

duct is a secondary yet significant theme running throughout his book. Bell emphasizes again and again that silence equals guilt. As the hero of one of his case studies, an anthropologist who lost his NSF grant because of the rumors his rivals on the peer review panel circulated about him, reasons: "Ultimately... every scientist that individually and collectively fails to confront abuses and wrongdoing in the system is contributing to corruption in the system." Bell also champions the victimized whistleblowers in these cases, who are often denounced and even investigated themselves for bringing unfavorable attention to (and thus threatening the power of) universities and funding agencies. Margot O'Toole (who could not find work after she exposed the Baltimore scandal), Dr. Erdem Cantekin (whose superiors moved his office, erased data from his hard drive, and tried to revoke his tenure when he challenged a colleague's endorsement of amoxicillin), and Ernest Fitzgerald (who was fired by President Nixon from his job as an Air Force cost analyst for exposing the deficiencies of the C-5A Transport) illustrate that fraud frequently pays while whistleblowing does not.

By combining breadth (in the variety of cases he examines) and depth (in his analysis of each case), Bell provides an excellent overview—for the scientist and the layperson alike—of the causes and consequences of scientific misconduct. He thoroughly surveys the available evidence—court cases, government investigations and reports, testimony given under oath before congressional committees, documents requested through the Freedom of Information Act, and personal interviews, as well as the more usual newspaper and journal articles, books, and radio transcripts. His tone may be too alarmist for some, but his work nevertheless raises critical questions about the practices and ethics of the scientific community.

One of these questions is "Where Do We Go From Here?"—the title of Bell's concluding chapter. While Bell could have said more on the subject, he does address himself to three potential solutions. Self-regulation and bureaucratic oversight are obviously inefficient (the number and names of the committees, reports, and agencies that he cites throughout his book are enough to strike horror in the heart of any decentralist). Bell therefore proposes: one, separating

funding and control in scientific research; two, requiring universities that receive federal research money to prevent or at least publicize conflicts of interest; and three, refining the Federal False Claims Act, which allows one to sue an individual or organization that has defrauded the government, to further protect the whistleblower from retaliation. He hopes that these remedies will force scientists "to live up to the strictures of the scientific method." Yet he neglects to mention perhaps the most essential ingredient to any plan to reform science: vigilant media coverage of the type of shenanigans *Impure Science* describes. For if misconduct is as rampant in the scientific community as Bell suggests, something more than a handful of new regulations is needed to shake up its patronage system. Indeed, the future of science may depend on similar exposés.

Christine Haynes is the editorial assistant at Chronicles.

Inescapable Horizons

by Mark C. Henrie

The Ethics of Authenticity

by Charles Taylor
Cambridge: Harvard University Press;
142 pp., \$17.95



W eighing in at more than 500 dense and provocative pages, Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self* (Harvard, 1989) was clearly not intended for the general reader; at just over 100 pages, *The Ethics of Authenticity* is much more accessible. While not a fully "polished" work, this slim volume is so full of valuable insights I am tempted to say that reading it is a moral duty for contemporary Americans.

A practicing Roman Catholic, Taylor until recently taught political philosophy at Oxford and was perhaps best known for his writings on Hegel. Politically he is a man of the left who has run for Parliament in his native Canada as a candidate for the New Democrats, on economic issues significantly more radi-

cal than the American Democratic Party. Still, there are many points of contact between his thought and traditional conservative concerns; more than anyone else, conservatives should profit from an engagement with the ideas of this remarkable thinker.

Taylor begins by describing "three malaises" of modernity. First, the "modern freedom" won at the expense of "older moral horizons" and social hierarchies has led us to a disenchanted "individualism" characterized by a "centering on the self, which both flattens and narrows our lives, making them poorer in meaning, and less concerned with others." Second, the "primacy of instrumental reason," with no evaluative criteria beyond "maximum efficiency," has produced a technological civilization while destroying the language of moral ends, reducing human relations to the level of a commodity to be bought and sold, and generating a fear of impermanency in the face of revolutionary technological developments. From these two predicaments, a third, essentially political, malaise (foreseen by Tocqueville) follows: the loss of genuine freedom to the "soft despotism" of a bureaucratic state, as the liberated individual finds himself unable to maintain an identity against the grain of prevailing opinions and social forces.

Taylor's concerns are familiar to readers of Richard Weaver, Allan Bloom, and Alasdair MacIntyre. But Taylor poses a challenge that should startle us into reflection. Focusing on the problem of moral freedom, he believes that conservative critics are right to condemn the "trivialized and self-indulgent forms" of the "individualism of self-fulfillment" that are now so prevalent. He also believes, however, that these manifestations are not simply a matter of "moral laxity," which, as such, is a constant in human experience; rather, because they arise from the pursuit of a genuine "moral ideal," they are the historically novel expressions of the specifically modern notion of "authenticity."

Thus, Taylor observes, many people today feel compelled to "sacrifice their love relationships and the care of their children to pursue their careers," in order to be true to themselves. This situation presents a new challenge for moralists. Though Taylor believes that such choices are most often made in error, simply to condemn those who so choose is, he argues, ultimately a futile response.

What is required instead is to ask *why* moderns so often choose poorly and *how* they might choose otherwise.

The purpose of this book is to call moderns back (or forward?) to what we might call an “authentic authenticity.” Taylor proceeds by asking, “What are the conditions in human life of realizing [such] an ideal?” How is it that one is really true to himself? In answering this question, he focuses on the “dialogical” nature of human self-development. Taylor argues that we acquire our distinctive humanity only through language, for without language—the *logos*—we are mere animals. Language in turn is acquired through *others*. It is a moral fact, which we must respect, that there can be no human self without encounters with other *selves*. Man’s nature is radically social. From such a perspective, we can begin to see why a “monological” notion of the self understood only as “disengaged rationality” is in error. Yet this monological, or Cartesian, view is most likely responsible for the widespread moral subjectivism we encounter today.

Elaborating on the implications of the dialogical self in a chapter titled “Inescapable Horizons,” Taylor argues that any attempt to free the self from its dependence on conventional values (as the undergraduate slogan puts it, “all values are socially constructed”) is ultimately

self-defeating. If we deny the existence of moral “horizons,” nothing can be in the “foreground,” nothing can have moral importance or be a moral *ideal*. The attempt to escape a shared moral world by purely subjective choice therefore does not simply open up space for the idiosyncratic values which we (mis)take to be authentic for us, but rather *trivializes* all values into equal insignificance, defeating any moral purpose. Taylor writes,

Self-choice as an ideal makes sense only because some *issues* are more significant than others. . . . Which issues are significant *I* do not determine. If I did, no issue would be significant. But then the very ideal of self-choosing *as a moral ideal* would be impossible Authenticity is not the enemy of demands that emanate beyond the self; it supposes such demands.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, choice cannot be what “confers worth.” The only place we can find our authentic selves is in our communities.

Taylor is perhaps most disappointing in his political prescriptions. At the end of the book he addresses the danger of Tocqueville’s soft despotism, which he interprets primarily as social fragmenta-

tion brought about by a politics structured around, first, the adjudication of rights, and, second, pressures exerted by special interests. Taylor believes that “there is a great deal of truth” in the description of the twin powers of bureaucracy and the market as an “iron cage” that traps us helplessly in comfortable servility and disunity. But he ultimately rejects this implicitly revolutionary metaphor to encourage instead an organized *resistance* to or *struggle* against soft despotism.

In order to resist the iron cage, the “galloping hegemony of instrumental reason,” Taylor suggests the need for “democratic will formation”—for empowerment by means of an experience of popular efficacy in a common moral project for a common good. His model is the environmental movement, where at least some people have come to feel a collective responsibility. But the language of democratic *will* is not the language of moral obligation, and it is odd to see Taylor effectively repair to Rousseau when he seeks a model of authentic political life. He seems on surer ground when he emphasizes alternatively the possibilities of a decentralized federalism (states’ rights?), which seems to derive from the Catholic principle of subsidiarity. But here the unanswered question is how one defends such an arrangement against the imperatives of efficiency and

Ghosts

by George Garrett

Coming unannounced
indeed honestly uninvited
in dreams of course
but also in a stab
and shock like the sting
of irrepressible memory

my own dead and wounded
rise up from dark places
to strike me deaf and dumb
as any stone O fathers
and mothers moving amid twilight
stay now and be still

as you always were and are
in fading photographs
pray be smiling and kindly wait
be easy on us living and scarred
kinfolk who come to love and grief
too little and too late.