position that, in the American context, entails a concern for power but also a preoccupation with law and sovereignty; and (3) the minimalist disposition that accepts the idea that some government power is necessary while also regarding it as distasteful and dangerous. The legacy of these frames, assumptions, premises, and dispositions is a thin democracy. Most innocuously, thin democracy results in malaise; most perniciously, it prepares the ground for totalitarianism.

The antidote to thin democracy is strong democracy, which "rests on the idea of a self-governing community of citizens who are united less by homogeneous interests than by civic education and who are made capable of common purpose and mutual action by virtue of their civic attitudes and participatory institutions." Again, Barber's argument is intelligent and carefully developed. He punctuates it with references to political theorists, from Locke to Habermas; he explores rather than merely dispose of objections and caveats to his own line of reasoning; he scrutinizes the nature of democratic regimes and the forms of citizenship; and he pauses every now and then to muse in a more speculative fashion. For example, there is a nice little piece on the nine functions of talk in the democratic process.

"But for all the elegance of Barber's treatise, it could be argued that the success of Strong Democracy depends finally on the viability of his suggestions for change. The key questions are: Are these suggestions realistic enough to be taken seriously? And if they are serious proposals for political change, does Barber offer us a roadmap for getting from here to there?"

Page 337 of the book is a twelve-point "Strong Democratic Program for the Revitalization of Citizenship." The list includes such items as a national system of neighborhood assemblies, a civic video/ex service to equalize access to information, recommendations for experiments in informal law justice and electronic balloting, select elections to local office by lottery, and a program of universal citizen service. According to Barber, "This program does not illustrate strong democracy; it is strong democracy."

It appears that Barber is perfectly serious about implementing his program. In fact, he addresses the need for "facilitating conditions" for an agenda of this kind—conditions such as civic education, the appropriate kind of leadership, and the acceptance of certain prevailing morals and values. What Barber does not provide, however, is a precise indication of what will motivate us to change. Where is the engine that will pull us to his place? The trouble is not that he fails to address this problem. He does—but with uncharacteristic imprecision. Thus, for example, although it may be true that neighborhood assemblies meet his criteria of being realistic, workable, and able to deal concretely with the obstacles that modernity poses in the way of participation, we are left wondering how they will one day come to dot the landscape. Does Barber expect his own book to be so convincing a treatise that there will be a grassroots movement to follow his lead? Does he expect a few key people to pave the way? Or does he anticipate that natural evolution will take us there?

Barber's insufficient attention to that agent of change does not significantly diminish the importance of his book. For even if it were merely an intellectual exercise—which it is not—the problems of thin democracy are manifestly apparent and Barber's exploration thereof original and brave. We deserve to be disappointed by his collective interia and provoked into doing something about it. Strong Democracy is a push down that long road. WW

WITNESS TO WAR: AN AMERICAN DOCTOR IN EL SALVADOR
by Charles Clements
(Bantam Books; 268 pp.; $15.95)

WEAKNESS AND DECEIT: U.S. POLICY AND EL SALVADOR
by Raymond Bonner
(Times Books; 404 pp.; $16.95)

THE MORASS: UNITED STATES INTERVENTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA
by Richard Alan White
(Harper & Row; 319 pp.; $14.95)

Aaron Segal

The once tiny rump of books on El Salvador and Central America has recently reached floodside proportions. The latest crest brings one extraordinary effort (Clements), one good try (Bonner), and one failed attempt (White).

Charles Clements has made a long physical and emotional journey: from the Air Force Academy to Vietnam as a military pilot and then to medical school and a year as a pacifist doctor with the Salvadoran...
guerrillas in their besieged stronghold of Guazapa. His moving autobiographical wit-
ness is the first detailed account of life among the rebels. It is also a compassionate ac-
count of what it is like, with a minimum of resources, to provide health care to ci-
vilians and combatants on all sides in the midst of a civil war. Clement's book is
painfully honest, introspective, and thoughtful. It hits home, whether Clements is
discussing why preventive health mea-
sures work poorly in the face of air attacks
or how to use native plants as medicinal
drugs.

This book should forever destroy the
myths about Cuban, Nicaraguan, and other
foreign influences on the Salvadoran guer-
ri1has. Again and again Clements hears of
the young and old who risk their lives in
response to the brutal, random violence of
the Salvadoran military and security forces;
the terror and exploitation inflicted on
tenant farmers and landless laborers; and of
the lack of options for the rural poor. He
meets rebel hardliners as well as devout Christians, and he presents them all in this
compelling book. Most of all he meets him-
self, an American pacifist doctor refusing
to bear arms in a war being fought against
a shiftless army bearing advanced American
weapons yet preferring to brutalize civil-
ians. His is a telling witness.

Raymond Bonner tells in one volume the
story of U.S. involvement in El Salvador,
primarily from 1979 to 1984, and the story
of the Salvadoran civil war. His relentless
pursuit of documents and sources results in
a scathing condemnation of Washington's
duplicity. Bureaucrats convinced that sup-
port of the corrupt Salvadoran military was
essential to prevent a "communist take-
over," covered up human rights atrocities,
illegal uses of aid money and of U.S. mil-
tary advisors, and many other outrages.

The hard-core ideological element of the
Reagan administration upped the ante and
torpedoed possible negotiations.

Less insightful is Bonner's story of the
complex Salvadoran civil war. A two-week
visit with the guerrillas in Morazan Pro-
vince corroborates the impression of their
motions given in Clement's book. But the
economy gets short shrift, as do the political actors opposed to both the military
and the Marxist-Leninists.

Bonner's major premise is that the U.S.
could have and still should use the with-
drawal of aid to curb the mad dog Salva-
doran military. However, a withdrawal of
aid had little impact on the similarly bru-
talizing Guatemalan Army. What happens
if the U.S. uses its stick and the Salvadoran
military either finds other benefactors or
disintegrates, as happened in Nicaragua un-
der Somoza?

This intelligent, extremely well-re-
searched, and humane book examines the
recent past but pulls back from a hard look
at future options.

Richard Alan White has attempted to
present the big picture, an overview of U.S.
involvement in Central America. Since his
text summarizes in three paragraphs the
social structure of five very different coun-
tries, it contributes confusion rather than
clarity. There is a thumping polemic based
on seeds of documents, hearings, and other
sources tracing parallels to Vietnam and to
the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Cur-
iously, there are individual chapters on each
of the Central American countries except
Nicaragua. These are analytically insipid,
and the discussions of counterinsurgency
doctrines, the role of the CIA, U.S. aid, and
"reform versus repression" are stale.

U.S. influence in El Salvador and Central
America is great, but its leverage is often
negligible. Subject to constraints arising
from U.S. domestic politics and to the in-
ternal machinations of highly idiosyncratic
societies in Central America, U.S. poli-
cymakers grasp at ideological and other
straws and at straw men. Clements and
Bonner forcefully remind us, from different
perspectives, that the Salvadoran reality is
a military murdering its own people and
driving them into rebellion.

RADICAL TRAGEDY:
RELIGION, IDEOLOGY AND POWER
IN THE DRAMA OF SHAKESPEARE
AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

by Jonathan Dollimore

(In November, 1534, the English Parliament
passed the Act of Supremacy declaring the
king Supreme Head of the Church of En-
land and then went on to make it high
treason to deprive the king of any of his
titles. The break with Rome was complete.
Henry VIII was free to establish the legit-
imacy of his divorce and remarriage and to
enrich himself and his favorites at the ex-
 pense of the Roman church.

This was not without its dangers, how-
 ever, for in the eyes of the Roman church
the king was now an outlaw. His strategy,
which became an important and carefully
cultivated policy of the Tudor monarchy,
was to encourage the view that the monarch
was, divinely ordained and that to disobey
him was to rebel against God's law. In the
words of Shakespeare's Richard II:

Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord.

This theory (or doctrine) of the divine
right of kings was a direct outgrowth of the
Reformation conflict of church and state.
Previously, the prince had authority only
through the church. When the various na-
tional princes broke with the Roman church,
they converted their limited right of sov-
erignity into a free hold and the divine right
conceit became a major asset. St. Paul's
“There is no power but of God: the powers
that be are ordained by God" had provided
for centuries a comprehensive theological
explanation of power, including as it did
every instance of power. Any governing
body requires what Max Weber called the
necessary "reigning fictions"; for the Tudor
monarchy this was the myth of divine right.

According to Lawrence Stone in Crisis
of the Aristocracy, "the real watershed be-
tween medieval and modern England was
the period 1580 1620." His account of the
crisis of authority in religion, ideology, and
power that destroyed this carefully nurtured
Tudor myth of the divine right of kings and
precipitated the civil war remains virtually
unchallenged since its publication in 1965.
The drama of the period was very much
about this crisis—and often, despite official
censorship, explicitly so. Shakespeare's
Richard II asserts the divinity of his crown,
but his fate denies it; and in Henry VIII (which
was written only five years later, in 1599)
He, on the eve of battle, muses:

"... I think the king is but a man, as I am.
The violet smells to him as it doth to me; the
element shows to him as it doth to me; all his
senses have but human conditions. His ceremonies
laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man. . . ."

There is, as I have said, something of a
scholarly consensus nowadays that there was
a collapse of political authority around the
turn of the century, a collapse reflected in
the drama of Shakespeare and his contem-
poraries. In the area of "ideology and
power," then, Jonathan Dollimore's thesis
seems uncontroversial. There is no such
consensus, however, respecting a pervasive
religious crisis, and Dollimore is conse-
quently more revisionist here than in his
political interpretations. However, because
of the dialectical nature of Renaissance
drama it is often difficult to give a definitive

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