tions. Yet in *Psychology's Ghosts* he advances as fact his own opinion about what makes people happy, namely, “commitment to a few unquestioned ethical beliefs.” I know some pretty cheerful people whose beliefs you wouldn’t touch with a pitchfork.

Kagan prefaces *Psychology's Ghosts* with a promise that he will make some constructive suggestions for change, but in his last chapter he doesn’t do much more than air his complaints on a loftier scale. And a section titled “Promising Reforms” meanders around before briefly alighting on Thomas More, the Old Testament, Chairman Mao, the late psychologist John Bowlby, Hollywood movies, and mathematician John von Neumann. Subheads such as “Look for Patterns” and “The Need for Patience” feel tacked on.

So who are psychology’s ghosts? The spooks pop out only at the curious end of this book, where they encounter “the muse of history, reclining on a cloud … continually altering the scenery and rewriting the script so that new generations speak new lines.” Kagan continues:

The muse smiles as she watches each cohort rage wildly at ghosts, trying to make sense of a script with a permanently unfathomable meaning while insisting that their lines are better than those of their neighbors. Although the initial role assignments were determined by throws of the dice, the muse is willing to give a new role and a revised script to those who pay the proper fee. To a select few, she whispers her secret: “Play your role with passion, even if you suspect that it is expedient, and allow the compassion you had as a child to balance the urge to always maximize the self.”

A man approaching the end of a remarkable social science career wants to speak philosophically? Fair enough, and lay readers will find much to admire in Kagan’s humanist approach. But as the corrective to an entire profession, *Psychology's Ghosts* displays a rather insubstantial regard for literary style and scientific particulars. Social scientists may prefer to find their “way back” to Jerome Kagan’s earlier work.

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**ARTS & LETTERS**

**Record of Achievement**

*Reviewed by Michael O'Donnell*

**GEORGE ORWELL** (1903–50), the moral compass of the 20th century, had his own true north: farming and fishing in peace. He spent the last years of his life on the rural island of Jura, off Scotland, fighting tuberculosis and writing his sixth and final novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949)—one of the great books of our time.

In his diaries, Orwell (born Eric Arthur Blair) does not discuss his novels directly, but the terse, factual entries recording weather and the number of eggs given by the hens each day do offer a sense of his ideal working conditions. It is hard to say whether he craved distraction or merely kept his priorities straight when one reads entries like this: “Diary not kept up for several days owing to pen being mislaid.”

Orwell’s diaries were first published in 1998 as part of the 20-volume *The Complete Works of George Orwell*. The diaries are now available in a single volume for the first time in the United States. Written from 1931 to 1949, they remind us that most of Orwell’s life was not so pastoral. Instead, it was filled with dramatic adventures that fueled his writing and shaped his politics. The journalist George Packer has called Orwell an “empirical absolutist,” meaning that he hated to write about a thing he had not personally experienced.

The early entries cover Orwell’s days as a tramp, a period that provided material for *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), and his subsequent investigation of poverty in the industrial north of England, from which he drew for *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937). This volume’s lacuna is Orwell’s experience fighting the fascists during the Spanish Civil War. Plainclothes policemen in Barcelona seized the one or two diaries that record-
ed those events, and delivered the work to the Soviets. Though the writings likely remain in the archives of the former KGB, Orwell transformed them into literature as well, with the extraordinary memoir *Homage to Catalonia* (1938).

Of greatest interest are entries from the periods of Orwell’s life that he did not turn directly into books. His World War II diaries are the highlight. Although all of the entries feature Orwell’s direct prose style, there are occasional hints of the novelist at work: “Characteristic war-time sound, in winter: the musical tinkle of raindrops on your tin hat.” And there are ominous passages that reveal his unusually clear view of the awful century unfolding, such as this one from June 1940 that prefigured his 1945 novel *Animal Farm*:

> Where I feel that people like us understand the situation better than so-called experts is not in any power to foretell specific events, but in the power to grasp what kind of world we are living in. At any rate I have known since about 1931 . . . that the future must be catastrophic. I could not say exactly what wars and revolutions would happen, but they never surprised me when they came. Since 1934 I have known war between England and Germany was coming, and since 1936 I have known it with complete certainty. . . . Similarly such horrors as the Russian purges never surprised me, because I had always felt that—not exactly that, but something like that—was implicit in Bolshevik rule. I could feel it in their literature.

Orwell volunteered for military service days after Germany invaded Poland, but was turned away because of poor health. His frustration comes through in entries despairing of the uselessness of writing at such a time. Determined to contribute somehow, he eventually became a sergeant in the Home Guard and produced war propaganda for the BBC. This was a sharp irony, for he had lashed out in the past against propagandists who worked safely away from the frontlines. Recalling just such a passage from *Homage to Catalonia*, Orwell spotted the hypocrisy and ruefully chastised himself: “I suppose sooner or later we all write our own epitaphs.” As the late Christopher Hitchens nicely puts it in this volume’s intro-
duction, when Orwell discovers one of his own contradictions, “he tries his best to be aware of the fact and to profit from it.”

Yet self-awareness could not overcome an admirable, scrapping pluck: an unsuppressed, hackles-up reaction to events of the 1930s and ’40s that cast right and wrong into sharp relief. It was a time for standing up and taking sides. Thus, if Germany invaded England, Orwell vowed privately to himself, “there is nothing for it but to die fighting, but one must above all die fighting and have the satisfaction of killing somebody else first.” For a man who died battling totalitarianism with his typewriter, these words are a fitting epitaph.


Guided by Voices
Reviewed by Darcy Courteau

In the Kuwaiti desert in March 2003, before 800 soldiers of the Royal Irish Regiment, British army colonel Tim Collins made a dazzling eve-of-battle speech. With Shakespearean flourishes and the moral fine-tuning of Jehovah, he instructed the troops to “tread lightly” in “the birthplace of Abraham,” though some would kill, others would be killed, and there would be “no time for sorrow.” Iraq’s children would one day acknowledge that the “light of liberation in their lives was brought by you.” Reporters and their audiences, including President George W. Bush, were electrified. Months later, however, Sam Leith, a writer and former literary editor of The Daily Telegraph, spoke to a high-ranking officer who suspected the speech had sunk like a stone before the immediate audience, youngsters more worried about staying alive in the desert than in history books.

Leith recounts the story in Words Like Loaded Pistols, his brief, rambunctious handbook of rhetoric, to illustrate a larger point. If you want folks on your side, you’ve got to speak their language. Collins would have done better to borrow a page from General George S. Patton, who roused his soldiers with a profane promise to get them home—the fastest route being through Berlin, where he’d personally shoot the so-and-so Hitler, “just like I’d shoot a snake!”

To help his readers both to hone their own rhetorical skills and to train their noses to detect baloney when the scent wafts their way, Leith breaks down the basics of rhetoric, the art of persuasion systematized by Aristotle. He often provides practical advice: When confronted with your past failures, talk about building a better future. But “if you’re arguing against someone about what to do in the future, find something in the past with which to discredit him.”

Pistols is not all pop how-to. A self-con-