

vices for seniors. For example, Northcott and Milliken tell us that the high cost of providing health and hospital services to British Columbia's aging population is really the cost of care to the sick and dying rather than to the larger community of elders.

I felt that I knew British Columbia's elders better when I finished this book, but I still longed for a personal perspective and some philosophical ruminations about old age at the millennium. True, both of these were beyond the mandate set by the authors. But two scholars with such expertise in old age must have many insights into senescence. For instance, it seems clear that Northcott and Milliken are presenting us with two groups of elders: well-educated people who live in comparative comfort and have input into the political decisions that shape their lives and those who live in poverty and isolation, effectively disenfranchised from society. What, I wonder, are Northcott and Milliken's thoughts about this situation?

Dr. Mary Pipher, therapist author of the bible for feminist mothers, *Reviving Ophelia: Helping You to Understand and Cope with Your Teenage Daughter* (1994), has just published *Another Country: Navigating the Emotional Terrain of Our Elders* (1999). Pipher offers us some useful insights into old age and agism. She argues that we treat our elderly like children and fail to understand that their emotional characters were defined in a pre-Freudian world. Then we shut them off from society by limiting access to public spaces to those who are physically challenged or unable to drive. Pipher's analysis, however, is primarily rooted in the realm of emotion, downplaying the importance of money, housing, and health. Setting the two volumes next to each other on my bookshelf, I was left thinking what a powerful statement about aging would come from a synthesis of these two approaches. And what better place to situate such a study than in British Columbia, the premier Canadian retirement locale for much of this century?

*Holding One's Time in Thought:  
The Political Philosophy of W.J. Stankiewicz*

Bogdan Czaykowski and Samuel V. LaSelva, editors

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**M**ost of the seventeen essays in this handsome volume were first presented in 1995 at a colloquium on the political thought of W.J. Stankiewicz at the

University of British Columbia, where Stankiewicz (WJS) was a member of the Department of Political Science for three decades. The book's apt title comes from Hegel's description of the

purpose of philosophy: "to hold your time in thought." WJS's "time" is outlined in an introduction by the editors, a discussion between Alan C. Cairns and LaSelva, and in Ian Simpson Ross's account of the arrival of WJS, a nineteen-year-old Polish soldier, at the University of St. Andrews in 1941. There he encountered the continuing influence of Scottish idealism in moral philosophy. During five years of graduate study at the London School of Economics and Political Science, a period outlined by George Feaver (one of WJS's first students and, later, a colleague at UBC), he continued to live in a milieu where ideas, ranging from those of Harold Laski to Michael Oakeshott, were assigned high significance.

When WJS began his work, behaviouralism and relativism dominated the social sciences, especially in their most flourishing home, the United States. WJS saw both as destructive of civilization and social order, believing that they can tell us little about what it means to be "human" or contribute to any formulation of "a common good," without which a coherent society cannot exist. Liberalism and socialism both lead to a lack of social and political responsibility, since they are based on moral relativism and reject the possibility of norms of behaviour. Here the philosophical villains are Hume, J.S. Mill, and Marx. In the moral chaos of our time, when there is no accepted hierarchy of values and one person's ideas or opinions are as good as another's, and society is a "construct" of "the self," democracy and individual human freedom are destroyed. WJS, for both philosophical and experiential reasons, sees Marxism and its political expression in communism as the worst possible form of human organization.

Despite the demise of so many communist states, WJS believes that the Marxist mindset is still widespread and that the struggle against it must be maintained. According to WJS, the alternative to all these false doctrines is to be found in the tradition of Hobbes and Burke, whose "prudential conservatism" draws on humanity's accumulated wisdom and provides the only basis for individual freedom within a democratic state.

Today, with the increasing recognition of the bankruptcy of the behaviouralistic social sciences and a willingness to recognize the place of human motivation in the lives of individuals and communities, WJS has more intellectual company among political philosophers than he did when he began his studies. Several of his interpreters in this volume credit him with contributing to current efforts to create a new "Grand Theory," which, in the words of Quentin Skinner as quoted by the editors, is not "in the least shy of telling us that [its] task is that of helping us to understand how best to live our lives."

For this historian, who has no claim to expertise in political theory, these essays provide a wealth of illuminating and provocative reading. In such a feast, it is difficult to select the most substantial items. Two this reader finds particularly interesting are Robert Jackson's "Sovereignty and Relativism" and Jean Bethke Elshtain's "Reflections on the Crisis of Authority and its Critics." Both essays elaborate on a concept central to the thought of WJS: that sovereignty is essential to any political order, whether between states or in the state's relation to its citizens. Jackson argues for the importance of distinguishing between relativism and pluralism. "The former is properly to be scorned, but the latter is to be

celebrated, and it is the main function of State sovereignty – in its external dimension – to uphold the value of pluralism.” He contends that “State sovereignty ... is the only practicable arrangement that can enable our planet’s diverse human groupings to live together side-by-side in peace,” and he rejects “postmodern and cosmopolitan international relations theorists [and] humanitarians,” who see sovereignty as “an obstacle to global justice,” which ought therefore to be abolished.

Elshtain examines JWS’s thought in dialogue with that of Hannah Arendt and St. Augustine and, to some degree, with Luther, “both liberator and father of our travail.” In the process, Elshtain shows clearly that in both philosophical (theological) and political terms, acceptance of legitimate authority is the condition of freedom. In doing so she provides content for JWS’s “prudent conservatism”: “We must begin with the recognition that [authority] is the opposite of violence and coercive force; [and with] recognition of the extent to which our control over the world is limited ... for it is an intractable place where many things go awry and go astray.”

Can a way out of chaos be found? An appendix to this volume contains four essays by WJS, two of which are entitled “Ecology and Natural Law.” In a wide-ranging, complex, and highly theoretical discussion, WJS finds ground for a new understanding

of “natural law” and for the development of a perception of a common good from the “science of ecology,” the study of the relationship of plants and animals (including human beings) and their environment. This ground disappears as a practical hope in the face of WJS’s analysis of the flaws in efforts to apply an ecological perspective to the future of our planet: most geographers, environmentalists of various stripes, and the Green Party are found to be “determinists” and often Marxists or liberals whose false premises render their actions destructive. Despite his belief in the dominance of ideas, WJS recognizes that we cannot will ourselves to adopt a philosophy of natural law or any other “rational” basis for ordering the world. Perhaps WJS too easily disposes of the approach of the Harvard biologist, Edward O. Wilson. At least in his recent work (*Consilience: the Unity of Knowledge*, 1998), Wilson outlines the basis of a secularized theology of care for the Earth that may have wide appeal.

Altogether, the book evokes pessimism, even despair. In the concluding words of Elshtain’s essay, “a world to which and by which we are bound, but within which we are free to act – has vaporized. We are all alone with our freedom and coerced in ways beyond our imaginings.” Through their engagement with the thought of W.J. Stankiewicz, the contributors to this volume help to explain how we got where we are.