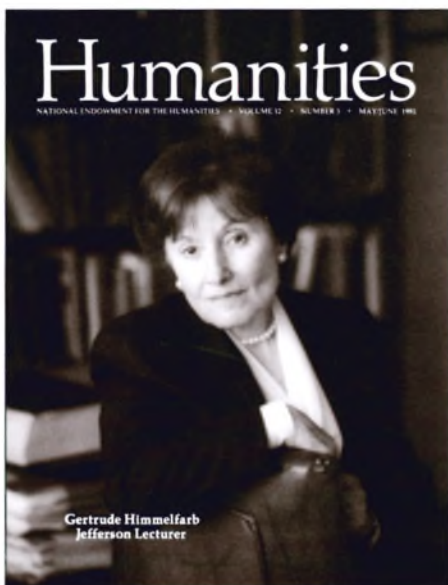


Humanities

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A black and white portrait of Gertrude Himmelfarb, a woman with short dark hair, wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored blouse and a pearl necklace. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some vertical lines.

Gertrude Himmelfarb
Jefferson Lecturer



Historian Gertrude Himmelfarb, 1991 Jefferson Lecturer. (Photo by Barbara Ries)

Humanities

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Editor's Note

Gertrude Himmelfarb

This issue of *Humanities* looks at the life and work of historian Gertrude Himmelfarb, who has been chosen as the 1991 Jefferson Lecturer in the Humanities. She is the twentieth recipient of the honor, which is the highest award the federal government bestows for distinguished achievement in the humanities.

Himmelfarb, a historian of Victorian England, has been described as "one of the most gifted and trenchant interpreters of the Victorian scene." Bernard Semmel likens her outlook to that of poet-critic Matthew Arnold. "Her intellectual opponents, like his, are the system-makers, the enemies of culture, and the advocates of moral anarchy, those who put their faith in a mechanical and material civilization. Her allies are those who stress the values of the humanist tradition, with its belief that individual activity can be effective and that individual responsibility is inescapable."

Her first published work, *Lord Acton: A Study in Conscience and Politics*, appeared in 1952. Since then, there have been seven more, exploring different facets of the Victorian period: *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution* (1959), *Victorian Minds: Essays on Nineteenth Century Intellectuals* (1968), *On Liberty and Liberalism: The Case of John Stuart Mill* (1974), *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Industrial Age* (1984), *Marriage and Morals among the Victorians* (1987), *The New History and the Old* (1987), and the soon-to-be-published *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*.

"Throughout a distinguished career combining scholarly research and teaching, Professor Himmelfarb has made enduring contributions to our understanding of the past," NEH Chairman Lynne V. Cheney said last fall in announcing the selection. "Her writings and lectures affirm the value of studying the great historical ideas and institutions that have influenced modern democratic societies."

Himmelfarb was born in 1922 in New York. She earned her bachelor of arts degree from Brooklyn College and her master's and doctorate in history from the University of Chicago. Himmelfarb taught for twenty-three years at Brooklyn College and the Graduate School of the City University of New York, where she was named Distinguished Professor of History in 1978. She is now professor emeritus. She and her husband, Irving Kristol, live in Washington, D.C. They have two grown children, William and Elizabeth.

Himmelfarb is a fellow of the British Academy and the Royal Historical Society, and a member of the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She also serves on the board of the Woodrow Wilson International Center and the councils of the Library of Congress and the American Enterprise Institute.

Himmelfarb was chosen for the annual honor by the National Council on the Humanities, the presidentially appointed advisory body of the Endowment. The award, which carries a \$10,000 stipend, honors the intellectual and civic accomplishments exemplified by Thomas Jefferson. It provides a forum for a distinguished scholar to deliver a public lecture on issues of broad concern.

This year is the twentieth anniversary of the Jefferson Lectures. To mark the occasion, we revisit some of Himmelfarb's distinguished predecessors and recall what they had to say about the state of the humanities in America.

—Mary Lou Beatty

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A Conversation with...



Historian Gertrude Himmelfarb



*EH Chairman
Lynne V. Cheney
talks with histor-
ian Gertrude
Himmelfarb, the
1991 Jefferson
Lecturer in the
Humanities, about*

*the cultural and historical legacy of Victorian England. Himmelfarb is professor emeritus of history at the City University of New York and the author of eight books, among them *The Idea of Poverty*, *The New History and the Old*, and the forthcoming *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*.*

Lynne V. Cheney: Why is it that the Victorians are either ignored or vilified today?

Gertrude Himmelfarb: They represent almost everything that the modern groups in our culture denigrate—morality, tradition, self-discipline, “high culture,” the whole humanist range of values. Matthew Arnold, for

example, is the humanist *par excellence*, and our culture finds him difficult to understand and respect. I know you did your dissertation on Arnold. When were you working on that?

Cheney: Sixty-eight, sixty-nine.

Himmelfarb: That was the same year, 1969, that I taught *Culture and Anarchy* for the first time in a graduate seminar. It was an extraordinary experience. You know it, of course.

Cheney: Oh, it's wonderful.

Himmelfarb: What made it especially wonderful then was the fact that, exactly a hundred years after it had been written, we were in much the situation Arnold had anticipated. 1969, you remember, was a time of student riots, strikes, and a general rebellion against authority, in and out of the academy. There were the students, priding themselves on this great new liberating movement, the counterculture. And there was Arnold exposing that counterculture as a form of anarchy, the very antithesis of real

culture. It was wonderful to watch my students trying to come to terms with this book. I don't think I converted many of them to Arnold's point of view, but I certainly convinced them that their ideas had been anticipated—and powerfully criticized.

Cheney: He is amazingly relevant. If you're looking for a quote on cultural topics or on the kind of cultural conflict that we've seen of late in the academy, Arnold is rich with possibilities. Every once in a while he sounds a little elitist to my ear. He talks about “the masses” a little more than I'd like.

Himmelfarb: On the other hand, his analysis of society is not elitist. He divided society, you remember, into three classes: the populace, the philistines (corresponding to the middle class), and—do you remember his name for the aristocracy?—the barbarians. The barbarians are not the masses, not the lower classes, which is what my students always assume, but the upper class, the aristocracy. And they are barbarians because they

are mindless, uncultivated, because they're not pursuing the free play of the mind, the best that has been thought and said, and so on.

Cheney: Well, that whole notion of the free play of the mind over ideas has always struck me as a scholarly ideal, and it is so amazing to me to be so often faced today with this notion that there is no such thing as the free play of the mind, and so the sooner you admit that, Mrs. Cheney, the better off we'll all be.

Himmelfarb: That's right. We're constantly told that everything is predetermined by class, race, and gender.

Cheney: Everything is political. You know, in a sense that's true, that everything is political, but it's political with a little "p." And what happens today is that the fact that there is a generalized political dimension to our lives is used to justify politics with a big "P." You have people talking about how their scholarship is an extension of their Politics—or, worse even—how their teaching is.

Let's talk about your lecture. In "Of Heroes, Villains, and Valets," you point out a scholarly tendency to give us the valet's point of view of great people—a view from the underside, so to speak. Are scholars the only ones guilty of this? I thought of journalists immediately when I read your essay for the first time.

Himmelfarb: When Hegel used the word "schoolmasters," he meant historians and critics—men of little experience and great pretensions, who think that they know so much more than a Caesar or an Augustus, that their moral sensibilities are so much finer than theirs, that they can sit in judgment on them. To Hegel they are little more than valets imposing their valet mentality on their betters. In the lecture I trace this hero-valet theme through the Victorians and on to the present generation of historians, biographers, and literary critics, culminating with the deconstructionists. At some point there takes place a reversal of roles between the hero and the valet, so that while the biographer or literary critic is denigrating the hero, reducing him to the level of a valet, that biographer or critic is elevating himself to the level of hero. *He* knows better than the hero what is going on, *he* can interpret Shakespeare's plays better than Shakespeare can, and so on. And that applies *a fortiori* to

the kind of journalist today who does precisely that in relation to public figures. I think you'd have to recast the argument a little bit to make this point. You'd have to talk not about heroes and valets, but about public figures and journalists.

Cheney: I suppose that's why it's on my mind.

Himmelfarb: There are, of course, journalists and commentators who make serious and important contributions to public discourse. But there are others who demean and degrade it, who know less than the people involved in public affairs but are quick to pronounce judgment upon them and who tend to interpret public issues and controversies in terms of personal, preferably sordid and scandalous, motives. This kind of journalist (who too often brings discredit to the profession) cannot accept the fact that public figures might have genuine differences of opinion, differences of policy and principle. Instead—in good valet fashion—he reduces public affairs to private interests, personal rivalries, and political maneuvers.

Cheney: To go back in time just for a minute, what was it that happened that suddenly made this style of history interesting to people and interesting to biographers? I mean, what was the crack in the temper of the times that suddenly gave us this form of history where there was interest in the degrading detail?

Himmelfarb: I think this mode of history—to put it very sharply—reflects a kind of democratization of history, a suspicion of "elites," of people in positions of authority. There's a muckraking impulse which unfortunately comes with democracy.

Cheney: I see.

Himmelfarb: H.G. Wells once boasted that he would write a truly populist history in which Napoleon would be seen strutting on the crest of history "like a cockerel on a dung hill."

Cheney: How much effect did it have on society as a whole? How much effect does the valet approach to history have on our society as a whole? Are people taken in by it?

Himmelfarb: Journalists, if not historians, do have a great deal of influence. They set the tone of public discussion, of public discourse. And to the extent that they interpret public affairs in terms of scandals and personalities, they do trivialize and

degrade the issues. But the interesting thing is that the public is more resistant to this than one might think. In this sense, the public culture is much healthier than the elitist culture—that is, the culture of the media and of the academy. For example, the public wants to read biographies of great men. Now, in the academy, biographies are looked down upon as an inferior mode of scholarship, as too traditional, not "innovative." History departments often discourage good students from writing dissertations that are biographical. "You don't want to do that. That's old hat, that's biography."

Cheney: And narrative history?

Himmelfarb: And narrative history, exactly. Here, too, the public is more traditional-minded than academics. They want to read not only about great men but about great events—biographies of Lincoln, for example, and narratives of the Civil War.

Cheney: You said some nice things about *The Civil War* in your Jefferson Lecture, speaking of narrative history, because it certainly was a good example of that. But George Will recently wrote a column about *The Civil War* and suggested that it was an antiwar film. Is that how you thought of it as you were watching?

Himmelfarb: I thought it was a grand assertion of national purpose and nationhood, a very patriotic film. But I am aware that there have been two views of it. On the one hand, all the misery and the violence . . .

Cheney: Which is true of war.

Himmelfarb: That's right. But I thought the genius of that film—and the genius of the real Civil War—was that it was both things. Of course war is ghastly and murderous and dirty and miserable and tragic. But the Civil War was all of that for a very noble purpose, and it had a very noble end—or rather two noble ends. One is the emancipation of the slaves, and there is no more noble end than that. The other is nationhood, keeping the nation together, preserving the union. In that sense it's a very patriotic film, it seems to me.

Cheney: It's almost like a great poem in the sense that it admits different interpretations—which is not to go so far as to say any interpretation is correct, but events are complex.

Himmelfarb: It admits different interpretations, but I think any interpretation that focuses only on the one aspect

and not at all on the other is simply wrong.

Cheney: It is both things.

Himmelfarb: The war was not merely miserable, dirty, violent, ugly, tragic. It was a heroic experience too. Those wonderful letters written by ordinary soldiers to their wives—they knew what they were fighting for and what they were ready to die for.

Cheney: And you did have the sense

the human condition, so we're told. Only your condition and mine and each individual's.

Himmelfarb: Exactly.

Cheney: It's a discouraging assessment of the humanities when you talk about the balkanization that has gone on. Are there places to look and feel positive about the humanities, or is your assessment of them a gloomy one?

Himmelfarb: I'm not normally given to optimism, as you may have noticed, but I must say I now feel somewhat optimistic—although for the most pessimistic reasons. I think the situation has gotten so bad, so overtly, patently bad, that people are reacting against it. This is especially true of the universities—the politicization of the universities, PC, as it is known—political correctness. The fact that it has acquired the status of an acronym suggests how prevalent it is and how everyone is becoming terribly aware of it.

Cheney: And satirizing it.

Himmelfarb: And satirizing it and being extremely critical of it.

right to insist on civility of discourse. But most of the examples of sentiments denounced as racist, sexist, or elitist that I have heard were not that at all. They were expressions of the kinds of opinions that have always been voiced, in and out of the university. Professors have been accused of racism, for example, for referring to "American Indians" rather than "native Americans." To characterize this as racist is outrageous. There are outrageous racist and sexist diatribes, mainly in novels, rap records, and the like. These are far more violent and objectionable than anything one hears in the university. For some reason the same people who are quick to denounce racism and sexism in the university are willing to tolerate much more egregious examples of these in the popular culture.


Cheney: Yes. It has struck me as extremely ironic that 2 Live Crew is held by some academics to be a kind of humor that we simply have failed to appreciate, when it's really violent against women, extremely so.

Himmelfarb: It's hardcore pornography.

Cheney: This may be a point on which you and I have some difference of opinion. I think I probably am less inclined to think that there are things that shouldn't be said, unless they cause danger somehow. And I know that you think—you've told me before—that when things are allowed to be said, the society is giving its blessing to the kinds of thoughts being expressed.

Himmelfarb: I think that things that are legally permitted are in a sense morally legitimized. Now, I agree with you that there should be a very large area of freedom for expression and action. Nevertheless, I think there comes a point when it's quite proper to say that some things are and should be illegal. This applies to drugs, and also to some forms of expression—obscenity, pornography, violence—which are morally as well as physically harmful. The decision to prosecute such cases is a prudential one, and I would try to use the courts as little as possible. But I would not preclude the use of the courts in extreme situations. As a matter of principle, I would not preclude it, because I think that society requires laws, and one of the functions of law is to legitimize—or illegitimize—behavior.

Can I come back to a point we dis-

t has struck me as extremely ironic that 2 Live Crew is held by some academics to be a kind of humor that we simply have failed to appreciate, when it's really violent against women, extremely so.

—Cheney

of people who were caught up in something larger than themselves and ennobled by that. In *My Ántonia* Willa Cather writes that happiness is "being dissolved into something complete and great."

Himmelfarb: This is why I am so disturbed by the enormous emphasis that is put on race, gender, and class. It not only reduces individuals to categories and confines them within those categories; it makes it difficult for them to see themselves as part of a larger, more elevated, more universal whole. It is this sense of universality that is being denied all the time now.

Cheney: That there is anything universal.

Himmelfarb: That there is anything universal. One is a woman or one is a black or one is gay, but one is not part of a larger culture, a culture that transcends these particularities.

Cheney: There is no such thing as

Even those professors who've been going along with the balkanization of the university are now pulling back and saying, "Is this what I want? Surely this can't be right." And so, too, with the politicization of the university. PC has been carried so far as to discourage and even prevent any expression of dissent. Instead we have public denunciations, humiliations, consciousness-raising sessions—this is Orwellian thought control. And I think more and more people are beginning to realize that.

Cheney: Should people be able to say anything? What we're talking about, really, is an interference with freedom of expression, and many of the expressions being censored are thought by those doing the censoring to be racist, to be sexist, to be homophobic. Should people be able to say things that are sexist?

Himmelfarb: A university has the

cussed earlier. This is about my being optimistic. Let me give you one other ground for optimism, a very pessimistic ground for optimism. Together with the politicization of the university, we are witnessing a new segregationist movement in the university. Did you happen to read an article by Dinesh D'Souza on this subject?

Cheney: In *The American Scholar*, I did read it, yes.

Himmelfarb: It is a hair-raising article. The segregation he talks about is very widespread, and I hadn't been aware of it. Dorms, cafeterias, student unions, classrooms are, in effect, segregated. I'm not talking about white racist segregation but segregation on the part of blacks and minorities, a self-imposed segregation, which is also imposed on those who would prefer not to be segregated. This is an appalling development.

Cheney: But what's the answer to it? I know one school has decided to force people to live together whether they want to or not. I'm not sure that's an answer.

Himmelfarb: No, that's obviously not the answer. That, in fact, is part of the problem. It is another form of PC—the idea that there is only one correct, compulsory answer to every problem. It's a typically totalitarian way of trying to handle the situation. Either you oblige students to live in separate dorms or you oblige them against their will to live together.

Cheney: Where's the optimism here? Just that this has gotten so bad?

Himmelfarb: It's gotten so bad that liberals are beginning to rebel against it. They are saying, "Of course we were all for ethnic studies, we were all for black studies, we were all for women's studies. But this is not what we had in mind at all. We don't want to encourage separatism and segregationism. We're integrationists, not segregationists." This, after all, is what the civil rights movement was all about. And it is ironic—and tragic—that the people who were in the forefront of that movement should now find themselves unwittingly betraying it.

Cheney: Why don't you tell me about your new book. You've just finished a book that you had worked on for a very long time.

Himmelfarb: Yes. It was meant to be a sequel to an earlier book that I had written on the idea of poverty.

Cheney: I knew your new book was on poverty, and you also have the old book on poverty, so I was confused.

Himmelfarb: It is confusing. I originally thought of the new book as a sequel to my *Idea of Poverty*. But it turns out to be not quite that, for it has a distinctive theme. The earlier book covers the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries; the new book is on the late-nineteenth century. It's called *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*. It deals with a quite extraordinary generation, the men and women of the 1880s and 1890s, who were truly dedicated to public service—philanthropists, social workers, settlement house residents (the first settlement house, Toynbee Hall, was started then) reformers, investigators, critics, and philosophers. It was a time of great social, political, and intellectual ferment about what was called *the social problem*, the problem of poverty. It was at this time, too, that several socialist parties were founded—not socialist as we understand it, but socialist in a very latitudinarian sense, meaning almost any kind of social reform or social change.

This period was interesting for two reasons. First, because it witnessed a total personal involvement on the part of these people. They gave of their time and their energy and their money. There were no foundations to support them, no government subsidies to finance their philanthropies, no national endowment for their research. They did it all by themselves out of their own resources, voluntarily and individually.

The other thing that I find very interesting is the spirit in which they approached the problem of poverty. As I said, the book is called *Poverty and Compassion*. Some of my friends are put off by this title because they regard "compassion" as a sentimental, wimpish word. I use it—as the Victorians used it—in a totally unsentimental sense. My introductory chapter is called "Compassion 'Properly Understood.'" As the Victorians understood it, there was nothing sentimental, nothing utopian about compassion. It

was hard-headed, rational, pragmatic—and at the same time moral and humane.

Cheney: Have you started thinking about your next book yet?

Himmelfarb: Yes, but I also wonder: Must I write another book? Is there any law that says I have to be working on a book all the time? I've been working on books ever since I left college. I'm trying now to think in terms of essays, although I suspect they might turn into a book. I've also decided to leave the Victorians and enter the twentieth century—the period of the early modernists. I've started an essay that takes off from that wonderful quotation of Virginia Woolf's.

Cheney: About human nature changing . . .

Himmelfarb: That's right. "In or about December 1910, human character changed." Even in the very early stages of modernism, I think you can see the later developments of modernism and even postmodernism. Yet the innovators of that period would



surely have been appalled by their successors.

Cheney: Do you write easily? I mean, you write so well. In your book about Darwin there's a description of Erasmus, the grandfather. It's marvelous in terms of the detail that makes Erasmus come alive. Do you accomplish that easily?

Himmelfarb: I do some things more easily than others—lectures, essays more easily than books. But I rewrite constantly, compulsively.

Cheney: Do you use a computer?

Himmelfarb: The computer was invented for me. I don't think I would have done this last book otherwise. It's glorious. One can write and rewrite and rewrite *ad infinitum*.

Cheney: There's a wonderful quote from E. B. White. His wife was a writer, and she edited constantly. And he described why her progress was so slow by saying she was like a county sheriff. No sooner would she get the sentence on the paper than she would shoot it dead.

Himmelfarb: That's wonderful. (laughter).

Cheney: I'm curious about how you got to be what you are. Were you a

or school book. We owned no books—at least no English books. What we did have were the Bible, prayer books, and some of the classics of Yiddish literature. Perhaps because *the* book was the Bible, my parents had an enormous respect, almost a veneration, for books in general. Did you know that in families like mine (and we were only moderately religious), when a religious book, even a children's text of the Bible, fell on the floor, one kissed it when one picked it up? Something of that sense of sanctity carried over to secular studies as well. My parents, for example, had no secular education, but they were very eager that their children have that—and not for vocational reasons but simply for the sake of education. Although my parents did not read to us, they encouraged us to read.

Cheney: That's very interesting.

Himmelfarb: My parents didn't read to us because English was not their native language. They could speak English, but they were much more comfortable speaking Yiddish, as they did with each other. My brother's first language—he is older than I—was Yiddish; this was the first of many languages that he mastered.

Cheney: What kind of school did you go to?

Himmelfarb: Public schools all the way through, and large second-rate public schools—not the "elite" schools.

Cheney: Did you go to religious school, too?

Himmelfarb: Yes, Hebrew school, every afternoon for two hours.

Cheney: And what does one do at Hebrew school?

Himmelfarb: Well, you learn the language, the prayers, and the religious rituals. You read the Bible, the prophets, and in the

upper grades, passages from the Talmud. Later, while I was at Brooklyn College, I also attended the Jewish Theological Seminary, so that my Hebrew education paralleled, to some extent, my secular education.

Cheney: I had a stereotype of you that turns out not to be true. I had assumed that you came from a long

line of New York intellectuals and grew up in a hothouse environment.

Himmelfarb: It was another kind of intellectual tradition that I grew up in. My grandfather was a learned man in a very parochial, religious sense.

Cheney: He was a Talmudic scholar?

Himmelfarb: Yes, although not in the modern Enlightenment sense of "scholar." It used to be said of him as it was said of many pious, learned Jews (the Jewish culture is full of myths of this kind that one mustn't take literally, although they do have a symbolic significance), that he could put a pin through the Talmud and know what word was on every page that the pin had hit. Another myth in our family—that I later discovered was shared by most Jewish families with any pretension to learning—was that we were descended from Maimonides.

Cheney: Your parents came from Russia.

Himmelfarb: My parents and grandparents came just before the First World War.

Cheney: How did they live in Russia? Who were they?


Himmelfarb: Theirs was a typical ghetto experience of Jews in a very small town. My maternal grandfather was not a rabbi—he didn't want to be a paid functionary, so to speak. But because he was learned, he became the village Hebrew teacher, which was not a demanding—or remunerative—occupation, and which gave him lots of time for study and prayer. His name was Lerner, which suggests his primary occupation. My grandmother and mother—the oldest of the children—ran a little store that gave them their livelihood.

Cheney: So that he could spend time studying.

Himmelfarb: So he could spend the entire day in the synagogue.

Cheney: He could lead the life of the mind and not be expected to earn money by doing it.

Himmelfarb: The life of the mind and of religious devotion. This was a very common ghetto pattern. And it affected—I hadn't thought of it until just now—the relations between men and women. The women, as often as not, worked in the store, did the purchasing and selling, took care of the family finances, as well as running the household. This was not your typical patriarchal family.



ne can, and
should, bring
to political
service ideas, principles,
even a political philosophy.
But political life is too
complicated, too messy, and
too untidy to accommodate
abstractions.

—Himmelfarb

studious child? Did you have parents who put books in front of you? What was growing up like?

Himmelfarb: The main fact about growing up for me was that mine was an immigrant family. I think that was absolutely crucial. Did I have books put in front of me? The answer is no. Every book I read was a library book

Cheney: Those are the grandparents who came to this country?

Himmelfarb: Yes. I knew them—at least my maternal grandparents—very well. I had enormous respect for my grandfather, a very gentle, modest, kindly, as well as learned man.

Cheney: At what point did you know that you wanted to lead the life of the mind?

Himmelfarb: I never thought of it in such exalted terms, but I suppose I had always assumed that books and ideas would play a large part in my life. It never occurred to me, mind you, that I would be a professional intellectual, as it were. I assumed that if I were to write, I would do it on my own. As for being a professor, that was out of the question; Jews, still less Jewish women, did not become professors.

Cheney: So there were barriers based on ethnicity as well as gender.

Himmelfarb: And other barriers as well. When I was interviewed for graduate school at the University of Chicago, Professor Gottschalk, who was later to be my mentor, told me: "We are offering you a scholarship and we would be delighted to have you in our program. But I want you to know that you have three strikes against you and that you will never have a teaching job. If you're entering this program with the expectation of teaching in a university, I want to disabuse you of that. That's not going to happen." I said, "I know two of the strikes against me. What is the third one?"

Cheney: I can't imagine.

Himmelfarb: Well, the third one was that I was a New Yorker, and mid-western colleges had a strong bias against easterners.

Cheney: So it really was a love of learning as opposed to any kind of credentialing for a profession that interested you. What did you study?

Himmelfarb: My master's thesis was on Robespierre; I was fascinated by the French Revolution—how its high ideals degenerated into the Terror. I moved into English studies by way of Lord Acton, who had done a very provocative book on the French Revolution, on just that theme.

Cheney: Most of the people that you have written about have in some way taken up the question of how to lead a good life. Sometimes they found it difficult to live according to the ethic they believed in.

Himmelfarb: This was certainly the dominant motif in Acton's life and mind. He had been working for years on a history of liberty, which was going to be his magnum opus. When I went to Cambridge University as a graduate student, it was to do research on his manuscripts, his huge collection of notes, and his magnificent library, all of which were designed to provide the material for his great history of liberty—"the greatest book," it has been said, "that was never written."

In my biography of Acton, I speculated that he never wrote it because he was caught up in a profound moral dilemma. On the one hand he had an absolutist notion of liberty; liberty was the ultimate, absolute good. But he also had an absolutist notion of morality, so that liberty could not be purchased at the expense of morality. He admired the American Revolution as a great event in the history of liberty because the degree of violence and murder was minimal. But the French Revolution, which also aspired to liberty, was murderous and therefore immoral. He could never resolve this dilemma: How can the historian justify the French Revolution—or other events that contributed to the progress of liberty—without endorsing immoral acts?

Cheney: There was a quote about your book about Acton which you seemed to endorse. "The best political thinkers," he wrote, "are often very poor politicians." If you think very closely on events, sometimes you do find yourself paralyzed even from the act of writing, much less from the necessity of action. I suppose the question is, to what extent is strong intellectual drive incompatible with public service, for instance?

Himmelfarb: At the very least, there is a large degree of tension between the two. One can, and should, bring to political service ideas, principles, even a political philosophy. But political life is too complicated, too messy, and too untidy to accommodate abstractions. Ideas and principles have to be mediated by compromise

and prudence—without, however, betraying those ideas and principles.

Cheney: Whose wonderful phrase is it? "All intellectuals should be bound by the necessity of seeing their ideas put into practice." There is a difference between having ideas and having to make decisions.

Himmelfarb: A few, not many, Victorians fell into the trap of thinking that ideas could be applied mechanically and decisively in politics. I once wrote an essay called "The Intellectual



in Politics," about the Webbs, the Fabian socialists. Now, they had a very decided view of what politics should be like. They prided themselves on being "social engineers." Their ideal was a fully regulated, organized, planned society, a society that was rational and tidy. That ideal would have been disastrous had it been put in practice. Fortunately it was not shared by most Victorians, who distrusted such "rationality." One of the most interesting and admirable things about the Victorians is how acutely aware they were of the complexities of life—of political as well as private life. They valued principles in politics, but they also made a principle of prudence. And they valued morality in private affairs, but they also made a virtue of tolerance. □

Gertrude Himmelfarb

GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB may well be the leading authority on Victorian intellectual history on either side of the Atlantic. She is certainly one of the most perceptive, most subtle, and most sympathetic. For her, the period—broadly conceived as beginning in the mid-eighteenth-century evangelical revival and extending to the First World War—stands as a special era in the history of mankind. Though not of the stature of the Periclean age or the Renaissance, or of the scientific revolution and Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Victorian age possesses a distinctive intellectual and moral elevation that makes it especially worthy of study in a century like our own, a century that has turned its back on much that its predecessor valued. The special achievements of the Victorians stand grandly magnified by the events that followed: the world wars, the Holocaust, the brutal regimes of Hitler and Stalin—as well as the antihumanist, modernist streams of academic and intellectual life today.

In Celebration

BY BERNARD SEMMEL

Himmelfarb's outlook is that of the Victorian poet-critic Matthew Arnold. Her intellectual opponents, like his, are the system makers, the enemies of culture, and the advocates of moral anarchy, those who put their faith in a mechanical and material civilization. Her allies are those who stress the values of the humanist tradition, with its belief that individual activity can be effective and that individual responsibility is inescapable. They are those who seek to achieve moral improvement and to establish it on a social as well as an individual basis.

Himmelfarb was born in New York City, received her undergraduate degree from Brooklyn College and her doctorate from the University of Chicago. She began her teaching career at Brooklyn College and the Graduate School of the City University of New York, where she was named Distinguished Professor of History in 1978. Before she began teaching, she had already, as an independent scholar, published books and essays that attracted the attention and regard of the intellectual community. What particularly strikes an observer of her scholarly accomplishment over four decades is the wide range of her interests. She has written on science and literature, politics and economics. She has produced books on Acton, Darwin, and Mill, essays on Burke, Bentham, Malthus, Bagehot, Buchan, and many more. In the best humanist tradition, *nil humani alienum sibi*; nothing has appeared beyond her concern. In this, she has resembled a number of the Victorian writers of whom she has written, the men-of-letters of their time. Following their example, she has skillfully turned her discussions of writers and ideas into articles for widely read journals, offering us learned yet graceful contributions not merely to scholarship but to present-day intellectual and political discourse.

Himmelfarb has joined the historian of Victorian England whom she most admires, Elie Halévy, in celebrating what Halévy called "the miracle

of modern England." Like Macaulay before him, the French writer had in mind England's having avoided the political and social revolutions of the continent, from the great French revolution of 1789 to those that rocked Europe in 1830 and 1848. Himmelfarb has been particularly interested in the intellectual and religious revolutions of the continent, to which England seemed similarly immune. Continental writers complained of English "backwardness" in failing to be moved by these convulsions. For a condescending Comte, Britain was suspended by a trick of history in a metaphysical stage, with her institutions and philosophy hovering uncertainly between an outmoded theological stage and the final positivistic and scientific stage that a modern France had achieved. Marx, and later Lenin, bemoaned the failure of the obtusely self-satisfied British working classes to follow the revolutionary class-consciousness of the continental proletariat. Nietzsche sneered at the apparent determination of the hypocritical English to retain a Christian morality even after they rejected the Christian God. But Himmelfarb argues that these European movements had not so much bypassed England as that England had received them in her own fashion, not merely imbibing them in homeopathic doses, but in the process transforming them to suit her own needs and traditions.

For Himmelfarb, England has for centuries possessed a distinctive political and moral identity. There was, she argues, a unique spirit that ran through English history from the Middle Ages onward, one institutionalized in the role of parliament and the rule of law, and characterized by a search for compromise in the interest of stability. England was determined to hold on to the old even while making room for the new and to exalt the individual and his liberty without trampling on the needs of the community. While fully aware of the deficiencies of Whig history, with its present-mindedness and its temptation to see British development in the altogether too simple terms of the steady advance of liberty, Himmelfarb admires Whig historians like Macaulay who helped to preserve the English political tradition. At a time, moreover, when the leading Victorian writers and thinkers felt deserted by the support of their earlier, often evangelical, faith, they

nevertheless adhered to a belief in a moral conscience, a residue of, as it became a substitute for, that faith. They turned to a self-imposed duty, resisting the Darwinian displacement of a moral man into an amoral animal. Even the English novel has through centuries born the mark of a moral sensibility quite different from that of its French or Russian counterparts.

The subject of Himmelfarb's first book, in 1952, a study of the historian Lord Acton, may have helped to confirm rather than to establish an intellectual and professional model for herself, for the reader is persuaded that the chief features of this ideal were already present. Acton, whose Catholicism, maternal descent from the aristocracy of the Holy Roman Empire, and continental education put him outside of the usual English mode, may nonetheless be understood as a quintessential Victorian moralist. He was regarded as the most erudite man of his time and would become Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. For him, as for Himmelfarb, history was above all the history of ideas; as he observed, only ideas gave "dignity and grace and intellectual value to history." Acton, to paraphrase Fichte, was also a morality-intoxicated man, and took intensely seriously his professional responsibility to act as a judge and moral arbiter over the past. For Acton, in his own words, "the inflexible authority of the moral code" was "the secret of the authority, the dignity, the utility of history." He felt violated by the papal declaration of infallibility, which as a liberal and a historian he courageously resisted as a perversion of history and a travesty of religion.

Himmelfarb persuades us that a shift in Acton's politics proved fatal to his work as a historian. Up until 1870, the time of the papal encyclical, he had been a Whiggish Burkean, stressing the importance of history and tradition; after this disappointing event, he became a Radical, an intellectual revolutionary who, if consistent, ought to have given up the writing of history. In short, this divide between upholders of tradition and radical revolutionaries was to be one of Himmelfarb's grand themes. Her strong preference for Burke's respect, against Radical disdain, for the past defined her own position and her own commitment to history as a calling.

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Acton had found it impossible to write his long-projected history of liberty, she argues, because his new radicalism had devalued, indeed, negated history itself. Acton's apparent recognition that, as he wrote, "the triumph of the Revolutionist annuls the historian" makes his dilemma a more tragic one.

A REWARDING EXAMPLE of Himmelfarb's method is her study, *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution*, completed in 1959. This brilliant contribution to the history of science is an intellectual biography of one of the Victorians whose work was of more than insular moment. Her patient reconstruction of the formulation and reception of evolutionary theory proved controversial. She argues that reasons entirely external to science had moved opinion to accept Darwin's hypothesis so easily. Darwin himself had in fact been willing to grant that his theory remained unproven and that Bishop Wilberforce's celebrated attack was not, as the generally accepted view has it, mere clerical buffoonery. The Darwinian revolution, she demonstrates, was a "conservative revolution," a final, legitimizing statement of what other writers had been saying for almost a century and which most naturalists already believed. Nor did Darwinism, as in the generally accepted view, undermine the religious convictions of the leading men and women of the period: For some like the clergyman-novelist Charles Kingsley, it actually confirmed religious belief, while quite different issues were responsible for the failure of faith in the best-known religious crises of the time.

Such efforts at historical revisionism on Himmelfarb's part were not exercises in overturning conventional interpretations simply to display virtuosity or to *épater les bourgeois*. Her intention was to dismiss—by means of a painstaking and perceptive examination of the contemporary evidence—the legends that had entrenched themselves, often for ideological reasons, in historical writing. An example of this are her essays on the father of nineteenth-century utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham, the defects of whose character and, to say the least, ambiguous quality of whose liberalism she revealed. Like the American found-

ing fathers and their successors, she prefers the Whiggish Blackstone. Her careful reading of the works of the economist-clergyman Malthus uncovered a figure substantially more complex than that usually presented, one whose often unacknowledged influence, usually in highly simplified terms, continues to obsess many contemporary writers. Much the same may be said of her controversial portrait of John Stuart Mill, another and grander modern icon. Her *On Liberty and Liberalism: The Case of John Stuart Mill*, published in 1974, enlarged the understanding even of those who cannot accept her interpretation.

Himmelfarb has taken sharp issue with the sociological historians who create abstract models based upon statistically precise calculations, ignoring the ideas and beliefs of the people of the period, in order to create a supposedly value-free, scientific history. She calls on historians to consider moral data as seriously as statistical data and sees their failure to do so as a serious defect in historical imagination. What is necessary to the writer of history is "a sensitivity to ideas, a tolerance for beliefs that may not be his own, above all a respect for moral principles as such so that he will not dismiss them too readily as rationalizations of interest, or deformations of vision, or evidence of an intellectual obtuseness that conceals from contemporaries those economic and social facts that are so obvious to the historian." It is to this program that she has dedicated herself.

Himmelfarb has sympathetically described "the Tory imagination" of Benjamin Disraeli in two splendid essays. Disraeli in the 1840s worried that the British sense of community was falling apart. England was in danger of becoming two nations, and in his novel *Sybil* he called upon that part of the aristocracy that was conscious of its duty to heal the breach. For Disraeli, as for Himmelfarb, the issue was not the blue-book statistics of material poverty, but the moral problem. The question, she writes, was one of "disposition as well as condition, of moral rights and duties, [and of] social obligations"—of making "connections" between the rich and the poor so as to provide a sense of com-

munity. Feelings of guilt and fear were as much the basis for separation and antagonism as was hard-hearted neglect. The Tory imagination of Egremont, the hero of Disraeli's novel, conceives that the condition of the poor can be bettered, in Egremont's words, "not by levelling the Few, but by elevating the Many."

Himmelfarb observes that the idea of nationality or of national character has been repugnant to many recent social historians, who today have a dominant position in the profession, because such concepts assume the importance, perhaps the primacy, of politics in history—a role she herself is pleased to concede. With their stress on the social sciences and quantification, modish historians have in her view dehumanized history; in preferring to discuss *mentalités* rather than ideas they have made puppets of the individual historical actors. She is troubled by the new history's readiness to see ideas as mere reflections of economic relationships, and politics as manipulation or a derivative of individual psychology rather than the embodiment of a political or moral tradition. These historians, she warns, in tearing the intricate web uniting past and present, that of politics and nationality, threaten to leave us without any direction.

Himmelfarb's *The Idea of Poverty*, which appeared in 1984, is a work on the social history of Victorian England that contrasts sharply with the prevailing Marxian model.

Here she joins the intellectual (and political) to the social in a way that demonstrates the immense influence of ideas. In this first of what will be two volumes, she has examined the competing outlooks of two seminal economists, Adam Smith and T. R. Malthus. Smith, optimistic but also realistic, exemplified mainstream British political thought in seeing the poor as an order of responsible persons, whose labor in a progressive economy would enable them to achieve both material and moral improvement. The clergyman Malthus, bowing under the weight of original sin, distrusted the new industrial system, believing its hopes for progress to be a snare.

continued on page 34

COMPASSION: AN UNSENTIMENTAL VIEW

In her new book, Gertrude Himmelfarb looks at how the late-Victorian reformers attempted to make compassion compatible with social policy.

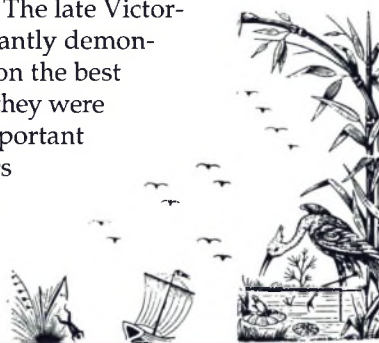
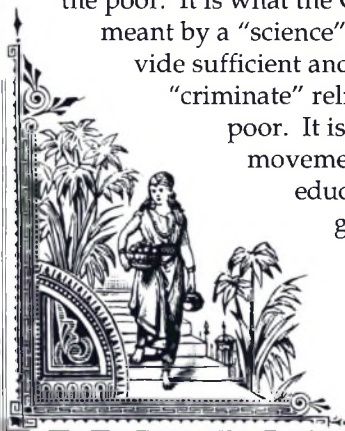
THE MORAL IMAGINATION of the late Victorians, in public affairs as in private, was neither sentimental nor utopian. It was every bit as stern as the old religion—perhaps because it was a displacement of the old. It was stern not only in the personal demands it made upon its missionaries, the commitment in time, labor, and energy it extracted from philanthropists and reformers, but also in the nature of that commitment. Compassion had its reasons of mind as well as of the heart. A sharp, skeptical intelligence was required to ensure the proper exercise of that sentiment. The God of Humanity turned out to be as strict a taskmaster as the God of Christianity.

Compassion, Kant said, has “no proportion in it”; a suffering child fills our heart with sorrow, while we are indifferent to the news of a terrible battle. The driving mission of the late-Victorian reformers, philanthropists, and social critics was precisely to infuse a sense of proportion into the sentiment of compassion, to make compassion proportionate to and compatible with the proper ends of social policy. This is what Charles Booth most notably did in his survey of the London poor, when he insisted upon the importance of “proportion” in calculating the “arithmetic of woe”—the proportion of the “very poor” to the “poor” and the “comfortable,” and the ratio of “misery” to “happiness” in the daily lives of the poor. It is what the Charity Organisation Society meant by a “science” of charity that would provide sufficient and appropriate but not “indiscriminate” relief to specific groups of the poor. It is what the Settlement House movement hoped to achieve with its educational and cultural programs designed to help the “earnest” poor achieve the full potentialities of their humanity. It is what inspired the Phil-

osophical Idealism of T. H. Green: the “best self” as the basis of individual morality and the “common good” as the basis of social morality. It is what moved Alfred Marshall to create a “new economics” that would reconcile “chivalry” with the free market and alleviate poverty without undermining the principles and practices of a sound political economy. It is even what most socialists tried to do in expanding the role of the state to cope with particular social problems and to further particular moral ends.

Compassion—“properly understood,” as Tocqueville would have said—was the common denominator behind all these enterprises. Over and over again contemporaries testified to the extraordinary accession of social consciousness and social conscience in the last decades of the century, and most conspicuously in the 1880s. “Books on the poor, poverty, social questions, slums and the like subjects, run fast and furious from the press,” the Charity Organisation Society journal reported in 1884. “The titles of some of them sound like sentimental novels.” What is remarkable is how few of them, apart from their titles, were in fact sentimental.

In its sentimental mode, compassion is an exercise in moral indignation, in feeling good rather than doing good; this mode recognizes no principle of proportion, because feeling, unlike reason, knows no proportion, no limit, no respect for the constraints of policy or prudence. In its unsentimental mode, compassion seeks above all to *do* good, and this requires a stern sense of proportion, of reason and self-control. The late Victorians, as this book abundantly demonstrates, differed greatly on the best way of doing good. But they were agreed that what was important was to do good to others rather than to feel good themselves. Indeed, they were painfully



To be compassionate in this sense was to be practical, even "scientific." It was to utilize means that were consonant with ends, and to define ends in terms that were realistic rather than utopian. Thus the Charity Organisation Society, while incessantly inveighing against "indiscriminate" charity, was no less committed to "discriminate" charity, a charity organized to dispense relief in such a manner and to such families as would best profit from it. It was in this cause that so many men and women gave so freely (literally, freely) of their time and energy to a "science of charity" that, as the secretary of the COS said, was the true "religion of charity." If the Fabians rejected that science of charity, it was in order to replace it by a "science" of socialism—an empirically scientific socialism, they liked to think, in contrast to the Marxist idea of "scientific socialism." Beatrice Webb expressed the tension between the means and ends of Fabianism in the form of a dialogue between the "Ego that Denies" and the "Ego that Affirms": The former denied that anything other than scientific method was required for social change; the latter affirmed the need for some more ultimate value, as ultimate as religion itself, to give purpose and power to the cause of reform. She herself had no doubt that the Affirmative Ego had the better of that argument. Others saw no conflict, no tension between means and ends; for them the passion of public service was perfectly consistent with the dispassionate performance of that service.



The Victorian obsession with morality, as some may now think it, may be the most difficult thing for a later generation to understand. When people today object to the term "Victorian values," they do so for different reasons. They properly point out that "Victorian" covers a long and extremely varied span of time, distinguished by

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rarely heard, although it has much validity, is to the word "values" itself, which prejudices the discussion by giving it a thoroughly relativistic cast. It is interesting that when Margaret Thatcher first raised the subject, she spoke not of "Victorian values" but of "Victorian virtues." But on the central issue of morality itself, whether morality played a significant role in social affairs, the evidence is irrefutable.

Whatever the differences (and they were considerable) among those of all parties and classes who addressed themselves to the subject of poverty, there was a strong consensus that the primary objective of any enterprise or reform was that it contribute to the moral improvement of the poor—at the very least, that it not have a deleterious moral effect. It was on this ground that laissez-faireists argued against state intervention, and on the same ground that socialists argued for it. The key word in economics, one socialist at the time said, was "character": The reason why "individualist economists fear socialism is that they believe it will deteriorate character, and the reason why socialist economists seek socialism is their belief that under individualism character is deteriorating." Unless one discounts everything that contemporaries said, and the passion with which they said it, one must credit their abiding, overriding concern with the question of moral character. And the character of the poor was of special concern because their situation was so precarious and the consequences of moral failure so disastrous.

The ethos implicit (sometimes explicit) in matters of social policy and behavior was not a lofty or exalted one. It did not celebrate heroism, or genius, or nobility, or spiritual grace. Its virtues were more pedestrian: respectability, responsibility, decency, industriousness, prudence, temperance. These virtues depended on no special breeding, talent, sensibility, or even money. They were common, everyday virtues, within the capacity of ordinary people. They were the virtues of citizens, not of heroes of saints—and of citizens of democratic countries, not aristocratic ones. Even the "best self" that Green made so much of was a best self attainable by every citizen; indeed, it was the only true basis of equality and the only requisite for citizenship. So too the "economic chivalry" that Alfred Marshall advocated: This

modern form of chivalry required no heroic exertion but only restraint and solicitude—restraint in the pursuit and consumption of wealth, and solicitude for those less fortunate than oneself.

Today the language of morality, applied to social problems and social policies, is often assumed to be the language of conservatism. In late-Victorian England it was the common language of radicals, liberals, conservatives, and those of no particular political disposition. The historian Stefan Collini has said that "character"—not in the neutral, sociological sense, but in the normative, moral sense—"enjoyed a prominence in the political thought of the Victorian period that it had certainly not known before and that it has, arguably, not experienced since." Other historians are beginning to speak of "respectability" more respectfully, without the quotation marks that commonly distance them from that benighted Victorian word. "Respectability studies," one reviewer has remarked, "have almost become a formal branch of Victorian historiography." Another historian disputes the assumption that the idea of respectability was confined to an ambitious and conservative "labor aristocracy." Brian Harrison has pointed out that the working class autobiographer, however untypical of his class, articulated values that were widely diffused. "His works helped to recruit respectability's ranks, and deserve more prominence in the discussion than they often receive; they spontaneously corroborate one another on details, and they evoke a common philosophy of life."

If historians are beginning to take the idea of respectability seriously, it is because contemporaries quite plainly did. And if historians cannot define the idea precisely, this too reflects contemporary usage. Victorians were fully aware that respectability meant different things to different individuals and classes, but this did not make it less a fact of life or less important a fact. Poverty too (like health, housing, education, and most of the other facts of life) meant different things to different people, and were nonetheless real and urgent. Whether respectability was signified by the wearing of clean clothes, or providing for a proper funeral, or belonging to a friendly society, or attending a mechanics' institute, or reading edifying books, or not being on relief, or not getting drunk and rowdy, the line separating the respectable

worker from the "rough" was as plain to the working classes as to the middle classes; it was, in fact, the main theme of many working-class memoirs.

That line was all the more important precisely because the temptations to cross it were so plentiful. To take the pledge of temperance (even if not always to adhere to it) was itself a token of respectability. The historian who belittles the idea of respectability by relegating it to the realm of "middle-class values" does justice neither to the facts of history nor to the working classes who struggled so hard to attain what the middle-class historian finds it so easy to deride.

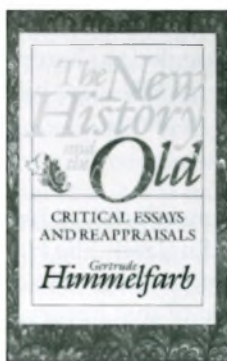
ONE OF THE most brilliant historians of modern England, Elie Halévy, coined a memorable phrase to describe one period of that history. It was the "miracle of modern England," he said, to have been spared the agony of revolution at a time when much of Europe was convulsed by revolutions. That "miracle" was the unique conjunction of institutions and traditions—religious, political, social, and economic—which promoted continuity and stability in a period of tumult abroad and of rapid change at home. By the end of the century, the threat of revolution had receded, but the possibility of social strife and exacerbated class tensions remained. It was then that the reformist temper helped meliorate those tensions and perpetuate that "miracle."

The late Victorians did not "solve" their social problems, still less abolish poverty. But they did bring to their problems a moral imagination that was remarkable in its intensity and "earnestness" (that very Victorian word)—and that was also remarkable free of the complacency and hypocrisy so often attributed to them. If they failed to understand all the causes and dimensions of their problems or to accomplish all they hoped by way of improvement, a later generation, aware of its own failures (in spite of its greater sophistication and experience), may be more forgiving of the Victorians than they were of themselves. □

Excerpt from the forthcoming book, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* (Knopf, 1991). (Copyright, Gertrude Himmelfarb, 1990.)

EXCERPTS

From the Writings of Gertrude Himmelfarb



Historical Sensitivity

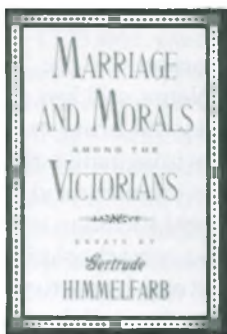
To call for a restoration of moral imagination in the writing of history—in the writing of all history, but it is in sociological history that it is most sadly lacking—is not to give license to the historian to impose his own moral conceptions on history. This has been the impulse behind yet another fashionable school of thought, that of the “engaged” or “committed” historian. In this view, all pretensions of objectivity are suspect, the only honest history being that which candidly expresses the political and moral beliefs of the historian. At the opposite pole, in one sense, from the sociological mode, this kind of “engaged” history shares with sociological history a contempt for the experiences and beliefs of contemporaries and an overweening regard for the wisdom and judgment of the historian.

What is wanted is not so much the exercise of the historian’s moral imagination as a proper respect for the moral imagination of those contemporaries he

is professing to describe. This, to be sure, takes an exercise of imagination on the historian’s part—a sensitivity to ideas, a tolerance for beliefs that may not be his own, above all a respect for moral principles as such, so that he will not dismiss them too readily as rationalizations of interest, or deformations of vision, or evidence of an intellectual obtuseness that conceals from contemporaries those economic and social facts that are so obvious to the historian.

It is a modest undertaking that is called for, indeed an exercise in modesty. It asks nothing more than that moral data—the ideas, beliefs, principles, perceptions, and opinions of contemporaries—be taken as seriously, be assigned the same reality, as facts about production and consumption, income and education, status and mobility. The historian is in the fortunate position of being able to do what the sociologist cannot do; he can transcend the fact-value dichotomy that has plagued sociological thought. The values of the past are the historian’s facts. He should make the most of them, as the great Victorians did.

The New History and the Old (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987, paperback ed., 1989), 69.



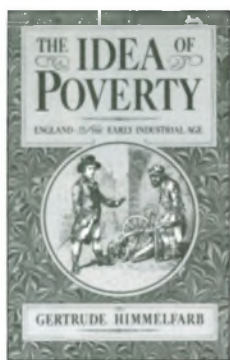
The Crisis of Belief

If these eminent Victorians agonized over the irregularities and improprieties of their personal lives, it was because they were so anxious about morality itself. And not because there was any actual breakdown of morality in their own time: Mid-Victorian England was more moral, more proper, more law-abiding than any other society in recent history. What made morality problematic, for the future if not the present, was the breakdown of the religious consensus. When Eliot was asked how morality could subsist in the absence of religious faith, she replied that God was “inconceivable,” immortality “unbelievable,” and Duty nonetheless “peremptory and absolute.” This is the clue to the Victorian obsession with morality. Feeling guilty about the loss of their religious faith, suspecting that the loss might

expose them to the temptations of immorality and the perils of nihilism, anticipating the Nietzschean dictum that if God does not exist everything is permitted, they were determined to make of morality a substitute for religion—to make of it, indeed, a form of religion. And having forfeited the sanctions of religion, they were thrown back all the more on the sanctions of convention and law. Whatever legal reforms or social changes they sought were designed to strengthen those sanctions, to give them greater moral authority and legitimacy by purging them of whatever might appear to be unjust or inhumane.

This was the common denominator, the common faith, of these Victorians. The duty to be moral, they believed (or wanted desperately to believe), was not God-given but man-made, and it was all the more “peremptory and absolute” for that.

Marriage and Morals among the Victorians (New York: Knopf, 1986; London: Faber and Faber, 1986; New York: Vintage, 1987), 21.



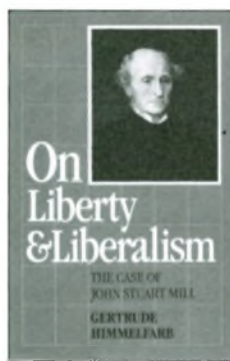
The Problem of Poverty

At a time when the condition of man was a subject of much agonizing, the condition of urban man, and of the Londoner particularly, began to be seen as the condition of modern man *in extremis*: spiritually and morally impoverished, anonymous, isolated, "alienated." So, too, the London poor seemed to be afflicted with a kind of poverty *in extremis*, a poverty that made them not so much a class apart, or even a "nation" apart (as in the "two nations" image), as a "race" apart. In fact the London poor were no poorer than the poor elsewhere and may even have been, on the average, less poor (although the poorest of them, the Spitalfields silk weavers, were in as depressed a state as any laborers in the country). Nor was the "anomie" of London life as severe or pervasive as has been made out; neighborhoods, streets, workshops, even public houses, generated distinctive loyalties, sentiments,

and associations. Still, there was unquestionably an acute sense of uprootedness experienced by large numbers of immigrants from the countryside and Ireland, by workers displaced from their old crafts and having to seek new occupations (silk weavers, for example, driven to the docks), and by families disoriented in unfamiliar surroundings.

Thus London, the least typical of places with the least typical kinds of poverty, somehow became archetypal. Not that any kind of poverty was "typical." Contemporaries were well aware that the kinds of poverty were as various as the degrees, that rural poverty was significantly different from urban, the poverty in a textile mill from that of a mining village, the poverty of a declining trade from that of a stable one, the poverty of old age from that of youth. Yet by the middle of the century the problem of poverty was more and more identified with the city, and, paradoxically, with that most uncommon city, the city beyond compare, the metropolis.

The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age (New York: Knopf, 1984; London: Faber and Faber, 1984; New York: Vintage, 1985), 311.



Mill's Absolute Liberalism

When Mill exalted liberty and individuality, it was in the expectation that they would have infinitely beneficial results; but there was nothing in his doctrine to prevent them from having the most mischievous effects. He looked to liberty as a means of achieving the highest reaches of the human spirit, he did not take seriously enough the possibility that men would also be free to explore the depths of depravity. He saw individuality as a welcome release of energy and ingenuity, as if individuals cannot be as energetic and ingenious in pursuing ignoble ends as noble ones. Where most modern and all ancient philosophers had dwelt upon the need to check the human passions and had devised elaborate means to do so, the only check Mill provided for was the prevention of harm to others. Where they had sought to promote the good, he sought only to promote liberty, explicitly enjoining society from intervening for purposes

of doing good either to the individual or to society as a whole. There was no room in his doctrine for the classical concept of moderation; the aspiration of liberty was to be as absolute, not as moderate, as possible. Nor was there room for other ends which might temper the passion for liberty—virtue, justice, obedience to natural or divine law. Other ends might coexist with liberty, even be furthered by liberty, but they could not be permitted to limit or interfere with liberty.

It is the exclusive as well as the absolute nature of his doctrine, its "simple principle" and "single truth," that had been an invitation to excess. It is this that has made it difficult to justify and sustain distinctions, to discriminate among particular liberties, to weigh the good and evil attending this or that liberty in this or that circumstance, to tolerate the lesser evil of a diminished liberty in order to prevent a greater evil or promote a greater good, to recognize the claims of other values without denigrating the value of liberty itself.

On Liberty and Liberalism: The Case of John Stuart Mill (New York: Knopf, 1974; London: Secker and Warburg, 1975; San Francisco: ICS Press, 1990), 320-1.

The Victorian Intellectual

To the American intellectual who has made much (perhaps too much) of his "alienation," his opposite number in England seems to enjoy an enviable ease and rapport. Where the American feels himself to be a foreigner in his own land—is often literally a foreigner, or of such recent foreign descent as to have the same effect—the Englishman is not only a pure-

bred native but also, it sometimes appears, a pure-bred intellectual. It is with some awe that one contemplates the interlocking genealogies that tie together, by birth and marriage, the great names of nineteenth- and twentieth-century English culture: Macaulay, Trevelyan, Arnold, Huxley, Darwin, Wedgwood, Galton, Stephen, Wilberforce, Venn, Dicey, Thackeray, Russell, Webb, Keynes, Strachey, Toynbee. . . . By comparison, American culture is a series of

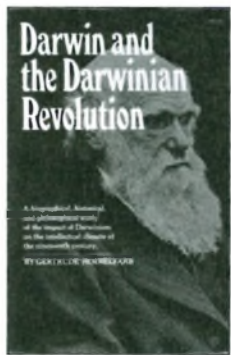
isolated and unrelated names, the few exceptions (the Adamses, Jameses, and Lowells) being rare enough to have become the butt of jokes.

Thus where the American intellectual has a precarious hold on fame, each individual earning his title by the sweat of his brow (hence, by some Lamarckian or Darwinian process, the evolution of that peculiarly American species, the "highbrow"), the English intellectual, and preeminently the Victorian intellectual, seemed to come into his title and estate almost by the right of birth. At a time when few monarchs dared lay claim to the prin-



ciple of legitimacy, the Victorian intellectual might do so. His legitimacy was established by family, class, education, profession, and remuneration. He could move in high society, aspire to political power, or make money, without impugning his calling. He had not the typical stigmata of intellectuals elsewhere—the academicism, bohemianism, or preciosity of the Herr Professor, the feuilletoniste, or the esthete. He was no exotic, no sport. His intellectuality came as naturally to him as his language, which in turn was as natural as breathing. It was his birthright, and he was as secure in that as he was in his Englishness.

Victorian Minds (New York: Knopf, 1968; New York: Weidenfelt and Nicholson, 1968; New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970), 201-2.



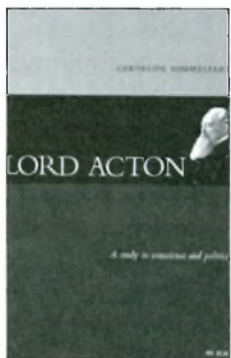
The Impact of Darwin

The *Origin* was the cataclysm that broke up the crust of conventional opinion. It expressed and dramatized what many had obscurely felt. More than this: It legitimized what they felt. Coming from so unexceptional a source, with all the authority of science and without the taint of ulterior ideol-

ogy, it became the receptacle of great hopes and great fears. Those who were already partial to the mode of thought it represented—which could mean anything from a mild naturalism or deism to a belligerent atheism—often fastened upon it as the symbol and warrant of their belief; if they later loosely spoke of it as the cause of their conversion, the error is understandable, the leap from justification to cause being all too easily effected. Simi-

larly, those who had already committed themselves to the other side, finding naturalism uncongenial or unpersuasive, tended to look upon the *Origin* as the incarnation of all that was hateful and fearful. There were, to be sure, some who experienced a genuine crisis of faith upon reading it, as there were also those who came upon it with an open mind and left unconverted; if the former have been more publicized, it may be because the loss of faith is a more dramatic affair than the retention of faith. For most men, however, the *Origin* was not an isolated event with isolated consequences. It did not revolutionize their beliefs so much as give public recognition to a revolution that had already occurred. It was belief made manifest, revolution legitimized.

Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution (New York: Doubleday, 1959; London: Chatto and Windus, 1959; New York: Anchor, 1962; Boston: Peter Smith, 1967; New York: Norton, 1968, 1982), 452.



Acton's Pessimism

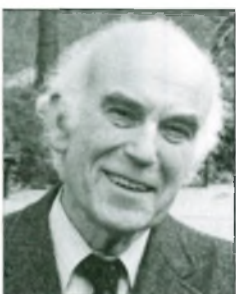
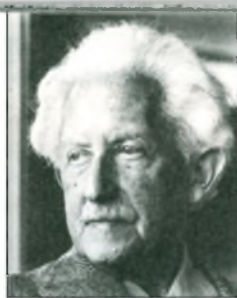
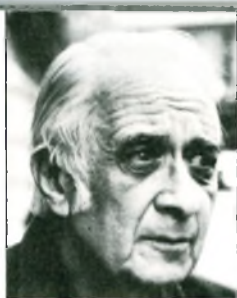
His [Acton's] remark to Creighton, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely," generally quoted in its shopworn form of "All power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely," has become the tag by which both the idea and the man are identified.

By this maxim, Acton takes his place squarely in the tradition of political and philosophical pessimism. His pessimism worked its way into every corner of his thought, into his politics, religion, and history, and it took on every emotional tone from passionate indignation through exasperation, despair, and what seemed to be a world-weary resignation. . . .

What saved Acton from the unredeemed bleak-

ness of pessimism and gave meaning to his indignation was his refusal to succumb to philosophical or historical determinism. Man, he believed, for all his propensity to evil, was a free agent capable of choosing the good, and although original sin was always there to dog his steps, it did not always succeed in tripping him up. The forces of evil were "constant and invariable," not so were "the truth and the Higher Purpose" with which they had to contend. If the presumption of evil was in all good causes, the presumption of the good was in the very idea of evil. The Fall itself attested to the existence of God, and God attested to the source of goodness in man, his conscience. Power corrupted, conscience redeemed; history was a tug-of-war between the two, with tyranny and freedom as the stakes.

Lord Acton: A Study in Conscience and Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952; Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1962), 239-40.



The Twentieth Anniversary of the Jefferson Lectures



The first of the Jefferson Lectures took place in May of 1972. Lionel Trilling spoke on "Mind and the Modern World." Over the years a distinguished array of philosophers, historians, and other scholars have used the occasion to further the Endowment's goal of bringing "the knowledge and insights of the humanities into a more central place in American life." Following are excerpts from the nineteen Jefferson Lectures to date.

Photos clockwise from upper left corner: Lionel Trilling, Erik H. Erikson, Robert Penn Warren, Paul A. Freund, John Hope Franklin, Saul Bellow, C. Vann Woodward, Edward Shils, Barbara Tuchman, Gerald Holton, Emily Townsend Vermeule, Jaroslav Pelikan, Sidney Hook, Cleanth Brooks, Leszek Kolakowski, Forrest McDonald, Robert Nisbet, Walker Percy, Bernard Lewis, Gertrude Himmelfarb.





"Mind and the Modern World"

"Jefferson's estimate of the intellectual capability of the whole people is part of the fabric of American history. A great scholar of our past has traced in detail the long unhappy course of anti-intellectualism in American life, but Richard Hofstadter also made it plain to us, through his studies of higher education in the United States, how strong in our culture is the opposite tendency, to conceive of intellect as a cherished element of democracy. Of this tendency Jefferson is the presiding spirit."

—Lionel Trilling, 1972

"Dimensions of a New Identity"

"Just because of this once-in-history chance for self-made newness, this country has experienced greater expansiveness and yet also deeper anguish than have other countries; and few nations have seen their ideals and their youth divided, as has this country in the recurring divisions of a national identity. Was the happiness guaranteed in the Declaration that of wealth and of technological power or that of an all-human identity such as resides primarily in the free person? Is there any other country which continues to ask itself not only 'What will we produce and sell next?' but ever-again 'Who are we anyway?' which may well explain this country's hospitality to such concepts as the identity crisis which, for better or for worse, now seem almost native to it."

—Erik Erikson, 1973

"Democracy and Poetry"

"If the poet is disorganized, then out of disorder may emerge the organized object—the image of the 'ideal self,' the 'regenerate self,' as it were of the disorganized man. The disorganization of the poet may seem, on the record, merely personal, but more often than not what he produces embodies issues and conflict that are central to the circumambient society, so that it finds mysterious echoes in the selves of those who are drawn to the object created; that is, the object created provides a vital feedback into the social process."

—Robert Penn Warren, 1974

"Liberty of Expression: The Search for Standards"

"Five hundred years after Caxton, generation by generation, struggle by struggle, we in America—writers and speakers, politicians and artists—have achieved, at least for a historical moment, a degree of freedom from official control that would, I daresay, amply gratify Milton, Locke, Mill and Thomas Jefferson. Meanwhile a different set of problems has emerged, centering on the adequacy and responsibility of the media of communication themselves, problems of new entry into the field and access to the existing media."

—Paul Freund, 1975

"Racial Equality in America"

"The position of the colonists on African slavery was rendered extraordinarily difficult by the fact that human bondage was, as David B. Davis has observed, 'an intrinsic part of American development from the first discoveries.' Blacks had cleared the forests, felled the trees, drained the swamps, removed the boulders, and planted and harvested the crops. 'To live in Virginia without slaves is morally impossible,' an Anglican priest serving in the tidewater wrote his brother in London in 1757. Patrick Henry, who preferred death for himself if he could not have liberty, spoke almost casually of the 'general inconvenience' of living in Virginia without slaves."

—John Hope Franklin, 1976

"The Writer and His Country Look Each Other Over"

"What a good idea it seemed to write about American life. . . . To do this was to join this American life, massive and hardly conscious of itself, to the world and to history. People who in the past would have remained inert and silent, sons and daughters of farmers, laborers, small businessmen, have become capable of observation and comment. European literature has taught them that novels might be made about American small towns and backstreets, about actresses from Wisconsin, and speculators from Philadelphia."

—Saul Bellow, 1977



"Europe's America"

"Living up to the demands of Europe's imaginary America has always put a strain on the nation's moral resources. It also helps account for the proliferation and durability of national myths and the energy that has gone into sustaining them. If America could accommodate herself to being somewhat less of a Country with a Mission, a Land of the Future, or a Redeemer Nation—then the strain on the nation's moral resources would be lightened, and so would the burden of myth. And finally Europe's America might come nearer resembling America herself."

—C. Vann Woodward, 1978

"Government and Universities in the United States"

"The failure to see the university as a corporate, spiritual, or intellectual whole is the crux of the matter because it makes it more difficult to discern the line which should separate the legitimate concerns and demands of Caesar from the proper obligations of academics to the realm of the products of the mind."

—Edward Shils, 1979

"Mankind's Better Moments"

"Amid a mass of worldwide troubles and a poor record for the twentieth century, we see our species—with cause—as functioning very badly, as blunderers when not knaves, as violent, ignoble, corrupt, inept, incapable of mastering the forces that threaten us, weakly subject to our worst instincts: in short, decadent."

"The catalogue is familiar and valid, but it is growing tiresome. A study of history reminds one that mankind has its ups and downs and during the ups has accomplished many brave and beautiful things, exerted stupendous endeavors, explored and conquered oceans and wilderness, achieved marvels of beauty in the creative arts and marvels of science and social progress; has loved liberty with a passion that throughout history has led men to fight and die for it over and over again; has pursued knowledge, exercised reason, enjoyed laughter and pleasures, played games with zest, shown courage, heroism, altruism, honor, and decency. . . ."

—Barbara Tuchman, 1980

"Where is Science Taking Us?"

"In our time, a historic transition is occurring in variety available for basic research, a transition which we are only beginning to understand. In time's own laboratory, a new amalgam is forming that will challenge the inherited notions of every scientist, engineer, and social planner. Undoubtedly, there will be battles to preserve the degree of autonomy that is and always will be essential. Undoubtedly, there will also be over-enthusiastic projects that cannot deliver on their promises. But if the new movement develops within the bounds of its genuine possibilities and responsibilities, the spectrum of research in science may well be greatly extended, its links to technology and society become more fruitful and certain, and its mandate reinforced."

—Gerald Holton, 1981

"Greeks and Barbarians: The Classical Experience in the Larger World"

"If a culture has a building tradition that really reflects the land and the character and aspirations of the people; if the artists of that culture are trained and skilled in expressions of spiritual and human values; if its literature is powerful, memorable, and public; if its music and drama are passed down through generations; if its histories are objective and accurate; if powerful minds grappled with the toughest ideas in philosophy and mathematics; if its inventive genius designed new solutions to old problems in the natural world, that culture will be remembered and admired when its own brief day is over."

—Emily Townsend Vermeule, 1982

"The Vindication of Tradition"

"Moses smashed the tablets of the law themselves in protest against idolatry; Socrates was executed as an enemy of the tradition because he believed that 'an unexamined life is not worth living' and an unexamined tradition not worth following; and Jesus went to the cross because he would not have any earthly form of the divine (not even, let it be remembered, his own) become a substitute for the ultimate reality of the living God. Therefore no criticism of the tradition that was voiced by the Reformation or the Enlighten-



ment or the historicism of the nineteenth century can ever match, for severity and power, the criticism that came from these, its noblest products and its most profound interpreters.

—Jaroslav Pelikan, 1983

"The Humanities and the Defense of the Free Society"

"If by the advance of the human condition we mean the material improvement of the human estate, the extension of longevity, and the increase of our power over nature, surely none can gainsay him. Yet even if we grant the dubious proposition that all knowledge is good, surely not all of it is relevant for our political purpose. Henry Adams to the contrary notwithstanding, no law of physics has any bearing on the justification for a free society. Einstein's theory overthrew Newton's, not the Declaration of Independence."

—Sidney Hook, 1984

"Literature in a Technological Age"

"The humanities cannot be eliminated from our culture, but they can be debased. They cannot be eliminated because as long as mankind remains human, his yearning for the song, the story, and the drama cannot be suppressed. People are interested in accounts of human behavior, in suspense and conflict of interests, in the expression of emotion, in motivation. If they don't have Shakespeare or Jane Austen to read, they will read something worse, too often utter trash."

—Cleanth Brooks, 1985

"The Idolatry of Politics"

"Educated and even uneducated people in pre-industrial societies, whose historical learning was very meager, were perhaps more historical—in the sense I mean here—than we are. The historical tradition in which they lived was woven of myths, legends, and orally transmitted stories of which the material accuracy more often than not was dubious. Still, it was good enough to give them the feeling of life within a continuous religious, national, or tribal community, to provide them this kind of identity which made life ordered (or 'meaningful'). In this sense it was living, and it taught people why and for what they were responsible, as well as how this responsibility was to be practically taken up."

—Leszek Kolakowski, 1986

"The Intellectual World of the Founding Fathers"

"Even as the Framers were rejecting doctrine as formula, they faithfully adhered to the principle underlying Montesquieu's work—to its spirit. For Montesquieu's grand and abiding contribution to the science of politics was that no form or system of government is universally desirable or workable; instead, if government is to be viable, it must be made to conform to human nature and to the genius of the people—to their customs, morals, habits, institutions, aspirations. The Framers did just that, and thereby used old materials to create a new order for the ages."

—Forrest McDonald, 1987

"The Present Age and the State of Community"

"It is not that bureaucracy might develop into what we know as the totalitarian state. No such state has emerged in any circumstances but armed revolution and the infliction of permanent terror. The danger of large, centralized bureaucracies is simply what we already see, what is already obvious: the suffocation or strangling of genuine thought, of genuine leadership, of genuine consensus. Marx was right: It is indeed an appalling parasite, in the Pentagon as well as in the civil agencies."

—Robert Nisbet, 1988

"The Fateful Rift: The San Andreas Fault in the Modern Mind"

"In brief, there are two kinds of natural events in the world. These two kinds of events have different parameters and variables. Trying to pretend there is only one kind of event leads to all the present misery which afflicts the social sciences. And even more important, at least for us laymen, it brings to pass a certain cast of mind, 'scientism,' which misplaces reality and creates vast mischief and confusion when we try to understand ourselves. . . ."

—Walker Percy, 1989

"Western Civilization: A View from the East"

"In Islam, the struggle for good and evil acquired, from the start, political and even military dimensions. Muhammad . . . was not only a prophet and a teacher, like the founders of other religions; he was also the head of a polity and of a community, a ruler and a soldier. Hence his struggle involved a state and its armed forces. If the fighters in the war for Islam, the holy war 'in the path of God,' are fighting for God, it follows that their opponents are fighting against God."

—Bernard Lewis, 1990



"The Decent Drapery of Life":

MORALS AMONG THE VICTORIANS

BY ROBERT NISBET



Gertrude Himmelfarb is by wide assent the foremost historian today on Victorian ideas and values.

I can think of at least three reasons for this notable status: She has an unexcelled

knowledge of the Victorian age; second, mindful perhaps of the old proverb that he who knows one thing, doesn't even know that, she has a mind well stocked with other times, other places; finally, she has a rare gift of style that can hold the reader's attention even when interest in a subject may flag.

It was four decades ago that her first book appeared, an arresting study of Lord Acton. In 1959 came her deeply researched and provocative book on Darwin and the Darwinian revolution. A decade later she published her *Victorian Minds* with its carefully drawn vistas of the age, highlighted by portraits of such worthies as Mill, Bentham, Malthus, Leslie Stephen, among others. There followed *On Liberty and Liberalism*, a searching reexamination of John Stuart Mill. Then, in 1984 came what will almost certainly be her magnum opus, *The Idea of Poverty*, the sequel to which is due off the press almost any day. "An admirable book," said Noel Annan in a long review. "A brilliant and convincing book," added Harold Perkin in the *Times Literary Supplement*. *The Idea of Poverty* and its reception by scholar-critics established her

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—if she had not already been so established—as not only our premier historian of the Victorian mind but high among our most distinguished historians, irrespective of field of study.

If anyone unfamiliar with her works asked me what to begin with, I would, I think, recommend yet another book, not mentioned above, a volume of her historical essays with the beguiling title, *Marriage and Morals among the Victorians*, published in 1986. Himmelfarb is an essayist of the first rank. What Montaigne and Francis Bacon invented nearly four hundred years ago as a literary form and which may have been brought to its highest luster in the very age Professor Himmelfarb has taken as her own, the Victorian age, comes with seeming effortless from her pen. I can think of no finer historical essayist now writing.

Marriage and Morals among the Victorians has the added advantage of being a kind of sampler of her lifelong historical studies. In it are to be found personages and settings she has dealt with over the years in different formats, often at book length, here presented in the graceful medium of the essay.

There is assuredly diversity of subject: the Victorian, evangelical roots of the Bloomsbury group; the Victorian trinity, as she calls religion, science, and morality within the Victorian mind; social Darwinism and its offshoot, sociobiology; the great historian Macaulay; Disraeli and the Tory imagination; Blackstone and Bentham compared in legal and philosophical positions pertinent to the American Revolution; Bentham, Godwin, and

the Webbs, Sidney and Beatrice, as, of all things, utopians; and in conclusion, a splendid appreciation of the recently deceased English conservative, Michael Oakeshott.

Taken in all it is a Victorian feast. Variety of the contents notwithstanding, there is a striking unity to the book, one that proceeds from the theme that Himmelfarb announces for the volume. The theme is moral imagination. She writes: "In most volumes of essays, the author is hard put to find a unifying theme. In this case I am embarrassed to discover how often—how obsessively, some might say—I have dwelt on the same theme." She acknowledges having been considerably influenced in this respect by Lionel Trilling, especially by his notable volume of essays, *The Liberal Imagination*. She was "all the more delighted" to find the phrase in "one of my other favorite writers, Edmund Burke," in his *Reflections*. She cites Burke tellingly in his indictment of the revolution in France:

"All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart

owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our own naked shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion."

It must be said for the Victorian moral imagination that it was capacious, highly so in Gertrude Himmelfarb's rendering. It could be trivial, as in the sheathing of piano legs in pantaloons, in the bowdlerizing of Shakespeare, the references to legs as "limbs," the works of male and female authors set in separate shelves, along with "all the other proprieties of Mrs. Grundy and hypocrisies of Mr. Pecksniff." To be sure, as Professor Himmelfarb takes care to emphasize, such inanities were scorned and laughed at by the Victorians themselves.

Yet it mustn't go unremarked that in the same age, five notable couples—the Carlyles, the Ruskins, the Mills, the Dickenses, and George Eliot with George Henry Lewes—could lead exist-

ences of decided exceptionality. Two of the couples, the Carlyles and the Ruskins, never consummated their marriages; another couple, George Eliot and George H. Lewes, lived together openly outside marriage, their statuses as eminences not noticeably affected. The John Stuart Mills had a longstanding, intimate (if platonic, as they insisted) union while she was married to another man; and the Charles Dickens marriage of twenty years and ten children broke up when he fell in love with the actress Ellen Ternan. Himmelfarb writes: "If some Victorians were rendered impotent by the prevailing sexual code and marital fetters, others, brought up under that same code and bound by the same ties, were evidently sexually stimulated to a degree that could not be contained within marriage."

The author's purpose in recounting these aberrant marital relationships is not that of flaunting them yet again. It is rather that of emphasizing the deeply moral preoccupations of even these violators of the Victorian ethic. Dickens went so far as to deny any wrongdoing in his relationship with Ellen Ternan, in fact, to deny the relationship itself. Mill, not content with legal marriage to Harriet Taylor, proposed, after some brooding, that they marry again, this time in a church. George Eliot, a religious skeptic, worried endlessly about the roots of morality in a religionless society.

"If these eminent Victorians agonized over the irregularities and improprieties of their personal lives, it was because they were so anxious about morality itself." It is as though they could stand well enough under loss of faith in a personal God but at the same time dread the possible consequences to the state of morality of this loss. Keep in mind, the author instructs us, that mid-Victorian England was "more moral, more proper, more law-abiding than any other society in recent history."

What complicated the position of the eminent, or at least educated, Victorian was his desperate effort to keep intact what Himmelfarb calls "The Victorian Trinity: Religion, Science, and Morality." She cites a wicked thrust at the English by the arrogant atheist Nietzsche from abroad:

"They have got rid of the Christian God and now they feel obliged to cling all the more firmly to Christian moral-

ity; that is *English* consistency, let us not blame it on little bluestockings à la Eliot. In England, in response to every little emancipation from theology one has to reassert one's position in a fear-inspiring manner as a moral fanatic. That is the penance one pays there."

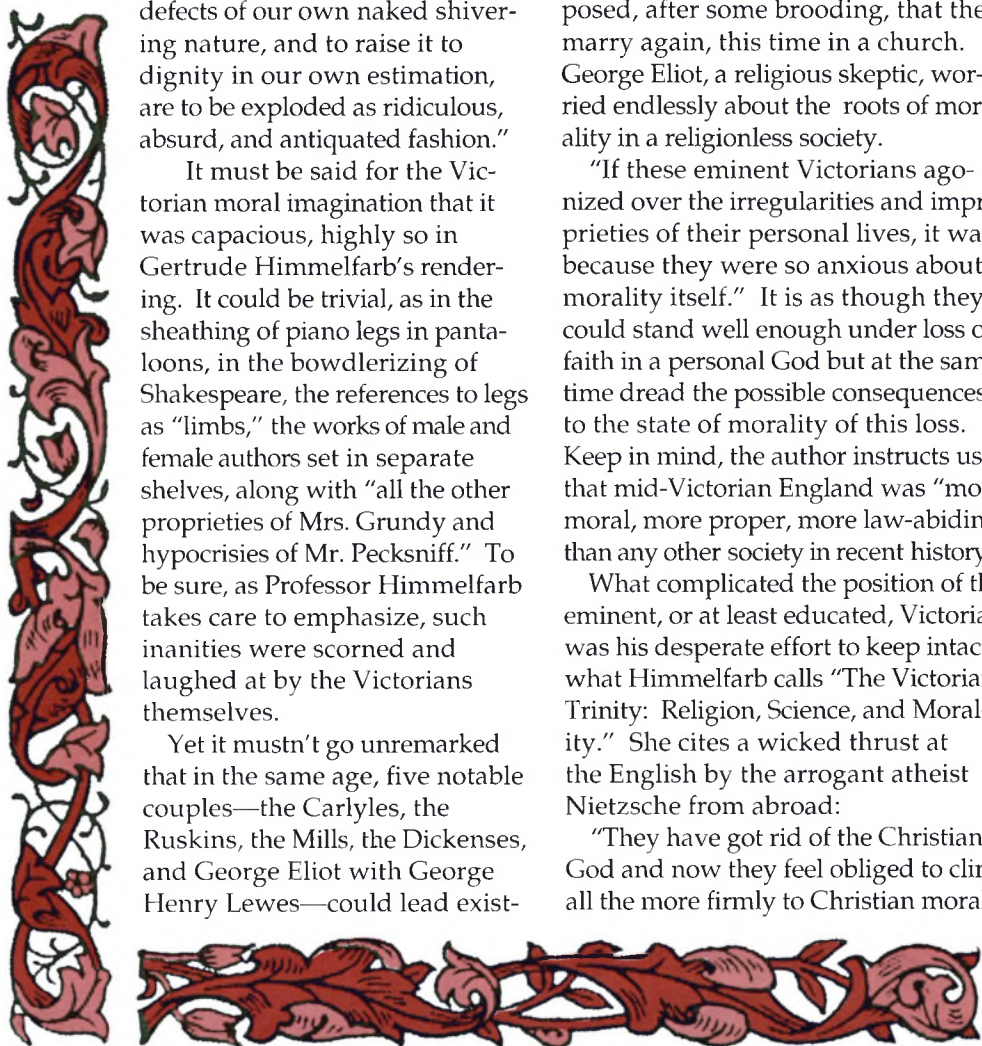
Why, asks Himmelfarb acutely, did the English take the course they did—even worse, she allows, than Nietzsche made it to be—the course of trying vainly, futilely, to maintain at one and the same time science, including evolutionary science, religion, in however emaciated a spiritual content, and morality, especially, excruciatingly, morality? The answer would appear to be that the religious crisis had been going on for decades and was no longer agonizing; there was nothing that could be done even had anyone wished to about the spirit of science, already clearly vital to a flourishing industrial society; and as for morality, how could a society such as England's endure without it?

"In a society," writes Himmelfarb, "that accepted inequality as a fact of life—an inequality that manifested itself in every detail of life, in speech and dress as much as work and wealth—morality appeared to be the one good that was available to all, that established their common humanity and their common nationality, that, as Nietzsche said, 'moralized' and 'humanized' them."

Interest in the roots of morality had to be clamant in a society in which need for it could, to some, appear to mount with each step of withdrawal of the old, now irretrievable, synthesis of religion and morality. In a fascinating essay, "Social Darwinism, Sociobiology, and the Two Cultures," Himmelfarb shows us something of the expectancy with which educated Victorians looked to the evolutionary process for hope and guidance.

The impact of Darwin's *Origin of Species* on Victorian religious belief was minimal, as Himmelfarb made incontestably clear in her 1959 full-length study of Darwin and the alleged Darwinian revolution. As she pointed out then and in the essay I have just cited, the roots of religious disbelief, of the whole crisis of faith, were planted in England and the rest of Western Europe long before Darwin's *Origin* was published in 1859.

But when we turn from religion to morals and consider not Darwin's *Origin* but his *Descent of Man*, pub-





The Health of the Bride, by Stanope Alexander Forbes, R.A.

lished a dozen years later, the matter changes. The Victorians didn't have to worry about repudiation of the Old Testament; that was old hat by 1859. What did concern them, though, sprang directly from the moral imagination: to wit, the secure source of morality. If in effect God had already been dismissed, what was the alternative? Here the *Descent of Man* came, or tried to come, to the rescue. The origins of our morals, even the most exalted of them, lie in the evolutionary process. "The book," writes Himmelfarb, "was literally reductivist, designed to demonstrate that the intellectual and spiritual faculties of human beings differed only in degree, not in kind, from those of animals The moral sense (which John Stuart Mill had characterized as a uniquely human trait) became only another form of the 'sociability' exhibited by animals." Evolution thus succeeded God as cause. Since God on high could no longer be credited with prized Victorian morality inasmuch as a personal God didn't exist, why not look to the primeval ooze and all that came out of it over millions of years?

Not that all Victorians, eminent or otherwise, found this relief in the evolutionary process. Thomas Henry Huxley had first believed, and repeatedly declared, that the cherished ethics of his Victorian day could be extracted directly from the evolutionary process, with states of animal consciousness giving birth in time to Victorian

morals. But the more Huxley and others reflected on "nature red in tooth and claw" being the source of morality, the more they began to doubt it.

Himmelfarb is citing from Huxley's ethical concerns in the following: "Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process The ethical process of society depends, not in imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it."

No account of Himmelfarb's *Marriage and Morals* could be adequate that failed to include mention of three essays on yet another aspect of the Victorian imagination: utopianism. The author presents four Victorians to demonstrate the sheer range of the utopian fancy. They are William Godwin, Jeremy Bentham, and the Webbs, Sidney and Beatrice. What a mixture! And how ingenious of the author to make that selection.

In William Godwin's *Political Justice* we have what could well be called the Holy Bible of libertarianism. For Godwin all evil emanated from the pressure of authority upon the otherwise free and creative individual. Man is, of all creatures on earth, perfectible. But perfectibility can't be attained until human beings are liberated from church and state (even democracy) all the way to marriage and the family. Complete

freedom will in time yield perfection. A time may be anticipated, Godwin reflects, when man will perhaps be liberated from even death—since disease and vice are the principal causes of death, and their own banishment can already be anticipated.

From Godwin's idyll to Bentham's *Panopticon* is like a journey from a romantic, tropical isle to the cauldrons of hell. The structure of Bentham's *Panopticon* was a circular building with the cells for the occupants at the circumference and the keeper in a tower at the center. As Himmelfarb trenchantly observes: "Bentham did not believe in God, but he did believe in the qualities apotheosized in God. The *Panopticon* was a realization of the divine ideals, spying out the ways of the transgressor by means of an ingenious architectural scheme, turning night into day, with artificial lights and reflectors, holding men captive by an intricate system of inspection."

There remain the Webbs, the incredible Sidney and Beatrice. After a lifetime of partnership in Fabian and other schemes and endeavors, they at last came upon their utopia, one that didn't have to be conjured up by fancy, one that was known as the USSR. Stalin, Ukrainian genocide, and the Great Terror seem not to have intruded into the Webbs' moral imagination. Even Beatrice's long struggle with a certain urge toward religious mysticism was at long last put to rest. "In the Soviet Union," writes Himmelfarb, "she found science and religion were perfectly complementary." To scientific government and a scientific economy, Beatrice Webb devoutly believed, the Soviets had added "soul" in the form of the Communist party. The party, Beatrice further believed, was a "religious order" complete with "strict discipline" and "vows of obedience and poverty." One can only imagine Stalin's reaction when he read those Webbian lines.

It is indeed a treasury of Victoriana that Gertrude Himmelfarb has brought together, one that reflects her deep learning in the period but is never weighed down with it and is wonderfully lightened by the sheer grace of her style. In one book she has written for scholar and layman alike. □





ARNOLD'S DOUBLE-SIDED CULTURE

BY JOHN P. FARRELL

A GREAT DEAL has happened to the word "culture"—not to mention the idea—since Matthew Arnold made it a familiar term for the activities, values, and characteristic subject matter associated with the humanities. Arnold had something of a genius for popularizing terms and phrases, so although he came relatively late to the work of shaping the

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multiple meanings of "culture," his influence has been decisive. Late Victorian and modern ideas of culture are always, in some sense, indebted to Arnold's artistry in placing the word at the center of debates about the goals of intellectual life and humanistic study. Arnold remains the figure who gave the word much of its resonance, its reach, and its semantic resources.

By the time Matthew Arnold drafted his first discourse on the concept of culture, he was widely known and highly regarded as both a poet and literary critic. He had also become an influential and hard-working edu-

cator in his capacity as an inspector of Her Majesty's schools, a post he had taken, rather reluctantly, in 1851 when he was preparing to marry. It was through his school inspecting that he gained his detailed knowledge of middle-class and, especially, Nonconformist life in the English provinces.

Moreover, Arnold acquired something of an official platform for his critical and social thought when he was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1857, a once inertly academic and largely quaint instance of honorary life in Britain. It was as Professor of Poetry that he initially laid down

his idea of culture. The appointment required that he lecture several times a year. As usual, he was behind in his obligations in February 1867. He therefore decided to speak on "Culture and Its Enemies," a subject he had originally conceived as an essay for the *Cornhill*. The lecture, which was very well received, became the first of a series, and the series resulted in the now classic work that Arnold published in 1869, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*. The lectures were composed during a period of profound political tension, and the book was addressed to a public distracted by current events. These included the long and harsh struggle over the Second Reform Act of 1867, horrific Fenian scares at Chester and Manchester, disturbances like the minor but melodramatically reported riots at Hyde Park, the regular marches of London trade unions, and a financial panic so severe that its precipitating event is still numbered among the "black Fridays" of economic history. Remarkable events were accompanied by remarkable new publications. The first installment of *Culture and Anarchy* appeared, as if on cue, in the same year that saw the publication of Walter Bagehot's genial wisdom in *The English Constitution*, Thomas Carlyle's angry denunciation of the age in *Shooting Niagara: And After?*, and Karl Marx's transforming vision in the first part of *Capital*.

The tumult of the times required, in Arnold's view, a dispassionate and yet vibrant voice. *Culture and Anarchy* is, first of all, the fully elaborated expression of the temperament and vision characteristic of Victorian humanism. Arnold's critical voice is both his own and, in his use of it, the instantiated voice of a broadly conceived humanistic consciousness. Arnold's ability to construct such a voice constitutes the deepest layer of his artistry. "Culture," he argues, "is a study of perfection. It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good. . . . [T]here is no better motto which it can have than those words of Bishop [Thomas] Wilson: 'To make reason and the will of God prevail.'" Right at the outset, Arnold virtually identifies culture with sacred authority, even though

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much of his preoccupation will be to make culture a secular alternative to sacred authority. This early definition of culture remains crucial, but it is instructive to compare it with the carefully phrased, fully considered definition that Arnold offered in the preface, which, in order of composition, is really his final analysis.

The whole scope of the essay is to recommend culture as the great help out of our present difficulties; culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world; and through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits, which we now follow staunchly but mechanically, vainly imagining that there is a virtue in following them staunchly which makes up for the mischief of following them mechanically. This, and this alone, is the scope of the following essay. And the culture we recommend is, above all, an inward operation.

Arnold is trying to restrict the meaning of culture as though he had, by

the end of his analysis, grown wary of its complexities. His more cautious approach is to identify culture with the formulations about "criticism" he had made in his famous essay of three years earlier, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time." The two concepts share an important common ground which is signaled by Arnold's emphasis, in the passage above, on the goal of getting to know the best that has been thought and said. Criticism is, then, also a study of perfection, but in a much more purely literary sense than Arnold applied in the complexly motivated essays that are only introduced by the preface to *Culture and Anarchy*. Arnold's display of wariness must not be entirely discounted, and yet it cannot mute the brilliant tones he initially gave to his construct.

In the best known section of *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold associated culture with the "immense spiritual significance of the Greeks." The ancient Greeks understood beauty and intelligence, or, in the familiar terms of Jonathan Swift, sweetness and light. "In thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection, culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry." What emerges in the central chapters of *Culture and Anarchy* is a significant clustering of terms that colors the austere "culture" of the preface with distinctive and sometimes dramatic illuminations: Greece, ancient authority, beauty, poetry, and the inner laws that govern and define these marks of perfection.

It could hardly be otherwise. In adopting culture as his key term, Arnold had selected a wondrous word, one of the most charged and spacious of his time. He knew what he was doing, of course, because he wanted the word's multiple reverberations. To understand these reverberations, we must begin where much else in nineteenth-century intellectual history begins—at the point of contact between England and Germany in the romantic era. Raymond Williams, in his important book *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (1958), has explored the growth of the term "culture" in the British tradition. David J. DeLaura, in a series of essays and lectures published more recently, has tracked the complex German sources of the term.

Williams shows "the emergence of culture as an abstraction and an abso-

lute." He argues that this process entailed the separation of moral and intellectual values, a response that reflected the period's advocacy of mind. Williams also shows that "culture" came to represent both mind and morality as a court of human appeal specifically set in opposition to the pragmatic processes of social construction in the new world of industrial capitalism. Culture offered itself as a cleansing and energizing alternative to the class consciousness and limited intellectual horizons of the bourgeois social order.

DeLaura's studies trace the continuity between the Goethean ideal of *Bildung* and Arnold's culture. *Bildung* refers to the virtually poetic process of self-development or self-cultivation that deeply influenced Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, and Matthew Arnold. In Carlyle's description, the ideal of *Bildung* is the "great law of culture," a law which says "let each become all that he was created capable of being; expand, if possible, to his full growth; resisting all impediments; casting off all foreign, especially all noxious adhesions; and show himself at length in his own shape and stature." *Bildung*, we should observe, defines an inward process of self-development; it is the culture of the person. The Germans reserved *Kultur* for the wider meaning of a civilization's whole way of life. In Arnold's usage, both *Bildung* and *Kultur* are present—with what consequences we shall see presently.

The core chapters of *Culture and Anarchy* are "Sweetness and Light" and "Hebraism and Hellenism." These chapters construct the sources of culture's power and authenticity. *Bildung* and *Kultur* do not divide quite so neatly in Arnold's text as I am making out here, but, generally speaking, Arnold's celebration of culture is double-sided, attesting to the cogency of its action in nurturing both the private self and the public realm.

In the full stride of his exegesis, Arnold makes rich and memorable claims for his version of culture.

He who works for sweetness and light, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and

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light. It has one even yet greater!—the passion for making them prevail. It is not satisfied till we all come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light.

We can say that Arnold's culture is its passions: Its first passion is the perfection of the self; its second passion is to make the ideal of self-perfection publicly valued and fostered. The motives of culture are located, then, in self-consciousness and in collective consciousness (a sort of *Zeitgeist*).

Again and again I have insisted how those are the happy moments of humanity, how those are the marking epochs of a people's life, how those are the flowering times for literature and art and all the creative power of genius, when there is a national glow of life and thought; when the whole society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and

alive. . . . Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. . . . [B]ut culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of the inferior classes. . . . It seeks to do away with classes. This is the social idea; and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality.

Lionel Trilling, in his majestic book on Arnold, is especially illuminating on the imperatives that animate Arnoldian culture. Trilling sees that culture "is reason involving the whole personality; it is the whole personality in search of truth. . . . It is the escape, in short, from *Verstand* to *Vernunft*, from mere understanding to the creative reason." This is the form of individual *Bildung* that Arnold affirms. But, as Trilling also says, in "Arnold's more organic conception of society, the individual is. . . a particular aspect of an integral whole. His individual does not *join* society, but springs from it."

Though Arnold's thinking about culture became very influential and helped, in many ways, to define the purposes of the liberal arts curriculum as it evolved in the century following the publication of *Culture and Anarchy*, there were always doubting allies, undoubting adversaries, and even angry dissenters. There have been three concrete forms of dissent from Arnold's views that have had considerable impact of their own. These forms merge with one another on specific points, but they remain discrete because of what each sees as contested by Arnoldian culture.

The first form of dissent can be seen as protesting Arnold's fearful designation of "anarchy" as culture's enemy. This dichotomy seems to set up simply one more version of the old struggle between a privileged power structure and radical challenges to its authority. Terry Eagleton, in a recent book on *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, is one of the many critics who have taken this view since Arnold's book first appeared. Eagleton writes: "From Burke and Coleridge to Matthew Arnold and T. S. Eliot, the aesthetic in Britain is effectively captured by the political right. The autonomy of culture, society as expressive of organic totality, the intuitive dogmatism of the imagination, the priority of local affections and unarguable allegiances,

the intimidating majesty of the sublime, the incontrovertible character of 'immediate' experience, history as a spontaneous growth impervious to rational analysis: these are some of the forms in which the aesthetic becomes a weapon in the hands of political reaction." Raymond Williams, in his more subtle analysis, accepts that Arnold attempted to reach beyond a merely well-lacquered authoritarianism—the best that has been thought and said is open, even for Arnold, to revision and dissent—yet, he nevertheless "not only holds to this but snatches also towards an absolute: and both are *Culture*." Williams, as usual, is very trenchant. Arnold certainly tried to define the *archē*—the legitimizing order of value—against what he saw as the *an-archē* of existentialist democracy, yet he himself was plagued in his soul by the blind arrogances of the reactionary powers in his world. The writer who regarded the contemporary condition with such apprehension in *Culture and Anarchy* is the poet who wrote "Dover Beach," not an ideologue rounding up all the usual modern suspects.

Another form of opposition to Arnold's idea of culture came, at first, from one of Arnold's friends, Thomas Henry Huxley, the highly articulate scientist who did so much after 1859 to explain and defend the theories of Charles Darwin. Huxley saw Arnold's culture as a perverse perpetuation of classical and literary learning, outlook, and privileges in a world where science had become the new *archē* and from which any substantively new order of thinking must develop.

A more celebrated rejection of Arnoldian culture as an outmoded enterprise in the age of science came from C. P. Snow in his *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (1959). Snow, who set himself up as both a scientist and a literary man, deplored the institutional and even temperamental division between the disciplines of science and letters. Snow centered his attack on the nature of the educational system, which is always taken to be the principal vehicle through which Arnoldian culture operates. Arnold himself had viewed culture as enacting its life in a much more broadly conceived set of institutions. But the "two cultures" debate, for obvious reasons, has always concen-

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trated more specifically on the goals of the formal curriculum than on forms of consciousness. Snow ventured his views and, more riskily, published his widely read but lackluster novels, while his Cambridge colleague, F. R. Leavis, was still the most influential, not to say explosive critic in Britain. Leavis responded to Snow in his Richmond Lecture of 1962. It was a performance in which, as the novelist John Wain reported, Leavis "threw Sir Charles Snow over his shoulder several times and then jumped on him."

Lionel Trilling, in a compelling essay on the Snow-Leavis debate, observed that Sir Charles opened the issue in his own Rede Lecture of 1959 and that Matthew Arnold had used the occasion of the Rede Lecture in 1882 to answer Huxley. Sir Charles, though he did not mention Arnold, was clearly replying, belatedly, on Huxley's behalf. Leavis, who also never invokes Arnold, responded to

Snow by articulating a line of argument thoroughly indebted to Arnold but almost exclusively preoccupied with issues of education. As Trilling puts it, "Dr. Leavis asserts the primacy of the humanities in education," and though he "refers more exclusively to literature than Arnold did . . . in general effect his position is the same."

In many ways, the most impressive aspect of the culture-science debate was its rapid evaporation as a substantive educational issue after looking, for a brief period in the early 1960s, as though it would become the defining point for any reevaluation of culture as an ideal and the humanities as its nurturing disciplines. History, as it transpired, had another agenda. Both Snow and Leavis disappeared in the swirl of the sixties, while both Arnoldian culture and Huxleyan science carried on an increasingly suspect and often anathematized life. A significant study in the sociology of knowledge might well investigate, not the emergence of the culture-science debate, but its sudden demise.

Arnoldian culture, though it has lost its mystical status, has not, of course, disappeared. It is much too deeply embedded in our institutions. Indeed, its current life is sustained, if indirectly, by the many contemporary declamations against its embeddedness. Two notoriously unfocused, but clearly significant, concerns of our time come into play here: postmodernism and multiculturalism. Whatever postmodernism may be, it gestures toward a syndrome of disorders that begins with the dispersal of meaning in language and goes on to conjure with the disappearance of the self, at least as the originating point of Goethe's *Bildung*. A recent writer on postmodernism begins his treatment of culture by juxtaposing Arnold and Nietzsche and by observing that Arnold's resistance to "anarchy" has fetched up as a contemporary attraction to "indeterminacy." Certainly one of the best ways of understanding postmodernism as a ganglion of nervous impulses in our day is to read its texts as inversions of the premises and preoccupations that identify Arnoldian culture.

Multiculturalism is a much simpler issue, largely a movement aimed at gaining recognition for voices and visions that Arnoldian culture, and its allied powers, have implicitly sup-

pressed. At the level of educational practice, the multicultural movement is interested in deflating the imperious authority that "high culture" exercises over the curriculum while bringing into play the principle that we must learn what is representative, for we have overemphasized what is exceptional. Arnold is often cited in multiculturalist documents as the warden of "high culture," which, in turn, opposes "popular culture." "Popular culture" is situated as the medium through which ethnic diversity, sexual difference, and political dissent may find their authentic creative expression and source of empowerment.

The multiculturalist conflict with Arnoldian culture has clear affinities with the radical critique we have already discussed. But multiculturalism returns us more specifically to a tension inherent in the idea of culture rather than to the culture-anarchy dichotomy. Arnoldian culture uneasily merges *Bildung*, the inner development of the individual, and *Kultur*, the notion of a publicly shared sense of meaning and practice, a collective consciousness. As long as culture, in the latter sense, is value-laden, or alludes to a critical formation of collective consciousness, the merging is more or less successful. But Arnold was writing at just the time that anthropology was developing as a social science. The anthropological conception of culture aims to be value-free, a descriptive rather than a critical account of society's practices, aspirations, and expressive forms. Anthropology designates culture as what is; Arnold designates culture as what ought to be.

The relationship between the anthropological and Arnoldian conceptions of culture has an important place in the whole development of literary modernism. Modernism has typically maintained an investment in the high cultural tradition while explicitly recognizing that high culture is always indebted to, and refreshed by, the broad streams of cultural imagination and expression that flow-through the social realm. The poetry of W. B. Yeats and the fiction of Saul Bellow illustrate the point. The multiculturalist movement stems from the opposite attitude toward Arnoldian culture, one that sees high culture as an elitist privileging of its pantheon and a silencing of other voices. The academic

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form of the movement would substitute cultural studies for the study of culture. Ironically, in some multiculturalist programs it is possible to see the emergence of a new Arnoldianism, since the multiculturalist position aspires to a redefinition of value.

The Arnoldian idea of culture has encountered opposition and generated antagonism because it is designed to do so. The most important term in Arnold's discussion of culture—though the term is often taken as a throwaway—is "perfection." Arnold identified culture with the pursuit of "complete human perfection." Culture, he said, has a "single-minded love of perfection." If we were to identify Arnold's essential statement of his meaning, we could do no better than follow his own formulation: "What we are concerned for . . . is simply . . . getting to know, whether through reading, observing, or thinking, the best that can at present be known in the world . . . and thus to get a basis for a less confused action and a more complete perfection than we have at present" (italics added).

In thus identifying culture with per-

fection, Arnold was following Plato and St. Paul. He understood the value of concentrating, as they do, on the idea of perfection, while concentrating even more on the knowledge, as Paul said, that the time of the perfect has not yet come. There is no utopian motive in Arnold's celebration of perfection. Rather, Arnold was trying to stimulate perception of all the false consciousness to which we are subject, all the tinsel, all the treachery, all the travesty that passes for wisdom. The idea of perfection mattered to Arnold as the only background against which we could form a just image of our actual circumstances. The social critics, the defenders of science, and the multiculturalists have insisted that Arnold's culture is simply a device for ordering us about. Instead, it is designed to register the gathering of ideological clouds on the horizon. This, of course, does not mean that Arnold had somehow transcended the narrowness that necessarily constricts all ideologies. He knew he could not, and he was careful to resist spelling out in any detail "the best that can at present be known in the world." But he did have the guidance of knowing, in one sphere at any rate, what was involved in the study of perfection. He was a poet, but one who had always struggled for his victories. The best insight into what Arnold had in mind he himself gave, years before, in a letter to his sister: "Perfection of a certain kind [in the region of pure form] may be . . . attained, or at least approached, without knocking yourself to pieces, but to attain or approach perfection in the region of thought and feeling, and to unite this with perfection of form, demands not merely an effort and a labour, but an actual tearing of oneself to pieces, which one does not readily consent to (although one is sometimes forced to it) unless one can devote one's whole life to poetry."

No one who has ever attempted, as Yeats would have said, something extremely difficult but not quite impossible, will fail to recognize the complex motives in this *cri de coeur*. We don't get perfection, but we are in many ways able to conceive unrealized perfections just as we can conceive finer sunsets and unheard melodies. This capacity, which all human beings possess by virtue of being human, Arnold made the foundation and authority of culture. □



THE LETTERS OF DARWIN

BY
DOUGLAS N. VARLEY



IT IS INTERESTING to contemplate a tangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth. . . ." So begins the final paragraph of Charles Darwin's great work, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. The image suggests how Darwin approached the study of living things. Although he is justly remembered for proposing a single generalization of vast explanatory power, Darwin was obsessed with the details and diversity of biological form. He spent eight years writing a book on barnacles, was steeped in the morphology of orchids, and was keenly interested in South American fossils. His vision was based on an omnivorous curiosity.

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Yet he was not a solitary, eccentric genius isolated in nature's endless variety. He was a Victorian, a gentleman scientist deeply indebted to his time and his society, whose social and professional contacts were essential to the furtherance of his work.

The Correspondence of Charles Darwin, the sixth volume of which has recently been published by the Cambridge University Press with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, offers copious documentation of both these aspects of Darwin's nature and the close interconnections between them. As Frederick Burkhardt, editor of Darwin's letters, puts it, "Darwin was no armchair thinker. He was constantly collecting data from a great many disciplines. He was a tremendous experimenter and part of an impressive network of scientists."

In part because of his poor health and in part because he needed information about species scattered across the globe, Darwin acquired much of his evidence for the theory of natural selection through correspondence. The editors of the Cambridge edition have located 9,000 letters in Darwin's

hand and an additional 5,000 letters written to him. These letters form a day-to-day record of Darwin's thoughts and activities that will give historians greater depth in understanding how he worked, according to Burkhardt. A former philosophy professor and former president of Bennington College, Burkhardt has been collecting Darwin's correspondence for sixteen years.

Volume 6 (1856-57) finds Darwin at last resolved to present natural selection to the scientific public. A letter from the famous Scottish geologist, Charles Lyell, admonishing Darwin to publish his ideas quickly or be scooped by Alfred Wallace, had finally goaded him to publish. It seems it was Lyell who first realized that Wallace, a naturalist working in the Malay archipelago, was moving fast in the direction of an evolutionary theory including natural selection. Darwin, on the other hand, had seen only a variant of creationism in the writings of his most potent rival.

This was a period of intense intellectual activity, as Darwin worked to shore up twenty years of research into the history of life on earth. With the

dogged persistence of a committed empiricist, he sought information on a startling range of species that included everything from Tibetan mastiffs to New World weeds. The result was a book that has done as much as any other to shape modern man's image of himself and his place in the world—*The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*.

The central question, of course, was the nature of species: Were they forever fixed, separate, and distinct; or did they change over time? The letters represent a major source of information about his "pre-*Origin*" thinking on this important topic. Much of volume 6 documents Darwin's searching for answers in the effects of domestication on various species, particularly poultry. In the "artificial selection" made by breeders, Darwin found a kind of analogue to the natural selection he was trying to understand.

The differences introduced into species by selective breeding, for example, offered Darwin an opportunity to explore the possible limits of variation. The issue was crucial to evolutionary theory, and he pursued details about the character of various species of fowl with astonishing zeal. Naturalists as far away as Calcutta were enlisted in his campaign. Even local pigeon fanciers were interrogated about the specifics of their prize breeds. Darwin exploited every avenue he thought might increase his biological knowledge. A typical instance involves an otherwise personal letter to a former servant who had moved to Australia. After an uneventful recounting of events relating to shared acquaintances, Darwin tags on an insistent request for the skins of any "odd poultry, or pigeons, or ducks, imported from China, or Indian, or Pacific islands."

Such letters are interesting for showing how wide Darwin cast his net, but it is his correspondence with the great "gentleman scientists" of his day that are apt to be of most interest to historians.

One of the lessons of the edition, says Burkhardt, is that the theory of natural selection "wasn't spun out of one man's head." Darwin relied heavily on his scholarly connections for both guidance and insight. Burkhardt hopes this edition of the letters will lead historians of science to take a new look at the researchers who aided

Darwin only to be eclipsed by him. Particularly in for a reevaluation, he says, are scholars who have all but disappeared from the pages of history because they were on the losing side of the argument over evolution.

While the popular conception is that the theory of natural selection grew solely out of the observations Darwin made while serving on the *Beagle*, Burkhardt believes the letters will make readers more aware of the role experimentation played in his work. One of the problems Darwin clearly saw, regarding his theory of descent from a common ancestor, was the existence of related species on opposite sides of the globe and on islands a great distance from land. Unable to appeal to divine action, he needed to find some plausible, natural mechanism for the distribution of species. According to Burkhardt, Darwin "never bought the theory of land bridges" that was current in his day. "That was too easy a solution for Darwin," he says.

During 1856-57, Darwin was busy devising experiments to find a better explanation. Specifically, he was investigating the ability of seeds to survive in saltwater on the theory that ocean currents might be one way plant species were dispersed. When he discovered that most seeds sink, he tried feeding them to ocean fish in London's zoological gardens. Unfortunately, the fish refused to cooperate and left the seeds uneaten. Not one to accept defeat, Darwin picked up on a suggestion that the carcass of a bird that had died with undigested seeds in its crop might prove a better raft than the seeds themselves. This experiment yielded success, and Darwin was able to inform a friend, botanist Joseph Hooker, that "a pigeon has floated for thirty days in salt water with seeds in crop & they have grown splendidly." Odd as these experiments may sound today, they demonstrate what Burkhardt calls Darwin's "indomitable will to succeed in wresting facts out of nature."

This intense desire to amass such an extraordinary wealth of information may explain one of the most perplexing features of Darwin's life—why he waited twenty years to advance the theory of natural selection in print. In his autobiography, Darwin writes

that he conceived the general idea of evolution through natural selection in 1838 while reading Thomas Malthus's *Essay on Population* "for amusement." *The Origin of Species* did not appear until 1859. Burkhardt does not see much evidence for the hypothesis that Darwin was reticent because of the religious uproar he knew his theory would occasion. Rather, Burkhardt says, "he knew he would have to build a tremendously strong case to convince his peers in the field." The letters make it clear that Darwin constantly chafed at the idea of publishing an abbreviated view of his arguments—"it is dreadfully unphilosophical to publish without full details" is a recurring refrain.

The reception of his "species book," as he sometimes called it, showed that his concern in this regard was not unfounded. According to Burkhardt, none of Darwin's noteworthy colleagues ever completely reconciled himself to Darwin's theory. Hooker, aware of many unsolved problems, accepted the theory cautiously and tentatively. Lyell could never accept that *homo sapiens* was descended from apes. Asa Gray, the great American botanist and one of Darwin's most frequent correspondents, balked at the idea that the whole of evolution was an accident without plan or purpose. Even Thomas Huxley, Darwin's ardent defender, always regretted the absence of confirming, experimental evidence for the theory. Darwin too was vexed by the gaps he knew remained in his theory, but he held fast to the belief that any theory that explained so much, in so many areas of natural science, could not be false.

The letters of Darwin provide a picture not only of his accomplishment but also of how he achieved it and "how he felt about it, how he agonized over it," Burkhardt says. They will be an invaluable tool for scholars seeking to understand the mind of the man who marshaled so much information into so elegant a theory. □

Since 1977, the American Council of Learned Societies has received \$420,886 in outright funds and \$154,000 in matching funds from the Editions category of the Division of Research Programs to support an edition of the correspondence of Charles Darwin.

CALENDAR

May ♦ June



Center for African Art

"Africa Explores: Twentieth-Century African Art" opens May 15 at the Center for African Art in New York City.



Dr. Henry Glassie

Based on the collection of folklorist Henry Glassie, "Turkish Traditional Art Today" opens June 1 at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum

This photo of Brewery Gulch in 1910 is part of an exhibition on the urbanization of Bisbee, an Arizona mining town; opening May 20 at the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum.



Computer Museum

"People and Computers: Milestones of a Revolution" is an interactive exhibition opening June 29 at the Computer Museum in Boston.

Conferences:

Performing Mozart's music will be the focus of a conference May 20-24 at the Juilliard School in New York.

The occult in modern Russian and Soviet culture will be examined June 26-29 at Fordham University in New York.



Folger Shakespeare Library

A symposium on "Nature and Civilization: Shakespeare's *King Lear*" will be held June 10 in conjunction with performances of the play at American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

—Kristen Hall

Such expectations, he argued, would fall victim to the lustful procreation of a population so much greater than the means of nourishing it as to require the services of famine, disease, war, and death to bring about a balance. It was in the pessimistic spirit of Malthus that the New Poor Law of 1834 was framed so as to avoid this apocalyptic fate. That act extended relief only to those incarcerated in workhouses, thereby dehumanizing the poor. It was the general acceptance by the liberal middle classes of the dismal Malthusian prophecy rather than Smith's more sober and more accurate prescription, Himmelfarb argues, that helped to undermine the moral and social legitimacy of the industrial system. Linked to Malthus's vision was the similarly pessimistic Marxist view that the growing number and immiseration of the industrial proletariat would be brought about by the contradictions of a grinding capitalism. These false prophecies have played particularly pernicious roles, she notes, because despite the facts to the contrary, they were so widely credited and acted upon by ideologues and system makers.

HIMMELFARB HAS WRITTEN her history as an American whose life has spanned over half of a very troubling century. She has presented the leading Victorian writers not, in the manner of Lytton Strachey, as a sport for debunkers, but as having much to contribute to our thinking today. There is not only a political but a moral message at the heart of her humanism, a cause which at this time has few such learned and eloquent defenders. As a historian of ideas, Himmelfarb has been most attracted to those thinkers who responded to a perceived call of duty, even when, as in the instances of George Eliot and Beatrice Webb, their political attitudes may fail to satisfy her. Among more recent writers who share her posture, and whose considerable influence she has acknowledged, is the great liberal historian of Victorian England, Elie Halévy, who though fully appreciating the importance of economics in shaping institutions and events, saw in religion and in moral and reli-

gious ideas (specifically in the rise of Methodism) the cause of England's avoidance of violent revolution. More immediate in forming her outlook was her late friend Lionel Trilling, the literary critic and the biographer of Matthew Arnold, whose dedication to the moral role of literature and whose work on "the liberal imagination" helped to shape her historical imagination. Like these men, Himmelfarb is a believer in the power of ideas and in their ability to move both ordinary and extraordinary men and women, in contrast to the dominant mode of seeing people as helpless creatures of society, economic position, or childhood traumas.

In a recent essay on the controversy over sociobiology, Himmelfarb's humanist perspective is decisive. Himmelfarb observes that both the sociobiologists and their critics have rejected the position rooted in culture, in philosophical tradition, and in man's ability to choose freely. The debate has been framed as one between biological and social science, and each side has with justice accused the other of being simplistically reductionist. The sociobiologists have argued that not only human emotions but even ethical ideals, such as altruism, were genetically programmed by natural selection; their most articulate opponents have been the spokesmen of a historical materialism and an environmental determinism. In utopian fashion, the latter have seen men as almost infinitely malleable; while the sociobiologists have argued for firm limits to such malleability, they have insisted that scientists, not philosophers, must determine such limits. Himmelfarb has chosen instead the more complex position of Victorian humanists like Arnold or the later T. H. Huxley, men who, critical of the pretensions of scientism, arrived at their "affirmations by way of doubt and fear."

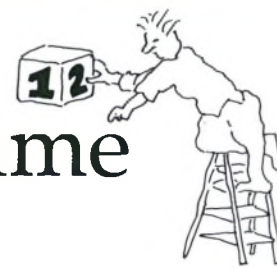
For Himmelfarb, modern intellectual and academic life, on almost every front, draws on sentiments alien to humanist values—even, she argues, to the human condition. Yielding to social and political pressures, academics have gone the way of the utopian Comte, in whose world scientists

would be limited to disseminating simple and useful truths rather than seeking to uncover any truth that might prove dangerous or unsettling. As a historian of ideas, Himmelfarb is disturbed by the way in which the academy has "scientized" itself, with history becoming social science, literary criticism becoming semiotics, philosophy becoming linguistic analysis. To deconstruct these traditional disciplines, she writes, has been to "desocialize, dehumanize, demoralize them by stripping them of any recognizable social and human reality." And, thereby, to inhibit further the pursuit of truth.

What is remarkable about Gertrude Himmelfarb is the virtually seamless unity of her professional calling, intellectual pursuits, and moral and political ideals. As a historian of ideas, she has retraced the often tangled intellectual development of past thinkers so as to better comprehend their intentions, and thus to free them from the moulds later generations have mistakenly cast. She has spent her scholarly life in a study of the period that displayed at its center the ideas and sentiments which she finds most congenial, the period whose central problems—liberty and community, science and religion, environment and heredity, free will and determinism—are those that continue to beset us. But she is wise enough not to yield to the temptations of a Whig history that imposes the present on the past; nor does she believe that the past can be readily transposed to the present. She does not imagine that the ethical imperatives of the Victorians, their sense of duty, so clearly drawn from the then-fading evangelical impulse, can be recovered. Yet, she writes—and this is a great, perhaps the great, underlying theme of her history—of her hope that the memory of the Victorian ethos may not be lost. "That memory," she writes, "of a culture living on sheer nerve and will, the nerve to know the worst and to will the best, may fortify us as we persist in our quest for some new synthesis that will herald some brave—or not so brave—new world." A noble objective, boldly yet carefully stated, which is satisfyingly embodied in her writings. □

Humanities Ph.D.'s Over Time

BY JEFFREY THOMAS



HUMANITIES Ph.D.'s in the United States now exceed 100,000, an increase of more than 50 percent since 1977. In recent years, they have become increasingly diverse in their demographic characteristics and employment patterns, as shown by the Survey of Humanities Doctorates, an NEH-supported survey series conducted biennially since 1977. The survey polls a nationally representative sample of humanities Ph.D.'s. Here are some highlights.

Growth of Small Disciplines

While traditional fields such as English, history, and modern foreign languages continued to claim the greatest numbers of Ph.D.'s in 1989 (*Figure 1*), smaller fields such as art history and music have substantially increased their proportions since 1977 (*Table 1*). Conversely, the proportions of Ph.D.'s in philosophy and in classical languages and literatures have declined. In no field, however, has the absolute number of Ph.D.'s declined.

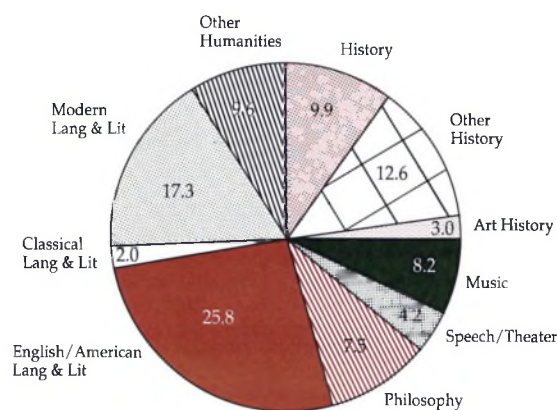


FIGURE 1. Humanities Ph.D. population, by field of doctorate.

Women and Minorities

The proportion of minority Ph.D.'s, although small, has risen since the 1977 survey, as have the numbers and proportions of women. In 1989, women constituted nearly a third of humanities doctorates, up from less than a quarter in 1977.

This article is part of a series deriving from statistical studies supported by NEH.

Jeffrey Thomas is assistant director for humanities studies in the Office of Budget and Planning

Nontraditional Employment

Although educational institutions continue to be the primary employer of humanities Ph.D.'s, the proportion in teaching declined by 9 percent since 1977, while those in business grew from 3 to 10 percent (*Table 2*).

As part of this shift toward nonteaching jobs, Ph.D.'s in larger numbers have moved into management/administration, consulting and professional services, and other activities. In 1989, one in five doctorates in American history claimed management/administration as his or her primary job. □

TABLE 1: Population of Humanities Ph.D.'s by Field, 1977-1989

Field of Doctorate	1977	1979	1981	1983	1985	1987	1989
All Fields	66,400	72,100	78,600	85,100	90,600	95,000	100,700
American History	5,400	7,200	8,500	8,400	8,800	9,500	10,000
Other History	11,400	10,700	11,000	12,000	12,500	12,500	12,700
Art History	1,500	1,800	2,100	2,400	2,700	2,800	3,100
Music	3,700	4,400	5,200	5,900	6,700	7,400	8,300
Speech/Theater	3,200	3,000	3,200	3,700	3,800	4,100	4,200
Philosophy	5,400	5,700	6,200	6,500	7,000	7,200	7,500
English/Amer Lang & Lit	18,500	20,100	21,700	22,800	23,800	24,600	26,000
Classical Lang & Lit	1,700	1,800	1,800	1,900	1,900	1,900	2,000
Modern Lang & Lit	11,800	13,200	14,300	15,100	16,000	16,600	17,400
Other Humanities	3,800	4,100	4,600	6,500	7,500	8,400	9,600

NOTE: Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred; therefore subcategories may not add to totals.

TABLE 2: Type of Employer of Humanities Ph.D.'s, 1977-1989 (in %)

Type of Employer	1977	1979	1981	1983	1985	1987	1989
Employed Population (No.)	58,400	63,700	70,400	75,500	81,600	84,200	88,400
Educational Institution	89.9	86.3	85.3	82.9	82.3	81.0	81.0
4-Year Coll/Univ/Med Sch	82.4	79.3	77.6	74.8	74.3	73.0	73.4
2-Year College	5.1	4.3	4.9	5.1	5.1	4.9	4.6
Elem/Secondary Schools	2.4	2.6	2.8	3.0	2.9	3.2	3.1
Business/Industry	3.2	5.4	6.5	8.8	8.7	9.8	9.8
U.S. Government	1.7	1.8	2.2	2.1	2.4	2.1	2.7
State/Local Government	0.8	1.0	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.1	1.1
Nonprofit Organization	3.5	4.5	3.7	4.2	4.6	5.5	5.1
No Report	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2

NOTE: Percentages for those reporting other types of employers are not included in this table; therefore, totals may not add to 100 percent.

Ex Libris

N·E·H

BOOKS PUBLISHED RECENTLY WITH NEH SUPPORT

AWARD WINNERS

♦ American Association of State and Local History, Award of Merit

Garvin, Donna-Belle, and James L. Garvin. *On the Road North of Boston: New Hampshire Taverns and Turnpikes* (museum catalogue). Concord: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1988.

♦ American Federation of Arts, Award of Excellence

Lentz, Thomas W., and Glenn D. Lowry. *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (museum catalogue). Los Angeles: Museum Associates, 1989.

♦ American Historical Association, Alfred Dunning Prize, 1990, for American history; Joan Kelly Memorial Prize, 1990, for women's history

Ulrich, Laurel T. *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on her Diary, 1785-1812*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990.

♦ American Historical Association, Herbert Baxter Adams Award, 1990, for distinguished book in the field of European history

Hoffman, Richard C. *Land, Liberties, and Lordship in a Late Medieval Countryside: Agrarian Structures and Change in the Duchy of Wrocław*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989.

♦ American Historical Association, J. Franklin Jameson Prize, 1990, for outstanding achievement in the editing of historical sources

Lewis, Meriwether, and William Clark. *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*. Vols. 1-6. Edited by Gary Moulton. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983-1990.

♦ American Historical Association, Leo Gershow Award, 1990, for outstanding book on 17th- or 18th-century Western European history

Herr, Richard. *Rural Change and Royal Finance in Spain at the End of the Old Regime*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

♦ American Library Association, Dartmouth Medal, 1990

Wilson, Charles Reagan, and William Ferris, eds. *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

♦ American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers, ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award, 1989; and International Congress on

Women in Music, Pauline Alderman Award for New Scholarship on Women in Music, 1989

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♦ Association of American Publishers, Prize for Excellence in Professional and Scholarly Publishing, Most Outstanding Book in Architecture and Urban Planning, 1990; and Society for American City and Regional Planning History, Lewis Mumford Prize, 1989

Wilson, William H. *The City Beautiful Movement*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

♦ Association of American Publishers, Prize for Excellence in Professional and Scholarly Publishing, Most Outstanding Book in Business and Management, 1990

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Elliott, Emory, ed. *Columbia Literary History of the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

♦ Choice, Best Academic Books, 1989-1990, joint winner

Simplicius. *On Aristotle Physics 6*. Translated by David Konstan. Ancient Commentators on Aristotle. London: Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1989.

♦ Historical Society of New Mexico, Gaspar Pérez de Villagra Award, 1990, for outstanding book; and Mountains and Plains Booksellers Association, Regional Book Award, nonfiction category

de Vargas, Diego. *Remote Beyond Compare: Letters of don Diego de Vargas to His Family*. Edited by John L. Kessell. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989.

♦ Los Angeles Conservancy, award for regional architectural history; and Society of Architectural Historians, Outstanding Catalogue of an Architectural History Exhibition, 1988-1989

Singerman, Howard, ed. *Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses* (museum catalogue). Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1989.

♦ Music Library Association, Vincent Duckles Award, 1988, for best book-length bibliography

Mathiesen, Thomas J. *Ancient Greek Music Theory: A Catalogue of Manuscripts*. Munich, Ger.: G. Henle Verlag, 1988.

♦ New York State Historical Association, Henry Allen Moe, catalogue of distinction in the arts, honorable mention

Idzerda, Stanley J.; Anne Loveland; and Marc H. Miller. *Lafayette: Hero of Two Worlds: The Art and Pageantry of His Farewell Tour of America, 1824-1825* (museum catalogue). Flushing, N.Y.: Queens Museum, 1989.

♦ New York Times, one of the best photo books of the year, 1990

Davis, Keith F. *George N. Barnard: Photographer of Sherman's Campaign*. Kansas City: Hallmark Cards, Inc., 1990.

♦ Phi Beta Kappa Society, Christian Gauss Award, 1990

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♦ Print Magazine Certificate of Excellence

Kimball, Greg D., and Marie Tyler-McGraw. *In Bondage and Freedom* (museum catalogue). Richmond: Valentine Museum; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

♦ Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, José Toribio Medina Award, 1989

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♦ Society of Colonial Wars, Distinguished Book Award, 1990

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♦ Southern Historical Association, Francis B. Simkins Prize, 1989

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♦ **W. Ross Winterowd Prize, 1989**, for best book on composition theory

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HUMANITIES GUIDE

FOR THOSE WHO ARE THINKING OF APPLYING FOR AN NEH GRANT

Humanities Projects in Libraries and Archives

BY THOMAS PHELPS

LIBRARIES, sometimes known as the "people's university," are a natural setting for citizens, librarians, and humanities scholars to come together to explore connections and relationships in history; to study ideas, ideals, and values; to examine experiences; and to find a context for understanding the past and the future. Through its program for Humanities Projects in Libraries and Archives, the Endowment supports public humanities programs in academic and public libraries and in archival institutions throughout the country. With this support, humanities programs have become a significant part of library services in rural, suburban, and urban communities and on academic campuses throughout the nation.

Although public programs in libraries and archives employ a variety of approaches and formats, including reading and discussion groups, conferences, exhibitions, and lecture series, all successful applicants have at least two things in common: 1) their projects are feasible within the context of their libraries and the communities they serve, and 2) they ensure the intellectual rigor of a project by involving scholars with appropriate credentials to help plan and execute the programs.

Many successful project proposals bring together public librarians, academic librarians, scholars, and members of the community. In one such project, underway at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, librarians from Chester and Exon public libraries and from libraries at Temple and Lincoln Universities are working with noted

scholars—Arnold Rampersad (Columbia University) and David Levering Lewis (Rutgers University)—to plan public programs on the life and work of Langston Hughes. Plans include a lecture series and public symposia, a book fair, and the screening of the film on Hughes from the noted *Voices and Visions* television series. The programs will use the resources of the Hughes library at Lincoln University, which Hughes attended, and encourage reading and discussion of works by and about him at local public libraries.

Other successful applicants propose projects that simply make their libraries' existing collections more appealing and accessible to the public. For example, the community library in New Rochelle, where Thomas Paine was awarded a farm for his revolutionary service, had amassed a large collection of works by and about Paine, arguably the leading phrasemaker and pamphleteer of the American Revolution. Working in cooperation with the Thomas Paine National Historical Association and the College of New Rochelle, the New Rochelle Public Library produced a variety of programs examining Paine's life and work. Book discussion groups featured works by Eric Foner, Edmund Burke, and Paine himself. Noted scholars—Gordon Wood from Brown University, Eric Foner from Columbia, and Sean Wilentz from Princeton—lectured and discussed Paine as an intellectual, a radical, and a figure of fluctuating repute. Several reviewers commended the cooperation between a public and a college library and the local historical association. NEH staff noted the topic's strong appeal to residents of the New Rochelle area because of Paine's association with the town

and the strong local collection.

Successful proposals demonstrate not only the fulfillment of a community need or interest but also the judicious use of a library's collection and human resources. For example, the Newberry Library's D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian will hold a major exhibition about native American cultures, drawing from its holdings of rare books, manuscripts, and maps, and from an extraordinary array of affiliated scholars to interpret the exhibition through lectures, teacher-training workshops, and school tours.

Libraries in relatively small, rural communities can use NEH support to bring scholar-led reading and discussion programs to their communities. For example, themes carefully chosen to interest local communities were selected by the Utah Library Association for reading and discussion programs at small libraries in six intermountain states: Utah, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. The theme package, "Trails of the West," features works by A. B. Guthrie, Wallace Stegner, and Willa Cather. Discussions of the works are led by scholars from institutions within the six-state area. Several evaluators commended the excellent outreach to small and rural communities and the choice of themes and works of interest to westerners.

Deadlines for implementation applications are semiannual, in March and September. Deadlines for planning applications are quarterly, in February, May, August, and November. For information, contact the Division of Public Programs, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20506 (202/786-0271).

Thomas Phelps is a program officer in the Division of Public Programs.

DEADLINES

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Deadline

For projects beginning

Division of Education Programs — James C. Herbert, Director 786-0373

Higher Education in the Humanities — Lyn Maxwell White 786-0380	April 1, 1992	October 1992
Institutes for College and and University Faculty — Barbara A. Ashbrook 786-0380	April 1, 1992	October 1992
Core Curriculum Projects — Frank Frankfort 786-0380	April 1, 1992	October 1992
Two-Year Colleges — Judith Jeffrey Howard 786-0380	April 1, 1992	October 1992
Elementary and Secondary Education in the Humanities — F. Bruce Robinson 786-0377	December 15, 1991	July 1992
Special Opportunity in Foreign Language Education Higher Education — Elizabeth Welles 786-0380 Elementary and Secondary Education — F. Bruce Robinson 786-0377	March 15, 1992	October 1992
Teacher-Scholar Program — Angela Iovino 786-0377	May 1, 1992	September 1993

Division of Fellowships and Seminars — Guinevere L. Griest, Director 786-0458

Fellowships for University Teachers — Maben D. Herring 786-0466	June 1, 1991	January 1, 1992
Fellowships for College Teachers and Independent Scholars — Joseph B. Neville 786-0466	June 1, 1991	January 1, 1992
Fellowships on the Foundations of American Society — Maben D. Herring 786-0466	June 1, 1991	January 1, 1992
Summer Stipends — Thomas O'Brien 786-0466	October 1, 1991	May 1, 1992
Travel to Collections — Kathleen Mitchell 786-0463	July 15, 1991	December 1, 1991
Faculty Graduate Study Program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities Catherine B. Tkacz 786-0466	March 15, 1992	September 1, 1993
Younger Scholars — Leon Bramson 786-0463	November 1, 1991	May 1, 1992
Summer Seminars for College Teachers — Stephen Ross 786-0463		
Participants	March 1, 1992	Summer 1992
Directors	March 1, 1992	Summer 1993
Summer Seminars for School Teachers — Michael Hall 786-0463		
Participants	March 1, 1992	Summer 1992
Directors	April 1, 1992	Summer 1993

Office of Challenge Grants — Harold Cannon, Director 786-0361

May 1, 1992

December 1, 1991

Office of Preservation — George F. Farr, Jr., Director 786-0570

National Heritage Preservation Program — Vanessa Piala 786-0570	November 1, 1991	July 1992
Preservation — George F. Farr, Jr. 786-0570	June 1, 1991	January 1992
U.S. Newspaper Program — Jeffrey Field 786-0570	June 1, 1991	January 1992

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For projects beginning

Division of Public Programs — Donald Gibson, Director 786-0267

Humanities Projects in Media — James Dougherty 786-0278	September 13, 1991	April 1, 1992
Humanities Projects in Museums and Historical Organizations — Marsha Semmel 786-0284	June 7, 1991	January 1, 1992
Public Humanities in Libraries — Wilsonia Cherry 786-0271	September 13, 1991	April 1, 1992
Humanities Projects in Libraries — Thomas Phelps 786-0271		
Planning	August 2, 1991	January 1, 1992
Implementation	September 13, 1991	April 1, 1992

Division of Research Programs — Richard Ekman, Director 786-0200

Texts — Margot Backas 786-0207

Editions — Douglas Arnold 786-0207	June 1, 1991	April 1, 1992
Translations — Martha Chomiak 786-0207	June 1, 1991	April 1, 1992
Publication Subvention — Gordon McKinney 786-0207	April 1, 1992	October 1, 1992

Reference Materials — Jane Rosenberg 786-0358

Tools — Helen Agüera 786-0358	September 1, 1991	July 1, 1992
Access — Barbara Paulson 786-0358	September 1, 1991	July 1, 1992

Interpretive Research — George Lucas 786-0210

Collaborative Projects — David Wise 786-0210	October 15, 1991	July 1, 1992
Archaeology Projects — David Wise 786-0210	October 15, 1991	July 1, 1992
Humanities, Science and Technology — Daniel Jones 786-0210	October 15, 1991	July 1, 1992

Conferences — Christine Kalke 786-0204

Centers for Advanced Study — David Coder 786-0204

International Research — David Coder 786-0204

Division of State Programs — Marjorie A. Berlincourt, Director 786-0254

Each state humanities council establishes its own grant guidelines and application deadlines. Addresses and telephone numbers of these state programs may be obtained from the division.

To receive guidelines for any NEH program, contact the Office of Publications and Public Affairs at 202/786-0438. Guidelines are available at least two months in advance of application deadlines.

Telecommunications device for the deaf: 202/786-0282.

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