

because it contains everything significant about him that is known to French scholars. And Pichois does place his subject rather well in Haussmann's Paris and its literary world. But the creator, as distinct from the man, is a mere apparition in this book. One never gets the sense of being in the presence of perhaps the greatest poet of the 19th century, or of the remarkable mingling of romanticism and realism he embodied. That "strange classic of unclassical things"—as the percipient publisher Pierre Jules Herzog once called him—is not fathomed in these pages.

## A Dubious Solution

**What Kind of Life:  
The Limits of  
Medical Progress**

*By Daniel Callahan  
Simon and Schuster.  
288 pp. \$19.95.*

**Reviewed by  
Amitai Etzioni**

*University Professor, George  
Washington University; author,  
"The Moral Dimension"*

NEARLY EVERYONE is concerned with increasing healthcare costs. So the question raised by Daniel Callahan's new book seems at first perfectly reasonable: How much is enough? Doubts set in, however, when we find the author arguing that the problem is not inefficiency, government intervention or profiteering physicians—but our own pursuit of the wrong values. We want to live too long, and expect medical advances to make this possible.

As a result, says Callahan, costly new medical technology is being used to provide what might be called (my term) junk-health: extending lives of poor quality. In a contemporary application of a '60s counterculture idea, he suggests that less is more; science and technology are suspect; "setting limits" is better than the quest for growth; and we should often merely offer comfort and amelioration where we now attempt a cure.

It is important to stress that the issue being talked about here is not whether to keep people going as vegetables or completely fettered to machines. Callahan means to limit care for those who might be returned to full functioning: patients in need of chemotherapy or organ transplants, as well as people who are ill and "too old"—in their late 70s or early 80s.

The moral justification for the author's position is far from self-evident. It is clear that many whose treatment he wishes to curtail find their quality of life satisfactory. Nobody, for example, is forced to submit to dialysis. Obviously, patients who do would rather be hooked up to a machine three times a week for four hours and lead an otherwise near-normal life, than die. On what moral grounds are we to prevent them from having this service?

The counterargument asserts that they are using taxpayers' money. Again, one must ask what the moral justification is for not funding, say, the bone-marrow transplants Callahan opposes, if we continue to spend billions of dollars exploring outer space, maintaining obsolete military bases, and so on. It is not apparent why we should distribute healthcare according to some set of national priorities, while leaving everything else as maldistributed as it is.

Moreover, the consequences of a change in values from "do all you can for your loved ones" to "enough is enough" should not be taken lightly. Healthcare often entails a considerable cooperative effort by members of the family, nurses and physicians. An ethic that justifies cutting care short would soon lead to dumping more of the infirm in public institutions, and—Callahan's predictions notwithstanding—to skimping on necessities from nursing to antibiotics.

But the author is likely to be challenged most of all on the practical steps he pro-

poses to implement his plan. He would have a central government agency determine societal—not individual!—needs for healthcare. Priorities would include law and order, a solid economy, defense, procreation, and education. He then would have the agency pay for the services required to bring the vast majority of Americans (80 per cent or so) up to par. Some additional services would be provided by employer-based insurance. Anything beyond that would come from one's own pocket.

To opponents of his scheme who might protest that even the USSR is refraining from so much central control these days, Callahan answers that we have such a system already in place—only it is implicit. He prefers to have it out in the open and streamlined. As someone who lives in a Washington eaten up by interest groups, I find this an invitation for more porkbarreling.

Skeptics who consider Callahan's position morally dubious and politically naïve will point out other ways to deal with healthcare costs. It might be feasible, for instance, to move Federal funds from where they are most outrageously wasted to the healthcare areas in greatest need, without a comprehensive planning system. Or we might place a ceiling on the annual growth in the budget for hospitals and nursing homes—while allowing the staffs of each to allocate the money internally as required. Strategies to reduce the enormous inefficiency and some profiteering in this sector would of course also be helpful.

Finally, I do not share the alarm Callahan's views reflect about some rise in the proportion of the GNP dedicated to healthcare. The figure was 9.2 per cent in 1980, and it was up to 11.5 per cent in 1989. Assuming a slightly slower growth rate, the proportion would be 13.6 per cent by the year 2000, and 15.7 per cent by 2010. Why should that prospect make us break out in hives? Why couldn't we buy somewhat fewer other goods (e.g. delay the purchase of newer model cars a few months, respond somewhat less to the latest fad in clothes), and buy more kidney dialysis, bone-marrow transplants, and similar health requirements? Why is that "too much to ask?"

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### Coming Next

Phoebe Pettingell  
on

A. N. Wilson's  
"C.S. Lewis: A Biography"

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The author goes on to suggest several modest steps that might be taken to loosen present restrictions. He counsels political overseers and agency executives to reduce some constraints, particularly in the areas of personnel and procurement. He also favors exploring new ways to make the suppliers of government services accountable for satisfying their clients' needs. Further, he urges that overseers clarify what they expect from agencies, and that operators be held responsible for attaining reasonably consistent and measurable goals.

Those proposals might very well be beneficial, especially given the generally positive effects achieved by business deregulation. But they do not address the ideas that have caused bureaucracy to be overregulated in the first place.

Interestingly, in his otherwise magisterial treatment of American bureaucratic life, Wilson virtually disregards the doctrines of public administration. Dominant in the early and mid-20th century, they continue to influence approaches to good government and conceptions of public service. Management—as opposed to administration—has no place in these outdated notions. I think proponents of deregulation in government, like Wilson, ignore the persistence of these ideas at their peril. My own experience with governmental reform leads me to believe that formulating and testing new “post-bureaucratic” doctrines to replace the old ones is essential to the process Wilson hopes will unfold.

## Romantic Realist

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### Baudelaire

By Claude Pichois

Translated by Graham Robb

Hamish Hamilton/Viking.

430 pp. \$24.95.

Reviewed by  
George Woodcock

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A few years ago I reviewed in these pages Rosemary Lloyd's excellent collection, *Selected Letters of Charles Baudelaire: The Conquest of Solitude*

(NL, 7/14-28, 1986). That extraordinarily sad and moving volume was compiled from the definitive collection in French, *La Correspondence de Baudelaire*, edited by Claude Pichois and published by Gallimard in 1982. Pichois is possibly the leading Baudelairean of our day. In France, where he has a chair at the Sorbonne, he has edited the definitive Pleiade edition of the poet's work. At Vanderbilt University in the U.S. he heads the Baudelaire Center.

Now a biography under his name has appeared. The French edition was published in 1987; the present translation, done by Oxford Baudelaire scholar Graham Robb, came out in England last year. There is some confusion about the actual authorship. Only Pichois' name is on the cover, while the title page includes a reference to “Additional research by Jean Ziegler.” Ziegler is the grandson of Eugène Crépet, who knew Baudelaire in his last years and was his first biographer.

In his Foreword Pichois seems to give his collaborator a more active role when he says that “I and Jean Ziegler felt that it was time to write a new biography of Baudelaire.” And now, although the book has no erratum slip, we are told in an accompanying information sheet for reviewers that “the book is co-authored by Claude Pichois and Jean Ziegler. Both names are to be cited when attributing authorship.” I mention this to do justice to Ziegler, and to remind readers that he should be remembered whenever, for convenience, I use the name Pichois. Publishers cannot expect reviewers to spend time correcting their errors.

The result of the collaboration is a volume whose accomplishments call attention to its deficiencies. Like many writers who lived obscure and, on occasion, deliberately furtive lives, Baudelaire left a broken trail behind him that makes new biographical material difficult to find. So a great deal of the information in *Baudelaire* has been gathered from published statements made during its subject's life, or shortly afterward by friends, acquaintances and enemies.

A few of these people are more closely identified than before, but his relations

with the women he may have been involved with are not greatly clarified. Similarly, the early past of Jeanne Duval, the poet's mistress and the “Black Venus” of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, remains impenetrable. Ultimately we must turn to the correspondence for the most complete picture of Baudelaire's life. It forms an exceptional, if oblique, autobiography to which this book does not add much.

Pichois seems to lay a claim to originality in his remark that Eugène Crépet's *Etude biographique*, revised by Jacques Crépet, “has never been replaced” and has “until now been the only reliable biography of Baudelaire.” His own work, he implies, will henceforth occupy that space. The contention simply underlines the parochial character of French literary scholarship. For while Sartre's *Baudelaire*, say, is a hollow and windy book that contributes almost nothing to a serious study of the poet, Enid Starkie's 1971 English biography was sensitive and competent and did justice to Baudelaire's personality, literary environment and work.

Pichois' book, in fact, has clear limitations he is not unaware of, since he actually draws the reader's attention to them. “This biography is not intended to be a history of Baudelaire's thought,” he informs us—and indeed, it is so concerned with personal relationships and practical matters like debts and publications that, once the poet's boyhood has been discussed, there is little about his later intellectual development.

A worse omission is the lack of critical attention to Baudelaire's writings. Admittedly, this is not the first duty of a biographer, yet it is difficult, for example, to get the great row over *Les Fleurs du Mal* into perspective without a somewhat fuller account than the one Pichois gives here of the merits and demerits of the poems that provoked prosecution. In such cases inadequate criticism serves biography badly. Furthermore, one must register a protest against the unbelievably bad verse translations that accompany Baudelaire's splendid poems when they are quoted.

Still and all, admirers of Baudelaire should have this volume on their shelf