novels—*Ride with Me, Mariah Montana*, and *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*—probe the dark plights of ranchers and farmers of the West (in both past and present) with a wit and passion reminding me of the one author, Wendell Berry, whose absence from the text seems the greatest loss.

Watts finishes the book as he began it, with an explanatory epilogue craftily titled "Mutual Gains from Exchange Between Economics and Literature and Drama, or Mutual Neglect Through Academic Protectionism?" This is a spirited essay, arguing mainly for economists to grow more sensitive to human concerns. Wilhelm Röpke is upheld as an example of how an economist, aided by a broad liberal arts training, can provide "a more humane understanding and appreciation of people's wants and constraints, especially in presenting and explaining economics to policymakers and the public at large" (309). There is a place for the poet in such a remedial process as well, as Watts well captures in this quote by Philip Wicksteed: "'The man who can make his fellows desire more worthily and wisely is doubtless performing a higher task than the one who enables them more amply to satisfy whatever desires they have" (313). This mutual exchange is the vision that fuels both Watts's elaborations and his diligent searching out of literary texts that reveal at least one half of the enterprise. His two appendices, each a brief foray into intellectual history, reveal first "How Economists Have Used Literature and Drama" and also "How Literary Critics and Historians Have Used Economics." These are research pieces, and they dampen the tone from Watts's own rather vigorous essays and the literary potpourri he offers.

Indeed, a constant tension between natural engagement and over-elaboration is woven throughout this book, and, at least for an economics amateur such as myself, the road can be tiring. However, it is a road well worth traveling because of the solid technical insights from Watts and especially because of the frequent glimpses in the excerpts of economic ideas come to life.

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American Creed: Philanthropy and the Rise of Civil Society, 1700–1865

Kathleen D. McCarthy

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003 (319 pages)

This is an impressive book. It is one thing to relate the history of an institution or other easily bounded entity—a person, a war, a party, a well-defined chunk of chronology and geography. It is another thing, and a far more difficult task, to trace the history of an idea, trend, or an elusive social ethos. However, this is exactly what Kathleen D. McCarthy has done in her latest book, *American Creed: Philanthropy and the Rise of Civil Society, 1700–1865*, and has done with great success.

By far the book's greatest virtue is its clarity. In the first two pages, she defines the three central concepts from her title: "American creed," "philanthropy," and "civil society." She also unabashedly wants to defend those concepts and argues that they are both quintessentially American and undeniably good. Civil society is easy to explain: the "broad range of institutions and activities that fall between the family and the state." These institutions of civil society are good, McCarthy argues, because they allow for the political empowerment of ordinary people, including the most marginal individuals of a society. They also—and here McCarthy relies on sociologist Robert Putnam—allow for the creation of social capital, or trust, which is the glue of any democratic society and its best defense against the threat of a hierarchical rule by force.

These institutions of civil society are quintessentially American because, through them, ordinary men and women shaped not only their own semiautonomous communities but the nation itself. Even more important than their actions in and through these institutions was the faith that they had in them—faith that they, regardless of their status in society, had a constitutionally protected "right to create organizations, lobby for change, and participate in political and economic developments through the voluntary sphere." That faith is what McCarthy calls the American creed and philanthropy—by which she means the giving of both money *and time*—is the way Americans lived out the creed.

Thus far there is nothing very new or earth-shattering in McCarthy's work. Alexis de Tocqueville made the same observations about American voluntary societies in the 1830s. McCarthy's real contribution comes in her insistence that these voluntary organizations and the civil society that they helped create did more to shape nascent American democracy than their contemporaries, the Jacksonians, who influenced politics directly. In fact, she persuasively argues that the Jacksonians, who are traditionally credited with launching modern American democracy, were in fact distorters of and threats to the real, and universally inclusive, principles of democracy embodied in the American creed

McCarthy's work should be praised for these two interrelated achievements, which are bound nicely in each of the two sections of the book. The first is a more inclusive narrative of political activity in the early nineteenth century, and the second is her persuasive revisionist critique of Andrew Jackson and his legacy.

In the first part of the book, she traces the emergence of civil society in America from the colonial era to about 1830. Her title, incidentally, which claims that her narrative will cover the years 1700 to 1865, is a bit misleading or overly ambitious. Her treatment of the eighteenth century is limited to a single chapter and is thus a little thin. In the next four chapters, however, which might as well have been titled "gender," "religion," "region," and "race," she slows down and deals thoroughly with the multi-dimensional and truly inclusive nature of America's emerging civil society from 1800 to 1830.

McCarthy's emphasis on diversity and inclusiveness is not some kind of obligatory politically correct add-on. Instead, her emphasis on outsiders, as well as the white, male, elite insiders of American philanthropy, is entirely appropriate for her subject. What McCarthy wants to make clear is that American civil society created a space in which even the most politically powerless (women, African Americans, Catholics, and Jews) could take charge of their own communal and political destinies. Women were involved in charities to help other women. Catholics and Jews created their own autonomous communities in the midst of Protestant America. The Protestants themselves created hundreds of voluntary organizations both to spread the gospel and to reform the iniquitous institutions of the young republic. Finally, last but certainly not least, free African Americans fought hard against the monstrosities of slavery in the South and racism throughout the country.

In the second part of the book, McCarthy describes how Andrew Jackson almost single-handedly destroyed America's young civil society. Here McCarthy not only challenges much of the previous Jackson scholarship but successfully redefines the very terms of the debate. Just as the first section was not inclusive for inclusiveness's sake, neither is this second half revisionist for revisionism's sake. McCarthy's argument is powerful and long overdue.

The traditional interpretation of Andrew Jackson is that he rid the American political system of its last vestiges of republican elitism and ushered in the age of real common-man democracy. However, instead of Jackson the liberator, McCarthy sees Jackson the repressor, who wanted to turn back the clock on thirty years of voluntary organization. The civil society that she describes in the first section of the book grew up organically and with great energy in the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Thus, its infrastructure was largely in place when Jackson took office. Jackson, however, responded to this tradition of grassroots activism with intense antagonism. In almost every instance in which "the people" organized for significant change, Jackson tried to shut them down. In 1829, when thousands of evangelical men and women petitioned on behalf of Native Americans in the Southeast, Jackson's cronies sought to table the petitions before they could be read. Democrats dealt with the abolitionist movement in exactly the same way. The infamous "gag rule," as it was called, tabled every antislavery petition that reached Congress from 1836 to 1844.

McCarthy's explanation for these reactionary measures is simple: Jackson was a Southerner. Not only did he obviously have a vested interest in protecting slavery, but he, like most in his region, did not share in the values that made up the American creed or the institutions that made up civil society. Although the South had voluntary organizations, these were "more dependent on the supervision and control of the white male elites, less active in reform, and less likely to play significant economic roles than their counterparts in the North." In the South, in other words, patriarchy reigned, not only on plantations but also in politics and the voluntary sphere. Thus, Jackson dealt with grassroots dissent in the nation in the same way that a Southern governor would deal with dissent in his state, or a slave owner his plantation. The result of all this was that

the antebellum South never built up any social capital—the natural and good fruit of civil society—but remained a Hobbesian world "held together by violence, coercion and force." This is the violent world that Andrew Jackson understood and that he shared with the rest of the nation as president.

When those organizations broke down, however, or were silenced by a patriarchal president, the civil space for "ritualized combat" collapsed, and real combat followed. Organizationally, McCarthy makes this point by following her chapter on Jackson with a chapter on the widespread civic unrest America experienced during and after his presidency. Her argument, again, is clear and well-substantiated: Once Americans had lost hope that their government would even listen to their peaceful protests in the voluntary sphere—lost their faith in the American creed, in other words—they were forced to seek their ends through violent means. John Brown's murderous rampages in Kansas and Harper's Ferry—both of which received financial and moral support from wealthy East-Coast allies—are perfect examples of what frustrated abolitionists had to do to make their voices heard.

In conclusion, McCarthy draws a distinction between what she calls "government" and "governance." The former is the mechanism of political power that, depending on the people holding that power, may or may not respond to the interests of its citizens. The latter is a social ethos: a widespread faith that citizens can influence politics through institutions of their own making. Traditionally, scholars of American democracy have looked only at government and the supposedly growing power of the enfranchised. McCarthy successfully turns this model upside down. Real democracy is neither a mechanism nor a process, and it is definitely not a personality. Instead, simply put, democracy is civil society. Without it, as the history of antebellum America demonstrates, there is only coercion and repression on the part of the government, regardless of its structure and rhetoric, and frustration and eventual violence on the part of the governed.

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On Nozick
Edward Feser
Toronto: Thomson Wadsworth, 2004 (98 pages)

After the publication of his last major work, *Invariances: The Structure of the Objective World* (2001) and his premature death in 2002, Robert Nozick became once more a major source of academic debate and controversy. In spite of his later contributions in different fields of analytic philosophy, Nozick's name is of particular prominence among political philosophers. His *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974) is still considered the most relevant answer to the book that reshaped the landscape of contemporary political philosophy, John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971).