their members additional power and control, there is no corresponding shift in systemic accountability. Although union/organization members and leaders are as responsible as any other employees of a school system, any unsatisfactory practice ensconced in a district as a result of the exercise of their organization's power and influence will not result in systemic discipline being visited on them. It is still school district administrators who will get fired or otherwise disciplined under such circumstances. The struggle around power/control and accountability is a distraction from the collective focus needed in public schools necessary to provide the pursuit of meaning and spirituality we so desperately need.

Also problematic is the reality that even thinking in these long-term strategic ways is rarely part of the discourse in public schools. Often you hear teachers and administrators say things like, "Let's quit philosophizing and get on with it." The overwhelming burden of just getting through undermines our ability to think about our own best, long-term self-interest. Assaults on the school system from outside leave many of us feeling that we are surrounded by a meanness of spirit that is so powerful that all we can do is protect ourselves, primarily by securing an increase in compensation.

Examples of historic abuse make the protective and power/control seeking nature of unions and administrative organizations understandable. Yet, without some reform, that focus may become self-defeating. Unless we transform schools in ways that really speak to the larger spiritual crisis in our society, our schools will fail and the public will defund the enterprise. The result will be profoundly negative consequences to teachers, administrators and the whole system.

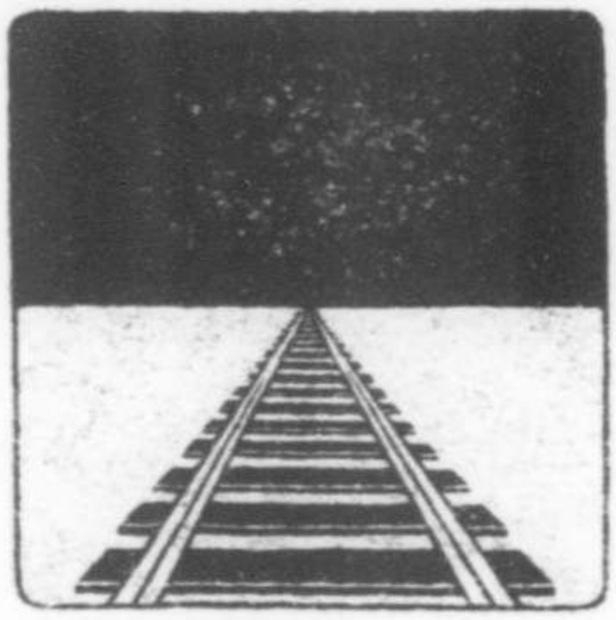
Here are some things that could be done in school districts if we intend to address the crisis in meaning and spirituality:

- Make it requisite for graduation that each student engages in a senior project which demonstrates how that student manifests the values of caring, solidarity, or support for others—thus validating the notion that schools are not only about individual success but about caring for others. To award the student whose projects are found to be the best, every administrator in the district and as many teachers and staff as possible should gather on the street outside the homes of each of those students, ask them and their parents to come out, and cheer the worth of the student's work. All students who participate in such a project should be acknowledged in some clear way for having done so.
- Sponsor community celebrations which, in addition to acknowledging students for their academic prowess, will honor students, families, teachers, and staff who have demonstrated their capacities to be supportive, nurturing, and ethical.
- Construct spiritual (as opposed to religious) ceremonies to encourage students to develop appreciation for Us, in our many cultural manifestations, as contrasted to accepting an Us-vs.-Them mentality.
- Create an advisory board of community groups to participate with the district in envisioning what the schools require to best serve the interests and needs of the community. Incorporate broad representation of community groups, including senior citizens, ethnic organizations, families on AFDC, business organizations, gays and lesbians, people from all socio-economic strata, women's organizations, religious leaders, civic leaders, employee organizations, etc.
- Create a student volunteer corps to work with senior citizens and another to work on ecological issues.

These are just a few of the concrete steps we might take if we are to move toward creating a school system that addresses the meaning and spiritual dimensions of human needs.

Please do not underestimate the amount of resistance that will come from both inside and outside our school systems when we try to move them in this direction. I believe the Politics of Meaning as a vision could make a powerful impact on our school systems were it introduced as an official approach, as our shared goal in education. If all of our students, new to our society or not, irrespective of ethnicity or socio-economic status, are to find meaning in their education, their histories and life experiences must be included in the process.

It is only when people feel that they are fully recognized as intrinsically valuable human beings that they let their guards down enough to begin to engage in deep learning. In the pursuit of human meaning and spirituality we can find that as human beings we are exactly the same, each of us precious. A step in the right direction, indeed. ❑



PERSONAL ESSAY

RESCUE
WARSAW 1989

Dorien Ross



It is late afternoon. I am sitting in the room with the sun and the white tablecloth. You know the one? There must be such a room there also in your country. In your city. But I never found it.

In your country, Anna, in your city, I found only one such room and even this, a sad, and yes pathetic, attempt at tenderness admits such ruin. It was surprisingly enough an afternoon tea parlor where hot chocolate was served. The room was large, relatively quiet and not yet tyrannized by a sense of purpose. The chocolate was served in old-fashioned porcelain cups in the style of the turn of the century. That the cups and saucers were chipped mattered, as you know, not in the least. Easy chairs, sofas and rugs presented a leisurely but broken atmosphere. A missing arm from this chair and a leg from that one expressed the futility we knew was everywhere.

You felt that the posters plastered all over the city expressed it best. There were the two side by side. In commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the war. A large calendar with the years 1939 through 1945 burnt out, and smoke rising from behind the numbers. Next to that, another poster with a calendar and the years 1945 through 1989 stamped over with a sickle and hammer. This had left only these few months of free time. Time that was not burnt or stamped, and this was what I meant by the pathetic attempt of the furniture.

You said, "*I can take you under the ground. When I look at the streets, I see bunker numbers. When I make a left turn here, I am crossing the tracks. The old world is not dead. I can take you there.*"

I wanted to see the bunkers of the ghetto under the ground. I wanted to see the ruins. The railroad tracks leading away from the city. It came like a blow the news that just last year, the government had decided to remove the last of the tracks where the trains left for the east. And now instead there is simply a white marble plaque. I do not know why this hurts me. Pains me. Wakes me up. Meeting you was a small redemption. Small as any one person can be. Small but significant.

Anna, I said, Anna. Do not be a custodian for this tragedy. The Cassandra of Warsaw with her ear to the ground, I teased. But we both know how serious you are and that it is probable that you will not leave until every last one of them is dead and buried. Each one older than the next. But the way you speak of them as if they are your most vibrant friends. The resistance fighters of the ghetto uprising. There is this one and that one! How you speak about them! How you do go on!

Anna, I think we are both possessed. I must tell you this. Why not leave? Take that job in Israel. Begin a new life with David. Forget about this Warsaw of yours. Didn't you say there were old Polish woman in Haifa who speak in whispers, a cultured Polish that vanished with the turn of the century? The hushed tones of the tea parlors, and the elegant shoes your grandmother so loved, were there in Haifa, embracing you like a lullaby from the imagined lost world. Anna, leave, why not?

I have a confession for you. Only a few months before my trip, I encouraged, passionately appealed to my lover to return to Warsaw to save the archives. The ones I told you are dissolving into dust in that old abandoned house on Wilsona street. I appealed to his manhood of all things. Called "the rescue" his life work. It is preposterous. What did I know? I had never been. I knew nothing. Nothing. Even after he told me that he found his parents' departure orders there, in the dust, dissolving along with the rest, still I had no mercy. What did I think I was doing?

"I am afraid I will break down. Yet there is no one else to do it," he said.

"You must then," I said. "You must."

"Yes," he agreed, "it is my life work. But it is a life I cannot live. I study Polish history. The texts bring me close enough to the loved world lost. But I am protected. Like a good marriage. Not too much passion. The necessary distance."

My sympathy was terse. Because I believed *I could do this. I would do it.* If I spoke all the languages he did. The Yiddish. The Russian. The Polish. The German … I would go. I would save the records, the newspapers, the journals of Jewish life between the Wars. The one thousand handwritten notes from the children.

We are different I thought, watching him fidget across the couch of my New York City apartment. I will never marry without passion.

He did.

I went to Warsaw. ❑

Dorien Ross is the author of the novel Returning to A *(City Lights Books, 1995). Her work has been published in* Best American Essays *(1991). "Rescue, Warsaw 1989" is an excerpt from a work in progress,* Notes From Central Park.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIC FIELD

Starting with the Young

General Colin L. Powell

If the foundations be destroyed," demands the Psalmist, "what can the righteous do?" It is a timeless and timely question. The foundations of civilized society do not maintain themselves; they must be kept in constant repair through concerted civil action. These days, thoughtful Americans are becoming uneasily cognizant that our country's foundations need shoring up. Amid our current affluence, the realization is creeping in that it is not enough to have a strong economy, 3 percent unemployment, and affordable interest rates. It is not enough if our current prosperity does not uplift every American. It is not enough if the more successful of us are not reaching out to our fellow citizens who are less well off. Above all, it is not enough if millions of children are at risk of being left out and left behind in today's America—and yet millions are.

Millions of our young people lack the fundamental resources they need to grow up into strong, confident, self-supporting adults. Hence they are vulnerable to drugs, lawlessness, irresponsible sex, dropping out, and the other pitfalls and pathologies of modern life. If we don't reach out to these youngsters now, they may grow up unfit for any kind of life other than dependency or crime, and the social consequences for this country could be calamitous.

If we don't reach out to these youngsters now, they may grow up unfit for any kind of life other than dependency or crime.

Because our youth represent our future, I have concluded that the best way to begin shoring up America's foundations is by helping the young. Helping the young not only brings out our best and most generous impulses, it also helps to instill in the young people themselves the habits of caring and good citizenship. It trains them to tend the foundations after we are gone.

For a year and a half now, I have been serving as chairman of America's Promise—The Alliance for Youth. America's Promise was launched in Philadelphia in April 1997 at the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, a watershed event in the history of American civic action. At the behest of every living president of the United States and every living First Lady, thousands of national leaders—governors, mayors, corporate executives, media celebrities, and leaders of nonprofit associations and communities of faith—met at our nation's birthplace to address the needs of the next generation of Americans.

In Philadelphia, we mapped out a campaign to give America's at-risk youth a decent chance at life. Our objective is to provide at-risk youngsters with access to five fundamental resources they need to become successful, contributing adult members of society. These five resources are:

- An ongoing relationship with a caring adult—a parent, mentor, tutor or coach;
- Safe places and structured activities during non-school hours;
- A healthy start;
- A marketable skill through effective education; and
- An opportunity to give back through service to others.

There is nothing about these five resources that should cause any observer to shout "Eureka!" They are plain common sense. We know that if a child doesn't have a caring adult in his or her life, that child is headed for trouble. Likewise, we know that if children don't have safe places and something constructive to do after school, they are going to be tempted into gangs and undisciplined behavior. Common sense further informs us that if youngsters are troubled by poor vision, hearing disabilities, or other undiagnosed health problems, they are not going to do well in school. If they don't get a decent education and learn marketable skills, they won't be able to land good jobs. Finally, we know that if young people do not learn the rudiments of good citizenship early in life, they are not likely to be civic-minded when they grow up.

Keeping America's Promise requires a national response. At the Presidents' Summit in Philadelphia, we brought together all sectors of American society in a non-partisan, non-ideological effort to help disadvantaged youth. Our job since has been to replicate our success in Philadelphia in communities all across the nation.

We have encouraged states and communities to mount their own summit conferences on behalf of at-risk youth. Communities that make a formal commitment to provide

General Colin L. Powell, USA (Ret.) is chairman of America's Promise.

the five America's Promise Fundamental Resources to a specific number of local young people are formally designated Communities of Promise. In Chicago this past April, on the first anniversary of America's Promise, I met with sixty-seven mayors from communities around the country that had committed to provide the five fundamental resources to half a million young people.

At the national level, we have secured hundreds of commitments from corporations and nonprofit service organizations. LensCrafters, for example, has provided thousands of children with free eye care. Pfizer has pledged $2 million in medicines for children; Ronald McDonald House Charities pledged $100 million to support the goals of America's Promise; Oracle has set up a $100 million foundation to provide cash-strapped schools with access to computers.

Among the nonprofits, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America has promised to increase the number of youth served by 500,000. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America has pledged to double the number of mentoring relationships it provides by the year 2000, and involve each match in community service activity. The Lions, the Kiwanis, and the Elks are all beefing up their youth service initiatives. B'nai B'rith and the National Jewish Coalition for Literacy are mobilizing thousands of volunteers for literacy and tutoring programs.

These few examples—and they are just a few out of hundreds—illustrate how America's Promise has rallied efforts for youth around the five America's Promise Fundamental Resources to multiply their impact. We have become a catalyst, precipitating new partnerships for youth between government, business, schools, nonprofits, and volunteers. Our task now is to sustain the momentum we have generated. We need to increase our major pledges; corporate America in particular can and should do more to invest in the young people who are their future workers, customers, and stockholders. We need to recruit more Communities of Promise. We need to create Schools of Promise that will help connect young people with the five fundamental resources in the place where they spend such an important part of their day. We need to better coordinate our efforts with those of other organizations that serve youth—ideally, we will do this through a shared commitment to the five fundamental resources. Finally, we need to motivate more Americans to join us in this campaign.

A study conducted by the Lions Club International says that the main reason why people shy away from volunteering is that they feel they don't have the time. One way to tap this reserve of potential volunteers is for employers to give employees paid leave for this purpose. Time Warner, for example, has a "Time to Read" program that gives employees time off to tutor. This year alone, Time Warner's employees are expected to contribute a million volunteer hours helping children to read. The public sector can do the same. In June, I was in Hartford, Connecticut for an



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEANETTE ORTIZ OSORIO

The obvious antidote to civic apathy is for those who are still on the benches to get out onto the field.

America's Promise state summit event. John Rowland, Connecticut's governor, used the occasion to sign into law a bill giving an extra week's vacation to state employees who become mentors through local chapters of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

Volunteering is the quintessentially American way of shoring up the foundations of society. It is the concomitant responsibility that comes with our individual right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." If we neglect that responsibility, we risk becoming "shut up in the solitude of our own hearts," a state Alexis de Tocqueville believed would be the result of democratic individualism run rampant.

This past June, the National Commission on Civic Renewal, chaired by former Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia and former Secretary of Education William Bennett, warned that we are in danger of becoming "a nation of spectators." The obvious antidote to civic apathy is for those who are still on the benches to get out onto the field. And there is no better place to start than by helping the young. ❑

"Decency" in the Arts

by Marcia Pally

In the late 1980s, performance artist and NEA grant recipient Karen Finley took off her clothes and smeared herself with chocolate to symbolize the shit women put up with. Most of the audience at the 1 AM performance I saw thought Finley's feminist point was emphatic, if messy, but leaders of the political and religious right did not see it that way—at least as they read about it in the papers. They saw Finley's piece as an unnecessarily pornographic way of expressing oneself which decent people shouldn't have to pay taxes to support. They complained to Congress, and Finley and three other artists whose work addressed AIDS or (homo)sexuality—John Fleck, Holly Hughes, Tim Miller—lost their grants. In return, the artists sued the government, accusing the NEA of discriminating against them on the basis of their ideas, thereby violating Constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression. Thus was the beginning of the nine-year court fight that ended on June 25, 1998 when the Supreme Court, in "The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) v. Karen Finley *et al.*," upheld the now-famous "decency test" for NEA grants. That decision has broad implications—though at the moment, unclear ones—not only for American art but for all public programs that fund the ideas, research, or expression of Americans.

In 1989, during the controversy that followed Ms. Finley's new clothes, Congress passed its first law prohibiting the NEA from funding provocative art. Reflecting the conservative shift in Congress during the Reagan and Bush administrations, the law prohibited NEA grants for art that is obscene, sadomasochistic, homoerotic or that depicts the sexual exploitation of children. The statute was declared unconstitutional in 1991 (in a case called Bella Lewitzky Dance Foundation v. Frohnmeyer)—not only because the broad prohibition against homoeroticism and sado-masochism disqualified much of Western art (including images of the Crucifixion) but also because the Supreme Court reaffirmed that government may not discriminate against the ideas of its citizens.

In 1990, when it became clear that the courts would not sustain the 1989 prohibitions, Congress passed a second law creating the "decency test." The test holds that the NEA, when awarding grants, must "take into consideration general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the American public."

("Decency" has no precise legal definition and is a subjective judgment, unlike "obscenity," which is illegal in the United States.) The 1990 law also required that grant recipients promise in writing not to violate the "decency" test—a requirement artists quickly dubbed the "loyalty oath." In response, Finley *et al.* extended their suit to challenge the "decency test."

In their case, the artists claimed that the "decency test" discriminates against controversial ideas and that it is vague, thereby casting a shadow over a wide range of art which the NEA will therefore be wary of funding. The artists asked: What precisely is "decency"? What is the line between disagreement and disrespect? Whose "standards," "beliefs," and "values" should artists respect—those of a high school teacher in Brooklyn, a race car driver in Kansas City? Who will determine what these standards are? How can every NEA project reflect the values of all U.S. citizens?

In addition to these objections, the artists made a very particular claim about the government's ability to discriminate against ideas in projects that it funds, and it is this part of the case that will most influence artistic, educational, and research institutions. The artists' argument was called "Rust v. Sullivan," a case in which the the Supreme Court held that government may indeed select what information is dispensed in federally-funded family planning clinics (to include, for instance, discussion of birth control but to prohibit information on abortion) because government may control (choose, limit) its own speech. Free speech advocates had disagreed, arguing that government money comes from all Americans and that the government may not favor some ideas over others. Though the court rejected this argument in the case of the government's speech, it did rule that government may not discriminate against expression in its programs that support the speech of the people. Since the NEA is such a people's-speech program, the government may not—according to "Rust"—withhold grants on the basis of the content (topic) or viewpoint (pro or con) of grant applicants.

In rejecting the artists' position in Finley *et al.*, the Supreme Court created a middle position between the government's own expression and the people's expression. When the government acts as "patron," the Court said, selecting expression on subjective criteria, the government "may advise" one of its own funding agencies to include "decency" among its standards. The funding agency is then free to follow

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that advice, or to reject it. "May advise" are the key words for, the Court said, had Congress "required" the NEA to include the "decency test," the requirement would have been unconstitutional. Since Congress only advised the NEA to use the "decency test," it stands. This leaves those seeking government support in an ambiguous position. Since almost all U.S. universities, for example, receive government grants, they, along with artists and research organizations, will be affected by government funding programs that "may" include "decency" as a criteria.

"In other words," said Marjorie Heins, director of the Arts Censorship project of the American Civil Liberties Union which represented Finley *et al.* against the government, "in this political climate, researchers are less likely to apply to the National Endowment for the Humanities with a proposal that is provocative or highly critical of the government." Such a proposal might be seen as not respecting the "values of the American public" and be refused. "Once a government agency does that, it creates a chilling effect," in which researchers, artists, and writers limit themselves, pursuing less controversial projects in order to get funding. Indeed, the effects of the "decency" clause were quick. According to the National Association of Artists' Organizations, some artists were denied grants, some narrowed the scope of their projects, and others were discouraged from applying altogether (believing their work would be rejected). Moreover, the "decency" clause impeded artists' ability to attract private funding and restricted what artists created with it. Because NEA grants are an imprimatur of excellence, they encourage private backers (in 1993, the $120 million of NEA grants generated $1.1 billion in private support). Failure to get an NEA grant, for whatever reason, reduces an artist's chances of attracting private money. Additionally, should artists find private backing, they are limited in what they may do with it. Since NEA grants are based on artists' past portfolios, any privately-funded work that is not "decent" could impede artists' chances of earning NEA grants in the future.

This chilling has led, wrote columnist Frank Rich in *The New York Times*, to "an increasing wave of self-censorship, in culture both high and low.... The more self-censorship that ensues, the more our culture becomes pabulum. Since its Enola Gay disaster [an exhibit about the W.W.II atomic bombing of Japan which veterans groups vehemently protested], the Smithsonian has postponed (apparently forever) an exhibit on the Vietnam War, even as its National Air and Space Museum has staged an elaborate debate-free exhibit on Hollywood's fictional 'Star Wars.'" In the effort to prevent funding controversial work, Congress has required that more NEA grants go to non-urban areas, has prohibited the NEA from awarding grants to individuals (except in literature), and has prohibited institutions that win grants from giving money to third parties. In fact, Heins believes the court's ruling will not significantly affect the NEA because "it is already very cautious. If there isn't political support for



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARILYN HUMPHRIES / IMPACT VISUALS

Karen Finley in front of Provincetown Hall where her piece "The American Chestnut" which contains partial nudity was performed.

funding provocative work, the laws don't matter. The NEA is fighting for its life in Congress. It will be cautious."

The debate about public funding for the NEA reflects historical tensions in the American social contract. Suspicious of centralized power, the authors of the Articles of Confederation (1781–1789) gave great government control to localities rather than to the federal government, hobbling counties—much less states—from coordinating economic, civil, and judicial life. The chaos led to the Constitutional Convention and a more binding version of the social contract. Under the Constitution then ratified, citizens contribute (taxes) to a common pool, administered by a central power (state or federal), which pays for projects and polices in their area or other people's areas. Since then, America has been tinkering with the balance of rights between national and state governments, individuals and groups, minorities and majorities. With the unbearable lightness of individualism, Americans have never rested easy with their money going to someone else's project. Those on the Left who withheld taxes during the Vietnam war and those on the Right who have withdrawn into Christian or neo-fascist enclaves and often pay no taxes at all act from the same impulse.

Americans are also a puritanical people, with approach-avoidance feelings about sex. Provocative or sexual imagery thus becomes an "obvious" source for social problems (violence, drugs, unwed mothers, rising welfare rolls). Being pragmatically optimistic, we have a penchant for quick fixes; we believe if we ban the bad pictures, we will be rid of the bad acts. This is the reasoning, for instance, behind the new "family friendly" PAX-TV, starting in the fall. As the full-page ad in *The New York Times* informed us, it's "free of explicit sex, free of senseless violence, free of foul language." That'll fix it. Fax me when it's done.

This ban-the-bad-images solution for social problems prevails in spite of large amounts of data, both American and international, experimental and correlational, that pictures of sex (with or without NEA funding) do not cause anti-social conduct. Sadly, neither do pictures of violence, except in the immediate conduct of small children (for a review of the



science, see, *Sex & Sensibility*, 1994, Ecco Press). If you show a three-year-old a video of someone bopping a doll over the head, the child might try bopping his doll. This is not to say the child will become a doll-bopper (or mugger or wife beater) as an adult. I say "sadly" for if two-dimensional bad images caused bad behavior, we could wipe out the behavior by eliminating the bad pictures. We could promote good conduct by showing good pictures to one and all. This is the optimistic view; it has not yet worked (in controlled experiments, or life). Showing young people movies with "good" values, research has found, does not produce changes in their real world behavior. Conduct is caused instead by a complex interlocking of three-dimensional factors—biological, familial, social, economic, and political. If a child is raised in a home and community where conflict is addressed by reasonable negotiation most of the time, a steady stream of action movies may prompt some shoot 'em up play acting, but not the world view, values, or identity that motivate lifelong behavior. Changing these complex, real-world motivators is a long, daunting process which offends American can-do-ism. Thus, the NEA found itself the target of two lines of fire—one against federalism and the other against bad pics—both fueled by the great American strengths of optimism, pragmatism, and individualism.

In 1965, the NEA was created on the social contract idea of a common pool to support the arts. Grants have ranged from $250,000 for large institutions to $5,000 for individuals. The total NEA budget reached $176 million in 1992, then was trimmed by Congress to $120 million in 1993. The budget for next year is $98 million, the result of last-minute concessions by Republicans who did not want to close the agency—as conservatives have been threatening to do since 1995—in an election year since it would offend both wealthy patrons who make tax deductible contributions to the arts and businessmen whose hotels and restaurants benefit from arts-generated tourism. Even when the NEA budget was at its highest, its funds were, as one arts supporter put it, less than the budget for one inch of one B-52 bomber. Grant applications are judged by peer review, rotating panels of artists in the field with particular attention to preventing discrimination against controversial work. As the founding statute says: "Countless times in history, artists and humanists who were vilified by their contemporaries because of their innovations in style or mode of expression have become prophets to a later age." Thus, the NEA was to "support" and not "control" artistic expression.

Among the achievements of the NEA was the enrichment of the arts in small cities which, without federal support, could not maintain museums or theater, music, and dance programs. Though benefiting millions in this way, the NEA (and state arts councils) became a magnet for public discontent—a Rorschach for the economic anxieties of the Bush recession (Why should I *pay* for art I dislike?) and for the pull between America's individualism and federalism (Why should I pay for art *I* dislike?). NEA detractors have argued that if Americans want art, they'll pay for it at the box office. All other art, they say, is elitist arcana that ordinary folks need not support. NEA supporters have argued that even uncontroversial institutions (such as classical orchestras) cannot survive on ticket sales, and that society has an interest both in supporting new, provocative work and in keeping ticket prices low so that museums, for instance, are democratically accessible.

The cultural and political climate in which Finley brought her case was marked by mounting hostility to public arts funding. Through the late 1980s and early 1990s, debates had escalated over a number of NEA grants, most famously those to Robert Mapplethorpe, whose photographs include homoerotic nudes and depictions of consensual sado-masochism; artist Andres Serrano, who criticized organized religion by dipping a crucifix in urine; Marlon Riggs, whose expressionistic film *Tongues Untied* accompanies poems (some of them erotic) by African American men; and Artistspace, a gallery whose exhibition catalog criticized the AIDS policies of public officials and the Catholic church. (The Christian, conservative American Family Association (AFA) photocopied each penis pictured in the catalog and sent them to every member of Congress, 3,200 Christian leaders, 1,000 Christian radio stations, 100 Christian TV stations and 178,000 pastors, making the AFA the largest distributor of the offending material.)

Though the number of NEA grants that drew complaint was small, right-wing protest against them had two effects. The first was to publicize previously unknown works. When Mapplethorpe's photos were at Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center, where both the museum and the exhibit's curator were indicted for obscenity, membership rose 80 percent; over 80,000 people visited the exhibit in seven weeks' time. The second was to build hostility to the NEA as a whole and further the Reagan-era rise in censorship efforts.

According to records kept by The American Library Association, book banning attempts in the United States doubled between 1979–1989. Throughout the 1980s, conservative religious organizations, most prominently the AFA, attacked TV programs and films for discussion of birth control, premarital sex, abortion, homosexuality, and AIDS. Major retail chains dropped "adult" magazines and NC-17 videos (no children under age seventeen permitted) even from special sections where children weren't allowed. Tipper Gore (wife of Vice President Al Gore) founded the Parents Music Resource Center to restrict sales of rock and rap music. The Federal Communications Commission (which regulates broadcast media) sought to expand its ban

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PHOTOGRAPH BY T.L. LITT / IMPACT VISUALS



Race & Massacre in Hispaniola



Michele Wucker

Sending letters directly between the Dominican Republic and Haiti has only recently become possible. For most of the last sixty years, their postal services routed the mail ninety miles north to Miami as if the two countries had decided that they no longer shared the island of Hispaniola. This is absurd at best; a flight between their capital cities, Santo Domingo and Port-au-Prince, takes only half an hour. Deep in the Cordillera Central mountain range, the border is virtually irrelevant to peasants who cross it easily on market days and switch rapidly between Dominican Spanish and Haitian Kreyol. In the north, the river that separates the two countries is so shallow that in it women wash clothes and children play.

Tragedy, not geography, forms the real border. Its name, as any Dominican or Haitian can tell you, is the same as that of the deceptively calm northern river: The Massacre. During just a few weeks in October 1937, Dominican soldiers killed thirty thousand Haitians along the border because the victims' skin was dark, even though Dominicans were just a few shades lighter. The events still divide the Dominican Republic and Haiti so deeply that there may as well be an ocean not only around them but between them.

Dominicans typically do not describe the massacre as the result of popular hatred against Haitians, but instead imply that Dominicans dislike Haitians because of the massacre. This sounds odd but is not far from the truth, which is that for six decades nationalist Dominican governments distorted history and promoted dissent to defend the madman dictator Rafael Trujillo. Trujillo was openly inspired by Hitler's racial theories and ordered the massacre as a way of "whitening" his country. To quiet critics, Trujillo deployed an intense "Dominicanization" propaganda campaign portraying his racist mania as a paternal act to save his people from Haiti.

Today the two nations are at a historical juncture, the end of an era dominated by two powerful Dominican leaders who were shaped by the massacre—Joaquín Balaguer, its greatest defender, and José Francisco Peña Gómez, an orphan left behind. Their successors now have a chance to transform the memory of the massacre from one used to justify the past into one with the power to keep such a thing from happening again. To do so, they must replace the myth of the protective strongman with the stories of his victims.

A former sugar cane plantation guard, Rafael Trujillo began his ascent to power in the National Guard, where he was trained by American Marines occupying the Dominican Republic. He quickly rose through the ranks, becoming head of the armed forces when the American troops left in 1924, a time of relative prosperity. It was not long before he toppled an aging caretaker president, and in 1930 he began a thirty-one-year dictatorship during which he renamed mountains and cities after himself and embellished his own name with the honorific Great Benefactor of the Nation and Father of the New Dominion. He wore pancake make-up to lighten the traces of color his Haitian grandmother's blood had left in his skin. Yet Dominican society still snubbed him for his working-class family origins and for his youthful exploits as a petty thief.

Turmoil in Europe resonated both with the Dominican Republic's growing economic difficulties and with Trujillo's own obsessions with race and status. By 1937 the Dominican Republic was practically broke, its sugar exports fetching only a penny a pound, one twentieth of the price during the boom a decade earlier. In late September of that year, weeks before the massacre, the Dominican president publicly accepted a gift of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, whose racial theories he clearly embraced. A visiting Nazi delegation was welcomed by glowing newspaper editorials: "Long live our illustrious leaders, the Honorable President, Doctor Trujillo, and the Führer of the German Reich, Adolf Hitler."

Hitler's ideas gave Trujillo a racist and nationalist plan to distract Dominicans from their empty stomachs. Reminding Dominicans that they could not afford to feed foreigners too, Trujillo cracked down on migration from Haiti. But powerful American sugar cane plantation owners, who brought in Haitians to cut cane because, unlike Dominicans, they worked for practically nothing, forced him to make huge exceptions. He resorted to deporting Haitians and

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT FOX / IMPACT VISUALS

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tightening border patrols, but the Haitians kept coming. On October 2, 1937, while Trujillo was drunk at a party in his honor not far from the Massacre River, he gave orders for the "solution" to the Haitian problem.

In the Book of Judges, forty thousand Ephraimites were killed at the River Jordan because their inability to pronounce "Shibboleth" identified them as foreigners. On the Dominican border, Trujillo's men asked anyone with dark skin to identify the sprigs of parsley they held up. Haitians, whose Kreyol uses a wide, flat "R," could not pronounce the trilled "R" in the Spanish word for parsley, "perejil." Dominicans still refer to the massacre as *El Corte*, the cutting, alluding to the machetes the Dominican soldiers used so they could say the carnage was the work of peasants defending themselves; only the government could afford to kill with bullets. *El Corte* also suggested the Haitians' work of harvesting sugar cane (ironically, soldiers did not touch the Haitians who stayed on the Americans' sugar plantations).

Trujillo's deed became a footnote to a much larger crime against humanity, and he exploited events in Europe as a way to clear his own name. At the time of *El Corte*, the world had its eyes on Hitler and on refugees desperate for a country to take them in. In an effort to find a home for them, U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt met with world leaders at Évian-les-Bains, France in July 1938. Of the many attendees, the only president to respond was Trujillo, who offered a vast expanse of farm land and one hundred thousand visas. This offer not only repaired his relations with the rest of the world, but also fit into his "whitening" plan. While it saved lives, the plan failed as a social engineering project. Most of the five thousand or so refugees who acquired visas soon left for other countries. And it turned out that only about half of the seven hundred people who eventually settled in the new community of Sosúa were unmarried; very few of the rest married Dominicans.

Meanwhile, Trujillo's men were revising history to justify what he had done. His protégé, Joaquín Balaguer, wrote that the massacre was "the crystallization in the heart of our country of a sentiment of protest and defense against four centuries of Haitian depredations." Grateful for this elegant defense, Trujillo made him, in 1960, the last of three puppet presidents. Driven into exile after Trujillo's assassination in 1961, Balaguer returned triumphantly, with U.S. support, to the nation's highest office in 1966. During seven presidential terms, Balaguer repeated one pledge above all others: to defend the country from the Haitian hordes.

History gives a far more complex version of Dominican-Haitian relations. The Massacre River got its name from a colonial-era Spanish slaughter of French pirate buccaneers. As a result of different socialization strategies on the part of these European rivals, Dominicans are mostly mulattos (of mixed African and European race) while Haitians have much darker skin. Spanish Santo Domingo encouraged its criollo descendants of European settlers and African slaves to intermarry. This was good for cattle ranching, which required close collaboration of workers and masters. It also fortified the Spanish-speaking population, which was dwindling as adventurers abandoned Santo Domingo to search for gold in South America. By contrast, in French Saint-Domingue, brutal masters perpetrated unspeakable cruelties on the African slaves of coffee and sugar plantations. In 1804, rebellious slaves expelled the French and created Haiti, the world's first Black republic. The Haitians then backed Dominican independence from Spain, though they soon occupied Spanish Santo Domingo to make sure neither Spain nor France would find an easy foothold. Slavery was abolished across the island. But Dominicans, chafing from twenty-two years of inept Haitian rule, won back freedom in 1844. Spain soon reannexed Santo Domingo for a few unhappy years until the colony again resorted to Haitian help to cast off European rule. Official Dominican history, however, downplays its neighbor's contribution: Independence Day celebrates freedom not from Spain, but from Haiti.

The border remained nebulous well into this century. Intermingling of Dominicans and Haitians had gone on for so long that in many cases it was (and still is) impossible to identify someone as fully one or the other. A clear line between the countries was not drawn until 1930, when the two governments signed a treaty at the urging of American troops, who were preparing to end a nineteen-year occupation of Haiti. At the time of the massacre, most of the residents of the border were bilingual, so could indeed pronounce "perejil." Some scholars even suggest that Dominicans exaggerated the parsley story as a way to reassure themselves that only Haitians were killed, that the line was clearly drawn between those who were meant to live and die.

The life of José Francisco Peña Gómez, the black Dominican leader who died in May 1998, debunks Balaguer's portrait of Dominicans and Haitians as utter enemies. Commonly known as Peña, he was adopted as an infant by a Dominican family when his Dominico-Haitian father and Dominican mother were forced to flee to Haiti during the massacre. Peña's skin was a color so dark that Dominicans described him as "black as a telephone." Despite Trujillo's and Balaguer's insistence that the country's destiny belonged in the hands of those of European ancestry, Peña became the internationally respected leader and three-time presidential candidate of the Dominican Revolutionary Party. His running mate was Fernando Alvarez Bogaert, the white Dominican son of the landowners who had given him safe haven. Was this really a case of two peoples who could never reconcile?

During campaigns, Balaguer's team spewed nationalist and racist smears against the popular Peña, alleging that he practiced Haitian Vodou and would open the country to the black hordes from the west. This tactic was not enough to keep Peña from winning in 1994; the government accomplished that only by stealing the election from him. Two

years later Balaguer's government expelled several thousand Haitians as a way of intimidating dark-skinned voters who were thought likely to vote for Peña in a special election called to repair the fraud. Balaguer, who himself was barred from running because he had stolen the last election, insinuated that Peña was not an "authentic Dominican."

Balaguer's propagandists tried to convince Dominicans that Peña's skin color proved that he was erratic, quick to anger, and unfit to be president. In reality, Peña time and again chose to seek peace instead of advancing his presidential ambitions, which remained unrequited. He lost in 1996 to Leonel Fernández, a man who won with the help of Balaguer's endorsement. A few days after Peña's death from cancer last year, amid national mourning and soul-searching over the racism that had dogged his life, congressional elections took place. Peña's party swept to a landslide victory in tribute.

President Leonel Fernández, a mulatto who spent his adolescence in Manhattan, ironically has more in common with Peña than with Balaguer. Fernández, too, comes from a part of the population that was long shunned by the Dominican government: the more than one million Dominicans who live abroad, the "absent Dominicans." One out of eight Dominicans now lives in the United States, where they are unearthing the African roots that Trujillo's massacre sought to obliterate. These Dominicans left their own country for jobs so they could send money back to their families; they are needed yet despised.

In this way, they are not unlike the half-million Haitians who live in the Dominican Republic, where they are systematically undermined, paid miserably, and arbitrarily deported. A Haitian cane cutter tapping a forearm crisscrossed with scars, a construction worker scratching his kinky hair, a merchant woman rubbing her dark cheek to show the color of the skin, they all say the same thing when asked about their life: *Nou pa moun*, we're not people.

Fernández has pushed for better relations, but the past continues to undermine efforts to bring the countries together. Time and again, reprisal follows rapprochement. Two years ago, Fernández met in Miami with Haitian President René Preval to build goodwill, but a month later his government expelled twenty thousand Haitians it ludicrously accused of forming a "massive network of beggars." In 1998, Peña's death prompted tributes to him and eloquent homages against racism. But within weeks politicians began to discuss ways to deny citizenship to Haitians born in the Dominican Republic, sabotaging expectations for a treaty that would guarantee humane treatment of Haitian migrants.

This past June, President Fernández traveled to Port-au-Prince for two days; it had been more than sixty years since a Dominican president slept in Haiti. The last time that happened, as the Haitian press did not fail to recall, Trujillo had traveled to Port-au-Prince in the spring of 1936, just a year before the massacre. Then, Haitian leaders re-named Grande Rue as "Avenue Trujillo." During Fernández's trip, the two countries agreed to cooperate with the United States to fight drug trafficking. But Dominican officials kept themselves busy blaming much of the drug problem on Haiti. Afraid that Haiti's image would taint them, Dominican tourism industry leaders refused to entertain the possibility of joint tourism efforts.

Still, as small an achievement as it may seem, there *are* now letters going back and forth from one side of the island to the other. More concretely, the two presidents do meet regularly. For the first time ever, both leaders have been elected democratically. History is no longer only in the hands of dictators who distort it to justify evil. Finally, the forgotten dead are being heard, given a voice by Dominican and Haitian novelists, many of them from Hispaniola's huge diaspora. *The Farming of Bones*, a new novel by the acclaimed Haitian American writer Edwidge Danticat, articulates this new cry for healing in the words of a young Haitian man frustrated by a Dominican youth: "He won't say what I want him to say, that we're the same, me and him, flesh like flesh, blood like blood." Shortly after his lament, he is killed by a mob during the massacre. Right now, reviving the memory of the massacre may be exactly what is needed so its story can be re-told: not in the words of a strongman but in the words of the ones who for so long have been silent. ❑

"Decency" in the Arts *(continued from page 60)*

on controversial programming from the traditional "safe harbor" hours (6 AM–8 PM, when children might be watching) to twenty-four hours per day, limiting all programming to what is suitable for children.

With the Finley et al. decision, the chilling effects on artists' funding and the development of "controversial" or critical projects *may* now reach the wide range of Americans seeking government funding for their ideas, research, or expression. In other words, the decency restrictions that Americans may have supported out of a sense of Puritanism, pragmatism, and a suspicion of contributing to the common pool may now come back to haunt them as the Court's ruling may allow the government to curtail further the expression of its citizens. Yet the ruling in Finley et al. also provides grounds for individuals to sue the government, if they can prove that government "required" a funding agency to reject "indecent" work. This is difficult to prove, as government agencies can always cite lack of artistic merit or simply budget limitations as a reason for refusing a grant. Yet precisely because it is politically advantageous for legislatures in many places in America to announce that they have prohibited the public funding of, say, positive images of homosexuality, or women smeared in chocolate in violation of Finley, they will leave themselves open to such suits. Seeking votes from the political and religious Right, politicians may give artists a new case. ❑

Who Really Won the Maccabean War?

Rami Shapiro

From 169 to 166 BCE the Maccabees fought the first recorded war of national liberation. They fought to preserve that which Antiochus Epiphanes, the hellenized and hellenizing King of Syria, hoped to destroy: Judaism and Jewish nationalism. Antiochus outlawed circumcision, *kashrut* (the laws dictating what is kosher), and Shabbat. Without these, he was certain the nation would disappear. Antiochus was right. Where he erred was in thinking he could do away with them in his lifetime.

I receive calls throughout the year from anxious parents looking for permission to avoid circumcising their baby boy. I sympathize with their plight; circumcision is primitive and painful. It is also the sign of the *brit*, the covenant between Jews and God that makes us a holy people. While I eagerly await a new egalitarian sign, and am happy to add a covenantal ceremony for our daughters, I cannot abandon the one we have for our sons.

Unfortunately, I don't get calls from people agonizing over kashrut and Shabbat. Most Jews have abandoned both and feel no remorse at having done so. In time the other calls may cease as well.

So who really won the Maccabean War?

In the short term the Maccabees won. They liberated the nation and rededicated the Temple. In the long term the hellenizers won. Not because they defeated us militarily, but because we surrendered.

And yet we get so excited about Chanukah! We light our candles, sing our songs, share our gifts, and proclaim the central importance of religious liberty, as if that was why the Maccabees were fighting. It wasn't. They were fighting for national liberation; they were fighting for circumcision, kashrut, and Shabbat. If Antiochus had gone after another group and left the Jews alone, Mattathias would not have taken up the sword to defend religious liberty. The Maccabees fought for Judaism, the very Judaism that most Jews celebrating Chanukah have rejected.

So what should we do with Chanukah?

First, let's be clear as to what Chanukah is: the celebration of the Maccabees' victorious war of national liberation; of their successful fight to circumcise their sons, eat kosher food, and rest on the Sabbath. Second, let's use Chanukah to challenge ourselves regarding these three behaviors.

Circumcision is the sign of the brit. How do you let your sons and daughters know that they have an eternal bond with God that obligates them to justice, kindness, and spiritual intimacy (Micah 6:8)? What more can you do to instill a sense of godliness in yourself and your children? Give the gift of brit this Chanukah.

Kashrut is the practice of living *l'chayyim*; curbing appetite and consumption so that your life promotes Life. The challenge of kashrut is living in a manner that honors the environment and recognizes the inherent dignity of all living things. What more can you do to instill a sense of l'chayyim in yourself and your children? Give the gift of kashrut this Chanukah.

Shabbat is a day of perfect peace, harmony, and mindfulness. It is living as if you were the person you wish yourself to be. Shabbat is about aligning yourself with God and realizing the grace and responsibility that comes with being created in God's image. What more can you do to instill a sense of holiness in yourself and your children? Give the gift of Shabbat this Chanukah.

As the TIKKUN guide to Chanukah says (see facing page), Chanukah is the first recorded struggle for national liberation. Our liberation has a deeply spiritual component that enriches the politics of Israel and challenges it to be a holy nation. As you gather with friends and family to honor this struggle and make it your own, as you take seriously the eight themes offer by TIKKUN, do your best to integrate the spiritual with the national.

When discussing the world of work, for example, consider the role Shabbat can play in liberating you from overwork and misplaced priorities. When discussing your relationship with the Jewish community, ask what it means to be God's partner in perfecting the world. When discussing your responsibility to the larger world, take up the ideals of kashrut as a means of liberating yourself from our consumptive society.

Chanukah celebrates our national liberation and reminds us of what is essential about us as Jews: our partnership with God, our responsibility toward nature, and our commitment to the peaceful transformation of the world through holiness. Stay true to the nation and her ideals and we will have won the Maccabean war. ❑

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Chanukah

evening of December 13 through December 21, 1998

THE WORLD'S FIRST RECORDED NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE

• The Ritual •

Each night of Chanukah we light candles, starting with the shamas (used to light the others) and one candle, and then adding one additional candle each night for a total of eight nights. The tradition is to sing, dance, and rejoice in our liberation and our freedom.

THE TRADITIONAL BLESSINGS OVER THE CANDLES:

• *All nights:* •

1. Baruch atah Adoñai, Eloheynu Melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu bemitzvotav, vetzivanu, lehadleek ner, shel chanukah.

(Blessed are you, the Force that rules all of existence, who sanctifies us by giving us a way of life directed by holy commandments and commanded us to light the lights of Chanukah.)

2. Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech ha'olam, she'asah nisim la'avoteynu, bayamim hahem, bazman hazeh.

(Blessed are you, the Force that rules the universe, who made possible miracles for our ancestors, in those days, and also makes the same possible for us in our own times.)

• *Add on the first night:* •

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech ha'olam, shehechiyanu, vekee-imanu, veheeg-iyanu, lazman hazeh.

(Blessed are you, the Force that rules the universe, who has kept us in life, made us flourish, and made it possible for us to reach this happy occasion.)

• The Story •

(The non-mythologized version you may never have heard)

When King Cyrus of Persia allowed the remnants of the ancient tribes of Judah and Benjamin to return from the exile imposed upon them by Babylonian conquerors in the seventh century before the common era (BCE), they formed the kingdom of Judea. As part of the Persian Empire, and later as part of the empire of Alexander the Great, Judea had relative autonomy to shape its own internal religious life.

When Alexander died at the end of the fourth century BCE, his empire split into three rival factions, and Judea was caught between two of them: the Seleucids, centered in Syria, and the Ptolemies, centered in Egypt. For the next hundred-fifty years, these two kingdoms warred and each sought to incorporate Judea as part of its empire.

Although the battle was largely military, there was an important ideological dimension. Alexander had introduced the Jews to Hellenistic Greek culture—its philosophy, its literature, and its impressive technology and power. Forcibly dragged into the larger Mediterranean world, many Jews could see that "the real world" was dominated by wealth and power. Some Jews, primarily those who lived in and around the larger cities, saw an opportunity to join this larger world by becoming merchants and traders, or by establishing political and economic relationships with others in the Hellenistic empire. It was apparent to these Jews that their tribal religion would have little meaning to those who had conquered the world. The religion of their fathers seemed irrelevant in a world reshaped by the "modern" realities of science; they were drawn by the allure of a society that worshiped the body and saw reality in terms of what could be tasted, touched, and directly experienced by the senses.

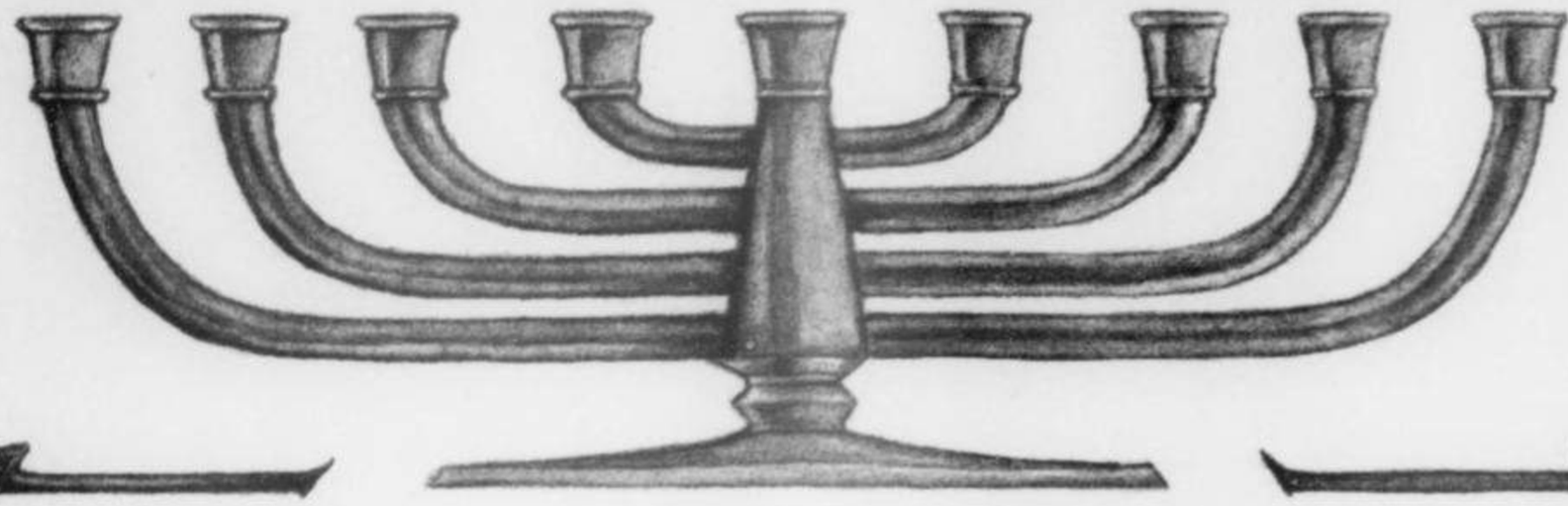
These Jewish Hellenizers saw no point in resisting Greek rule. Their goal was to live in peace with the powers that ran the world. They could benefit from the connection to the expanding trade of the Hellenistic world. On the other hand, the vast majority of the Jewish people were small, independent farmers, who lived on the land and brought its produce to Jerusalem three times each year to celebrate their hard-won freedom from slavery. They bore the brunt of the oppressive taxes imposed first by the Greeks, and then, alternately, by Seleucids and Ptolemies. These Jews resented foreign rule and detested the city-dwelling elites who seemed to be culling favor with the Hellenistic conquerors, imitating their ways, abandoning the religion of the past, and becoming worshippers at the shrine of political and cultural "reality."

Judea's plight worsened considerably in the early part of the second century with the ascendence to the throne of the Seleucid Antiochus IV. Claiming that he wanted to "protect" Judea from the Ptolemies, Antiochus invaded Judea and marched toward Egypt, where his armies were defeated. He turned back to Judea and attempted to impose Hellenistic culture by force. He ordered the Temple in Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Greek gods and forbade the practice of circumcision, kashrut, and observance of the Sabbath.

To the already assimilated elites of the city, the new rules were insensitive, but did not constitute a major crisis. Perhaps Antiochus was a boor, but the culture he represented was "happening," while the Jewish religion he forbade was a remnant of the past.

Yet many of the people in the countryside, burdened by Seleucid taxes that expropriated more of their wealth, found the Hellenists' narcissistic fascination with their own power repugnant. The essence of their now-banned religion was its insistence that there was a single God governing the universe who made possible freedom from oppression. It was in the name of that God that they joined a rebellion against the Seleucids under the leadership of a country priest named Mattathais and his five sons (of whom Judah became the most famous, known as "the hammer" or Maccabee).

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSS ANDO



These Maccabees, as they came to be known, rejected the notion, shared by their contemporary Jewish establishment, that it would be pointless to fight, that one would do best by appeasing the ruling class, learning their language and ways, and accepting their system of oppression. The Maccabees understood Judaism as teaching that "the spirit of the people was greater than the man's technology," or, in traditional Jewish terms, "not by power, and not by might, but by My spirit, says the Lord of Hosts."

To fight against superior military force was totally illogical and unrealistic from the Hellenizers' standpoint. But the Maccabees rejected assessments of "realism" that derived from the framework imposed by the imperialists, and drew instead upon the Jewish religion and the stubborn spirit of a people who had come to believe that every human being was created in the divine image, hence had a right to be treated with respect and decency. These were people who could not submit to the rule of the imperialist, and whose religion taught them that they need not, because the central Power of the universe was a power that rejected the reality of oppression. Their Torah told the tale of their origins in a slave rebellion against another imperialist power thought to be invincible—Egypt of the Pharaohs.

Armed with these stories, the Maccabees and their followers used guerrilla tactics to win the first national liberation struggle in recorded history. In 165 BCE they retook Jerusalem, purified and rededicated the Temple (chanukah means dedication), and rekindled the eternal light that was to glow therein. The fighting continued many years more, but eventually the Maccabees and their descendants (called Hashmona'im) set up an independent Jewish state.

Unfortunately, that state degenerated as the Hashmona'im tried to become a nation like all other nations, adopting the same perversions of state power that other nations adopted, and becoming "realistic" and hence spiritually and morally corrupt.

The rabbis who shaped rabbinic Judaism, depressed at the defeat of Jewish rebellions against Rome and, aware of the moral degeneration of the Hashmona'im, tried, by focusing on a story about a miracle of a pot of oil that kept the Chanukah lights burning for eight nights, to downplay Chanukah's importance and reframe it into a minor "religious" event. But the Jewish people intuitively recognized that something miraculous had happened. The miracle was this: a critical mass of people had come to recognize that there was a Force in the world that made possible the transformation of what is to what ought to be (the Force that we call God). That recognition, when it takes hold of large numbers of people, becomes a manifestation of God's presence, and in that presence "the power of the people," suffused with divine energy, becomes greater than all the technology and manipulations of the most sophisticated forms of oppression.

Some right-wing Zionists today, believing in military power as the primary way to create security for Israel, have turned might into their god. They believe they are being "realistic" to think that peace and reconciliation are impossible, and that Jewish survival depends on strength. Yet this way of thinking is Hellenism—the validation of that which is and the inability to commit to that which ought to be. We affirm a different vision of strength. Our survival and the survival of the entire planet, depend on our ability to create a world of love and caring, a world of peace and justice, a world in which every human being is treated as an embodiment of the spirit of God. The possibility of building such a world was precisely what Hellenism denied, and precisely what we affirm when we take God seriously.

• Making It Real •

In the contemporary world, Jews have turned Chanukah into a Christmas clone, trying to give their children and each other gifts to approximate the gift-giving frenzy that has been particularly promoted by the capitalist market. We need to find creative ways to give of our talents, our love and creativity—but if we can't resist the pressure of the market to equate love with buying materials goods, we undermine the spiritual message of Chanukah: that the world as constituted, with all its distortions, and with all of its incredible power to shape our sense of need and desire, can nevertheless be fundamentally changed, healed, transformed and rededicated to higher spiritual purpose.

What follows is a spiritual exercise that you can try with your family as a way to give this message more immediacy in our lives.

Try these exercises and you will see how Chanukah can have a different focus than a mere fixation on who has received the best presents.

EACH EVENING, pick a theme in which you allow yourself to imagine how things could be if they were the way they ought to be. Then tell in detail what would have to happen in order for your vision to be made real, and how you might participate in some way in its actualization. Everyone in the family, TIKKUN discussion group, circle of friends, or any other group observing the ritual will share his or her answer.

For example, imagine changes in your:

1. world of work
2. relationship with your parents
3. Jewish community
4. your neighborhood and relationship with neighbors
5. society
6. American politics
7. social change movements
8. larger world

Share your vision with others and listen, without criticizing, to theirs. Then rejoice and sing songs of celebration and of struggle—both Chanukah songs, and songs from other liberation struggles around the world.

Please reproduce this and encourage friends to use it as a guide for constructing their own meaningful Chanukah observance. And urge them to subscribe to TIKKUN magazine (send $29 to TIKKUN, P.O. Box 460926, Escondido, CA 92046.) Written by Michael Lerner, editor of TIKKUN, in memory of his beloved mother.

BOOK REVIEW

Listening to Black Women





Michael Bérubé

- *Lift Every Voice*, by Lani Guinier. Simon & Schuster, 1998.
- *Speaking Truth to Power*, by Anita Hill. Doubleday, 1998.

Like most people, I was introduced to Anita Hill and Lani Guinier somewhat indirectly; when they appeared on the political stage in the early 1990s—Hill in a kangaroo court convened by the Senate Judiciary Committee, Guinier in a Jacobean revenge play written by right-wing pundits—I had to rely on mass media for basic information about their lives and work. I was immediately struck, however, that each of these black women seemed to bring out the nastiest beasties in the hearts of conservative reporters and politicians. Hill was tagged as "a little bit nutty and a little bit slutty" by David Brock back when he was the far right's favorite character assassin and general-purpose toady; Guinier had the honor of being called a "madwoman" with "cockamamie ideas" by David Boldt, who was editor of the editorial page of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* during the days when a notable *Inquirer* editorial called for the sterilization of black female welfare recipients.

Both Guinier and Hill had multiple tiers of critics, not all of whom merely called them names. In his memoir *Standing Firm*, Dan Quayle mused that whatever the merits of Hill's charges against Clarence Thomas, something was surely amiss about her career as a lawyer: after all, she was teaching at the unprestigious law school of the University of Oklahoma even though she was a black female graduate of Yale Law School and therefore "presumably could write her own ticket" (in a world where, thanks to affirmative action, white male academic whiz-kids like Quayle are routinely deprived of good jobs by black mediocrities). Guinier was treated to a similarly phantasmic reception in the pages of *The New Republic*, where her neocon nemesis, Abigail Thernstrom, offered the following synopsis of Guinier's beliefs just before President Clinton withdrew her nomination to the post of assistant attorney general for civil rights:

> [I]n Guinier's world, black constituents can lack representation even if their elected officials are black. If the officeholders are not "community-based," "culturally rooted" and politically and psychologically "authentic," then they're "tokens"—contaminated by white support.... The authentic black has a "distinctive voice" and a level of group consciousness incompatible with white enthusiasm.

The content of Thernstrom's claim was ludicrous, bearing no relation to Guinier's actual writing; but what was really astonishing about this hit job (as opposed to similar items by Clint Bolick and Paul Gigot in the *Wall Street Journal*) was Thernstrom's pretense that she was citing Guinier in those scare quotes. Apparently, *TNR* was familiar with fabricated quotes and intellectual fraud long before anyone heard of Stephen Glass. Perhaps it is possible to say that Hill and Guinier helped to set the terms for what right-wing political commentary would look like in the 1990s. On the (relatively) high road, the Guinier fight taught conservatives that Clinton was singularly susceptible to frontal media assault on "controversial" social issues; on the low road, the Hill fight produced a cadre of conservatives committed to taking down the next Democratic president by means of mass-media sex-scandal. In this bitter sense, the Guinier episode set the terms for the torpedoing of national health care in 1993-94 and Clinton's later capitulation on welfare "reform"; Hill, meanwhile, begat David Brock, who tripled the *American Spectator*'s circulation and begat Richard Mellon Scaife and a host of Arkansas state troopers, who together begat Kenneth Starr, who begat Linda Tripp, who begat Monicamania, whose issue was still uncertain at press time. No doubt Anita Hill and Lani Guinier would prefer to leave a different legacy—which is, I surmise, one reason they have written their own accounts of their encounters with Washington at its worst.

Anita Hill's *Speaking Truth to Power* is a memoir dotted with moments of *apologia pro vita sua* in which Hill writes chiefly to answer detractors and unaligned skeptics. Why didn't she report Clarence Thomas's harassing behavior when it first occurred in 1981? Why did she follow him from the Office for Civil Rights to the Equal

PHOTOGRAPHS BY (LEFT) RICK REINHARD / IMPACT VISUALS; (RIGHT) DOUG KNUTSON

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Employment Opportunity Commission in 1982? What were her motives in 1991? Was she used by feminists to smear a prominent black man? And why was she teaching at Oklahoma instead of riding the black woman's affirmative action gravy train?

Because her life has been framed by questions like this for the past seven years, Hill's rhetorical task in *Speaking Truth to Power* is more difficult than it may appear. At times her narrative voice sounds unpolished, even naive, as when she chides Orrin Hatch's deliberate mischaracterization of sexual harassment law by writing, "Faulty information, negligently or purposefully spread for partisan reasons, is particularly harmful when its source is a person in public trust." Together with Hill's painstaking, literal-minded refutations of dunderheaded remarks about sexual harassment by people like Dennis DeConcini (D. AZ) and Alan Simpson (R. WY), passages like this suggest an author working in what was known, in bygone centuries, as "the plain style," unadorned by artifice on the page or in the heart.

There will of course be those who read Hill's lack of pretense as proof positive of great pretense, but to my ears Hill's delivery is in itself a decisive refutation of the narrative that cast her as a wily, conniving, arch-feminist conspirator. *Speaking Truth to Power* is not the work of a smooth operator; it presents its author as a hard-working woman from rural Oklahoma who was caught up in a horrific whirlwind of race/gender/power at the center of the Thomas nomination. As for why she "put up with" Thomas's behavior, Hill tries to re-establish the context in which she worked: as a young black woman, her mantra had been "do your schoolwork or job and don't take biases or insults personally"; as for Thomas, he not only demanded, and partly won, Hill's loyalty as a black colleague, but led her to understand that he was under siege both from Reagan administration officials and, he claimed, from "people in the civil rights community" who "were out to get him because he challenged the conventional way of thinking." Hill's initial attitude toward Thomas's harassment, in other words, was deeply conflicted, and for good reason.

More pointedly, Hill reminds her readers that in 1981, complaints such as hers were almost unheard of—and almost never acted on. The Supreme Court did not recognize sexual harassment as employment discrimination until 1986; before then, writes Hill, "What were the precedents?" Instead, she says, "I wanted most of all for the behavior to stop ... [and] I found a way to make that happen by removing myself from the situation." Which, by the way, explains how she wound up back in Oklahoma, via the even-less-prestigious law school of Oral Roberts University: she was fleeing an intolerable, sexually-harassing supervisor, something Dan Quayle has not yet been compelled to do.

Hill reminds her readers that in 1981, complaints such as hers were almost unheard of—and almost never acted on.

But Hill's is not simply the narrative of a neophyte trapped between Clarence Thomas and Senate Republicans. Her account of the Senate hearing is incisive, particularly where it points out the hearing's bizarre *ad hoc* deviations from standard practice. One such deviation was that other women were called to testify that Thomas had not harassed them, about which Hill remarks, "I had not claimed that Thomas treated all of the women on his staff in a sexual manner.... I can think of no legal proceeding or quasi-legal proceeding where persons who are not victims of an alleged offender are called to testify that they were non-victims of the offense." Similarly, she effectively skewers Thomas' claim that racism was at issue in the hearing: "In the years that I had known him, he had always chosen, both publicly and privately, to belittle those who saw racism as an obstacle. In the case of his sister, he asserted that the real barriers to economic and political achievement were a lack of industry and a reliance on remedial programs. Yet, now having met an obstacle to his *own* dream, he blamed racism."

Hill does not elaborate on her original encounters with Thomas, choosing simply to quote her 1991 testimony to the Senate. Nor does she evaluate his record as an associate justice of the Supreme Court, where, together with Antonin Scalia, he has so far vouchsafed us a vision of civil liberties roughly commensurate with that of Argentine prison guards. Most of the book is devoted to the Senate hearing and its aftermath—including a compelling account of sex/gender harassment in academe both before and after Hill appeared in Washington. *Speaking Truth to Power* is thus primarily the story of what it was like to be the woman who first put sexual harassment on the national agenda; no less important, it is also a record of the visceral reactions Hill sparked among women who had never before had such a spokesperson, however reluctant. "I am not a rousing speaker," she confesses. "I do not respond to the thrill of the crowd by elevating my rhetoric. I am slow, methodical, and lack charisma." Yet whatever the merits of that claim, Anita Hill has become iconic, even as the issue of sexual harassment has metamorphosed repeatedly in the years since she first appeared, soft-spoken and nervous, on national television.

The overlap between the Rogue's Gallery that populates Hill's book and the Parade of Horribles that animates Guinier's is somewhat amusing. These books' composite portrait of

Democrats often bears out the suggestion that before we propose a third national party we should consider creating a second; the role played by Senator Joseph Biden (D. DE) in Hill's and Guinier's lives is particularly notable, since he not only opposed Guinier's nomination as soon as the fraudulent attacks began (and refused to meet with her personally), but had also caved in to Republican intimidation in 1991 and prevented Angela Wright from taking the stand to corroborate Hill's charges against Thomas. To gauge by these accounts, Joe Biden should have spent less time as a Senator obsessing about his hair transplant and more time considering a spine implant.

Guinier's book is denser than Hill's, and more ambitious: it not only recounts the nomination debacle in 1993 (which Guinier wittily terms her "dis-appointment"), but also offers a brief account of the events leading to the passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965; some vivid examples of the importance of the VRA and its continuing enforcement in the South; a lucid defense of her "controversial" proposals for expanding American voter participation and democratic representation; and a meditation on the fate of the civil-rights movement since the 1960s ("instead of a moral crusade led by the people, the civil rights movement became an almost purely legal crusade").

Of course, all these stories are intertwined, since it was Guinier's commitment to taking the Voting Rights Act seriously that got her into trouble with the oligarchs of Washington and their many minions in the press. The fact that she was a black woman certainly didn't help matters; without question she would have fared much better if she had been an undistinguished, plodding white man. As Guinier notes upon looking on the walls of the assistant AG's office, "all the pictures on the wall" except one (Drew Days) were photographs of white men, "many of whom had meager qualifications for the job prior to being nominated. Yet, despite their thin 'qualifications,' none of them ran into confirmation trouble."

In some ways Guinier knew what she was up against; she had successfully sued Clinton in a voting rights case while he was governor of Arkansas, and knew him well enough to tell a White House staffer, "If he can't stick up for me in this little fight, he is going to be compromising and giving up the whole store on every other issue." But when it came to media feeding frenzies, Guinier was as unpracticed as anyone. She could not, at first, fathom the furor her essays had caused, and she experienced a raw, physical reaction when Clinton declared her views "anti-democratic": "I could feel myself reeling.... My friend, the President, was humiliating me on national television."

To be sure, calling Guinier's views "anti-democratic" is like calling Clinton "steadfast"; but after reading *Lift Every Voice*, I began to wonder at Guinier's wonderment at the ferocity of her opponents. Though she describes her work innocuously as an effort to expand the national conversation (hence the book's title), her advocacy of stratagems like proportional representation, preference voting, and cumulative voting amounts to a substantial, long-overdue challenge to business as usual in the United States, a challenge that rabid conservatives and comfortable liberals have every reason to resist. As Guinier's own examples repeatedly point out, proportional representation and cumulative voting *do* have the effect of wresting electoral power from the hands of the few and exposing the often anti-democratic results of "winner-take-all" elections, especially in runoffs and primaries. When Illinois state elections were conducted by cumulative voting (as they were until 1980) "women were 40 percent more likely to be represented in the Illinois House than in the national legislature"; when cumulative voting was adopted in Chilton County, Alabama, in the 1980s, it "led to the election of the first woman, the first black, and the first Republican in many years." No "quota queen" she, Guinier is highly critical of racial gerrymandering and of what she calls the "black faces in high places" approach to democracy. But in the United States, shackled by the most undemocratic electoral system in the West, Guinier's willingness to take democracy literally puts her at odds with every kind of entrenched power—and it's positively dangerous in districts where "democracy" has for decades conformed to Dave Barry's wry definition of the word, white men (from the Greek "democ") in dark blue suits ("racy").

When it came to media feeding frenzies, Guinier was as unpracticed as anyone.

Guinier does acknowledge that voting, in and of itself, "is a rather trivial measure of democracy." But Guinier does not conclude that it's a trivial job to extend the franchise to people who have been threatened, prosecuted, and murdered for trying to vote; on the contrary, she sees voting as one of the mechanisms by which political (not merely racial) minorities are accounted for in the body politic. "I believe," she writes, "it is much better to hear from the people with whom you disagree in a formal, legislative system than to leave them with no options but extralegal means of self-expression. In my view, the legitimacy of a legislative body depends on answering your critics, not excluding them." It is unfortunate (though appropriate) that the strength of Guinier's opposition testifies so clearly to the need for radical American electoral reform; and it is all the more unfortunate that her work shows why radical electoral reform is about as likely as radical campaign finance reform. But now that she has lifted her own voice once again, it surely behooves her critics to listen more attentively this time. ❑

BOOK REVIEW

Multiculturalism and the Jews

David A. Hollinger

■ *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*. Edited by David Biale, Michael Galchinsky, and Susannah Heschel. University of California Press, 1998.

One of the most probing and convincing books yet written about multiculturalism focuses on a group systematically excluded from it: Jews. *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism* uses the Jewish case to sharpen many of multiculturalism's soundest theoretical insights, to strengthen its most wholesome moral instincts, and to challenge some of its least defensible assumptions and practices. This book ironically "out-multiculturalizes" a multiculturalism persistently aloof from the Jewish Studies programs that are home to most of the twelve contributors.

Why are Jews not on the cultural map of the United States as drawn by multiculturalists? This question is addressed by several of this volume's contributors, all of whom recognize that American Jews, as an exceptionally wealthy subgroup of empowered whites experiencing a high rate of intermarriage with Anglo-Protestants, are different from the disadvantaged groups in whose interests multiculturalist initiatives have been the most energetically advanced. Some Jews have dealt with this recognition by trying to reinforce the image of the Jew as victim. Co-editor David Biale, in a compelling essay calling for the reconfiguration of Jewish identity within a milieu of voluntary and multiple identities, correctly points to an irony in "the success of the American Jewish community in building a Holocaust museum on the Mall." It was "as if by transferring the European genocide to America" that American Jews could sustain the old image as "the chosen minority," yet "only a group securely part of the majority," Biale observes, "could institutionalize its history in this way."

But the chief basis for leaving Jews out of multiculturalism is no different from the basis for leaving out Americans of Irish, Italian, or Polish cultural affiliations. Multiculturalism has been a means of advancing not cultural diversity as such, but several specific cultures popularly associated with groups who have suffered color-triggered discrimination in the United States long after blatant anti-Semitism went into decline. The terms "culture" and "diversity" are misleading. The goal of cultural diversity, if taken literally, would seem to imply that only prejudice could exclude Jews, Pentecostal Christians, Polish Catholics, Mormons, Promise Keepers, Druids, French Canadian immigrants, and any number of other religiously, linguistically, regionally, and ethnically defined cultural groups. Yet it is tacitly understood that only certain kinds of diversity have been sought, and only certain cultures have been promoted. The map-readers "legend" you need to decode a multiculturalist's map of the United States in the 1980s and 1990s is a five-color chart: black (African American), brown (Latino), red (Native American), white (European American), and yellow (Asian American). Multiculturalists had good reason to concentrate on cultures associated with groups who had been subject to white prejudice. But if they were more forthright about their implication that color was a predictor of culture, and to some extent a prescription for it, the irrelevance of Jews would never have been a mystery, nor an occasion for ideological shadow-boxing.

Now that the conflation of color with culture has come under sustained attack on the grounds that non-whites should not be obliged to perform cultural roles assigned by well-meaning whites, the time is right for a more honest and radical multiculturalism that confronts culture as it is, and as men and women should be free to make it. It is in the context of this welcome diversification of diversity, as called for by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Randall Kennedy, Walter Benn Michaels, Jorge Klor de Alva, Angela Davis, Todd Gitlin, and a host of other critics, that the place of Jews in a revised multiculturalism can be openly explored. *Insider/Outsider* shows how revitalizing this discussion might become.

Co-editor Susannah Heschel outlines the career of the great biblical scholar, Abraham Geiger, who challenged mid-nineteenth century non-Jewish interpretations of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus was a Pharisee whose teachings were quite conventional for Jewish religious reformers of his time and place, Geiger insisted. Pagan influences on Jesus' followers later produced the Christian doctrines of the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection, Geiger argued, with the implication, as Heschel puts it, "that those Christians who sought to follow"

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the true faith of Jesus, rather than its pagan corruptions, "would have to convert to Judaism." This perspective horrified Christian scholars whose careers were built upon a vivid contrast between a stagnated, dogmatic Judaism and the dynamic, passionate preaching of the Christ of Christianity. The Jewish Geiger thus destabilized the dominant metanarrative of his own time by rearranging the elements of that metanarrative on terms made possible by an understanding of the suppressed history of a group devalued by the hegemonic majority.

This use of subaltern subjectivity to undermine a hegemonic majority is of course characteristic of the multiculturalist movement of the United States in the 1980s and 1990s. When long-suppressed aspects of the nation's history are presented, a prevailing Anglo-Protestant account of the American national community is destabilized and rewritten on new, multiculturalist terms. Writers sensitive to the place of black people and their intimate entanglement with whites declare that "the history of the United States has not been white and black, it has been mulatto," and writers conscious of the Spanish presence insist that Santa Fe in 1605 replace Jamestown in 1607 as the starting point of the narrative of the continuous experience of European peoples in the United States. Both perform versions of Geiger's act. Heschel's analysis of Geiger is emblematic of *Insider/Outsider*'s appreciation for standard multiculturalist methods, and of this book's demonstration that Jews have often carried out, and have even prefigured, the discursive strategies of which an American multiculturalism oblivious to Jews has been conspicuously proud.

Another turn in Heschel's essay renders it representative of the book in a third sense: *Insider/Outsider* brings multicultural analysis to the study of Jews themselves. Pointing to the diversity of the Jewish people, and complaining especially of the traditional tendency to see female Jews in male terms, Heschel invokes "Jewish studies multiculturalism" as a basis for recognizing as "problematic" the retention of a "unified" construction of the concept of the "Jew." Heschel asks, "What of the Jewish expressions of politics, morality, or faith applies to me as a woman?" The contradictions of a unified notion of Jewish identity are also explored by a number of other contributors who employ analytic techniques associated with multiculturalism and postmodernism. Mitchell Cohen, in a brilliant essay on Shaatnez, develops a notion of Jewish identity similar to Kwame Anthony Appiah's integration of cosmopolitanism and particularism. Biale revises the classic Enlightenment formula, "being human on the street and Jewish at home," to the holding of several identities, both at home and on the street. Naomi Seidman provides a virtuoso lit-crit analysis of the role of Jewish identity in Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick's classic account of gay male sexuality, *The Epistemology of the Closet*. Seidman's ingenious, sometimes playful essay on Sedgwick—which also includes brief, provocative observations on the "ambivalent avowal of Jewishness" found in the work of feminists Judith Butler and Nancy Miller—has the additional virtue of proving the counter-intuitive hypothesis that even multiculturalism can be fun.

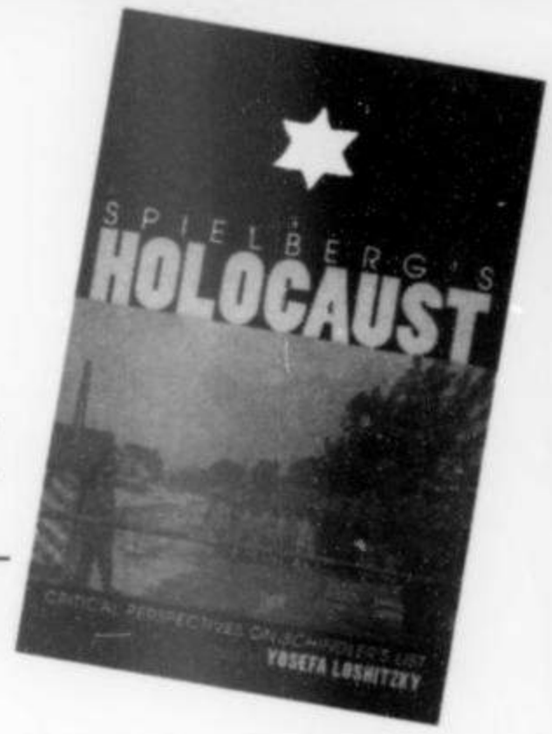
Although most of the contributors to *Insider/Outsider* explore a two-way street down which ideas from multiculturalism and from Jewish experience instruct one another amid a dynamic society of multiple and changing affiliations, Michael Walzer's essay is anomalously conservative. Displaying no interest in revised notions of Jewish identity and eschewing any engagement whatsoever with the novel cultural combinations said to be more characteristic of the United States than of European and Asian societies, Walzer defends the integrity of already-existing "cultural groups" and looks for ways in which they can achieve solidity and cohesion. He offers the Jewish community as a model for other groups, and hints that tax money should be assigned to African American and other groups who lack the power possessed by Jews. Yet Walzer makes no effort here to deal with the issues he, as so accomplished a philosopher, well knows have long since bedeviled this old, "pluralist" agenda. In a society of increasing intermarriage and cross-group reproduction, who decides, and on the basis of what principle, what organizations are valid representatives of a group to which federal aid should be given? Why should groups created under the pressure of racist understandings of color be privileged over groups that reflect the choices of their members? Why should the tax monies of a democratic nation state go toward the project of encouraging individual citizens to remain culturally in the color-coded enclosures into which they were born?

A multiculturalist's map is a five-color chart: black, brown, red, white & yellow.

All the essays in this extremely valuable volume also invite close interrogation. One set of questions I hope the contributors will address in their future writings is prompted by Biale's speculation that American Jews, in order to rethink Jewish identity amid the multiple and voluntary affiliations of a genuinely cosmopolitan milieu, will "have to give up their sense of themselves as the paradigmatic minority, a sociological version of the older theology of the chosen people." What role, if any, should henceforth be played by the ancient myth of the chosen people? Can Jews retain a sense of Jewishness while frankly sharing the contingency of history with other varieties of humankind, accepting a place as a people among peoples? Can the comforting but necessarily invidious concept of "the chosen" be treasured as a part of Jewish history but abandoned as part of a Jewish future? ❑

BOOK REVIEW

Rethinking Schindler's List





Marla Stone

- *Spielberg's Holocaust*, edited by Yosefa Loshitsky. Indiana University Press, 1997.

Schindler's List, Steven Spielberg's mega-media event and instant classic on the Holocaust, has become the flashpoint of contemporary Holocaust memory culture. Offering the "non-fiction/fiction" story of Oskar Schindler, the Nazi party member turned rescuer, and the Jews he saved, the film emerged quickly as the American master narrative on the Holocaust. This three and one-half hour blockbuster by Hollywood's most successful filmmaker was released in December 1993 and immediately met with popular and critical success. Today, this film, already viewed by millions of people worldwide, represents not only Hollywood's first major attempt to depict the murder of European Jewry, but a pointed distillation of the American interpretation of the crime.

Debuting in the midst of what Frank Rich has called the "Holocaust Boom" (*Schindler's List* opened within months of the inauguration of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum), Spielberg's film was more than a film from the beginning. The film's canonical status was never in doubt, as the sacred tone of the 1994 Academy Awards attested. Pundits from Hollywood to Washington hailed it and cloaked it in reverence to the point that critique of the film implied profanity or anti-Semitism. Officials from California Governor Pete Wilson to New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley testified to the profound effect the film had on them and its universal educational value. This bipartisan celebration of *Schindler's List* led to free, and often, mandatory, showings of the film to high school students in the United States and abroad. Today, the film frames the way most Americans understand the fate of European Jewry under the Nazis.

The reasons for the special status of *Schindler's List* are manifold, but the most obvious is the coincidence of America's obsession with spectacular Hollywood depictions of the world and its growing tendency to see the world through a moral paradigm shaped by the Holocaust. With *Schindler's List*, two major shapers of contemporary American mentalities had come together: our greatest cultural producer had taken on the story of ultimate suffering.

As a few years have settled on Steven Spielberg's dramatic act of personal and political history, the inadequacies and imbedded agendas of *Schindler's List* have become ripe for analysis. In fact, because of the film's reception and evolution into a kind of ruling narrative on the Holocaust, we are obligated to critically engage the film: it has within it all the components of the emotional and divisive debate on Holocaust representation and memory. As such, a critical assessment of *Schindler's List* opens the door to an investigation of the powerful and high-stakes questions about how to remember, memorialize, represent, and understand the Holocaust.

When the film opened, a few dissonant voices such as Jim Hoberman in the *Village Voice* were heard, but they were generally drowned beneath a wave of celebration. This year, Yosefa Loshitsky, professor of journalism and communications at Hebrew University, has edited the first major discussion of the film: *Spielberg's Holocaust* brings together historians, film theorists, and literary critics to look at the cultural impact of *Schindler's List* and its strengths and weaknesses as today's most well-known representation of the Holocaust.

The twelve essays in *Spielberg's Holocaust* read between the lines of *Schindler's List*. In so doing, the authors confront a range of controversial issues. The first chapters debate the question of form and ask, Has Spielberg overstepped the limits of representation? What does it mean to have the genre of the Hollywood epic shape Holocaust memory? Barbie Zelizer uses the film to talk about who "writes" history in a postmodern age and the merits and disadvantages of a mass culture depiction of the Holocaust. She examines the narrative structure of melodrama and its demand for a plot, a happy ending, and for heroes and victims. Miriam Bratu Hansen and Yosefa Loshitzky juxtapose Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* and Spielberg's *Schindler's List* to debate differing modes of representation and the transition from documentary to an epic in a pseudo-documentary aesthetic. Spielberg's film quotes Lanzmann, yet eschewed the taboo against graven images which Lanzmann's rejection of documentary footage respected. While she stresses the impli-

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID JAMES



cations of *Schindler's List*'s origins in mass culture and consumption, Hanson warns against dismissing the film on those grounds, claiming it "is a more sophisticated, elliptical, and self-conscious film than its critics acknowledge" (85). In Yoshefa Loshitzky's critique, *Schindler's List* is the inauthentic, manufactured and emotionally manipulative counterpoint to *Shoah*'s powerful "dialectic of presence/absence" through evocation, language, and imagination (112–113).

Looking at the film's content and form, Sara Horowitz and Judith Doneson examine the narrative and character choices made by Spielberg. Sarah Horowitz deftly points out how *Schindler's List* "reproduces negative stereotypes of Jews, whose victimization serves as an arena for Oskar Schindler's spiritual transformation"(124). In the moral economy of the film, women and Jews, passive and awaiting rescue, are contrasted to Schindler, the active male. Judith Doneson powerfully highlights the uses of voyeurism and erotic violence in scenes such as those between the characters Judith Hirsh and Amon Goeth. Doneson argues that the film recapitulates well-worn stereotypes of the "feminized Jew" and, in so doing, suggests Spielberg's own unease.

The final essays examine the film's reception and how differing readings of the film depend upon the viewing public: Jeffrey Shandler, Liliane Weissberg, Haim Breseth, and Natasha Leherer reveal the ways in which public culture in America, Germany, Israel, and France shape reactions to the film. Liane Weissberg connects the popularity of *Schindler's List* in Germany to anxiety about national identity in the newly reunified nation: "Spielberg's hero is an anti-skinhead … the other Nazi, the German who did good" (178). In an ironic twist of fate created in Germany's attempt to "come to terms with the past," "the Jew has thus turned into the German's moral conscience" (187). For Haim Breseth, the Israeli response to the film was the outgrowth of the contested nature of Holocaust memory in Israel. The film became a locus of the debate over whether or not Israel had a special right to Holocaust remembrance.

In this very useful and thoughtful collection, the authors vary in their final judgments on the film. They are all uneasy with aspects of it, though some find that the ultimate achievement of bringing the crime to a mass public outweighs its faults. The more critical pieces stress the film's exploitative and trivializing aspects; others, such as Omer Bartov's, find it flawed, but given the conventions of mass culture, ultimately a positive contribution. Many of the authors are uncomfortable with the film's black and white morality and final resolution; they believe that the process of remembering, if it is to bring enlightenment, must remain nuanced and, as Bryan Cheyette writes, "uncertain" (226). Importantly, many of the essays in *Spielberg's Holocaust* note the massive popularity of *Schindler's List* in the United States and the centrality of the Holocaust to America's moral interpretive framework and to contemporary American Jewish identity.

Yet, the essays fall short of confronting the profound and multiple ways in which the film projects our time and place. Barbie Zelizer and Jeffrey Shandler acknowledge the ways in which Steven Spielberg's biography and personality shaped the project. *Schindler's List* clearly reflects aspects of Steven Spielberg's life—the conversion narrative, in which Spielberg articulates the filming of *Schindler's List* as his act of redemption, his own move from the profane to the sacred (from dinosaurs to genocide). And Spielberg's midlife embracing of the Holocaust as his return to Judaism closely parallels the equation Holocaust awareness = Jewish identity so common in modern American Jewish life.

As the first major full budget Hollywood film to address the Holocaust and as the product of Hollywood's most commercially successful director, the film tells us much about America and how Americans see the past. It is not chance that Schindler as a historical figure seized the American imagination. The film is based on the notion of possessive individualism—that the only way to resist evil is as an individual acting alone. According to the film, resistance to Nazism took place within the parameters of the ruling system, without active dissent. Schindler resisted with the tools of the regime, not against it.

Yet how do we reconcile the choice of Schindler against the history of anti-fascism? The most widespread and most effective resistance to Nazism took place as collective, political, and organized action against the occupying forces. Would those stories have been too "foreign" for an American audience? Or would they not have been interesting to an American director? American culture has little place for or



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understanding of the idea of collective or ideological resistance—it would have been less marketable to tell the story of a group of partisans, such as those of Primo Levi's *If Not Now, When?*.

Another deeply American aspect of the *Schindler's List* narrative is the nature of Schindler's transformation—individual and private. He made no public critique of Nazism; he did not denounce the dictatorship, its morality, or its power. He wore his Nazi party pin until the last scene of the film. Schindler certainly took risks and was driven by abhorrence of the genocide taking place around him: but his response was to save individuals to whom he had developed an attachment, not to go underground and fight Nazism.

The way that Schindler achieved his goal of saving his Jewish workers also has a distinctly American flavor: he saved lives through being a good businessman and through having a good accountant. This is redemption through capitalism (another parallel with Spielberg?): in the film's last speech, Schindler laments that if only he had made more money, he could have saved more Jews.

Of the millions of stories which emerged from the Holocaust, why was this the one chosen to be the first Hollywood production? Why was such an ambiguous hero so appealing to American audiences? What kind of hero is he? Schindler was a Nazi and an adventurer who lost faith in the face of the crematorium: his conversion comes after the ghettoization of the Jews and the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto. Because *Schindler's List* is such a particular story and so based on the conversion of a single character, its moral imperative is contingent.

Finally, the apolitical character (outside of the Zionist conclusion) of the film fits tightly into an America sense that history is driven by things other than politics. So, *Schindler's List* offers no explanation of Nazism or the Holocaust or why one led to the other. The film presents only two types of Nazis: the sadistic commander of Auschwitz, Amon Goeth, clearly ill, deserving of execution; and the "good Nazi," Schindler, deserving of redemption. What about the grey area between which consisted of those who consented, acquiesced, collaborated, or merely went along?

The film's opening scene with the Jewish family lighting the Sabbath candles suggests an interpretation of the causes of the Holocaust—that the Jews were persecuted because they practiced different religious rites. There is no attempt to convey the complexity, brutality, and ideology of Nazi racial politics. Instead of explaining the character or history of Nazi ideology and conquest, it is as if the Jews in Krakow were displaced Americans and the Nazis random, generic evil. According to the film, a strange cloud descended upon Krakow one day and this terrible thing happened. This explanation parallels that of the Los Angeles Museum of Tolerance/Beit HaShoah: if only people respected each other's individual rights and differences, we would all "get along." In the same way, the film presents Nazism and the Holocaust as events based in individuals outside larger systems of power and politics, an explanation that is ultimately too narrow, too limited, and without causality. By presenting it this way, the film suggests no program for action, no options for the future, and no real understanding of the past. As such, *Schindler's List* has become part of a broader process of turning the Holocaust into an American spectacle.

Spielberg's Holocaust arrives at the right time. This collection of essays opens further the debate on how to represent the Holocaust as Holocaust representation and memory move into ever-greater areas of daily American and Jewish American culture. Above all, this anthology reminds us of the manifold ways in which film constructs social and historical meaning. The central place of the movies in modern life gives a film such as *Schindler's List* extraordinary power and, hence, a special responsibility. ❑

FILM REVIEW

Spielberg's America

Jean Bethke Elshtain







The hip young editors of *Entertainment Weekly*, who seem not to be familiar with a long list of great war films that are also anti-war films, have hailed Steven Spielberg as "our most spectacular poet of war" and tagged *Saving Private Ryan* a film that "for the first time" has shown us both the horror and the heroism of war. This isn't the case. But it does speak to the extraordinary critical and popular acclaim being heaped on what is, admittedly, a great or almost-great film. Much of what makes it so is that we can now see, thanks to advances in technology, precisely what happens to the soft-shelled human body when it encounters explosives, projectiles, fuel, flame, and sword.

But there is a deeper cultural reason for our reaction as well: we want to believe in *something* again, something that has to do with the country and with honor and yes, perhaps, with heroism. This may explain why the film's critical last words—those uttered by Tom Hanks' Sgt. John Miller—seem to have fallen by the wayside. For Sgt. Miller's words raise questions about sacrifice and responsibility in a way that suggests one cannot attain honor and purpose "on the cheap," so to speak. Miller and his men have been sent on a rescue mission to find and retrieve one Private Ryan from harm's way. This is on order from the highest—General George C. Marshall—who receives word that Ryan's three older brothers have all been killed in battle and that Mother Ryan will receive word of these three deaths at one dreadful moment.

Miller, knowing he has been killed in a battle in which his badly outnumbered men, combined with what's left of Pvt. Ryan's platoon, defeat the superior German force, turns to the young man who accounts for his coming to this time and place. Looking young Ryan (Matt Damon), the subject of this costly rescue, in the eye, Hanks/Miller says: "John Patrick Ryan. Earn it." Watching the film, I felt as if I had been slugged. Earn it.

Then we see the elderly Ryan, returning to the scene of carnage for the first time, his family trailing behind, turn to his wife and ask, tearfully: "Am I a good man? Have I led a good life?" She doesn't really understand. Noncombatants never do in the lore of war. But she reassures him that yes, he's a good man. It won't suffice. Ryan will go to his grave haunted by this question. Has he earned it—his life itself—when so many died, including those whose deaths were a direct result of the rescue mission that spared him? No, of course not. No one ever can. How could one possibly live up to that sacrifice?

A theology friend of mine frets that the Hanks/Miller injunction—"earn it"—bespeaks a form of "works righteousness," the notion that we can, from our own efforts, merit salvation. But we cannot. That's where grace enters. To enter the theological debate is to cover that complex terrain when one sorts out questions of merit and reward. The Christian view is that there is no direct providential intervention that sends the hail to destroy one farmer's crops but spares another. Living an absolutely spotless life, assuming that were even possible, doesn't get you a ticket to salvation. That's where grace, faith, and love enter in.

But let's shift from the theological debate to civic terrain, so to speak. Consider the possibility that the "earn it" is intended not just for young Ryan but for us, the country, a half-century after these terrible events in a just and righteous cause—defeating fascism—unfolded. Have we as a country lived up to the sacrifice of the World War II generation that will soon, to the man and woman, be leaving us? I doubt it. No country, not even one as alternatingly self-lacerating yet bombastically good-natured as our own, could come close. But, considering Sgt. Miller and his men and glancing about at our current pitiful civic state, I could feel only sadness mixed with shame. With our national well-being measured by the Dow Jones, the Sgt. Millers are well behind us now. So we will flock to the film. But God forbid it should spur any authentic soul-searching of the sort that would suggest that Miller and his men and all the Millers and all those men died, not to make the world safe for profit and consumerism, but for fundamental human decency and for human beings to be able to live out their lives in responsible freedom. Responsible freedom means being called to account in full knowledge that neither one's individual good deeds, nor those of an entire society, can ever somehow "match" the sacrifice of the many dead who, hopefully, did not die in vain. ❑

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID JAMES

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LITERARY REVIEW

Language as Homeland

A Reappraisal of Modern Jewish Literature

Ilan Stavans

It seems fitting, as the millennium comes to a close, to reassess—yet again—the value and extraordinary outpour of literary creativity among modern secular Jews in the last hundred and fifty years. It goes without saying that, when seen against the European background, this literary explosion is comparatively young. After all, fiction as we know it today—"conventionally accepted lies shaped in the form of novels and short stories," in the definition of Peruvian man of letters Mario Vargas Llosa—has only been frequented by Jews since the mid-nineteenth century, as a result of the so-called Haskalah, the age of reason. And yet, in spite of such a short span of time, it is astonishingly voluminous and substantial already.

As it happened, its arrival came at the closure of the Neoclassical and Romantic periods in Germany, France, Italy, and England. The first novel in Hebrew, *The Love of Zion*, by Abraham Mapu, was romantic in tone, set in the time of the prophet Isaiah. But it wasn't until Realism and Naturalism swept the Old Continent in the pens of Dickens, Flaubert, Dostoyevski, and Tolstoy that modern Jewish literature began to move willy-nilly at the same pace as Europe's mainstream letters. And it is only in the twentieth century, particularly after World War II, when it moved to the foreground. Happily, this slow awakening and the ancient proclivity toward polyglotism made the Jewish writer a communicating vessel, a bridge of sorts between cultures. For Jewish literature, unlike its European counterparts, was not, and has never been, even after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, a national literature. It has been, instead, a transcontinental, multilingual phenomenon where the only boundaries are those of censorship.

We inherited from the nineteenth century an antiquated view of tradition which still prevails in the way we approach Jewish letters. The pinnacle of this approach was T.S. Eliot's formidably influential essay of 1917, "Tradition and the Individual Talent." It has continued to reverberate in literary criticism, however, for far too much of this century, permeating the work, for example, of the early Harold Bloom. A writer, so the argument went, is confined by his or her own country's perimeters not only culturally and politically but also linguistically, and thus responds to stimuli only within those perimeters, even when those stimuli filter in from beyond the nation's borders. This of course does not deny the invigorating contribution of exiled and migrant authors, nor does it minimize the artistic influence between writers like Flaubert and Turgeniev, each belonging to different geographical and verbal spheres. Still, we have been taught to approach literature—especially European literature—through the prism of nationalism and monolingualism.

Our global culture, where marketing strategies and fast translations make a book available in various tongues and places almost at once, is forcing us to look at other horizons, particularly when considering the modern Jewish writer, who never really lived isolated in any milieu. In fact, Jews, by virtue of their diasporic existence, have not only been the first to promote translation as a way of renewal but, more than any other people, they have functioned as vinculums between diverse European cultures. It is thus high time to implement a more open, less confined definition of tradition in regard to modern Jewish letters, especially as we move into the twenty-first century, where the whole concept of territoriality is likely to be less concrete and more speculative.

This reappraisal forces upon us a view of modern Jewish letters resembling a kind of secret universal club, so secret, indeed, that often its members might not be aware of their own membership. Any reader of Heinrich Heine, Benjamin Disraeli, and Sholem Jacob Abramovish is struck by the obvious: not only do "modern" Jewish languages like Yiddish and Hebrew have their own Jewish writers, but so does each major Western tongue—from German and Russian to English and Portuguese; and their respective Jewish writers, to various degrees, are hybrids, crossroads where two cultures meet: the Jewish one and their own national ones. They are both insiders and outsiders that belong to their native soil and are part, simultaneously, of a long chain of generations that connects them to Jews elsewhere. How deeply this hybridity is felt varies, of course, from one author to another. Philip Roth, for instance, is an inheritor of the tradition of Hart Crane, Theodore Dreiser, and John Dos Passos, but where would he be

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without Kafka and Bruno Schulz? And what would Kafka have become without the Hasidic tales of Rabbi Nakhman? Or the Brazilian Moacyr Scliar without the idiosyncratic monologues of Sholem Aleichem? Not that either Kafka or Scliar were deliberately invoking their predecessors when drafting *The Castle* or *The Centaur in the Garden*. In fact, while it is probable that Kafka was directly acquainted with a gamut of Hasidic tales, it is questionable whether he was familiar with Rabbi Nakhman's tales. And yet, the Hasid's influence is unquestionable in him, perhaps because a writer forces on his readers a certain re-reading of the literary past—in Borges' words, he creates his own precursors. And to do so, in the Jewish tradition, a congeniality, a certain attunedness is required: each writer of stature not only creates his own precursors across linguistic and national divides, but he also includes them all at once in his own oeuvre, thus turning them into a medium, a vehicle through which his ancestors speak. No author is the sole creator and possessor of his oeuvre; he is but a link, a stepping stone. This evidences Eliot's narrow view of tradition; when it comes to modern Jewish letters, authors suffer what Harold Bloom calls "the anxiety of influence" but across verbal habitats.

This view of secular Jewish literature was first divulged by the incisive Yiddish critic Ba'al Makhshoves in 1908 in Bukovina, at the height of the debate between Yiddishists and Hebraists, both claiming their tongue to be "the authentic national language" of the Jews. Yiddishists based their argument in universalism: they maintained that since the huge impoverished Jewish masses in the Pale used Yiddish in their everyday life, and because it inhabited the collective soul and was the tongue conducive to socialism, it needed to be classified as the Jewish tongue. (This, of course, in spite of the fact that only Ashkenazic Jews used it.) Hebraists, on the other hand, pointed at history to support their verbal vehicle: Hebrew is the biblical language, the one in which God communicated with humankind. To shape a Jewish nation, Hebrew, *lashon hakodesh*, the tongue of the Torah, of the Shulhan Arukh and rabbinical debates, needed to be reinvented, to be turned into the tongue of political redemption. This tension was at the center of an important international conference in Bukovina, attended by authors, politicians, pamphleteers, teachers, and the like, designed as a platform to elevate Yiddish to the status of sole champion.



ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREA KASSOF

The embrace of Sholem Aleichem's tongue was predicated without dissent, except for a few spare voices crying in the wilderness, including that of Ba'al Makhshoves, who, in a conciliatory note, argued in favor of literary bilingualism, an artistic device which, by the way, most of those present already endorsed, although not as an ideology. While Ba'al Makhshoves, not unexpectedly, failed to ease the tension, his was a most prophetic view. "Some among us," he stated, "will not admit that our one and only literature has a double language." Does one really need to make a choice between Hebrew and Yiddish, he wondered. How is one to define a Jewish language? through political manifestos? He then asked the most germane of questions: "Does the [Jewish] writer live and breathe between two languages only? Don't our critics carry within them the spirit of the German language? And in our younger writers, who were educated in the Russian language, can't we discern the spirit of Russian? And don't we hear echoes of French among our colleagues, the Palestinian writers (Ben-Ami, Hermoni)?" Ba'al Makhshoves concluded by saying that, in a nutshell, Jews might have two languages and a dozen echoes from other foreign tongues … but only one literature."

His statement advocates for open, intangible perimeters. It is common knowledge that the tension between Yiddishists and Hebraists was of course a purely internal Jewish affair: it affected only those Jews living daily in a Jewish tongue, but not those already at home in European languages. But Ba'al Makhshoves spoke five years after the traumatic Kishinev pogrom. By then modern Jewish letters were not only alive and well in two languages but in many more, from German to English, and they would soon flourish in numerous geographies—Arabic, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish—for Jews, taking advantage of European liberalism, had left the self-contained universes of the shtetl and ghetto to insert themselves into secular European culture, as far away from their co-religionaries as possible, among non-Jews, dreaming of total immersion.

Translingualism, thus, as ticket to modernity. This is not to say, of course, that it was practiced by everybody. Actually, while polyglotism has been the undeniable trademark, just a handful of Jewish authors have written in more than one tongue. Still, verbal self-consciousness was to become the heart and soul of the tradition, unavoidable, as it is, in Isaac Babel's laconic style, Danilo Kiš' Borgesian voice, Itzjok Leib Peretz's revisionist Hasidic parables, Shmuel Yosef Agnon's biblical

echoes, Saul Bellow's over-intellectualized pathos, and Kafka's paradigms. Language is also Tevye's only capital in Sholem Aleichem's classic *Tevye the Dairyman*, arguably the best and most beloved of Jewish novels: his fortress through which he defends himself, the only space and place that is truly his own—in short, the portable house in his eternal wanderings.

Herein, in fact, lies the key to understanding the modern Jewish literary tradition: language as homeland. As guests of one foreign land after another, Jews use words not only to protect themselves but to build a secure, self-contained habitat: a nation within a nation. At times that habitat is for internal use only, as is the case of Yiddish, Ladino, Judeo-Italian, Judeo-Portuguese, and other dialects shaped so as to establish intramural links; but on numerous other occasions the appropriation of a standard European tongue, such as English or German, serves the purpose beautifully: to appropriate is to build a home of one's own through words, to re-invent the language anew. Not surprisingly, European letters have been altogether refreshed by this outpour of Jewish literary creativity.

The reappraisal I'm suggesting is not beyond confusion: Is a Jew one who is infatuated with language? Not really: Proust is a Jewish writer, albeit loosely connected, but Joyce obviously isn't and neither is Faulkner. Isn't a Jewish writer supposed to be one who tackled Jewish themes? The question, of course, has never been easy to answer and never will be. In fact, this ambiguity has often given way to the demise of modern Jewish letters as its own distinct genre particularly by Zionists and Israelis like Aharon Appelfeld and Amos Oz—an invariably wrongheaded demise, needless to say.

True, a Jewish writer is not only born but made. But his or her identity is beyond symbols. Proof of it is Kafka, whose fiction totally excludes the word Jew, and yet Jewishness is present everywhere in it in spirit. (His diaries and correspondence, on the other hand, are filled with reflections about his religion and family tradition.) Modern Jewish literature has never been recognizable merely by its content. National traditions conglomerate their members by content: a Norwegian writer is part of the canon as a result of his birth, tongue, and motifs, even if he works in exile. Jewish literature is different, though: birth, yes, but neither tongue nor motifs make the author a member of the club.

This difference brings to mind an argument by Borges, delivered in an inspiring essay called "The Argentine Writer and Tradition," an essay obviously reacting to T.S. Eliot's famous essay. Half a paragraph is worth quoting:

> Some days past I have found a curious confirmation of the fact that what is truly native can and often does dispense with local color; I found this confirmation in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Gibbon observes that in the Arabian book par excellence, in the Koran, there are no camels; I believe if there were any doubt as to the authenticity of the Koran, this absence of camels would be sufficient to prove it is an Arabian work. It was written by Mohammed, and Mohammed, as an Arab, had no reason to know that camels were especially Arabian; for him they were part of reality, he had no reason to emphasize them; on the other hand, the first thing a falsifier, a tourist, an Arab nationalist would do is have a surfeit of camels, caravans of camels, one every page; but Mohammed, as an Arab, was unconcerned: he knew he could be an Arab without camels.

No camels, then, no Jewish symbols, only a Jewish sensibility. What makes modern Jewish letters, including its Israeli incarnation, so astonishing is precisely their amphibiousness, their talent to turn words into homes, to surface in unexpected places, to be reborn time and again from the ashes and out of hopelessness. In and through language—the many languages, all together erecting a multilayered, labyrinthine homeland whose boundaries are everywhere and nowhere—is the tradition kept alive. ❑

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MUSIC REVIEW

Sounds of Renewal

Ya'acov Gabriel



Sheva in the Galilee.

An artist has a way of absorbing and then reflecting the cultural landscape he or she is immersed in. James Taylor is a product of a college town in North Carolina, so he gives us whiffs of that in his songs. John Lennon's working class Liverpool infused his work. Contemporary Israeli artists also create music in reaction to their uniquely overheated little corner of the world.

I recently spent two months in Israel, and it was not that much fun. My strongest memories are of endless negotiations with cab drivers and store owners, of gratuitous slights from strangers, of self-absorbed and self-righteous eccentrics, and of a prickly and unforgiving environment. Still, all that is juicy stuff for artists to work with. They get to underline or counterpoint the emotionally jarring stuff around them.

Sheva is a seven piece band living communally with twenty-five other artists and folk healers on Moshav Amirim in the Galilee. Like a latter day Pink Floyd, they do spacey, cosmic music and long extended jams. My sense is that their music is a reaction to the relentless Americanization of their homeland, and a truer reflection of Israel's North African/Asian nexus. Sheva is a folk band in the truest sense, and their debt to Arab and Hindu music is very up front. They play all kinds of Semitic and Indo-European music and give it their own Sheva spin. Each piece is usually a mini-opus, with elaborate beginnings, intense development, and then a slowly descending finish. They have four lead vocalists, who sometimes sing words and sometimes sing sounds, and a pretty eclectic mix of instruments, from the Middle and the Far East.

The songs create emotion and trance, through droning or get down and sweaty drumming. In the concerts that I caught in Jerusalem and on Kibbutz Lothan, their audiences seemed more than happy to fly with their exotic rhythms and melodies. They're doing an East and West Coast U.S. tour this fall, and are definitely worth catching.

Stephen Horenstein and his group Tarshish have a more angular, edgy reaction to today's Israel. Their music is in the zone between postmodern classical and jazz. In collages and soundscapes, they replicate the tension, the hurly burly and the chaos that I felt in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Using drums, gongs, electronic sounds, and Stephen's saxophone as the lead voice, the music is moody with a cool soul. It's not pleasant or pretty. Instead, it challenges you to think, to react, and to enter a tough world with a heavy pulse. On their recording *Between the Silences* (Jerusalem Institute of Contemporary Music; call 011-972-2-673-3325), you are dropped into a dense space and left to figure out what's happening. With repeated listening, the terrain gets more familiar and enjoyable.

What these artists do well is communicate the complexities of a paradoxical society, simultaneously traditional and pioneer. In some ways they do a better job of revealing the Israeli soul than news soundbytes ever could. ❑

Ya'acov Gabriel is rabbi of the Jewish Renewal Congregation Har Shalom in Fort Collins, Colorado. He was a music producer and reviewer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for fifteen years. His sixth recording is Eagle Wings.

Short Takes

A Look at What's in Other Magazines

Harper's

In the September issue of *Harper's*, Fenton Johnson meditates on monasticism in "Beyond Belief: A Skeptic Searches for an American Faith." Johnson quotes Zen philosopher Alan Watts in order to explain the difference and relationship between faith and belief: "Belief ... is the insistence that the truth is what one would 'like' or wish it to be.... Faith ... is an unreserved opening of the mind to the truth, whatever it may turn out to be." Johnson suggests that those who practice monasticism are the true keepers of faith because it "offers a discipline to govern and assist the search for faith." The journey of a monastic is one that encourages contemplative lives "committed to poverty, celibacy, and obedience, addressing the three great obstacles to faith, the cornerstones of secular culture—money, sex, and power." But in the modern era, with the rise of feminism and a new consciousness of the body that is not contemptuous of the flesh, monasticism is in decline even while there is a growing interest among Americans to lead more contemplative lives. What Johnson ultimately wishes for is a world that recognizes that "without faith, without that willingness to embrace life, including its uncertainty and pain and mortality and mystery, the soul becomes stagnant—possibly the only aspect of the universe that can resist change, and in so doing possibly the only aspect of the universe that can really die."

George

Naomi Wolf, a contributing editor to TIKKUN, writes in the September issue of *George* about the failure of women's sports to attract corporate sponsorship anywhere near what is offered for men's leagues. The reason Wolf puts forth in "Straight Women Can't Jump" has much to do with the alternative lifestyles of the athletes themselves. Wolf observes that while "the spectacle of female combat is proving to be the fantasy life of American girls, the image is complicated by the fact that a number of top athletes are lesbian." If married, male athletes are expected to have cheerleader wives; those who are single are expected to be bad boys. "But female athletes are innately threatening to the social order: They tap our deepest excitement, and deepest fears, about women's strength." Corporate sponsors tend to shy away from images of women that seem to promote lesbianism, but Wolf maintains that "the kids who admire these new role models don't seem to care whether their heroines are straight or gay; what excites them is that the female stars are showing discipline and respect for the competition and their own young fans."

Mother Jones

Using a tabloid-styled insert, the October *Mother Jones* takes a merciless shot at media mogul Rupert Murdoch in "Heartless Man in Spineless World." Heavily supplemented with photographs, the insert covers various stories, including Murdoch's backroom deal to circumvent the FCC's regulations on market share, his history of trading political favors for commercial advantage, and his strategy to monopolize the coverage of hometown sports teams. Michael Leapman writes, "He learned in his early years that the most successful papers are those who scream the loudest." Also in this month's issue, Julian Brookes laps up the irony of *The Nation*'s scheduled week-long December Caribbean cruise in which both editorial and financial contributors will set sail on a ship, the MS *Veendam*, known both for underpaying its crew members as well as for having been fined for despoiling the environment. He quotes Eric Altman, one of *The Nation*'s own columnists, who had previously written, "The great thing about being a right-winger ... is that you get to exploit people and feel good about it. Any self-respecting liberal would feel guilty being so well served by so many apparent Third Worlders."

The Atlantic Monthly

Copyrights and intellectual property are the focus of Charles C. Mann's article, "Who Will Own Your Next Good Idea?," in the September issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. Mann explains that "intellectual property is knowledge or expression that is owned by someone." It comes in the form of copyrights, patents, and trademarks—such as copyrighted songs or books, patented drugs or trademarked soft drinks. According to Mann, personal computers, cable television, the Internet, and telephone systems make it possible to supply far more intellectual property to homes than at any other time in history. But this very same technology has also made the ownership of intellectual property harder because the ideas themselves are now cheaper to produce and reproduce. "[E]ven as digital technology drives the potential value of copyright to ever greater heights, the same technology threatens to make it next to worthless." All of which has led some to advocate eliminating copyrights in the modern age altogether, while others argue that it is now more necessary than ever to expand and increase copyright protec-

tions. He writes: "Copyright should not impede artistic efforts to explain our times. Nor should we let it interfere with the relation between producers and consumers of art."

Utne Reader

In the October *Utne Reader*, James A. Autry and Stephen Mitchell revive interest in Lao-tzu's book, *Tao Te Ching*, written 2,500 years ago, as a source for understanding leadership and power in "Beyond Machiavelli: The Source of Real Power." "Real empowerment is not about taking power from the top and spreading it through the company.... You can't lead people unless they are willing to follow you, which means that you must inspire trust.... The effect of such leadership is that no one feels oppressed." The authors demonstrate the relevance of the *Tao Te Ching* in today's business/labor climate of corporate downsizing and inflated executive pay and its relationship to unhappy employees. And there are other lessons. For instance: "People who view their professions as a world of hostile competition often do so because they require enemies for comparison.... Whether they win or lose, their minds become battlefields strewn with corpses."

The American Prospect

Christopher Jencks and Meredith Phillips, writing in the September/October issue of *The American Prospect,* take on the question of the disparity of test scores between African Americans and European Americans in "America's Next Achievement Test: Closing the Black-White Test Score Gap." "[D]espite endless speculation, no one has found genetic evidence indicating that blacks have less innate intellectual ability than whites." Although the authors acknowledge that eliminating the test score gap will require enormous effort, they believe that it can be done. They contend that the traditional reasons offered by both liberals and conservatives to account for the gap in test scores have neither solved the problem nor paved the way for a solution. Suggestions proposed include: reducing the number of students in the classroom and screening out semi-literate teachers, changing parenting practices to improve cognitive skills, and convincing both blacks and whites that test score gaps are not genetic. The authors agree that "psychologists, sociologists, and education researchers have devoted far less attention to the test score gap over the past quarter century than its political and social consequences warranted."

Lingua Franca

Writing in the September issue of *Lingua Franca*, Emily Eakin profiles MLA President Elaine Showalter in "Who's Afraid of Elaine Showalter?: The MLA President Incites Mass Hysteria." Eakin quickly gets to the source of the problem. Showalter, a Princeton feminist scholar, confessed to a lifelong love of shopping in *Vogue*. Then, soon after becoming president of the MLA, she wrote an article that displayed little sympathy for Ph.D.'s who are unable to obtain teaching jobs in the humanities. Then came the publication of her book, *Hystories*, in which she argued that sufferers of chronic fatigue and Gulf War syndromes, alien abductees, women with multiple personalities and recovered memories, as well as survivors of satanic ritual abuse, are all possessed of modern day afflictions where the symptoms may be real but are self-induced—essentially hysterical disorders rather than real disabilities. "Thus a middle-aged English professor became a lightning rod for controversy, provoking an outpouring of antipathy that few could have predicted."

Double Take

In the fall issue of *Double Take*, Lawrence H. Diller looks at families struggling with attention deficit disorder (ADD) in children and the continuing use of the drug Ritalin in "Running on Ritalin." Diller describes ADD as a problem of epidemic proportions; since 1990, the number of children and adults diagnosed with it has risen from about 900,000 to almost five million, resulting in a 700 percent increase in the amount of Ritalin produced in the United States. "Although it has been around for a long time, some people are still surprised to learn that Ritalin is essentially a form of speed." Diller points out that families coping with ADD are usually white and middle or upper-middle class. The children experience problems both at home and at school, and the parents usually work long hours. Diller, who is a medical doctor as well as a professor in behavioral pediatrics, seamlessly moves through a number of factors that may account for the increased use of the drug. He writes, "Today, we expect more for our children, and we expect more of them.... Something is seriously out of balance in the lives of many families, and the impact on certain kinds of children is profound.... I'm concerned that we might be too successful in medicating away the negative consequences of our obsession with performance." ❑

Seastone

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Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

Vigil

Alan Shapiro
(University of Chicago Press, 1997)



Alan Shapiro's memoir of his sister's death in 1995 of breast cancer is a story not only of coming to terms with a ravaging disease and its effects on one family, but a dramatic look at an entire cultural moment—his sister's liberal politics and personal convictions as they clash with those of their parents, her interracial marriage, and the alienating fissures that a family attempts to mend as they experience the confrontations that surface again with an impending and unspeakable loss. With his compassionate and unyielding intelligence, Shapiro finds the words to reflect a grief that is never resolved though finally articulated; his prose seamlessly joins personal experience and the larger ethical questions underlying his sister's death, and the poems that accompany show why Shapiro is one of TIKKUN's favorite poets.

In the Belly

David Gewanter
(University of Chicago Press, 1997)



David Gewanter's first book of poems marks an auspicious debut, full of keen verbal wit and a sensibility mixing irony and passion, the comic and the tragic. From poems that cast a disabused eye on harsh political realities to wry autobiography, love poems, poems of sexual discovery, mortality, and meditations on how the artist forges powerful shapes out of historical circumstances, Gewanter sings with taut muscular rhythms and a linguistic energy matched by a winning formal invention.

Simone de Beauvoir

A Critical Reader

Edited by Elizabeth Fallaize
(Routledge, 1998)



Although Simone de Beauvoir is best known for her feminist classic *The Second Sex*, she was also an essayist, novelist, and significant commentator on a wide range of political and philosophical issues. This collection brings together some of the most significant articles published by feminist theorists analyzing the breadth and depth of a woman whose close association with Jean Paul Sartre may have allowed others to undervalue her significance.

ReOrient

Global Economy in the Asian Age

Andre Gunder Frank
(University of California Press, 1998)



Andre Gunder Frank's thesis requires a revolution in Western thinking: if we transcend Eurocentrism, we can see that, viewed from the standpoint of the global whole, the main story of economic development is in Asia and not in the West. Frank exhibits distinct glee as he pulls the rug out from under the Eurocentrism of Marx, Weber, Toynbee and (he thinks) even Immanuel Wallerstein. Frank is famous for having shown how "not feudalism, but capitalism" generated "the development of underdevelopment" in Latin America and elsewhere in the Third World. In this work, Frank shows that until 1800 productivity, production, and accumulation were greater in Asia than elsewhere in the world, and that the increase in European accumulation was possible only thanks to that Asian accumulation. There is really only one world system, something that we are experiencing in the current ups and downs of the market but which is denied by the accepted ideological frameworks through which Western social theorists hide from themselves the deep interdependency of the world.

Apples From the Desert

Savyon Liebrecht
(The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1998)



Savyon Liebrecht is one of Israel's most talented writers. This selection of short stories brings us into the rawness and passion of contemporary Israeli life. Holocaust ghosts recur everywhere as do contemporary Palestinians. Nothing is quite as stable and calm as the commodious middle-class Israeli background seems to promise. Instead, we are often startled and provoked by the turn of events in Liebrecht's tales. What makes these stories most powerful are their unflinching commitment to enter into the consciousness of women as they approach the complexities of contemporary life with a distinctively self-affirming women's perspective. It is work that is finely nuanced to social reality and yet powerfully alive to the inner struggles and psychological twists of its characters. A truly beautiful piece of writing.

Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

A Place for Us

How to Make Society Civil and Democracy Strong

Benjamin R. Barber
(Hill & Wang, 1998)



Barber is an advocate for a strong democratic tradition to revitalize civic society. He hears the appeal of both communitarian and libertarian approaches, and tries to steer a middle course. Barber also imagines emancipation from work as the end point of technology, so that human needs are largely met through the products not of human labor but of human imagination (robotics and computers thus are envisioned as "human imagination made manifest"). Barber's book is an important antidote to the growing cynicism about the possibility of a democratic culture in the United States.

Flamboyánt

Elizabeth Swados
(Picador USA, 1998)



Elizabeth Swados is a talented playwright and novelist and her latest gift to us is engaging, sensitive, and a fun read. Deeply rooted in Torah and the tradition yet fiercely independent and sophisticated, Swados brings us into the life of Chana Landau, a woman who has stepped beyond her Orthodox Jewish community in Brooklyn to form a friendship with a part-Jewish fifteen-year-old prostitute who is her student at a West Side high school. Swados is one of our best talents, and has a grasp for what is enduring and powerful in the emerging renewal of Jewish sensibilities.

The River Midnight

Lilian Nattel
(Scribner, 1999)



Set in a shtetl in 1893–4, Lilian Nattel's powerful and persuasive novel gives us a variety of different perspectives on a set of events that shake a Jewish village when one of its youth is arrested for passing out revolutionary pamphlets. The novel's richly nuanced tapestry allows us to enter into a world that is at once familiar and lost forever. The allure of Nattel's story is that she manages to avoid nostalgic fluff and yet give us a sense of what was so beautiful and magical in Jewish life in Eastern Europe.

Here I Am

Contemporary Jewish Stories from Around the World

edited by Marsha Lee Berkman and Elaine Marcus Starkman
(Jewish Publication Society, 1998)



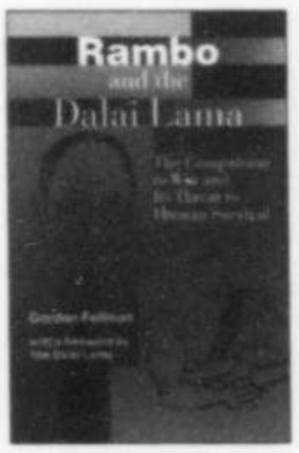
The Oxford Book of Jewish Stories

edited by Ilan Stavans
(Oxford University Press, 1998)

These two anthologies are the state of the art in collections of Jewish stories. Although both make some selections based on obligatory bows to weak writers with too much social power in the literary world (e.g. Cynthia Ozick), both make a serious effort to overcome the North American chauvinism that has given previous collections such a narrow perspective on the Jewish experience. Both are chock-filled with literary delights. In this issue of TIKKUN Ilan Stavans presents some themes that are further developed in his introduction to the Oxford anthology, and his collection has the added advantage of historical breadth through the past hundred years. Taken together, these two collections provide an important introduction to the juicy riches of the Jewish literary experience.

Rambo and The Dalai Lama

by Gordon Fellman
(State University of New York Press, 1998)



Gordon Fellman draws upon the most sophisticated thinking in sociology, social psychology, and social movements to present a unique perspective on how we might achieve significant social change. Fellman understands what most social movement theorists and progressive activists leave out: the critical role of creating mutuality and an inner life within social change movements, and how that, in turn, depends on the development of ego strengths. He highlights the importance of empathizing with the other and developing the capacity to enjoy challenge and growth. Fellman points to a way we can move to connect with other human beings and to feel a sense of organic connection with other species and the whole planet. Fellman, a member of TIKKUN's editorial board, has played a leadership role in bringing psychological sophistication into his work as a political activist; his book provides a useful compendium of the practical wisdom he has amassed.

תיקון

Tikkun (te-kün) ...to heal, repair and transform the world. All the rest is commentary

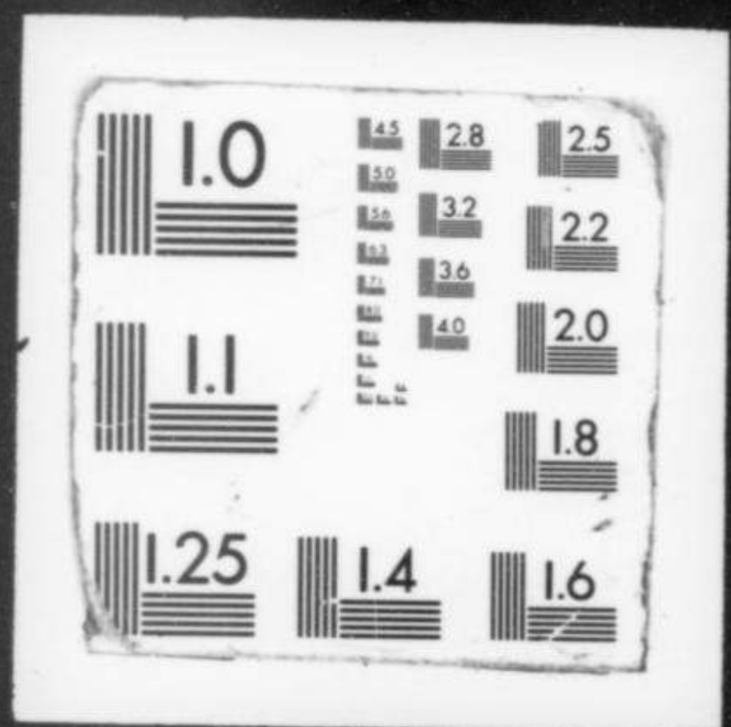


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