
PAPERBOUNDS

CITIZENSHIP WITHOUT CONSENT: Illegal Aliens in the American Polity. By Peter H. Schuck and Rogers M. Smith. Yale, 1985. 173 pp. \$22.50

Somewhere between 3.5 and six million illegal aliens currently reside in the United States, and the number increases by about 200,000 each year. Any of their children born in the United States automatically become citizens. The time has come, say Schuck and Smith, professors, respectively, of law and political science at Yale, to reconsider birthright citizenship. Tracing American notions of citizenship from English common law and Enlightenment philosophy, they identify two opposing traditions, one based on birth, the other on consent. While American law has always contained elements of both, the authors call for a tilt toward the latter. Ideologically, this emphasis is more consistent with America's founding principle of political membership by mutual consent—even though, as the authors acknowledge, this principle has been invoked in the past (*Dred Scott v. Sanford*, 1857) to exclude blacks and Indians from citizenship. A more important consideration is that birthright citizenship has become a further enticement to illegal immigration—something the United States can now ill afford.

MORAL TALES. By Jules Laforgue. Translated by William Jay Smith. New Directions, 1985. 160 pp. \$8.95

These seven parodic treatments of great literary and mythological figures by the French poet Laforgue (1860–87) had a tremendous influence on such modernist writers as James Joyce and T. S. Eliot. From Laforgue's example, they, and others, learned, as translator Smith puts it, to bring "legend and myth down to earth." Here is Laforgue's Hamlet, musing *ad infinitum*: "But Art is so great and life is

so short! And nothing is feasible. I was damned in advance by my mother and my brother, by everything. (Yes, there's something in that.)" Laforgue's Pan, soon to be maddened by the elusive Syrinx, cries, "Oh, Woman, Woman! Creator of monomaniac humanity!" In parody, style is all, and Laforgue, in his version of *Salome*, made so bold as to mock the great French stylist Gustave Flaubert for his excessive use of detail: "And, under the enjambments of natural bridges, long mossy ravines in which ruminate in the mire the slate-covered carapaces of rat-tailed king crabs, some seeming to writhe upside down but probably just doing it on purpose to give themselves a rubdown." To deflate, as Laforgue taught was one way to make things new.

POPPER SELECTIONS. Edited by David Miller. Princeton, 1985. 479 pp. \$9.95 (cloth, \$32.50)

If one test of a philosopher is how well his ideas stand up in "samplers" such as this, then Karl Popper (born 1902), the Vienna-born exponent of "critical rationalism," is an outstanding thinker indeed. Simply put, critical rationalism is the belief that knowledge grows through conjectures which are then subjected to uncompromising tests. Ideas that cannot be subjected to criticism (i.e., cannot be falsified) are not worth entertaining. Included here are Popper's history of the critical rationalist tradition, beginning with the pre-Socratic Greeks; his demolitions of Marxist philosophy and empiricism (the latter naively supposes that knowledge begins with sense experiences and not with hypotheses about those experiences); and his reflections on the aims and methods of science. Popper writes such uncluttered prose that one almost forgets that his business is contemporary philosophy.