world watching out for dybbuks and deluges, many of us were relieved to see the New World of Brooklyn. We could read the energetic stories of immigrant Jewish families working hard and pulling together in order to make a new beginning in that city where "a tree grows." A bit later, we took in the trials and tribulations of the assimilated young (men, usually); these youngsters were going on to the great city colleges and respectable (literary, usually) careers, and returning to give Mama and Papa *nachas*.

Leaving Brooklyn uses the conventions of the postmodern, self-referential text and the tone of feminist self-disclosure. As such, it implies that the other Brooklyn stories may have been superficially true. But as the narrator admits about her past self, "lying wasn't my style. I tended more toward omission." For isn't it so that a "wandering" eye/I finds refuge, as it must, in a private darkness and secret journeys? And all things—somehow—happen.

Through the lens of her seasoned vision, the adult narrator accepts, finally, her own history: "If it wasn't a memory to begin with, it has become one now." By giving ourselves over to Audrey's coming-of-age-and-leaving tale, we accept the blurring of the lines of truth, memory, and fiction that lead to the past.

For a people concerned with the past, perhaps because we're not sure when next we'll be "wandering," Lynne Sharon Schwartz's meditation on the dangers of intentional innocence is infinitely rich. □

BOOK REVIEW

The Hazards of Eco-chic

Robert Gottlieb

Environmentalism and the Future of Progressive Politics by Robert C. Paehlke. Yale University Press, 1989, 325 pp.

Ecology in the 20th Century: A History by Anna Bramwell. Yale University Press, 1989, 292 pp.

Green is in. George Bush, the one-time champion of environmental deregulation and cost-cutting, holds a dramatic press conference by dirty Boston Harbor and then, early in his administration, decides to make a widely publicized presentation in support of a Clean Air program. Mikhail Gorbachev, in the wake of Chernobyl and an industrial policy that has caused tremendous pollution, encourages a widespread debate over environmental consequences. Similar political interventions take place in Hungary, England (even Margaret Thatcher tries on the lightest shade of green), and West Germany (where *all* the political parties, from the Social Democrats to the Neo-Fascists, attempt to emulate the Green party's original claim to an environmental politics).

In the United States, the conservative commentator Kevin Phillips has recently argued that green issues could well influence the outcome of one of the next presidential elections. His analysis has been confirmed by recent polls suggesting that more people than ever are not only willing to support environmental interventions but are even willing to pay for them. At the same time, alternative grouplets battle fiercely over who has the right to appropriate the green label and, by extension, to define the new "paradigm" of politics arising from it. Social ecologists, bioregionalists, Earth Firsters, and ecofeminists all contend for hegemony over this new politics, but no group has yet developed the kind of powerful organizational presence found in Europe. Meanwhile, mainstream environmental groups like the Sierra Club (most of which are staff-directed, nationally based organizations) continue to refine the skills of lobbying, litigation, and technical expertise they have been practicing, with little change, since the early 1970s, when environmentalists first extensively spread their influence into the governmental domain.

The current preoccupation with environmental issues is due in part to a shift in political discourse. In the late 1970s, a corporate counteroffensive took shape around resource policy (energy, water, and wilderness lands especially), environmental regulation (clean air, clean water), and industrial activity (workplace safety and consumer product guidelines). Jimmy Carter was a perfect foil for this strategy: his notion of environmentalism as *individual sacrifice* presented an easy target for newly organized corporate lobbies such as the Western Regional Council and the Business Roundtable.

The corporate counterattack focused on negative tradeoffs (job loss, industrial relocation, the high cost of regulation), downplayed the extent and seriousness of environmental pollution (symbolized by the "Good Science" of comparing and thus minimizing risks, which was promoted by Reagan EPA administrator—and later convicted perjurer—Rita Lavelle), and emphasized the importance of renewed industrial production.

For a time, it appeared this corporate counteroffensive had succeeded. Ronald Reagan, with his outlandish views on the environment, was easily elected and reelected. The mainstream environmental groups thought themselves vul-

Robert Gottlieb's two latest books are More on Waste: Can America Win Its Battle with Garbage? *with Louis Blumberg (Island Press, 1989) and* A Life of Its Own: The Politics and Power of Water *(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989). He teaches environmental politics at the UCLA Urban Planning Program.*

nerable and sought ways to adjust to the conservative temper. And Congress, the new focus for environmental lobbying, fretted about deficits and the public's supposed hostility to regulation. This defensive mood culminated during the 1984 presidential campaign when environmental organizations (along with organized labor, civil rights advocates, and feminist groups) were successfully labeled as "special interests," while corporate polluters who led an uneven economic recovery were heralded as promoters of the "national interest."

Then something happened to the political debate. A variety of new local movements emerged to confront such issues as toxics, garbage, and transportation gridlock—the degradation of daily life. More Americans began to desire some form of government intervention. Even the conventional environmental groups, to their surprise, gained both donations and members.

What then is the current environmental agenda of these organizations, and how might it shape contemporary politics? Groups centered in Washington, D.C. debate whether to broaden environmental regulations and cleanup or to devise solutions that creatively use the sphere of the market such as air pollution, "credit," or the sale of water to the highest bidder. William Reilly, Bush's EPA head, who is a longtime advocate of environmental mediation and consensus building, reflects both tendencies in this debate—a little more regulation, a few more incentives.

The new legitimacy and broad-based popularity of ecology has also led to a diversity of attempts to explore its roots, trace its most important ideas, and see how it might influence the current and future political landscape. Canadian political scientist Robert Paehlke's *Environmentalism and the Future of Progressive Politics* and English writer Anna Bramwell's *Ecology in the 20th Century: A History* are among the most recent contributions. Both authors conclude that environmentalism today falls within the center or "soft" left but includes a wide array of countertendencies, both political and apolitical. The authors focus more on environmental ideas than on the social movements that articulate them. As a consequence, they also demonstrate the limits to the current search for a new "paradigm" of politics.

Paehlke suggests that environmentalism has been narrowly focused and antipolitical. He argues that its agenda should include such new issues as reduced military spending and support for human services. He views energy as central, precisely because of its significance for the political economy. But Paehlke fails to link these ideas to any discussion of the social movements that might implement them. And his own analysis of what he sees as an ascendant neoconservatism in North America suggests that his new agenda would have to be tempered by cautious tactics and practical goals. As a result, Paehlke finds himself returning to the kind of self-limiting politics that have long characterized the dominant approach of environmentalists in this country. The tradition has been, for example, to treat pollution issues as externalities, or as limited failures of the market. Environmentalism may indeed, as Paehlke argues, offer the basis for the first new "ideology" since Marxism, but nothing in his book transcends the familiar dilemmas of those who struggle to build "moderate" but "progressive" coalitions in the wake of Reaganism.

Himmler established experimental organic farms at Dachau to grow organic medicines for the SS.

While Paehlke's concern is with the present and future, Anna Bramwell seeks to uncover the intellectual roots of today's environmental activists. Her Northern European–centered analysis views "ecology" as a commentary on the land and agriculture in the age of rapid industrialization. The loss of a pristine "Nature," the degradation of the natural environment, and nostalgic yearnings for an agrarian lifestyle are central to her interpretation of English (High Tory) and German nationalist expressions of the ideas of ecology.

Bramwell spends a good deal of time discussing whether German ecology in the 1930s was *generically* Fascist, and her conclusion is ambiguous. On the one hand, she argues, the Nazi vision of ecology had both cultural and economic manifestations—the celebration of the countryside and forests as well as a fascination with "biodynamic" farming. Himmler, for example, established experimental organic farms at Dachau to grow organic medicines for the SS. Yet such interests were not only specific to the German experience (French and Italian Fascists had little to say about the natural environment) but were ultimately undermined by the technocratic and industrial ideas enshrined in the Nazi war machine.

While Bramwell's analysis of the relationship between ecology and nazism reflects her own ambivalence on the subject, she exhibits no such constraint when she turns to the subject of contemporary green politics. She is particularly scathing toward the German Greens, whom she castigates for most unecological behavior—donating part of their public funding to antinuclear groups, Third World causes, and immigrant workers, as opposed to using it for "tree-planting or river cleaning [where] the ecological stance would have been more convincing." Bramwell also has sharp words about attempts to link feminism and ecology. She ridicules German Green fundamentalist Petra Kelly's "account of the sufferings of female secretaries in the EEC [Common Market]," who, Bramwell insists, "notoriously earn a great deal for doing very little." Bramwell recognizes the wide diversity of ideas from "anarchist and protofascist, Marxist and liberal, natural scientist and visionary" that all fit inside the frame of contemporary ecologism. But she remains hostile to the social movements that have used such ideas to respond to the impact of industrial and urban society on daily life.

In the end, who ultimately wins the battle to define the green name and its symbols is less important than how environmental movements translate their ideas into politics. Ecology will remain a "special interest" as long as it confines itself to the question of environment as a separate category of nature, and contamination as a sideshow of industrialization and urbanization. The new green politics will represent the ideological breakthrough promised by Paehlke only when it becomes capable of addressing not just the results of industrial change, but the basic character and structure of that transformation.

This type of critique, which emerged in the 1960s with the expressive but disorganized and ahistorical politics of the New Left, is flourishing today within the nascent multiracial, multiclass, and often female-led social movements dealing with daily life.

These movements represent a kind of epiphany of a new industrial and consumer politics. So-called Not-in-My-Backyard neighborhood groups concerned with toxics (some of whom are affiliated with the Citizens' Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes and the National Toxics Campaign) are one expression of this new form. From challenging where and how toxics are dumped, they have quickly moved to question why certain dangerous products and processes are used in the first place.

By expanding the arena of protest, including linking up with local plant workers who are the first to suffer the effects of hazardous production, these movements are laying part of the groundwork for a new political discourse. Such a discourse, combining "green" ideas with community and workplace empowerment, requires a vision not just of nature less degraded but of society more livable and less hazardous, more peaceful and equitable; where a different set of social relations would coincide with a different conception of the production system itself. □

BOOK REVIEW

Political Philosophy: Cogito Ergo So What?

Josh Henkin

The Conquest of Politics: Liberal Philosophy in Democratic Times by Benjamin Barber. Princeton University Press, 1988, 220 pp.

Perhaps no other discipline has undergone as great a revival in recent years as moral philosophy. Countless volumes appear annually focusing on a vast range of ethical dilemmas. From busing to bioengineering, pornography to pedagogy, no issue manages to escape our moral compass—or our philosophers' pens. Indeed, one renowned theorist recently published a four-volume collection, some fourteen hundred pages long, on *The Moral Limits of the Criminal Law*; another writes essays on such topics as "Can a Liberal State Support Art?" or "Is Wealth a Value?" Still others set their philosophical sights even higher, attempting to define (and defend) conceptions of equality, liberty, justice. Large tomes have appeared bearing titles such as *A Theory of Justice* and *Social Justice and the Liberal State*. The influence of these books has begun to match their ambition; dog-eared copies now line many a dormitory bookshelf.

Although some of the reasons for the growth of moral philosophy are a function of dynamics internal to the university, others have more to do with the world "out there." Technological advance proceeds apace, providing us with once unimaginable opportunities both to save and to kill millions, even billions, of people. With enough resources to feed the planet, the gap between the possible and the actual is all the more glaring; with enough nuclear energy to destroy it, the decisions we make are more portentous than ever.

Technology, moreover, continually presents us with new and confounding moral dilemmas. Surrogate motherhood, once the cutting-edge ethical issue, already seems passé. Now, in California, there is a court battle over an embryo. The couple, having finally succeeded with in vitro fertilization, is getting divorced. The mother wants to give birth to the child; the father is suing to prevent her. Meanwhile the embryo remains in the freezer.

Another reason for increased interest in moral philosophy has to do with the precarious foundations of morality itself. Ours is an age of immense skepticism, an age in which ethical relativism reigns supreme. Political morality, or the morality of state power, has come under particularly close scrutiny. Two centuries ago political morality meant simply the divine right of kings. Since then, all sorts of moral and political theories—utilitarianism, natural rights, consent, tacit consent—have been promoted by various thinkers only to be shot down by others. In recent years, in particular, the possibility of finding bedrock, of constructing solid moral foundations, has seemed ever more difficult. We live, after all, in an increasingly small and self-conscious world: we are aware, as never before, of cultures different from our own, and therefore of the contingency of our way of life. Morality to some seems like cultural hegemony to others.

From busing to bioengineering, pornography to pedagogy, no issue escapes our moral compass.

It is in response to these developments that a growing number of scholars have begun to focus on moral questions, and on the nature of morality itself. Among the more interesting of these thinkers are philosophers such as John Rawls, Robert Nozick, and Bruce

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