

Book Reviews

Sapira's Art and Science of Bedside Diagnosis, 4th ed., by Jane M. Orient M.D., hardback, 688 pp, ISBN 1-60547-411-8, Philadelphia, Pa., Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2010.

Largely because of a malignant proliferation of laboratory tests and imaging modalities, there has been an undeniable atrophy in new physicians' bedside diagnostic skills in the 21st century.

For the freshman medical student, the best way to acquire the primary principles of physical diagnosis is at the patient's bedside, under the diligent guidance and vigorous expectations of a wise clinician-preceptor. Nevertheless, owing to the enormous constraints on time devoted to teaching physical diagnostic skills, and to the fact that "wise preceptors" of sufficient clinical insight might be an endangered species, one needs to find other ways. The next best thing would be to get a copy of *Sapira's Art and Science of Bedside Diagnosis*, and make it your Bible!

The latest edition of this encyclopedic reference, spanning just under 700 pages, reaffirms its status as the benchmark when it comes to teaching and learning the artful science of physical diagnosis—from the etiquette of the patient interview, through the methodical details of physical examination, to the fundamentals of medical heuristics.

At first glance, the book is visually appealing and easy to navigate, with an excellent chapter layout. However, color illustrations in the dermatology section would have been desirable, and the typography seems to have slightly deteriorated from previous editions. There are occasional errors, such as a recorded gradation of lower extremity pulses with the right and left side readings contradicting the accompanying text.

The writing style is captivating, with deliberate use of the first person singular pronoun throughout the text. The language of the book is blessed with a certain panache—fearless and incisive at

times—but nevertheless zesty, with a clever use of euphemisms as well. Quotations from Hippocrates to Goethe to Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes can be found scattered throughout the text, while a subtle silver lining of humor renders relief from pensive discussions.

Abundant use of personal anecdotes (as on "coffee-ground stools" or "the post-tussive percussion of the trachea") conveys valuable learning points. Similarly, allusions to several fables of medicine (like that of "Korotkoff, the young surgeon" and "Osler and the politician's handshake") serve not only to entertain, but to bring us closer to our distinguished heritage.

Yet another unique characteristic is the use of several "objets d'art" for illustrative purposes. They serve as strong memory aids: Who would forget the different varieties of malar rash superimposed on the face of Michelangelo's David? They also remind us that we are always physicians, even in the art museum. This mindset in the past enabled physicians to learn from a Jesuit how to cure agues; from a friar how to cut for stones; from a sailor how to prevent scurvy; and from a postmaster how to sound the Eustachian tube—to paraphrase Oliver Wendell Holmes (*Medical Essays: 1842-1882*, p 289). Moreover, art nurtures creativity in the physician, encouraging him to visualize the implied pathophysiology of disease states, and to imaginatively overcome obstacles in the course of performing a therapeutic procedure.

The early introductory chapters on patient interviews offer insights into formal psychodynamics, which should not be restricted to persons with specialty training in psychiatry. The author urges the healer, who is not just a subspecialist technician, to listen to the patient with common sense, courtesy, and compassion, and to respect the patient's individuality while preparing a case record. There are also diseases that only a carefully performed patient interview can elucidate, such as migraine and depression. Modern

medical ethics and "evidence-based medicine" (EBM) come under much-deserved criticism for being "evidence biased" or "evidence burdened" and for neglecting the primacy of patient welfare and patient autonomy. The obvious disadvantages of the "Problem Oriented Medical Record" are laid bare, especially the inherent difficulties in balkanizing doctor-patient interactions, which are inherently multidimensional.

In many ways this treatise can serve as a workbook for the sophomore student, as it covers the step-by-step details of basic and advanced physical diagnostic maneuvers, from taking an arterial pulse to performing a complete neurologic examination. This workbook aspect has been heightened in the present edition with provision of a companion website containing a 300-question test.

For scholars and practicing physicians, many rare physical signs and diseases are included, such as the Means-Lerman scratch and the Bulova watch syndrome. The book tells something about the person and the history behind the eponym, and also provides some landmark original descriptions, as of the hepatojugular reflux and the Hamman sign, to help the reader understand the direct observation and applied logic used by their discoverers.

Several dogmatic and worthless teachings are exposed, such as the use of the words "ninety-nine," while testing tactile fremitus, instead of the better suited "toy boat" or "nine boys." Erudite-sounding terms that cover ignorance or unwarranted assumptions, such as "essential," "idiopathic," "physical disease," or "spontaneous bacterial peritonitis," are condemned.

"Memory is faulty and hence scholarship has to be thorough," says the author. It is easy to see why the book is so heavily referenced.

The penultimate chapter on clinical reasoning introduces several key topics in inferential/analytical statistics such as the null hypothesis and levels of probability, as well as a collection of clinical

aphorisms, including Sutton's law and Occam's razor.

Laboratory diagnosis is considered as an extension of the physical examination, and hence is covered in the last chapter, "for young Gargantuans."

The reader is warned not to stretch the physical examination beyond its limits. The discussion of pulmonary embolism clearly reveals the limitations of history and physical examination as tests of hypotheses, as contrasted with their usefulness as generators of hypotheses. In other circumstances, however, the reader learns how the physical examination is superior to radiography. As Dr. Gerry Rodnan said, "You can't hear rales on a chest X-ray!"

I consider myself fortunate to have learned from all four editions of this masterpiece, but it's still pertinent to note a few mistakes or disagreements. Henry Battle, in 1890, had originally associated mastoid ecchymoses with fracture of posterior cranial fossa of skull, not a middle fossa fracture. The Bryant sign of intraperitoneal/retroperitoneal bleeding refers to scrotal ecchymoses, not perianal ecchymoses. The Maroni sign of Graves disease should be the Maranon sign, after the Spanish endocrinologist Gregorio Maranon (1887-1960). Perhaps an avid Sherlock Holmes fan would notice that Holmes was speaking to Inspector Gregory (and not Dr. Watson) in the excerpt from the "Silver Blaze" adventure, given as a footnote on p 537. Even more interesting is the fact that Richard Asher, who originated the famous allusion to "The Dog-in-the-Night-time Syndrome," himself had garbled the above quotation in his 1960 article on "Clinical Sense." One cannot refrain from seeking refuge in the old joke, quoted in the book: "History repeats itself and historians tend to repeat each other."

To sum up, it is impossible to overrate this epic contribution to the study of clinical medicine. It has no competition. This work is in a class of its own and embodies the very definition of clinical wisdom and scholarship. It teaches us that technical skill and factual knowledge are necessary, but by no means sufficient to relieve the suffering of a fellow human being. Science cannot prove anything, apart from disproving all possible null hypotheses; true medical science recognizes its limitations and worthwhile advances are

made depending on the insights gained from practicing the art of medicine.

We live in an era in which technology is supplanting instead of supplementing bedside physical diagnosis, dehumanizing medicine while increasing its cost. To change this we need to reinvigorate the practice of scientifically validated physical diagnostic techniques at the patient's bedside.

This book is like the wise teacher portrayed in Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*: "one who does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind."

Shafeek Shamsudeen, M.B.B.S
Thiruvananthapuram
Kerala, India

ARGUING WITH IDIOTS: How to Stop Small Minds and Big Government, by Glenn Beck, hardback, 325 pp, \$29.99, ISBN 978-1-4165-9501-4, New York, N.Y., Threshold Editions—Mercury Radio Arts, 2009.

ARGUING WITH IDIOTS is a very unusual book. In fact, when I first looked at the front cover and scanned through the book, I was convinced that the author was mentally deranged!

A pompous Glenn Beck in a Soviet-style uniform is featured on the front cover, and the "R" in the first word of the title is reversed. The inner pages reveal simulated burned, stained, and worn pages with numerous fake turned-down corners. In addition, many information boxes, charts, graphs, and cartoons appear to be inserted by the author in a very haphazard fashion.

The whole presentation was initially very annoying to me. Please guard against this impression. It is also important for the reader to review the instructions on how to read the book before beginning. If the reader can get past these minor hurdles, he will not only be enlightened, but thoroughly entertained. It is an excellent and well-documented book.

The book is presented as a continuous exchange of ideas between an "idiot" and Beck. The "idiot" does not represent any particular person or group of people, such as progressives, libertarians, conservatives, leftists, Democrats, or Republicans, but anyone, including Beck himself, who does not consider the facts and think logically before arriving at an opinion. The "idiot's" comments are always exhibited in red font

and are readily discernable. The comments of the "idiot" usually sound intelligent, but actually lack substance and are easily refuted by Beck. Unfortunately, these shallow comments are accepted as absolute fact by many Americans, and undoubtedly played a major role in the results of the 2008 elections.

Beck divides the book into 12 chapters. The first six deal with capitalism, the Second Amendment, education, energy, unions, and illegal immigration. The second six deal with the "nanny state," home ownership, economics, U.S. Presidents, universal healthcare, and the U.S. Constitution. In my opinion, Beck's answers to the "idiot's" assertions throughout these chapters are based on his strong belief in individual rights and freedoms. The charts, information boxes, and other insertions that originally annoyed me actually added clarity and humor to his discussion. He deals in great depth with these very serious issues that face our nation and somehow manages to successfully mix in humor. His frequent "A.D.D. Moments" are particularly humorous and informative.

The chapters that deal with the U.S. Presidents and the U.S. Constitution were the most informative for me. I was unaware that both Woodrow Wilson and Teddy Roosevelt were progressives—a term that Hillary Clinton recently applied to herself rather than calling herself a liberal or a socialist. Beck's discussion of the progressive movement is very revealing. The chapter on the Constitution is an in-depth discussion of the original intent of those who developed it.

Unfortunately, the book ends abruptly after the completion of this thorough chapter. I somehow felt cheated. I expected a summary or some closure that would bring the book into focus. Perhaps it simply means that another similar book is in the offing.

This book very nicely complements Beck's talk radio and television shows. Beck is aware that our country is at a pivotal time in its history, and that we are either going to return to our core beliefs and once again embrace our Constitution as it was originally intended by our Founders, or we are going to rapidly deteriorate into a socialist, third-world country. He is attempting to educate us before we lose our freedoms because of

our own complacency and ignorance. I hope that Americans, no matter what their political views are, will read and seriously consider the facts Beck presents.

Glenn Beck is a modern Paul Revere. He is warning us of impending disaster, and in the process is being thoroughly denigrated. Will he suffer the same fate as the mythical Cassandra who had the gift of prophecy, but whom no one believed?

I strongly recommend this book. It is enjoyable and filled with valuable information. There is also an audio version on compact discs that, while lacking the illustrations, still vividly displays Beck's humor. In fact, listening to the CD version while I read the book enhanced my enjoyment.

Chester C. Danehower, M.D.
Peoria, Ill.

Never Enough: America's Limitless Welfare State, by William Voegeli, hardcover, 327 pp, \$23.95, ISBN 978-1-59403-376-6, New York, N.Y., Encounter Books, 2010.

In *Never Enough*, William Voegeli examines the welfare state, its history in America, and arguments for and against its existence.

The book's introduction lays out some of the themes covered, including the limitless growth of the welfare state, government desire to improve society, costs, attempts to rein in spending on welfare, and the role of welfare as seen by liberals, conservatives, and the public.

Chapter 1 is mainly concerned with informational graphs and tables that show the spending on "human resources" (minus money for veterans' benefits) in the United States from 1940-2007. Voegeli states, "In constant dollars, federal spending on Human Resources was 35 times as high in 2007 as it had been in 1940." He shows how after the Korean War, "federal outlays as a percentage of GDP settled into a narrow range, where they have stayed for more than half a century, falling short of 17% just once (1956) and exceeding 23% twice (1982 and 1983)."

Voegeli goes on to demonstrate how spending on welfare and social insurance has increased as a percentage of federal spending. It has gone "from 2.59% of GDP in 1955 to 12.33% in 2007." A large portion of this spending is for Social Security and Medicare. The share devoted

to Medicare and other health programs has grown from 11% during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations to 36% during the George W. Bush era.

Voegeli next compares the United States to other countries in terms of welfare spending, 1980-2003. "The United States, with the greatest ability and the weakest desire to finance a welfare state, winds up in the middle of the pack in terms of the absolute value of the resources devoted to it." He points out that economic growth still has occurred, even with sizable welfare states. One question he raises is why, with the increased prosperity of individuals in developed countries, haven't people become more self-reliant, taking on more responsibility for their own welfare-type expenses? "This subject of why prosperity never seems to curtail the welfare state is at the heart of our inquiry."

Chapter 2 covers the history of the welfare state in the United States. Americans' natural distrust of a powerful central government is noted, making it unlikely for the U.S. to ever have as big a welfare state as European nations have. Voegeli discusses Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive movement, contrasting it with the Founders' views of government and human nature. "In his first book, *Congressional Government*, written in 1885, Wilson criticized the 'blind worship' of the Constitution, for which the only antidote was 'fearless criticism.'" Instead of seeing the wisdom of the Founders, "The progressives chafed against the ways the Constitution's 'internal and external controls' divided and constrained government, thwarting the project of delivering single, unstinted power to disinterested experts."

Franklin Delano Roosevelt used the term "liberalism," rather than "progressivism" as he expanded the size of government and strengthened the executive branch. FDR was able to appoint seven new justices to the Supreme Court, and by 1945 "the Court had dismantled every one of the constitutional impediments to government activism." Voegeli discusses the living Constitution concept, as put forth by the New Dealers. "A living Constitution denied the existence of timeless principles; its fundamental principles changed as the nation's economic and social circumstances changed." FDR also introduced a "Second Bill of Rights," which included rights to a job, good wages, trade free of "unfair competition and domination by monopolies at home or abroad," a home, health care, "protection

from the economic fears of old age and sickness and accident and unemployment," and education. This second bill, however, lost its influence after FDR's death.

Chapter 3 examines liberals' principles and their belief "that every genuine need corresponds to a right to have that need addressed." This concept isn't well received by many Americans, who realize that more taxes and government regulations to redistribute wealth will be necessary in order to meet everyone's needs. Concerning affirmative action, Voegeli concludes: "The ideal of a government that exists to secure rights and guarantee equal justice under the law gives way to a government that brokers an endless series of accommodations with an endless array of interest groups." Liberals emphasize compassion, communitarianism, and the "lack of a limiting principle" in the number of welfare programs.

Voegeli examines the costs of welfare, noting that liberals claim that cost won't be a problem and that they avoid questions about how to pay for and run welfare programs. One of the effects of income redistribution, he notes, is to discourage wealth production. "The growth of the welfare state will, beyond a certain point, require some combination of high taxes, heavy borrowing and muscular regulations that reduces the amount of wealth the private economy produces, and ultimately reduces the amount available for the government to distribute through welfare state programs."

The final chapter looks at conservatives' efforts to reduce the welfare state. At best, they have managed to slow its growth, since entitlement programs, such as Social Security and Medicare, seem to be entrenched in our society. Supply-side economics emphasized tax cuts, but not spending cuts, because the latter would not be politically popular. There were no major changes in the welfare state as a result of Reagan's policies or the Contract with America. The libertarian view of welfare is presented, with the conclusion that it is unrealistic to think the public would accept the small government that libertarians desire.

In conclusion, Voegeli stresses that liberals and conservatives must come to an understanding that the welfare state will remain, but we can't afford to have programs for everything. Aid should be given to the truly needy. He writes that "conservatives must stipulate that America will and should have a welfare state, and

that the withering away of the welfare state is not the goal of the conservative project, not even in the distant future.” Liberals “must abandon the belief that everything is good to do, and that with all this money we can afford to try anything we have the audacity to hope for.”

Voegeli presents many facts and important ideas to consider, and I found the historical information to be very interesting. The author drives home the point that the welfare state has no limit to its potential size. I would prefer more curtailment of the welfare state than he seems to advocate in his conclusion—and the national debt may make this a necessity.

Sally Christman
Dayton, Ohio

Guilty: Liberal “Victims” and Their Assault on America, by Ann Coulter, hardback, 309pp, \$27.95, ISBN 978-0-30735-7, New York, N. Y., Crown Forum, 2008.

“There are lies, damn lies, and The New York Times.”

“Assault Weapons—Semi-Automatics That Look Scary to Liberals.”

“When a Republican becomes a Democrat, the average I.Q. increases on both sides of the aisle.”

—Ann Coulter

According to Ann Coulter, it is a perverse world when the most aggressive people are always wailing about their victimhood. She says liberals viciously attack everyone else while wailing that they are the victims. And their oppressors always are conservatives. This continuing drama is brought to you by network television, The *New York Times*, and National Public Radio.

The liberals and the media have a symbiotic relationship, she states. Both are fighting for the same thing—the total destruction of the United States. Coulter reminds us that the purpose of news is not to inform, but to promote the left-wing agenda. The entire American press corps works tirelessly to unearth the scandals of Republicans, while aggressively suppressing Democratic ones. For example, the media never revealed that Obama’s pastor of 20 years was a racist, anti-American lunatic who preached, among other things, that the U.S. government invented AIDS to kill black people.

As a result, in Coulter’s view, there are two Americas; one for right-wingers, where every jaywalking offense will be covered like the O.J. murder trial, and one for left-wingers, where they can do anything and count on a total media cover-up. There is one system of justice for liberals, and another for conservatives.

The establishment media are constantly claiming to speak up for the little guy. The *New York Times*, for example, is for children’s rights and for illegal aliens. But it is against guns, against the police, and against the rule of law. Coulter describes CBS News as the station that once employed left-wing conspiracy nut Dan Rather.

Media-generated crises include what she calls the completely phony political issues of campaign finance reform, earmarks, bipartisanship, health care, and global warming. For example, a series of *Washington Post* polls from 2007 to 2008 found that global warming was the most important issue for 0 percent of voters. No matter. Liberals are scared to death of its effects.

Coulter considers that people *may* become liberals because they truly believe socialism would be good for America. But she suspects they are more likely to do so because they enjoy being told how pretty, brilliant, clever, brave, and talented they are. They especially love being praised for their courage. But there is one quality they don’t want talked about: their money. They prefer to demonstrate their goodness by giving away *your* money.

Coulter discusses other liberal atrocities. She calls illegitimacy—the active social policy of liberals—the single most important social problem of our time, since 90 percent of welfare recipients are single mothers and they cost the U.S. taxpayer \$112 billion every year. For years welfare bureaucrats paid single women money just for having children out of wedlock; liberal justices on the Supreme Court stripped away the legal benefits of marriage; and pop culture glamorized single motherhood. By 2005, more than one-third of all babies born in the U.S were illegitimate.

She says that when real victims of racism and sexism appear on the same campus, liberals lead the lynch mob against them. An example is the Duke lacrosse players who were falsely accused of gang-raping a black stripper. Coulter insists that instead of “institutional racism” we are witnessing “institutional racial hoaxism,” committed by liberals.

Coulter points out that with McCarthyism, liberals vilified an American patriot to hide the

Democratic Party’s shameful collaboration with Soviet spies. And she describes the Elian Gonzalez affair as the second military action against American citizens by Attorney General Janet Reno.

Liberals claim they are victims: victims of pregnancy, victims of the Republican Attack Machine, victims of foreign words meaning “monkey.” But Coulter tells us they’re not innocent victims—they are the marauding oppressors. They are guilty.

Ann Coulter is hated and feared by liberals; she is at her very best when exposing their absurd, destructive policies. All Americans should read *Guilty* so we can better fight the socialism that is destroying America.

Jerome C. Arnett, Jr., M.D.
Helvetia, W.V.

United in Hate: the Left’s Romance with Tyranny and Terror, by Jamie Glazov, hardback, 264 pp, \$25.95, ISBN 978-1-93507160-0, Los Angeles, Calif., WND Books, 2009.

“Everything that exists deserves to perish.”

—Karl Marx

“...[T]he more innocent they are, the more they deserve to be shot.”

—German playwright Bertolt Brecht
“In the years of independence, the Arabs have so far made no inventions or discoveries in the sciences or the arts.”

—British author David Pryce-Jones

In *United in Hate*, Dr. Jamie Glazov, managing editor of *Frontpage Magazine*, exposes the shocking history of the American Left and its support of a succession of totalitarian killing machines, such as Stalin’s Russia, Castro’s Cuba, North Vietnam, Mao’s China, Sandinista Nicaragua, and now, the vicious ideology of Islamic extremists.

The Left’s utopian paradises repeatedly result in mass death and suicide instead of the human equality and “social justice” promised. The resulting death count to date is well over 200 million humans and climbing.

Prominent intellectuals such as George Bernard Shaw, Upton Sinclair, H.G. Wells, Bertolt Brecht, and Susan Sontag all applauded the mass murderers involved, such as Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Castro, and Ho Chi Minh, and excused their atrocities while blaming America for the crimes, states Glazov. Pulitzer Prize

winner Walter Duranty, the *New York Times*'s man in Moscow during the 1920s and early '30s, covered the Ukrainian famine. While Stalin starved millions of Ukrainians to death, Duranty lied to America and praised the Soviet dictator.

In the 1960s, a new generation of believers formed the "New Left"—with the same ideas and goals to develop true socialism that were used in the Soviet terror. As Glazov notes, this was the most privileged generation in human history, wanting for nothing. The new believers hated capitalism not because it failed, but because it worked. The father of the New Left, Herbert Marcuse, used the term "repressive tolerance" to describe the way capitalism supposedly enslaved people by making them happy and free. Leftist guru Noam Chomsky agreed.

After the Soviet Union, three new tyrannies appeared: Castro in Cuba; the dictatorship in Hanoi; and Mao Tse-tung in Communist China, who murdered 70 million Chinese. American leftists of the 1960s and '70s—such as Noam Chomsky, Norman Mailer, Jane Fonda, Tom Hayden, and Shirley MacLaine—fawned over them.

Castro turned Cuba into one of the poorest nations in the world, where ordinary Cubans live in utter poverty. Cuba is a monstrous human-rights abuser; torture has been institutionalized. Half a million humans have passed through its Gulag, while firing squads have carried out more than 15,000 executions. To document this, Armando Valladares, after 22 years of prison and torture, wrote *Against All Hope*, Cuba's version of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*. Yet Dan Rather, Oliver Stone, Jack Nicholson, Norman Mailer, Gina Lollobrigida, Francis Ford Coppola, Harry Belafonte, and Ted Turner all praised Castro. Steven Spielberg called his 2002 meeting with Castro "the most important eight hours of my life."

Again, after the attacks on Sep 11, 2001, history repeated itself—except that the Left's new favorite murderers now waved the black flag of Islamic jihad. According to Glazov, the Left consistently takes the side of Islamist terrorists in their jihad against the U.S. Both groups detest modernity, individual freedom, and any value placed on *individual* human life. Human reason and individual responsibility are rejected.

Glazov says Islamism is designed to move us to a worldwide theocratic

totalitarian dictatorship, the caliphate, and that it seeks to force Sharia (Islamic law) on all the inhabitants of the earth. He calls it a monstrous death cult, and he believes that it poses the greatest threat to freedom in this century. It fosters, he states, a psychotic mindset in which death has become an end in itself, and where the goal is not to treasure life or to pursue individual happiness or fulfillment; instead the goal of life is to lose it.

Martyrdom (killing others) and suicide are the principle ways through which the radical Muslim can express himself. Since one is hardly allowed to do anything pleasurable on earth, one seeks to die in order to find pleasure in heaven.

The religious hatred that Glazov states is at the root of Islamism is analogous to the racial and class hatred that drove Nazism and Communism. Like those ideologies, Islamism wages war against Jews, who have replaced the "class enemy" of the Communist era. Glazov notes that the only game permitted to many Arab children is "kill the Jew."

According to Glazov, Islamism teaches that the sexual act is dirty. Sex is not about mutuality, but about the adult male's achievement of pleasure through violent domination. Islamism condemns love between husband and wife, and mandates the hatred of women. It sanctions polygamy, repudiation, wife-beating, the stoning of women, "honor" killings on the flimsiest of charges, and female genital mutilation. The last has been inflicted on more than 130 million women living today, precluding the possibility of sexual satisfaction for three-fourths of them.

For decades, leftist feminists have howled with moral indignation about the "inequality" of women in their own society, yet they have remained silent about the barbaric treatment of women in Islamist societies, which has no parallel in the West.

Jamie Glazov exposes the American Left for supporting and promoting both the secular religion of socialism and the totalitarian ideology of Islamism. All Americans concerned with liberty should read *United in Hate*. Buy copies for your friends and colleagues—except for liberals, who will almost certainly find it very offensive

Jerome C. Arnett, Jr. M.D.
Helvetia, W.V.

Callous Disregard: Autism and Vaccines—the Truth Behind a Tragedy, by Andrew J. Wakefield, hardcover, 269 pp, \$26.95, ISBN 978-1-61608-169-0, New York, N.Y., Skyhorse Publishing, 2010.

In 1998, pediatric gastroenterologist Andrew Wakefield, along with 12 colleagues, published "that paper" in *The Lancet*. It was an "early report," describing clinical findings in 12 children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) occurring in association with a mild to moderate colitis. It was accompanied by lymphoid nodular hyperplasia, predominantly in the terminal ileum.

The parents of eight of those children associated the onset of the autistic symptoms with the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. In the study's conclusion, the authors suggested the possibility of some connection between the vaccine and the findings. This was of the nature of hypothesis, a suggestion for a future direction of research.

In 2004, 10 of the authors of the 1998 paper issued a retraction, and the editor of *The Lancet* stated that in hindsight the paper should not have been published because of lack of proper disclosure of some funding by lawyers representing children who were attempting to get compensation for a vaccine-related injury. Some of the authors issued a retraction of the interpretation that MMR is a possible trigger for the syndrome that was described. As Wakefield points out in his book, however, a possibility cannot be retracted.

In January 2010, the UK General Medical Council (GMC) ruled that Wakefield acted "dishonestly and irresponsibly" and showed "callous disregard" for the suffering of children involved in his "controversial research."

In February 2010, *The Lancet* issued a full retraction of the study, stating that elements of the manuscript proved to be false. A decision by GMC, after a 3-year hearing, to ban Wakefield from practice in the UK, was trumpeted worldwide. Dr. Gilbert Ross of the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) stated that "his license was appropriately pulled, albeit 12 years too late. The counsel reproached him for his unethical conduct, but they didn't say anything about the quality of his research, which we have

been decrying for years.” ACHS president Elizabeth Whelan calls Wakefield a “charlatan.”¹

Nature Medicine published “a timeline of the Wakefield retraction” on a news page headed “State of Denial.”² It states: “Scientists regularly debate hypotheses and interpretations, sometimes feverishly. But in the public sphere, a different type of dissension is spreading through media outlets and online in an unprecedented way—one that challenges basic concepts held as undeniable truths by most researchers.”

The rejection of the scientific consensus is termed “science denialism.” The most vocal denialists are listed as Mark and David Geier, who challenge the safety of thimerosal preservatives in vaccines while suggesting a link with autism; David Rasnick, who challenges the HIV/AIDS hypothesis; Sandy Szwarc, who challenges the idea that obesity causes an increased risk of premature death; Wolfgang Wordag, who challenged the World Health Organization’s declaration that swine flu was a pandemic; and Michael Fumento, who lauds adult stem cell research and calls embryonic stem cell research a “dead end.” While this news page focuses on biomedical issues, there are many other dogmas that one questions at peril to one’s career, including the man-caused catastrophic global warming hypothesis and Darwinian evolution.

The editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal* joined the chorus in putting Wakefield in the rogue’s gallery.³ It blames “the press-saavy Dr. Wakefield” for the fact that Britain’s child vaccination rates had plummeted to below 70 percent in some areas, down from more than 90 percent in the mid 1990s. In 1998, England and Wales had 56 cases of measles, and by 2008 the number was 1,370. In 2006, the first British child died of measles in more than a decade. *The Lancet* was complicit in “launching a global vaccine scare by giving Wakefield an aura of respectability.”

Wakefield’s book is an answer to these critics.

About the “now-infamous” paper, the term used by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), he notes that it was a series of clinical case

reports. The children were not experimental subjects, but rather patients referred to the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine because of very distressing symptoms. They underwent colonoscopy as part of their workup. Treatment with a standard anti-inflammatory regimen for inflammatory bowel disease brought considerable relief. Some of the children had a lumbar puncture as part of the workup of a deteriorating neurological syndrome. The “questionable procedure” to which some children were subjected was drawing blood samples of normal children at a birthday party, with consent. The pathologic diagnosis was disputed by some inexperienced pathologists who initially read the slides, but the key findings of lymphoid nodular hyperplasia in children with colitis and ASD have been independently confirmed in five different countries, Wakefield writes, citing the references, which include the *American Journal of Gastroenterology*, the *Canadian Journal of Gastroenterology*, and *Digestion*.

Wakefield prepared a proposal for a law firm to submit to the Legal Aid Board (LAB), a means-tested, government-funded legal assistance program to which the firm was contracted for vaccine-related work. The Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine, as well as the editor of *The Lancet*, was well aware of his funding source, and Wakefield followed the procedures that were current at the time for disclosure. At present, disclosure requirements are far more extensive.

There’s a whole chapter, “The Dean’s Dilemma,” about the fate of the check from the LAB, and the dilemma of the university about what to do with it. The whole reason for the consternation is revealed on page 53: the concern that if the study showed some connection between inflammatory bowel disorder and a vaccine, “this could lead to a case against the government for damages.” The government, after all, had certified the vaccine as safe on the basis of very limited research, despite a number of safety problems leading to the recall of certain vaccine products.

Wakefield speculates that if the LAB-funded study of potentially vaccine-damaged children had been successfully stopped, the British government might have dodged a bullet, and the GMC witch-

hunt might have become unnecessary. As a representative of the company that became Smithkline Beecham said, “We are immunising the children and the Government is immunising us.”

Much of the controversy about Wakefield was instigated by a journalist, Brian Deer, who wrote inflammatory articles in the *Sunday Times*. For one thing, he accused Wakefield of fixing data on autism, and of doing it for money. Wakefield provides a detailed factual refutation of Deer’s allegations.

The book is described as a “forensic analysis,” and it quotes heavily from legal transcripts. It has a very large number of endnotes, and a table of events at the Royal Free, the UK Department of Health, *The Lancet*, other scientific publications, the national media, and the GMC, dating from 1971. I found it to be a cogent and convincing analysis of what I think is one of the most important sham peer reviews to date. We must ask why there was such a sustained and costly effort over a dozen years to destroy the reputation of a man who listened to his patients and their parents, tried to do what was best for them, and came up with a hypothesis about a vaccine connection to their misery and profound disability. If Wakefield is right, and the case against him is really based on lies, obfuscations, and deliberate cover-ups, the UK government and others indeed face a huge liability. They may be the ones guilty of a callous, perhaps even criminal disregard of serious adverse vaccine reactions.

Wakefield remains unafraid, confident that eventually the truth will vindicate him. This book might prove to be a nightmare for those who are now strutting about and savoring their triumph over his downfall. It is interesting to see the note to all customers on the frontispiece: “This book is not for sale in the United Kingdom.”

Jane M. Orient, M.D.
Tucson, Ariz.

¹ American Council on Science and Health. Dispatch: Vaccines’ safety confirmed, Wakefield’s validity denied. *HealthFacts AndFears.com*, May 26, 2010. Available at: www.acsh.org/factsfears/newsID.1467/news_detail.asp. Accessed Jul 10, 2010.

² Scudellari M. News: State of denial. *Nature Med* 2010;16:248.

³ Anon. *The Lancet’s* vaccine retraction. *Wall St J*, Feb 3, 2010.