

education is not interested in high standards. Higher education occasionally tolerates and sometimes even rewards scholarship, intellectual curiosity, and good teaching, but only after more important things are taken care of. These include filling the beds, increasing the cash flow, and lobbying the legislature. Scholar-teachers are the sacred totems or icons of the system, to be trotted out for the edification of donors, parents, and the average faculty mem-

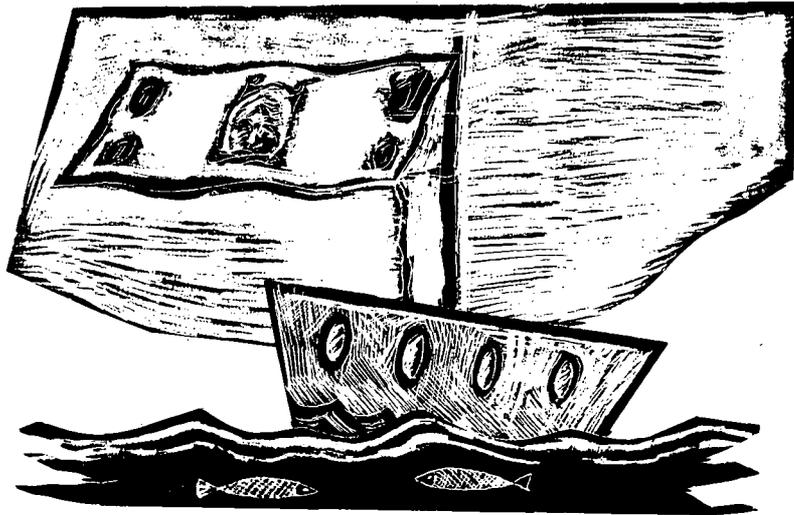
ber. The university's real interests lie elsewhere. I learned this from a distinguished papyrologist in the classics department of a major university. This man, who ate many a reluctant but free meal in the process of being paraded before the dean's guests, was recommended for a distinguished professorship just before he retired. Had it come ten or fifteen years earlier, he said, it would have meant a great deal; as it was, he knew pretty well where his work

stood in the university's scheme of priorities.

Higher education in America has become a system of virtually uniform institutions serving a mass clientele, and increasingly devoted to the proposition that a perfect world is one made safe, comfortable, and profitable for mediocrity. The subversion of educational standards is dangerous to America's long-run prosperity and happiness, but it is essential to the short-run prosperity of higher education. One could even argue that institutions that spend at most about 25-30 percent of their cash flow on education are not really schools at all: they are holding companies, phone companies, real-estate investment companies, hotels, social service agencies, research and fundraising offices. In that context, "affirmative action" is the latest and most powerful of a series of weapons deployed in higher education's war on intelligence and integrity; "cultural diversity" is an economic concept that defines one aspect of the future the universities think they are investing in. One of D'Souza's most engaging characters, Vice-provost Gillis of Duke, more or less told him so; but D'Souza seems not to have taken him seriously.

For some five years, under cover of doing good to the world's wounded, the myriad nerds of academe have been enjoying sweet revenge for every injury inflicted on their fragile self-esteem by the very idea of academic distinction. Now there are signs—the success of D'Souza's book is one of them—that this latest campaign to subvert academic standards is overreaching itself. One should not, however, expect an academic renaissance: intellectual subversion has more forms than one, and the denizens of academe are gifted inventors of them. Meanwhile, rhetoric upon the place of the humanities in the curriculum is less useful in grasping the significance of D'Souza's data than some apothegms of the marketplace, such as, "If you subsidize a thing, you're going to get it." D'Souza's cast of characters consists mostly of people whom America has rewarded well with prestige and money. Someone is satisfied. But then, as someone else said, "No one ever went broke underestimating the taste of the American people," and contemporary academia spends its days in that kind of estimation. ◊

BRIEF MENTIONS



WHAT HAS GOVERNMENT DONE TO OUR MONEY?

by Murray N. Rothbard

Auburn, Alabama: Ludwig von Mises Institute; 119 pp., \$5.00

Murray Rothbard, according to his enemies, is no economist, because he is not a rigorous scientist. Rothbard ought to take that as a compliment. Whatever else economics is, it is not the "dismal science." It is not a science at all, except in the sense that all forms of systematic humane learning (*e.g.*, theology, grammar) are sciences, and its practitioners are for the most part conceited optimists, whose ignorance of history, literature, and philosophy render them incapable of learning anything even from their own experience. An argument with an economist usually begins with the "layman" saying something obvious about the uniqueness of mother love or the importance of wilderness, only to have the economist shoot back with something about different people "maximizing utility" in different ways—as if such statements actually meant something. Economists are like sheep dogs: they are very good at handling their assigned tasks, so long as they never get the idea that they're in charge. When a dog makes that mistake, he begins to eat the sheep.

Murray Rothbard is no rogue economist, subordinating human concerns to economic calculation. He has always been a historian and, above all, a moralist whose obsession with human liberty has made him enemies across the political spectrum. His little book on money, first published in 1963, provides a clear and entertaining account of money and banking from the perspective of the Austrian school, as well as a nutshell history of American monetary policy. Rothbard is learned but never pedantic, simple without ever trivializing his complicated subject. The book has converted many of the most skeptical readers to the doctrine of hard money and ought to be put in the hands of every present and potential voter in the United States. If that sounds too much like coercion, then order the book.

—Thomas Fleming

Credulous Creatures

by Jack D. Douglas

"If the world will be gulled, let it be gulled."

—Robert Burton



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Kinsey, Sex and Fraud: The Indoctrination of a People

by Judith A. Reisman and Edward W. Eichel

Edited by J. Gordon Muir and John H. Court

Lafayette, Louisiana: Huntington House; 256 pp., \$19.95

Who now reads Alfred Kinsey? Almost no one. Who now remembers the great media event set off in 1948 by the publication of his "monumental" book of 804 pages on *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*? Most Americans over 40 probably do, while most under 40 probably do not. Few college students today recognize the name, unless they have just had to pass a multiple-choice exam in *Sex and Society* 101.

Kinsey was not one of the *conquistadores* of sexology, among a pantheon of modernist cultural heroes who led the conquest of two eons of Christian tradition; he seems to have seen himself as a humble statistician document-

ing the thunderous truths of the Marquis de Sade, Krafft-Ebing, Freud, Ellis, Sanger, Malinowski, Mead, and others. By trade, Kinsey was an entomologist whose forte was the meticulous counting of specimens and items of behavior. His calling was the use of this trade to "mop up" the lingering traces of Victorian hypocrisy by burying them in an avalanche of statistics about the sexual behavior of twelve thousand men, boys, and babies.

Kinsey was well aware that his statistics were only the *ne plus ultra* of many decades of interviews, questionnaires, compilations, and analyses by many sexologists. But he also knew that, in an age of bureaucratic official information and technocratic journalists, a mountain of arcane numbers buried in myriad analyses would pulverize any public criticisms of the new faith of sexual liberation. Just as fifth-century Christians used their celibacy as a breastplate of Christian righteousness to humiliate their pagan enemies, so Kinsey used statistics as his scientific breastplate of righteousness to humiliate his Christian and scientific opponents with "proof" of rampant hypocrisy.

Stripped of all its complexities, Kinsey's argument was a bald assertion that "scientific statistics" on these

twelve thousand men (soon to be followed by a supporting cast of eight thousand females exposed in *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*) "proved" that Americans were secretly committing a lot of sexual sins that they publicly denounced. The undecleared conclusion of his work was that this proof of hypocrisy also proved that the Christian tradition of sex confined to marriage was wrong, and therefore should be abandoned in favor of sexual liberation—that is, casual sex of whatever polymorphously perverse form fits one's fancy at the moment, be it animalism or Romantic Passion.

Though almost all the details of Kinsey's work have now been forgotten even by sexologists, that work did much to advance his calling in precisely the ways he anticipated. My review of a small sample of major texts on sex, marriage, and family shows that they still routinely refer to Kinsey's great impact through the mass media in the 1950's. No single work that I know of has noted the obvious facts that no one, least of all Christians, ever doubted that deviant sex and hypocrisy were rampant, and that ministers routinely advanced this fact as evidence of the need for Christianity. When the Great Spirit of an age decrees the triumph of a Great Myth, no amount of common

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