

ing for antibiotics, and when the United States is forging partnerships with Russia and China, we are in uncharted waters. Mead's book demonstrates just how starkly the world has changed.

—JONATHAN ROSENBERG

**ILLINOIS JUSTICE:
*The Scandal of 1969 and the
Rise of John Paul Stevens.***

By Kenneth A. Manaster. Univ. of Chicago Press. 332 pp. \$27.50

In this account of an obscure, three-decade-old political scandal, Manaster crafts a compelling morality play around a theme that's more timely than ever: the often unseemly, but sometimes noble, intersection of law and politics. An attorney with a supporting role in the original events, Manaster provides a well-researched history of a 1969 scandal involving two Illinois supreme court judges. An up-and-coming Chicago litigator named John Paul Stevens investigated the allegations for a court-appointed commission. His effective work, which ultimately led to the resignation of both judges and significant reform of the Illinois legal system, helped him gain appointment to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in 1970 and then to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1975.

The Stevens connection may give this fine book its national significance, but the story of Illinois politics in the 1960s, "a culture that thrived on the fruits of influence and the enjoyment of clout," is compelling in its own right. The cast of characters is sometimes overwhelming but always fascinating. We have the original complainant, Sherman H. Skolnick, a thorn in the side of the political establishment with his frequent accusa-

tions of corruption in the justice system. There are reporters competing to break the story, plus disturbing indications that the culture of influence led the *Chicago Daily News* to downplay the allegations. There are the state supreme court justices, Ray Klingbiel and Roy Solfisburg, under investigation for accepting bank stock from a lawyer whose criminal appeal was before them. Any good scandal has a supporting cast of wheeler-dealers and hangers-on, and they are all here as well. Finally, there are the attorneys who sat on the special commission and those who conducted the investigation. The 1969 experience, Manaster observes, influences Justice Stevens's work on the Supreme Court today.

After our experience with independent counsel investigations that take years to complete, as Justice Stevens notes in the foreword to the book, it seems remarkable that the special commission in this case completed its work in just six weeks, the deadline set by the Illinois supreme court. Certainly there are differences between the two types of investigations, not the least of which is that independent counsel are charged with prosecution as well as investigation, while this commission had only the duty to investigate and report. But perhaps there is a lesson here. The criminal law may be the most complicated and least satisfying tool for addressing abuses of the public trust.

The Illinois supreme court justices were not prosecuted for their lapses. But they were forced to resign, and the public learned about the intricate web of influence in the justice system of the state. One finishes the story believing that this was enough.

—KATY J. HARRIGER

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

**THE RECKLESS MIND:
*Intellectuals in Politics.***

By Mark Lilla. New York Review Books. 216 pp. \$24.95

This elegant little book is a victim of its own success. Moving briskly from one denunciation to another, taking sure aim at a gallery

of 20th-century intellectuals who entangled themselves in practical matters, Lilla, a professor on the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago, leaves readers convinced but unhappy. His suggestion that intellectual flirtation with politics all too often leads to pathological results—tyran-

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nies of both left and right—is amply supported but finally depressing.

Lilla deftly eviscerates the ambitions of Martin Heidegger and Michel Foucault, and mercilessly exposes the rather banal liberalism that emerges, almost unwillingly, from Jacques Derrida's deconstructionism. He is more forgiving of Walter Benjamin, whose messianism, Lilla argues, should be rescued from the bad Marxist uses to which it has often been put. And he writes with some admiration of Alexandre Kojève, the influential interpreter of Hegel, and of Carl Schmitt, the conservative political theorist whose antiliberalism, based on a conviction that conflict and enmity are essential to political life, has been adopted at both ends of the political spectrum.

The essays in this book began as reviews in the *New York Review of Books* and the *Times Literary Supplement*, and now and then that etiology shows through. But this is not debilitating, and Lilla's assessments of the main currents of 20th-century intellectual life, especially French and German, are accurate and cogent. The book functions as a sort of primer on Continental thought from 1900 to 1989.

In a long concluding essay, "The Lure of Syracuse," Lilla attempts to untangle the threads of Plato's complex position on philosophy and politics. (Plato sailed several times to Syracuse in a futile attempt to institute an ideal state there by educating the philosophically minded tyrant Dionysius the Younger.) Lilla is right to argue that Plato's cel-

ebrated defense of the philosopher-king is meant as a cautionary tale, not a blueprint for political reform. And he is likewise right to emphasize that eros, the force of desire, can lead to either wisdom or tyranny: The philosopher-king and the tyrant are not so dissimilar, except in the crucial sense that eros inspires one to seek the truth and the other to seek only his own satisfaction.

But Lilla provides little in the way of wisdom about how truth seekers can avoid becoming, in his term, "philotyrants." We have indeed grown wary of big ideas entering the political realm, especially as wielded by those with little taste for the messy details of life—such people tend to be dangerous. And yet, one doesn't have to be an intellectual to fear a politics devoid of ideas, hope, idealism, and some norm of justice that takes us beyond the materials given.

Lilla's provocative book is valuable less for its conclusions than for the deep response it implicitly demands. What is philosophy for? Should wisdom be pursued for its own sake, or is there an intellectual duty to try to change the world? Socrates tells us that the philosopher, once escaped from the metaphysical imprisonment of the cave, seeks to make the difficult downward journey in order to free his fellows. Everyone with a feeling for philosophy must decide whether to take that trek. Unfortunately, an awareness of the dangers only makes the choice more pressing.

—MARK KINGWELL

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

SPUTNIK:

The Shock of the Century.

By Paul Dickson. Walker. 310 pp. \$28

Dickson was a freshman at Wesleyan University in 1957 when he saw the first Soviet-made satellite scooting through the night sky at 18,000 miles per hour. That was the year Elvis Presley recorded "Jailhouse Rock," Jimmy Hoffa got elected head of the Teamsters, Beaver Cleaver first shuffled his feet on CBS, and the National Guard escorted black students into Central High School in Little Rock. American

democracy was forward looking and righteous, communist collectivism was backward and evil—so why had the Russians beaten us into space with this 184-pound basketball called Sputnik?

As Dickson recounts in this entertaining, admirably straightforward account of how and why America entered the space race, Sputnik changed the terms of the Cold War, mostly for the better. Until Sputnik (a Russian word meaning "traveling companion of the Earth"), the Eisenhower administration had other things on its mind—