
than six negative reports on Notre Dame, five of them quoting the book," Sheehan says. Even the sports pages, it seems, are not immune to the press's "deep structural bias in favor of discord, and its weakness for the disenchanted."

Ad Trek: The Next Generation

"Is Advertising Finally Dead?" by Michael Schrage, with Don Peppers, Martha Rogers, and Robert D. Shapiro, in *Wired* (Feb. 1994), 544 Second St., San Francisco, Calif. 94119-9866.

These days, we *always* seem to be poised on the brink of an utterly new era in which life will be very, very different. The latest new age on the horizon, according to Schrage, a columnist for *Adweek* magazine, and his fellow seers, is the "Interactive Age"—and in this brave new realm, advertising and the relationship between advertisers and potential consumers is going to be . . . very, very different.

"Yesterday, we changed the channel; today we hit the remote; tomorrow, we'll reprogram our agents/filters," Schrage proclaims. "We'll interact with advertising where once we only watched; we'll seek out advertising where once we avoided it. Advertising will not go away; it will be rejuvenated."

When "smart" cable converter boxes sit atop TVs everywhere (as John Malone, of Tele-Commu-

nications, Incorporated, has promised) and all video is digitized and carried on hundreds of channels, then "encoding and tracking all the ads becomes a snap," Schrage says. A sophisticated system "would be technically capable of offering its customers not just pay-per-view but TV-sans-ads." For an extra \$5 or \$10 a month, a viewer's local cable company might be willing to cut out all the ads. Or viewers could arrange to get only the types of ads they want, and screen out the rest.

The implicit "deal" that mass media advertisers have always made with viewers or readers—*Take our ads and we'll pay for the TV or radio programs, or heavily subsidize the newspapers or magazines*—"is likely to become decidedly explicit" in the new Interactive Age, claim Peppers and Rogers, co-authors of *The One-to-One Future: Building Relationships One Customer at a Time*. When they turn on their television, viewers will get such offers as "Watch this two-minute video on the new Ford Taurus, and we'll pay for the pay-per-view movie of your choice," or "Answer this brief survey from Kellogg and we'll pay for the next three episodes of 'Murphy Brown.'" The very character of these ads will be different, Schrage speculates: "Advertisements will feel and play like visual conversations, video games, and simulations."

In this interactive future, Peppers and Rogers believe, a significant shift in power will have taken place: "The consumer will be the one in the driver's seat, and the advertiser will be thumbing a ride."

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

The Importance Of Seeming Pious

"What the Polls Don't Show: A Closer Look at U.S. Church Attendance" by C. Kirk Hadaway, Penny Long Marler, and Mark Chaves, in *American Sociological Review* (Dec. 1993), Dept. of Sociology, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz. 85721.

Survey after survey since World War II has yielded the same finding: Roughly 40 percent of Americans go to church every week. This high

rate of church attendance helps (along with other survey data) to make the United States "God's country" in the eyes of some sociologists and historians. Hadaway, of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, Marler, of Samford University, in Birmingham, Alabama, and Chaves, of the University of Notre Dame, believe that a lot of Americans are fibbing.

They examine actual church attendance among Protestants in Ohio's rural Ashtabula County, and among Catholics in 18 dioceses else-

where in the nation, including two of the largest, the archdioceses of New York and Chicago.

According to a 1991 Gallup poll of adult Americans, 45 percent of Protestants and 51 percent of Catholics said they had gone to church the preceding week. The authors' own survey of Ashtabula County residents found that only 36 percent of Protestants claimed to have attended services. But head counts at the churches indicated that only 20 percent of the county's Protestants took part in services in an average week.

The result was similar in the 18 Catholic dioceses, where the authors found that, overall, on the basis of actual counts, only 28 percent of all parishioners went to weekly mass. Even that figure, for various reasons, is probably too high.

The authors conclude that Protestant and Catholic church attendance is roughly one-half the levels reported by Gallup. That suggests that total church attendance in the nation is only 20–25 percent. Without allowing for differences between reported and actual attendance in other countries (which appear to be much smaller), that puts Americans on a par, more or less, with Australians, Canadians, Belgians, and the Dutch. American "exceptionalism" in this case may come down to an exceptional belief that it is important to appear pious even if one is not.

The Two Mr. Mills

"Liberty: 'One Very Simple Principle' " by Gertrude Himmelfarb, in *The American Scholar* (Fall 1993), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

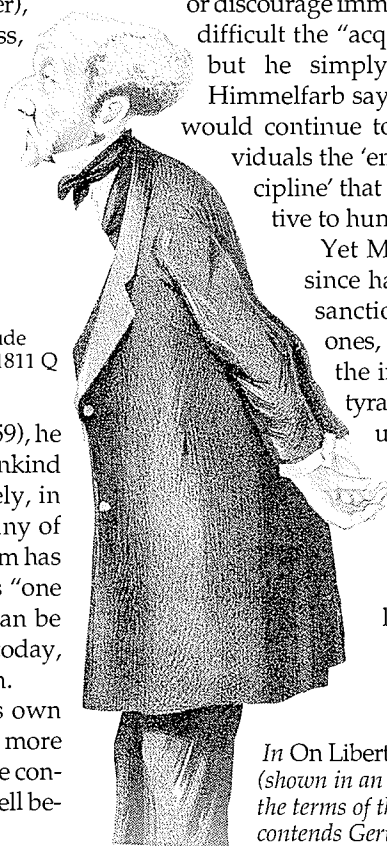
In John Stuart Mill's classic *On Liberty* (1859), he asserted that "the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection." Liberalism has come a long way since then, but in Mill's "one very simple principle" (as he called it) can be found the roots of many of its problems today, contends Himmelfarb, the noted historian.

"*On Liberty* was radical enough in its own time," she writes, "but it is, in a sense, still more radical in ours, because it seems to validate contemporary ideas about liberty which go well beyond those that Mill intended."

Although he favored absolute liberty of discussion, Mill had no doubt that truth exists and can be known. That was the point of discussion. But his doctrine lends itself to relativism, Himmelfarb points out. "Mill himself meant only to say that society cannot presume to decide between truth and falsity, or even to lend its support to truth once that has been determined. But a later generation, deprived of the authority of society and impressed by the latitude and tolerance given to error, can so relativize and 'problematize' truth as to deny the very idea of it." Thus, postmodernists today are skeptical even of contingent, partial, incremental truths.

Similarly, in moral affairs, Mill himself was not a relativist; he believed in the intrinsic superiority of chastity to promiscuity, sobriety to drunkenness, decency to indecency, altruism to self-interest. But he also believed, Himmelfarb says, that "morality is dependent upon a maximum amount of individuality." There should be no legal or social sanctions to promote morality or discourage immorality. He knew how difficult the "acquisition of virtue" is, but he simply took for granted, Himmelfarb says, "a civilization that would continue to impose upon individuals the 'eminently artificial discipline' that was the moral corrective to human nature."

Yet Mill and most liberals since have proscribed social sanctions along with legal ones, "stigmatizing both as the instruments of 'social tyranny.' In doing so, they unwittingly invite a worse tyranny, for legislation is then called upon to do what society might otherwise have done less obtrusively and



In *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill (shown in an 1873 caricature) "set the terms of the debate for our time," contends Gertrude Himmelfarb.