In this book, Lieberman demonstrates a keen and informed mind and brings to his writing the savvy and insider's perspective that comes from 45 years in education. He is the author of a number of books on education beginning as far back as 1956. He writes well, and with good humor, although the book is quite a long read.

Lieberman provides as much data and as many cogent arguments on this topic as anyone could reasonably expect—thorough is a word that applies to him. Nevertheless, I am left with some questions. For instance, assuming a market system in education is a good thing, is it enough to get us what we want? Is there more to it than that? Is a market arrangement but one necessary piece in the puzzle? How much do we also have to attend to, say, individual and collective values, or social and political realities, as well as markets? And if Lieberman is right and voucher plans won't necessarily lead to a market system, how enthusiastic should we be about them? Is there any chance that vouchers will get in the way of local control and take one more important responsibility away from people, in this case the education of their own children? Will vouchers or tax credits serve to lock in education as another product to buy and consume and thereby rob people of the satisfaction of creating something that reflects who they are? Will an unintended outcome of voucher plans be the government's getting its hands on private schools and imposing on them what it has already done to public schools, its usual number: bureaucratization, standardization, and "mediocritization" (also known as the post office syndrome), all the while steadily making pitches for more and more resources? Minneapolis is turning its schools over to a private company to run. How excited should we be about that?

Yes, I've got questions. But then again, a good book both informs you and gets you thinking—and Lieberman's book has done that for me.

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The Moral Sense
James Q. Wilson
New York: The Free Press, 1993, xviii + 313 pp.

James Q. Wilson holds that human beings share a common moral sense. Underlying the diverse moral rules and customs we find in different cultures and historical periods, he claims, are a set of dispositions and emotions that have a common ethical content. The purpose of his book is to describe that moral sense, to explain its sources, and—implicitly at least—to endorse it.

In content, according to Wilson, the moral sense prescribes *sympathy* (it is obligatory to avoid cruelty to others and admirable to extend them compassion and aid; self-sacrifice on their behalf is especially admirable); *fairness* (goods should be distributed equitably, favors returned, and

people judged impartially); *self-control* (one ought to control short-term impulses for the sake of long-term goals and obligations); and *duty* (obligations should be honored even in the absence of rewards or punishments). Wilson notes that the individualistic cultures of Western Europe and especially America tend to emphasize fairness and sympathy, whereas the communitarian cultures of Japan and elsewhere in East Asia tend to emphasize duty and self-control. Nonetheless, he claims that every society endorses all four principles in some form.

Wilson is considerably less clear in describing what the moral sense is as a mental state. He appropriates the concept of a "moral sense" from Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith, David Hume, Thomas Reid, and other thinkers of the 18th century. One of the central debates in this tradition was whether the moral sense is affective (a feeling or sentiment) or cognitive (a literal sense, like vision). Wilson seems to side with the former camp. He describes it as a feeling, compares it with desires, and speculates that its seat is the limbic system in the brain, known to be involved in various basic emotional responses. Yet he also describes it as a belief or set of judgments; and in many specific cases he treats it as the product of thought. Describing duty, for example, he refers favorably to Hans Eysenck's theory that it is the product of classical conditioning of the autonomic nervous system, yet he also says that "it is in part something we impose on ourselves as we think through what it means to be human and on what terms we can live with ourselves"—a straightforward cognitive account.

Wilson argues that the moral sense is a product of many factors: genetic endowment, stimulus-response conditioning, economic incentives, cultural influences, and child-rearing practices, among others. But its fundamental source is the desire for affiliation or attachment with other people, and especially the reciprocal bonds between parents and children. "Our moral senses are forged in the crucible of this loving relationship and expanded in the enlarged relationships of families and peers. Out of the universal attachment between child and parent the former begins to develop a sense of empathy and fairness, to learn self-control, and to acquire a conscience that makes him behave dutifully at least with respect to some matters. Those dispositions are extended to other people. . .to the extent that these others are thought to share in the traits we find in our families" (226).

One problem with Wilson's defense of this hypothesis is that he takes for granted the conventional distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding motives, and the accompanying view that only the latter count as moral impulses. Wilson's theory gains much of whatever plausibility it has from this assumption that morality is social in content and function. But he does not examine or defend that assumption and seems oblivious to some of the peculiar things it leads him to say. For example, he says that valuing self-esteem is an other-regarding motive—apparently because it does not fit the usual conception of self-interest.

The concept of self-esteem points to another problem in Wilson's theory. Self-esteem is in part a sense of self-worth, of having lived up to one's moral standards. Why do we value this? Wilson claims that as social animals we desire the approval of others—and not merely as children who are dependent on our parents. Even as adults, he says (in a generalization he takes as self-evident), "Scarcely a waking hour passes when we do not wonder how we appear in the eyes of others." This is the root from which he thinks the moral sense grows.

Yet he is aware that virtue is not a popularity contest. "Since we want to be admired, we want to conform, within reason, to the expectations of others," Wilson writes. "But at some point a remarkable transformation occurs in how we judge ourselves. We desire not only to be praised, but to be praiseworthy." What is the nature of this "remarkable transformation"? What is the psychological mechanism by which the child's desire for its parents' approval matures into the kind of moral strength that can act for an ideal in the face of social ostracism? Wilson does not say; he admits it "is not well understood." But if we do not know *how* morality arises from the desire for approval, then what reason do we have for assuming there is a causal link in the first place? Why assume that the moral sense arises from a desire for approval, rather than, say, a recognition that one's own long-range interests require that one act in accordance with certain principles? This is not to deny that for most societies historically, and for many individuals even today, morality does have tribal roots. The question is whether this is a matter of psychological necessity.

A final problem concerns the normative import of the book. Wilson claims at the outset that he is not trying "to state or justify moral rules" nor "to discover 'facts' that will prove 'values.' " As a social scientist, his goal is merely to describe the facts. Yet he clearly has a normative end in view. He is clearly concerned, for example, that the moral relativism so common today is weakening the bonds that make society viable. He praises the Enlightenment for promoting individualism and universalism, under the rubric of individual rights, but worries about "the challenges to self-control and duty posed by radicalized individualism. If rights are all that is important, what will become of responsibilities?"

Speaking more generally, he insists that our moral sentiments must be treated as valid: "There are many ways of knowing; the teachings of the heart deserve to be taken as seriously as the lessons of the mind." But it simply is not possible to spin normative gold from this sort of straw. Emotions are not tools of cognition, and neither is majority opinion.

Wilson's book is best seen as a modern statement of the classical conservative thesis, going back at least to Edmund Burke, that morality is a matter of emotion, not reason; that it is rooted in the impulse to emulate and seek approval from those to whom we feel attached; and that the circle of attachments spreads outward from the family.

Wilson sets this view in the context of a wide range of work in psychology, anthropology, history, economics, and game theory. That makes his book a useful one for those who want a survey of what social science has

to say about morality as human beings actually experience and practice it. And his commentaries on this literature are often insightful. But in the end, the empirical evidence he reviews does not add up to a proof of the conservative theses.

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The Wisdom of Henry Hazlitt
Henry Hazlitt
Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1993, 358 pp.

A few months before Henry Hazlitt's death on 8 July 1993 at the age of 98, the Foundation for Economic Education republished 31 of his essays from its monthly magazine *The Freeman*. They follow an Introduction by Hans F. Sennholz, tributes written by Bettina Bien Greaves and Edmund A. Opitz for Hazlitt's 95th birthday in 1989, and Ludwig von Mises's tribute on Hazlitt's 70th birthday in 1964. Hazlitt's autobiographical response at the 1964 celebration is also included.

The reprinted essays date from 1956 to 1985; 1971 is their median year. A few of them also appeared as parts of his books. Recurring topics include the logic of a market economy, the calculation-and-knowledge problem of socialism, poverty and welfare programs, growth of government intervention, and the uphill battle facing libertarians. Noting the bias implicit in speaking of the "private" and "public" sectors of the economy, Hazlitt suggests sometimes substituting the more forthright terms "voluntary sector" and "coercive sector."

Libertarians are handicapped, as Hazlitt says, in having to debate with bureaucrats and special-interest spokesmen who, unlike themselves, naturally have technical expertise and the details of government programs and interventions at their fingertips. In several of his articles, nevertheless, Hazlitt deploys a remarkable variety of facts and figures. He shows that he is no mere ivory-tower philosopher of freedom.

Yet he *is* a philosopher. He dissects the prize-winning *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974), in which Robert Nozick tries to legitimatize the state, though only a minimal state, as opposed to anarchy. He faults not so much that conclusion as the defective arguments that Nozick employs and his rambling, involuted, "self-heckling" style. Nozick rejects any form of utilitarian justification of his position and even caricatures utilitarianism.

Hazlitt identifies the attempt of Nozick and some other libertarians to ground their policy preferences in "natural law" or "natural rights," as in John Locke's self-ownership axiom. Hazlitt traces the appeal of natural law largely to its ambiguity. No two of its votaries seem to agree on just what it enjoins. Hazlitt quotes Jeremy Bentham: "A great multitude of people are continually talking of the Law of Nature; and then they go on giving you their sentiments about what is right and what is wrong: