

and does not attempt to verify the story by reference to Sumner's works or David Donald's biography of Sumner. This ignoring of standards of historical evidence is indicative of Thurow's approach. When he says that the principles of Jefferson "had to be transformed," he means it in a normative or mystical sense. History and the historical figure of Abraham Lincoln are merely put at the service of this moral demand.

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From Centennial to World War: American Society, 1876-1917. By Walter T. K. Nugent. (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1977. Pp. xv, 249. Notes, bibliography, index. Paperbound, \$5.50.)

This is the third volume to be published in the Bobbs-Merrill *History of American Society* series. The purpose of the series, and of each volume, is to break away from the historian's common preoccupation with political history and to provide a conceptually expanded view of American social development. This formidable task requires covering a wide spectrum of topics, sketching out the interrelationships among them, and integrating ostensibly discrete developments into a meaningful synthesis. Synthesis construction of this sort normally depends for information and insight upon a large body of specialized studies, but the very topics directly relevant to an analysis of American social change are precisely the ones that have been most neglected by historians. The authors in this series, then, must sail through uncharted waters and make maximum use of their skills to fit together the pieces of the past social mosaic. Few authors could confront these challenges successfully. Even fewer could produce an analytically sophisticated and gracefully written synthesis. Walter T. K. Nugent has done both. The result is an informative, readable, and intellectually stimulating overview of American society.

The four decades between the nation's centennial celebration and its entry into World War I witnessed enormous demographic, economic, and social change. How such changes

—in population composition, residential and occupational structures, communications and transportation networks, patterns of social and economic organization—impacted traditional institutions and values is the central question to which Nugent directs his attention. His answer is at once imaginative and provocative. He posits a shift from the *laissez faire* negativism and rampant individualism of the Gilded Age to an evolutionary pragmatism and a developing sense of social consciousness in the first decades of the twentieth century. To be sure, Nugent does not fall prey to the common error of arguing that such modes of thought were universally diffused across all levels of society. His explicit focus is on what he defines as the middle class—i.e., the white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, property owning sector of the social structure.

In presenting a synthesis with such sweep, Nugent has also created something of a nitpicker's paradise. Specialists on any one of the dozens of discrete topics that Nugent integrates into his stimulating synthesis will likely be dissatisfied that their area of concern has not been explored in greater depth and with more attention to subtle nuance. Some will draw attention to glaring omissions; e.g., there is a discussion (pp. 137-42) of the ways in which "progressive intellectuals" transmitted their ideas to the larger society, but no mention of the expansion of press associations, the increasing use by local newspapers of wire news, and the impact of these shifts on the range and quality of information available to most citizens. Still others will quarrel with some of the specifics of Nugent's interpretation. The early twentieth century efforts by "middle class" progressives to restrict the electoral franchise and to erode the functions of political parties seem, for example, rather self consciously aimed at reversing the widespread citizen participation in politics that had characterized most of the nineteenth century. Moreover, those efforts were only one side of a multifaceted attempt by corporate-capitalist elites to control their society. The success of those efforts, and the later emergence of interest group pluralism as the dominant mode of political aggregation, depended in the first instance upon the demobilization and "departisanization" of the mass electorate. Nugent fails to draw out such connections and implications because he focuses too exclusively, and somewhat imprecisely, on the allegedly "middle class" character of "progressivism."

Yet it is only because Nugent has done so much, and so well, that he lays himself open to such criticism. For it is the nature of synthesis to treat with commonalities, rather than subtle shadings of distinction; to ignore some topics, while creating a framework for their subsequent interpretation; and to present a cogent and unambiguous argument, even at the risk of highlighting anomalies resistant to paradigm integration. On these critical counts *From Centennial to World War* is preeminently successful, and the penetrating quality of its analysis puts it on the level of the earlier syntheses by Samuel P. Hays and Robert Wiebe. With Nugent's analysis of how the American middle class responded to industrialism and searched for order, the level of the intellectual dialogue over the impact of modernization has been considerably elevated.

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The Healers: The Rise of the Medical Establishment. By John Duffy. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976. Pp. ix, 385. Notes, bibliography, index. \$12.50.)

John Duffy has made a brave attempt to write a one volume history of medicine in the United States. Proceeding chronologically and topically, Duffy draws upon more than three decades of research and writing to survey more than three centuries of scientific and technical advances which, in conjunction with institutional developments and reforms, enabled medicine to achieve the preeminence that it enjoys today among the professions.

The book covers a staggering amount of ground. The changing popular image and social status of physicians, the efforts to license and organize them, the evolution of medical education, the impact of various wars on medicine, the growth and decline of medical sects, the emergence of the public health movement, and the rise of scientific medicine are but a few examples of the topics treated. Reflecting an awareness of the new social history, Duffy even devotes a chapter (albeit meager) to women and minorities in medicine.

Approximately two thirds of the book is devoted to medical developments prior to 1900, a fact which necessarily results in a discussion of modern medicine that is too brief.