

# Book Reviews

## **Do-Gooders: How Liberals Hurt Those They Claim to Help (and the Rest of Us),**

by Mona Charen, 269 pp, hardback, \$25.95, ISBN 1595230033, New York, N.Y., Sentinel, 2004.

*Do-Gooders* reveals what happened after the 1960s, when liberalism first appeared in force on the national scene. The New Left, with its warmed-over Marxism, initiated the era of big government, with its War on Poverty, Medicaid, Medicare, food stamps, and housing vouchers. Entitlement became the order of the day. Our liberals, certain that they knew what was best for America's poor and middle classes, imposed their destructive ideas on us all. Best-selling author and columnist Mona Charen exposes the mess they have made of important domestic issues such as crime, poverty, the homeless, race relations, and public education over the past four decades.

The 1960s liberal compassion binge toward the poor and minorities primarily benefited violent criminals and led to a "crime wave" lasting three decades. The "long hot summers" of 1965-67 saw rioting in the cities, and President Johnson's Kerner Commission blamed white America for the three purported causes of the riots: racism, powerlessness, and poverty. The Supreme Court set the stage, declaring that retribution was no longer the dominant objective of the criminal law, but that "reformation and rehabilitation" was to be the goal of incarceration. Subsequently, between 1960 and 1999, violent crime increased by 226 percent.

Beginning in the 1990s, all categories of crime began to drop sharply—not because of sweeping social change but because of tougher anti-crime measures instituted in the 1980s. In 2002 there were 21 million fewer crime victims than in 1973, and the liberal fantasy that poverty causes crime was demolished. *The New*

*York Times* was befuddled and remained mystified for years.

In 1964, Sargent Shriver, President Johnson's War on Poverty czar, predicted that the Office of Economic Opportunity would end poverty by 1976. The Supreme Court assisted by striking down state residency requirements for welfare eligibility, by ruling that welfare payments were a property right of the recipient, by deciding that mothers considered employable by welfare workers could not be denied benefits, and by striking down state rules denying benefits to mothers who had a man living in the house. Over the next 25 years, U.S. taxpayers spent more than \$3 trillion providing support for the poor, the infirm, and the elderly. But welfare caseloads increased by 230 percent between 1963 and 1973, and by 1994, nine million children and three million adults (15 percent of the population) were receiving benefits. As Ronald Reagan observed, "In the war on poverty, poverty won."

For liberals, the politics of race is a matter of good versus evil, and a contest between people of good will (liberals) and villainous racists (conservatives). Democrats want blacks to feel oppressed, despised, and handicapped. They encourage blacks to believe that whites are responsible for their problems. Instead of promoting initiative and responsibility, they paint blacks as victims who must vote for Democrats, who will then protect them. As a result, 80 to 95 percent of black votes go to Democrats.

The Great Society, with its welfare programs and liberal sexual mores, damaged the black family. The availability of welfare became an "enabler," so that black Americans could stop marrying but could continue bearing children. Beginning in the 1960s, black marriages declined sharply, while the number of

single-parent families and welfare dependence mushroomed. By 1994, 70 percent of all black births were to unmarried women. An entire culture changed. Mayor John Lindsay of New York City was told by an angry welfare mother at a public hearing, "I've got six kids. Every one of them has a different daddy. It's my job to have kids, and your job, Mr. Mayor, to take care of them."

When the Congress finally accomplished welfare reform, after one of the fiercest political struggles in recent memory, liberals howled. It was "anti-child" and "mean-spirited." But every wild prediction the liberals made was proved false. It was the greatest domestic policy success of the past 30 years. The poor really are not childlike, irresponsible, or incompetent, as the liberals had claimed.

Our child welfare system is a liberal-inspired disaster that costs \$18 billion a year yet does not protect the children who need it most. The biggest risk factor for child abuse is having a never-married mother. Children raised outside marriage are at higher risk for every social pathology, from drugs to crime to teen pregnancy. Families headed by single mothers spawn 72 percent of America's young murderers, 70 percent of long-term prison inmates, and 60 percent of rapists.

In 1971, the Supreme Court swept away most of America's vagrancy statutes, and living on the street became a right. Eighty-five percent of the homeless were alcoholics, drug addicts, and/or mentally ill. Largely owing to the liberal ideas of Thomas Szasz (*The Myth of Mental Illness*), Erving Goffman (*Asylum: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*), Ken Kesey (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*), and especially British psychoanalyst R.D. Laing (*The Politics of Experience*), community mental health clinics changed their mission from

treating patients to “curing” society. And the government made mental patients eligible for Medicaid, Medicare, Supplemental Security Income, the Disability Insurance Trust Fund, food stamps, and housing assistance. Thousands of schizophrenics and manic-depressives descended upon the nation’s cities. Many of them quit taking their medicine, misused the \$500 to \$700 a month extra money from liberal government programs, and became addicted to alcohol and street drugs. Many of the mentally ill homeless ended up in prison, where they were often victimized by both guards and fellow prisoners.

Liberal education programs have proven especially disastrous. All of our national problems were blamed on education. We were not properly “investing” in our children. Liberals dreamed up the following failed programs: open classrooms, whole math, new math, whole language, bilingual education, child-centered education, outcome-based education, cooperative learning, and using teachers as “facilitators.” Head Start, one of Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society programs, has cost \$35 billion since 1965 and served 15 million preschoolers, but studies show it hasn’t worked. Chapter 1, the federal program to benefit poor and minority children in grade school doesn’t work after 40 years and more than \$130 billion. Bilingual education, a jobs program for teachers, actually harmed students by delaying their learning of English.

The budget of the federal Department of Education increased from \$14 billion in 1979 to \$43 billion in 2001, all without educating a single child. Meanwhile, students became less and less capable. Billions of taxpayer dollars and 40 years later, we are producing citizens who can scarcely read a newspaper or balance a checkbook—and who hate their ancestors. Yet in 2000 Al Gore proposed spending an additional \$176 billion over ten years and hiring 100,000 new teachers.

As David Horowitz so clearly explains in his book *Left Illusions: an Intellectual Odyssey*, being an American means accepting a social contract, a commitment to democracy and individual freedom. But liberalism is a plan of “morally sanctioned

theft” that aims only to divide up what others have created. The liberal utopian vision of “social justice” is a vision of nowhere. Liberalism’s evil deeds and crimes of the past century are evidence of the impotence and irrelevance of good intentions that, as so carefully documented by Mona Charen, only lead to broken eggs, with no omelet to show for them.

**Jerome C. Arnett, Jr., M.D.**  
Elkins, WV

**The Truth About Hillary**, by Edward Klein, 336 pp, hardback, \$24.95, ISBN 1595230068, New York, N.Y., Sentinel, 2005.

The subtitle of this book promises to tell us “What She Knew, When She Knew It, and How Far She’ll Go to Become President.”

Edward Klein’s answer to the last question is that Hillary Rodham Clinton will do anything in order to become President. The other two questions refer to her knowledge of her husband’s philandering. They are answered also—the pithy version being that she knew everything, and knew it early on.

Klein’s main claim to our attention lies with his generally “liberal” political orientation. His prior nonfiction all concerned the Kennedys, especially Jacqueline. Although he did use some harsh words, he was on the whole sympathetic to the Kennedy family. The same cannot be said for his view of Hillary.

The book divides her life into a “prequel,” the earlier years, the White House years, her candidacy for the Senate, and her hoped-for road back to the White House. Klein recounts many incidents, alighting on the peaks and sliding into the troughs of her life. A comprehensive treatment of any of the many fixes in which she has enmeshed herself, and then, Houdini-like, escaped without consequences, lies outside the scope of this book. But Klein offers many compelling quotations, apologizing that some are anonymous because the sources fear “Hillary’s power to exact retribution.” Richard Nixon, now beyond her powers in the grave, is quoted as saying, after meeting her, “Hillary is ice-cold.... Hillary inspires fear!”

She is described as power-hungry, detached from her husband’s infidelities (indeed an enabler of his wrongdoing), misanthropic, soulless, duplicitous, and lacking in the ability to discern right from wrong. Additionally, she is said to be paranoid and obsessed with privacy. She believes herself to be entitled to power. With a sense of infallibility, she never has any self-doubts about re-molding Americans and their society.

Some who did go on the record had zingers. Bradford DeLong, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury during the first Clinton Administration, said: “My two cents’ worth ... is that Hillary Rodham Clinton needs to be kept very far away from the White House for the rest of her life.”

Her relationship with Bill Clinton, her power during his Administrations, and her thirst for power in general, absorb most of the author’s attention. In their marriage she sought power; and he sought a politically savvy, tough taskmaster to discipline him in his own quest for power. She is said to have signed off on all appointments by her husband’s White House, and to have insisted on her own choices for some. Evidence abounds of her pervasive influence. The Paula Jones/Monica Lewinsky connections serve as metaphors for a theme that runs through the book: Clinton’s sordid sex life, and Hillary’s role in it. Klein covers that in some detail. There is more about lesbianism than you probably wanted to know, including something termed “political lesbianism,” which tells men they are superfluous.

Klein covers Hillary’s apologetics for Black Panther murderers, her cattle futures windfall, the gratuitous accusations of the White House Travel Office, the death of Vincent Foster and possible reasons for him to commit suicide, the looting of the White House, and her vaunted overreaching attempt at a government takeover of all medical care in America. Most of the material is treated in other books. Dick Morris has the advantage of having known both Clintons for at least 20 years, and writes insightfully and incisively, with a snazzy style. Barbara Olson and R. Emmett Tyrrell wrote earlier, more analytical, denser books on the same

subjects: her power hunger and amoral ruthlessness. Klein's book piles on some detail, and lets us know that she has shocked him out of his fluffier previous works. Even the leftists fear her.

If you want to refresh your knowledge of the scandals of Hillary's life, you should also read Barbara Olson's *Hell To Pay* (at least the last two chapters) and R. Emmett Tyrrell's *Madame Hillary: The Dark Road to the White House*. It is the least you can do for yourself and your country.

**Tamzin Rosenwasser**  
Venice, FL

**Marker**, by Robin Cook, 533 pp, hardback, \$25.95, ISBN 0399152938, New York, N.Y., Putnam, 2005.

In his latest medical thriller, Robin Cook delves into the dark side of human nature and the emerging technologies of the human genome project, medical economics, and medical malpractice. *Marker* is not a good book to read when one is about to undergo surgery.

Entering the world of two New York City medical examiners, the reader learns many of the gory details in the everyday life of a forensic pathologist. Young, pretty Laurie Montgomery, M.D., seems to be a misfit in the basement morgue of a large city hospital, where her inquisitive mind delves below the obvious causes of death of the bodies she examines.

Laurie attempts to tie together several mysterious deaths in otherwise healthy young patients who had undergone recent surgery, and finds there are those who would prefer that she stop searching so hard for the truth. She becomes a model of unusual persistence, in contrast to those people who are too busy in their own small worlds to see the big picture. After she learns that she is carrying a genetic marker for breast cancer, she also becomes a potential victim.

Another young pathologist, Dr. Jack Stapleton, is attracted to Laurie, but too self-absorbed to make a permanent commitment to her. But he finds he must take on Laurie's cause, as the two race against time to prevent further tragedy.

As usual, Robin Cook makes us think, and shows that we are vulnerable to those who might want to use medical technology for nefarious ends. But this time, he announces a reversal of previously held positions.

In the past, Dr. Cook believed that medical insurance should be reserved for catastrophic illness and for those who are the most economically vulnerable. He thus felt that most medical transactions should be made between the patient and the physician. This arrangement, leaving out the third party, causes both the doctor and the patient to "value the encounter more, which invariably leads to more time, more attention to potentially important detail, and higher level of compliance—all of which invariably results in a better outcome and a more rewarding experience."

Now, in light of the new medical information resulting from the genome project, Cook argues that our nation ought to move to a "government sponsored, obviously non-profit, tax-supported, single-payer plan. Only then will we be able to pool risk for the entire country, as well as decide rationally how much we should spend on healthcare in general."

Robin Cook's logic breaks down in the light of history, for the atrocities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century ought to make us take pause before entrusting the welfare of the masses to the hands of the few. Who would be entrusted with the awesome responsibility of "deciding rationally" how much to spend on healthcare—and, ultimately, who would live or die?

Read *Marker*, and enter into the world of medical intrigue. But come to your own conclusions, and critically analyze those of Robin Cook.

**Alieta Eck, M.D.**  
Somerset, NJ

**I Am Charlotte Simmons**, by Tom Wolfe, 676 pp, hardcover, \$28.95, ISBN 0-374-28158-0, New York, N.Y., Farrar Straus Giroux, 2004.

The darling of the literary elite when exposing the Wall Street "Masters of the Universe" in *Bonfire of the Vanities*, Tom

Wolfe is now anathema. The critics hate *Charlotte Simmons*, the book, just as they would despise poor Charlotte herself if they should ever meet her.

Charlotte is Momma's "good, good girl" from Appalachia, a brilliant scholar sent off to prestigious Dupont University with all the aspirations of her dying little hometown invested in her. Within one semester her parents, like so many American parents, find that they have lost their child, apparently forever. She is hopelessly lonely in the moral and intellectual cesspool of Dupont. Yet she can never again go home.

More than 400 readers have posted reviews on amazon.com, most of them missing the point entirely. One, while asserting that Wolfe "misses the real issues that affect college campuses," writes that "date rape doesn't just happen with mean, drunken frat boys," and wants to "grab the author by his trademark white lapel and scream 'Are you BLIND? She's DE-PRESSED!'" Like so many proponents of the therapeutic state, she'd send Charlotte off to the student health center, perhaps to get some Zoloft. Depression—rather than "sex, drinking, and sports," the only part of the book that she seems to understand—is the root problem. This reviewer even thinks that the book has a "*deus ex machina* Happy Ending."

After being deflowered in an utterly revolting and humiliating way at the out-of-town fraternity "formal," set for some reason in Washington, D.C., Charlotte is indeed in a deep clinical depression. Wolfe's portrayal of this state is worth the price of the book. But fortunately, the book's prototype nerd, Adam Gellin, immediately dismisses the thought of delivering Charlotte to Student Health when she unloads all the sordid details on him. Instead, he pulls her through the crisis with a devoted act of unrequited love.

The villain of the book is not Hoyt Thorpe, the alpha male, the coolest senior in the coolest fraternity, who ultimately gets what he deserves. Hoyt epitomizes the rawest defects in human nature. Fraternities haven't really changed much, as many reviewers observe. What apparently escapes them is the difference in the university itself,

which formerly tried to direct and control the baser drives and to set a higher behavioral standard. The post-modern university has thrown away its moral compass, negating the very legitimacy of Charlotte's question ("isn't it *immoral?*"). It permits, even facilitates, the up-ending of cultural standards. The upper classes imitate the language and dress of the underclass, just as depicted so brilliantly by British psychiatrist Anthony Daniels (Theodore Dalrymple) in *Life at the Bottom*.

The real villain is Victor Ransome Starling, whose biographical sketch from "The Dictionary of Nobel Laureates" begins the book. By removing the amygdala from cats, Starling had induced "a state of sexual arousal hypermanic in the extreme." Then, after viewing the bizarre actions of the amygdalotomized cats, the "control" cats manifested identical behavior.

"Starling had discovered that a strong social or 'cultural' atmosphere, even as abnormal as this one, could in time overwhelm the genetically determined responses of perfectly healthy, normal animals."

Dupont's milieu—with coed dorms (and coed bathrooms), expectations of promiscuous and consequence-free "experimentation," and omnipresent lasciviousness in dress and behavior—resembles such an experimental setup. There is no escape. Roommates are routinely "sexiled" from their own beds in the middle of the night. The library is a place to cruise for dates. But the most dangerous trap is the classroom.

Hoyt Thorpe deceives Charlotte, takes advantage of her, and dumps her without remorse. But she might have resisted—or at least recovered—had Victor Ransome Starling not first raped her mind. The gross encounter between the Governor of California and a coed, witnessed by Hoyt at the beginning of the story and obsessed over by Adam, seems an apt if crude metaphor for the university's spiritual assault on the younger generation.

Initially, Charlotte sees through the pseudo-intellectual claptrap that passes for intelligent discourse among such persons as the self-styled Millennial Mutants. She asks down-to-earth questions: "You

went—people go all the way to Africa just to look good?" Then Charlotte gets high on the "life of the mind" in the charismatic Professor Starling's class on neuroscience, where she is, for a time, a prodigy. Summoned to the Dupont Center for Neuroscience—the shining 21<sup>st</sup> century Xanadu of Science—she thrills at sitting "not three feet from him in the presence of ... the Future!" The chapter entitled "The Lifeguard" is a virtuoso account of how a master psychologist can exploit and manipulate the unsophisticated mind—using terror and kindness, sarcasm and wit, condescension and flattery.

Starling dissects Charlotte's first term paper, on the assigned subject of assessing the theory of evolution with regard to the conventional requirements of the scientific method. Evolution is a key concept in Starling's course, even though Darwin, of course, admittedly knew nothing about neuroscience. Having actually read *The Origin of Species*, Charlotte knows that Darwin viewed the origin of life as a hopeless inquiry. Darwin bows to the Creator—in Starling's view, probably because he wasn't progressive enough to conceive of being an atheist. Darwin's fundamental contribution is that he "obliterated the cardinal distinction between man and the beasts of the field."

Indeed, as Starling acknowledges, evolution is a "special case." No other scientific theory "merits consideration unless you can provide a set of contradictions, which, if true, would prove it wrong."

"'Ms.'—*Miz*—'Simmons,' said Mr. Starling, '...Did you by any chance think the assignment was to disprove the theory of evolution in 15 to 20 pages?'" She agrees that it would be presumptuous even to try. He claims that that aspect of her paper didn't interest him because after all, people had been trying to undermine the theory for almost a century and a half. But she wouldn't try such a nifty feat again, not after this interview. She has assimilated Starling's view—almost.

Her sense of self—"I am Charlotte Simmons"—could not long survive the

concept that everybody else was merely a "conscious little rock." Hoyt Thorpe, she concludes, is no more responsible for his predatory behavior than a cougar could be. Appropriately, the book's ending reminded the *Washington Post's* reviewer of Winston Smith's acquiescence to spiritual suicide in Orwell's *1984*.

While espousing evolutionary assumptions, the university simultaneously accepts radical feminist ideology, which collides with a fundamental biologic reality—that boys are different from girls—and that these differences are right and necessary. Women need men to protect them (Charlotte fell for Hoyt because he fought for her at the "tailgate"). Men need women to civilize them (and that is why Jojo, the only white basketball starter, pursued Charlotte).

In the not-so-happy ending, Charlotte is Jojo's girlfriend, helping him to achieve his potential as a basketball hero for a season. Passing by her in the stands, Professor Starling smiles at her "in that way." She takes it to mean, "Don't worry, I hold nothing against you for squandering your gifts." But could it be a smile of triumph, as he looks forward to conquering the next pretty, innocent brunette with a Southern accent?

The Ghost in the Machine isn't quite dead. Charlotte knows that she needs to hold that honest conversation with her soul, just as Momma said. But it's impossible to do it while believing that the "soul" should always be placed inside quotation marks.

The book makes much of Socrates drinking the hemlock for corrupting the youth of Athens. And what would be a just fate for the likes of Professor Starling?

While calling the book a "sermon" and a "polemic," the *Washington Post* reviewer, like most others, admits that he still couldn't put it down.

Physicians who care for the students or alumni of places like Dupont need to read this book. And parents about to entrust their son or daughter to an American university, especially a prestigious one far from home, also need to read it. Twice.

**Jane M. Orient, M.D.**  
Tucson, AZ