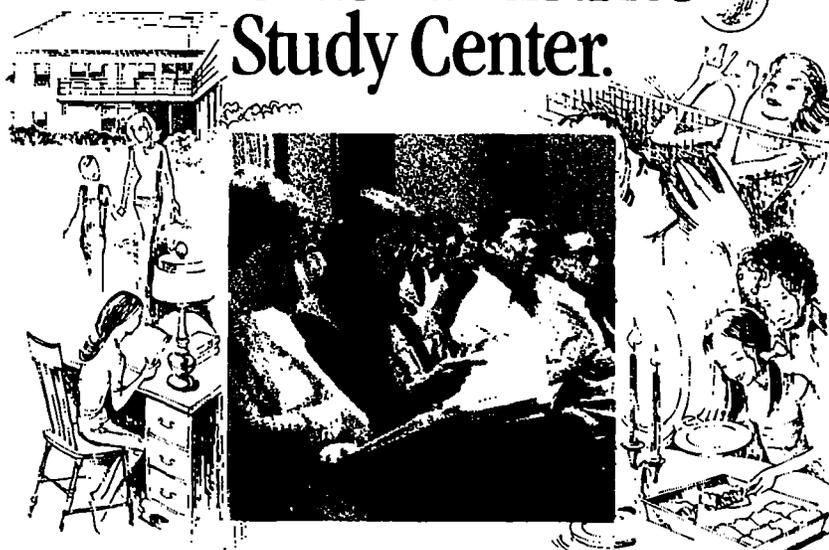


tracing of events associated with nuclear weapons from 1946 to 1963, where its real emphasis lies, is a straightforward and competent account of what is treated, and indeed the individuals and developments treated are among the most prominent features of that period. Mandelbaum's approach is not wrong, only incomplete. *The Nuclear Question* would be an excellent undergraduate textbook in a course where lectures and

other readings could be counted on to fill in the gaps. The chapters entitled "The Failure of Liberal Diplomacy" and "The Foundations of Stable Deterrence" are especially clear and well argued. They manifest the virtues rather than the faults of Mandelbaum's penchant for simplification. In these chapters the impact of his expository style, which depends heavily on categorizations like "the three questions of strate-

gy" and "the two schools of diplomacy," is measured and provides a useful tool for imposing order on a mass of complex historical data. (It is only when Mandelbaum elevates these categories, particularly the first set, drawn from Clausewitz, to the level of first principles by which to judge all subsequent developments that their usefulness evaporates.) In an introductory treatment such categories help to reduce to sharp blacks and whites the many grays encountered in the history of the nuclear era. They also help Mandelbaum pursue his argument for the superiority of the traditional pattern of diplomacy over the liberal model pursued by the United States in the early nuclear years. Chapter two is recommended reading for anyone concerned with nuclear arms limitations. In showing clearly, and in an understandable style, the weaknesses of an idealistic, all-or-nothing approach to restricting nuclear weapons, this chapter paves the way for serious discussion of the achievements of the limited, one-to-one model typified by such treaties as the Limited Test Ban, SALT I, and SALT II. Mandelbaum's argument for the advantages of traditional diplomacy is forceful and convincing, and it constitutes a significant contribution of this book. [VVV]

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William Pitt
the Younger
by Robin Reilly

(G.P. Putnam; ix + 502 pp.; \$19.95)

Bruce Cole

Robin Reilly is too modest about what he hopes to accomplish with this life of the younger Pitt (1759-1806):

"It is not possible in a single volume to describe in detail the events of Pitt's lifetime or the intricacies of his policies....I have therefore given little more than an outline of the events, selecting for special attention those episodes which seem to shed light on Pitt's character and personality, and giving some weight to three important influences in his life: his health, his alcoholism and his sexuality. This is not a work of deep historical research. It is an attempt to

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assemble and interpret material, much of it already published, which may help towards a better understanding of the man who was Britain's youngest, and perhaps greatest, Prime Minister."

In fact, Reilly's is an excellent narrative of Pitt's private and public worlds, both of which are perhaps less mysterious than is usually assumed.

Pitt's weird youth is often not emphasized sufficiently as a factor in both his emotional reserve and his politics. With five close relations who were to varying degrees deranged, it is not surprising that he developed obsessive self-control supplemented by "relief" in politics and alcohol. The elder Pitt set him out for public life early, and while still a teenager port was prescribed for his fleshly ills. For all the warmth of Pitt's private relations, he could not become deeply involved with others. But Reilly's speculation that he was homosexual is pointless. The traditional explanation is the likeliest: Pitt was undersexed.

One consequence, as the author demonstrates, was that Pitt was too loyal a friend. He declared himself "the shyest man alive," and it might have been better if he had known when to tell people to get off. This was irksome enough as a personal problem, but at times the nation also suffered. For instance, after resigning in 1801, he rashly promised George III that he would support the incoming Addington administration and not mention again Catholic emancipation, in which cause he had given up office. He made that promise because he feared for the king's sanity and because the new (and incompetent) prime minister was his childhood friend, the son of the very doctor who had addicted him to the port that helped kill him.

Still, for England there was not a better choice in those years than Pitt. Fox, the other major figure from 1783 to 1806, was self-centered, opportunistic, and Francophile, albeit that "most unscrupulous of politicians...possessed an innate probity that burst unbridled from the shackles of his ambition." Reilly skillfully shows the importance of Pitt's peacetime reforms in administration, trade, and finance, as well as his sincerity regarding the abolition of the slave trade and electoral reform (though Pitt yielded too much to pressure in deferring further work on these as he was caught up in the struggle with France). While he was a mediocre war leader,

lacking his father's strategic vision, "It is, nevertheless, easier to criticize Pitt's policy than to find one which, in the circumstances facing him, would have produced a more favorable result."

Reilly comes, quite properly, to Whiggish conclusions about Pitt's career. He lists his accomplishments and failures, and then pays tribute to Pitt's most important legacy, his rectitude:

"Pitt was truly a man of principle, of one single principle that transcended all others and on which no compromise was possible. The welfare of his country, with which he associated the preservation of the Constitution and loyalty to the Crown, was the mainspring of his life, and for it he was ready to sacrifice cherished causes, personal advantage, and even his own reputation for integrity. This dedication was absolute....To his successors he left an example of leadership, fortitude and self-denial. To his country he bequeathed the priceless legacy of hope."

That is no little contribution, in any political season. [WV]

The View in Winter by Ronald Blythe

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; xiii + 270 pp.; \$12.95)

Berel Lang

Readers have often been asked to pay the price of boredom for the findings of social science, and Ronald Blythe's *Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village* provided a sharp reminder that the people and lives that subsidize the generalizations of sociology and psychology are at least as interesting as the theories themselves. Blythe's achievement in *Akenfield* was his ability to recapture the voices of the inhabitants of the fictionally named but real village of Akenfield; they spoke about themselves as they spoke for themselves. Blythe's narrative, leading the reader from one village to another, completed an unusual portrait of English rural life, at once dramatic and reflective. In his new book, *The View in Winter*, Blythe turns the same practice to the phenomenon of old age—the *problem* of old age, as he argues—but with less success: The dif-

ficulty of getting people to address directly the question of what it is to be old is itself part of the problem.

The premises of *The View in Winter* are both concise and indisputable. Because of increasing life expectancies, old age is more and more a factor in our society. Although society has conceded to the old their status as a social or political "problem," nobody is willing to listen to the old people themselves: not the young, because the old are alien; not the middle-aged, because of the fear of aging in a youth-centered culture; not even the old themselves, because they have no reason to think that either what they say or anything else they are able to give is desired by anyone in the society. This last point is part of a harsher and more general reality to which Blythe calls attention: The old in our society are addressed out of a sense of duty. They themselves make no claims on love—no advances to emotion, no indications of sexual desire, no expectations of future return.

This is undoubtedly a great theme, long known, as Blythe notes, to authors as various as Sophocles, Montaigne, and Shakespeare; it is new only in the number of people against whom the prejudice now works. One might well argue that, in the United States no less than in England, aging has taken the place of sex as a vice to be practiced only in private (extending even to the obscene language attached to those discreet institutions of the aged like "adult" villages or "convalescent" homes). But the question remains of how the aged themselves feel and speak about this when the pressures for silence are great, and here even Blythe's powers of evocation are not enough.

To be sure, his ear is keen as always in its selection and reporting. So we hear Thomas, General Haig's batman in the "Great War," now, at eighty-five, regretting the medals he had then refused to collect; and Margaret, ninety-one, still devoted to her early training with Maria Montessori, scolding the school-girls who visit her for preferring to listen to her stories rather than speaking for themselves; the retired farmer, seventy-seven, who cherishes his new freedom—"I wander for days in my car now. I don't stay in, I get out. 'Off we go,' I say. Away, Away!" But neither from the old themselves nor from others whom Blythe introduces—the social workers speaking about aged clients, the