vised the opus that would be published only after his death, *Philosophical Investigations* (1953)—a work that would develop his notion of "language games" while challenging the adequacy of the scientific method as the foundation of knowledge.

After working as a hospital orderly during World War II Wittgenstein could not bring himself to return to Cambridge. What followed were largely solitary peregrinations in England and Ireland, Wittgenstein dreading his loneliness but feeling that it was his fate to embrace it. His death from prostate cancer, three days after his 62nd birthday, was marked by a Catholic burial. Although Wittgenstein was not a practicing believer, Monk deems it an appropriate mistake: "For in a way that is centrally important but difficult to define, Wittgenstein had lived a devoutly religious life."

Contemporary Affairs

THE POLITICS OF RICH AND POOR:
Wealth and the American Electorate in the Reagan Aftermath. *By Kevin Phillips. Random House. 262 pp. $19.95*

The Politics of Rich and Poor is this year's most talked about book: In it, before the reader's eyes, a leopard changes his spots. In the 1960s, Kevin Phillips predicted a new Republican majority, and in the 1968 election he helped to achieve it by building Richard Nixon's populist strategy on white working- and middle-class discontent. Now Phillips is predicting the Republicans' downfall, if only, he says, politicians will start treating real issues and the Democrats start acting like an opposition party.

Phillips's argument about the Reagan years sounds a familiar refrain: The rich got richer and the poor got poorer, and, meanwhile, the GOP had fun. By the end of the 1980s, the top 420,000 households accounted for 26.9 percent of the nation's wealth, the top 10 percent for 68 percent, while 21 percent of all children lived in poverty. Moreover, argues Phillips, "that accelerating economic inequality under the Republicans was more often a policy objective than a coincidence." Tax laws were changed to eliminate their progressivity; government expenditures moved toward defense and away from domestic programs; interest rates were deregulated; and the government, instead of taxing adequately, borrowed lavishly, so that the United States passed from being a creditor to a debtor nation. All this was caviar on the plates of the rich. By 1987 there were a million millionaires; more Americans had become millionaires in the 1980s than in the nation's entire history.

But the day of judgment is at hand, Phillips says. "The great corrective mechanism of U.S. national politics is the chastisement of elites at the ballot box." The Reagan and Bush administrations have lost "touch with the public, excessively empower[ed] their own elites, and become a target for a new round of populist outsidership and reform." It has all happened before, according to Phillips. He draws elaborate analogies to the Gilded Age of the 1880s and the Roaring Twenties, both of whose speculative excesses ended in an economic panic and a subsequent populist outcry and a redistribution of wealth.

Yet, so far the Democrats have failed to chal-

lenge the Republicans successfully because, Phillips thinks, they have been too busy imitating them. The Democrats collaborated on both the Gramm-Rudman budget act and the 1986 tax reform, and thus could not take advantage, in 1988, of public dislike of a tax policy that both favored the wealthy and created unprecedented deficits. Even so, Bush's 53 percent was the weakest Republican presidential victory in a two-way election since 1908; a switch of a half-million votes in 11 states "could have elected even Dukakis." Although Phillips finds Jesse Jackson "limited by both race and Third World rhetoric," he believes that if the Democratic candidates appropriate Jackson's thunder in 1992, the way Nixon stole George Wallace's in 1968, the White House is theirs.

Exactly how plausible are Phillips's prophecies? So far, there's been little sign of any new populist majority emerging. Phillips's statistics on income inequality may be correct, but Americans in the middle ranges are not significantly worse off. And while those in the bottom third are, they are not heavy voters. In 1968, Phillips drew up a strategy that let Nixon capture white voters hostile to race-fraught issues such as busing and welfare. Yet the same tensions still polarize American politics. It will require more than populist rhetoric to unite the majority that Phillips proposes—blacks, whites, liberals, workers, the homeless, and the middle class—behind a single cause. Even the wizard Phillips has yet to locate such a unifying program in his famous crystal ball.

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada. *By Seymour Martin Lipset. Routledge. 337 pp. $29.95*

To the casual observer, the United States and Canada pass for fraternal twins: a little hard to tell apart. But take a second look, says Lipset, a Harvard sociologist and political scientist, and striking differences emerge. America has twice as many policemen (per capita) as Canada—which may not be a bad idea, since four times as many Americans are murdered annually. A greater percentage of Americans go to church. A greater percentage of Canadians vote in elections. Canada resembles a European country, with its third parties, socialized medicine, and strong trade unionism. In the United States, union allegiance is declining, third parties are ineffectual, and socialized medicine is largely untried. What do such differences, when added up, amount to? And given the similarity of the two countries' backgrounds, how did the differences arise in the first place?

Borrowing from Max Weber, Lipset sets up a chain of causality: Certain historical events happen, they establish social values, and those values in turn cause distinctive national behaviors. The event that culturally divided the upper North American landmass, Lipset argues, was the American Revolution. Canada, never experiencing a revolution, remained "Tory"—conservative, monarchical, ecclesiastical—while the United States embarked on its populist "Whiggish" adventure in individualism and egalitarianism. The mottoes of the two counties encapsulate their differences: Americans are dedicated to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," while Canadians want "peace, order, and good government."

Peace, order, and good government enumerate fairly practical goals, whereas liberty and happiness represent transcendent ideals. In pursuing them, one almost enters the realm of religion. Indeed, Lipset's main thesis is "that becoming an American was a religious—that is, ideological—act." He quotes Richard Hofstadter: "It has been our fate as a nation not to have ideologies but to be one." During World War II, Winston Churchill opposed the outlawing of the English Communist Party because it was made up of Englishmen, and he did not fear an Englishman. In Canada, as in England, nationality is related to community, to common history. One cannot become un-English or un-Canadian. But "being an American," Lipset says, "is an ideological commitment. It is not a matter of birth. Those who reject American values"—communists, for example—"are un-American."

The timing of *Continental Divide* is fortuitous, coming as the Cold War ends and when many journalists and politicians are speculating about America's role in the world. Lipset holds up Canada as a sort of fun house mirror to America: It shows what America might look like with one distinctive element removed from the image—our ideological mission.