result is frustration and alienation. For citizens who hear all the ethics fanfare but nonetheless see government 'as usual,' the result is cynicism and disillusionment."

There is no easy way to change a culture, but repealing or sharply revising some of the ethics rules would be a good start. Instead of making such recommendations, Morgan and Reynolds close by offering seven guidelines for better behavior, including "Responsibility Is for Everyone"—a sensible but not very pragmatic prescription. Still, *The Appearance of Impropriety* is a good and useful book, part of what should be a growing body of work on a culture of scandal run amok.

—*Norman Ornstein*

FOR SHAME: The Loss of Common Decency in American Culture.

By James B. Twitchell. St. Martin's Press. 237 pp. $22.95.

How do you write a jeremiad for an age that does not know the meaning of the word? Twitchell's brisk account of how we got from Adam and Eve covering their nakedness to Madonna hawking hers sounds the alarm about the state of contemporary American society, where we are more chagrined to be caught smoking than committing adultery. We have banished the age-old sentiment of shame in favor of an all-enveloping self-indulgence. Why feel guilty when you can feel good? Because, Twitchell argues, unless we understand and recover the social protections of shame, we shall pay a terrible price.

To give shame its due, Twitchell gathers evidence from various sources: biology (consider the blush and the flush, the instinct to hang one's head and hide—lose—one's face: "Clearly human biology and evolution have hardwired us to experience the jolt of shame for a purpose"); anthropology ("All cultures depend on shame; all cultures abhor shamelessness"); and history (he deplores the behavior of the prerevolutionary French upper classes, who were "immodest and haughty" and got what they had coming, and brandishes the enviable record of the Victorians, those overachieving blushmeisters).

Twitchell's book derives from a course he taught on advertising and American culture and on the seismic changes in marketing strategy since the 1950s. Then, we bought because we were shamed into buying; now we buy because we're so bullish on ourselves. Twitchell believes that the trouble began for America in the 1960s, when an ethos of self-gratification first began to infiltrate the society. From being a pathology of the counterculture, it metastasized to the dominant culture, and we are all now ailing from its settled hold on our spirits.

For Twitchell, who teaches English at the University of Florida, the dominance of commercial television in contemporary life is the key to understanding what has happened to shame in America. Advertisers relentlessly woo the attention of an audience, especially an audience of the young and affluent. "In an electronic culture, the stories are controlled by those hearing them," and the message is predictably skewed, Twitchell says, "toward entertainment and away from shame." The playing field is leveled, not to say scorched; hierarchy is abandoned; authority, direction, reserve, and reprimand are forgone. About the force of the media and their indifference to everything but commercial gain, the author is depressingly correct, and the real value of his book is in its insistence, yet again, on advertising's blindness to anything beyond its shallow range.

Twitchell hits all the easy targets—O. J.

NEW YORK POST

METRO

MADONNA: 'I'M NOT ASHAMED'

Rock star shrugs off nudie pix furor

Simpson, TV talk shows, politicians, megachurches, Hollywood and its calculated effluvia—but he has nothing particularly new to say about them. Instead, he repeatedly makes the same assertions about the deplorable condition of the society without developing his themes much beyond their initial sounding. As a result, the book feels both protracted and abrupt. Like a lively TV discussion—PBS, to

be sure, not NBC—it captures the attention but does not hold the mind.

The clock ticking for America is the timer on a bomb: that's Twitchell's message, and he delivers it in a book that is chatty, entertaining, and too informal, finally, for its own good. To be right is commendable, but you win no disciples unless you are convincing too. A funeral notice should arrive on an engraved card, not a Post-it.

—*James M. Morris*

THE PARADOX OF PLENTY:
Oil Booms and Petro-States.
By Terry Lynn Karl. Univ. of California Press. 360 pp. $55 ($22, paper)

In Frank Herbert's science-fiction classic *Dune* (1965), whoever controls the spice—the desert planet's most valuable commodity—controls everything. Karl, a political scientist at Stanford University, would disagree. The message of her book is that he who controls the spice will live to regret it.

The author finds proof in the way the oil boom of the 1970s affected five previously poor nations: Venezuela, Iran, Nigeria, Algeria, and Indonesia. Each nation spawned ungainly centralized bureaucracies, all geared solely toward generating more oil profits. Entrenched interests, such as foreign investors and state officials, acquired additional influence and fought to retain it, creating enormous barriers to change. Policymakers put aside any plans for nurturing long-term, sustainable growth. When the prosperity ended, the results were economic crisis and political decay. In this important addition to the literature on political economy, Karl explains why sudden riches pushed the policymakers of these strikingly different nations toward the same unwise choices.

A wealth of natural resources, the author suggests, can enfeeble a nation's institutions and ultimately bring about economic decline. Conversely, some of today's newly industrialized nations, especially those in Asia, may have had success in part *because* they lacked natural resources: "The need to overcome this poverty may have been one of the chief catalysts for building effective states." To Karl, this is "the paradox of plenty."

She is not the first to recognize the paradox. Juan Pablo Perez Alfonso, the founder of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, said at the peak of the oil boom: "Ten years from now, 20 years from now, you will see. Oil will bring us ruin." He was right, and this valuable book helps us see why.

—*Elizabeth Qually*

Religion and Philosophy

STEALING JESUS:
How Fundamentalism Betrays Christianity.
By Bruce Bawer. Crown. 352 pp. $26

When Harry Emerson Fosdick preached his famous 1922 sermon, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?," he answered with a rousing no. "They are not going to do it," he declared, "certainly not in this vicinity." Within a few years, it seemed that Fosdick was right. Following the humiliating Scopes "Monkey Trial" of 1925, fundamentalist Christianity was all but extinct in the vicinity of Fosdick's New York City pulpit and in other urban areas. For the next 50 years, the movement was largely confined to the back hills, storefronts, and radio waves of a white, anti-urban underclass. It was, from the perspective of the national culture, invisible.

Since fundamentalism returned to public view in the 1970s, the mainstream media have scrutinized its clout, both cultural and political, and its demographics. But, by and large, the culture mavens have given a free ride to fundamentalist theology. Because there have been no modern-day Fosdicks subjecting these tenets to searching examination, many people have come to view fundamentalism and Christianity as essentially synonymous.

Bawer, however, contends that the teachings of fundamentalist Christianity are at odds with American history, principles of reason and fair play, and the Gospel itself. In fact, he argues that the fundamentalists are the heretics and apostates, twisting the text in pursuit of preordained conclusions. Fundamentalist Christianity "has stolen Jesus—yoked his name and his church to ideas, beliefs, and attitudes that would have appalled him."

The author proves surprisingly well suited