

part over Rank's insistence that all neurosis originates in the trauma of birth—and his subsequent work took Freud's ideas down paths the master could not walk.

Though it was antithetical to Freud's scientism and rejection of religion and philosophy, Rank insisted on the fundamental importance of the soul to any account of human psychology. *Psychology and the Soul* is Rank's idiosyncratic history of the evolution of humankind's relationship to the soul and to self-consciousness. He traces the generation of belief in the soul to the clash between the reality of the desire to live forever and the no-less-insistent reality of biological death. The painful collision of the two, and humankind's refusal to accept the finality of death, strikes in our consciousness a spark of "soul-belief." In varying forms, that belief has endured from the earliest stages of animism and the magic worldview of the primitive through the evolution of complex societies and complicated notions of consciousness.

Psychology is, in essence, the study of the soul. "The object of psychology is not facts," writes Rank, "but ideas created by soul-belief. . . . Psychology deals only with interpretations of soul phenomena." To be sure, this is not the traditional Christian or religious conception of soul. Indeed, Rank wrote, "the soul may not exist, and, like belief in immortality, may be mankind's greatest illusion." But illusion has its uses.

Psychology and the Soul is the first complete English translation of a work that Rank published in 1930 (as *Seelenglaube und Psychologie*). It draws on anthropology, sociology, mythology, religion, philosophy, history, and literature to chart the development of the human psyche. Figures such as Adam and Eve, Homer, Gilgamesh, Lohengrin, Shakespeare, and Faust pop up oddly in the course of the text. In due course, even physics bolsters the argument: the new physics of Rank's day rejected a rigidly deterministic causality, allowing him to claim for the psyche its dynamic shaping through the force of human will.

This is a short book, but there's no use pretending it's an easy one. For all the heroic labors and clarifying notation of the translators (Lieberman is clinical professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the George Washington University School of Medicine; Richter is a professor of foreign languages at Truman State University, Kirksville, Missouri), the argument often progresses over

rocky ground. Still, the book's antimaterialistic passion makes a compelling counterpoint to the stern biology of our age, and the bounds it sets to what psychoanalysis can claim are justly drawn: "Psychology can no more replace knowledge gained through thought than it can replace religion and morality." In that caution there is the good sense of the Rank who once told an admirer, "Read my books and put them away; read *Huckleberry Finn*, everything is there."

—James Morris

VIRTUAL FAITH: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X.

By Tom Beaudoin. Jossey-Bass. 210 pp. \$22

Public brooding over the supposed anomie of Generation X—those born between 1965 and 1976—peaked in the early 1990s and seems, mercifully, to have waned. Movies (*Reality Bites*) and books (Douglas Coupland's *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*) chronicled the existentialist crises and unassuageable grievances of a new lost generation. Foremost among the themes was the desire to foist perfection upon an imperfect world while at the same time resisting individual discipline.

The secularized social activism of Gen X exemplifies that theme. Martin Luther defined the "freedom of a Christian" as manifest in one who is "a lord over all and a servant to all." In other words, as Harvard historian Steven Ozment has pointed out, knowledge of one's destiny and righteousness breeds the resolve, boldness, and self-mastery—hence the freedom—from which benevolence flows. In contemporary parlance, free people get their own act together before striving to right the world.

Many Gen X-ers, however, seem to lack the self-knowledge that is the prerequisite to effective charity, particularly any self-knowledge rooted in faith. For them, religious belief and commitment represent a betrayal of intellectual honesty, personal freedom, and chic cynicism. At the same time, the diversity of religious options induces in them a kind of spiritual vertigo, exacerbated by a watery respect for "tolerance." Many worship freedom of choice but have no basis on which to choose. The views of singer Sinéad O'Connor, a Generation X icon who ripped apart a photo of the pope on television, are illustrative: "I'm interested in all religions, and I don't believe in subscribing to one because I believe in order to subscribe to one,

you've got to shut out all of the others." Two paths diverge in a wood, and Generation X strives to follow both—to the detriment of coherent belief, or belief altogether.

In *Virtual Faith*, Beaudoin portrays Gen X-ers as spiritual seekers on a quest for "theological clarity." He argues that through little fault of their own, they have become creatures of evanescence, in thrall to videos, music, and fashion. Through his chilling description of identities in flux, of selves engulfed by the kaleidoscopic flood of pop culture, the author reminds us of the perils faced by a generation for whom so much is so precarious.

Oddly, though, Beaudoin depicts popular culture not as a flawed substitute for faith, but rather as a fount of religious significance. His characterization of Madonna as "a saint of liberation" on a par with Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena will strike many readers as a bit over the top. By attempting to discern a spiritual dimension in music videos, the author expands the concept of the religious so broadly as to lose all meaning. In this regard, Beaudoin offers the spiritually hungry not bread, but stone.

—Christopher Stump

Contemporary Affairs

FORTRESS AMERICA: *The American Military and the Consequences of Peace.*

By William Greider. Public Affairs Press.
208 pp. \$22

Greider, national editor of *Rolling Stone*, has seized on an important yet largely unexamined fact: despite the absence of any significant overt threat, the United States has chosen to remain the world's dominant military power. A decade after winning the Cold War, in a departure from all previous American history, the nation has yet to demobilize. "What exactly is the purpose of Fortress America," Greider asks, "now that our only serious adversary has evaporated into history?"

Seeking an answer, he calls on those who build and defend the ramparts of the American fortress. He visits the crew of a spanking-new U.S. Navy destroyer undergoing sea trials in the Atlantic. At Nellis Air Force Base in the Nevada desert, he watches fighter squadrons go through their paces in a highly competitive "Red Flag" exercise. At Fort Hood, Texas, he assesses the army's efforts to adapt mechanized forces to the information age. Near Fort Worth, he walks the floor of Air Force Plant 4, birthplace of thousands of warplanes since World War II, now barely alive as it produces a dwindling number of F-16s.

Viewed from the inside, Fortress America has shrunk significantly over the past decade. The services have absorbed painful cuts. Through successive waves of consolidation, the defense industry has laid off 40 percent of its workers. Yet the author argues that this streamlining falls woefully short, leaving the nation with a defense establishment that "is

too large to sustain, too backward-looking in design, too ambitious in its preparations for the future war," not to mention overburdened with duties in far-off places such as Bosnia and the Persian Gulf.

All sides of the "Iron Triangle"—the military officers, corporate executives, and politicians whose Cold War collaboration created Fortress America—are acutely aware of these contradictions. They know that present levels of defense spending will not suffice to train the existing force, support essential deployments, procure new equipment, and develop new weapons for the future. Greider takes it as a given that increasing the defense budget is out of the question. As he notes, though, money is not the only issue: "The larger and more troubling political questions are about purpose."

When Greider describes what he sees and hears—especially when he allows commanders, crew members, engineers, and corporate executives to do the talking—the results are impressive. But when he ventures into the realm of lofty analysis and policy prescription, he is awful. In "the post-Cold War vacuum," he reports with dismay, the United States has gradually assumed "the obligations of empire" through its role as "high-minded, vigilant enforcer of world order and global commerce." He calls on Americans to "say 'no' to empire," and instead ask themselves "what are we to do now that a general peace is upon us?" (Some readers may wonder how an era of ethnic cleansing, episodic genocide, nuclear proliferation, and terror qualifies as a "general peace.") Surrendering to the ethers of utopianism, Greider declares that "the end of the Cold War is a great opportunity to re-