nings that happen to kids during the crucial years between birth and 3-4 years old. Nor are they going to exert a lot ... East 

It's entirely possible that American schools and teachers aren't what they sed to be, but then what is? Kids and amilies are certainly different. A generation ago, there were considerably fewer families where both parents worked outside the home. If Junior oded out during first period for three weeks running, somebody eventually

A few months ago, the U.S. secretary of education declared with effusive ratitude that actions taken in response to A Nation at Risk have already had measurable affect on the average core of high school seniors on standardized tests. Since the typical public high school system needs all year to ear up for Arbor Day, you don't have to be a confirmed cynic to harbor a few louts about so remarkably speedy nd comprehensive a recovery. But with such vacuous officialese draws to a lose public education's latest season of isisment—a niemandus-dilemma followed by the predictable self-ongratiation that terminates the natural life cycle of any bureaucratic roushaha.

Whether there's something wrong with American schooling isn't at issue, nd you need neither national commisions nor private panels to prove it. All ou need is to see the agonized baffleent on the face of the kid who's tryng to make change for you at the local McDonald's, or the panicked eyes of he checker at Shop-Rite when her computerized cash register beeps its thril protest at an improper command.

Probably it's sheer blashminy to ask whether reading St. Augustine's Confessions or Oedipus Rex is the solution o their problems. Or whether "fostering analytical life skills" is really what rt, literature, history, and philosophy are all about. Or whether the most basic goals of mass education are identical to or even compatible with those of classical learning or technocratic scholarship. These, in any event, are questions to which The Pudiia Pro-}

It is a matter of record that Israel is the subject of far more political and media scrutiny than its Arab neighbors. Indeed, of all countries, Israel is second only to the Soviet Union in the amount of air time and newsprint it receives in the United States. That in itself is not a matter of concern. But, Zev Chafets charges in Double Vision, much of this attention is distorted or biased.

Chafets, an American native who emigrated to Israel in 1967, became director of Israel's Government Press Office, a position that afforded him an opportunity to witness first-hand the way American journalists cover Middle Eastern politics. His conclusions are disturbing. Since 1973, he writes, each of the three key American groups—press owners, journalists, and politicians—has, for reasons of its own, chosen to distort the Arab-Israeli conflict.

To begin with, the companies that own the television networks, the newsmagazines, and the great newspapers have become huge corporations with wide-ranging international interests. Long ago they shed their sensitivities about advertising revenues from local department stores. Today they are vitally concerned with "forces at play in the national and international economy. And since 1973, none of these forces has been more dramatic, and more influential, than the economic and financial power of the Arab world." Chafets isn't claiming the existence of a conspiracy, but simply the evident self-interest of media compan-
The Detroit News no less than three times—on November 23, 25 and 26, 1979—carried news stories that declared the mosque in Mecca rescued from the rebels who had taken it over and never explained the discrepancies in these accounts.

Ned Temko of the Christian Science Monitor, in his eagerness to find an American hook for a news story about the PLO, asked the PLO spokesman about his organization's reaction to the death of Elvis Presley.

Yasir Arafat, so carried away by his own dovish rhetoric, replied to Barbara Walters when she read a clause from the Palestinian National Covenant: 'about the need to destroy Israel, "I did not remember that."

David Ottoway of the Washington Post compared Saddam (“The Butcher of Baghdad”) Husayn to an “American politician on the election hustings.”

Ottoway's colleague Jonathan Randal found advantages resulting from a large-scale massacre in Syria in February 1982: “What emerged from the Hama rubble, according to local residents, was a respect for the government in large part born of fear but also of a feeling of avoiding even greater catastrophe. Some analysts have argued that the destruction of Hama ... marked the birth of modern Syria.”

Double Vision combines wit, style, and intelligence to produce a devastating indictment. If it is true that informed citizens cannot, alas, avoid the press, this book provides a vivid reminder of just how vigilant we must be.

SON OF THE MORNING STAR
Evan S. Connell/North Point Press/$20.00
William H. Nolte

In Son of the Morning Star Evan Connell has given us an utterly fascinating account of what led up to, occurred at, and then followed the fiasco that took place at Little Big Horn on June 25, 1876. That is to say, he has accounted for that landmark event insofar as an accounting can be made without stepping outside the bounds of evidence and entering the domain of conjecture. Had some of the 220 or so officers and enlisted men who accompanied Custer on his wild mission lived to tell tales about just what happened on that blazing hot Sunday afternoon, our interest would doubtless be less than it is and has been. Given the many hints and clues, the shards of palpable evidence strewed about the site, and the human obsession for solving such riddles, it is little wonder that such an immense literature has grown up around the leading actors in the little drama.

Still, I am puzzled by the interest we take in George Armstrong Custer, a man who was certainly unfitted by nature to play the role of tragic hero. In fact, it is not so much Custer who fascinates as it is the mainly sordid enterprise in which he played a part. That Connell is also puzzled by our interest in the man seems apparent.

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But, as I say, it is less the character of Custer than it is the whole complex of Indian-Anglo relations that gives this book its special flavor. After all, Custer was only one of many actors in the play. At times he disappears altogether from the stage while members of the supporting cast stand in the spotlight and speak their lines. To be sure, the play (to maintain my image or figure a moment longer) has no moral whatsoever. Certainly Mr. Connell does not make the romantic (or sentimental) mistake of depicting the Indians as noble savages. No one so fond as they were of torturing and mutilating their adversaries can be considered noble. Nor, on the other hand, does he gain the satisfaction and decile of the Anglos who sought to corral the Indians on reservations and thus deprive them of their way of life, and when efforts to that end failed endeavored simply to exterminate them. The simple fact is that the Indians occupied land that the westward-moving Anglos wished to farm or mine for its minerals. In the inevitable clash that followed, the two opposing peoples responded in a perfectly human manner: They went at each other's throats with all the moral fervor that we mistakenly believe only fanatics display.

Reading this spellbinder of a book I was often reminded of Mark Twain's remark about "this damned human race"—to wit, his comment that the more he saw of men, the more they amused him and the more he pitied them. Twain would have delighted in Son of the Morning Star, as would Joseph Conrad, who late in life wrote his friend Bertrand Russell that he had "never been able to find in any man's book or any man's talk anything convincing enough to stand up for a moment against my deep-seated sense of fatality governing this man-inhabited world." More than anything else it is that sense of fatalism that Connell conveys in this exemplary volume.

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