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SOCIAL SCIENCE

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## Social Science

**Barrows, Susanna. *Distorting Mirrors: visions of the crowd in late nineteenth-century France.***

Yale Univ. Pr. Oct. 1981. c.222p. bibliog. index. ISBN 0-300-02588-2. \$20. HIST/SOC SCI

Barrows discusses an influential group of writers in late 19th-century France who developed concepts of crowd psychology, among them Taine, Sighele, and Le Bon. According to the author, these men, fearing the onset of revolutionary disorder, erected a pseudoscientific edifice to justify their hatred for the masses. They argued that the crowd was an irrational, almost bestial organism that in times of past turmoil had brought disaster to the politics of France. The behavior of the crowd was, to these theorists, linked with sickness, degeneration, and alcoholism. As one might well imagine, the proponents of this view were conservatives; Emile Zola, who portrayed the crowd in *Germinal*, was an exception. While Barrows does a good job of showing the bias of the writers she treats, her own strongly expressed distaste for them interferes with her analysis. In particular, Le Bon is seriously underrated. Her analysis reduces her subjects to their political prejudices, thus imposing a distorting mirror of its own.—*David Gordon, Cato Inst., San Francisco*

**Bombardieri, Merle. *The Baby Decision: how to make the most important choice of your life.***

Rawson, Wade, dist. by Atheneum. Sept. 1981. c.271p. bibliog. index. LC 80-51246. ISBN 0-89256-138-6. \$12.95. PSYCH/SOC SCI

Changed social mores and improved contraceptive technology have made the current generation of young adults—themselves the product of the biggest baby boom in U.S. history—the first for whom parenthood is truly an elective state. Elizabeth Whelan's *A Baby? . . . Maybe* (LJ 11/1/75), the original how-to-choose manual, is enlarged upon here, with specific activities at each step of the decision-making process to help individuals and couples identify and articulate their feelings. Post-decision qualms are dealt with. The lists of readings and resources are superior. Recommended for general readers, informed laypersons, and specialists.—*Susan B. Hagloch, Tuscarawas Cty. P.L., New Philadelphia, Ohio*

**Fromm, Erich. *On Disobedience and Other Essays.***

Seabury. 1981. 135p. fwd. by Annis Fromm. LC 81-2260. ISBN 0-8164-0500-X. \$9.95. POL. SCI/SOC SCI

The only political party that claimed psychoanalyst/social philosopher Fromm's full allegiance was the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation during the early 1960s. These nine brief post-humous essays, reprinted from diverse sources, date from that period, and extend the sociopolitical concerns developed in his earlier books. There is a broad programmatic urgency to these essays—evident in Fromm's free use of

abstract concepts, in his advocacy of humanistic socialism as a solution to alienation and imminent calamity, and in his appeal to the "humanistic conscience" in each of us. Fromm only briefly touches on the dialectical relationship between obedience and disobedience; thus, a better title might be: "The Psychological Values of Humanistic Socialism." However, the present title may serve to make the work more attractive to those struggling to orient themselves intellectually in the world, especially young people. For popular collections.—*William Abrams, Portland State Univ. Lib., Ore.*

**Greeley, Andrew M. *The Irish Americans: the rise to money and power.***

Harper. 1981. 215p. index. LC 81-47353. ISBN 0-06-038001-2. \$12.95. SOC SCI

In his *That Most Distressful Nation* (LJ 5/1/72) Greeley concluded that the American Irish, having achieved economic and social respectability, were no longer "Irish." Now, based largely on further research by the National Opinion Research Center, he reverses that conclusion. His judgments (on Irish-American success, family life, Catholicism, politics, drinking, etc.) are bound to be controversial, and his chip-on-shoulder manner of presenting them is bound to irritate some readers. However, he has marshalled some impressive evidence on these topics. On the question of Northern Ireland he seems less knowledgeable and certainly less convincing—India and Pakistan or Federal Canada and Quebec seem more valid analogies to that situation than South Africa and Zimbabwe. For academic libraries and public libraries serving communities with a substantial Irish-American population.—*J. F. Moran, SUNY Coll. at Fredonia Lib.*

**Helgesen, Sally. *Wildcatters: a story of Texans, oil, and money.***

Doubleday. 1981. LC 79-7867. ISBN 0-385-14637-X. \$9.95. SOC SCI

This is an impressionistic, journalistic account of three generations of Texan oil independents ("wildcatters"). Through the stories of Monty Moncrief, his son Tex, and his grandson Dick, the wildcatters' way of life is portrayed in bits and pieces. Willingness to take risks, clannishness, a strong belief in private ownership and competition, and the ability to cope with the ups and downs of technology characterize all the independents, regardless of their many differences. The attention of the wildcatters, once limited to Oklahoma and Texas, has expanded into other areas of the world, leading to adventures in Israel and Africa. While the story told here leaves vivid images, one might wish for a more factual narrative, since little else of substance is available on these interesting and influential entrepreneurs.—*Jack Forman, Mesa Coll. Lib., San Diego State Univ.*

**Hightwater, Jamake. *The Primal Mind: man and reality in Indian America.***

Harper. Aug. 1981. c.256p. bibliog. index. LC 80-5929. ISBN 0-06-014866-7. \$12.95. PHIL/SOC SCI

Hightwater regards himself a product of "cultural fusion"—an "amalgamation