ists, far from glorifying the self, chronicle its disintegration. He jokingly displays a self-deprecating pseudo-awareness of his own condition, while finding it increasingly difficult to make any lasting commitment or to mourn his personal losses. He finds that old age and death are becoming an obsession, and, most basically, he finds that he wishes to be vastly admired, not for his accomplishments, but simply for himself, uncritically and without reservation.

A large share of the horror Lasch depicts he blames on the self-deception practiced by many in positions of cultural power. The author, an historian, holds such intellectuals responsible for trivializing the past, rendering it banal or camp, and eviscerating protest by transforming cultural criticism into something chic and escapist: "strategies of narcissistic survival present themselves as emancipation from the repressive conditions of the past." Genuine soul-searching notwithstanding, Lasch is skeptical of middle-aged hippies dropping out from Exxon, "getting in touch with their feelings," and taking up weaving. It is the superficial and temporary nature of these "conversations" that Lasch finds narcissistic. In the world of letters, he notes, authors are relying on "anti-confession," pretending to work courageously through their memories but, in reality, merely titillating the reader with tidbits from the lives of celebrities. The interior world is thereby rendered slightly droll. Less obviously, contemporary novelists on the apparent verge of an insight "often draw back into self-parody, seeking to disarm criticism by anticipating it. They try to charm the reader instead of claiming significance for their narrative."

Lasch's book is arresting and provocative, synthesizing the work of such men as Otto Kernberg, Heinz Kohut, Jan Huizinga, Joseph Heller, Donald Barthelme, and others from an extremely wide range of American culture. Despite the obvious utility of Narcissus as the book's controlling symbol, however, there is a real lack of unity and direction. Many of the chapters are too obviously recycled magazine articles, forced to confront Procrustes before they meet Narcissus.

This impression is strengthened by the absence of a clear rationale for those subjects discussed at length vs. those lightly touched upon. An obvious gap in Lasch's discussion, for example, is any meaningful treatment of American religion. He notes that "the ideology of personal growth, superficially optimistic, radiates a profound despair and resignation," and he calls it "the faith of those without faith." One senses that he might have worthwhile things to say about the effects of "the therapeutic mentality" on religion, but they are left unsaid. Many readers, perhaps most, will find themselves agreeing with Lasch's jeremiad, but he is disappointing in his hints of solutions to the vast array of societal problems. The book is weighted by the accumulation of detail, and occasionally seems lost in the miasma it describes. Lasch begins by noting that Americans are preoccupied with the "sense of an ending" in society, adding to the irony that his book ends quite abruptly, even arbitrarily.

"In the seventies, it appears that the prostitute, not the salesman, best exemplifies the qualities indispensable to success in American society. She too sells herself for a living, but her seductiveness hardly signifies a wish to be well liked. She craves admiration but scorns those who provide it and thus derives little gratification from her social successes.... She remains a loner, dependent on others only as a hawk depends on chickens. She exploits the ethic of pleasure that has replaced the ethic of achievement, but her career more than any other reminds us that contemporary hedonism, of which she is the supreme symbol, originates not in the pursuit of pleasure but in a war of all against all, in which even the most intimate encounters become a form of mutual exploitation."

—The Culture of Narcissism

The U.S. Crusade in China, 1938-1945
by Michael Schaller
(Columbia University Press; xiii + 364 pp.; $14.95)

David McLellan

We have had many books on America's wartime relations with China, but none as readable, revealing, and free of tendentious argument as this one. Schaller has made magnificent use of his archival research to rest his narrative as much as possible upon the actual words and recommendations of the actors themselves. And what a cast of characters comes tumbling forth! The follies, deceits, and chicaneries of Chinese and American officials are recorded in their own
words, words that Schaller has woven into an absorbing narrative analysis of the colossal failure of Americans either to understand the Chinese or to understand the dynamics of Asian nationalism. While we might question Schaller's tendency to take the Chinese Communists' wartime avowals of pro-Americanism at face value, they clearly were more seriously intended than was appreciated at the time. Schaller does not make heroes out of Stilwell and the foreign service officers whose careers and lives were later blasted, but it is evident that they were far better informed and far more realistic about China than the emissaries sent out by Roosevelt and Truman to mediate the incipient civil war, and far more honest than the pro-Chiang clique in Washington.

The basic flaw in American policy was the gap between Roosevelt's aspiration to see China a united and effective ally in the war against Japan (and later against Soviet encroachments) and the incapacities of Chiang's regime. Roosevelt hoped to reform Chiang's government along liberal American lines, and few American officials understood that Chiang, albeit a nationalist, was totally incapable of transcending the rapacious and outmoded social system with which he had come to terms in 1926. Schaller observes: "More than any other factor, the social crisis of the masses determined China's political evolution and its eventual relation with the United States. Yet almost all contemporary observers ignored this point." Without land reform and attention to the needs of the peasants, Chiang was doomed. Unable to tap the power of the masses, Chiang's regime rested on the deadwood of the past; his personal power was so much at the mercy of the landlords, the moneylending classes, and the warlords that he could not risk making the reforms indispensable to the survival of his rule.

Given the strategic situation of 1942 and 1943, Washington's support of Chiang is understandable, but when the point was reached at which it was pure folly to continue that support, then the judgments made must be questioned. But by 1944 and 1945 there were Americans, notably Ambassador Hurley and General Wedemeyer, for whom Chiang's salvation had become a personal crusade. While American planners hoped to use Chinese manpower as a vast force against Japan, the Nationalist regime intended to use the American alliance to accumulate reserves of money, weapons, and influence to support its palised existence and to defeat the Communists. Only monumental arrogance can explain the presumption with which Chiang and the Soongs, abetted by their American friends, expected the U.S. to dole out billions for which no accounting was to be asked. Chiang's war effort consisted largely of reinforcing his personal power at the expense of the Communists, relying on his conviction that no matter what happened Washington would have no choice but to bail him out. This attitude was almost totally ignored by relevant American decisionmakers, and thus the myth of Chiang and the KMT as the only authentic expression of Chinese nationalism was perpetuated. The Communist alternative was not only ignored, but its pro-American potential was dismissed out of hand.

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Schaller notes that even Stilwell shared the liberal assumption that there was no alternative to the American model for bringing about reform. If only a democratic and reformist alternative to Chiang could be found, Stilwell believed, America's aspirations for China would be achieved. Only the foreign service officers were daring enough to suggest that the alternative to Chiang might be the Communists, and that Washington should cultivate them, since they were not all that tied to Moscow. Schaller suggests that a more pragmatic approach might have reduced our overblown expectations and produced a more detached attitude toward Chiang instead of putting him in a position to dictate to America the terms for his support.

Another result of the gap between Roosevelt's aspirations and Chinese realities was the personal and bureaucratic bitterness that further poisoned the atmosphere during the postmortems on who lost China. Stilwell found himself opposed by Chennault who, backed by Chiang, Soong, and Joe Alsop, promised that airpower alone could defeat the Japanese and that there was no need to place Chinese forces under Stilwell's command. Stilwell, whose own view was fatally flawed by the belief that if only he could get rid of Chiang all would be well, was later undercut by Hurley, who in turn was being undercut by the foreign service officers who correctly thought that his understanding of the situation was preposterous. Yet another bureaucracy, Naval Group China, tried to exert the Navy's influence and ended up by bolstering the most reactionary and anti-Communist faction within China—Chiang's secret police under Ti Lai. While the other American officials tried to avert the Chinese civil war by moderating the inernecine conflict, Naval Group China (under Admiral Milton Miles, who was infatuated by Ti Lai's fanatic anticommunism) worked to sab-
In Innocents of the West by Joan Colebrook

Michael Kerper

In Orthodoxy, G.K. Chesterton warned the British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candid friend. "The British public against the solicitude of "the candid friend," the type of person always on hand with supposedly candidacy.