

CURRENT BOOKS

FELLOWS' CHOICE

Recent titles selected and reviewed by Fellows of the Wilson Center

CHINESE SHADOWS

by Simon Leys
Viking, 1977
Penguin, 1978
220 pp. \$10 cloth
\$2.50 paper
L of C 77-23175
L of C 77-15419 pbk
ISBN 0-670-21918-5
ISBN 0-14-004787-5 pbk

A brilliant and controversial portrait of the New China, *Ombres chinoises* was published in 1974 by the Belgian Sinologist Pierre Ryckmans, who writes under the pseudonym Simon Leys. The translation includes a 1976 foreword in which the author states that "the pessimism that emanates from this book derives precisely from the unreality of its subject." Much of the text describes the Maoist gerontocrats (in this it is like Milovan Djilas's 1957 *The New Class*, also a grim portrait of Communist Party leaders long in power). Based on this reviewer's impressions of China in 1977 after a 30-year absence, Leys' shadows are *too* dark and distort the picture. But then, according to a Chinese maxim, which he quotes, "In a thousand observations, the wise man may make one that is foolish and the fool one that is wise." Leys is no fool, but a fine writer and a wise man who makes some exaggerated remarks.

—Joseph S. Sebes, S.J. ('77)

THE MERMAID AND THE MINOTAUR: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise

by Dorothy Dinnerstein
Harper, 1976, 288 pp.
\$10.95 cloth, \$3.95 paper
L of C 72-23879
ISBN 0-06-011047-3
ISBN 0-06-090587-5 pbk

Every decade or so, a few books come along that have the originality and force to change the way we have been interpreting the past and imagining the future. *The Mermaid and the Minotaur*, not widely reviewed and dependent so far on scholarly and/or feminist word of mouth, may become such a book. Psychologist Dorothy Dinnerstein argues that since both boys and girls are raised by women in most cultures, children associate their visceral, vulnerable emotions solely with women, whose overwhelming care and power they experience before they are able even to speak. They see men, whom they experience later or at a greater distance, as more rational, more properly connected to and in command of the outside (adult) world. The

consequences include not only a continued fear of the power of women but also suppression both of women's full range of human talents and of men's nurturing qualities (as well as an exaggeration of overintellectualized or violent behavior as a way to prove masculinity and adulthood). The subservient versus dominant model that has arisen may have created a profound pattern for other divisions based on race and class. Rescuing Freudian (and other) insights from their swamp of biological determinism, Dinnerstein documents the long-term dangers of our current gender-based political structure and describes the evolutionary and revolutionary potential for rearranging it. For starters, she believes that the long dependency unique to young humans no longer has to be the primary, often unilateral, responsibility of women.

—Gloria Steinem

**ECONOMIC POLICY
BEYOND THE
HEADLINES**

by George P. Shultz and
Kenneth W. Dam
Norton, 1978, 225 pp. \$8.95
L of C 77-17981
ISBN 0-393-05674-0

Economics and politics meet somewhere between the unreal world of newspaper headlines and the jargon of professional journals. It is in this space that economics professor George Shultz (former Secretary of Labor, director of the Office of Management and Budget, Secretary of the Treasury, and assistant to the President in charge of the Council on Economic Policy, 1969-74) and Kenneth Dam (deputy to Shultz and executive director of the CEP) end some of the mystery of how economic policy gets made in the real world. They explore such aspects of "political economy" as the "driving and relentless interplay between equity and efficiency" in domestic and international policymaking, and the surprising interconnections among very different policy issues. Shultz and Dam are sharp observers of Washington wheelers and dealers, especially in such policy areas as income security, international trade, and taxes ("we all pay taxes, but . . . tax policy is dominated by the specialist and the interest group"). They provide a clear explanation of why and how the instruments of economic policy are often misused.

—Edward Clarke