

contends that the fight against cancer is slowed not by lack of scientific knowledge or of adequate laws but rather by the public uncertainty nurtured by continuing scientific debate. Chemical and food industry lobbies, such as the powerful American Industrial Health Council (of chemical manufacturers), marshal their own scientists to question the findings of government researchers. The industry studies "neutralize" those of such agencies as the U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration; regulators become hesitant to act, wary of corporate resistance and legal snarls. Many of the examples Epstein cites are familiar: the prolonged debates over asbestos and vinyl chloride in the workplace, red dyes and saccharin in food, DDT in the environment. In each, Epstein details the *political* struggle that has taken place between industry's scientists, who argue that the costs of regulation are too high and that the benefits of cancer-causing substances often outweigh their risks to health, and government and environmental scientists, who stress the need for extreme caution where the public's health is concerned.

—Samuel P. Hays ('79)

**THE BREAKDOWN OF
DEMOCRATIC REGIMES**

edited by Juan J. Linz and
Alfred Stepan
Johns Hopkins, 1979, 733 pp.
\$35 cloth; available in 4
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Why do democracies fail? Many historians stress the crowd appeal of democracy's chief foes (fascism and communism). Others point to democracy's vulnerabilities (the "inevitable" concentration of economic power and resulting class inequities). Some contend that various peoples (e.g., the Russians, the Chinese) simply lack the taste for political give and take. In his long, analytic introduction to essays on a dozen 20th-century democratic breakdowns, Yale political scientist Juan J. Linz argues that democracy fails when its *friends* stop supporting it. Democracies come apart when their leaders begin to define conflicts in either/or terms, leaving no room for compromise, as happened in Spain in the 1930s and Venezuela in 1945-48; when, to shore up their power,

democratic party strategists collaborate with radical or violent groups, as happened in Weimar Germany and in Colombia during the 1940s and '50s; or when institutions (e.g., the courts, the legislatures) cease to be significant forums for decision-making. In the book's most detailed case study, Arturo Valenzuela, a scholar at Duke, traces the polarization of Chilean politics during Salvador Allende's Presidency (1970-73). Radical demands within its own leftist minority coalition forced the Allende government to accelerate its Marxist economic programs (income redistribution, nationalization of key industries, land reform). Conflict between Left and Right escalated; the military felt compelled to restore order. Both sides, Valenzuela maintains, set aside chances for compromise "in favor of the short-term requirement of preserving immediate political strength."

—Gianfranco Pasquino ('79)

**BEAST AND MAN: The
Roots of Human Nature**

by Mary Midgley
Cornell, 1978
377 pp. \$12.50
L of C 78-58021
ISBN 0-8014-1032-0

"We are not just rather like animals; we *are* animals," writes Mary Midgley, lecturer in philosophy at England's University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Regarding animals as beasts, Western society has attributed its own savage propensities to "the beast within" and has seen reason as the leash that holds the beast in check. But the much-maligned wolf, for instance, is a faithful spouse, a loving parent, a loyal pack member, and a killer only from necessity. Midgley is among the first scholar-philosophers to take full advantage of the recent explosive growth in knowledge of the behavior of animals in nature. Her book has received scant attention compared to that accorded works by Edward O. Wilson, Desmond Morris, and Robert Ardrey. She criticizes Wilson's sociobiology for its "bias toward noticing inherited tendencies and ignoring causes that operate after birth." She faults the opposing "blank paper" environmental theory of human nature for its denial of all human instincts. Recent experiments