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BY CULLEN MURPHY



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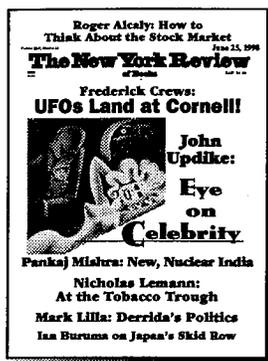
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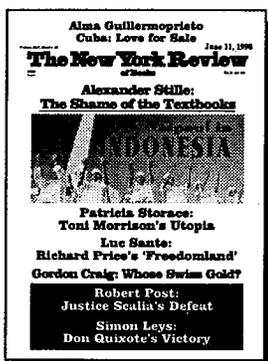
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EDITOR'S COMMENT

In his work as a writer and editor, formerly here at the WQ and now as managing editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Cullen Murphy has made a fine art of interpreting and explaining, for a general lay readership, the often arcane work of scholars and other specialists in fields ranging from archaeology to Soviet studies to medieval history. If he didn't have so many other talents—including that of a gifted occasional essayist—an envious spirit might be tempted to dismiss him, as Gertrude Stein did Ezra Pound, as a village explainer—"fine if you're a village," Stein tartly added, "not if not." Unlike Miss Stein, I am a village, and I suspect most Americans are as well. The hunger to understand what is beyond us may be one of the distinctive American appetites; it is certainly one to which Murphy has graciously catered.

The cover story of this issue, drawn from Murphy's forthcoming book, *The Word According to Eve*, focuses on a new and powerfully revisionary development within the many disciplines devoted to the study of the Bible. This turn is marked not only by what is being studied—the place and standing of women in the text and times of the Bible—but by who is doing the study—primarily (but not exclusively) women. In the introduction to his book, Murphy brings up several questions that direct this new investigation, of which I quote only three:

"Do certain passages in the Bible, together with evidence of archaeology, preserve traces of what may have been a more egalitarian social regime than we might have imagined?"

"Does the theology of the Creation stories really mean that woman must be subordinate to man, as centuries of interpretation would have us believe?"

"Can we ever know whether parts of the Hebrew Bible or New Testament were written by women?"

When Murphy asked a prominent Catholic theologian where he thought such questioning might lead, he got this straightforward answer: "The next intellectual revolution." Murphy's timely investigation of the investigators makes that response seem altogether plausible.

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The Rural Rebound

Rob Gurwitt's profile of the economic growth and social changes in Garden City, Kansas ["The Revival of Rural America," *WQ*, Spring '98] is an important example of how rural America has become far less remote and more ethnically diverse in recent years. I have long argued that rural areas beyond the metropolitan fringe need to be attractive places to live and work in order to relieve some of the growth pressures in congested yet sprawling metropolitan America.

After the so-called Rural Renaissance of the 1970s and the harsh reality of the 1980s Farm Crisis, I am leery of the Rural Rebound heralded by Kenneth Johnson and Calvin Beale. An important indicator will be the 2000 census. While many rural places are experiencing population increases, my suspicion is that in absolute numbers those rural counties adjacent to metro counties are growing the most. The edge city phenomenon is turning rural areas up to 60 miles away into suburbs. People are moving farther out in search of cheaper housing and open space amenities. They are willing to undertake the long commute, and low gasoline prices make that option possible.

Rural areas are accustomed to having things done to them, rather than taking charge of their destiny. How can rural communities plan for growth to have economic prosperity together with environmental quality? Frederick Turner is correct in suggesting that there is as yet no satisfying vision to replace the short-sighted, sprawling, ex-urban commercial strip and residential pod development. This is not simply a matter of what the landscape will look like, but how communities will function economically and socially. While remote areas will struggle for economic survival, the close-in rural places will be under equally severe challenges to retain their identity.

Tom Daniels
Director, Agricultural Preserve Board
Lancaster County
Lancaster, Pa.

"The Revival of Rural America" is a welcome addition to the literature. It would be a great mistake, however, for readers to believe

that the "revival" is occurring across the country. There are still whole regions largely untouched by growth and change. These tend to be places still characterized by chronic out-migration, deep poverty, an aging population base, declining traditional employment sectors, the provision of only a modest array of appropriate human services, and too few opportunities. Some of them, too, are places with high concentrations of minorities where the legacies of racism and bigotry contribute greatly to underdevelopment. The other rural America is in atrophy and decline even while some areas are "booming."

It is also important to reflect upon the positive and necessary role that government has played in those places which are part of the "revival." Whether in the form of incentives for firm relocation, the construction of prisons and other facilities, road, port, and airport development, transfer payments in the form of Social Security and Medicaid, favorable tax policies, environmental protection and public lands acquisition, rural electrification, or flood control, public policy has decisively influenced rural development. Literally every place which is witnessing some degree of success does so within a context which combines individual initiative with resilient community leadership, a strong base of local social capital, wise public investments, and progressive public policy.

If we are to witness a rural revival across the divides of race and ethnicity, age, class, gender, and region, then we will need to pay attention both to those communities that are succeeding, and to those that continue to atrophy and decline.

Mark B. Lapping
Cumberland Center, Maine

Rural America occupies more than 95 percent of the land area of the United States and provides a home to nearly one-quarter of its inhabitants. Yet, until recently, the scholarly literature has virtually ignored this part of our society. There are exceptions, of course. A relatively small number of scholars, mainly from rural sociology, geography, and agricultural

economics, have made some excellent contributions concerning this vast and diverse part of the nation. There is no better example than Calvin Beale, whose outstanding research has kept many of us anchored in reality. There is substantial literature about agriculture, forestry, and mining, but much seems to assume either there is nothing else in rural America, or that other rural activities can be ignored.

There are signs that this scholarly neglect may now be coming to an end. It is encouraging that the *Wilson Quarterly* has provided us with these three essays, each with a distinct vantage point.

Frederick Turner's essay concerning the landscape of disturbance illuminates future possibilities in rural places. Rob Gurwitt perceptively treats the capacity of the social institutions in Southwest Kansas, and especially in Garden City, to adjust to major changes. The accommodation there of the exceedingly rapid increase in population growth and social diversity that has occurred is indeed impressive. All rural areas may not possess such resiliency, but Garden City provides a standard against which other places may be judged. It is at variance with the rural stereotypes of cultural and social isolation, ignorance, and intolerance.

Of course, there is much about rural America that cannot be captured in three short essays. Despite improved conditions in many areas, severe problems remain. Social pathologies exist that are as bad as or worse than those found in urban places, including the inner cities. Much rural poverty is exceedingly persistent. This provides still another example of how difficult it is to generalize about rural America.

Emery N. Castle

Professor Emeritus

University Graduate Faculty of Economics

Oregon State University

The Corporatist Model

With a few changes, John Hooper's brilliant (and jaundiced) portrait of Italy ["A New Italian Renaissance?," *WQ*, Spring '98] could easily fit much of Europe. Americans and Britons frequently overlook the depth of the cultural divide between them and the Continent. It is the difference between the Magna Carta and the French Revolution (which soon turned totalitarian), between Locke and Hegel, Adam Smith and Jean-

Baptiste Colbert, Ronald Reagan and Helmut Kohl.

In Britain, the liberal state was born in 1215, when the barons told their king that his powers were limited by the law. On the Continent, the liberal tradition is still weak. Both left and right reflexively opt for the powerful, munificent state which substitutes the predictability of regulation and protection for the hurly-burly of individualism and adversarial politics. The unwritten social contract says two things: there must be no change; if change is unavoidable, losers must be compensated.

Hooper's anecdotal account of what it takes to open a store in Italy captures it all. So does the famous quotation from Lampedusa's *Leopard*. But he may be undercounting the change that is afflicting Italy as well as the rest. That Italy would liberalize its retail laws and transform its electoral system in Anglo ways was strictly inconceivable a few years back.

The country has been doing so under the brutal impact of political and economic failure—much like Margaret Thatcher's Britain in 1979. Today, Italy may well be marching in Europe's avant-garde, demonstrating a much larger capacity to reform than Germany or France.

But there is an ironical add-on. Precisely because France, Germany, and other Continental nations are so stuck in their statist ways, their societies are beginning to cope *all'italiana*. The shadow economy in Germany now accounts for 15 percent of gross domestic product. Business is learning to wiggle out from under the heavy hand of corporatism, moving abroad or striking individual deals with local union stewards—never mind national headquarters.

Marx, it turns out, was right: economics is more important than politics. The molds are being cracked under the onslaught of modernity and globality. Italy showed the way in the past, and it is doing so again now. Except that it will take years before you can buy milk or fax paper in Germany on a Sunday.

Josef Joffe

Süddeutsche Zeitung

Munich, Germany

John Hooper argues that the government of Romano Prodi is shifting Italy away from "collaborative traditions toward the Anglo-Saxon Model." As evidence he cites a proposed deregulation of retail trade, and argues that any anti-corporatist renaissance must over-

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come many cultural hurdles. In fact, however, Italy's corporatism is of political rather than cultural origin, and the current government is making things worse.

The article hints that a prime minister who headed the biggest state industrial holding company, and a government including the old Communist party as well as the remains of the Christian Democratic left, may not be altogether sincere about leveling the economic playing field. That is a huge understatement. But they act for reasons of power and privilege, not ideology.

Hooper treats as passé "the old system" in which parties gave "jobs in the mail service to poor but politically loyal southern voters" and in which "[t]hose who were able to get a share of power raised funds by levying unofficial commissions at every level of society." In fact, the Prodi government has revived with a vengeance the system of pervasive political patronage that was briefly submerged by the investigations and reforms of 1992-94. The economy is being choked by higher taxes and politically motivated administration. Privatizations are being carried out on the post-Communist model of crony capitalism.

Italy's political system is less responsive than ever to popular pressure. The government's campaign reform banned political advertising for two months prior to the 1996 elections, thereby crippling the opposition. Hooper notes that Italy's North has the highest per capita gross domestic product in the European Union. It is also the region where claims of vote count fraud and political tax audits abound. The revolt against corporatism now brewing in Northern Italy is political.

*Angelo Codevilla
Boston, Mass.*

Blair Ruble's portrait of Russian urban governance ["The Rise of Moscow, Inc.," *WQ*, Spring '98] is accurate, but it doesn't apply to all Russian cities. I believe that the Moscow model is both unique and ordinary.

Moscow's reliance on public-private partnerships as a means of achieving policy goals is a standard practice. As Ruble notes, the blurring of "the line between public and private" characterizes Russian urban governance today. A recent survey conducted in nearly 70 cities throughout Russia revealed that urban officials viewed the local business community and the federal government as the most important groups influencing the identification of

policy priorities. Over 70 percent of urban officials identified the local business community as the group with whom they most successfully collaborated on policy implementation. The survey responses suggest that close collaboration between members of urban government institutions and the business community typifies governance in many Russian cities.

But no other Russian city can match Moscow's ability to mobilize its own substantial capital resources. As Ruble points out, Moscow has the resources to act. As a subject of the federation—an administrative level higher than all other cities with the exception of St. Petersburg—and as the owner of vast capital and land resources, the city government has fiscal powers and resources beyond those of ordinary Russian cities. Moscow's mayor not only can identify a policy agenda but can implement policies to achieve its goals. In other Russian cities, the search for capital resources often directs policymaking.

While public-private partnerships contribute to governance in most Russian cities, other cities rarely wield the power of a "senior partner" like Moscow.

*Beth Mitchneck
Tucson, Arizona.*

The WQ is to be congratulated for calling attention to Moscow's unusual and unexpected thriving. But Blair Ruble is right to sound a note of caution, as he describes the "imperial urban corporatism that might well undermine Russia's transformation into a true free-market democracy." What deserves even greater emphasis is that Yuri Luzhkov, Moscow's mayor, is a likely president of post-Yeltsin Russia. He has been self-deprecating and noncommittal about his presidential ambitions, but he appears to be positioning himself for the job. People are not happy with liberals, but they do not want to back communists either. They are looking for a third option. "Moscow, Inc." might be a model for a more ambitious project, "Russia, Inc."

Will Luzhkov's tough, no-nonsense manner attract voters across the country and then bring the same kind of results to the entire country? Will he be able to turn Russia into "a country that works?" And, most importantly, will Moscow's system of corporatist economy and autocratic leadership, when applied in the national arena, work for Russian citizens?

There is enough evidence to believe that Luzhkov, the president, would be 1) autocratic, though within the constitutional order; 2) nationalistic, though not militant; 3) pro-capitalist, though non-liberal. All three postures have had a lot of appeal in Russia. People compare Luzhkov's corporatism not with an abstract ideal model of liberal democratic competitive capitalism, but with what Grigory Yavlinsky called "Russia's phony capitalism." Blair Ruble's parallels between Moscow and St. Petersburg are very illuminating. The authorities of St. Petersburg, while more reform-minded and oriented to classic models, have failed to renovate the city or attract capital in the way "Moscow, Inc." did. All domestic comparisons are in Moscow's favor.

The major challenge to Luzhkov's capitalism came recently not from within but from outside of Russia. The Asian financial crisis has not only changed the political landscape of South Korea, Thailand, and Indonesia, brought a new market-savvy prime minister in China, but seriously undermined the most basic, philosophical premises of the "Asian model," which has had much in common with the "Moscow, Inc." model. Complicated international market forces and global economic shifts have pushed aside development-oriented dictatorships, which are usually prone to cronyism, in favor of more transparent and competitive capitalism. It remains to be seen if Luzhkov has learned his "Asian lesson."

Igor Zevelev
Washington D.C.

First Impressions

I have just finished reading my first copy of your magazine. I have two comments to make. In "Out of Bounds" ["At Issue," WQ, Spring '98], James Morris says, "The first time I saw the countryside I was six, and nauseous . . ." He may or may not have been "nauseous" which means "sickening." More likely, however, he was "nauseated": his stomach was upset.

In the "Rural Rebound" articles, I was surprised that no mention was made of the retired farmer. In the east north central states, Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Ohio, with which I am familiar, he was the core of the rural community.

Ralph Nottingham
Pompano Beach, Florida

Having sampled one issue of the WQ, I find myself upset at the lack of balance: the first 80-plus pages are entirely devoted to economics and greed, corporate and nationalistic, with less than one-third of the issue dedicated to the arts and literature.

To your credit, though, I thoroughly enjoyed the re-introduction to Pablo Neruda and his elegant folk poetry and a handful of other items.

I will sign on for a year and hope to enjoy forthcoming issues, but I will continue to count pages and, I hope, you will, too.

Al Buono
Baltimore, Md.

Debating Democratic Islam

Reading Daniel Pipes's letter (WQ, Spring '98) on Dale F. Eickelman's "Inside the Islamic Reformation" (WQ, Winter '98), I realized I must have misunderstood Eickelman, since I could recognize so few of his bright observations in Pipes's dark warnings. Pipes dismisses Eickelman's article with the charge that it misrepresents the true nature of religious change in the Muslim world. The "turn to Islam," Pipes insists, has promoted religious violence, intolerance, and, in general, an ideology that "thoroughly contradicts" American values. There is no religious reformation in the Muslim world, Pipes adds, because the Christian Reformation stressed "faith alone" over sacramental works, while the Islamic resurgence stresses formalistic law.

Whether in Islam or any other religion, violent fundamentalism is dangerous and antidemocratic and should be condemned. Missing from Pipes's unmeasured observations, however, was the central point of Eickelman's article: that there is a struggle for the hearts and minds of believers in today's Muslim world, related to the fragmentation of religious authority and the expansion of education and communications technologies. Contrary to Pipes's linking of the turn to Islam with "violent fundamentalism," Eickelman correctly points out that, though some participants in this struggle are antidemocratic, others are not. Eickelman's achievement is to have illuminated the social roots of the new democratic currents in the Muslim world.

Pipes dismisses Eickelman's examples of democratic Islam on the grounds that no such movement has "guided . . . govern-

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ments or powerful opposition movements." I beg to differ. In the largest majority-Muslim country in the world, Indonesia, civil-democratic Muslims such as Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid (leader of the 30 million-strong Nahdlatul Ulama) were at the forefront of the opposition to the authoritarian rule of former president Suharto. Though they are not as well organized as their Indonesian counterparts, there are also civil pluralist Muslims in Malaysia, India, Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Central Asia. The struggle between Muslim democrats and their rivals will not be easy. As in the modern West, however, democracy will depend on economic progress, the growth of civic organizations, and the achievement of a countervailing balance of social power. Where

these circumstances develop, Muslim democrats may prevail.

Pipes would do well to revisit his European history as well. The Protestant Reformation was not about "faith alone." It was followed by fierce religious wars over the establishment of religion in states. It took European civilization three centuries to resolve the challenge this dispute posed for the political order. We Americans should cherish the values bequeathed by this achievement. But we best honor these values by recognizing their possibility in other cultures, including, as Eickelman so rightly reminds us, Muslim ones.

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FINDINGS

McWorld?

Why is it called cultural diversity when Americans embrace enchiladas and Islam, but cultural imperialism when they export things American overseas? That question is suggested by the work of six anthropologists who studied the local impact of that fearsome cultural conquistador, McDonald's.

The dread golden arches now cast their shadow over more than 100 countries, and it's true, according to the contributors to *Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia* (1998), that the company can force-feed American values. When its first Moscow branch opened, an employee with a bull-horn instructed waiting Muscovites: "The employees inside will smile at you. This does not mean that they are laughing at you. We smile because we are happy to serve you."

More often than not, however, it is McDonald's that bends, serving mutton-based Maharaja Macs in beef-averse India and champagne in Rio de Janeiro. In many places in Asia, notes volume editor James L. Watson, "the meaning of 'fast' [food] has been subverted," as youngsters have converted the restaurants into "leisure centers and after-school clubs." In Asia the chain is not so much creating McWorld, Watson suggests, as profiting from rapid social change, especially a "revolution in family values," as extended families give way to nuclear families with very few, and therefore very pampered, children—Little Emperors and Empresses, as the Chinese call them, their heart's desire a Coke and an order of fries.

A Streetcar Named Conspiracy

Americans love a good conspiracy theory, the more unlikely the better: the grassy knoll, the Roswell Incident cover-up, the Great Trolley Massacre. The massacre theory holds that devious auto, tire, and

oil companies snapped up electric trolley systems in Los Angeles and other cities after World War II and purposely put them out of business in order to promote car-centered development. The notion surfaced in Senate hearings in 1974 and has since been repeated on *60 Minutes*, in a recent PBS documentary, and even in the 1988 movie *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* Robert C. Post, president of the Society for the History of Technology, aims a stake at its heart in *American Heritage* (May-June 1998), pointing out,

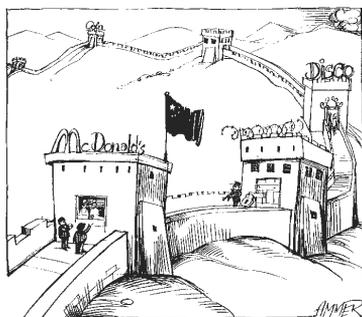
for example, that by the 1920s chronic dissatisfaction with the trolleys already had more than half of Angelenos commuting by car—and that while the "conspirators" owned only about 60 of the roughly 600 transit systems nationwide, virtually all of the systems suffered the same fate.

(That fate was not abandonment, as "juicefans," or electric trolley partisans, say, but conversion to buses.)

Thanks in part to "a past misremembered," Post notes, Los Angeles has spent nearly \$2 billion on new light-rail systems and more on subways while neglecting the bus system that carries more than 90 percent of the city's transit riders.

The Big Tent

Religion, which once divided liberals and conservatives, is increasingly dividing conservatives themselves, who part ways over the conservative Christian social agenda. (See the *Periodical Observer*, p. 119.) Gertrude Himmelfarb, a distinguished historian of Victorian England, has served as an important intellectual link between the two sides. She emphasizes that the Victorian era was a time of cultural renewal which saw drastic declines in crime and other social vices, and she leaves no room for doubting that a revival of religious feeling was essential to the Victorians' success.



In the *Public Interest* (Spring 1998), Himmelfarb ventures into the present, arguing that “the religious revival we are now experiencing is not only—perhaps not so much—a religious revival as a moral revival.” She holds out little hope for cultural revival solely through political measures (such as welfare reform) or emphasis on civil society, but says she sees “the religious-cum-moral revival” keeping alive “an alternative ethos and culture” to the mainstream.

Looking back on the Victorian experience, Himmelfarb predicts that religious groups “will shed some of their sectarianism” as they begin to feel less beleaguered. (Only a third of born-again Christians identify with the religious Right, she notes.) Like the Methodists and Evangelicals of Victorian England, today’s Christian conservatives will be joined by others, “not least, a good body of secularists.”

The Joy of Narrative

If American children are ignorant of U.S. history, blame their textbooks. Composed by committee, dumbed down to eliminate difficulty, watered down to appease activists on the left and right, their greatest sin may be bad writing—or even the absence of writing. In the *New York Review of Books* (June 11, 1998), historian Alexander Stille says that today’s textbooks devote much less space to historical narrative, much more to timelines, pictures, and other diversions. *America’s Story*, a Harcourt Brace product, gives only a quarter of its 700-odd pages to historical text. Stille celebrates the achievement of Joy Hakim, a former teacher and journalist who wrote her own lively textbook, *A History of US*. He also cites an experiment in which writing instructors, linguists, and journalists were recruited to rewrite textbook passages. Only one rewrite raised students’ reading comprehension (by 40 percent): that of the journalists, most skilled in the arts of storytelling.

Loose Ends

The West’s historic victory in the Cold War is never marked by anniversary speeches and parades. And no wonder: nobody knows *when* it ended.

What about December 25, 1991, when the Soviet Union officially ceased to exist? The Cold War was already long over, says Thomas Blanton, director of the National Security Archive, in the *Wilson Center’s Cold War International History Project Bulletin* (#10).

What about November 9, 1989, when giddy Germans danced on the Berlin Wall? The Soviets themselves had already taken a few tentative dance steps on the grave of communism, Blanton points out. In December 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev effectively relinquished the Soviet Union’s claim to be a bearer of ultimate truth. A year later, when Communist regimes in Eastern Europe were falling, a Soviet spokesman quipped that the Brezhnev Doctrine had given way to the Frank Sinatra Doctrine—an allusion to *that* chairman’s line, “I did it my way.”

Blanton’s candidate has no such Hollywood appeal and isn’t going to inspire many parades. The Cold War really ended, he argues, when official U.S. thinking changed, and that occurred on December 24, 1989, when then-secretary of state James Baker allowed on TV that Washington would not object if the Soviets came to the aid of the Romanian revolutionaries who had just deposed communist dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu. Although the State Department publicly backpedaled, Blanton says that documents from Soviet archives show that U.S. diplomats did feel out the Soviets about the extraordinary prospect of intervening in the communist bloc against a communist leader.

So there you have it. The Cold War ended on Christmas Eve. In 1989. In Romania. Not with a bang, you might say, but with a feeler.



A Time to Unwind

I was no big fan of the late, great Frank Sinatra. I was of a later generation, and found other vocalists to interpret the moods of my time. Still, Sinatra was a voice of my childhood, a voice from the Magnavox that my parents turned on at the end of the day when they “unwound” with their cocktails. So I thought of him mainly as a clue, albeit an important one, to the mystery of those ritual domestic moments.

Unwinding: what a strange notion that seems now, when day’s end is a frantic transition between the workaday life and the proliferating activities of a typical family evening. Back in my wonder years—roughly coincident with the 1950s—I came to think that unwinding was an institution that went automatically with adulthood, along with jobs or den mothering. I also learned not to intrude upon it with roughhousing or too-insistent requests about dinner.

As I recall of those times, my parents mostly talked, sometimes with friends who’d dropped by (another all-but-defunct custom), but usually just to each other—or to us kids, when they asked us to join in and treated us to our own “cocktails,” complete with maraschino cherries. While we sat there, mostly seen but not heard, they’d tell stories or go over the day’s events or gossip about friends while half-listening to Ella Fitzgerald or Sinatra or one of the old big bands and sipping what now seem to me significant quantities of alcohol. The time of those times was elastic, stretching out longer on spring or summer evenings, when they often took place outdoors, while darkness fell slowly around the voices and the tinkling of ice and the swing of the music.

Thinking back on those times of unwinding—and, truly, their formal purity began to fade around 1960, with the increasing intrusiveness of the Tube, and other changes of culture as well—I probably invest them with more meaning than they had. In particular, I see them—or more accurately, hear them—as moments of symbolic distillation, little

islands of time in which experiences and feelings from my parents’ past seemed magically to resonate in the present.

It was possible, for instance, sometimes to hear echoes from as far back as the 1920s, particularly the live-for-the-moment gaiety and gregariousness, as well as the healthy contempt for prim prohibitionists and other moralists who say that you should not have fun. Certainly more audible, because closer, were the emotional strains of the Great Depression, the anxieties and uncertainties offset by something deeply sustaining: a real sense of fellow-feeling and community that grew out of the experience of shared suffering. But what came through loudest and clearest of all were the echoes of the war years, the grit and determination and solidarity—tinged, all of them, with a melancholy that came from the loss of so much life, so many lives.

In the alcohol and the music and the stories, as well as in a certain timbre of conversation and laughter, I heard resilience and relief, a happiness at having come through, accompanied by the anxious knowledge that all peace is temporary. There was also, understandably, pride and satisfaction, and even an abiding nostalgia: for at the darkest times of depression and war, my parents’ generation had grabbed hold of life and each other with an intensity they knew they would never again experience. How could they help missing those times? Yet I was amazed, too, and became even more so after living through the self-indulgent decades that followed, at how stoical they were about all that had happened and all that had been lost.

The music, perhaps even more than the stories, seemed to conjure up the deeper emotional experiences. With the opening bar of a tune—often one by Ol’ Blue Eyes—someone would say, “Remember . . .” and no more needed to be said, though there might be a complicitous wink or smile. (Didn’t Gore Vidal recently say that more than half of all baby boomers were conceived under Frank Sinatra’s influence? Fly me to the moon, indeed.) But with the romance there



also came the swells of sadness.

I am grateful for those times because they allowed me to learn something about my parents and their generation that I might not otherwise have learned—something like their inner histories. And this knowledge, inchoate as it was, proved to be a valuable corrective to much that I later read in the social commentary about them. The general point of such commentary, particularly that written during the first postwar decade, seemed to be that most members of my parents' generation lived lives of outward conformity and inner emptiness, if not desperation. From social scientists and amateur observers came dozens of labels for this condition, including "organization man" and "lonely crowd."

There was, of course, some truth to the diagnosis, and many of my own generation made a big point, at least for a part of their lives, of doing everything in their power to avoid the fate they thought had befallen their parents—and so the various Great Refusals of the '60s. But fate usually works in ironical ways. Looking back on the last half of this century, I cannot help thinking (and historian Wilfred McClay supports this suspicion in his essay on David Riesman, pp. 34–42) that even the best sociological writing from the '50s did not capture my parents' generation so much as it anticipated an emerging type—a type to which my own generation would more closely conform. We became, ironically, the people we feared our parents were, but really weren't.

They weren't because our parents entered the nascent suburban, corporate, high-tech world not only with rich pasts but with a pioneer innocence and earnestness that largely insulated them from premature soul-death. The security, the conformity, the barbecues in the backyard, the big-finned cars, the accumulating gadgetry, the Levittown-style developments—all of these aspects and tokens of Fiftyishness were not, for that generation, symptoms of spiritual moribundity. They were, in a way, the rewards at the end of a long struggle—rewards that seemed more to astonish than to deaden their recipients.

Did they become rampant materialists, as some critics suggest? I don't think so. Certainly in contrast with the wants of today's consumers, their concern for materi-

al accumulation seems positively ascetic. And this is not simply because the means were not there. It had far more to do, I believe, with the fact that they had other things to do with their time.

For that reason, too, they were not generally workaholics. For all the talk of the rat race, they were not trying to prove anything at their jobs. And though they did those jobs well, with habits learned during leaner years, they did not live for their work the way so many of my own generation do.

What, then, did they live for? Many things. But important among them was the notion of living for each other. I might idealize, but it seems to me they invested more time in sustaining their friendships, in getting together and dropping by, in writing letters, in keeping in touch.

They also had more time for real neighborliness, beginning with the fact that they tried to know who their neighbors were. Such contacts did not always lead to fast friendships, but they fostered an atmosphere of conviviality, security, even tolerance. Theirs were not simply the "dormitory communities" social critics complain about today. Their neighborhoods were real places of contact and connection.

Above all, though, that generation had more time for family life. But this was the curious thing about such family time: it was not planned or scheduled as "quality time" with the kids. In fact, it centered less upon the kids and what they were doing than upon the parents simply taking the time to be themselves, at ease, with each other. The kids more or less moved about the periphery, sometimes drifting into the middle of the adult circle but more often simply observing from the edge—seeing the good as well as the bad in their elders, and learning the hardest lesson: that the good and the bad were usually, and painfully, intermixed.

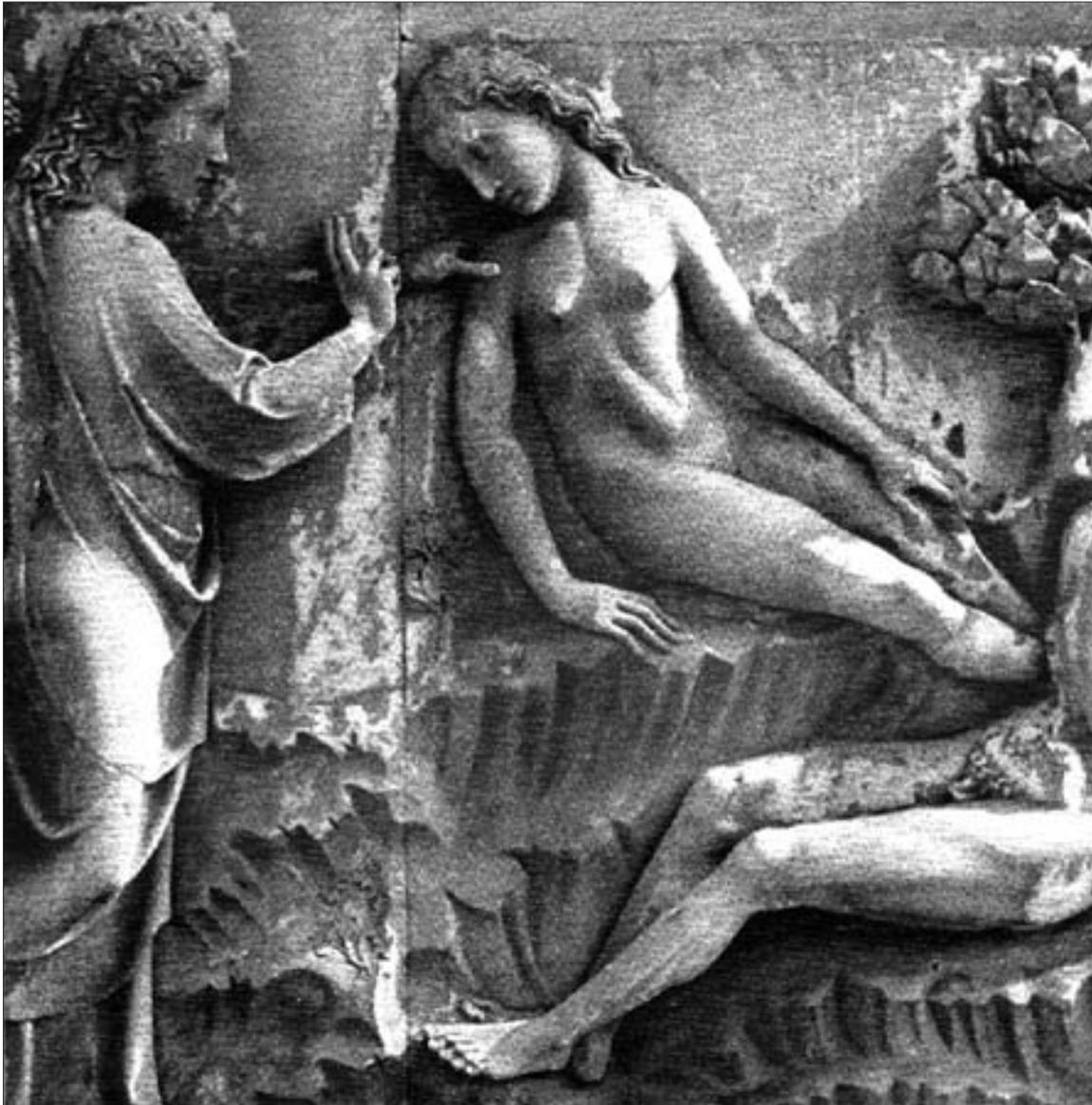
Because our parents took the time to be themselves, to unwind before us, we children had the chance to find out who they were and what had made them, and therefore to understand a good part of what was making us. It was, I learned, an invaluable lesson. How strange, then, that we who have been so determined to provide our children with every opportunity might be depriving them of the one they can least afford to miss.

—Jay Tolson

Is the Bible Bad News for Women?

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not the god in whom many women today find comfort. In response to New Age spiritualism or feminist need, such women are inventing goddesses or reclaiming ancient deities to give direction to their spiritual lives. Yet the rejection of the biblical God, and of the Bible itself, might be overly hasty—or so suggests a new generation of biblical scholars.

by Cullen Murphy



T

he ruins of ancient Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, lie across the Tigris River from what is today the Iraqi city of Mosul. When the Assyrian Empire was brought down, in the seventh century B.C., by invading Babylonians, Scythians, and Medes, the conquerors destroyed the capital and carried off into slavery the inhabitants they didn't kill outright. The conquerors did not spare the great library of Ashurbanipal, with its record of Assyrian civilization stored in the form of cuneiform writing on some 20,000 clay tablets. They burned the library down.

In a way, explains Professor Tikva Frymer-Kensky, a scholar of the Mesopotamian world, it was the best thing the conquering armies could have done, from our point of view—an inadvertent exercise in what would now be known as “cultural resources management.” Under ordinary circumstances the clay tablets, each about the size of a bar of soap, would have turned to dust in a few centuries, if not a few generations. But the conflagration fired the tablets, turning them into durable ceramic.

Frymer-Kensky is talking, actually, about other things—the role of goddesses in polytheism; the revolutionary implications, for people in general and for women in particular, of monotheism; the emergence of such feminine biblical images as the figure of Lady Wisdom—when the discussion veers off in the direction of writing and historical serendipity. This turns out to be not quite the tangent it might seem.

Frymer-Kensky is an Assyriologist and a Sumerologist who has focused her interest in questions of gender in antiquity as much on the Hebrew Bible as on the literature of the great Mesopotamian civilizations. She was until 1996 the director of biblical studies for the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia, where she lives, and she has been and remains a professor of Hebrew Bible at the University of Chicago, to which she commutes. She recently began a sabbatical at the Center for Judaic Studies in Philadelphia. Frymer-Kensky has won wide recognition for a cross-cultural study titled *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (1992), in which she attempts to take the goddesses of polytheism as serious theological constructs and social reflections but at the same time disdains the wish-fulfilling popularizations of “the Goddess,” a romantically conceived being who now seems to sustain vast territories of certain bookstores and gift shops.

Frymer-Kensky understands why some women have turned to the “earth-centered, immanent Goddess of contemporary neopaganism” as “a refuge from, and counterbalance to, what many consider the remote and punitive God of western religions.” But do these devotees and theorists understand that the societies that



*Detail from a relief carved into the wall of the Orvieto Cathedral:
God raises the unconscious Eve out of Adam's side*

actually possessed goddesses were deeply patriarchal and would have had no patience for their New Age conceits? Do they appreciate the larger ideological dynamic of monotheism and, in some respects, its potentially positive implications? The presumption that we can speak sensibly about ancient goddesses on the basis of a heartfelt emotional outpouring rather than painstakingly acquired knowledge drives Frymer-Kensky to exasperation.

Yet while forthright in her belief that some feminists' depictions of the past "come right out of their own psyches," she is also sensitive to the demands of psychic want. She is the mother of two children and also published *Motherprayer* (1996), a compilation of spiritual readings on pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood, some of them new but most of them ancient prayers—translated from Sumerian, Akkadian, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Latin. The book grew out of her own need for such a resource, and the apparent lack of one, during her first pregnancy, an unusually dangerous and difficult experience, two decades ago.

In the course of a long conversation at the Center for Judaic Studies, Frymer-Kensky recalls how the circumstances of that pregnancy deflected what had been the vector of her career. The daughter of Polish Jewish émigrés who were actively leftist in their politics and devoutly Conservative in their religion, she was drawn from an early age to the physical sciences, for which she showed a strong aptitude. Her early ambition was to become a chemical engineer, but she found herself thwarted again and again by high school teachers—this was in the late 1950s—who deemed her scientific interests to be inappropriate for a woman and turned her away from formative opportunities. She was understandably embittered by this experience and in retrospect derives an important personal insight from it: "It explains why, although I became and am a very strong feminist, I never had the rage against religion that many of my colleagues did, because I always suffered more out in the nonreligious world"—suffered more, that is to say, from the heirs of the Enlightenment, the modern men of science.

Frymer eventually abandoned any thought of a scientific career and, as an undergraduate studying jointly at City College of New York and the Jewish Theological Seminary, took up instead the study of the ancient world, the philosophy of religion, and the Talmud. (At the seminary, she became the first woman ever to be accepted into the program for the teaching of the Talmud.) She went on to pursue graduate work at Yale University, acquiring a quiver of dead languages and undertaking a doctoral dissertation on certain legal issues in ancient Assyria.

During her years at Yale she encountered two women, Judith Plaskow and Carol P. Christ, who played a significant early role in shaping the field of feminist biblical studies, though their work had little direct

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relevance to Frymer's at the time. Plaskow today is best known for *Standing Again at Sinai* (1990), an exploration of the possibility of a feminist Judaism, which has never been out of print. She teaches in the Department of Religion at Manhattan College, in New York. Carol P. Christ, the author of a book on goddesses and goddess rituals titled *The Laughter of Aphrodite* (1987), has abandoned academe altogether. She is today the director of an organization called the Ariadne Institute for the Study of Myth and Ritual, and, among other things, conducts goddess-oriented tours to the Aegean.

Frymer completed her dissertation—"The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East"—and was awarded a doctorate in 1977. By then she was married, and she and her husband, Allan Kensky, a rabbi, were planning a family. When unexpected problems arose in the late stages of pregnancy and she had to rush to the hospital for a Caesarean section, Frymer-Kensky grabbed some things to read: a few novels, a *TV Guide*, and a sheaf of Babylonian birth incantations that just happened to be lying around, left over from her dissertation. In the end, the Babylonian incantations occupied her attention: "Let the one which is sealed up be released. Let the being come out as an independent being. Let it come out quickly so that it may see the light of the sun."

Awaiting the birth of her daughter, Meira, amid the anti-septic silence, Frymer-Kensky became perhaps the first woman in 3,000 years to speak those ancient Babylonian words in the context for which they had been composed.

Afterwards—"10 months later"—Frymer-Kensky began to wonder, with some asperity, why there was no literary material in the Jewish or Christian tradition comparable to what existed in the Babylonian tradition. She continued to publish scholarly work in her original field



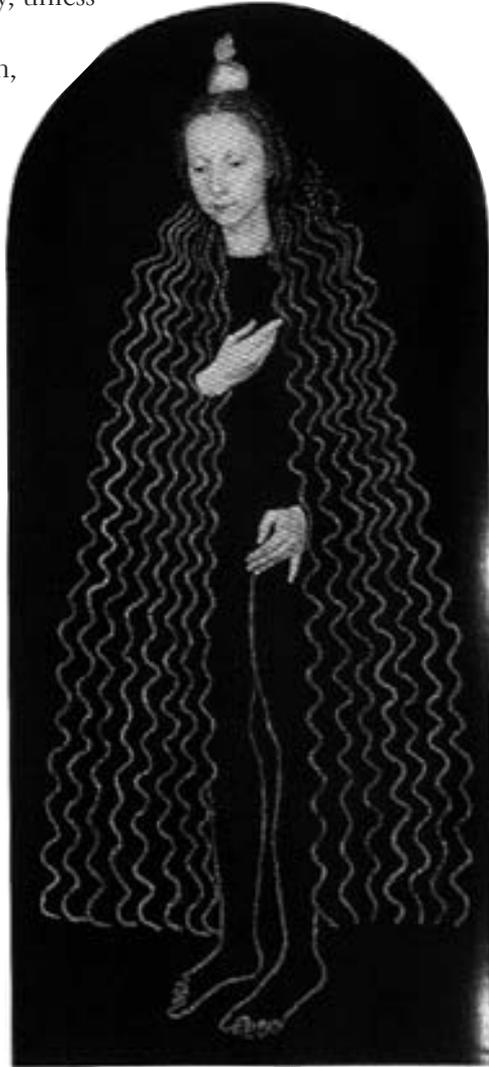
A statue of the fertility goddess Astarte dating from the mid-second century B.C.

(“The Tribulations of Marduk: The So-Called ‘Marduk Ordeal Text’”; “Unusual Legal Procedures in Elam and Nuzi”) even as her attention turned increasingly to the new question she had posed.

To begin with, Frymer-Kensky explains by way of an answer, the Bible just isn’t that kind of book. It is a public document serving a public purpose; it does not preserve very much in the way of private writings, the outstanding exception being perhaps the Song of Songs. The Bible does not even preserve a wedding ceremony. To find birth incantations in the Bible would be like finding excerpts from a Lamaze pamphlet in the *Congressional Record*.

Second, most of the writings from ancient Israel have simply been lost. Wedding ceremonies did, of course, take place among the Israelites. In all likelihood, chants and prayers existed for a difficult labor. But these things have not come down to us because the Israelites were, in a sense, too advanced. We have practically nothing in terms of texts, in effect, because the Israelites had an alphabet. “You wouldn’t want to write with an alphabet on clay, unless it was a cuneiform alphabet,” Frymer-Kensky says. “Cuneiform, those funny marks, are representations made by sticking the wedge of a reed against the clay—you make the triangular head and the shaft with one quick tick. But once linear script got developed, you couldn’t write on clay—it would take too long to draw the wedge through it.” The Israelites wrote fluidly with their new alphabet on parchment and papyrus, materials that are easy to transport and easy to store. Unfortunately, they also disintegrate with age. And they are *not* preserved by fire.

So much writing survives on clay tablets from the Mesopotamian civilizations—literature, tax records, legal codes, schoolchildren’s copybooks—that vast amounts of it still await translation. And the corpus remains “open”: new tablets turn up all the time. Indeed, the sanctions-hobbled gov-



Eve (1993–95), by Rimma Gerlovina and Valeriy Gerlovin

ernment of Iraq, which controls most of the important Mesopotamian archaeological sites, has in recent years quietly been selling off freshly exhumed tablets to the West in exchange for hard currency.

By contrast, the corpus of Israelite literature is essentially “closed,” limited to the canonical books of the Bible and a few other texts that have been passed along, copied and recopied, from age to age. The Bible makes reference to other major works that once existed but now are lost. For example, the Book of Numbers (21:14-15) refers to the *Book of the Wars of Yahweh*, but the few lines quoted are all that survive. Missing too are the *Chronicle of Solomon*, the *Chronicles of the Kings of Israel*, and the *Chronicles of the Kings of Judah*. A few ancillary fragments of writing have survived, but only because they were written on pottery, or on potsherds, or on amulets.

If this had not been the case—if the surviving corpus were large and diverse—would any significant amount of it have reflected a woman’s voice? What forms can that voice take? Can it come only from a woman? Each question begets others, and the answers lead off into the imponderable. Theoretically, though, we can imagine a woman’s voice surviving in at least three ways. One is overt and direct: by means of passages actually written by women. A second is indirect: by passages that preserve, through explicit or implicit quotation, the words of women in actual social contexts. The third way is more ineffable but perhaps the most compelling of all: the complex mechanisms of psychology and spirituality, which may under various guises both draw on and demand a feminine presence.

To take the first of these: a subject as basic as the extent of literacy in ancient Israel and whether literacy was accessible to women can be approached through only a handful of clues and is largely a matter of speculation. So little is known about so many aspects of literacy in ancient times that scholars are still debating how prevalent the practice of reading to oneself was—as opposed to reading aloud—or if it was done at all. But the acts of reading and writing do come up directly in the Bible, and there are instances when women are involved.

They make an unlikely pair, Jezebel and Esther. Jezebel is the princess of Tyre and worshiper of Baal who marries the Israelite king Ahab, encourages him to build altars to the false Phoenician gods, and in general, according to the first Book of Kings (16:30), induces him to do “evil in the sight of the Lord more than all that were before him.” In Hebrew, Jezebel’s name means “Where is the prince?” The reference is to Baal, but the name is also a pun, because the consonants can be fleshed out with alternative vowels to acquire the meaning “dung.” Jezebel’s idolatry (from the Israelite point of view), her greed, and her scheming aggressiveness fatally complement parallel qualities in her husband and earn a curse from the prophet Elijah, who foresees that Jezebel’s corpse will be eaten by dogs. And so indeed it comes to pass, when Jezebel, after the defeat and death of Ahab, is thrown from a window by her retainers: “But when they went to bury her they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands” (2 Kings 9:35). Her name, of course, lives on in the eponymous word mean-



A leaf from an 18th-century manuscript showing Queen Esther begging King Ahasuerus for clemency for the Persian Jews. The text (in Persian but with Hebrew letters) was intended to be read during the festival of Purim.

ing “a wicked, shameless woman.” Bette Davis won an Oscar for playing such a woman, a spiteful southern belle, in the 1938 film *Jezebel*.

Esther presents a contrast. She is the descendant of Jews who have been carried off to the court of the Persian kings after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the First Temple at the beginning of the sixth century B.C. However, her identity as a Jew is kept hidden, and Esther is raised at court, where fortuitous events conspire to make her the wife of King Ahasuerus. She becomes aware of a plot to destroy the Jews of Persia, which she foils, precipitating the execution of its mastermind, the evil Haman, and the inauguration of a feast to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews from persecution.

The Book of Esther is read every year at the festival of Purim, which supposedly has its origins in the events the book describes. (The Hebrew *pur* means “lot”; the day chosen by Haman for the destruction of the Jews was selected by lot.)

If we think of Jezebel and Esther as historical characters, they are separated by some 300 years of actual history. The books in which they appear were composed centuries apart. The characteristic the women share is a form of education: they are the only women in the Hebrew Bible who are depicted as able to read and write.

In its account of Jezebel’s lethal expropriation of Naboth’s vineyard, the Bible has this to say: “So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent them to the elders and the nobles who dwelt with Naboth in his city.” (One of Jezebel’s royal seals was, in fact, recently discovered by archaeologists.) The story of Esther ends with her promulgation of a directive to the Jews of Persia: “Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, gave full written authority, confirming this second letter about Purim. Letters were sent to all the Jews.”

Should it be surprising that of all the women mentioned in the Bible, only two should be depicted as literate? Should it be surprising, rather, that there are this many? Was literacy common, or at least not out of the ordinary, among women of royal rank, as Jezebel and Esther were? Did it ever extend to the lower classes? These are all questions without reliable answers for the period covered by the Hebrew Bible—without reliable answers when the subject is literacy among men, let alone among women. “I do think that Jezebel could probably read and write,” Frymer-Kensky says, “but Jezebel was raised a king’s daughter. And we really don’t know. The Bible says that Jezebel writes a letter. Of course, documents say that Charlemagne also wrote, but what Charlemagne actually did was dictate.”

A picture of literacy even in postbiblical times and other Mediterranean cultures, about which in general we know much more, remains difficult to retrieve. A recent exhibit at the Yale University Art Galleries, titled *I, Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome*, included a number of wooden writing tablets, or *tabulae*, of the kind that women are sometimes seen holding in Roman portraits—for instance, in the well-known portrait from Pompeii of a husband and wife. But in these instances, it seems clear, literacy is being paraded as an exceptional virtue rather than a routine adornment. The earliest Latin document anywhere that is *known* to be in a female hand comes relatively late: it is a Roman letter from about A.D. 100, found near Hadrian’s Wall in Great Britain, inviting the recipient to a birthday party.

At one recent meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, a member gave a paper on the subject of female scribes in the Roman Empire. The author, Kim Haines-Eitzen, who now teaches at Cornell University, persuasively made the case that female scribes, or *librariae*, were not uncommon in the service of affluent mistresses. The evidence is often indirect, embedded as a passing reference in something else. Juvenal, for example, remarks in the sixth of his *Satires* that if a husband spurns his wife’s sexual



Creation of Eve (1989), by Martin Maddox

overtures, the wife's *libraria* will bear the brunt of the spurned woman's temper. *Libraria* in this passage has usually been read and interpreted as *lani p̄ndia*, meaning "wool-worker," thereby disguising the fact that a scribe—a female scribe—is being referred to. The underlying reason for the mistranslation in this case, as apparently in others, is a form of circular reasoning: how could the word be *libraria* when we know that women lacked the skills for that job?

In other instances, female literacy has been simply suppressed. A letter of Eusebius, for instance, reveals that women figured among the scribes he supplied to the theologian Origen; but Jerome, quoting this letter at a later date, makes no mention of the female scribes. One significant manuscript from late antiquity—the fifth-century *Codex Alexandrinus*, which contains both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament—actually contained that great rarity, a scribe's name, in this case that of a woman: Thecla. The possibility that a woman was responsible for the code was nonetheless contested by scholars for centuries, with the notable exception of one 18th-century investigator who accepted the attribution on the grounds that there were so many mistakes in the manuscript.

The issue of female literacy in antiquity, or indeed at any time, is of course of interest for its own sake—for what it reveals about the social status and attainments of women and about the structure and evolution of societies. And it is hardly surprising that some scholars have been picking over Scriptural texts, even if some of their colleagues find the endeavor faintly amusing. (At the lecture on

female scribes in the Roman Empire, the first question during the discussion afterward came from one of the few men in attendance, who asked, “So did women have better handwriting than men?”)

But another, and by far the more prominent, motivation for investigations of literacy has to do with the question of authorship. This is a nagging question that hangs over the Bible generally, issues of gender aside. As the biblical scholar Richard Elliott Friedman has written, the Bible

is at the heart of Christianity and Judaism. Ministers, priests, and rabbis preach it. Scholars spend their lives studying and teaching it in universities and seminaries. People read it, study it, admire it, disdain it, write about it, and love it. People have lived by it and died for it. And we do not know who wrote it.

Could parts of the Bible have been written by a woman, or by a number of women? Even if they were not literally penned by women, in the sense that women composed a full narrative, and applied an ink-laden quill to papyrus or parchment, can any texts or passages be said to reflect women’s authentic voices, relatively unmediated by a male editorial hand? There can be no conclusive answer. There has, however, been a great deal of circumstantial speculation.

The speculation that has received the most widespread attention, as well as a great deal of criticism from academic specialists, is the proposition put forward by the Yale literary critic Harold Bloom, in *The Book of J* (1990), that one of the chief strands of text in the first five books of the Bible, which scholars have given the name J, was the work of a woman. *Newsweek* gave its report about Bloom’s suggestion the headline “The Woman Who Invented God.” *Time* magazine, pithier, ran its account under the headline “Ms. Moses.” Bloom contends not only that J was a woman but that she was a descendant of King David, that she lived at the court of King Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, and that she in fact had little or no religious motivation at all.

To understand the basis of Bloom’s contention is to accept the general outline that biblical scholars have crafted over the years to describe how the Bible was compiled. This outline would not be accepted by the most orthodox of Jews or by the most fundamentalist of Christians, whose interpretation of a belief in the Bible’s divine origin extends to particulars of composition. (Orthodox Jews, for instance, believe that the first five books of the Bible, the so-called Five Books of Moses, are the actual product of Moses’ hand.) Biblical scholars of a more humanistic bent see the books of the Hebrew Scriptures as encompassing a vast diversity of materials—historical tales, poems, law codes, liturgical invocations, war songs, chronicles, festive chants—whose origins in some cases stretch back to oral traditions rooted in Israel’s prehistory and in other cases are as recent as the second century B.C.

The task of molding literary material into the preliminary forms of the first five books of the Bible was begun during the First Temple period, but the most intensive era of biblical formation, according to the scholarly consensus, occurred just afterward, during the half-century of

the Babylonian exile, beginning in 587 B.C., when the Jewish elite and much of the Israelite population endured transplantation to the enemy capital. During this time these five books took final shape, as did the seven books that constitute the so-called Deuteronomistic history. Much of the rest of the Hebrew Bible's content was fashioned after the Jews returned to Jerusalem, during what has come to be called the Second Temple period. Final agreement on what would constitute the canon, the officially sanctioned corpus of the Hebrew Bible, was reached late in the first century or early in the second century A.D.

Back to J: whatever the ultimate sources of its content—Canaanite myth, Israelite folk tradition, divine inspiration—the Book of Genesis has



Abram's Counsel to Sarah (c. 1896), by James Tissot

long been seen by scholars as embodying a number of distinct literary threads. As early as the 17th century, a French cleric, Richard Simon, suggested that Genesis was the product of interwoven sources. In the 18th century, a number of investigators looking into the phenomenon of doublets—the fact that key stories, such as the accounts of the

Creation, the Flood, and so on, are typically told twice, in differing versions—noticed a distinctive pattern. In one group of doublets, the designation used for God is the Hebrew word *El*, and in the other the word used is the Hebrew tetragrammaton *YHWH*. Scholars gave the name E to the first source and J to the second source; as scholarship has become more refined, Genesis has also acquired a P (for priestly) source and an R (for redactor, or editor) source. Depending on what paths we follow we may encounter further refinements, such as J1, J2, and J3.

Harold Bloom's focus is on J, the Yahwistic writer, the author of what would seem to be the oldest strand of Genesis. The J he discerns is a woman who was writing primarily for women and who conceived of Yahweh as essentially a literary character rather than as a god to be worshiped and prayed to. Bloom surmises further that J was a close friend of the so-called Court Historian, the author of most of the second book of Samuel, and he emphasizes the particular attention J paid to women. About six times more text is devoted to Eve than to Adam, and whereas J's treatment of major male figures (Abraham, Jacob, Moses) is mixed, the treatment of female characters (Sarah, Rachel) is on the whole sympathetic. "I think it accurate to observe that J had no heroes, only heroines," Bloom writes.

Bloom contends, more than a little disingenuously, that "in proposing that J was a woman, at least I will not be furthering the interests of

any religious or ideological group.” In truth, his proposition about the gender of J (which he came to regret having mentioned at all, according to one interview, because it distracted from his larger contemplation of the meaning and significance of J’s work, whoever J happened to be) predictably found favor in certain religious and ideological camps even as it elicited widespread skepticism (or, at best, deep agnosticism) among most biblical scholars.

Besides pointing out what they saw as inadequacies in the translation Bloom was working with, the skeptics questioned many of his guiding assumptions, including the idea that a characteristically “female” form of writing that is objectively discernible exists. “It must be said,” the eminent biblical scholar Robert Alter observed, the year after Bloom’s book appeared, “that the evidence offered for J’s female identity is rather tenuous. We are repeatedly told, often with engaging wit, that J in Genesis exercises an extraordinary degree of imaginative sympathy for the plight of women and the viewpoint of female characters. But this is also true of the authors of Judges and Samuel—note the instance of the rape of Tamar—not to speak of later books like Ruth and Esther.” By the same reasoning, Alter added, “one could easily conclude that *Anna Karenina*, with its splendidly realized if doomed heroine and its large gallery of repulsive, feckless, or clumsy men, must have been written by a woman.”

As a writer and as a critic, Bloom is a commanding presence, and a playfully seductive one, whose works always merit attention and usually give pleasure. If his speculations about J’s gender garner objections, it is for reasons other than inherent implausibility. Richard Elliott Friedman has noted that whereas it is virtually impossible to imagine the source E coming from a female hand, partly because, among other reasons, E is so closely connected with the priestly class, which historically was exclusively male, J does in fact present more interesting possibilities, partly because of its origin in Judean court circles, where women might have enjoyed unprecedented opportunities. Friedman concludes: “The weight of evidence is still that the scribal profession in ancient Israel was male, true, but that does not exclude the possibility that a woman might have composed a work that came to be loved and valued in Israel.”

It may be that *The Book of J* does a disservice in a number of ways. The gleeful outrageousness of its tone makes sense only if the idea of women’s high cultural achievement in ancient Israel is in fact nearly preposterous. But as Carol L. Meyers, an archaeologist and religion scholar at Duke University, has noted, “It is an open question as to whether women were deemed inferior, secondary, and otherwise incapable of high art in Israelite antiquity. Most likely such stances are largely post-biblical.” Moreover, by emphasizing one authorial possibility, Bloom sweeps off into the shadows many points that might be pertinent to the issue of biblical sources and gender. Even if we discount entirely the notion that women had any kind of hand in the Bible’s textual formation, there remains a body of material that may ultimately have originated among women—for instance, various utterances that come from the lips of female prophets,

such as the Song of Deborah and the Song of Miriam. Beyond texts such as these, whose female origin is not only plausible but in the view of some even likely, are texts of more indeterminate status, which can be spoken of as female not in authorship but in genre.

One of the more dramatic episodes of Israel's modern history is the series of airlifts that began soon after the country came into existence in 1948 and brought Jews from neighboring Islamic regions to the new Jewish homeland. Among those coming to Israel were rural Jews from Yemen, who, at one point in late 1948, under the program known as Operation Magic Carpet, arrived at the rate of a thousand a week, airlifted to Tel Aviv aboard DC-4 Skymasters. Most of the Yemeni immigrants were peasants from small villages. Their way of life had been unchanged for centuries and preserved social patterns of presumably great antiquity.

In all, some 45,000 Yemeni Jews were brought to Israel in the course of little more than a year. Not surprisingly, they attracted the attention of scholars of various kinds, in particular of S. D. Goitein, the Hebraic and Arabic scholar, who undertook a close ethnographic study of the Magic Carpet immigrants soon after their arrival. Among the issues he explored were the social and religious roles of men and women, which he found to be sharply distinguished. But certain features of Yemeni Jewish society made a deep impression on him. In an article published in Israel in 1957 but not translated into English until several decades later, he wrote:

The detail which made the greatest impression on the present writer, turning his attention to women's poetry in the Bible and giving him great insight into it, was this: the Yemenite woman, despite her lowly and limited social position, expressed in her poetry public opinion on the events of the day. Her simple verses filled the function which the editorial in a daily newspaper fills in a modern society. Verses of this sort were devoted to great political events—such as the murder of the Imam Yahya in the spring of 1948 and the suppression of the subsequent revolt, or the bombing of Yemenite villages by British planes—as well as to people and happenings in the neighboring Muslim villages and also, of course, to the Jewish community.

It is not hard to see why Goitein discerned strong parallels between modern-day Yemenite women and many of the women in the Bible, whose taunts and laments, warnings and advice, prayers and prophecies, likewise serve as a gloss on the great events in the lives of the Israelites and their neighbors. Women did not necessarily write the biblical stories in which these words and commentaries appear—indeed, they almost certainly did not—but is it far-fetched to see such stories as transmitting a memory of women's voices or women's authority? Goitein used the image of feminine "remnants" in oral literature that leave "a recognizable impression" in the stories as they come down to us. He also used the image of these remnants being poured over time "from one vessel to another."

Scholars sympathetic to this idea focus not on identifying or speculating about male and female authors but on identifying male and female *genres*. In their book *On Gendering Texts* (1993), the Hebrew Bible scholars Athalya Brenner and the late Fokkelen van Dijk-

Hemmes designate these genres “M” and “F,” hoping that the very abstraction of such minimalist terminology will shift thoughts away from the gender of scribes bent over their work and toward the idea of “textualized women’s traditions.”

One genre to look at is that of the so-called naming speech—the formal bestowal of a name upon a newborn child, typically embedded within a larger explanation of the meaning of that name. The birth of each of the children of Leah, the unloved wife of Jacob, is followed by a naming speech in which the child’s name is derived from a Hebrew pun. For instance: “And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, ‘Because the Lord has looked upon my affliction; surely now my husband will love me’” (Genesis 29:32), the name Reuben meaning not only “Behold, a son” but also mimicking the Hebrew words meaning “looked upon misery.” Jacob will never love her, but Leah will continue bearing sons. Upon the birth of her fifth, she says, “This time I will praise YHWH, therefore she called his name Judah” (Genesis 29:35), the name Judah embodying the expression of thanks to the Lord.

In the Hebrew Bible as a whole there are 41 instances in which children are formally named in the context of a naming speech, and in two-thirds of these cases the person doing the naming is a woman. In a number of other cases—notably, that of the birth of Esau and Jacob to Rebekah—the use of the passive voice conceals the identity of the name-giver, although we can assume that it must be a woman, since the naming occurs immediately after childbirth, when only women would have been present. “The act of naming is significant,” the commentator Savina Teubal has written, “because it places the name-giver in authority over the name-bearer.” She goes on to observe, “In biblical times, it seems, children were named the moment they were born—by mothers and midwives who chose names appropriate to the conditions, or their perceptions of the birth itself.” (Of course, one of the more prominent instances of namegiving does not involve a newborn child at all but rather the new creature, woman, to whom Adam gives the name Eve, meaning “mother of all living.” As you might imagine, a considerable number of feminist scholars have examined this episode in every conceivable light.)

Other genres of F texts, as Brenner and Hemmes classify them, include birth songs, such as the Song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1-10), with its strong echo in the “Magnificat” of the New Testament, and the famous songs of victory, including Deborah’s and Miriam’s, and those of the nameless women who come forward dancing with tambourines after success in battle.

Biblical passages give evidence, even when not quoting women directly, of occasions when women’s speech of a formal and public kind was an accepted aspect of social drama. From the mouths of women must have come words of ritual goading, taunting, and mockery, and also words of soothsaying and of prophecy. Four women are explicitly given the title “prophet”—Miriam, Huldah, Noadiah, and the wife of Isaiah; the unremarkable manner in which the Bible mentions the status of these women suggests that the role of prophet was an established one.

Although the words women customarily used are not preserved,

many references, such as the following one from Jeremiah (9:17), indicate that women were central to expressions of mourning and lamentation: “Call for the mourning women to come; send for the skillful

women to come. Let them make haste and raise a wailing over us, that our eyes may run down with tears.” In the Book of

Lamentations, which records the final destruction of the Israelite kingdom and the beginnings of exile, the fallen city of Jerusalem is depicted as a woman mourner, a dirge singer, and her words (1:16) perhaps capture some of the language that such a singer might have employed on an ordinary occasion in ordinary times:

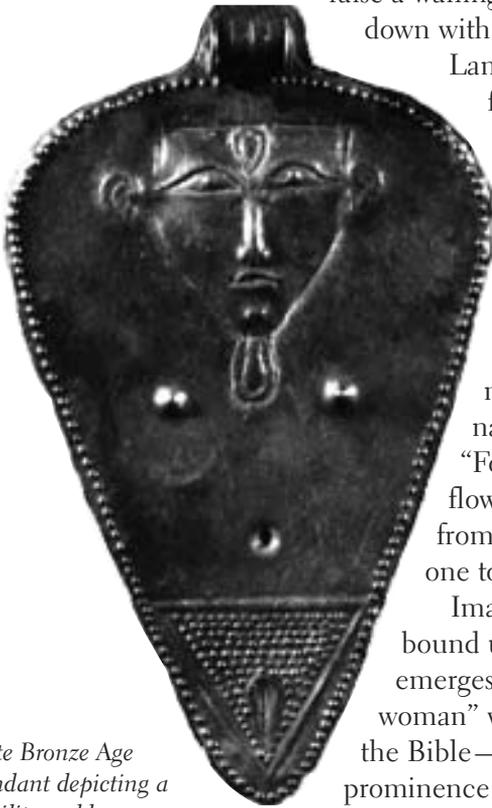
“For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears; for a comforter is far from me who might revive my spirit, one to revive my courage.”

Imagine many of these functions bound up in one person, and what emerges is a tentative sketch of the “wise woman” who appears from time to time in the Bible—a woman whose familiarity and prominence in the ordinary life of the people, a number of scholars suggest, may have helped give rise to one of the more powerfully attractive feminine images in the Bible, the figure of Wisdom.

Goitein wrote about the wise women he encountered among the Yemeni immigrants, offering a composite portrait:

This is a woman who keeps a watchful eye on her fellow villagers from the day of their coming forth into the light of the world until their death. It is she who helps during childbirth; she who knows the remedies and other treatments. . . required in case of illness; she who assists in matchmaking and, when necessary, who makes peace between husband and wife. Her advice is sought not just by her family but by her whole village. It is she who is most proficient at whatever craft is practiced in the district, and she, too, who is the poet who “declaims” before the women at weddings and other festive occasions and in mourning as well.

A wise woman from Tekoah (2 Samuel 14) speaks eloquently before King David, urging him to make peace with his son Absalom. A wise woman from Abel-Beth-Maacah (2 Samuel 20) negotiates on behalf of her city and saves it from destruction. The idea of “wisdom”—*hokma*, a word of feminine gender—in the Hebrew Bible, as Carol Meyers has pointed out, cannot be neatly encapsulated; it can apply to a mother’s nurturing, to the teaching of household and cultural tasks, to a knowledge of folkways, to the



Late Bronze Age
pendant depicting a
fertility goddess

skilled wielding of technology, to the astute perception of what constitutes a righteous path. In the Book of Proverbs, wisdom is personified not only as a woman but as a divine consort: “The Lord created me the first of his works long ago, before all else that he made. . . . Then I was at his side each day, his darling and delight” (Proverbs 8:22-30).

Lurking within this exalted figure of Wisdom, conceived of specifically as a woman, is surely the wise woman of ordinary communal life. These organic origins aside, some scholars also point to the psychological significance of Wisdom’s full emergence only in the writings of the postexilic period, when the public focus provided by the Davidic monarchy was forever gone. And as still other scholars suggest, it is important to see Lady Wisdom in the context of monotheism itself—to see her as a powerful expression not only of the divine feminine, an obvious role, but even more significantly as a means of intercession. As Frymer-Kensky (among others) has pointed out, in the transition from polytheism to monotheism it is of course significant that God is now only male, but the greater significance is simply that God is singular: “In the absence of other divine beings, God’s audience, partners, foils, and competitors are all human beings, and it is on their interaction with God that the world depends.”



The place known in Arabic as Kuntillet Ajrud, “Solitary Hill of the Wells,” can be found in the northeastern region of the Sinai Peninsula, at a place where important caravan routes once intersected, including the north-south route from Gaza, on the Mediterranean coast, to Elat, on the Gulf of Aqaba. Beginning in 1975, a team of archaeologists from Tel Aviv University undertook excavations at this site, unearthing the foundations of structures dating back to the ninth century B.C., when this territory would have been under Israelite control. Among the discoveries were two *pithoi*, or standing stone monoliths, and on one of them had been drawn some images of men and women and also words in Hebrew that some interpreters ventured to read as: “by Yahweh, our guardian, and his Asherah.”

For two decades, the finds at Kuntillet Ajrud have been a source of debate. To begin with, is the translation correct? If so, is “Asherah” meant to designate the Canaanite goddess of fertility, the consort of the chief male god, El? Are we to suppose, then, that Yahweh too had a consort, and that the monotheistic Israelites made room for a goddess, “his Asherah”? Was Kuntillet Ajrud their shrine? Or was it just a caravansary, abounding in the graffiti of travelers? And might “Asherah” refer not to the Canaanite goddess specifically but merely to the Israelite cult-image of the same name, a sacred tree or symbolic wooden pole planted near stone altars?

These are questions that elicit both narrow academic inquiry and, among some feminists with an interest in religion, a broader emotional resonance. The Israelite worldview, which offered a revolutionary vision

centered on a single deity, came into being amid a cultural context of polytheism. All of the Israelites' powerful neighbors—the Canaanites, the Assyrians, the Egyptians—had sophisticated religious systems that featured pantheons of goddesses as well as gods, with the functional responsibilities of cosmic governance and earthly development apportioned among them. The Israelites, not surprisingly, were hardly immune to the attractions of these systems. Atavistic references to them appear in many places in the Hebrew Bible. And, of course, the explicit embrace of foreign gods by the Israelites causes frequent breaches in the covenant with Yahweh. The fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians is precipitated in part by King Manasseh's installation of a shrine to Asherah in the Temple. The Lord vows (2 Kings 21:13) in response: "I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down."

The broader emotional response occurs on a different plane. It is only natural to wonder if women must inevitably suffer disadvantages in a religious system that lacks powerful goddesses, or indeed goddesses of any kind—one in which goddesses may in fact have been suppressed. And it is only natural to wonder about the theological and psychological consequences of a system in which the one god there is comes across as a male.

Tikva Frymer-Kensky understands such complaints. At the same time, she sees polytheism and monotheism in a considerably different light from the one that is typically trained on either subject. She writes in *In the Wake of the Goddesses* (1992): "If you could discover all you needed to know about the Goddess from inside your soul and your mind, why should anyone study Sumerian and Akkadian?"

Superficially, elements of polytheism undeniably hold a certain appeal. In a culture such as ours, with all its talk about affirmative action and minority set-asides, and all the public invocation of the importance of role models, the presence of women in an ancient pantheon can strike a reassuring note of progress. In the pantheons of Mesopotamia, vital natural and social functions such as the growing of grain, the brewing of beer, the making of pottery, and the turning of wool into cloth are associated with women who enjoy divine status. In the Sumerian pantheon, the goddess Nisaba watches over the storage rooms, among other duties, storage rooms perhaps being a cultural analogue of the womb. Nisaba is responsible also for yet another form of storage: writing, the warehouse of memory. And, of course, goddesses are generally associated with fertility and sexual pleasure. But male gods fill most of the important roles. They control the earth and the skies and the elements—the power structure of the universe—and they dominate the female gods. The religions of ancient Mesopotamia do not by any means constitute "women's religion." Moreover, the whole system presupposes—and legitimates—the division of heaven and earth, of thought and theology, along gender lines. In the end, the goddesses provide little in the way of succor. Frymer-Kensky writes: "The existence and power of a goddess, particularly of Ishtar, is no indication or guarantee of a high status for human women. In Assyria, where Ishtar was so promi-

ment, women were not. The texts rarely mention any individual women, and, according to the Middle Assyrian laws, married women had to be veiled, had no rights to their husband's property, . . . and could be struck by their husbands at will."

Monotheism, the chief characteristic of Western religion, represents a revolutionary theological departure. All the functions and characteristics of those male and female divinities must now be rolled into the being of the one God. "God plays all the roles," Frymer-Kensky writes, "for God is creator and sustainer, provider and destroyer." In the Bible, God brings forth the rain and snow and sun, induces fertility in woman and beast and field, serves as midwife, heals the sick. The complex dynamic of shifting power relationships among the divinities themselves and their mortal clients—the jealousies, the couplings, the wars—is replaced by a single, all-important relationship: that between the one God and the apogee of God's creation, human beings.

God in the Bible is not devoid of gender. God is described most often with male imagery, a circumstance that prompts a good deal of literal-mindedness even now. "O'Connor Rips Radical Feminists: God Is a Man" was the front-page headline on the *New York Post* when John Cardinal O'Connor of New York used a 1991 Father's Day sermon to criticize feminist reconceptualizations of the divine. When the director of the York Mystery Plays in England announced in 1996 that the role of God was to be played by a woman at the next staging of the six-hun-



Bronze Age statue of Astarte

dred-year-old event, the archdeacon of York condemned the proposal as tantamount to “paganism.” He observed, “We are made in God’s image, and not the other way around.”

Yet the God of Israel, unlike the gods of Israel’s neighbors, is not a sexual being, possesses no sexual organs, and is never depicted, as Frymer-Kensky memorably puts it, “below the waist.” The God of Israel creates the world not by means of sexual reproduction but by an act of will.

Depending on circumstance, feminine as well as masculine imagery may be invoked in metaphor. “Now I will scream like a woman in labor, I will pant and I will gasp,” says God in Isaiah (42:14). Later in the same book (49:15), God speaks to Israel in this manner: “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.”

Created in the image of the one God, human beings, male and female alike, partake of a single nature: “So God created man in his image . . . male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). As a result, humanity is elevated in status and competence. Whereas in the polytheistic religions the gods bestow technology and skills on human beings, in the Bible human beings develop cultural skills on their own, after “stealing” from the Tree of Knowledge (on a woman’s initiative). The first act of Adam and Eve after eating the forbidden fruit is one that in Sumerian mythology would have been the gift of the goddess Uttu: they make clothes for themselves. Soon human beings are tilling fields, forging metal, building cities, writing books, making music. Eventually they will even be capable of biblical criticism. Civilization is in human hands.

The religious vision of what Frymer-Kensky calls “radical monotheism” represents an ideal—and the reality of biblical society did not conform to it. Women were subordinate to men in custom and in law, as they were everywhere in the ancient world. Their property rights were limited. Their sense of purpose in life was often equated with reproductive success. And yet, unlike the sacred literature of other Near Eastern cultures, “the Bible presents no characteristics of human behavior as ‘female’ or ‘male,’ no division of attributes between the poles of ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ . . . As far as the Bible presents humanity, gender is a matter of biology and social roles, it is not a question of basic nature or identity.” There is no battle of the sexes, no pursuit of “male” or “female” goals, no characteristically male or female behavior, no incipient gender-driven solidarity.

The emergence of monotheism can be traced in the texts of the Bible, as intimations of a more populous divine sphere give way to the monopoly of Yahweh. How and why does this process occur? A recent *New Yorker* cartoon shows pagan gods assembled among the clouds, one of them saying angrily to the others, “It’s called monotheism, but it looks like downsizing to me”—an explanation that can take its place alongside various scholarly theories. “The Marxist in me asks, how does this happen?” Frymer-Kensky says. “How does a social system where gender is important and where identity is an issue rise beyond that to a kind of universalizing system? My upbringing would like to say, ‘Revelation!’

Revelation!’ The counterquestion would be, how does Marxism arise in the context of the bourgeoisie? which is where it does arise. The answer is, I don’t know *how* these things happen.”

By elevating human beings, monotheism also puts an enormous strain on them, creating a profound psychological demand for intercessory figures. To whom do we entrust a dialogue with God? There are, obviously, the prophets. But the voice of compassionate intercession is frequently the voice of a woman. The Bible invokes Rachel—“Mother Rachel,” wife of the patriarch Jacob, who died giving birth to Benjamin. Zion, the spirit of Jerusalem, is also invoked as a beloved woman. Perhaps reflecting in part the precarious status of women in their society, the fragile, beleaguered polity of the Israelites identifies itself as a woman in its supplications. Possibly the most memorable image is that of Lady Wisdom, who is sometimes depicted as a goddess. It is said in places that she already existed at the time of the Creation. She will go on to become the divine (and feminine) Sophia of Christian theology.

“It’s a convergence of the psychological, the historical, and the sociological,” says Frymer-Kensky. “Psychologically, the mother is an enormous presence to the infant. The mother is the one who knows what to do when the child is hurt, tired, or wet. This has a deep impact. The impact is reinforced by the fact that women had responsibility for all kinds of technological wizardry that we now take for granted. The preparation of food. Turning sheep’s wool into cloth. Collecting herbs and making potions. The ‘wise women’ of the Bible may be older women who have done these things all their lives. Women are seen to have arcane knowledge. They are the child’s first teachers. There is also a sense of women as being in touch with the divine agenda, which is partly, but only partly, because it is women who give birth. Women gain perspective from being pushed off to the margins of the public world, the margins of the political world. There is always something dangerous and also numinous about the margins.”

This experience may explain, Frymer-Kensky says, why there are so many stories in the Bible about women, period. If Wisdom shows women exalted, many other stories appear to use women the way Dickens used poor children, as a kind of index of social pathology. Perhaps it is only optimism, but Frymer-Kensky sees a recurring tension in the Bible on the issue of gender. On the one hand, she says, the authors are conscious of gender and of the fact that the social position of women is inferior to that of men, and on the other hand, the authors recognize that women and men are innately equal and that they are in exactly the same position with respect to God. “When I’m reading with a hermeneutic of benevolence,” she says, “I call the Bible gender-neutral. When I’m reading with a hermeneutic of suspicion, I call it gender-blind.”

Fifty Years of *The Lonely Crowd*

Of the many books that seek to tell Americans about themselves, The Lonely Crowd stands among a small collection of classics. Yet the meaning of this modern classic was largely misunderstood during the decade of its greatest popularity, and its analysis of American society may be more relevant to our time than it was to the 1950s.

by Wilfred M. McClay

The eminent American sociologist David Riesman, who celebrates his 89th birthday this September, has had a career of many parts: as an attorney, law professor, freewheeling intellectual, respected student of American higher education, fearlessly independent commentator on diverse political controversies, elder statesman of the American academy. But there is one accomplishment with which his name will forever be linked, above and beyond everything else he has done: an amazingly durable book of social and cultural analysis, now nearly 50 years old and still going strong, entitled *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*.

As its subtitle suggests, *The Lonely Crowd* was not only an examination of the changing structures and folkways of American society at midcentury but also an exploration of the changes taking place within the souls of individual Americans. In its various editions and translations, it has sold many hundreds of thousands of copies and been read attentively the world over. Along with such works as Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, James Bryce's *American Commonwealth*, and D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature*, it has earned a place

on the small shelf of essential books about American society and culture.

The book's enormous popular success came as something of a surprise to Riesman and his then unknown co-authors, Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney, who were well aware of the many elements of chance and serendipity in its gestation. Composed during the late 1940s in a white heat of creativity, *The Lonely Crowd* started out as a relatively modest study of the sources of political apathy. But it grew like topsy, through many drafts, into a much more ambitious study of American life. When the book was finally published in 1950, the professional sociological community gave it a subdued reception, a mixture of lukewarm praise and mildly dismissive criticism. But, to Riesman's surprise, it received a far more enthusiastic reception from the general reading public.

In retrospect, it is not hard to see why. The very title of *The Lonely Crowd*—although the phrase was dreamed up virtually at the last moment by the publisher, and never appears in the book—seemed to register the ambivalences of an entire generation of middle-class Americans. The oxymoron also captured many of the more troubling features of the corporatized,



Time's seal of approval: September 27, 1954

bureaucratized, suburbanized, and homogenized white-collar America that had emerged in full flower in the years after World War II.

In particular, the book expressed a worry that, despite the postwar era's exuberant prosperity, the traditional American ethos of self-reliant independence was rapidly atrophying, and, as a result, America was turning into a nation of anxious, oversocialized, and glad-handing personality mongers,

salesmen, trimmers, empty suits, and artful dodgers. Hence the paradox captured in the title: a teeming throng whose individual members nevertheless feel themselves to be aching alone, empty, devoid of purpose or independent meaning.

The Lonely Crowd quickly became one of the defining works of the 1950s—a decade that, contrary to its reputation for intellectual blandness and timidity, was exceptionally rich in works of sharp and

enduring social criticism. In September 1954, four years after the book's appearance, Riesman appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine, the first social scientist ever to do so. His sober countenance was surrounded by figures representing the central concepts drawn from the pages of *The Lonely Crowd*. Beneath this curious and fanciful tableau was the identification of "Social Scientist David Riesman" and the pointed question: "What is the American Character?"

That such a question was posed so earnestly, in such a place and manner, confirms *The Lonely Crowd's* significance as a popular icon of social-scientific inquiry. No single work provides us with a more valuable window onto America in the 1950s. But *The Lonely Crowd* is much more than a period piece. The Cold War is gone, tailfins are gone, the organization man in the gray flannel suit is gone, the cult of conformity is gone, the suburban ideal is teetering—in short, many of the particulars of the world we associate with *The Lonely Crowd* are no longer with us. But the book itself, and the questions it poses—about the kind of people we are, and are becoming, and about the meaning of human freedom in an organized age—remain very much with us. Such staying power is an extraordinary achievement. Consider, by way of comparison, how hard it would be to imagine a work of social analysis published in 1900 that would have had as much immediate interest for readers living in 1950 as *The Lonely Crowd* has for readers today. Indeed, it is not at all extravagant to claim, as the sociologist Dennis Wrong has suggested, that *The Lonely Crowd* "rings even more true today than when it was written."

Yet that statement calls for some qualification. Large and complex books peal in different tones for different readers, and *The Lonely Crowd* is no exception. Its marvelous title made prospective readers feel that they could intuitively grasp what it said, even before they opened the book. As

a consequence, some never did open it—or at least, never kept it open long enough to read it with care. Thus cuts the double edge of popular success. Such popularity always caused Riesman trepidation, precisely because he knew that the book was complicated, multilayered, and filled with internal tensions—and feared that its readers might appropriate its arguments selectively, in ways that would, at times, betray its larger vision.

The book's subsequent history bore out many of Riesman's fears. Given its considerable historical influence, it is perhaps inevitable that the book's "received" meaning is sometimes given more attention than its actual contents, a tendency that has hindered a fuller appreciation of its real virtues. The time is right for a closer, more nuanced assessment.



The *Lonely Crowd* is above all else a study in what Riesman, following his mentor, Erich Fromm, called "social character": the dominant mode of psychological conformity that any cohesive society inculcates in its members. As such, it is of a piece with the works of numerous social scientists of the era who sought to connect "culture and personality," writers such as Fromm, Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, Karen Horney, Abram Kardiner, and Geoffrey Gorer. But *The Lonely Crowd* made a distinctive contribution to this burgeoning literature through its unforgettable taxonomy of personality types and its explanation of how these various types came into being historically.

The heart of the book's argument is its claim that the dominant social character of Americans had changed dramatically since the 19th century, in response to declining rates of fertility and the emergence of a service- and consumption-based economy. The change, as Riesman expressed it, was from "inner-directed" personality types—self-reliant and purposeful souls who navi-

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gated through life relying upon the firm principles implanted in them by parents—to “other-directed” types, who were brought up to rely upon the cues of others, particularly peer groups, coworkers, and the mass media, in addition to parents, to find their way in the world.

Riesman expressed this difference with an ingenious pair of metaphors, graphically rendered on the *Time* cover. The inner-directed man (who resembles a staid, hard-driving Victorian businessman) is guided by a gyroscope, a navigational device directed entirely by its own internal compass, without recourse to external referents. The other-directed man (who resembles an overly friendly, glad-handing salesman) is guided by a radar dish, entirely oriented to external referents, which bounces electromagnetic pulses off “others” to ascertain where the man is standing and where he should go next.

Both inner- and other-direction stood in sharp contrast to “tradition-direction,” the form of social character that had been generated by older, premodern, static, highly ascriptive social orders. Such unchanging orders encountered little difficulty in transmitting the correct patterns of thought and behavior to their members. The regime of tradition-direction, however, was no match for the dynamic capitalist world, whose social forms are highly fluid and changeable, and whose mechanisms of social and moral formation must therefore be designed to equip the individual with a dramatically different kind of social character—a portable and internalized equivalent of the pervasive checks and guideposts of traditional society.

Hence the emergence of inner-direction, which instilled in the souls of children a “rigid though highly individualized character,” a permanent moral “set” that enabled them to weather the storms and stresses of an unstable and unpredictable world. Inner-direction was the classic *modus operandi* of the 19th-century Western bourgeoisie, which is perhaps why one can hear such clear echoes of Sigmund Freud’s superego and Max Weber’s Protestant ethic in Riesman’s formulation of the concept. But the inner-

directed man can also be compared to an intrepid Victorian explorer or imperial conqueror, striding confidently through strange jungles and disordered circumstances with his pith helmet in place and his “civilized” values intact.

Inner-direction was highly appropriate to the era of imperial and industrial-capitalist expansion, an era that had learned to turn all productive energies to the task of conquering the “hardness” of the material world. But with the transformation from a production- and extraction-oriented economy to a service- and consumption-oriented one, dominated by large, bureaucratic business corporations and governments, inner-direction became outmoded. A

new kind of social character was required for the emerging social order.

Because the new forms of work generally revolved around effectiveness in personal relations, it was now less important to concentrate on the “hardness” of matter than on the “softness” and malleability of minds.

Riesman anticipated that there would be unprecedented uses in the future for “men whose tool is symbolism and whose aim is some observable response from people”—advertisers, marketeers, communicators, therapists, educators, media personalities, intellectuals.

This concept of a great transition from inner- to other-direction, then, was at the very heart of *The Lonely Crowd*’s vision, and the book ultimately stands or falls on the usefulness of such a concept. But such a bare summation does not begin to explain the book’s popularity, because it fails to do justice to the unusual verve and wit with which the work was written. Riesman and his co-authors managed to vitalize their potentially inert formulas through vivid portraiture, and through a set of clever dualisms and phrases that were often as wry as they were informative. These are especially evident in many of the book’s titles and headings: “From



Morality to Morale”; “From Craft Skill to Manipulative Skill”; “From Free Trade to Fair Trade”; “From the Invisible Hand to the Glad Hand.” In the age of other-direction, the individual’s “struggle for social acceptance” becomes “The Trial” by “A Jury of Their Peers.” The manner by which consumer preferences become socialized (Ford is better than Chevy, Coke is better than Pepsi, etc.) was dubbed “The Talk of the Town.”

Obviously, the last allusion would have been especially meaningful to highbrow readers of the old *New Yorker*. But Riesman and his co-authors showed an equally discerning feel for the middlebrow tastes of the lady from Dubuque, and for a wide range of popular culture as well. They were especially acute in their analysis of children’s literature. Other-directed parents, they noted, had stopped reading their children the inner-directed story *The Little Engine That Could*, and were instead reading them *Tootle the Engine*, a “cautionary tale” of a free-spirited young locomotive that is unwilling to “stay on the tracks,” and ends up paying the price for his reckless individualism.

Everywhere one looked in the culture, and particularly in the education of children, one saw evidence of “an enormous ideological shift favoring submission to the group,” a regime in which “the peer-group is the measure of all things” and “the individual has few defenses the group cannot batter down.” Such a culture appeared to value smooth socialization and “adjustment” far more than it did independence or dissent.

Even within the family, the severe internal discipline of inner-direction had evaporated, since informed parents realized that the possession of an inner-directed personality would actually be a liability to their children in a brave new other-directed world. Popularity and “social skills” were more important than the pursuit of excellence or fidelity to inner standards of behavior. Such parents did not want their children to be “different,” even if that meant discouraging them from solitary play, unstructured inquiry, and too much reading. Besides, such parents sensed that

they were no longer in control of the situation; in the new-order family, they would have to accept a costarring role, at best, in the formation of their children, taking their place alongside the power and authority of mass media, peer groups, “experts,” and other interlopers. The family was simply too permeable now for inner-directed childrearing to be possible.

Riesman and Co. also carried their analysis into a consideration of politics. The other-directed type, they argued, approached political life with the attitude of a consumer rather than a producer, which meant that he tended to be passive, disengaged, or indifferent. An all-too-familiar variation on this theme is a character Riesman called “the inside-dopester,” a savvy figure who delights in knowing, and talking about, the “inside story” of political dealmaking and horseracing, but who does so strictly as an amoral observer, and only for the social status that his “knowingness” confers upon him. Such a role would never appeal to the inner-directed type, with his superego-driven sense of moral obligation.

In addition, Riesman found laughable the assertion of social theorists such as C. Wright Mills that a “power elite” secretly controlled American politics. On the contrary, he contended, American politics was fundamentally polyvalent—chaotic, de-centered, populist, and nearly unmanageable. Indeed, in the age of other-direction, the dominant political force had become not the corporate chieftains and other highly networked elites but the increasingly powerful “veto groups,” whose main purpose in life was negative: preventing untoward or undesirable things from happening, rather than initiating policy changes that took a more generous or ambitious view of the aims of political society.



What, then, was one to make of this new regime of other-direction? *The Lonely Crowd* provided an ambiguous answer to that question, a fact that may have something to do with the tangled background of its principal author. Riesman was born in 1909 in Phila-

delphia, the son of prosperous and highly assimilated German-Jewish parents who lived on Spruce Street, just off Rittenhouse Square. They were formidable people, whose lives were cast in the classic late-Victorian mold. His father, also named David Riesman, was an eminent physician and professor of clinical medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, and the author of numerous books on the history of medicine. His mother, Eleanor, was a graduate of Bryn Mawr College and a woman of considerable intelligence and cultivation. She was also an acerbic critic of modern life, a somewhat snobbish aesthete who admired Spengler and Proust and looked down on people who did the day-to-day work of the world, including her own husband. In the domestic sphere, the hypercritical mother's imposing figure inevitably loomed larger in the mind of the young David than that of the busy, somewhat remote, often absent father. But both parents were united in setting very high standards for their son. Coming into the world under the auspices of such parents would prove an immense psychological burden for Riesman, since their expectations were impossibly high. He could either try to meet those expectations or find a way to free himself from them.

As most of us would in such a situation, he did a little of each, with the result that he had great difficulty settling upon a vocation. When he graduated from Harvard in 1931 with a major in biochemical sciences, it might have seemed that he was going to follow in his father's footsteps. But there was never the slightest chance of that. Instead he decided, for lack of anything better to do, to enter Harvard Law School, from which he graduated in 1934. Although he excelled in his legal studies and attracted the patronage of Felix Frankfurter, he would always find himself restless in the law, unable to still his growing interest in the larger world of ideas.

After a year as a research fellow at the law school, a clerkship with Supreme Court justice Louis D. Brandeis, and a year in private practice in Boston, Riesman made a rather abrupt change and took a position as a professor of law at the University of Buffalo Law School, which

he held from 1937 to 1941. He then came to New York for a year on leave, as a research fellow at Columbia Law School, hoping to use the time in part to sort out what to do next. Then, with the United States' entry into World War II, Riesman made another series of abrupt changes, first going to work in the district attorney's office in New York, and then joining the Sperry Gyroscope Company, where he was first assistant to the treasurer and then war contract termination manager.

In retrospect, we can see that Riesman was building up a remarkable fund of experiences in white-collar culture, ideal background for the writing of *The Lonely Crowd*. But that was by no means clear at the time. As the end of the war approached, Riesman experienced the most profound sense of personal crisis yet as to what he would do next—a crisis heightened by the fact that he was now almost 36, and had a wife and four young children to provide for. He had been informally offered the presidency of Sarah Lawrence College but had refused it, convinced that he had no talent for administration. He had all but decided that, if nothing else came along, he would take shelter at Yale Law School, in a position he did not really want. Then, virtually out of the blue, Edward Shils of the University of Chicago contacted Riesman and invited him to come to Chicago to teach social science to undergraduates. Riesman accepted the visiting assistant professorship and went to Chicago in 1946. By the time he left, in 1958, he was moving to an endowed chair of social science at Harvard.

Taken as a whole, the story suggests both the breadth of Riesman's interests and the restlessness with which he pursued them. Indeed, there was a daring, driven, almost reckless side to the younger Riesman, a quality consistent with his keen desire to break out of the psychological imprisonment of his upbringing—and suggestive of the compulsive need for self-validation hidden away in the hearts of so many achievement-oriented individuals who often spend their entire lives laboring under the weight of others' expectations.

In that sense, the struggle at the center of *The Lonely Crowd* was more than mere cultural analysis. Riesman understood in his bones something that many of the readers of *The Lonely Crowd* did not: that 19th-century individualism was not real freedom, and that there was a world of difference between the driven, impersonal, workaholic obsessiveness of his father's inner-directed ideal and the more genuinely liberatory ideal of a truly *autonomous* person.

There was no way, then, that he would publish a tract that explicitly advocated a return to inner-direction. He knew all too well, from his own observation and experience, about its obsessive and inflexible aspects. Perhaps for that very reason, he rejected the cultural priority still given to the work ethic, arguing instead that play was the only sphere of modern life "in which there is still room left for the would-be autonomous man to reclaim his individual character from the pervasive demands of his social character."

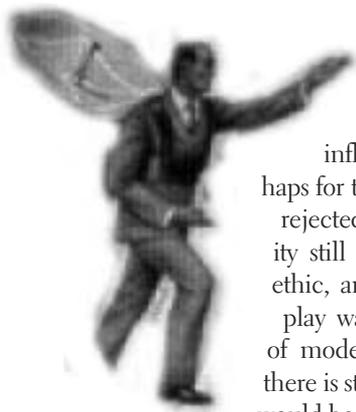
Even a casual reading should make it clear that *The Lonely Crowd* was not meant as a simple call for the restoration of older virtues. Instead, the authors argued, they were trying to "develop a view of human society which accepts rather than rejects new potentialities for leisure, human sympathy, and abundance." Far from being a critique of consumer culture, *The Lonely Crowd* was a celebration of the possibilities presented by consumption unfettered by the constraints of moralism or scarcity. That Riesman himself was among the most compulsively work oriented of men only went to show how much he was still his father's son, a fact that perhaps made him all the more disinclined to affirm inner-direction as a virtue. In many places *The Lonely Crowd* argues that other-direction, for all its faults, represented a vast and humanizing improvement over the soul-deadening constraints of inner-direction.

But that is certainly not the way the pub-

lic read the book at the time. Nor, in fairness to the readers of the 1950s, is it invariably the way the book reads to us today, considered as a whole. The authors may well have intended to write a neutral description and analysis, one that affirmed the positive possibilities inherent in the changes it describes. But the public embraced *The Lonely Crowd* because they found it a great secular jeremiad *against* other-direction. This detailed and extended sermon on our national failings seemed especially credible because it came delivered by a sage dressed, not in the black robes of the Protestant minister, but in the more respectable business suit of social science. As historian H. Stuart Hughes observed, the book "both reflected and stimulated a mood of national soul-searching," leading middle-class Americans to comb its pages in search of explanations for their dissatisfactions and doubts about their neighbors, their colleagues, their spouses, their children, and themselves. There was little chance that such readers would ever see anything admirable in the other-directed man's desperate yearning for acceptance, even if—especially if—they were vulnerable to such yearnings in their own lives. Even so respectful a commentator as Lionel Trilling, whose excited reading of *The Lonely Crowd* led him to wonder if sociology was "taking over from literature one of literature's characteristic functions," nevertheless shared the general reaction, finding inner-direction to be the "more attractive" and "more fully human" option.

But if there was no going back to inner-direction and no satisfaction to be had in other-direction, then what was a perplexed member of the lonely crowd supposed to do?

On this point, the book was less satisfactory. Riesman argued that within each of the three basic character types, tradition-, inner-, and other-direction, there are individuals who either conform happily to the characterological standard (*adjustment*), fail to conform to that standard (*anomie*), or transcend the standard (*autonomy*). Clearly the preferred goal is autonomy, which allows one to enjoy freedom from the compulsions and distortions caused by excessive adjustment (or maladjustment). The autonomous man



still has a social character, but he enjoys a certain distance from it. He can, as it were, turn off his social character at will, rather than be subjected to it at all times. In dealing with social conventions, he is captive neither to the need to conform nor the need to rebel, but instead looks upon such conventions with a mature and rational detachment.

An attractive prospect, in many ways. But there also were problems with it. In the first place, the public that embraced *The Lonely Crowd* never quite grasped that there was a difference between autonomy and inner-direction. This meant that much of Riesman's point about the untoward effects of inner-direction, and the real but limited virtues of other-direction, was lost in the shuffle. In the end, the most influential feature of *The Lonely Crowd* was its critique of other-direction, because that was the part of the book the public was primed to hear. *The Lonely Crowd's* influence therefore played into a more general '50s-era nostalgia for the lost American virtues of self-reliance and rugged individualism, a nostalgia that was visible not only in conservative attacks on "creeping socialism" and in the anticollectivist romances of Ayn Rand but in the challenging social criticism of William Whyte and Vance Packard, as well as the wild antinomian impulses bubbling to the surface in the movies of James Dean and the poems of Allen Ginsberg. Needless to say, such an outcome was not at all what Riesman—who was, like Trilling, a critic of liberalism from within—had envisioned, and he would later come to regret some of the uses to which the book was put, particularly in the anarchic 1960s and narcissistic '70s. But such uses were not without sources of support in the book itself.

In addition, there is a second, more profound problem. By asserting that individuals might have the power to don or remove their social character at will, Riesman was, in effect, making light of the most fundamental premise of sociology—the belief that beneath all appearances of individual autonomy and rationality were the irrational binding forces of society and the brute power of the master concepts—community, authority, kinship, status, class, religion—by which human societies are constituted and sustained. Such forces molded the individual

into an inescapably social and "heteronomous" creature who could no more step out of these forces at will than he could step out of his own skin. Was Riesman then, in effect, writing an antisociological work of sociology, by creating powerful typologies of social character, and then exhorting the reader to cast them aside in the name of some unconstrained freedom? Or is it more accurate to see *The Lonely Crowd* as a book moving, like surf waters, in two different directions at once, with the incoming waves of autonomy forever wrestling with the powerful undertow of social necessity?

The latter image perhaps comes closest to the mark. *The Lonely Crowd* was in fact a valiant effort to conjoin two very different sets of values: a social-scientific respect for the integrity of culture, and a classical-liberal respect for the autonomous individual. Nearly all important social science contains something of this tension between description and prescription. But Riesman's relationship to the social sciences was always limited and selective, and in the end, his greater loyalty was reserved for the liberal tradition, the tradition of John Stuart Mill, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Alexis de Tocqueville—thinkers whose central writings revolved around the fate of individuality in a mass age. *The Lonely Crowd* only appears to be a book of social analysis. It is really a book about human freedom, employing social analysis in order to transcend social determinism. Consider the words with which it concludes:

While I have said many things in this book of which I am unsure, of one thing I am sure: the enormous potentialities for diversity in nature's bounty and men's capacity to differentiate their experience can become valued by the individual himself, so that he will not be tempted and coerced into adjustment. . . . The idea that men are created free and equal is both true and misleading: men are created different; they lose their social freedom and their individual autonomy in seeking to become like each other.

It is refreshing to see *diversity* used not as a code word for an abstract pattern of racial-ethnic-sexual demographics but as an affirmation of the individual person, considered free of confining labels.

The possibility of just such an affirmation of the individual person was, and is, the grounding premise of *The Lonely Crowd*. Riesman understood, and *The Lonely Crowd* argued, that while human beings cannot live outside of social arrangements, which determine much of what we are, there is no conceivable set of social arrangements that can make us free. The freedom to which we can reasonably aspire is to be found neither in acts of mindless conformity nor in acts of mindless rebellion. Instead, it is to be found in an individual disposition that is able to accept gracefully the social limits within which it must operate—but is able to accept such limits precisely because it does not feel itself to be psychologically bound by them. It is, to use an older, nonsociological understanding of freedom, the ability to operate *in* a social order without being *of* it.

Such a disposition is very different from the anarchic or Nietzschean myth of the “unencumbered self” that so captivates our popular imagination, and is so strongly, and rightly, condemned by our most influential communitarian thinkers (as well as by David Riesman himself). It is a disposition difficult to achieve even under the best of circumstances—and, paradoxically, times of material prosperity, such as the United States has enjoyed during the 1950s and 1990s, are not necessarily the best circumstances for the flowering of the human spirit. To be sure, the battle cry of “freedom” is the most powerful and inspiring of slogans, particularly when it is galvanizing social and political struggle against tyrannical institutions. But freedom in its deepest sense can never be the proper object of a social movement, because it is so irreducibly individual, and

therefore so diverse, in character.

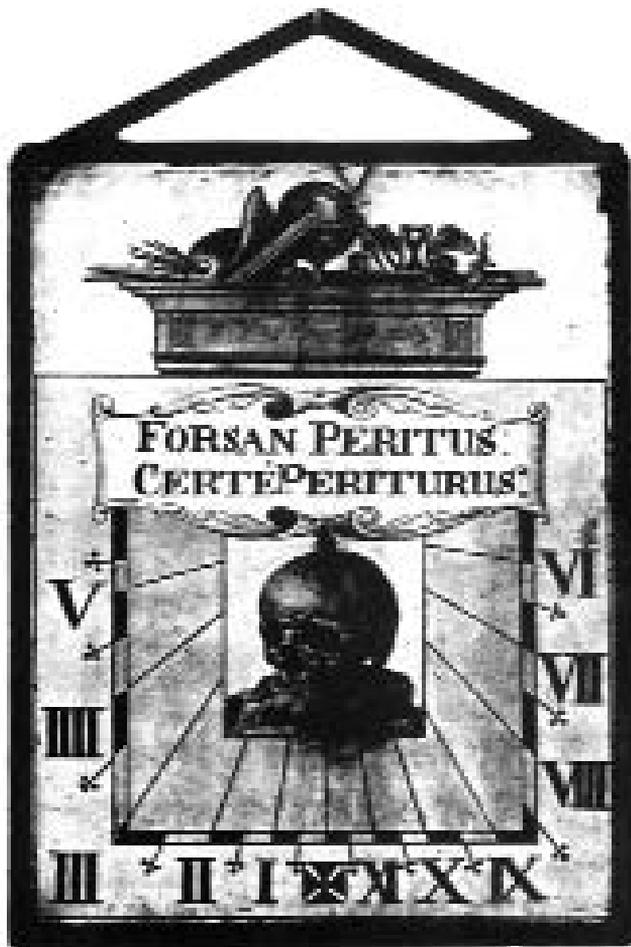
One wonders whether *The Lonely Crowd's* account of things assumes the existence of some transcendent, or at least trans-social, frame of reference to which the self can repair and from which it obtains vital sustenance, apart from family, culture, and others. So it would seem. Yet *The Lonely Crowd* is silent on the potential shape of any such frame. Such silence marks some of the distance we have come since the 1950s, because, in today's climate, the modernist notion of a freestanding, autonomous person no longer seems credible or even desirable. Perhaps that is because the once-great binding power of our social institutions has been so greatly diminished, a development that has also, paradoxically, diminished our sense of individual possibility.

Our current concerns tend to revolve around restoring the fabric of families, communities, and civic life, rather than celebrating the existentialist act of self-creation, an enterprise we are increasingly likely to regard with a skeptical eye. Yet *The Lonely Crowd's* silences serve to remind us that the sources of genuine freedom, that most human of human aspirations, are ultimately mysterious and individual, not to be captured in any social or ideological recipe, or encoded in clever public-policy formulas.

The Lonely Crowd did not solve the mystery of human freedom, but it challenges us to think more concretely about what it might mean to be genuinely free, here and now, in our own America. The book's greatest and most enduring strengths are cautionary ones. It warns us against the peculiar forms of bondage to which our era is especially prone. And in doing so, it draws us into a deeper consideration of what freedom might be, both now and in the future. For that reason, it may well endure for another 50 years. Or even longer.

TIME AND WHAT WE MAKE OF IT

Time is one of the more confounding products of civilization. While rooted in nature, it is measured, cut, and consumed in different ways in different cultures—though rarely satisfactorily in modern ones. In the West, a temporal system that began as a means of increasing our nearness to God has since come to serve other masters. Now, more than ever, the struggle over time involves essential questions that face us as individuals and as a society.



18th-century vertical glass dial

Time's Empire

by *Anthony Aveni*

“I do not think that they ever experience the same feeling of fighting against time or having to coordinate activities with an abstract passage of time, because their points of reference are mainly the activities themselves, which are generally of a leisurely character—there being no autonomous points of reference to which activities have to conform with precision.”

When the British anthropologist Edward Evans-Pritchard offered this observation on the daily life of the semi-nomadic Nuer people of southern Sudan in the mid-1930s, he seemed to be lamenting the dear price his own culture had paid for pulling time out of nature. I imagine that after writing his considered opinion of Nuer time, based on years of experience in close contact with these remote pastoral people, Evans-Pritchard must have drawn a breath and sighed before penning his next sentence, in apparent envy: “Nuer are fortunate.” Those autonomous reference points the anthropologist speaks of—the ones to which we moderns believe we are required to march in lock step—emanate from an ingenious, unforgiving machine Western culture has struggled to master since the Middle Ages. I am speaking, of course, of the mechanical clock and all the other myriad clocks within its eminent domain.

“Time rules life” is the motto of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors—a credo borne out in the formal time units that make up our calendar, as well as in the way everyday events have become organized and packaged into quantifiable bundles. Like squares on a chessboard, our formal timekeeping units—from the second to the hour to the week to the month—define the field on which we engage life’s momentous challenge. Athletic competition, the great modern metaphor for life, powerfully emphasizes how much of modern existence is controlled by the clock. Hockey has its three 20-minute periods, football its four 15-minute quarters, and basketball (at the college level), a pair of precisely timed halves.



Harold Lloyd in *Safety First* (1923)

We measure our records in individual sports to the nearest hundredth, sometimes thousandth of a second, and athletes aim to break time barriers: four minutes for the mile or 10 seconds for the 100-yard dash. In professional football and basketball, games often end with one team “fighting the clock,” calling “time-outs” that literally bring time to a stop for the participant—though not for the unfortunate TV spectator, who is assaulted by a barrage of precisely timed commercial messages.

Like the quarterback running out of time, the efficient worker, too, battles the clock—a situation memorably parodied in Charlie Chaplin’s 1936 film *Modern Times* (and again famously in an episode of *I Love Lucy* that found our heroine struggling comically to apply a chocolate covering to morsels on an assembly line).

Introduced in the United States early in the 20th century, the assembly-line process of mass production reflects many of the properties of scientific timekeeping that have become embedded in the Western way of life since the Industrial Revolution—sequentiality, consecutive change, and control—paralleling our concept of history, with its emphasis on piecemeal linear progression.

But time is not a purely social creation, a Frankenstein monster we cobbled together that now turns on us. All timekeeping systems, including our own, are ecogenic; that is, they originate in tangible percepts and rational concepts that emanate from the world around and within us. For example, the 260-day sacred round in the ancient Maya calendar was derived from the subdivision of the gestation period of the human female (approximately 253 days) into a pair of splendid cycles made up of the number of fingers and toes on the human body (20) and the number of layers believed to exist in heaven (13). The Trobriand Islanders of eastern Papua New Guinea begin their year when a certain Pacific marine worm spawns (about mid-November in our calendar).

For the Nuer, the physical reference is the sun, the extended arm the hour hand of a human clock. They mark their daylight hours by pointing roughly to the position of the sun in the sky. Moreover, their time intervals are not numbered like our hours; rather, each is named after the activity that takes place at that time of day—milking time, eating time, and so on. Late-afternoon intervals are compressed because, the Nuer say, this is the most important time of the day for doing chores. Longer intervals during the heat of the day reflect periods of relative inactivity.

Time's measure in Western culture has a long and sinuous history. Imagine starting work when it becomes light enough to recognize the difference between heads and tails on a coin, or learning to pay your rent before sunset on the day after the first crescent moon. All of these were viable subjective time-making schemes in the not-so-distant past of the West.

The simple act of shoving a stick into the ground and marking its shadow signaled the first break from nature that would culminate in our own uniform timekeeping system. But the desire for uniformity begets problems. The sunrise and sunset times that once designated the beginning and ending of the day vary drastically with the seasons, as do the proportions of daylight and nighttime hours. The partitioning of day and night into 24 hours probably came with the division of the celestial zodiac into 12 equal segments or “houses,” each marked by a constellation through which the sun passed in the course of a single lunar cycle.

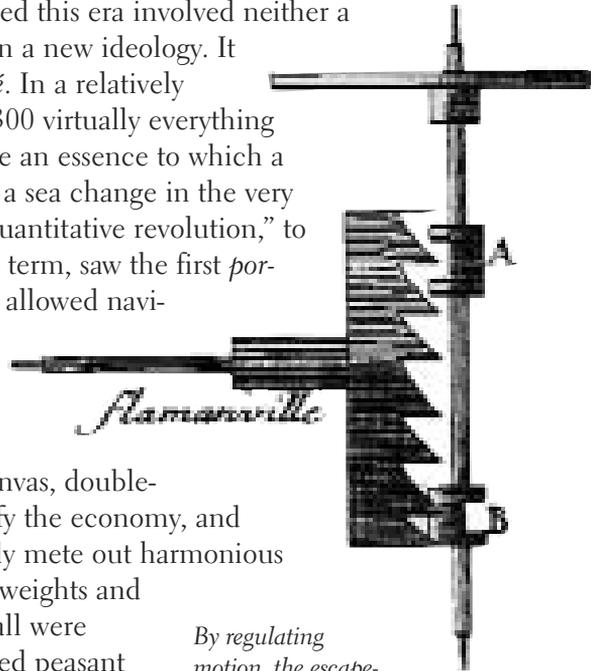
Because it takes the sun approximately 360 days to make a complete annual circuit among the stars, nature seems to have suggested an obvious

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system for partitioning seasonal time: use intervals divisible by 6 and 12. And so, sexagesimal notation came to be a part of time reckoning, with 60 minutes to the hour (and, much later, 60 seconds to the minute), 12 hours per day and night, and so on. This happened in Babylonia about the fifth century B.C. Spatially, the circle that represents the round of the sun on its zodiacal course was segmented into 360 degrees. By the Roman era, day and night were joined to create a cycle that began and ended at midnight—a more abstract but also more convenient point to make the diurnal transition in the business world of the empire. And for a dozen centuries, the Romans managed it all with sundials.

To locate the first hint of modern time consciousness, one must crank the turn-of-the-century clock back seven rounds from the present to the period around 1298. This was the point in history that brought the pendulum swing that vastly expanded time's dominion. The flux of social change was truly enormous: there were upheavals in religion, in urban development, and in the very basic business of doing business. (*Business* derives from *busy* [German: *besich*], which means “to be engaged in something requiring time,” in other words, the opposite of *idle*, or having no activity in time.) God, the city, and commerce—in all three of these spheres human needs would encourage the establishment of the standards of time that govern our behavior today.

The revolution that defined this era involved neither a war nor an invasion, not even a new ideology. It was a revolution in *mentalité*. In a relatively brief span of years around 1300 virtually everything in the Western world became an essence to which a number could be assigned—a sea change in the very perception of reality. The “quantitative revolution,” to use historian Alfred Crosby's term, saw the first *portolano* marine charts (which allowed navigators to lay compass courses) and the invention of perspective painting to quantify geometrical space on a canvas, double-entry bookkeeping to quantify the economy, and polyphonic music to precisely mete out harmonious sound. Monetary standards, weights and measures, the hourly wage, all were unleashed upon the urbanized peasant turned commercialized man seven turns of the century ago. From that beginning point, Crosby writes, “Western Europeans evolved a new way, more purely visual and quantitative than the old, of perceiving time, space, and material environment.”



By regulating motion, the escape-ment made mechanical clocks possible. In this verge escapement, the toothed “crown wheel” alternately engaged the “pallets” (A & B) on the verge, which was driven by a pendulum or weights. An axle in the crown wheel powered the clock's hands.

At that seminal turn of the century, out of economic necessity, the hour was snatched from nature and confined to the hidden gear work behind the façade of a weight-driven machine. As far as historians can document it, it happened between 1277 and 1340. There had been timekeeping mechanisms of various kinds before—including banded candles, sand hourglasses, water clocks powered by dripping water—but all were too inaccurate or unwieldy for general use. Some unknown tinkers’ invention of the *escapement*, a device for regulating the descent of a weight, allowed Europeans to make relatively reliable mechanical clocks—and led ultimately to their entrapment in time. London got its first public mechanical clock in 1292, Paris in 1300, Padua in 1344. These public timepieces were not merely useful devices but symbols of civic status and progress. The Paduan clock, which included brass and bronze disks that pointed to the hours, the months of the year, and the signs of the zodiac, was renowned throughout Europe. It took 16 years to build.

The historian and social critic Lewis Mumford called the mechanical clock the world’s single greatest invention. It was the machine that would objectively grind out a new temporal reality couched in a network of numbers. Mumford said that the clock “disassociated time from human events and helped to create the belief in an independent world of mathematically measured sequences: the special world of science.”

The earliest change in the common sense of time began neither in the marketplace nor in the hallowed halls of science. Rather, it was the child of the sixth-century Christian monastery. Many religions of the world call for regular times of prayer. Islam specifies five: sunrise, noon, sunset, evening twilight, and after dusk, while the Jew prays after day break, before sunset, and again after dark. Only in the Christian monastery were the times set by the hours—by the rule of an organized clergy whose duty it became to codify the schedule for prayer. Around A.D. 530, the rule of Saint Benedict specified when to “recite the hours”: the Lauds, the prime, the terce, the sext, the none, the vespers, and the complin in the waking hours, and two more at night—the vigils and the matins. If we all pray to God together, the better will He hear our plea. The precise measurement of time thus became a major concern as Christianity spread throughout Europe after the fall of Rome. But who would “stand watch” in the middle of the night to keep the observance of devotions intact? Who would keep the vigil? The clicking gear work of the verge-and-foliot escapement would become the sole sentry all supplicants could depend upon.

The first mechanical clocks were little more than gravity-driven mechanical bells. They had no faces or hands. In fact, the word *clock* derives from the French word *cloche*, or bell, a device to which the ears, not the eyes, responded. Remember Frère Jacques, the delinquent monk who slept through his matins? This eternally harassed figure in a children’s song was one of the first people to feel the tyranny of the automatic alarm.

The mechanical clock arrived just as another unrelated develop-



Clock time was initially the servant of the sacred, as in this circa 1450 miniature showing Sapientia (Divine Wisdom) regulating a clock as she instructed a disciple.

ment was sharply focusing the European mind on the fleeting nature of time. The Black Plague quickly spread northward from its introduction in 1347 by flea-bearing rats entering from the Levant at the port of Messina, Sicily. In three years, the pox decimated much of Europe (the Scandinavian countries and parts of northeastern Europe were spared), wiping out more than a third of the population. “Be diligent in your prayer and in your daily acts,” came the word from the pulpit. “Watch the clock carefully: you could be experiencing your last hour!” To avoid eternal death, one needed to prepare ever more diligently for salvation. Time flies! “He who idles away his time and does not measure it is more like an animal than a human being,” said a 14th-century preacher.

If the monastery was the midwife attending the birth of the mechanical clock, the city provided the ideal community for that robot child to grow to adolescence. By 1298, the population of Europe was three times what it had been at the turn of the millennium. Venice, London, Basel, Paris: the city as we know it—a place where goods are assembled, processed, and traded—had been born. The new manufactured products and other goods moved from city to city and from city to country. Economic change bred more changes: new, widely circulated currencies—Genoa and Florence minted the first genois and florin,

respectively, in 1252, and Venice the first ducat in 1284—and what Crosby calls a “giant step into abstraction,” a universal system of monetary exchange. Increasingly, everything now had its price, including time.

The city changed the rhythm of human activity. Workers migrated en masse from the country to get jobs. There they could become shoemakers, weavers, textile workers, or dyers—and they could bring home a pretty good wage if they were well trained. But the urban workday was a far cry from the rural peasant’s former daily schedule, which had consisted of a list of chores that began with feeding the chickens and ended with bringing in the cows—all accomplished alone and more or less in sequence and timed by the approximate rhythm of the sun in the sky, much like Nuer time.

Work in the city required collaboration and coordination among relatively large groups of people. The penalty for lost time was lost revenue. Piecework gave way to the hourly wage, as church bells migrated first to shops, where they became work bells, then to the belfry at the center of town, where all manner of pealings, differing in pitch and duration, would attempt to impose their discipline upon those for whom the bells tolled, upon masons and carpenters, wine makers and linen cutters. The well-to-do likewise subjected themselves to a new discipline of time, egged on by Renaissance philosophers such as Leon Battista Alberti. “A man owns three things,” he wrote, “his fortune, his body and his time.”

Regardless of where the laborers performed their tasks—whether in the vineyard or in the weaving loom, at the shipyard or the mine, whether in the home or at the bench in the shop—they came to resent the bells and mistrust those who rang them—the employer class which also ran the town government. Time seemed no longer to belong to God. It belonged to those who presided over this world.

For a variety of reasons, the revolution in time stirred concern in the medieval church. For example, take the practice of lending money at interest, an increasingly common phenomenon with the rise of markets in medieval Europe. The borrower essentially lives on borrowed time, paying a fee (interest) for the use of assets for a period of time. In the eyes of the medieval church, such crass secular capitalism constituted a criminal act called usury, the selling of time, a thing created by God. By putting money “to work” day and night, the usurer also posed a challenge to the Christian regulation of time: “Every man stops working on holidays, but the oxen of usury work unceasingly and thus offend God and all the saints,” wrote one 13th-century observer. Dante consigned usurers to the bottom of the seventh circle of the Inferno, lower than blasphemers and sodomites.

But the struggle over time between medieval labor and management cut two ways. Clocks also gave workers the opportunity to master their own time, and they raised new and complex issues for employers and workers alike. It is a relatively simple matter to mark the length of a workday that begins at sunup and ends at sun-

down, but what of one that is measured in hours? Such questions about time's essence, which had never been raised before the advent of clock time, were bound to create conflict. There are many examples. In 1315, when they were required to handle fabric of a heavier weight, textile workers in the northern French city of Arras demanded higher wages. To increase their earning power, they further entreated to be allowed to exceed the length of the workday announced by the bells—the first overtime dispute! Management fought back: in the cloth trade, for example, sheep shearers, fullers, and washers who failed to obey the clothiers' bells were fined as follows: the equivalent of five British pounds for checking in after the morning bell, 60 for ringing it to call an assembly of fellow workers, the death penalty for ringing it to call for a revolt.

As the clock became a symbol of prestige and progress, owning a “watch” became a measure of status, even though for aristocrats, working half a day at most, a “chamber clock” was hardly a necessity. In the horological revolution that swept Europe, clocks became elaborate showpieces. One estimate has it that by 1700 a single British clock maker had produced 50,000 watches for domestic use and exported twice as many abroad. (Today, Americans alone purchase 50 million a year.)*

Naturally, when clocks were brought indoors from the tower to the chamber they got smaller. By the mid-15th century, you could carry your own personal timepiece in your waistcoat pocket. (King Francis I of France owned a watch so tiny it was said to fit into the hilt of his dagger.) Pull it out, open the lid, and push a button, and your “repeater” watch would automatically chime out the hour and its quarter divisions—a great convenience in dark city alleys in the days before artificial lighting.

This miniaturization of timepieces was made possible by replacing the falling weights that powered larger clocks with the spring balance, a tightly wound metallic spiral whose slow release of tension was communicated via a twisting shaft whose detents alternately engaged rows of teeth on a round wheel connected to the dials. Credit for this technical achievement probably belongs to Italian artisans of the early 15th century. The wristwatch, which fostered even more intimate contact with the moment, dates from World War I, when military commanders, needing to coordinate everything from reveille to frontal assaults, sought readier access to their timepieces.

Renaissance Europe soon discovered that life in an interlocking market economy spanning an entire continent necessitates the international regulation of time standards. Consider the tradespeople who journeyed with their wares between Venice, Munich, and Basel. Because each city kept its own separate system of hours, a set of conversion tables became an absolute necessity for business travelers. A visitor to Basel, for example, needed to know not only that the city's

*Recently Tiffany's in New York displayed a Patek Philippe Swiss watch said to be the most complicated in the world. Weighing 2.4 pounds, held together by 332 screws, and exhibiting 24 hands, it performs more than three dozen different tasks—among them calculation of Easter Sunday's place in the calendar, the times of sunrise and sunset, and the orientation of the Milky Way in the night sky.

reckoning of the hours in a day began at noon but that it called that hour one o'clock, not 12.

The extension of bureaucratic control over time continued in the 19th century with the imposition of a unified global scheme of time measurement, a change necessitated by the revolutions in industry and transportation, and specifically the schedules and timetables of the railroads. In order to avoid massive inefficiency and spoilage, goods and people needed to arrive and depart at predictable times.

The technological burden was accompanied by a social one. Towns along the line needed to agree on a system of standard hours. Before the advent of zone time in the United States in 1883, the wayfarer kept two kinds of travel time: standardized "railroad time" inside the train, and "local time" in the towns outside. The latter differed from town to town, for at a given time the angle of the sun from the meridian is the same only at a given longitude. Step one pace east or west of that line, and the natural hour changes. Even noon and midnight change. To keep pace, travelers would need to change their watches about one minute for every 14 miles traveled in an east-west direction. Clearly, to be in step with the world, you needed to march to the same beat as your neighbor. The federal Uniform Time Act of 1883 established a new standard: everyone situated within a fixed distance east or west of the nearest whole multiple of 15 degrees of longitude would keep time by that parallel. (If the line of demarcation bisected a heavily populated area, the line would be shifted to avoid confusion.)

One year later, the International Meridian Conference applied the same scheme to the entire globe, establishing Greenwich, England, long a favored reference point of navigators, as the point of zero longitude, and Greenwich Mean Time as the international time standard. (The French, however, clung to their own standard, Paris Mean Time, for nearly 20 years.) Thus, the continuous time differential experienced in nature as we move long distances has, for the sake of convenience, become discontinuous and partitioned.

Like the tendency to socialize time, the penchant to bureaucratize it has its roots in the ancient world. Our own calendar emanates from Julius Caesar's adviser Sosigenes, who invented the leap year in 45 B.C. to keep time's canon in tune with the seasons. If you didn't add a day to the 365-day count every four years, the feasts that follow the seasonal cycle of $365\frac{1}{4}$ days indicated by the sun's movement would backslide by one day every four years. But the Julian calendar, modified several centuries later, did not entirely solve the problem. By the 16th century, the recession of nature's year relative to the artificial version of it had grown to 11 days. Concerned about where Easter Sunday ought to be positioned relative to New Year's Day, Pope Gregory XIII appointed a commission to solve the calendar problem in 1582. As was the case a millennium and a half before, two actions were needed to assure that the future festival date would arrive at its proper location in the year of the seasons. First, the spring equinox (from which the annual reckoning of days until Easter commenced) needed



Prayer times throughout the Muslim world are noted at Sri Lanka's Jami Al Alfar Mosque.

to be restored to its proper place in the year cycle; and second, the commission needed to devise a mechanism to hold it fixed.

After much debate about whether the lost time might be made up in small parcels over a long interval, the first problem was solved, as in Caesar's time, in a single bold stroke simply by dropping 11 days out of the calendar. To put the plan into effect, the pope decreed that the day after October 4 of that year would be October 15. The second step of the Gregorian reform consisted of changing the leap-year rule by decreeing that among century years, only those divisible by 400 shall be leap years.*

As might be expected, the Gregorian reform was immediately adopted by all Catholic countries but not so quickly by others. Great Britain did not approve the new calendar until 1752, by which time it needed to erase even more days to make the transition. Russia did not accept the Gregorian calendar until the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 (and then under Stalin experimented with five- and six-day weeks), and many non-Western societies at first paid little attention to calendar reform.**

We can scarcely fathom the toll such a theft of time would exact from us today, and it is safe to say it wreaked substantial havoc even

*Thus, 2000 will be a leap year but 2100 will not. This recipe had far-reaching consequences, for it drastically reduced the shortfall inherent in the Julian leap-year system by cutting the length of the calendar year, averaged over long periods of time, below 365.25 days to 365.2425 days (which is closer to the real value of 365.2422 days). So near perfect was the new rule that the man-made year cycle would now roll ahead of the seasons by only one day in 3,300 years.

**Minor reforms have taken place since the time of Pope Gregory. By agreeing to convert A.D. 4000, 8000, and 12,000 to common years, we reduced the difference to one day in 20,000 years. Finally, at an Eastern Orthodox congress held in Constantinople in 1923, yet another rule was adopted. It stated that century years divisible by 900 will be leap years only if the remainder is 200 or 600. The resulting calendar is accurate to one day in 44,000 years.

centuries ago. Immovable feasts were moved, critical saint's days omitted, monetary deadlines shortened, and the calculation of bank interest interrupted. Angry mobs assembled in the streets shouting against the authorities from Frankfurt to London: "Give us back our days!" The change was less traumatic in Britain's American colonies, largely rural and therefore less strictly calibrated to the calendar. The ever-pragmatic Benjamin Franklin shrewdly advised readers that "expenses will be lighter" in the transition month.

During the past two centuries, the calendar has more than once attracted the attention of secular reformers. All such revolutionary attempts to regulate long-interval time seem to aim for pristine completion of the year cycle as well as the ability to arrive precisely at a solar date. The more fingers in the bureaucratic pie, the greater the concern to build up and tightly interlock larger and larger cycles, with a single aim: to gain a foothold on the future.

The calendar reform launched by anticlerical zealots of the French Revolution was one of the most thorough attempts to reform a traditional calendar system. On October 5, 1793, the National Convention's "calendar of reason" abolished all units of time and replaced them with new, more uniform ones. Months were made the same (12 each of 30 days, with a five-day period tacked on at the end of the year). For the traditional names borrowed from oppressive emperors and deities the revolutionaries substituted names with seasonal associations: Mist, Frost, Snow, Germination, Harvest. (Never ones to pass up an opportunity to ridicule their cross-channel rivals, English satirists promptly invented new and improved names, such as wheezy, sneezy, and freezy.) The days were divided decimally into 10 hours each of 100 minutes, every minute containing 100 seconds. There were 10 days in a week instead of seven, which meant nine consecutive days of toil instead of six before a day of rest—a move that instantly made the new calendar very unpopular with the masses. The Republican Era replaced the Christian Era; 1792 became year 1.

The creation of such an ultimate time machine fit easily with the entrenched mechanical philosophy of the Enlightenment, and especially the Cartesian view of the universe as, in effect, an immense clockwork that, once set in motion by God, would operate automatically and unfailingly, driven by its own self-evident principles. If today's God is a computer programmer, Descartes' God was a watchmaker.

But French Revolutionary time ended as abruptly as it began. On the 11th of Snow in year 13, Napoleon brought the new era to an end, returning France to the Gregorian calendar and to the year 1806. The revolution's attempt to impose a new secular rhythm upon the people in the name of progress had run too much against the grain of religious tradition. While Enlightenment philosophy emphasized that science, reason, and the natural order were the principles humanity was designed to live by, the revolution's new time was forced and unnatural, too suddenly emplaced, too radical,



“Punching the clock,” an emblematic everyday act of the industrial era

too discontinuous with time systems outside France. The new calendar was too much a misguided social creation rather than a natural one.

A second significant attempt to rationalize time came with the campaign for a so-called World Calendar after World War II. Imbued with the same postwar attitude of universalism that animated the quest for a common language (Esperanto), calendar reformers such as Elizabeth Achelis of the World Calendar Association floated various propositions for “one World Calendar for One World.” Mahatma Gandhi declared that such a reform “will help to unify the peoples of the world.”

The 20th-century reformers often framed their rationale in terms of a familiar conviction: “Time is money.” The existing calendar, one business executive said, is a “smooth and subtle” thief. Consider, for example, the time required to determine on what day of the week the 10th of the next month will fall or whether Christmas will occur on a weekend next year. One radio news commentator estimated that it cost the taxpayers of New York City \$5,322,866.25 a year to reckon time—and that was in the 1930s. (This is a subject that hits home in the current wake of discussions of what it will cost us when ’99 turns into ’00, which most computers think of as 1900!) Vagaries in the Gregorian calendar produce variable quarters, variable overtime, variable time-payment periods—and endless opportunities for error. The advocates promised to erase these irrational, trou-

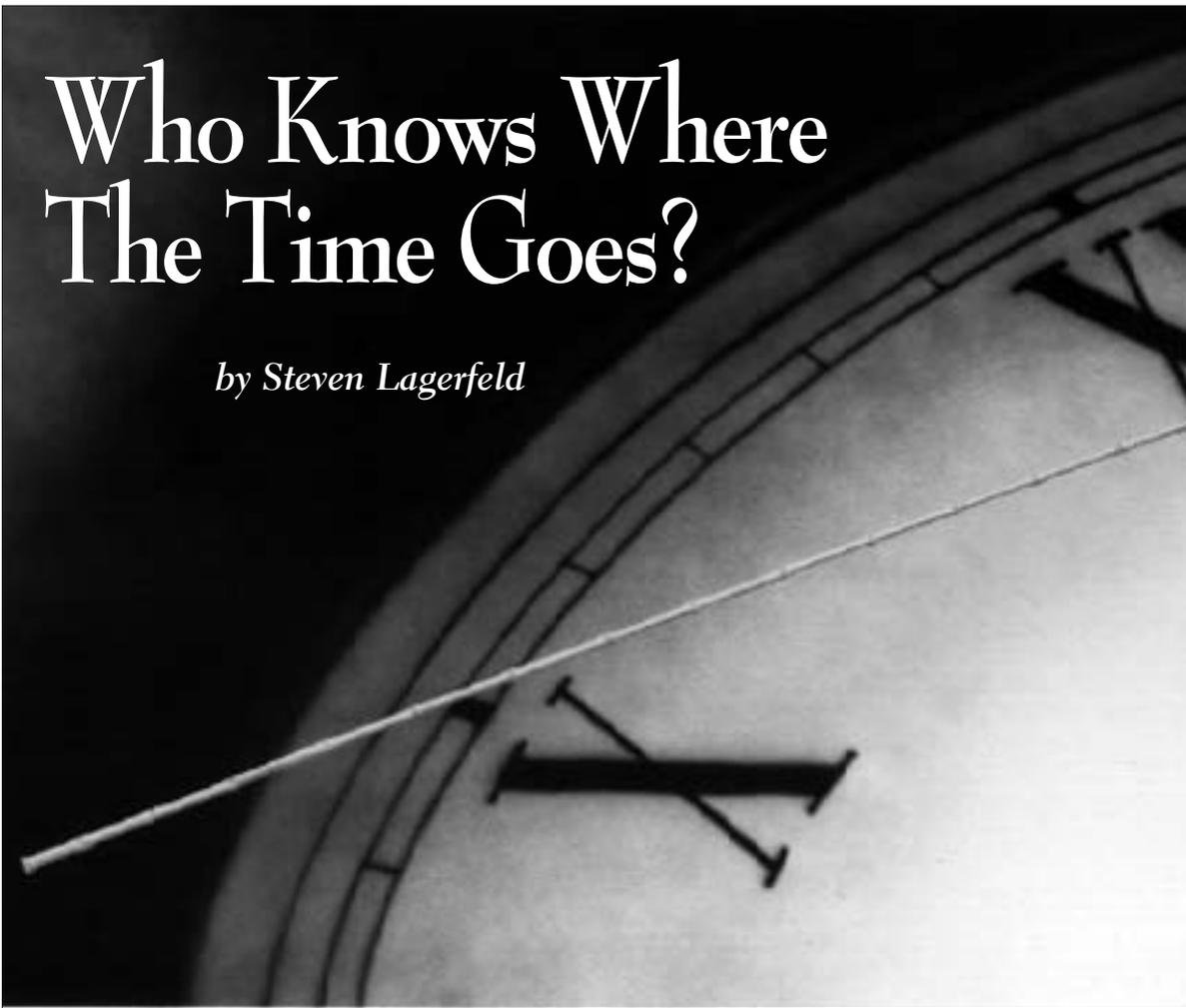
universal harmony and unity, a day for bringing together all races and nations in fellowship. “Leap Year Day” would likewise be inserted into the calendar every fourth year.

The World Calendar was embraced by the likes of H. G. Wells and John Dewey and praised as the temporal tonic for our time. One proponent heralded it as “a scientific system of time measurement without sectional, racial or sectarian influence.” Even the Vatican acceded that time management was primarily a civic rather than a religious concern, proffering a conditional endorsement of the World Calendar in 1954. World calendar advocates confidently predicted that their system would be instituted in 1961, a year they pegged as ripe because its January 1 fell on a Sunday.

Of course, it never happened. There is no single reason why it didn’t, but perhaps the World Calendar failed for the same reason the metric calendar of revolutionary France did not survive. Perhaps there remains within the human heart a longing for the uncertain, the incalculable, the chaotic—that tiny segment of the unknown we all struggle to preserve as the sacred, symbolic turf of time to which we might escape, the ever shrinking domain we can still freely explore in a life already too rigidly controlled by the clock.

Human culture is the great processor of time. Like other creatures of the biological world, our ancestors began simply by sensing the rhythms of natural time—the beat of the tides, the coming of the rains, the on-and-off stroboscopic flickering of the full moon’s light, the comings and goings of swallows, locusts, the red tide, and El Niño. But once we grabbed hold of the controls, we changed the order. We manipulated time, developed and enhanced it, processed, compressed, and packaged it to conform to our perceived needs.

There will be no turning back to life in a participatory universe like the one that Evans-Pritchard found among the Nuer. The struggle over time has had the effect of removing us from any real involvement in the rhythm of nature. We desperately want to take up an instrument to play, but our ambition to conduct the whole orchestra prevents us from doing so. At the end of his classic work, Evans-Pritchard describes Nuer society as one possessing “neither haste nor an appetite for product and profit, a modest society that accepts its lot and never tries to transform or exceed it.” Maybe Evans-Pritchard envied the Nuer because they seemed content just to play along.

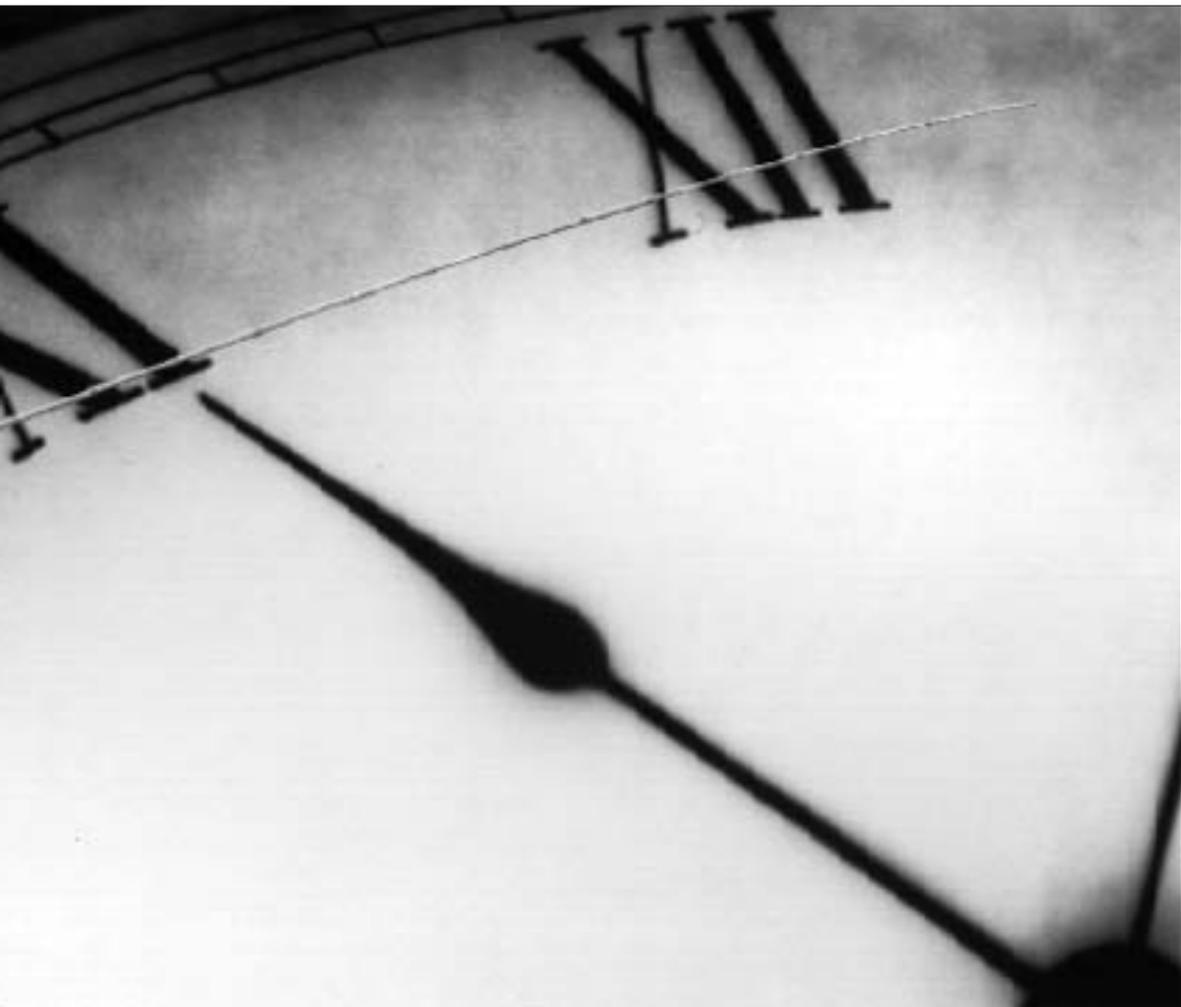


Who Knows Where The Time Goes?

by Steven Lagerfeld

The road to happiness and prosperity,” the philosopher Bertrand Russell declared in 1932, “lies in an organized diminution of work.” Russell made a strong case for the virtues of what he didn’t shrink from calling laziness, and his essay, “In Praise of Idleness,” is often quoted today by writers who bemoan the overwork and paucity of free time endured by contemporary Americans. Seldom is much said about Russell’s particular vision of the promised land of leisure. He thought that a reduction of the workday to no more than four hours would be enough to revolutionize human existence, freeing writers, painters, amateur scientists, and the civic-minded to pursue their true interests. “Above all,” Russell imagined, “there will be happiness and joy of life, instead of frayed nerves, weariness, and dyspepsia. . . . Since men will not be tired in their spare time, they will not demand only such amusements as are passive and vapid. . . . Ordinary men and women . . . will become more kindly and less persecuting and less inclined to view others with suspicion.”

Today we can see how far off the mark Russell was. While we are still some distance from his promised land of the four-hour workday, we



Five Past Eleven (1989), by Edward Ruscha

have drastically reduced the burden of work since his essay appeared. The average workweek, 50 to 60 hours in Russell's day, is now down to 40 or fewer. We have lopped Saturday off the workweek, cut the workday to eight hours, and created for tens of millions of people an entirely new sovereign state of extended idleness called retirement. Despite these and other vast improvements in the lot of the average person, complaints about frayed nerves, weariness, and dyspepsia are louder than ever. An amusement more passive and vapid than anything Russell could have imagined—television—has become our national pastime. And most Americans would probably agree that we are less kindly and more inclined to view others with suspicion than we were 70 years ago.

Yet the argument that overwork and an absence of free time are the source of our discontents has recently reached a new crescendo. The focus now stays narrowly on the last 30 years or so, a period when the pace of life seemed to quicken and when the course of life itself changed for many Americans as vast numbers of women took jobs outside the home. Those who began the latest time debate, however, were less reformist advocates of “family friendly” work practices than critics of

capitalism. If capitalism has not impoverished the masses, as Karl Marx predicted, then perhaps it has robbed them of time—a theme addressed years ago by the eminent Marxist historian E. P. Thompson in an essay titled, “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism.” Time is, after all, the most precious resource. An economy can be thought of as an elaborate mechanism for converting time into money, for making my 10 minutes of labor easily convertible into a gallon of gasoline or a jar of mayonnaise or some other product of somebody else’s labor. A group of progressive businesspeople in Montpelier, Vermont, made this connection explicit recently when they launched a new alternative local currency they called Green Mountain Hours.

The modern time debate may have started with *Time Wars* (1987), by Jeremy Rifkin, a kind of New Age advance man on emerging issues such as biotechnology and “the end of work.” Rifkin argued that the contemporary social order imposes an unnatural and exploitative system of social time, and he predicted the emergence of a “new time politics” that would “eschew the notion of exerting power over time” and ultimately bring society into closer accord with the temporal rhythms of nature. But Juliet B. Schor, an economist at Harvard University, created a stir by putting a number to the time stress so many Americans experience. By 1987, she claimed in *The Overworked American* (1991), Americans were putting in much longer hours at work than they had a generation earlier, in 1969. The average increase, she argues, amounted to an extra 163 hours per worker every year—the equivalent of an extra month of work. Desperate corporations, reluctant to hire more workers, “have just demanded more from their existing workforces. They have sped up the pace of work and lengthened time on the job.” Americans went along, Schor wrote, the victims of a “consumerist treadmill and long hour jobs . . . an insidious cycle of ‘work and spend.’”

In the new picture of time that has emerged from the debate begun by Rifkin and Schor, this argument about the creeping burden of work appears overstated and possibly altogether wrong about the direction of change. Yet it is also probably true that certain groups of Americans *are* working harder than before. The United States over the past 50 years has experienced a massive and largely unrecognized redistribution of time. There has been a vast increase in leisure, but it hasn’t fallen into the right hands. The elderly have benefited enormously, while the very group with the greatest need for time, married couples with children, has benefited least, if at all. And many of these younger people have been drawn into demanding elite fields (law, engineering, management) that hardly qualify them as members of the oppressed masses but that do demand longer hours of work. While even retirees complain of too little time, these middle-aged people are the most vocal and articulate critics of the prevailing temporal order.

Psychologist Peter A. Mangan has shown in experiments that, just as

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they often complain, people do perceive time to be moving faster as they age. Mangan and others speculate that there is a physiological basis for this alteration in perception, as changing levels of dopamine and other neurotransmitters in the brain throw off the aging body's internal clock. Mangan's research dealt only with short intervals of time, but changing perceptions do have something to do with today's rising anxiety about time. As those rushing 401(k) contributions behind the surging Dow suggest, clocks are suddenly ticking loudly in baby boomer heads. A generation that rebelled against the economy of love (remember "free" love?) and the economy of money now finds itself confronting the far more painfully exacting economy of time. Raised in affluence, the first generation to be granted on a mass scale that four-year extension of childhood that is college, this generation luxuriated in time. Yet the university's parting lesson was that in a

postindustrial economy with products that are largely ephemeral, success is measured as much in terms of input (time) as output. (This explains why college students are convinced that they are the busiest people in the world.) Its members are now reaching the point in their lives when con-

flicting demands on their time are at a maximum—their careers (and thus their hours at work) are peaking, their children are young. They also have sophisticated palates for leisure, and they know a thing or two about making their views heard. Entering middle age, moreover, they are facing the reality that time is not on their side; it is running out. There may not be enough left to fulfill every hope for family, career, and for play and travel and fun. No wonder time seems short.

Are Americans working longer hours and enjoying less leisure? It's a simple question whose answer, like so many efforts to understand social and economic life, is obscured by a data smog. Part of the problem is that the question really isn't so simple. There is no single set of flawless data one can turn to for an answer, and a host of difficult methodological issues surround the information that is available. Schor, for example, relied on the federal government's Current Population Survey (CPS), which regularly queries some 50,000 Americans about everything from their marital status to the size of their paycheck. The investigators ask their subjects how many hours they worked "last week," and how many hours they usually work in a week. Which number do you use? And how do you calculate the number of weeks per year people work? Because of such uncertainties, Schor found her estimates challenged even by left-of-center sympathizers using the same CPS data (but a different span of years). One pair of





Watch (1925) by Gerald Murphy

researchers, for example, trimmed the estimate of added hours of work per year by 40 percent, to 100 hours. Two other investigators, using different data and endpoints, put the increase at 66 hours.

The controversy reached a new level of intensity last year when John P. Robinson of the University of Maryland and Geoffrey Godbey of Pennsylvania State University published *Time for Life*. Specialized “time researchers,” they came armed with numbers from studies explicitly designed to determine how Americans mete out their hours. Moreover, the studies were not surveys asking people to recall how much they had worked, but diaries that respondents were asked to keep for single days in three separate years: 1965, ’75, and ’85.

It wouldn’t be a controversy if Robinson and Godbey did not contradict Schor in a major way, and of course they did. Far from working harder than ever before, they asserted, Americans are cutting back. This being a data smog, however, they didn’t produce numbers that would allow a neat and direct comparison with Schor’s. (That would have required them, among other things, to extrapolate a year’s work time from a single day of diary time.) Thus, we’re stuck with numbers such as these: among employed men, hours of paid work per week fell, from 46.5 in 1965 to 39.7 in 1985. That’s a 15 percent drop. Overall, Robinson and Godbey found that their subjects actually gained about five hours of free time per week between 1965 and ’85 (most of it in the first half of that period), reaching a total of 40—mainly because

they cut back on both paid work and housework. But virtually all of the new free time was squandered on television—the “800-pound gorilla” that consumes 40 percent of Americans’ spare time.

One of the many other interesting things Robinson and Godbey did was to ask their diarists to estimate how much time they had spent at work the week before, just as CPS respondents do. Comparing the diaries and the estimates, the two researchers found that people significantly overestimate how much time they spend at work. In 1985, for example, people who estimated they worked 50 to 54 hours that week actually averaged 41.6 hours on the job. Even more interesting, the two researchers found that the more people worked, the more they overestimated how much they worked. These findings tend to undercut any conclusions drawn on the basis of the federal government’s CPS data, which rely on just such estimates.

Of course, the Robinson-Godbey findings are a long way from flawless themselves. The people they recruited to keep diaries, for example, may not be representative of the entire population. Other studies? Other problems. But federal government data, generally based on the CPS, point toward this conclusion: working hours have stayed flat or increased by perhaps an hour per week in recent decades. One such study, a 1997 effort by government economists Philip L. Rones, Randy E. Ilg, and Jennifer M. Gardner, found an increase between 1976 and 1993 of about 12 minutes in the workweek of men and an hour in the workweek of women. They say the rise is not the result of a generalized increase in work but of the shift by a tiny fraction of the work force to workweeks of 49 or more hours.

What are we to conclude? Probably that, on average, not much has really changed. The people most likely to be putting in longer hours on the job are not hard-pressed blue-collar workers but a small minority of highly educated and highly paid professionals who have chosen careers known to consume large quantities of time and now profess themselves shocked at the outcome. (Schor, while jousting with her critics and giving a little ground in a paper she presented last year, barely even nods to her argument about growing work time in her latest book, *The Overspent American* [1998], a further critique of the vicious “cycle of work and spend” and a guide for the “downshifters” who seek to escape it.) It’s difficult to square the assertion that everybody is working themselves to the bone with the rising popularity of golf, gardening, and other leisure activities. “Gone fishing” may be the last words in leisure, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s latest recreational survey reveals that while the number of anglers stayed about the same between 1991 and ’96, the number of “angler days” (translation: the time spent fishing) rose by 22 percent.

So are we all happy now?

Of course not. For all the comfort such numbers offer, one might as well say, “Take a statistic and call me in the morning.” Americans *feel* very pressed for time. Evidence of this feeling appears even in Robinson and Godbey’s study, which shows not only that Americans overestimate

their work time but that the size of these overestimates has grown significantly over the years. It's impossible to count the ways in which the pace of life has quickened. Science writer James Gleick reports that a unit of NBC called NBC 2000 has been at work excising the split-second "blacks" between a show's fade from the screen and the appearance of the first commercial. Total savings: 15 to 20 seconds per evening. More important, Gleick says, "is that the viewer is in a hurry, or so NBC 2000 has determined. That's *you* cracking the whip."

Of course, it is misleading to consider only how many hours Americans are working. It is also important to know *who* is among the working. And on this question there is a great deal of agreement. The last several decades have seen a massive redistribution of work and leisure time. Work has been shifted from the old to the young and from men to women. Even unmarried people seem to have reduced the time they give to work. In other words, the very people whom society would most want to endow with free time—people in families with children—are most likely to be working more.

The biggest beneficiaries of this shift have been older Americans—not just the elderly but people over the age of 50. At the beginning of the century, retirement was a condition akin to a short-term membership in a very exclusive and stuffy club. Today, retirement is like a house party that begins early and, thanks to extended life spans, ends late. Men, government data show, start cutting back their weekly hours of work in their fifties. Retirement now usually begins in the late fifties or early sixties. About 80 percent of retirees begin receiving Social Security by age 62, and they can expect to live roughly 20 more years. That's a lot of golf.

What has happened to women's time is by now familiar. Between 1960 and '97, for example, the proportion of married women with children under six who worked outside the home rose from 19 percent to 65 percent. Most families have cut back the time devoted to housework, and men have picked up a somewhat larger share of the household chores. The overwhelming majority of working women with young school-age children either choose part-time jobs or choose not to work outside the home at all. But still, for many families a big chunk of leisure and family time has vanished, and women disproportionately bear the burden of what sociologist Arlie Hochschild called "the second shift" in a 1989 book with that title.

These are the changes that have propelled the plight of working families into the national political debate. Advocates have pushed a variety of palliatives, from "family friendly" employer policies (e.g., "flextime" and generous family leave) to improved child care to revised tax policies that are designed to smooth the integration of work and family life. Other measures might simply reduce the amount of time people spend working. Longer vacations are one possibility. Family allowances (as the Left proposes) or tax breaks for families with children (as the Right proposes) would both make it easier for one spouse to stay home.

What if some of these incentives were offered and hardly anybody took them? That troubling question is provoked by Hochschild's most



The American way of leisure

recent book, *The Time Bind* (1997). Hochschild, a sociologist at the University of California, Berkeley, studied 130 people working for Amerco, her pseudonym for a Fortune 500 company ranked as one of the nation's 10 most "family friendly" by *Working Mother* magazine. Hochschild's subjects were a mixed lot, though many were affluent middle- and upper-middle-class professionals, many in two-earner families that could have gotten by on one salary. Yet most turned down every opportunity to cut back—part-time work, job sharing—or reorder—by doing some work at home—their work time as company policy allowed them to. Many worked longer hours than they needed to, and Hochschild found that very often her subjects found life at home more stressful than life on the job. "Although Denise Hampton counted herself a hundred percent behind family-friendly reforms," Hochschild says of one woman, "she wasn't the least bit interested in shorter hours herself. . . . Her life [at home] was too laced with strain and her life at work too filled with promise and—with the evil eye" of envious male managers.

Her husband, Daniel, who is said to be "more emotionally centered at home," thinks aloud about the family's time bind with Hochschild and concludes that "family teamwork" is essential. "I'm still hoping we can make our family a good production team," he says.

Seeking in 1932 to explain why "there is far too much work done in the world," Bertrand Russell declared that "immense harm is caused by the belief that work is virtuous." Americans have largely abandoned that belief, but they have replaced it with the even

more problematic conviction that work is a form of self-actualization. Writing in the *New York Review of Books* recently, Mark Lilla of New York University argued that we live in an era that has wedded the values of the cultural revolution of the 1960s to those of the Reagan revolution of the 1980s. Americans “work hard, probably too hard, though no longer to amortize their divine debt or to secure an economic dynasty; they work for ephemeral pleasures and for status and esteem, understood as part of the ethos of democratic individualism.”

Whatever its defects, the old view of work, growing out of the fear that Satan would find employment for idle hands, dignified work of all kinds. But if work is a way—perhaps the only way—of creating oneself, then it is more difficult than ever for cooking, doing volunteer work, and taking care of the kids to compete with writing software or selling cars.

Few subjects breed more guilt and hypocrisy than work. In fact, there is plenty of evidence that busy people—or at least some of them—are happy people. People who work more than 60 hours a week report having sex about 10 percent more often than others do, according to the University of Chicago’s General Social Survey. Or consider the people who work more than one job. The usual view is that these are people struggling to make ends meet, and there are plenty of “multiple jobholders,” to use the U.S. Department of Labor’s utilitarian term, who meet this description. But the group most likely to work more than one job consists of people with Ph.D.’s, 9.4 percent of whom hold more than one job, according to a Labor Department study. Only 3.3 percent of workers without high school diplomas work more than one job, and the proportion of multiple jobholders rises with education. It does not decline significantly as earnings rise. In other words, lots of people who are working more than one job aren’t doing it for the money—or to please oppressive capitalist overseers. The last time the Department of Labor asked them, in 1989, only 44 percent said they were moonlighting for financial reasons.

Americans are good at work. It’s leisure they stink at. Arlie Hochschild found that many of her busy subjects at Amerco developed an imaginary “potential self” who did in their mind’s eye all the delightful things they couldn’t seem to find time to do in real life. This view of leisure as something incomparably sweet yet unattainable is essentially sentimental. It is the stuff of the Polo ads and Smith & Hawken catalogues that peddle impossible dreams of idleness. And it is widespread.

Americans are in a strange way not very serious about leisure. In a society that takes it seriously, leisure is the reward of the rich. Benjamin Franklin told us that time is money, and the minute he had enough money he chose time, retiring from business to devote himself to public life and other gentlemanly leisure activities. Today, the rise of wealthy two-income families in which both spouses earn significant sums yet continue to work has become a significant cause of growing income inequality. For all our protestations, we tend to think of downtime as a downer, as something boring, suburban, waiting to be filled. In suburbia, the vogue is for townlike subdivisions designed by New Urbanist

It may be that the contemporary American time crisis has as much to do with the structure of leisure as the structure of work time. In *Waiting for the Weekend* (1991), Witold Rybczynski of the University of Pennsylvania shows that it took centuries of effort and evolution to wall off two days from the week and reserve them for rest and recreation. Over the centuries, “Saint Monday,” the informal, sometime day off of urban workers during the early Industrial Revolution, was replaced by the formal Saturday day off. Time, Rybczynski emphasizes, is always being structured and restructured. In the recent past, however, we have busied ourselves breaking down the established borders of time. The week is more and more like a piece of postmodern art, full of pastiche and discontinuities. Many of the breaches in the old boundaries cut two ways. The cell phone, with its endlessly intrusive beeping and its babbling users, may be one of the more fiendish instruments ever invented by humans for peaceful purposes. Yet pagers, laptops, and e-mail allow millions of people to work at home, at least occasionally, or free them from waiting by the phone. (Of the five hours of weekly leisure that Robinson and Godbey say Americans have gained, many come in short bursts during the week.) A *Washington Post* reporter at baseball’s spring training camps earlier this year found the stands filled with electronically armed visitors from the North who swore they couldn’t have come if not for their digital companions. “My cell phone makes it possible to run a business from the ballpark,” one Yankees fan said, summing up the situation. “It also makes it harder to play hooky.”

Even Robinson and Godbey, though arguing that the workweek has shrunk, find that work increasingly intrudes upon the weekend. So does commerce. Sunday, the day of rest, was once guarded by an imposing array of blue laws that restricted or forbade various kinds of commercial activity. All 50 states had such laws on the books as late as 1961; by 1996, only 13 did. In addition to supporting Sunday’s traditional sacred function as a day outside normal time, blue laws spared salesclerks and others a day of work, and, just as important, they helped keep everybody else at home for a day of enforced leisure and family time. Yet much as we may now praise Sunday and recall it nostalgically, we buried it. It was too excruciatingly boring for too many people. Now, for most people in most places, Sunday is just another day at the mall.

If time really is the most precious resource, perhaps we should treat it that way. We now count leisure as something that’s left over after we’ve used all the hours and minutes necessary to work and to do all the other things we “need” to do. This is strikingly similar to the way clean water, open land, and other natural resources were once seen. A number of environmental scholars have suggested recently that we have reached the end of nature—or at least nature as the completely wild and untouched thing of our imagination. Indeed, they argue, this sort of virgin nature has never really existed in the human lifetime. Even the most primitive peoples reshaped the environment. It is best to put aside our romantic hopes and illusions, these writers suggest, and move toward actively managing nature and thus preserving it. Perhaps we

have reached a similar moment in the natural history of time. It's something of a paradox that we may need to manage time more thoroughly in order to create more unmanaged time. We may need to preserve pieces of time much as we now preserve forests and stretches of seashore.

How we manage our own time begins with how we teach our children to manage theirs. Sunday was once a day for stepping outside time, and in the 20th century Saturday morning became a kind of secular twin for children, with its long, idle hours watching TV in pajamas, ranging through the neighborhood, or joining in whatever game was going on. But now children are hustled off to soccer games, to piano lessons, to play dates, to the mall. After-school play is even more thoroughly regimented. An exercise physiologist, Pete Egoscue, wrote recently in the *New York Times* that the narrow range of children's physical activities today is causing great harm, and may be partly responsible for the rise of hyperactivity and other ills. His prescription is "playgrounds, open fields, and tall trees for climbing." Playing at random is the best elixir, he suggests.

What Egoscue is describing is the old-fashioned neighborhood, which, whether urban, rural, or suburban, served as the ultimate playground for children. Many neighborhoods no longer have that quality, in part because there are so many fewer stay-at-home mothers to serve as anchors for their free-floating children. Other factors are also at work, not least a pattern of suburban sprawl that makes it increasingly difficult for children to get around on their own. Then there are fears—some justified, some surely exaggerated—about what could happen to children left at liberty, fears that gain more plausibility in neighborhoods that are largely depopulated by day. A self-perpetuating cycle has been set in motion, as the withdrawal of children from neighborhoods into organized activities shrinks the ranks of playmates and encourages other parents to arrange more of their children's lives for them.

Into all of this there enters a sense of anxiety and worry about what we might ironically call "getting the most out of childhood." It is a feeling familiar to virtually all modern parents, summed up for me one Saturday morning last year as I stood watching my six-year-old daughter play soccer. As the children flitted about the field in their brightly colored shirts, never seeming quite mindful enough of the directions screamed at them by adults on the sidelines, another father remarked to me enthusiastically that this was terrific fun, and great preparation for life in the private sector too.

Leisure comes in several varieties, and those that are most like work—competitive sports, hobbies—have flourished. Witold Rybczynski observes that while such pursuits are refreshing, they carry with them the implication that they are both the consequence of and a preparation for work. Another kind of leisure brings us together in groups—for worship, for sports, for volunteer and civic activities. Robert Putnam, a Harvard political scientist, has argued that

Americans have increasingly retreated from these sorts of activities and warns of dire consequences for American democracy. But, as G. K. Chesterton observed, the most rare and precious form of leisure is simply the freedom to do nothing, and this is the most endangered species of leisure today. Those anglers who gave more time to their great escape in the 1990s also increased their spending on boats and other gear—by five times as much. They made fishing more like a job. They probably caught more fish, but their most important quarry only became more elusive.

Chesterton, a famous workaholic, understood that the joy of work and the joy of leisure are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but do need to live apart. While most writing about the contemporary “time bind” emphasizes the importance of better integrating work and family life, it may be more important in the long run to achieve a greater *separation* in the way we think about work and leisure. Otherwise, Americans may unthinkingly surrender one of their most precious freedoms, the freedom to do nothing.

A campaign for idleness would have to establish the home and the neighborhood as its capitals. Its expansionist energies might be engaged by the fact that people are most likely to enter into the more restful and restorative varieties of leisure—reading, socializing, joining in community activities—when they have three-day weekends. The rise of casual Fridays and the scattered practice of keeping reduced summer hours on the last day of the workweek suggest a promising opening. Saint Friday? It’s something to work on.



Object to Be Destroyed (1959), by Man Ray

Citizen Canine

It is often said that people come to resemble their dogs, and dogs their masters. But we humans do not stop at searching for reflections of our individual qualities in our canine companions, the author writes. We are also eager to find the representative virtues of entire nations and ethnic groups—and therein lies a tail.

by Edward Tenner

Often I walk or run around a half-mile path near my apartment, a simple asphalt loop encircling soccer and baseball fields, playgrounds, and basketball courts. Morris Davison Park is the green of a global village. Professional urbanists and cultural critics may deplore our landscape of garden apartment complexes (like mine), housing tracts, and shopping centers, but my neighborhood travels show that families from all over the world love it. People with origins throughout Europe, in East and South Asia, in the Middle East, in the Caribbean and Central America all happily gather to walk, talk, play, and rest here. To see their cosmopolitan soccer teams on a spring or summer afternoon is to witness the beginnings of a fresh transformation of American identity.

Bigotry and ethnic tensions are not dead, and Plainsboro, New Jersey, is no utopia, but the congenial scene at my local park is confirmation of what modern genetics has revealed, the unity of the human species. The dogs that accompany my fellow citizens are also conscious that they form a single species. They vary far more in size, color, and temperament than we people do, but in their vivid and seemingly indiscriminate interest in one another they betray no apparent breed consciousness. (Chihuahuas are said to prefer their own kind, but it is more likely that they are simply, and sensibly, most interested in other small dogs.)

Many of my foreign-born neighbors are already Americans, and still others are well on their way to Americanization. Already

the children speak to their parents and among themselves in English. We say that these families are becoming “naturalized.” Their dogs are newcomers, too; indeed, so are all dogs with owners, even if the dogs’ ancestors have been on American soil for a century or more. The dogs, however, will never be entirely naturalized. They are, in a sense, perpetual newcomers.

For all their emotional intimacy with owners and their families, dogs remain conditional citizens. Americans without criminal records need not register with the authorities, as Europeans often must, but in most places they do have to register their dogs. It would take a four-legged Foucault to anatomize our elaborate regime of surveillance over dogs—the taxes, the tags, the inoculations, and above all the human control of reproduction that has made possible the profusion of canine physical and mental traits.

The dog’s conditional legal status is only the beginning. Like any greenhorn, it must learn, often painfully, the ways of its hosts. It may be spared the need for table manners, but it must learn human conceptions of appropriate behavior. It is expected to modify its innate concepts of territoriality to suit the human propensity toward sociability, to refrain from jumping on dinner guests, and to respect the otherness of the postal carrier’s uniform instead of considering it a provocation. When we pet some adorable puppy, we are also educating it. Reared in isolation, many dogs become aggressive or shy, or indeed both at once.

The burden of learning does not, however, fall only on the dog nation. Children equally learn the ways of an alien folk. Children must come not to fear dogs, yet they also must learn rules of caution, such as not approaching an unfamiliar dog without asking the owner. They must avoid running from a dog. When they are older, they may learn the disconcerting fact that the sight of a running child may trigger a hunting response in dogs, including some small, cute breeds. Of course, they may also learn how much cleaner a dog's mouth is than a human mouth. The worst bite is a human bite, my mother said. Science has proved her right, as usual.

Humanity, unlike dogdom, has not been satisfied with the distinctions between the two conjoined species. In the last hundred years or so, it has increasingly mapped its own political and ethnic identities onto the nation of dog. Out of the variegated world of dog breeding and training, it has extracted symbols of history and character.

A cultivated, telepathic dog might give an amusing interview. It might quote David Starr Jordan, the ichthyologist who was Stanford University's first president: "When a dog barks at the moon, then it is religion; but when he barks at strangers, it is patriotism!" But human politics, it might remark, is, was, and will remain meaningless to its kind: *ubi bene ibi patria*. Where my kibble is, there is my fatherland. Dogs indeed have special human loyalties, but these precede the rise of nation-states by hundreds of years. They have been specially bred by different kinds of groups—classes, occupations, and trades—for particular uses: sight hounds, retrievers, herding dogs, watchdogs, even draft animals, are attached respectively to nobles and hunters, sheep raisers, property owners, and small tradespeople. How can a dog trace geographic affiliations, it might well ask, if human beings are so confused?

Scholarship and scientific research on dog origins remain in their infancy, with

years of archaeology, genetic analysis, and documentary research still needed. Specialists question many of the assertions of breed histories, such as the close kinship of the Tibetan Mastiff and the Neapolitan Mastiff, or the Egyptian ancestry of all greyhounds and other sight hounds. (Independent origins are more likely.) The Peruvian Inca Orchid, a nearly bald variety said to have been kept in luxury and protected from the sun by the rulers of the Inca Empire, appears similar enough to the Xolo, or Mexican Hairless, that Mexican fanciers do not recognize it as a separate breed. Both in turn are closely related to the Chinese Crested, but it is not clear when and in which direction the ancestors of these breeds were transported.

Some breeds are of more recent, and more reliably known, origin. The Teutonic Dachshund has Gallic Basset Hound blood. The Australian Shepherd was developed by Americans, possibly from the stock of Basque herdsmen. (Ironically, the "native" dingo, which long ago crossed to Australia from Eurasia, is reviled by European Australians as a livestock pest, accused in one celebrated case of stealing and killing an infant.)

Our canine informant might continue that dogs are most comfortable when they enjoy a close working bond with people in a given terrain performing a certain job—patrolling and defending a territory, hunting—or simply sitting in a human lap. Each of the dozens of types of herding dogs in the world is accustomed to a certain landscape and specific sizes of sheep or cattle. Industrialization indirectly promoted still other breeds. Factory workers of the River Aire in Yorkshire bred large terriers for chasing rats and pursuing (often forbidden) game, creating the ancestors of today's gentrified Airedales. (English gamekeepers, in turn, crossed bulldogs with mastiffs to create a new breed, the bull mastiff, that could take down a poacher and hold him without devouring him.) The high spirits prized by today's Airedale breeders and trainers reflect

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“Venus” the bulldog was the ship’s mascot of a British destroyer during World War II.

the raffish culture of the dog’s original blue-collar enthusiasts.

When European settlers in the New World and other outposts began creating new varieties around the 18th century, they were not exercising their fancy but blending the structure and behavior of existing breeds to suit new conditions: thus the Newfoundland and Chesapeake Bay retrievers and such distinctively British legacies as the Rhodesian Ridgeback and the New Zealand Huntaway. Folk breeders paid no attention to borders. Mark Derr, a leading dog writer, speculates that the Catahoula Leopard Dog descends from colonists’ curs and indigenous dogs, with traces of red wolf and Spanish Mastiff mixed in. But while it is found along the Gulf of Mexico from Mexico into Florida, Louisiana has claimed it as its state dog since 1979 and pointedly employs Catahoulas as guard dogs on state property.

Today, even as the cult of national dogs flourishes, geography imposes fewer limits than ever on how far a breed may range.

The upper classes of Europe and North America have been transporting dogs for centuries—George Washington ordered a Dalmatian from England—but few people could afford to do so before efficient transportation by rail, road, and air was generally available. Our cultivated guide dog might conclude its remarks by reminding us that the same pathways helped make heartworm a national rather than a southern problem.

Even the most learned poodle probably could not analyze the subject further. It is one thing to recognize that people have changed dogs and quite another to understand what these changes had to do with human self-consciousness. And even to people, the beginnings of national dogdom were gradual. The literary scholar Harriet Ritvo has studied how the abolition of bullbaiting in the 1830s led fanciers to begin the bulldog’s transformation to house pet and competitive show animal. The viselike jaws were turned into stylized jowls, and polygenic traits such as large

heads and short legs were maintained generation after generation. The early breeders were not trying to make a national statement. Nevertheless, their kinder, gentler bruiser proved the perfect canine complement to England's existing cartoon emblem, the beefy, foursquare yeoman John Bull. The bulldog was more a creature of enthusiasts than a common companion, and it was never accorded any official status, yet it became an indelible national emblem of tenacity, applied to doughty Englishmen from Thomas Henry Huxley ("Darwin's bulldog") to the plainclothes policemen of Oxford University.

National dogs seem to fall into two groups: mascots and monuments. The former is a natural greeter, a goodwill ambassador; the latter is a stern standard bearer. (Whether mascot or monument, few of these breeds enjoy *official* recognition as national dogs.) A similar distinction between the familiar and the distant applies among

the human celebrities who embody national qualities—think of Benjamin Franklin and George Washington. But where Franklin was a wise if eccentric uncle, mascots are metaphorical children, loved as much for their foibles and mild misbehavior as for the positive side of their character.

The distinction is not absolute. The Irish Wolfhound, for example, despite the imposing size and aristocratic bearing that make it so much a classic monument dog, is part mascot. Centuries of breeding after the disappearance of wolves and other large predators from Ireland have given it such a sweet temperament that it is no longer fit to hunt wolves or defend sheep, just as few bulldogs would be eager to jump at the nose of an enraged longhorn. As a symbol of Irish culture the wolfhound still retains impeccable credentials; according to tradition, Saint Patrick himself worked with wolfhounds during his youthful period of captivity among the Irish and thus was able to call them off in

Gaelic when he returned as a missionary many years later. Wolfhounds are features of Saint Patrick's Day parades in the United States, but it is unlikely that an IRA cell would have any use for one.

Conversely, a mascot is not held to a high performance standard. Tony Blair swept Britain's 1997 general elections with a campaign ad featuring a bulldog rejuvenated after years of Tory torpor by the prospect of New Labor. (The spokesdog, Fritz, was only three, so it was no great feat.) The breed's alleged health problems and distant heritage of blood sport could equally have made it the sym-



Hitler called his beloved shepherds "my only perfect friends." As a breeder, he sought to emphasize the dog's wolf-like qualities.

bol of all that Blair and his associates sought to purge from a “re-branded” Britain, but it had a nationalist subtext that Labor’s official red rose could not match, even if some Scots thought the bulldog was too English a breed.

The poodle, especially the miniature poodle, is an unofficial mascot dog of France, even more childlike than the bulldog. In the early 19th century, the standard poodle was as much a German as a French dog, fit to serve in Goethe’s *Faust* as an incarnation of Mephistopheles. As more people moved to Paris and provincial cities, the *Pudel’s* French cousin, a duck hunting dog, or *caniche*, was selected for compactness and trainability. It was not only a favorite performing dog, and the earliest dog of the hunter’s blind, but the signature pet of bourgeois urban apartment dwellers. Yet the more beloved the poodle became, the less fearsome. Standard poodles are physically and temperamentally excellent protection dogs, yet are disqualified symbolically from such service. Much dog work is pure theater, and a poodle guarding a nuclear missile site, no matter how intelligent and even fierce, is simply miscast. (Even among mascots, it has an awkward position: would you rather be a powerful person’s metaphoric bulldog, or that person’s poodle?)

The dachshund was the third classic mascot of the 19th century and, like the poodle, a citified hunter. The Teckel Society—Teckel and Dackel are the dog’s more *gemütlich* names—was founded in 1888 and is one of the oldest German dog organizations. Some owners continued the breed’s original work of hunting badgers, but for friend and foe of Germany alike the dachshund remained the “wiener dog,” endowed by its distorted anatomy with an eccentric dignity and musculoskeletal problems to match. Even more beloved than other mascot dogs, and often courageous and persistent, it has been sadly unable to defend self or country. With the outbreak of World War I, even native-born British dachshunds faced abuse and death in the early waves of British jingoism. The last dachshund in the international spotlight was the unfortunate Waldi, the emblem of the 1972 Munich Olympics,

who presided over yet another tragedy.

Even before 1914, though, another type of national dog was emerging: the monument dog. Germany had an old monument dog, the Deutsche Dogge, another mastiff variant and a fearless protector. A dachshund on a pedestal would be laughable, a Deutsche Dogge plausible. But the Deutsche Dogge needed a lot of room, indoors and out, had an appetite that could challenge even the average Junker’s bank account, and lived only about a decade. Perhaps even more damning, many foreigners thought it was originally Danish—it is called the Great Dane in the English-speaking world—even if it seemed an unlikely product of such a small, peaceable nation.

Nearly a hundred years ago, a group of German fanciers made a fateful innovation in the culture of national dogs. In 1899, only a year before the significance of Gregor Mendel’s long-neglected papers on genetic inheritance burst into the awareness of scientists, these fanciers formed a German Shepherd Dog Society, the SV, to develop what they considered the outstanding qualities of one of Germany’s native breeds. The cofounder of the SV, a retired Prussian cavalry captain named Max von Stephanitz, was no Junker. He had grown up in a cosmopolitan, well-traveled Dresden household and was familiar with the breeding customs and dog shows then part of the vogue for all things English among the Continental upper class. Like other dog fanciers, von Stephanitz had noted the elegant lines of the Rough Collie, Queen Victoria’s favorite and the outstanding international luxury dog of the day.

After observing the autonomous herding skills of sheepdogs in western Germany, von Stephanitz (with another former officer) resolved to bring a new spirit to elite dog breeding, emphasizing the folk breeder’s cultivation of character, intelligence, and working ability over mere looks. A fierce nationalist, he promoted these pursuits as a distinctively German alternative to the frivolous and superficial ways of foreign breeders. Realizing that fewer and fewer dogs would ever actually herd sheep, he still insisted on the field trial as the

ultimate test of a pedigreed dog and extolled the loyal and protective character of the shepherd. The shepherd would retain the working virtues that Britain's effete collie had lost. Von Stephanitz's tireless publicity, massive correspondence (up to 17,000 letters logged in a single year), and persuasiveness with police officials brought quick popular recognition, though no official status, for the new breed of German Shepherd Dog. During World War I, the centrally organized SV was able to mobilize so many shepherds for the army that the breed displaced the Airedale terrier as favorite.

Von Stephanitz, a Saxon who had served Prussia and then moved to an estate in Bavaria to oversee his informal network of breeders and fanciers, epitomized German national fusion in his own right. And the breed standard that he and his associates developed merged what they considered the best traits of a number of regional varieties of sheepdog in Central Europe, especially strains from Thuringia and Württemberg. Express crate shipment via a national rail network let breeders combine varieties that could have remained distinct breeds; Belgium alone has three recognized shepherding breeds. Indeed, it is not clear how many of the dogs originated on "German" soil: Glenn Radde, a Minnesota geographer and anthropologist and pioneering student of the breed, believes that much of the foundation stock came from non-German-speaking Central Europe. Nevertheless, by 1938 the leading German encyclopedia *Meyers Lexikon* was proclaiming the shepherd's "pure German descent and pure German breeding."

Despite the use of masquerade names such as "Alsatian" and "police dog," Hollywood only helped confirm the German-ness of the breed during the first decades of the century, when its early canine stars Strongheart and Rin Tin Tin (both the products of German police or military kennels) paraded the shepherd's athletic prowess before international film audiences. The innocent dachshund remained stigmatized, but the shepherd became a token of a valiant foe, and a luxury import item akin to

optics and racing cars. Many American police departments still believe so strongly in the original bloodlines and methods that they pay premiums of thousands of dollars for German-bred, German-trained shepherds, hoping to find dogs that fulfill von Stephanitz's policedog ideal: "joy in work, devotion to duty, loyalty for his master, mistrust and sharpness against strangers and unusual things."

Other peoples have followed the Germans in the manufacture of monument dogs. Whether or not in conscious imitation, Japanese breeders of the early 20th century began to purify the largest of their indigenous spitzlike strains, the Akita, to remove traces of the European dogs to which it had been bred during its fighting days in the 19th century. Japanese breeders, according to one history of the Akita, created a hierarchy of colored leashes and honorific forms of address for the most accomplished dogs. Shepherds and others could earn titles of *Schutzhund* (protection dog) I, II, and III, but Akitas that progressed from *Ara-inu* (beginning dog) all the way to an exalted training title such as *O-hana Shi-inu* (released dog) were honored with a red leather collar decorated in gold with a shogun's crest. By 1919 the Akita was a designated national monument, and other breeds soon received the same distinction.

The German connection helped produce at least one even more surprising monument dog. In his history of the shepherd breed, the fiercely anti-Semitic von Stephanitz denied that Jews could understand the "essence" of the shepherd, but he evidently recognized honorary Aryans. Among the contributors to the magazine of the SV was Dr. Rudolfina Menzel, chief consultant to the Vienna police department and one of the leading specialists of the Shepherd world. Menzel and her husband emigrated to Palestine in the 1930s, where they became dog breeders and trainers for the Haganah, the Zionist military organization. And when shepherds and other European breeds wilted in the Middle Eastern heat, Menzel began to develop a new, desert-hardy dog from the fittest and most intelligent of the

pariahs that followed the Bedouin camps.

Until comparatively recently, Jews shared some of Muslims' cultural misgivings about dogs. In the Eastern European shtetl, dogs were suspect as the guardians of the gentry's estates and as the fighting companions of an often hostile peasantry. The Zionist dream of a Jewish state in Palestine changed aversion into enthusiasm. The local dogs of the Middle East, with whom the Bedouin could be alternately affectionate and harsh, were the survivors of rigorous natural selection, and close to their uncorrupted, spitzlike ancestors. Despite their nomadic history, the dogs turned out to be fiercely territorial as well as intelligent and self-reliant, able to signal an outsider's approach with two distinct barking tones.



The Akita

Were these not the dogs of ancient Israel, ready to emerge from centuries of neglect and to defend a land of their own at last?

The Canaan Dog, like the shepherd, has no official status in its homeland, yet it also is used widely by public authorities in Israel, and even as overseas celebrities adopt the breed, locally and internationally it continues to represent national values.

Native residents and settlers are not the only creators of national dogs. Peoples all over the world may be skillful practical owners of regional varieties, but shaping a breed demands familiarity with the biological, legal, and social aspects of dogdom—a body of knowledge that arose little more than a hundred years ago in Western Europe and North America. Just as the system of Scots clan tartans was elaborated by English textile manufacturers, just as Captain von Stephanitz appropriated the craft skills of working shepherds, Western



The Kangal

sojourners have been adopting and fostering what they perceive as “native” breeds in various corners of the world.

In Afghanistan, it was British diplomats and military officers serving under the British pro-

teCTORATE that prevailed from 1839 to 1921 who began to put together narratives of the Afghan Hound as a breed—this at a time when Afghanistan was still a tribal, nomadic society with no fixed political identity. Mary Amps, the wife of an English major stationed near Kabul after World War I, bought valuable specimens of the dog from tribesmen. Her writings and letters not only defined much of the breed's history but helped create a national consciousness of the Tazi Hound, as it is called locally.

Some foreigners have gone a step further, promoting breeds that were not yet recognized locally. Another English overseas couple, the husband in this case a diplomat on Malta, recognized in a large local rabbit-hunting dog the descendant of animals painted on the walls of the tombs of ancient Egypt. They christened it the Pharaoh Dog, worked with other breeders and fanciers in the United Kingdom and then in the United States, and ultimately helped it achieve recognition by the American Kennel Club in 1983. It is now the official hunting dog of Malta.



The Canaan Dog

Yet another diplomat, an American named David D. Nelson, and his wife, Judith, delighted their Turkish hosts in the mid-1970s by recognizing among the diverse herding and guarding dogs of east-central Anatolia the Kangal dog, named for a leading family and town of its region. As the Nelsons note on their World Wide

Web site devoted to the dog, “the Turkish villager has little concept of ‘breeds.’” In the absence of a Turkish national kennel club, and despite the preference of urban Turks for imported breeds, the Nelsons succeeded in raising Turkish government consciousness. Now there are two state kennels in the dog’s home province. Today the Kangal appears on a Turkish postage stamp and, like the Akita in Japan, is one

of breed wardens organized by von Stephanitz saved the shepherd from ruin through commercialization in the 1920s.) Yet narrow as the biological base may be, it still supports a monument.

The creation of national animals by cosmopolitan enthusiasts has not ended. The Inca Dog of Peru, for example, follows a breed standard developed by fanciers in Bremen. The Fila Brasileiro, with the build of a mastiff and the nose of a bloodhound, the unofficial monument dog of Brazil, is prized by owners there for its fierce territoriality and suspicion of strangers. But one of its chief promoters is a Brazilian-born breeder and writer named Clelia Kruel, who lives in Texas, where he manages a Fila Web site. Urban Brazilians may prefer shepherds and Dobermans, but, according to the site, the Brazilian Center for Jungle Warfare has judged the Fila “the *best* dog for jungle work.” “Faithful as a Fila” is a Brazilian proverb.

While the Chihuahua, unlike the Xolo with its proud Aztec ancestry, began as the darling souvenir of Anglo tourists, it has proved surprisingly popular among Hispanic Americans, to judge from their favorable reaction to opinion polls on a controversial Spanish-speaking dog in a Taco Bell commercial. Nor is this the only welcome addition of humor to the formerly hard-bitten world of canine nationalism: Cobi, the mascot of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, was officially a Gos d’Atura Catala (Catalan Herding Dog) but existed mainly as an unrecognizably stylized cartoon figure by the local artist-designer Javier Mariscal. No Catalan seemed to mind that foreign journalists regularly misidentified the breed as a Pyrenees.

As with most technologies, there are glaring paradoxes in dog breeding. When a mascot or monument dog becomes a global success, as the shepherd did, its country of origin may lose much of



Stubbie the pit bull, wounded while serving in World War I and greeted as a hero by three U.S. presidents, made a strong but unsuccessful bid for national dog status.

of a number of breeds prized as a national asset for a combination of beauty and courage in the face of fierce predators.

Some academic biologists dispute the Nelsons’ claims and are skeptical that there are any real distinctions among Turkish breeds, but, as interest in the Kangal grows in Turkey and the West, the standard is becoming a self-fulfilling phylogeny. Turkish scientific opinion seems to support the Nelsons’ view that the Kangal is a long-established breed. Like other newly recognized breeds, it will need careful management and selection to retain the qualities that attracted owners to it in the first place. (Only a rigorous new system

its control over selection and quality. (This has been a serious issue among Akita breeders in Japan.) Though most people distinguish between individual animals and the images associated with their breed, dogs are sometimes made to suffer for atrocities committed by totalitarian or racist police employing the breed. Residents of Kinshasa, Zaire, took violent offense at the German Shepherd Dog that accompanied George Foreman for his 1974 world championship match with Mohammed Ali; it recalled the dogs of the hated Belgian colonial police. And military mobilization, which initially promoted the shepherd in its homeland during the First World War, nearly wrecked it in the second. Though Hitler was an SV member who exalted the shepherd as a quasi-official national totem through the 1930s, he also requisitioned thousands of the finest breeding dogs for war service, and many or most never returned. (Today, the overwhelming majority of German military and police dogs are shepherds.)

The ultimate national-dog paradox may be that Americans, so receptive to the mascot and monument breeds of other nations, have never had a pure-bred candidate of their own. Just as we have a succession of presidential libraries across the land supplementing our national archives, we have a trail of presidential dogs, from Warren Harding's Laddie Boy (an Airedale) to Bill Clinton's chocolate Labrador retriever Buddy, and a diverse lineup of military and police dogs. Few traces remain of our native American dogs, at least outside Alaska. Enthusiasts have only a slender basis for a truly autochthonous breed on the Canaan Dog model. One biologist, I. Lehr Brisbin, has found and bred a wild strain near the Savannah River

nuclear plant that he has identified as descended from the earliest native dogs, but these Carolina dogs, as he has called them, do not have American Kennel Club recognition yet, let alone a postage stamp.

Americans seem to reserve their affection and enthusiasm for mixture itself. In 1990, the chairman of Japan's Toyota Motor Company caused an international uproar when he declared that Americans built inferior cars because they were a "mongrel race." Americans may have been embarrassed by the quality of their Fords and Chevies at the time, but they never wavered in their commitment to the glories of crossbreeding. Around the same time, when Robert Dornan, then a Republican congressman from California, used a talk show to propose a bill to designate a national dog, the winner of the show's poll was the "great American mutt."

My neighbors in the park don't necessarily want to merge their cultures or their genes into a vast, old-style melting pot, but neither are they happy with ideologies of purity. The pluralism reflected in the mutt cult has, at least for the time being, suspended the search for a national culture and purpose that was so prominent in the 1950s and '60s. But there is an equally unforeseen side of the pedigreed dog fancy. As sites on the World Wide Web suggest, the establishment and maintenance of "pure" bloodlines is a national and international sporting activity. It brings together people of the most diverse backgrounds in new communities, just as the assorted dogs of Davison Park are giving older and newer Americans occasion to meet each other. Animals are not only good to think with, as Claude Lévi-Strauss wrote. They are good to link with.

Who Will Serve?

Fraught with profound questions about the obligations of citizenship, conscription has been a controversial issue at crucial moments in the American past. During the Vietnam War, the draft was almost as much an object of protest as the conflict itself. Then, a quarter-century ago, conscription ceased. Our author takes a look back.

by Andrew J. Bacevich

Twenty-five years ago, the draft—an institution that had turned white-hot with controversy as it sucked Americans into an unpopular war—came to an end. President Richard M. Nixon, citing America’s “continuing commitment to the maximum freedom for the individual,” had announced in 1970 his intention to end it. Three years later, he made good on that promise: draft calls fell to zero, and stayed there. Acting in the waning moments of a war that had bitterly divided the country, the president had seemingly bowed to the will of the people. He had even claimed that his decision to end conscription would “demonstrate to the world the responsiveness of republican government.”

It did nothing of the kind. Matching the temper of the times, the president’s motives for reverting to an all-volunteer military were devious and cynical. For Nixon, terminating the draft had little to do with national security, still less with democratic politics. It was merely a matter of tactics. By lifting from student protesters the threat of being compelled to fight in a war they hated, he hoped to bring quiet to American campuses and thus gain more time to extricate the United States from Vietnam with a modicum of national dignity.

The results of the maneuver were mixed. The antiwar movement did collapse soon thereafter. “It was as if someone had flicked a light switch,” observed the acerbic Chicago columnist Mike Royko. “Presto, the throbbing social conscience that had spread across America went limp.” Without the threat of involuntary military service, said Royko, “about 99.9 percent of those who had sobbed over napalm, Christmas bombings and man’s inhumanity to man suddenly began looking for jobs on Wall Street.” Yet Nixon’s hopes for “peace with honor” in Vietnam would go unfulfilled, foundering on the shoals of Watergate.

The more lasting impact of the end to the draft, however, would be on the American military. For the rest of the 1970s and through the 1980s, the all-volunteer force struggled to achieve maturity, finally succeeding just as the Cold War reached its conclusion and Saddam Hussein’s armored columns rolled into Kuwait.

Saddam’s gamble set the stage for one of history’s more lopsided military victories. The spectacular performance of American forces during Operation Desert Storm retroactively transformed Nixon’s decision to jettison the draft from a calculating ploy into a visionary act of leadership. For the first time



These Boston-area men were among the first drafted in late 1940 under the new Selective Service program.

in its history, the United States had fought a major war with a thoroughly professional military establishment—and the stunning outcome silenced the skeptics.

The Persian Gulf War convinced Americans that the United States henceforth should rely principally on regular forces to implement national security policy. Highly skilled and disciplined, experienced professionals appeared precisely suited to the needs of the world's only superpower, with interests spanning the globe. Uncomfortable memories of Vietnam remained sufficiently fresh—in universities, editorial offices, and, most notably, the Clinton White House—to suppress any inclination to think otherwise.

So the United States has embraced the modern-day equivalent of what the Founding Fathers would have recognized as a “standing army.” The question of “who will serve,” formerly a source of recurrent controversy, has now been answered to the apparent satisfaction of all.

That answer has endowed the United States with the most powerful armed forces in the world. Yet past disputes over “who will serve” were never about military requirements and capabilities alone. They were linked inextricably to larger questions about

the meaning of democracy and the nature of democratic citizenship. For that very reason, those passionate but now little-remembered debates about conscription, the regulation of state militias, and the comparative effectiveness of regulars and citizen-soldiers deserve to be pondered today.

I

In the turbulent period after the Revolution, American political leaders enunciated with minimal controversy principles that would form a permanent basis for military policy. Consistent with well-established practice from the colonial era, lessons drawn from the War of Independence, and a firm belief that standing armies were antithetical to liberty, the Founders decided that the people themselves—that is, a militia composed of all free male citizens—would defend the new nation. It was the “embattled farmers,” after all, who—according to the mythology born in the Revolution—had almost single-handedly defeated the British and secured American independence.

Inevitably, the truth was a bit more complicated. “To place any reliance upon mili-

tia, is, assuredly, resting upon a broken staff,” an exasperated George Washington had warned the Continental Congress as early as September 1776. Although his Continentals were few in number—at their peak not more than 16,800—their contribution to final victory, secured not only in battles such as Saratoga and Yorktown but by their very survival as the approximation of a regular army, was incalculable. Moreover, the spirit of volunteerism so much in evidence at Lexington and Concord in 1775 soon began to wane.

The next year, beginning with Massachusetts, states began resorting to compulsion to replenish the diminished ranks of their militias. To fill congressionally assigned quotas for recruits for the Continental Army, most states employed a system of indirect conscription. Typically, local officials would draft an affluent citizen who would in turn hire a substitute. As a result, those who bore the brunt of the fighting in Washington’s beleaguered army were, in the words of one historian, “the sons of marginal farmers, laborers, drifters, and indentured servants,” as well as recent immigrants.

Still, at war’s end, the myth of the minuteman had prevailed, so that even Washington himself paid it obeisance. “It must be laid down as a primary position and the basis of our system,” he wrote in 1783, “that every Citizen who enjoys the protection of a free Government, owes not only a portion of his property, but even of his personal services to the defense of it.” Acknowledging that “a *large* standing Army in time of peace hath ever been considered dangerous to the liberties of a Country,” he would venture only that “a few Troops, under certain circumstances, are not only safe, but indispensably necessary.” But the general had no illusion that a handful of regulars would suffice to defend the republic. That burden belonged to the people.

The other Founders concurred: the imperatives of responsible citizenship and a lively concern for the preservation of liberty demanded reliance on a citizens’ army. The willingness of citizens to accept the burdens of military service, said Secretary of War

Henry Knox in 1786, was a measure of the moral health of the republic. “When public spirit is despised, and avarice, indolence, and effeminacy of manner predominate,” he maintained, the temptation to entrust the security of the nation to hirelings and mercenaries grows. In a republic of virtue, citizens rely upon themselves for collective defense.

Those were not mere words. The Militia Act of 1792, which formed the cornerstone of American military policy for more than a century, required “every free able-bodied white male citizen” between the ages of 18 and 45 to enroll in the militia. It also specified that the “rules of discipline” established by Congress would apply to the military establishments of the several states, presumably ensuring that when called into federal service, the militias would be prepared to fight. On paper at least, the legislation created a mighty host, well suited to the needs of a small republic happily isolated from the rivalries and strife of the Old World.

In practice, though, the result left much to be desired. The new nation was neither as peaceable nor as insulated from Great Power politics as it imagined. The early republic’s small regular army sufficed for routine functions, but it was not adequate for even the slightest emergency. The host of forces produced by the Militia Act of 1792 was little more than a “phantom citizen army,” in historian T. Harry Williams’s phrase. Called into active service, militia units were notoriously undisciplined, ill equipped, and poorly trained. The men balked at lengthy campaigns far from home, and when assigned tasks not to their liking, responded halfheartedly or not at all.

Confronting military requirements for which the militias were ill-suited—as in both the War of 1812 and the Mexican War—the United States had to improvise armies. The preferred method was to raise large numbers of volunteers who could be hastily equipped and given a semblance of training before being dispatched into battle, where fervor and sheer numbers would presumably offset lack of skill. But, of course, in

> ANDREW J. BACEVICH is executive director of the Foreign Policy Institute at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C. Copyright © 1998 by Andrew J. Bacevich.

an unpopular or unsuccessful war, sufficient numbers of volunteers might not be forthcoming, and the government would be forced to consider more coercive methods.

In late 1814, for example, near the end of the War of 1812, President James Madison, beguiled by the prospect of invading Canada (an earlier attempt had failed abysmally), announced his intention to create a new expeditionary army. Its ranks, some 70,000 strong, would be filled, if necessary, through conscription. Justifying the proposed requirement of involuntary service for the sake of a dubious land grab, Secretary of War James Monroe asserted that the “Commonwealth has a right to the service of all its citizens.”

This attempt to convert civic obligation into government prerogative provoked a powerful dissent from Representative Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, a state opposed to continuation of the war. Speaking in Congress on December 9, 1814, Webster pointed out that while the Constitution empowers Congress to raise military forces solely to “repel invasion, suppress insurrection, or execute the laws,” the conscription bill would draft citizens “for the general objects of war—for defending ourselves, or invading others, as may be thought expedient;—not for a sudden emergency, or for a short time, but for long stated periods.” Is this arbitrary power “consistent with the character of a free government?” Webster asked. “No, Sir,” he said, “indeed, it is not. . . . Who will show me any constitutional injunction, which makes it the duty of the American people to surrender every thing valuable in life, and even life itself, not when the safety of their country and its liberties may demand the sacrifice, but whenever the purposes of an ambitious and mischievous Government may require it? . . . [S]uch an abominable doctrine has no foundation in the Constitution of the country.”

Before Congress completed action on Madison’s proposal, the war ended, and Andrew Jackson’s victory at New Orleans restored some luster to the reputation of the citizen-volunteer. But the profound issues Webster had raised—the relationship between individual liberty and civic duty, and the government’s asserted but untested authority to compel citizens to bear arms for

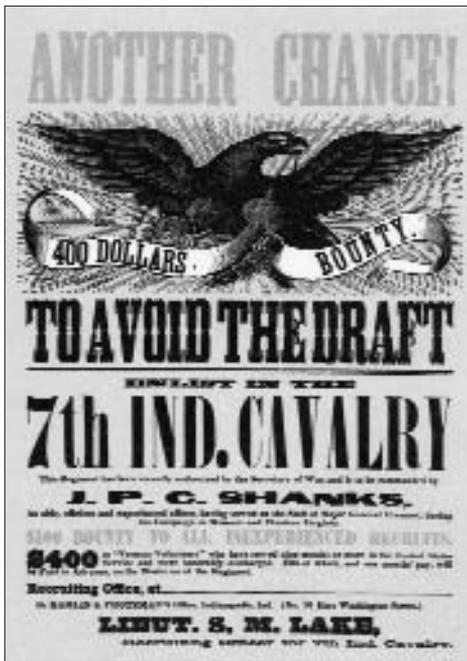
purposes other than immediate defense—remained unresolved.

Nationalists rejected Webster’s thesis on pragmatic grounds. The country’s interests were rapidly expanding, and the government needed to be able to protect and advance them, not just repel invasions and put down insurrections. Nationalists also objected to the radical individualism lurking in Webster’s critique. For example, Representative John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, speaking in 1816, insisted that freedom “mainly stands on the faithful discharge of the two great duties which every citizen of proper age owes the republic: a wise and virtuous exercise of the right of suffrage; and a prompt and brave defense of the country in the hour of danger. The first symptom of decay has ever appeared in the backward and negligent discharge of the latter duty.” Citizens who left to others the defense of their country were themselves unworthy of freedom.

II

During the Civil War, although by no means for the last time in American history, opposition to conscription as an illicit assertion of government power reasserted itself with a vengeance. The Civil War was a contest of massive amateur armies led by a handful of professionals. With the attack on Fort Sumter, volunteers rushed to enlist in the newly forming Union and Confederate forces. On both sides, expectations ran high that the war would be short, glorious, and successful. The gruesome and seemingly endless war of attrition that ensued obliged both sides to embark upon radical experiments in all-out mobilization for war.

The Confederacy, with a smaller population from which to draw, acted first. In April 1862, the Confederate Congress passed the Conscription Act. Allowing for an array of exemptions and for the hiring of substitutes, this measure was designed less to raise new recruits than to prevent the dissolution of Confederate forces already in the field: it obliged Southern soldiers who in 1861 had volunteered for one year to remain in service indefinitely. Closing loopholes as the



As this recruiting poster for the 7th Indiana Cavalry suggests, the Civil War draft was not entirely a failure: it stimulated volunteering.

war progressed, the hard-pressed South would use the draft to squeeze out the last of its manpower reserves. Of the one million soldiers who served in the armies of the South, 21 percent were draftees.

Though resisting the coercive power of the federal government was one motive for their rebellion, Southerners accommodated themselves to involuntary military service with remarkable ease. They had little alternative. In the North, however, circumstances were different. Fully 92 percent of the 2.1 million soldiers who fought to preserve the Union were volunteers. Yet even the North's vast reserves of manpower and patriotism were not inexhaustible. On March 3, 1863, with little to show for two years of war but heartbreaking losses, Congress enacted the Enrollment Act, which specified that "all able-bodied male citizens . . . are hereby declared to constitute the national forces." This legislation laid the basis for the first full-fledged national draft.

Seemingly oblivious to local prerogatives still highly valued in American society, the federal government went about implementing the measure in a needlessly

heavy-handed way, assigning a uniformed provost marshal to oversee conscription in each congressional district. In the summer of 1863, efforts by these officials to register prospective conscripts and to conduct lotteries to identify inductees triggered widespread riots. The most violent—possibly the worst civil disorder in American history—occurred over several days in July in New York City. Thousands of rioters, mostly poor Irish immigrants, rampaged through Manhattan, burned the draft headquarters, and ransacked the homes of government officials and wealthy Republicans. Several blacks were lynched. Estimates of those killed in the melee range from several dozen to several hundred. New York was not the only scene of violent unrest. In Boston, for example, Union artillerymen employed canister and grapeshot to disperse a mob of protesters who had laid siege to a local armory. Here, as elsewhere, the cost of restoring order was heavy.

The workingmen and poor whites who took to the streets were not concerned that conscription represented, in Webster's words, "an abominable doctrine." Their objections were more basic: they wanted neither to forfeit their jobs (especially to blacks) nor to risk their lives for a cause not their own. For President Abraham Lincoln, the issue was also a practical one. "The republican institutions and territorial integrity of our country cannot be maintained without the further raising and supporting of armies," he reasoned in a document drafted that September. "There can be no army without men. Men can be had only voluntarily, or involuntarily. We have ceased to obtain them voluntarily; and to obtain them involuntarily, is the draft—the conscription."

The brutal suppression of rioting by Union regiments—some of them just returned from the Battle of Gettysburg—did not purchase acquiescence. While the wealthy hired substitutes or paid a "commutation fee" to avoid service, the less favored found other ways to dodge the draft. They ignored orders to report, changed their names, or simply moved. The net result was an ineffective system. Of 300,000 men called up in the summer of 1863, only 10,000 ended up in

Mr. Lincoln's army. Overall, four separate federal drafts produced a piddling 46,000 conscripts and 118,000 substitutes for the Union Army. America's first real encounter with conscription had proven a major disappointment.

III

The military history of the Civil War is a chronicle of dogged gallantry—and of stupefying waste and incompetence. In the end, volunteers fought and won the war for the Union. But while the citizen-soldier tradition emerged seemingly intact, it soon came under increasingly critical scrutiny. During the following decades, the officer corps of the minuscule regular army mounted a sustained intellectual assault on the premises underpinning traditional American military policy. Led by reformers such as Brevet Major General Emory Upton, these regulars argued that the United States had prevailed in war *despite*, rather than because of, its reliance on militiamen and volunteers. They argued, moreover, that success in the Civil War had come at an unnecessarily high cost, as “undisciplined troops commanded by generals and officers utterly ignorant of the military art” were butchered to little purpose.

Upton's call for American military professionalization accorded well with developments abroad. In the armies of the European powers, innovations such as general staffs, war colleges, detailed mobilization plans, and improved training of reserve formations all pointed toward a more deliberate approach to preparing for war. As the 19th century drew to a close, this emphasis on centralized planning, rational organization, and efficiency also meshed with advanced thinking then coming into fashion in industrializing America.

In short, around 1900, civilian progressives and military reformers met, mingled, and discovered, to their mutual amazement, that they were made for one another. To soldiers, the application of progressive principles implied an approach to military affairs that would elevate the prestige of regular officers, place state militias under federal

supervision, and give the United States a military establishment that would put it on a par with the acknowledged Great Powers.

To progressives, those same principles suggested that the armed forces could serve as a schoolhouse for building national unity and inculcating democratic values, as well as provide an instrument for achieving the American Mission. The concept that would enable both parties to achieve their aims was universal military training, a system of brief compulsory service for all young men that would create a vast national (rather than state-controlled) reserve, easily mobilized in time of emergency to fight under the command of regular officers. This national reserve army would displace the militia as the first line of defense. Universal military training would reaffirm the citizen's obligation to serve—but shift his allegiance from state to nation.

With the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, military reformers and civilian progressives collaborated on the “preparedness movement,” a grassroots campaign to generate support for a peacetime army of unprecedented size and capability. The way to achieve this, argued the reformers, both in and out of uniform, was to institute universal military training. “Manhood suffrage means manhood obligation for service in peace and war,” wrote the influential General Leonard Wood in 1916. “This is the basic principle upon which a truly representative government, or free democracy, rests and must rest.” Adherence to this principle would provide for the “moral organization of the people,” teaching them “to think in terms of the nation” rather than locality or narrow self-interest. The influential progressive Charles W. Eliot, president emeritus of Harvard University, agreed. Only universal military training could create a force that was both strong and democratic. Yet the benefits of such training would extend well beyond military affairs. For citizens “to be always ready to defend and to maintain American ideals of public justice and liberty would add to the self-respect of the people,” Eliot said, and teach them to think of their nation “as a unified and exalted power for good in the world—humane, unselfish, and aspiring.”

Such progressive sentiments shaped the



In May 1917, little more than a month after the United States entered World War I, Congress enacted a draft law, after heated debate in both houses. Here, draftees en route to boot camp parade in New York City.

manpower policies implemented once the United States actually entered the war in April 1917. In contrast to the practice in previous conflicts, America did not first summon volunteers to the colors, then resort to conscription as an afterthought or act of desperation. Instead, the federal government determined from the outset that it would choose those who would fight. Conscription formed part of a larger effort to mobilize not just an army but an entire people. Explaining the system of Selective Service that he had asked the Congress to implement, President Woodrow Wilson in June 1917 declared: “It is not an army that we must shape and train for war; it is a nation. . . . It is in no sense a conscription of the unwilling; it is, rather, selection from a nation which has volunteered in mass.”

Selective Service was not universal military training, but it still accorded well with progressive principles, creating a people’s army led by trained professionals. Consistent with the approved tenets of pro-

gressivism, it empowered “experts”—bureaucrats in the War Department and other federal agencies—to decide, on the basis of the nation’s overall interests, who would man the trenches and who, the shipyards and munitions plants.

Not everyone agreed with this approach. To Senator Robert M. LaFollette of Wisconsin, the issue was clear: “The draft is the corollary of militarism and militarism spells death to democracy.” But his was a minority view, soon swept aside by the surge of spread-eagle nationalism that accompanied America’s entry into the war. That wave of patriotism and the fact that Wilson shrewdly allowed local rather than federal officials to administer the system made the draft of 1917–18 a success. Some 2.8 million young American men were drafted, 72 percent of the doughboys who served during the war. Resistance to conscription was by no means inconsequential: 338,000 of those receiving draft notices failed to report and were classified as deserters, while 57,000 others applied for conscientious objector status. But overall

(and especially in comparison with the Civil War experience), Selective Service worked.

Success, however, did not translate into a general willingness to continue conscription in peacetime. As soon as the Armistice was declared, in November 1918, the great army of citizen-soldiers dissolved. Though senior military officers tried briefly to revive enthusiasm for universal military training, their arguments went unheeded. Throughout the 1920s and well into the '30s, U.S. military policy reverted to 19th-century practice: a very modest professional army backed by a much larger militia—now called the National Guard—which continued to frustrate demands that it adhere to training and readiness standards mandated by regulars. The result did not inspire awe. But the paltriness of the nation's military did not worry most Americans. Nor did ancient questions about civic duty. For most of the interwar period, the answer to the question "Who will serve?" was "Who cares?"

The rise of Hitler and the threat of war in the Pacific changed that. Prodded into action by veterans of the old preparedness movement and thoroughly frightened by the collapse of France in the spring of 1940, Congress that September enacted the first-ever peacetime draft. The Selective Training and Service Act stated that "in a free society the obligations and privileges of military training and service should be shared generally." The term of involuntary service was limited to 12 months, and draftees were not to be deployed outside the Western Hemisphere. Renewed on the eve of Pearl Harbor—and with restrictions on deployment lifted—this legislation provided the basis for the massive American force that waged global war. The requirements for military manpower in World War II were staggering. By 1942, the draft call reached 500,000 *per month*. Of the 10.5 million soldiers who served in the wartime army, 93 percent were draftees. In a conflict that lasted far longer than World War I and that required a far more complete mobilization of the nation's human resources, draft resistance was negligible.

Yet again, the wartime system, however well it worked, did not provide a basis for sustaining a peacetime military. The need

for preparedness and the experience of two world wars notwithstanding, influential political figures viewed the draft as an expedient justified only in dire emergency. "Military conscription is essentially totalitarian," Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio bluntly asserted.

Even in the 1940s, old fears about the incompatibility of democracy and a standing army survived, and American leaders had to take them into account, just as George Washington had. Looking ahead to the postwar world, General George C. Marshall, chief of staff of the U.S. Army, said he regarded "a large standing army as an impossibility . . . because of the repugnance of our people toward a large standing force." He saw no reason to abandon the tradition of maintaining only a small regular military establishment, so long as it could "be reinforced in time of emergency by organized units drawn from a citizen army reserve." For Marshall, the preferred means of developing this citizen army reserve was universal military training.

President Harry S. Truman agreed. But in the heady aftermath of V-J Day, with the boys eager to come home and an era of peace beckoning, public opinion—and hence, the Congress—did not. Even in watered-down form, universal military training never had a chance. The combat-hardened legions that the United States had raised at such great effort and expense rapidly disappeared. In the spring of 1947, Selective Service expired altogether. Though the nation was assuming new responsibilities for security in the postwar world, the military was losing the manpower it needed to meet them.

IV

Mounting Cold War tensions, however, soon persuaded Americans that the nation could ill afford its usual lackadaisical approach to peacetime security. Even with the atom bomb and increased reliance on airpower as the mainstay of American defense, the United States found that it still had need for a large conventional force. And just as in Lincoln's day, there could be "no army without men." In June

1948, Congress enacted, and President Truman signed into law, a new Selective Service measure. With modifications, it was to provide the chief source of military manpower for the next quarter-century and two major wars.

But two years after the return to conscription, the draftee-sustained military still needed help to respond to the North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950. Consequently, Truman mobilized eight National Guard divisions and recalled tens of thousands of reservists. However necessary, this action provoked an outcry of protest. Many of those recalled were veterans of World War II who had won “their war” and were now being asked to fight another.

In response, the Department of Defense in 1951 established a rotation policy based on a one-year combat tour in Korea.

Replacements supplied by a massively expanded draft—September 1951’s planned quota of 10,000 was revised upward to 56,000 after the North Korean invasion—arrived to relieve the reservists. Meanwhile, the draftees themselves, rather than being called “for the duration,” likewise served only a one-year combat tour and were released altogether after two years on active duty. Intended to distribute the risks of combat more broadly, this arrangement was not conducive to military effectiveness, but it did make more palatable an unpopular war conducted without the prospect of a decisive outcome. And the policies enacted during the Korean War established precedents that the military would revive for the Vietnam War.

The experience of the two world wars and Korea had seemingly established beyond doubt the prerogative of the federal government to compel citizens to undertake military service. But after the Korean War, the “selective” approach to conscription came to seem less and less “universal,” less and less a matter mainly of citizenship. As draft calls shrank year by year, the chief mission of Selective Service became less the drafting of men into the army than the “channeling” of men who were not drafted. This, explained General Lewis B. Hershey, the Selective Service director, meant using deferments as an incentive to nudge young men “into occupations and professions that are said by those in charge of government to be the necessary ones.” The competition with the Soviet Union was invoked to justify this: channeling would provide the United States with the engineers, scientists, and teachers it needed to prevail. With local draft boards using local standards to award educational and occupational deferments, military service became increasingly the lot of the less educated and less affluent. The answer to the question “Who will serve?” was changing.

For the rest of the Eisenhower era, with the prospect of American involvement in a shooting war apparently remote, neither the draft nor the channeling seemed especially burdensome. Parents might be a little uneasy about certain



MAJ. GEN. LEWIS B. HERSHEY

For an A-1 army
In I-A times,
Selective Service
Selected him
To prevent free rides
To the front and fame,
In sort of a glorified
Noodlers game,
You feel a draft?
You'd better check.
It's That Man breathing
On your neck.
—ROBERT JACOBSON.

The Selective Service chief visible in this 1943 Saturday Evening Post cartoon was not yet the controversial figure of the Vietnam era.

new cultural influences, such as Elvis Presley and rock 'n' roll, but traditional American patriotism persisted. Those who were drafted did their duty. The summons that in 1958 sent Presley off in uniform to serve his country disrupted his career, but he went without complaint, and most of his fans were pleased that he was doing the right thing.

It was too good to last, and it didn't. President Lyndon B. Johnson's escalation of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War saw to that. With the buildup of American combat troops in South Vietnam that began in the spring of 1965 came a huge increase in the number of Americans drafted. In February 1965, the monthly draft quota was a minuscule 3,600. By April 1966, it had spiked to 42,200. But that was still only a fraction of the millions of draft-eligible men, their numbers starting to be swollen by the massive "baby boom" generation.

Channeling increasingly came to seem a life-and-death matter—and, along with the draft, an arbitrary, inequitable practice. In 1969, about 1.75 million college students were deferred, more than 22 times the number in 1951, during the Korean War. During the Vietnam War, a high school graduate was twice as likely to be drafted and twice as likely to go to Vietnam as a contemporary who had finished college. Once in Vietnam, he was more likely to find himself in harm's way. In 1969, draftees constituted only 16 percent of the entire armed forces but 88 percent of the infantrymen in Vietnam—and more than half of the combat deaths.

Responding to criticism and protests, President Nixon's administration sought to redress obvious inequities, notably by ending most deferments and instituting a national lottery. Despite those efforts, the perception persisted that the Vietnam draft was fundamentally unfair. That perception has not changed much since. In his best-selling memoir, *My American Journey* (1995), General Colin Powell, for instance, denounced the "raw class discrimination" of a system that treated the "poorer, less educated, less privileged" as expendable, while pretending that "the rest are too good to risk."

In the eyes of the antiwar movement, the draft and the war itself were inextricably linked. Opposition to the war fueled opposition to the draft. Inexorably, as the war dragged on, opposition to the draft intensified into loathing of military service altogether. There ensued a radical campaign, winked at by some respectable organizations, that aimed to suborn the soldiers fighting the war. The coffeehouses, underground newspapers, and draft counseling centers that sprouted up outside the gates of military installations across the United States existed less to save young Americans from the clutches of conscription than to undermine the government's capacity to continue the war effort. As one underground paper advised: "Don't desert. Go to Vietnam and kill your commanding officer."

These efforts were not without effect. In 1971, in the unit in which I was serving in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam, a young enlisted soldier did in fact gun down his company commander, a captain barely three years out of West Point. That murder in broad daylight of a white officer by a black soldier seemed to me an apt metaphor for the wretched condition then of the draftee army, a force made up largely of citizens compelled to fight a war that growing numbers of their fellow citizens at home opposed—and a force riven by race and political dissent and so much else.

That draftee army was in an advanced state of disintegration. Incidents of "fragging"—furtive attacks by American soldiers intended to maim or kill their own leaders—had become commonplace. (More than 200 such incidents were reported in 1970.) Drug abuse reached pandemic proportions. The racial climate was poisonous. Traditional measures of military discipline, such as AWOL (absent without leave) rates and desertions, suggested a force on the verge of collapse. At home, the Selective Service system itself was struggling to cope: in 1971, it turned out 153,000 draftees and took in 121,000 applications for conscientious objector status.

The continuing protests against the war as ill conceived or immoral, the continuing turmoil on campuses and the nightly



In a decade of protest, burning draft cards was perhaps the most potent symbolic protest of all.

television news, prompted Nixon to convert dissatisfaction with the draft to his—and, he supposed, the nation’s—political advantage.

The Pentagon’s senior leaders were by no means eager in the early 1970s to embark upon Nixon’s highly publicized experiment with an all-volunteer force. Who would enlist in a military that was then at an all-time low in public esteem? The answer seemed obvious: only those who could find nothing better to do—the dropouts, the untalented, the shiftless. This indeed proved to be the case, until well-conceived incentives, combined with the changed political climate of the 1980s under President Ronald Reagan, turned the situation around.

V

To the question “Who will serve?” the nation’s answer has now become: “Those who want to serve.” At the end of the 1990s, this answer seems well suited to the requirements of national security, as well as to the prevailing national political climate. The century-long trend of machines displacing men as

the principal determinants of combat strength in conventional warfare continues to accelerate. In the modern American way of war, technology trumps mass. That renders the old idea of a citizen army obsolete.

Furthermore, in a society in which half the eligible voters did not even bother to show up at the polls in the last presidential election, the notion of an obligation to participate in the country’s defense has become an apparent anachronism, an oddity from another time. To today’s typical 18-year-old, compulsory military service is all but inconceivable.

The changed nature of warfare, as well as the changed outlook of Americans, argues that Nixon’s instincts in ending the draft were correct. It now makes sense to hire professionals to handle the demanding, highly specialized business of national security—an enterprise that tends to involve not defending the country as such, but protecting and advancing its burgeoning interests around the world. In the corporate jargon of the day, American defense has been “outsourced.” The citizen simply foots the bill.

Yet ironically, even as the performance to date of the all-volunteer military has put

to rest earlier doubts about such a force, the new professionalism has given rise to whole new realms of controversy. For those who now regard military service as merely a career, one like any other—a view bolstered by optimistic expectations that American soldiers will never have to face another Hamburger Hill or Chosin Reservoir—the armed forces offer a choice arena in which to pursue the current national obsessions with gender and sexual orientation. In this environment, debates about gender-integrated basic training, and about the “don’t ask, don’t tell” rule, assume far more prominence than concerns about military effectiveness. Altogether lost from view are the concerns of earlier generations about the obligations of citizenship and the imperative of infusing into American military institutions the genius of the people.

As the end of the 20th century nears, Americans are inclined to shrug off indications of a growing, and potentially dangerous, cultural divide between soldiers and civilians; to dismiss evidence that the officer corps may be abandoning its tradition of remaining studiously apolitical; and naively to assume that advanced

technology and the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs will provide the United States with an effective—and conveniently casualty-free—response to future security threats. Perhaps worst of all, the generation of Americans now reaching maturity is being deprived of any awareness that citizenship ought to imply some larger shared responsibility for the common good.

In his remarkably prescient Farewell Address of January 1961, President Dwight D. Eisenhower reflected on the dilemma of any democracy obliged to maintain a large and powerful military establishment. “Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry,” he warned, can provide the prudent and responsible direction of military affairs, “so that security and liberty may prosper together.”

Twenty-five years into its thus-far successful experiment with a standing military of professionals, the world’s sole remaining superpower would be ill advised to undertake—and the American people would be unlikely to tolerate—a return to the citizen-soldier tradition of an earlier era. But American citizens would be foolhardy in the extreme if, in their newfound comfort with a “standing army,” they took either their security or their liberty for granted.

Further Reading

In **To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America** (Free Press, 1987), John Whiteclay Chambers II deals chiefly with the Selective Service system of 1917–1918. George Q. Flynn provides a history of conscription from World War II to the Vietnam War and its termination in **The Draft, 1940–1973** (University Press of Kansas, 1993). Eliot A. Cohen looks at **Citizens and Soldiers: The Dilemmas of Military Service** (Cornell University Press, paper, 1990) from a comparative international perspective.

Readers wanting additional detail can find it in two comprehensive collections of documents: John O’Sullivan and Alan M. Meckler, eds., **The Draft and Its Enemies** (Univ. of Illinois Press, 1974), and John Whiteclay Chambers II, ed., **Draftees or Volunteers** (Garland Publishing Co., 1975).

CURRENT BOOKS

City of Forgetting

FAUST'S METROPOLIS:

A History of Berlin

By Alexandra Richie. Carroll & Graf. 891 pp. \$37.95

by Amy E. Schwartz

Visitors to what used to be West Berlin usually start at the Kaiser Wilhelm *Gedächtniskirche*, or Memorial Church, a neo-Gothic cathedral dedicated in 1895 and reduced to a single towering fragment by an Allied bombing raid in 1944. Instead of either rebuilding it or letting it crumble, imaginative preservationists in 1961 framed the ruined tower with a blocky, hypermodern structure of blue-green glass, offering the tourist's camera a satisfyingly jarring image of a city marked by wrenching changes from civilization to barbarism and from pride to disaster. Step closer, though, and you see that at least in this one spot, Berliners have been able to address, directly and honestly, this most dreadful aspect of their history. A plaque at the foot of the ruined tower gives the circumstances of its dedication and destruction, then adds that the fragment is preserved as a memorial to that destruction "and to the judgment of God upon this people."

Early in the introduction to her gigantic history of Berlin, *Faust's Metropolis*, Alexandra Richie lays out the city's claim to attention in sweeping and grandiose terms: "No other city on earth has had such a turbulent history; no other capital has repeatedly become so powerful and then fallen so low." Even the most heartily Berlin-obsessed reader is likely to goggle slightly at this. Not Rome, Jerusalem, Babylon?

As it turns out, though, Richie's narrative does not depend on these claims; nor does she seem fully to believe them herself. In describing pre-Bismarck Berlin, from the centuries of its Slavic prehistory up through the depredations of the Thirty Years' War and the repeatedly dashed pretensions of the Hohenzollerns, she notes

again and again that the city was a provincial backwater with nothing to compare to Paris or London. Only in the last century and a half does "imperial Berlin" embark on the series of wild gyrations that marks it off from other cities, from the abortive revolution of March 1848 to its collapse, from the burst of growth and wealth brought on by industrialization and German unification under Bismarck to the breakdown that followed World War I, from the "Golden Twenties" of Weimar to the madness of Nazism and the city's subsequent quick reincarnations as defeated rubble heap, Cold War flashpoint, divided symbol of a divided Europe, and, finally, reunified capital and city of the future.

In rehearsing this familiar tale, Richie pursues a narrower and more telling point: that in no other city have the inhabitants gone so blithely and with such bad political judgment from upswing to upswing. Her argument, emerging gradually (not to say excruciatingly) over nearly 900 pages, is that Berliners have flung themselves into each of these new developments with an extraordinary degree of willed amnesia; that Berlin remains "a city of myth, of legend, and of the deliberate manipulation of history"; and that this quality makes it dangerously vulnerable to the perpetual dream of a *Stunde Null*, or "zero hour"—the moment of fresh start and complete reinvention that will spare its inhabitants the pain of confronting the past. In particular, the persistent "19th-century myth" of *Berliner Unwille*, or stubborn resistance to authority, has allowed the city's inhabitants to nurse a self-image of resistance to the Nazis while dodging the fact that virtually all the atrocity, mur-

der, and madness of the Holocaust was planned and directed from Berlin, by people living in Berlin, under the noses of manifestly indifferent Berliners, and in Berliner-staffed offices.

Richie is essentially saying that Berlin is short on sites of honest reckoning such as the *Gedaechtniskirche* (whose structure she mentions several times, but not its plaque). Her indictment carries resonance for anyone who has lived in Berlin and pondered the strange could-be-anywhere quality of large stretches of the city and the oddly submerged quality of much of the history that remains.

In the wake of Allied bombing that destroyed the vast majority of the old housing stock, postwar planners in West Berlin plunged into modern architecture as if to eradicate any hint that a previous city had existed. On the eastern side, communist makeovers of showplaces such as the Alexanderplatz accomplished more or less the same goal, though lack of resources kept the obliteration from being anywhere near as comprehensive. The fall of the Wall and plans for the renewed capital—to be moved to Berlin from Bonn by the end of the century—have likewise set off a tremendous frenzy of demolition and building on “Europe’s largest construction site,” with grand plans promising to sweep away any hint of the No Man’s Land scar and other inconvenient geographical landmarks. Richie notes that city authorities in recent years have urged destruction of such finds as Nazi bunkers, on the ground—shaky, if you think about it—that they might become neo-Nazi shrines.

“The city changes identities like a snake sloughing its skin,” the author writes. “The political upheaval itself has been bad enough, but more worrying is the way in which Berliners have responded to it, leading outsiders to suspect that whatever Berliners are today, the status quo might not last for long. . . . It may seem unfair, but Berlin will have to work hard to prove

to the world that this ‘democratic phase’ is not merely another passing trend.” This is a biting argument, all the more so coming from a writer who describes herself as a lover of German culture and a frequent resident of Berlin, on both sides before the Wall fell and also after, with family connections there going back to the 14th century.

Alas, it is an argument that comes into focus only occasionally as Richie struggles with a mass of information that seems beyond her control. Instead of primary material documenting or making vivid her assertions about Berliners’ behavior through the ages, we get baggy narratives of the horrors of the Thirty Years’ War, medieval tortures, and



Napoleon’s Russian campaign; an excellent description of German Romanticism but none, weirdly, of Wagner; and a 55-page, desperately repetitive chapter on the fall of Berlin to the Russians.

Even where Richie’s material is relevant to the argument, it is oddly deployed. Discussing, in her afterword, the modern city’s plans for a Holocaust memorial, she once again asserts that Berliners bear undeniable responsibility for the horrors. A footnote cites a lengthy translation of a stomach-turning 1942 document, issued from Berlin and unearthed by Claude Lanzmann in his film *Shoah*, concerning the details of a design for gas vans. It is indeed damning, famously so, with its discussions of weight-and-balance limits and

the tendency of the “load” to rush toward the back of the vehicle once the “operation” commences. For sheer evidentiary firepower, it may be the most powerful document in the book. But if it is intended as the keystone of Richie’s argument about moral responsibility, what on earth is it doing in the afterword, and in a footnote?

The author’s argument suffers too from a lack of comparison with other cities, even other German cities. Berliners will tell you that Berlin hated the Nazis, laughed at them as boors. But even in Nuremberg, people will cite election figures to show they never *really* supported Hitler—and Nuremberg has no *Gedaechtniskirche* or Reichstag, but a medieval sector rebuilt so perfectly that you’d never know it had been bombed. Berliners may have had doubts about resuming their status as capital and griped at the inconveniences of reunifying their city, but the very action of being forced to do so has meant endless confrontations with the historical ghosts Richie rightly wants to see given their due.

In her afterword, Richie suggests a more cautious and ultimately more workable definition of the moral culpability of her city, one drawn from Klaus Mann’s *Mephisto* (1936), the story of a Berlin actor who starts out in the leftist opposition to the Nazis and is imperceptibly drawn into a level of collaboration and guilt that he never saw coming. “The warning of

Mephisto,” Richie writes, “is that a person makes his moral choice much earlier than he thinks.” This sidesteps the fairly important question of whether there are any moral gradations between the writer of the memo about the gas vans and a Berliner who “merely” turned the other way as Jews were marched onto trains. Still, it is a valuable insight, one that condemns what ordinary Berliners did in the presence of extreme evil, but in terms that make it possible to connect that behavior to less spectacular failures, theirs and others’, throughout history.

The idea that an individual, and likewise a nation, can fall into coresponsibility for ultimate evil merely by missing the chance to get off the bus is a persistent and chilling theme of this chilling century. Richie’s evocation of it calls to mind the classic statement by the Polish poet and Nobel laureate Czeslaw Milosz in his early postwar poem about the end of the world. On the day the world ends, a bee buzzes sleepily in a flower, people go about their business, nothing much seems to have changed—except that a prophet by the riverside

who is too busy to be a prophet
mutters over and over again to his nets:
“There will be no other end of the world,
There will be no other end of the world.”

> AMY SCHWARTZ writes about cultural issues for the Washington Post.

Defining Disease

MAKING SENSE OF ILLNESS:

Science, Society, and Disease.

By Robert A. Aronowitz, M.D.

Cambridge Univ. Press. 267 pp. \$29.95

by *Richard Restak*

A successful attorney suddenly begins feeling listless and exhausted. Finding nothing amiss despite extensive tests, her doctors react with impatience, finally suggesting that she consult a psychiatrist. Eventually, and to her immense

relief, another internist assures her that she does indeed suffer from an illness, chronic fatigue syndrome. The first doctors concentrated singlemindedly on a search for objective, testable criteria of disease; the last doctor heeded her sub-

jective feelings of illness. As another chronic fatigue sufferer put it, “The difference between a crazed neurotic and a seriously ill person is simply a test that would allow me to be ill.”

A great deal depends upon whether society grants or withholds “permission” to be ill. If the rundown attorney’s illness is confirmed, she may be eligible for medical disability, enabling her to retire with both economic security and social sanction. Without such confirmation, she not only will be deprived of any financial benefits but will likely be treated as an oddball, even a pariah.

In *Making Sense of Illness*, Robert A. Aronowitz, a professor at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Jersey, argues that many shortcomings of our health care system result from the dominance of an “ontological view” of medicine, in which diseases unfold in all patients in characteristic and unvarying ways that can always be diagnosed by “abnormal” lab results. Under this model, doctors frequently tell patients with “normal” results, such as the attorney, that they are physically healthy (though perhaps psychologically unwell). And for some patients who feel just fine, doctors prescribe treatment because of abnormal test results. In place of the ontological method, the author advocates a holistic approach in which disease is understood—and treated—in the context of social factors.

As Aronowitz shows, doctors prescribe treatment for some patients with no symptoms whatsoever, owing to widespread confusion about testable risk factors. Hypertension, for instance, raises one’s risk of stroke, heart attack, and other complications. But how much risk does mild and symptomless hypertension actually pose? And whatever the purported risk, shouldn’t it be balanced against the risks associated with the medications that reduce blood pressure? Aronowitz sensibly suggests that “the proper definition of hypertension might be the threshold above which a particular individual has greater benefit from treatment than no treatment.” Instead, doctors consider

hypertension, no matter how mild, to be a disease in its own right. Buses and subways are plastered with ads encouraging people to monitor their blood pressure on a regular basis and tell their doctor of any deviation from “normal.” As a result, “patients may view themselves as sick when they previously felt healthy. They may attribute all kinds of emotional states, behaviors, and health consequences to a new disease that has no experiential basis. They may make numerous physician visits not for any physical complaint, but to lower their statistical risk of disease.”

As an additional complication, neither patient nor physician can be certain that today’s accepted truths about risk factors won’t turn out to be tomorrow’s mythology. A prime example is cholesterol. Many people are convinced that the lower their cholesterol, the healthier they are. Doctors routinely treat patients to bring their cholesterol down to “normal” levels. Yet recent findings link low cholesterol with a serious risk of its own: an increased likelihood of suicide. It’s speculated that cholesterol may represent a source of energy that, if depleted, contributes to depression, a major cause of suicide. So what, if anything, should a doctor do about a minimally elevated cholesterol level?

Risk-factor revisionism also touches less easily measurable variables such as personality. In 1961, San Francisco cardiologists Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman suggested that an increasingly stressful environment had given rise to the so-called Type A personality—marked by time urgency, hostility, and a generally hard-driving approach to life. Despite great initial enthusiasm for this concept (it remains firmly established in everyday parlance as a description of character and behavior), this pattern of behavioral traits hasn’t panned out as a predictor of disease. Several studies have even found out that Type A patients are at *lower* risk for heart attack than others. An additional challenge to the Type A hypothesis is that the rate of heart attack has declined among all age groups, social classes, and races, despite

the absence of any perceptible decrease in our collective stress levels.

Overall, then, risk factors are a mixed blessing. They provide, at best, loose guidelines for healthy living. Aronowitz likens them to a list of ingredients: "Risk factor formulas are like mathematical statements of the probability of ending up with a particular bread as a function of different amounts of flour, water, yeast, eggs, and so on. In other words, the list of ingredients masquerades as instructions. One cannot make bread without a recipe."

In tracing the roots of our skewed definitions of sickness and health, Aronowitz casts a measure of blame on health maintenance organizations. Obsessed with objective data, they often define risk factors as diseases that require treatment, and they maintain that no disease exists whenever test results are within the normal range (which rules out many psychiatric disorders, among others). Under this approach, a healthy-feeling patient with elevated blood pressure is sick; the attorney incapacitated by constant fatigue is not.

Just as strict standards determine who is sick, they also increasingly determine how sickness is treated. HMOs have borrowed a principle from industrial production: if two patients with the "same" disease receive different treatments, one of them must be receiving inferior medical care. Doctors are forced to adhere to practice guidelines (typically formulated, to the joy of mathematicians, as algorithms) that must be applied in each medical "encounter." Deviations on the part of the doctor from these guidelines can result in admonitions, financial penalties, and sometimes expulsion from the "provider network." Patient guidelines are no less exacting. Failure to consult physicians on the proper "panel" or in the proper sequence, or to obtain approval for emergency care rendered by outside physicians, may result in a refusal of payment.

Aronowitz notes that "to the degree that medical care is thought of as the creation of a specific and unique product, like the manufacture of an automobile on an assembly line, then the equation of variability with poor quality holds some merit." But

such an analogy fails to account for the individuality of the patient. The "same disease," the author argues, can never be "adequately understood as a set of uniform and predictable encounters between patients suffering specific ailments and physicians who apply specific diagnostic and therapeutic technology and practices."

Part of Aronowitz's message is that medicine is too important to be left to doctors. Ironically, though, earlier "demedicalization" of the health care system has led to some of the very problems he discusses, especially the loss of personal control. Social, legal, and political forces increasingly constrain doctors and patients alike. Doctors are forced to follow legalistic standards ("if it isn't documented, it didn't happen"). As a consequence, medical records now consist of extended, tedious, and obfuscating enumerations of normal findings, serving only to obscure from all but the most doggedly determined reader those key observations that furnish the basis for correct diagnosis and effective treatment. And patients find their health care determined not by themselves and their doctors but by bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, lawyers, and politicians.

The result is a widespread uneasiness about health care, the sort of uneasiness that was once limited to the poor and socially disenfranchised (whose care grows even worse). Among the middle class, the necessity of health insurance is forcing people to remain at jobs they detest. The wealthy are faced with draconian insurance rules that, in the case of Medicare, interfere with their willingness and ability to pay doctors more money in exchange for additional time and attention. And none of this is likely to improve in the near future. As Aronowitz notes, "demands for efficiency, uniformity, quality, and market discipline" are pushing medical care harder than ever. This important book shows that the dictatorship of quantifiable data will not soon give way.

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Leftward, Ho!

ACHIEVING OUR COUNTRY:

Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America.

By Richard Rorty. Harvard Univ. Press. 159 pp. \$18.95

by Jean Bethke Elshtain

If the American Left could heal itself, then it might heal what ails the American nation. That, in short, is the belief that drives Richard Rorty's appeal for a real politics: a left-liberal politics that will help achieve, at long last, the country dreamed of by Rorty's heroes, John Dewey and Walt Whitman.

Rorty, clearly, is no glib detractor of his nation. A professor of humanities at the University of Virginia, he presents himself as an American who loves and celebrates his country, who cheers America's achievements and laments its indecencies. "National pride," he asserts, "is to countries what self-respect is to individuals: a necessary condition for self-improvement."

Rorty also skewers those elements of the cultural Left that have abandoned the terrain of democratic hopes and fears in favor of a hypertheorized aestheticism that turns citizens into mere spectators and strips them of effective agency. He decries escape into "the most abstract and barren explanations imaginable" even if the matter at hand is "something very concrete," such as transformations in work life or sexual relationships. And he notes that a cultural politics of difference (racial, gendered, or even sexual) promotes the view that there is not and cannot be a political language of commonalities that might forge and sustain coalitions cutting across racial and other lines.

None of this is new, of course. Todd Gitlin, Michael Walzer, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and I, among other scholars, have advanced similar arguments. But Rorty's ripostes carry special zing given his

status as one of the fathers of antifoundationalism, a position associated with those postmodern trends whose excesses he decries.

Rorty's political prescriptions also carry a whiff of nostalgia. Any viable left-liberal politics, he contends, must rebuild long-moribund coalitions. He would resurrect the old alliance between intellectuals and labor, though many sympathetic to his general perspective insist it lies beyond repair because it presumes what no longer exists: a coherent labor movement and a unified group of left-wing intellectuals. (Rorty skirts part of the problem by defining *all* intellectuals as partisans of the Left.) In this respect, Rorty's book is a plea for restoration of what held the New Deal together.

Unlike some on the left, the author defends the nation-state against its "cosmopolitan" detractors as the only political entity currently capable of making decisions about social justice in response to global market forces. In his defense of patriotism, Rorty blasts the telling of the American story as a long train of atrocities, not only because the picture is false but because it promotes political apathy and cynicism. Rorty's genuine affection for America shines through so tellingly—the book's autobiographical fragment is instructive in this regard—that it seems almost churlish to cavil. But cavil I must, on several points.

First, Rorty beats the drums against objectivity in a way that undermines the commitment to politics and the American project he aims to promote. If we can't even "try to be objective when attempting



to decide what one's country really is," we are tossed to and fro between equally subjective, hence indefensible, alternatives. Why, if that is the case, should anyone accept Rorty's defense of American possibilities against, for instance, Elijah Muhammad's argument that America is a perverse experiment conducted by "white people [who] started out as homunculi created by a diabolical scientist"? Surely there are some facts that cannot be denied, some forms of public recognition and cognition that any person who cares about truth will acknowledge as the basis from which political deliberation can arise.

Second, Rorty deploys "right" to mean stingy, selfish, unfair, and chauvinistic, and "left" to mean generous, compassionate, fair, and patriotic. This is politics as simplistic morality play. Rorty surely knows that not all chicanery lurks on one side of the spectrum and not all civility resides on the other.

Third, Rorty repeatedly disparages religious belief as the last refuge of intellectual weakness. In an ideological enterprise more or less on a par with intolerant Marxism, he would have Americans "think of themselves as exceptional" but "drop any reference to divine favor or wrath." If one goes this route, however, one cannot explain the life and work of Abraham Lincoln, Rorty's great, prototypical American, who believed that the nation was under divine judgment and that the Civil War was visited on it for the sin of slavery. Nor can one explain the tasks undertaken by most abolitionists, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, large segments of the anti-Vietnam War movement, or many of today's activists opposing capital punishment.

Rorty wants us to stand in awe only of ourselves. He favors a "utopian America" that will "replace God as the unconditional object of desire." But this prescription paves the way for the ideological excess he deplores, opening the doors to triumphalism and an idolatrous sacralization of necessarily finite, limited, and contingent human projects. One of Rorty's heroes, Vaclav Havel, has decried the "arrogant

anthropocentrism" of modern humankind, which, having closed the window to transcendence, feels free to run amuck, a dangerous Titan and destroyer. Rorty needs to tell us why his self-assured pronouncements will not lead down such a path. What framework of evaluation enables us to nurture our civic and political projects, and, when appropriate, to chasten them as well?

Rorty claims that those who take sin seriously are committed to the view that the "commission of certain acts" is "incompatible with further self-respect." One wonders where this misconception comes from. The Christian understanding of sin is tied to a capacity for self-responsibility and agency of the sort Rorty extols. Sin doesn't place one beyond the pale; it serves as a prelude to awareness of one's faults tethered to a call to fellowship and service to one's neighbor. And to associate a "belief in sin" with a "failure of nerve," as Rorty does, leaves one puzzled. Does he really want to tell hopeful citizens—those who, every day in our cities, towns, and villages, work to make the world less cruel and more just—that they are weak-minded and wrong-headed if their hope stems from faith? Should tens of thousands of citizens abandon the ground of their hope, repudiate the beliefs that make them agents and not mere spectators?

Rorty poses some questionable philosophical points as well—one can reject a correspondence theory of truth and classic foundationalism without embracing full-fledged antirealism—but that is another debate. He has given us a sprightly volume that sees in what used to be called "the American dream" a call to action worthy of free citizens. I regret that he treats so roughly those of his fellow citizens who persist in beliefs he distorts and, having distorted, denounces.

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Contemporary Affairs

CLOSING:

The Life and Death of an American Factory.

By Bill Bamberger and Cathy N. Davidson. Center for Documentary Studies/Norton. 224 pp. \$27.50

A Library of Congress subject heading on the copyright page places this book in a sadly familiar genre: “Downsizing—United States—Case Studies.” In 1993, a hundred-year-old plant, the White Furniture Company of Mebane, North Carolina, went out of business, leaving many of more than 200 employees jobless. For five years the photographer Bill Bamberger had been documenting the life of the factory, and he continued to follow the lives of the former workers. A text by the writer and literary scholar Cathy N. Davidson rounds out a moving, unsettling view of a region in transition.



In 1985, a slim majority of the family-dominated shareholders approved the sale of the company to Hickory Manufacturing Corporation, a larger firm that was in turn controlled by a holding company under a Chicago venture capitalist named Clyde Engle. Steve White, the CEO who had fought the deal, had to resign under its terms. With no access to the books of these closely held companies, it is hard to prove either the employees’ conviction that an absentee speculator gutted a viable if not vibrant enterprise, or the managers’ avowals that years of underinvestment by the patriarchal, conservative Whites had made the plant’s position untenable.

Whatever the case, White Furniture was a middle-sized organization in a middle-sized

industry at a time when technological trends favor the big (with the resources for ever-costlier electronic enhancements) and the small (with the flexibility to find niches that complement the big). It hurts to be located in between, whether making furniture, practicing law, publishing books, or selling software.

It was this very size that gave White Furniture, especially before its merger with Hickory, a human scale. If the alienated cubicle-dwellers of Scott Adams’s *Dilbert* form a dysfunctional clan, Bamberger and Davidson offer a counterimage of workplace as family. The production line at White’s was closer to artisanal teamwork than to regimented machine tending. Workers and supervisors came from similar rural backgrounds, black as well as white. Steve White hunted ducks with men from the plant. And the mirror frames and bedsteads and dressers photographed by Bamberger reflect not only craftsmanship but teamwork. For the employees interviewed, the industrial family had made it possible to raise their real families with dignity and modest comfort. The plant’s closing appears as a chapter in the destruction of an industrial yeomanry.

Reading interview-based history critically is like working from a kit of semifinished parts, not all of which fit neatly together. Was Hickory-White’s an honest experiment in bringing long-needed managerial controls and capital investment into a declining paternalist enterprise? Workers acknowledge that wages and equipment initially improved under the new regime, even if ancient perquisites were reduced. But the merger might have been doomed from the outset by the folly of cost cutting (practices such as using plastic bands in lieu of veneer for concealed buffet shelves) in a demanding luxury market in which a dining room set had to sell for the price of a mid-sized automobile. And how could the last president agree to keep the plant’s final liquidation a secret for three months, knowing that line workers were counting on continued employment?

Davidson's prose, like Bamberger's photography, is forthright and lucid. The book insistently directs our attention to the human costs of the new economy, yet it never conceals the problems of the old ways. The gentle natural light of the factory interior captures workers, products, and machinery in an elegiac yet unsentimental memorial. This is documentary work of a high order, a corrective to triumphalist cybercratic boosterism, and above all a reminder of the ambiguities and ironies of family values.

—Edward Tenner

**CARTELS OF THE MIND:
*Japan's Intellectual Closed Shop.***

By Ivan Hall. Norton. 208 pp. \$25

During the mid-1600s, Japan's Tokugawa shogunate took the fateful step of expelling almost all Westerners from the nation and confining the rest to a small artificial island in Nagasaki harbor. In the era of *sakoku* (seclusion) that followed, the shoguns banned overseas travel, monitored foreigners' movements, and used a handful of mostly Dutch traders as their conduit to Western teaching and technology. Today, despite recurrent tensions between Japan and its trading partners, a visitor to Tokyo, with its Hermes boutiques and McDonald's restaurants, could be forgiven for thinking that those exclusionary days are over. Yet as Japan scholar Hall shows in this disturbing and important work, the xenophobic mindset of the Tokugawa era still holds powerful sway.

Unlike critics of Japanese economic policies who have focused on cars, computer chips, and the *keiretsu* (corporate networks) that produce them, Hall sets his sights on what the political scientist Chalmers Johnson has called Japan's "cartels of the mind": the formal and informal networks and rules that make it difficult, if not impossible, for foreign professionals to find work.

The restrictions that Hall painstakingly details would seem merely absurd if they did not apply to the world's second-largest economy. So stringent are the rules governing the activities of foreign lawyers that a Japanese attorney who goes to the United States and joins a U.S. firm can no longer argue cases in his home country. Foreign journalists must work extra hard: although their lot has improved since 1964, when American reporters were kept out of a police press conference on the stabbing of U.S. ambassador

Edwin Reischauer, they remain effectively barred from the cozy *kisha* (reporters) clubs that monopolize news from most government ministries, industrial associations, and private companies. Those foreign professors lucky enough to be hired in Japan are denied chances at tenure and generally endure a second-class status that Hall calls "academic apartheid." In one of his book's more powerful chapters, the author draws on his years as a professor in Japan to show how and why foreign scholars are generally treated like "temporary transmitters of knowledge, to be celebrated, sucked dry, and sacked."

Hall is by no means the first scholar to scrutinize Japan's highly resistant strain of cultural isolationism. As the Japanese social critic Takeo Kuwabara observed more than a decade ago, "Japanese respect the principle of cultural interchange . . . but in reality they tolerate one-way traffic only." As more than a few Japanologists have learned, Japanese often react to a foreigner who speaks their language and knows their ways much as one might respond to a talking dog: initially charmed but increasingly suspicious—especially if the dog begins to criticize.

Perhaps understandably, Hall's account is colored a shade too purple by the slights and injuries he has witnessed or experienced in nearly three decades as a journalist, diplomat, and academic in Japan. His prediction that Japan's closed system will spread to its neighbors seems misguided, especially given the push for democratization and greater openness in many Asian countries suffering from a regional financial crisis.

But the flaws in some of Hall's conclusions do not detract from his valuable mapping of Japan's barriers to intellectual exchange. Cutting through the disingenuous blather of Japan's intellectual establishment about its commitment to *kokusaika* (internationalization), Hall shows that as technology and trade turn much of the world into the equivalent of a global village, Japan will increasingly stand out as one of its more provincial neighborhoods.

—James Gibney

ONE NATION AFTER ALL.

By Alan Wolfe. Viking.

384 pp. \$24.95

Elites commonly declare that the American public has become extremely contentious, even angry, about religious and

political doctrines and behavior. Wolfe, by refreshing contrast, sees a nation “dominated by the ideas of the *reasonable* majority: people who believe themselves to be modest in their appetites, quiet in their beliefs, and restrained in their inclinations.” The Boston University sociologist bases his conclusions on 200 in-depth interviews with “middle-class” Americans in eight suburban sites, and buttresses that research with national polls conducted by others.

Wolfe finds that most Americans reject an absolutist sense of religious or political truth. They basically are centrists, holding religious and political values but accepting the views of those who disagree. By 167 to 19, for example, Wolfe’s respondents believe that “there are many religious truths and we ought to be tolerant of all of them.”

Although the respondents have little faith in government, Wolfe reports that they reject “the case for social and political decline that preoccupies social critics and social scientists.” The great majority believe that American society is basically fair. They dispute the notion that “the country as a whole has lost its bearings.” Indeed, almost everyone interviewed (184 to 5) feels that “the United States is still the best place in the world to live.”

Much evidence documents that most nonelite Americans share these Panglossian views. Yet the data themselves reveal anxieties lurking beneath the optimism. A substantial majority (133 to 49) agree that “compared to 20 years ago, Americans have become more selfish.” By a modest margin (110 to 92), most say that “the prospects facing my own children are worse than they were for me when I was a child.” A large majority (177 to 16) feels that “it has become much harder to raise children in our society.” And the in-depth interviews find many parents worrying that affluence is corrupting the moral fiber of their children. All is not right with middle-class America.

All is not entirely right with *One Nation’s* approach, either. Most serious to a student of stratification is the way Wolfe deals with social class. He reports that only 10 percent “classify themselves as *either* lower class or upper class,” with the rest saying middle class. But this does not demonstrate that the United States is a middle-class country. People from Japan to Eastern Europe do the same. To identify oneself with the upper class is boastful; to identify oneself with the

lower class is invidious. So when presented with this three-class question, nearly everyone reports middle-class status.

Back in 1948, however, the social psychologist Richard Centers asked respondents if they were upper class, middle class, *working class*, or lower class. Given the fourth choice, a plurality of respondents—between 35 and 45 percent in the United States and elsewhere—placed themselves in the working class, a noninvidious response. Published as *The Psychology of Social Class* (1949), Centers’s findings have been replicated in recent surveys. *Middle class*, as used by Wolfe and others who identify the United States as a middle-class nation, seems to include everyone not living in dire poverty or great wealth. If so, it is not a useful analytic concept.

Despite this flaw, *One Nation* is a thoughtful, provocative, and data-rich book. It needs a sequel. Fortunately, Wolfe is in the middle of research to provide it. One hopes the next volume will explain why the conservative and liberal literati so exaggerate the failings of their nation.

—*Seymour Martin Lipset*

SPIN CYCLE:

Inside the Clinton Propaganda Machine.

By Howard Kurtz. Free Press.

324 pp. \$25

Hoping to discover the secret of President Clinton’s high approval ratings in the face of scandal, Kurtz ventures backstage at the White House press office. A *Washington Post* reporter, the author finds press secretary Michael McCurry and his staff doing, quite competently, what their recent predecessors have done: leaking stories, awarding exclusives, staging symbolically rich announcements, peddling human interest tales, and, by shying away from learning certain information, maintaining credible deniability. No dazzling innovations here.

Though it’s not the author’s intended message, *Spin Cycle* ends up teaching us that the White House media manipulators are not all that influential. The news, commentary, and chatter chronicled in this aptly titled book go around and around without having much impact outside the circle of officials and correspondents. The bulk of the explanation for Clinton’s enduring popularity must lie elsewhere—most likely in his

own actions, and in the perceptions of those actions out beyond the spinners, in the concentric orbits of partisan politics, government policies, and public opinion.

A siege atmosphere pervades *Spin Cycle*, suggesting that the scandals will bring down either the president or the media. But big news stories have a perverse way of ending

small. Having promised a stark climax, the O. J. Simpson saga closed with two contrary verdicts and a truckload of memoirs. The stand-off that Kurtz details may simply drag on until the president's term expires. By then, most of the media will have moved on to the next presidential show.

—Michael Cornfield

Science & Technology

OUR BABIES, OURSELVES:

Why We Raise Our Children the Way We Do.

By Meredith Small. Anchorbooks.

320 pp. \$24.95

Dr. Spock once astutely observed that “two women who in actual practice would handle a child just about the same could still argue till kingdom come about [child-rearing] theory”—and probably would in America. The converse also holds true. Two women (or two men) who agree about child-rearing theory could easily proceed to treat a child quite differently. Ask them how the differences might affect the growth of a child into a citizen, and the honest answer will be an uneasy “Who knows?”

Small, a professor of anthropology at Cornell University, seeks new clarity for the messy business of child rearing through a pioneering science called “ethnopediatrics”—“a mix of cultural anthropology and developmental psychology, with a soupçon of evolutionary biology thrown in.” The goal of the group of pediatricians, child development researchers, and anthropologists who gave the field its name is twofold: to highlight the culturally relative functions served by “parenting styles,” and to explore the effects those styles might have on the biologically fixed needs of infants. Put in the more prescriptive terms that Small often uses in her lucidly accessible book, “These scientists want to uncover whether mismatches might exist between the biology of the baby and the cultural styles of the parents, with an eye toward realigning parents and babies into a smoother, better-adjusted biological and psychological relationship.”

The ethnopediatricians do discover mismatches, particularly in advanced Western cultures such as America's, where child-rear-

ing theories and methods have changed so often. Babies, according to the evolutionary view that underpins the field, are equipped with “Pleistocene biology” that has changed very little since the hunter-gatherer “era of evolutionary adaptedness” in which our genus, *Homo*, emerged. Faced with the dilemmas of maturation posed by big-brained bipeds, the process of natural selection produced infants designed to develop within a closely entwined relationship with a caretaker.

Proof, or at least illustration (in this necessarily speculative endeavor, the two blend), lies in contemporary cross-cultural evidence that babies who are carried all the time, cuddled through the night, and fed constantly, as their ancestors presumably were—and as infants in some non-Western cultures still are—cry very little. Babies obviously can cope with less intensive bonding, but their developing neurological and biochemical systems will be in greater disequi-



librium. Hence the colicky, cranky tendencies so commonly displayed among infants subjected to the more detached nurturing favored in urban-industrial societies, where babies sleep alone, breast-feed on a schedule, if at all, and can't expect their cries to elicit prompt human contact.

Ethnopediatricians are not preaching a return to hunter-gatherer habits, though they believe such a style is better for babies. They appreciate the cultural pressures that have given rise to a great variety of "caretaking packages," which represent "trade-offs in which parents weigh the needs of infants against the constraints of daily life." But it would help, this new breed of scientist wisely feels, if we scrutinized those trade-offs more carefully. Instead, we tend to blur them in "parenting ethnotheories" that generally purport to prove that whatever methods suit adults in a particular social context are also best for molding children to fit the culture.

Small believes Americans would do well to give babies at least a little more say. Then we might appreciate the wisdom of fostering attachment, rather than fixating on independence—"the chief, overriding goal of American culture, whether stated overtly or not," she believes. In fact, we and our experts are already obsessed with bonding, as well as with autonomy. The truly novel service ethnopediatrics may provide is to expose how contradictory, or complementary, our socializing goals often are—and how difficult it can be to judge whether specific child-rearing styles, especially those used with babies, help or hinder us in achieving them. As parents and babies fuss in confusion, these scientists at their unreductive best suggest where some of our child-rearing conflicts come from. The tensions can be eased, ethnopediatricians propose, but they avoid the foolish promise that they will ever disappear.

—Ann Hulbert

**REMAKING THE WORLD:
*Adventures in Engineering.***

By Henry Petroski. Knopf. 239 pp. \$24

Just after World War I, the irascible sociologist Thorstein Veblen proposed a way to bring about a fair distribution of wealth and well-being: let engineers run society. Veblen's suggestion would appeal to few people today. Those who have remade our material world are rarely consulted on social

reform or economic development policy, or accorded the kind of recognition lavished on leading scientists.

In these essays, Petroski, a professor of history and engineering at Duke University, renews our esteem for the social and cultural accomplishments of engineers. In one piece, he overturns the perverse symbolism of a famous photograph showing Albert Einstein towering over the hunchbacked electrical engineer Charles Steinmetz. In another, he recounts the history of how the prizes endowed by mechanical engineer Alfred Nobel came to be awarded to scientists but only rarely to engineers.

As a counterpoint to such hints of professional defensiveness, the author's essay on Kuala Lumpur's Petronas Towers—the tallest buildings in the world—lauds the genius of the engineers who solved the extremely difficult and dramatic problems presented by so vast an undertaking. In one sense, these towers are the latest in a long line of ambitious projects that Petroski examines in other essays—the Eiffel Tower, Ferris's Wheel, the Panama Canal, Hoover Dam—all of which required skill and imagination to solve a multitude of structural and construction challenges. But he also points out the political impacts of such projects. Gigantic business towers especially function as status symbols, announcing the arrival of a nation into the powerful club of industrializing societies. He ends the essay by recounting how the towers' engineers transferred knowledge and know-how from their own societies to other regions. By establishing networks of businesses, suppliers, technical schools, workers, and communications media, they helped invent the organizational systems that make such massive projects possible.

In a few of the essays (most of which appeared in the *American Scientist*), one wishes for less of Petroski's reasoned description and more of the conflict, indecision, ambition, and even humiliation that engineers experience when they juggle the givens of the physical world with the unpredictabilities of social, political, and economic interests. The author's talent, however, is a writing style characterized by seemingly effortless serendipity, drawing the nonspecialist as well as the technical expert into his topics in pleasurable and unexpected ways.

—Miriam R. Levin

Arts & Letters

IMPROVISED EUROPEANS: American Literary Expatriates and the Siege of London.

By Alex Zwerdling. Basic.

425 pp. \$35

Europe barely registers on our cultural radar these days, but there was a time when it would have filled the entire screen. Politically and culturally, the United States spent the 19th century in Europe's shadow. To England especially, America was the boisterous, untutored rebel, the offspring perceived as something of an embarrassment. But by the early 20th century, the upstart had become mighty, a cultural achiever in its own right, and the imperial parent was tottering.

Zwerdling, a professor of English at Berkeley, portrays this grand reversal through the personal encounters with England and the Continent of four great figures in American literary life—Henry Adams, Henry James, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot. The four fall into two roughly contemporaneous pairs, and their collective lives extend from the first half of the 19th century to the second half of the 20th. The concatenation is striking: Adams and James were friends; late in his life, James knew Pound; Pound was a friend and creative adviser to the young Eliot.

Derived from a letter of Adams to James, the term “improvised Europeans” is used to characterize a particular type of mid-19th-century American, “molded by Boston, Harvard, and Unitarianism,” and “brought up in irritable dislike of America.” Zwerdling employs the term in a more expansive sense for his literary expatriates, who felt compelled to come to terms with themselves, their talents, and their ambitions by moving to Europe. Adams was mature when he lived for a time in Paris and London, but the others were young when they went abroad and had their imaginations fired by the Old World.

We forget how young. We remember Pound as the remote and deranged old man who had favored the Fascists, not as a product of Idaho and Hamilton College and the University of Pennsylvania. James and Eliot linger in our minds as they were in their seniority, grave, oracular, marmoreal. But all three were still in their twenties when their work began to win critical attention. Eliot published “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” at 27 and “The Waste Land” at 34, after it had been revised and shaped by the barely older Pound. In his mid-thirties James wrote *The American*, *The Europeans*, and *Daisy Miller*.



James M. Barrie (left) and Henry James in London, 1910

They all aspired to separation from their American origins and association with the superior European culture. They wanted to be placeless cosmopolites who could move with facility among the literatures and traditions of the world, their work free of mere national affiliation. “The birth of Anglo-American modernism as a self-conscious movement,” writes Zwerdling, “owes a great deal to the overlap (and the shared assumptions) of these displaced Americans.”

But they achieved their cosmopolitanism at a price. The youthful genius released by immersion in the foreign yielded eventually to regret. The recovery of their origins and of what they had forgone became for them “a necessary act of self-possession.” What Zwerdling says of James hints at the common loss: “As he reflects on his own life and those of artists who have made similar choices, he becomes aware that the dream of his youth—to write about, and for, a cosmopolitan world in which the issue of his national identity is unproblematic—has not been realized. He has had to settle for less, much less.”

Zwerdling mixes social and cultural history, literary criticism, and biography in expert measure to construct an absorbing narrative of these divided lives. He draws on the major published works as well as on letters and

journals and unpublished materials, and he is always agile in controlling the disparate sources. When he turns to the human consequences of his characters' decisions to stand apart, the book even manages an effect rarely associated with academic criticism these days: it becomes moving.

—James M. Morris

WILL THIS DO?:

An Autobiography.

By Auberon Waugh. Carroll & Graf. 288 pp. \$24

Each week in London's *Spectator* and *Sunday Telegraph*, 59-year-old Auberon Waugh writes battle dispatches from the losing side of the class war, praising such vanishing upper-class folkways as fox hunting, ethnic slurs, and drunk driving. The author of five novels, he appears frequently as a television pundit, edits the monthly *Literary Review*, and writes regularly on wine. But his own writing has not proved a vintage that travels well. While Waugh is among the best-known right-wing men of letters in Britain, foreigners know him, if at all, only as the eldest son of novelist Evelyn Waugh (1903–1966).

“Being the son of Evelyn Waugh was a considerable advantage in life,” Waugh notes, with some overstatement. For all of Evelyn's friends who helped Auberon (John Betjeman, Graham Greene), there were plenty of others who stood in his way (Anthony Powell, Cyril Connolly). Evelyn himself had little interest in family life, taking meals alone in the library when his children were home from boarding school, and, “with undisguised glee,” holding lavish parties to celebrate their departures. When rationing was lifted just after World War II, the government promised every child in Britain a banana—a legendary treat. Neither Auberon nor his two sisters had ever eaten one. On the evening the three bananas arrived, his mother placed all of them before Evelyn, who wolfed them down with cream and (heavily rationed) sugar. “From that moment,” Auberon writes, “I never treated anything he had to say on faith or morals very seriously.”

Other than the occasional adventure (serving with the Royal Horse Guards in Cyprus, he mishandled a machine gun and shot himself six times), this autobiography largely chronicles Waugh's free-lance

assignments in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s. It is sometimes enlivened by blow-by-blow accounts of libel suits and literary feuds, and there are humorous moments. Invited to Senegal to speak on breast-feeding, Waugh discovers after weeks of research that the invitation had been misheard; the subject of his talk was to be not breast-feeding but press freedom. Because the speech was to be in French, Waugh could not even describe the misunderstanding to his audience, “since ‘*la liberté de la Presse*’ bears no resemblance to ‘*le nourrisson naturel des bébés.*’”

Slapped together out of the 1991 English edition, the book is full of anachronisms—not just dead people referred to in the present tense, but thematic anachronisms as well. Here, as in his columns, the British class system obsesses Waugh. *Will This Do?* catalogues, ad nauseam, his and his friends' houses and pedigrees, and laments the shiftiness of the working classes. The near-decade since the book first appeared has seen the rise of televised politics and the collapse of the Tory Party, changes that have corroded the class system in ways no workers' party could ever have dreamed of. The world Waugh lovingly chronicles here not only holds little appeal for the American reader; it's of waning relevance in Britain too.

—Christopher Caldwell

**THE DREAMS OUR STUFF IS
MADE OF: *How Science Fiction
Conquered the World.***

By Thomas M. Disch. Free Press.
272 pp. \$25

In the late 1960s, science fiction was divided into two warring camps. The Old Wave wanted the genre to continue following the traditions established by Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein, and Arthur C. Clarke, depicting scientific advances and their human consequences. The New Wave, by contrast, wanted SF (which they maintained stood for “speculative fiction”) to raise its standards and aspire to become avant-garde literature. The Old Wave stressed *science*; the New Wave stressed *fiction*.

Thirty years later, it's hard to tell who won. The best writers—such as Gregory Benford, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Stephen Baxter—produce high-quality fiction that's scientifically accurate, satisfying

both factions' criteria. The trouble is, their work has been overwhelmed by a tidal wave of trash: novels based on television shows or games, "sharecropped" books expanded from outlines left by dead or retired giants of the field.

A novelist and literary critic who championed the New Wave in the 1960s, Disch indicts today's science fiction on a number of counts. It stimulates woolly-minded daydreaming. It drives readers to promote ridiculous or pointless causes, such as the existence of UFOs. As "lumpen-literature," it encourages simplistic fantasies—every woman a warrior queen, every man a starship trooper.

Much of Disch's critique is accurate. Science fiction attracts its share of obsessives and eccentrics, including some who turn antisocial (the creator of Japan's Aum Shinrikyo cult apparently derived his messianic ideas from Asimov's Foundation series). But most readers choose SF for its entertaining stories and stimulating ideas—

and they are just as skeptical of the genre's occasional mystical nonsense as Disch. The author's understanding of current SF is spotty, too. His chapter on female writers concentrates on Ursula Le Guin and Joanna Russ, neither of whom has written much science fiction for years, and he devotes a single dismissive line to Lois McMaster Bujold, who has won three Hugos for best novel in the 1990s.

"As to the future of SF," Disch writes, "apart from the fortified suburbs of tenured teaching, the outlook is bleak." He rightly argues that many midlist writers, whose books generate respectable but not spectacular sales, will have trouble getting new contracts (a situation that's not limited to science fiction, by the way). But SF has survived past predictions of doom. In all likelihood, the genre will continue to account for about 15 percent of all fiction published, Disch's entertaining but misleading rodomontade notwithstanding.

—Martin Morse Wooster

History

FREE SPEECH IN ITS FORGOTTEN YEARS.

By David M. Rabban. Cambridge Univ. Press. 393 pp. \$34.95

In *Schenck v. United States* (1919), the Supreme Court ruled that a group of socialists could be imprisoned, First Amendment notwithstanding, for dispensing antiwar circulars to men heading for military service. Writing for the Court, Oliver Wendell Holmes explained that the utterances at issue "are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent." Holmes's casual "clear and present danger" aside soon became the judiciary's test for regulating speech; it remained the analytical standard in sedition cases until the 1950s. Rabban, a professor of law at the University of Texas at Austin, traces the origins of the test by placing *Schenck* and the other landmark World War I speech cases in a context of legal and intellectual history, creating a rich and textured view of First Amendment law from the 1870s to the 1920s.

Harvard Law School professor Zechariah Chafee, Jr., emerges as a central character in the story. His *Freedom of Speech* (1920) established the 20th-century framework for analyzing the First Amendment. Written in support of the "clear and present danger" standard, albeit a somewhat more demanding version than Holmes's, Chafee's book treated the World War I speech restrictions as virtually unprecedented. Not since the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, he claimed, had courts and the law been so unfriendly to free speech. It was a persuasive legal brief, but it turns out to be flawed history: American law and courts were quite hostile to free speech throughout the 19th century.

To Chafee and liberal champions of free speech of the post-World War I era—including Herbert Croly, John Dewey, and Roger Baldwin—speech principally served communal ends. In approaching the First Amendment, they "retained the progressive emphasis on social over individual rights," Rabban explains, even as they worked to avoid a recurrence of the

wartime suppressions that putatively had occurred in protection of the community. From these advocates' perspective, speech must be free in order to benefit society; in those instances when speech demonstrably harms society, it can be abridged. "Clear and present danger" served as their benchmark for the level of harm that justifies suppression.

Rabban points out that First Amendment jurisprudence could have taken a different path. Beginning in the late 19th century, libertarian radicals argued for a broad freedom that would serve individual autonomy rather than the collective good. Under this view, everyone would have the right to speak regardless of viewpoint or impact on society. As Rabban observes, this approach might have provided a sturdier foundation for modern free speech than Chafee's disingenuous history and the Progressives' emphasis on community.

This important study ends by reflecting on the current challenges to free speech from the Left. Rabban urges that we recall the lessons the Progressives learned during World War I: democratic governments do not always act in the public interest, and freedom of speech is an essential check on them. It is a caution we ignore at our peril.

—*Timothy Gleason*

THE FOUNDING MYTHS OF ISRAEL.

By Ze'ev Sternhell. Translated by David Maisel. Princeton Univ. Press. 419 pp. \$29.95

Did the founders of modern Israel set out to create a socialist society? This book, published to coincide with the nation's 50th anniversary, answers the question with an emphatic "no." Sternhell, a political scientist at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, contends that the founders, facing the task of creating a nation out of disparate bands of immigrants, "had no patience for exper-

imentation" with socialism or any other unproven philosophy. When forced to choose between advancing socialist principles and attracting capital, David Ben-Gurion, Berl Katznelson, and the other founders invariably picked the latter. Tax rates favored the wealthy, for example, and the quality of schools varied according to neighborhood income. The leaders' pious invocations of socialist principles constituted "a mobilizing myth," the author asserts, "perhaps a convenient alibi that sometimes permitted the movement to avoid grappling with the contradiction between socialism and nationalism."

Sternhell detects similar hypocrisy in



some Israeli leaders of the 1990s. During a protest against the Oslo peace accords in 1995, demonstrators waved signs depicting Yitzhak Rabin as an SS officer. According to the author, speakers at the rally—including Benjamin Netanyahu, now the prime minister—voiced no objections to the hyperbole. "For the Right," Sternhell observes, "Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres were comparable to the worst enemy the Jewish people ever had." One month later, Rabin was assassinated. Israel became, in the author's dispiriting words, "the first democratic state—and from the end of the Second World War until now the only one—in which a political murder achieved its goal."

—*Ami E. Albernaz*

Religion & Philosophy

STRIVING TOWARDS BEING:

*The Letters of Thomas
Merton and Czeslaw Milosz.*

Edited by Robert Faggen. Farrar,
Straus & Giroux. 178 pp. \$21

What are friends for? The question is usually posed as though the answer were self-evident: friends offer help in time of need. But literary friendships are different. They leave a record, the quality of which depends on

the quality of the need—and of the help. In this remarkable 10-year correspondence between Merton, the American Trappist monk best known for his spiritual autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain* (1948), and Milosz, winner of the 1980 Nobel Prize in literature, the quality of both is high indeed.

In 1958, when Merton initiated the correspondence, Milosz was living in France, a recent exile from the Stalinist regime in his native Poland. Milosz's poetry, now celebrated in the West, was untranslated, and his reputation did not extend beyond the bitter controversy surrounding *The Captive Mind* (1952, trans. 1953). To the Polish exile community, Milosz's extraordinary dissection of intellectual capitulation to communism was tainted by his having served the regime. To French leftists, the book was a blot on the legacy of Stalin. And to many Americans, *The Captive Mind* was just another anti-communist tract.

Faggen, a professor of literature at Claremont McKenna College, explains why Merton's reading of *The Captive Mind* was so distinctive: he "recognized that the book was not simply a condemnation of Communism but an attempt to understand the lure of Marxism in the wake of the erosion of the religious imagination." Merton's stance was clearly congenial to Milosz, whose wife and two sons had emigrated to America but whose own visa was being delayed on suspicion that, as a former official of the Polish government, he might be a spy. About his time in France, Milosz wrote, "I live in a little town near Paris and look at that literary turmoil with a dose of scorn—do not accuse me of pride as this is not my individual pride, I share it with young writers from Poland who visit me here, perhaps we all are more mature—at a price." Throughout the correspondence, which ranges beyond politics into fundamental questions of art, faith, and morality in a world darkened by war and genocide, this tension between pride and maturity is central.

Of the two writers, Milosz is the more relentless self-examiner. He agrees with Merton that it is important to resist group causes and political labels, but he goes on to offer a striking meditation on why such resistance should not be regarded as heroic: "Pride or ambition sometimes mislead us when we want to be individuals and not just

members of a group. But in general pride or ambition by breaking etiquettes is a positive force—and exactly for this reason writing, as self-assertion, is for me something suspect."

Faggen observes that while in the first letters "Milosz's eager response to Merton reveals his need for a spiritual father, . . . Milosz appears to take on that role himself as the correspondence develops." This is true in certain realms, notably the political. Yet some of the most affecting passages are those in which Merton counsels Milosz not to regard exile as a dead end: "What you write for Poland will be read with interest everywhere. You do not have to change your mental image of your audience. The audience will take care of itself." Wise words, not only reassuring but prophetic—and, for one of the greatest poets of our troubled century, exactly the help most needed.

—Martha Bayles

MARTIN HEIDEGGER: *Between Good and Evil.*

By Rudiger Safranski. Translated
by Ewald Osers. Harvard Univ.
Press. 474 pp. \$35

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) poses a dilemma for the intellectual biographer. He was one of the more original and influential philosophers of the 20th century, and he was a supporter of the Third Reich. Situating his subject "between good and evil," Safranski, the author of *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy* (1991), addresses the perilous links between Heidegger's brilliant philosophy and his abominable politics.

Safranski's focus is Heidegger's quasi-mystical exploration of "Being," his attempt to find meaning in life through its intimate connections with death and nothingness. Heidegger believed that modern humanity had lost touch with its own essential nature because of the spiritual shallowness, materialism, and overall "inauthenticity" of contemporary life. Following the implications of his meta-



physics, Heidegger embraced the National Socialist revolution as “a collective break-out from inauthenticity,” a chance to attain authentic Being and create a “new intellectual and spiritual world for the German nation.” In 1933, Heidegger accepted the National Socialist Party’s invitation to become rector of Freiburg University, a prominent position in Hitler’s cultural propaganda machine.

By the end of World War II, Nazism had become for Heidegger yet another nightmarish product of modernity: a conformist and manipulative regime. Inspired by his own disastrous experience, he went on to explore the insidious ways in which a modern technological society can lead people astray. Safranski cites the philosopher’s “seducibility by power” as a partial explanation of his disastrous political misstep. Heidegger was neither the first nor the last mandarin to conflate his own ideas with a monstrous ideology; a distressing number of 20th-century intellectuals have served as shills for Nazism, Stalinism, and Maoism. Yet Heidegger’s life offers a particularly sobering lesson in the pitfalls of translating philosophical theory into practice.

—*Lawson Rollins*

GENUINE REALITY:
A Life of William James.

By Linda Simon. Harcourt Brace.
480 pp. \$35

William James (1842–1910) was a pioneer in philosophy and psychology, a muscular public citizen, and a member of a famously complicated American family. Eldest child of Henry and Mary James, William was born a year before his literary brother, Henry Jr. In time, their siblings would include the neurasthenic Alice and two boys, Garth Wilkinson and Robertson. As patriarch of the brood, Henry Sr. was self-absorbed, frustrated by a lack of recognition for his philosophical writings, opinionated, and quick to hurl himself in the path of William’s ambitions. “Unmanly” was one of the father’s favorite epithets for the boy, leaving him with a debilitating sense of unworthiness.

In keeping with his father’s views—the senior James’s failed career led him to insist that all careers are ignoble because work shrivels the soul—William reached 30 before securing his first job, teaching

anatomy at Harvard University. He also inherited some of his father’s petulance, wanderlust, and intolerance of rivals, and shared some of his sister’s emotional fragility, which subjected him to periodic breakdowns. But marriage to Alice Gibbens enabled him to transcend the worst of the family afflictions. According to Simon, a professor of English at Skidmore College, life with Alice “enlarged his experience of other people as well: students, colleagues, friends, and his own children, who provided living examples of the wide range of personalities functioning happily, healthily, and productively.”

As a thinker, James preferred possibilities to absolutes. “I am convinced that the desire to formulate truths is a virulent disease,” he wrote a friend. Fellow philosopher George Santayana remembered that “James detested any system of the universe that professed to enclose everything; we must never set up boundaries that exclude romantic surprises.” Unfortunately, the professional James proves elusive in *Genuine Reality*. While Simon recreates some of the debates among the Pragmatists—including those of James and his Harvard colleagues Josiah Royce and Charles Peirce—she fails to convey a clear understanding of James’s philosophy, his psychology, or the impact of either.

She is more successful in chronicling his career as a public figure, a moral pronouncer on the violence in Haymarket Square, the Spanish-American War, and other great events of his time. James championed citizen activism and “civic courage”—so long as the elite held the reins and kept the bellicosity of “lower types” in check. A popular speaker and writer, he ardently believed that philosophers should make their ideas plain to the masses so that they might lead more purposeful lives.

Simon lets her story unfold on James’s terms, presenting him in all his complexity with few authorial ahems. For the most part the strategy succeeds, though at times one longs to know the author’s reaction to her eccentric subject. In an era of “overpaged” (publishing-speak for “fat”) biographies, it is rare to finish reading a life and long for more. Simon is an engaging narrator, and *Genuine Reality* is an elegantly crafted book—as far as it goes.

—*Patricia O’Toole*

THE CITY OF MAN.

By Pierre Manent. Translated by
Marc A. LePain. Princeton Univ.
Press. 248 pp. \$24.95

What does it mean to be modern? As French political philosopher Manent shows in this important book, just asking the question reveals one to be in the grip of the modern, to be aware that we are both human (implying a universal human nature) and modern (implying a sharp awareness of historical contingency and the malleability of human nature). Manent pursues the historical source of this self-consciousness and muses on its meaning and destination.

To be modern is to be free from the constraints of nature and grace, to flee from the Western tradition's two exemplary models for ordering the soul: the magnanimous man of Athens, proud with his civic responsibilities, and the humble monk, dedicated to God. The profound tension between magnanimity and humility lies, in Manent's view, at the heart of the West's cultural and political dynamism. But because both models understood virtue substantively as real—implying a range of excellences and goods that humans discovered rather than created—and viewed human nature as oriented toward the good, the two traditions could speak to one another, most powerfully in St. Thomas Aquinas's great effort at synthesizing Greek philosophy and Christian revelation. Yet both magnanimity and humility were worn down over time through their reciprocal critique (each viewed the other's good as illusory) and their internal contradictions (the political strife of the Greek cities and the Christian wars of religion). And what eventually replaced them, starting in the 18th century, is the "city of man" of liberal democratic modernity, an artificial construct—a human project—based on the individual prior to any demand upon his allegiance.

In the first half of *The City of Man*,

Manent explores three of the principal dimensions of modern understanding: history, sociology, and economics. The authority of history relativizes the idea of permanent human ends; the sociological viewpoint replaces the perspective of the human actor situated within the common human world with that of the detached observer, a "scientist" of human affairs; the idea of the economic system reduces human motivation to the desire for acquisition, truncating the full range of human excellences. Manent carefully reconstructs the emergence of these new authorities in the writings of Montesquieu, Adam Smith, Rousseau, Nietzsche, and other great thinkers, noting that for all the attention devoted to us by the human sciences, we moderns remain a bit of a cipher.

As Manent underscores in the second half of his book, this fact has troubling consequences. From Montesquieu on, virtue, whether pagan or Christian, has been reinterpreted as repressive. Moderns view the citizen's obligations or the monk's hairshirt as constraining human nature rather than as advancing it toward its full potential. The law's neutrality toward conceptions of the good becomes an injunction: you must be free to choose your own "lifestyle," free to jettison the past as so much baggage. Yet what is freedom for? The modern individual, Manent tells us, runs and runs without a destination. The cost of our liberty has been a deep inarticulateness about the ends of life.

Manent proposes no solutions. *The City of Man*, beautifully translated from the French edition published in 1994, seeks to mirror the world, not to transform it. But it carries a lesson nonetheless: untethered from the past, we slide into nihilism, and may no longer be able even to sustain our modern liberties. Athens, Jerusalem, Rome—the roots of our civilization, rich with teachings on human nature and destiny—still call to us disenchanted moderns. But we find it more and more difficult to listen.

—Brian C. Anderson

POETRY

Eugenio Montale

Selected and introduced by Anthony Hecht

Sometimes regarded as the greatest Italian poet since Leopardi (1798–1837), Eugenio Montale was born in Genoa in 1896, awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1975, and died in Milan in 1981. He served in the infantry in World War I, and settled in Milan in 1948, where he became the chief literary critic for Italy's foremost newspaper, the *Corriere della Sera*. He was also a music critic and a translator, and, for his courageous opposition to fascism, was made a lifetime member of the Italian Senate in 1967.

Montale's poetry is deeply personal, at times almost hermetic. Often it is addressed to an unknown "you" who, not infrequently, is dead, or to certain women, presented under fictive names (in the manner of classical and Renaissance poets), who played important roles in his real and imaginative lives. They are called Esterina, Gerti, Liuba, Vixen, Dora Markus, Mosca, and Clizia. Liuba, for example, was someone he glimpsed for only a few minutes in a railway station, where she was fleeing from Italy's Fascist, anti-Jewish laws. Dora Markus was someone he never met; she was, he explained, "constructed from a photograph of a pair of legs" sent him by a friend. Nevertheless, as one of his finest translators, William Arrowsmith, declares, "the poem devoted to her is no mere exercise in virtuoso evocation; it is the objectification of the poet's affinity for a personal truth, the existential meaning of a given fragment. 'The poet's task,' Montale observed, 'is the quest for a particular, not general, truth.'" His poems almost always deal with fragmentary experience, the meaning of which is either obscure or, possibly, terrifyingly absent. As a poet, he had a preoccupation with images of limitation. This is manifested, Arrowsmith writes, in the form of "walls, barriers, frontiers, prisons, any confining enclosure that makes escape into a larger self or a new community impossible. Hence too his intractable refusal to surrender to any ideology or sodality, whether Communist or Catholic."

In 1927 Montale fell in love with a married woman, who left her husband in 1939 and moved in with him. He called her, half-affectionately, half-mockingly, Mosca (or Fly), a name he might have borrowed from Ben Jonson's *Volpone*. She was a plain woman with poor eyesight, but he remained devoted to her, and when her husband died in 1958, they entered into a marriage that lasted until her death five years later.

Another woman who would figure prominently in Montale's work was an American scholar he met in 1932 named Irma Brandeis—later to become the author of a brilliant study of Dante's *Divine Comedy* called *The Ladder of Vision*, an examination of segments of Dante's great epic without recourse to any credence in its theology. In Montale's poems she becomes his Beatrice, a woman of more-than-human gentleness and perfection. (In an interview, Montale said the women in his poems were "Dantesque, Dantesque," by which he meant, suggests the poet/scholar Rosanna Warren, they were spiritualized, not fully individualized beings.) He gave this American, a figure of

majestic spiritual importance to him, the name of Clizia (might this be derived from *ecclesia*?). Arrowsmith calls her “the absent center of the poet’s life. . . . Clizia’s sacrifice of physical love” allows her to become “her lover’s spiritual salvation,” and redeems “all those who, like Montale, were suffering the darkness of the Fascist years and human evil generally. She ‘redeems the time,’” in a phrase borrowed from T. S. Eliot.

Montale was a learned autodidact and a highly allusive poet, a matter that adds to the difficulties and puzzles of his poems. His literary influences, for example, include Plato, the Bible, Dante and the *dolce stilnovisti* of his circle, Petrarch, Shakespeare and the English Metaphysical poets, Browning, Henry James, Hopkins, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Jammes, and Valéry, as well as Eliot.

A word needs to be said about William Arrowsmith, Montale’s chief, and among his best, translators. He was a classicist who has translated Euripides, Aristophanes, and Petronius, as well as Pavese, and, with Roger Shattuck, edited *The Craft and Context of Translation* (1961). In addition, he has written penetrating commentary on Eliot’s early poetry and on Ruskin. He observes: “Translation, like politics, is an art of the possible; if the translator has done his work the best he can expect is that his reader, believing that the text has been translated, not merely transcribed or transliterated, will feel something of the contagion of the original.”

The poems that follow are selected from Montale’s *Satura: 1962–1970*, as translated and annotated by William Arrowsmith, and edited by Rosanna Warren.

From *Xenia I*

1

Dear little insect
nicknamed Mosca, I don’t know why,
this evening, when it was nearly dark,
while I was reading Deutero-Isaiah,
you reappeared at my side,
but without your glasses
you couldn’t see me,
and in the blur, without their glitter,
I didn’t know who you were.

2

Minus glasses and antennae,
poor insect, wingèd
only in imagination,
a beaten-up Bible and none
too reliable either, black night,
a flash of lightning, thunder, and then
not even the storm. Could it be
you left so soon, without
a word? But it’s crazy, my thinking
you still had lips.

3

At the St. James in Paris I’ll have to ask for
a room for one. (They don’t like single guests.) Ditto
in the fake Byzantium of your Venetian
hotel; and then, right off, hunting down
the girls at the switchboard,

always your pals; and then leaving again
the minute my three minutes are up,
and the wanting you back,
if only in one gesture,
one habit of yours.

4

We'd worked out a whistle for the world
beyond, a token of recognition.
Now I'm trying variations, hoping
we're all dead already and don't know it.

7

Self-pity, infinite pain and anguish
of the man who worships this world here and now,
who hopes and despairs of another. . .
(who dares speak of another world?)
.....

"Strana pietà..." (*Azucena*, Act II)

8

Your speech so halting and tactless
is the only speech that consoles me.
But the tone has changed, the color too.
I'll get used to hearing you, decoding you
in the click-clack of the teletype,
in the spirals of smoke coiling
from my Brissago cigars.

9

Listening was your only way of seeing.
The phone bill comes to almost nothing now.

10

"Did she pray?" "Yes to St. Anthony
who's in charge of finding lost
umbrellas and suchlike things
in St. Hermes' cloakroom."
"And that's it?" "She prayed for her dead too,
and for me."
"Quite enough," the priest replied.

12

Spring pokes out at a snail's pace.
Never again will I hear you talking of antibiotic
poisoning, or the pin in your femur,
or the patrimony plucked from you
by that thousand-eyed
[deleted],
long daylights and unbearable hours.
Never again will I hear you struggling with the backwash
of time, or ghosts, or the logistical problems
of summer.

13

Your brother died young; that little girl
with tousled curls in the oval portrait,
looking at me, was you.
He wrote music, unpublished, unheard,

now buried away in some trunk
or trashed. If what's written is written,
maybe someone, unawares, is rewriting it now.
I loved him without ever knowing him.
Except for you no one remembered him.
I made no inquiries; it's futile now.
After you, I was the only one left
for whom he ever existed.
But we can love a shade, you know,
being shades ourselves.

14

They say my poetry is one of nonbelonging.
But if it was yours, it was someone's:
it was yours who are no longer form, but essence.
They say that poetry at its peak
glorifies the All in flight,
they say the tortoise
is no swifter than lightning.
You alone knew
that movement and stasis are one,
that the void is fullness and the clear sky
cloud at its airiest. So your long journey,
imprisoned by bandages and casts,
makes better sense to me.
Still, knowing we're a single thing,
whether one or two, gives me no peace.

The Death of God

All religions of the one God
are only one, cooks and cooking vary.
I was turning this thought over
when you interrupted me
by tumbling head-over-heels
down the spiral staircase of the Périgourdine
and at the bottom split your sides laughing.
A delightful evening, marred only by a moment's
fright. Even the pope
in Israel said the same thing
but repented when informed
that the supreme Deposed, if he ever existed,
had expired.

I Feel Remorse

I feel remorse for squashing the mosquito
on the wall, the ant
on the sidewalk.
I feel remorse, but here I am formally garbed
for the conference, the reception.
I feel sorry for all, even for the slave
who proffers me advice on the stock market,
sorrow for the beggar who gets no alms from me,
sorrow for the madman who presides
at the Administrative Council.

The Black Angel

O great soot-black
angel, shelter me
under your wings,
let me scrape past
the bramble spikes, the oven's shining jets,
and fall to my knees
on the dead embers if perchance
some fringe of your feathers
remains

o small dark angel,
neither heavenly nor human,
angel who shines through,
changing colors, formless
and multiform, equal
and unequal in the swift lightning
of your incomprehensible fabulation

o black angel reveal yourself
but may your splendor not consume me,
leave unmelted the mist that haloes you,
stamp yourself in my thought,
since no eye resists your blazings
coal-black angel sheltering
under the chestnut peddler's cape

great ebony angel
angel dusky
or white
if, weary of my wandering,
I clutched your wing and felt it
crunch
I could not know you as now I do,
in sleep, on waking, in the morning
since between true and false no needle
can stop biped or camel,
and the charred residue, the grime
left on the fingertips
is less than the dust
of your last feather, great angel
of ash and smoke, mini-angel
chimney sweep.

From Two Venetian Sequences

II

Farfarella, the gabby doorman, obeying orders,
said he wasn't allowed to disturb the man
who wrote about bullfights and safaris.
I implore him to try, I'm a friend of Pound
(a slight exaggeration) and deserve special
treatment. Maybe . . . He picks up the phone,
talks listens pleads and, lo, the great bear
Hemingway takes the hook.
He's still in bed, all that emerges
from his hairy face are eyes and eczema.
Two or three empty bottles of Merlot,

forerunners of the gallon to come.
 Down in the restaurant we're all at table.
 We don't talk about him but about our dear friend
 dear Adrienne Monnier, the Rue de L'Odéon,
 about Sylvia Beach, Larbaud, the roaring thirties
 and the braying fifties. Paris, pigsty London,
 New York, nauseating, deadly. No hunting in the marshes,
 no wild ducks, no girls, and not
 the faintest thought of a book on such topics.
 We compile a list of mutual friends whose names
 I don't know. The world's gone to rot,
 decaying. Almost in tears, he asks me not to send him
 people of my sort, especially if they're intelligent.
 Then he gets up, wraps himself in a bathrobe,
 hugs me, and shows me to the door.
 He lived on a few more years, and, dying twice,
 had the time to read his own obituaries.

It's Raining

It's raining. A drizzle
 without backfiring
 motorcycles or babies
 crying.

It's raining
 from a sky without
 clouds.

It's raining
 on the nothing we do
 in these hours of general
 strike.

It's raining
 on your grave at San Felice
 at Ema
 and the earth isn't shaking
 because there's no earthquake
 or war.

It's raining
 not on the lovely tale
 of seasons past,
 but on the tax-collector's
 briefcase,
 it's raining on cuttlefish bones
 and bureaucrats.

It's raining
 on the Official Bulletin
 here from the open balcony,
 it's raining on Parliament,
 it's raining on Via Solferino,

it's raining without the wind's
 ruffling the cards.

It's raining
 in Hermione's absence
 God willing,
 it's raining because absence
 is universal
 and if the earth isn't quaking
 it's because Arcetri
 didn't command it.

It's raining on the new epistemes
 of the biped primate,
 on deified man, on the humanized
 heavens, on the snouts
 of theologians in overalls

or tuxedos,
 it's raining on the progress
 of the lawsuit,
 it's raining
 on work-in-regress,
 on the ailing cypresses
 in the cemetery, drizzling
 on public opinion.

It's raining but if you appear
 it's not water, not atmosphere,
 it's raining because when you're not
 here,
 it's nothing but absence
 and absence can drown.

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THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

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Unnecessary Surgery in Asia?

A Survey of Recent Articles

One after another, the economically ailing countries of Asia have gone to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), desperate for a massive infusion of money, and have reluctantly agreed to take the bitter medicine prescribed: fundamental economic reform, along Western, market-oriented lines. All but forgotten is the Asian “miracle” that had dazzled the world for a quarter-century. Now, even the foremost champion of “Asian values,” Singapore’s Lee Kuan Yew, is a bit on the defensive. “There are certain weaknesses in Confucianism,” he admits in *Time* (Mar. 16, 1998).

But “Asian values” are no more responsible for the region’s current distress than they were for its stunning success, argues Francis Fukuyama, a professor of public policy at George Mason University, writing in *Commentary* (Feb. 1998). Before, credit was given to “a combination of the work ethic, respect for community and authority, and a tradition of paternalistic government,” he notes, though, in fact, Confucian values had to be combined with values imported from the West. “Economic growth was contingent on the *rejection* by Asians of important elements of their own cultural heritage, including the Mandarin disdain for commerce and physical labor.” In the same way, Fukuyama says, today blame is assigned to Asian values because they supposedly “led to nepotistic credit allocation, an overly meddlesome state, and a disastrous lack of transparency in financial transactions.” But in fact, he observes, “the causes of crisis vary from country to country.”

The currency crisis began in May 1997 when speculators, sensing weakness in the Thai economy, began selling off the baht. They then moved on to the Indonesian rupi-

ah, the Malaysian ringgit, the Philippine peso, and other currencies. Throughout Southeast Asia, firms that had taken out loans denominated in American dollars were suddenly unable to earn enough in local currency to pay off their debts. This threatened banking institutions, which also had borrowed billions of dollars. Thailand obtained a \$17 billion bailout loan from the IMF, and Indonesia borrowed \$40 billion. The crisis cost President Suharto his presidency. Meanwhile, in South Korea, business and financial institutions found themselves with short-term foreign debts, totaling some \$110 billion by October—more than three times the country’s foreign exchange assets. Nervous investors began selling Korean won and the IMF stepped in with a \$57 billion loan, which, like the others, had major conditions attached.

This was a big mistake, contends Harvard University economist Martin Feldstein, former chairman of President Ronald Reagan’s Council of Economic Advisers. The IMF, which is strongly influenced by the United States, is wrong to insist that South Korea and other Asian countries drastically overhaul their economies, he maintains in *Foreign Affairs* (Mar.-Apr. 1998). In Southeast Asia, where the currency collapses stemmed from overvalued and fixed exchange rates, the “proper remedy” would be “a variant of the traditional IMF medicine tailored specifically to each country—some combination of reduced government spending, higher taxes, and tighter credit.” But instead of relying on private banks and mainly just monitoring performance, the IMF “took the lead” itself in providing credit to Thailand and Indonesia, and

demanded wholesale change. In Indonesia, the fund enumerated “a long list of reforms, specifying in minute detail such things as the price of gasoline and the manner of selling plywood,” and told the regime to end the country’s widespread corruption and curtail the special business privileges used to enrich Suharto’s family and political allies. Desirable as these reforms might be, Feldstein observes, they were not necessary to defuse the economic crisis.

The situation in South Korea, which has the 11th-largest economy in the world, is more important and different, Feldstein says. The Korean economy was performing well. Its foreign-debt problem “was clearly a case of temporary illiquidity rather than fundamental insolvency,” he says. All that South Korea needed was “coordinated action by creditor banks to restructure its short-term debts, lengthening their maturity and providing additional temporary credits to help meet the interest obligations.” Instead, the IMF insisted that South Korea go on a regimen of higher taxes, reduced spending, and high interest rates. Seoul was also forced to open its economy wider to foreign investors, and to make other major changes. Again, the IMF overstepped its authority, Feldstein says. Many of the reforms “would probably improve the long-term performance of the Korean economy,” he concedes, but South Korea could return to the international capital markets without them. Indeed, by emphasizing the Korean economy’s structural and institutional problems, he says, the IMF made the situation worse.

There is a terrible irony in forcing South Korea and other countries to open their capital markets further, writes Columbia University economist Jagdish Bhagwati in *Foreign Affairs* (May-June 1998), because “short-term, capital inflow played a principal role in their troubles in the first place.” A leading free-trade advocate, he nevertheless dissents from “the mainstream view [that] a world of full capital mobility continues to be inevitable and immensely desirable.” Though Wall Street naturally takes that view, free capital mobility, he maintains, is not the same as “free trade in widgets and life insurance policies,” and is inherently crisis-prone. “The Asian crisis,” he says, “cannot be separated from the excessive borrowings of foreign short-term capital as Asian economies loosened up their capital account controls and enabled their banks and firms to borrow abroad.”

Economic thinkers from very different schools of thought have somehow managed to find in the Asian agony evidence to confirm their particular faith, economist Paul Krugman, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, wryly observes in the *New York Times Magazine* (May 3, 1998). He himself is one of the few economists credited—by persons other than themselves, that is—with having anticipated the Asian crisis. More than three years ago, in an article in *Foreign Affairs* (Nov.-Dec. 1994), he argued that efficiency gains, essential to long-term growth, had played only a small part in the success of the East Asian “tigers.” Their spectacular growth would slow, he suggested. Still, he notes now, if he predicted anything, “it was a gradual slowdown—not the sudden catastrophe that has overtaken the region.”

Even before that “catastrophe,” some of the region’s leaders were thinking of Westernizing their economies, maintains Sebastian Mallaby, the *Economist*’s Washington bureau chief, writing in the *National Interest* (Summer 1998). Though South Korea’s economy had been “performing splendidly,” at least until the market for semiconductors collapsed in 1996, most Korean economists talked even then “about the need to deregulate, to break up the conglomerates known as *chaebol*, to create a more Western style of corporate governance by fostering sophisticated banks and equity investors.”

Though the IMF reforms “will not be swallowed whole” anywhere, Mallaby believes, their ultimate effect will be beneficial, making Asian economies “less state-directed, more transparent, and more open to foreigners; in short, more Western.” And he marvels at the reluctance of Feldstein, Fukuyama, and other American conservatives “to celebrate the latest evidence from Asia for the superiority of their Western system.”

In the long run, Fukuyama responds, most of the reforms probably are desirable. “But there is something to be said for prudence,” he believes. Global competition would bring about many of the changes anyway—without stirring up nationalistic resentment. And countries must be allowed to elaborate the economic implications of democracy and markets in accordance with their own cultures. It would be very strange, he says, to conclude “that the central Western idea . . . must be equated” with whatever particular policies are in favor at the moment with the technocrats at the IMF.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

America's Two Revolutions

"A Tale of Two Reactions" by Mark Lilla, in *The New York Review of Books* (May 14, 1998), 1755 Broadway, 5th floor, New York, N.Y. 10019-3780; "The Southern Captivity of the GOP" by Christopher Caldwell, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (June 1998), 77 N. Washington St., Boston, Mass. 02114.

Two cultural revolutions have occurred in recent decades, and together they are redefining American politics—but neither Right nor Left has been able to bring itself to accept the fact. So argues Lilla, who teaches politics at New York University.

The first revolution—call it “the ’60s”—delegitimized public authority, weakened the family, and undermined standards of private morality. Conservatives continually deplore this decline but fail to explain its causes, pointing instead to such culprits as moral weakness, self-indulgence, and nihilism. “What they refuse to consider,” says Lilla, “is the darker side of our own American creed” of individualism and egalitarianism.

The second cultural revolution, he contends, is “the shift in political and economic attitudes” in the 1980s. Thanks to the Reagan revolution, “most Americans now believe (rightly or wrongly) that economic growth will do more for them than economic redistribution, and that to grow rich is good. It is taken as axiomatic that the experiments of

the Great Society failed and that new experiments directed by Washington would be foolhardy. Regulation is considered *dépassé*, and unions are seen as self-serving, corrupt organizations that only retard economic growth.” Liberals of the *Nation* school deplore this seismic shift in attitudes, Lilla observes, and usually blame it on a corrupt campaign finance system that favors the wealthy. Nearly everyone is worse off because of the Reagan revolution, according to the Left, but they somehow have been fooled into thinking they’re better off.

In reality, Lilla writes, both cultural revolutions have been successful, are over—and are basically *one* revolution. The result is “a morally lax yet economically successful capitalist society.” President Bill Clinton’s “’60s morals and ’80s politics do not seem particularly contradictory to the majority of the American public that supports him,” Lilla points out. Indeed, any political agenda that rejects one—but not the other—of the two revolutions is

Washington's Gift

Writing in the *Hudson Review* (Spring 1998), essayist Joseph Epstein ponders the life of one political leader who did not end his career, as so many do today, “happily peddl[ing] their influence in large law firms.”

Although he understood power and knew how to use it, unlike the case with almost every other political leader of his importance, there is no strong evidence that George Washington loved power, either for its own sake or for the perquisites that it brought him. He was a thoughtful but not a speculative man, and neither is there any serious evidence that he had a strong vision for America, a vision of stately grandeur or of human happiness. Why, then, did he accept the most arduous service his nation offered, not once but over and over again?

Because, the only answer is, of a profound sense of duty that derived from his, Washington's, moral character. [It] is the only way to account for the continual tests to which Washington put himself, throughout his life, depriving himself of the leisure and contentment of the private life for which he always longed. His retirement was short-lived, for he died in 1799, three years after he left office. He died, it is reported, stoically, in pain and with no last words of wisdom on his lips. If his life seems sacred, it is because it seems in the final analysis sacrificial, a donation to the state.

“doomed to failure.”

Republicans seem determined to prove that point, according to Caldwell, a senior writer for the conservative *Weekly Standard*. He argues that the GOP is increasingly in thrall to the South, and that its “tradition of putting values—particularly Christian values—at the center of politics” is alienating even conservative voters in other regions. “The Republicans would like to think that Americans are the dupes of a lecherous Arkansas sleazeball, just as the Democrats in the 1980s saw voters as gulled by a senile B-movie warmonger. But Clinton’s success, like Reagan’s, has to do with American

beliefs and the extent to which he embodies them and his opponents do not.” On issues such as gay rights, the environment, and women in the workplace, Caldwell says, “the country has moved leftward.” The GOP may cling to power, but it will not “rule from a place in Americans’ hearts” until it changes.

Clinton-style blending may be a good short-term solution, but in Lilla’s view, “healthy democratic politics” requires a “perceptible distinction between right and left.” This vital divide “will naturally reappear,” he believes, once the political system fully assimilates the two revolutions.

The Proud History of Voter Apathy

“Limits of Political Engagement in Antebellum America: A New Look at the Golden Age of Participatory Democracy” by Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, in *The Journal of American History* (Dec. 1997), 1125 E. Atwater Ave., Bloomington, Ind. 47401-3701.

As clucks of disapproval about Americans’ political apathy and low voter turnout have grown louder in recent years, many historians have looked back to the decades before the Civil War as a time when Americans (at least the white males eligible to vote) were enthusiastically engaged in politics. In that golden age, citizens immersed themselves in politics, understood “the issues,” flocked to meetings and rallies, and faithfully voted on election days as if taking part in a solemn religious rite. “More than in any subsequent era,” one such historian has written, “political life formed the very essence of the pre-Civil War generation’s experience.”

Not quite, say Altschuler and Blumin, professors of American studies and American history, respectively, at Cornell University. Closely examining political life during the 1840s and ’50s in 16 county seats and small cities, they found that political apathy is hardly a strictly modern phenomenon. In a complaint characteristic of the period, the *Dubuque Daily Times* editorialized in 1859 that the “better portion” of the electorate “retire in disgust from the heat and tur-

moil of political strife. They leave primary meetings, and County, District and State Conventions to political gamblers and party hacks.”

Altschuler and Blumin found that antebellum politics was much like our own: that lawyers and businessmen predominated among the politically active; that local party caucuses and conventions were often thinly attended, even when there were close contests; that interest in campaigns slackened in off-year elections; that “spontaneous” outpourings of support for candidates at major campaign rallies were nearly always



GOP “Wide-Awake” clubs march in Hartford for Lincoln in July 1860. Popular enthusiasm displaced political apathy that year.

pumped up by imported party workers; and that the political parties did not rely on the civic conscience of their supporters to get them to the polls but rather used organizers and treats such as whiskey to make sure they voted.

In short, those people who were deeply committed to political affairs worked hard to influence those who were not, Altschuler and Blumin say. “The very intensity of this ‘partisan imperative’ sug-

gests the magnitude of the task party activists perceived and set out to perform.” The big turnout at the polls during the period reflects their success in this effort more than it does “the broad and deep political conviction” of the electorate, as the dewy-eyed historians would have it. Indeed, write the authors, “American democracy found its greatest validation in the peaceful and apolitical aftermath of the strident political campaign.”

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

The Phony China Threat

“On the Myth of Chinese Power Projection Capabilities” by Rick Reece, in *Breakthroughs* (Spring 1998), Security Studies Program, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 292 Main St. (E38-603), Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

Is China building up its armed strength to expand its presence in the South China Sea, intimidate its neighbors, and ultimately replace the United States as the dominant power in Asia? Some analysts claim that it is, with the immediate aim of gaining control of the sea-lanes through which Mideast oil is transported to the region. But Reece, a marine lieutenant colonel and 1997–98 Marine Corps Fellow in the Security Studies Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, contends that China has nowhere near the military muscle it would need to do that.

During the last 10 years, China has occupied islands, reefs, and islets throughout the South China Sea, skirmishing with rival claimants such as Vietnam and the Philippines. The resulting tensions in the strategically important area have helped propel an East Asian arms race. But the only place occupied by China that has any military significance is Woody Island, the largest of the Paracel Islands, Reece says, and, at most, it provides an airfield “for limited refuelings and emergency landings, not a forward base for staging assaults in the South China Sea.”

China could airlift two divisions (25,000 troops) to attack a foe beyond its territorial waters, Reece observes, sending reinforcements once it seized a good port. However, it lacks ground-attack aircraft to support operations more than about 300 miles from home. China also “does not practice large-scale amphibious operations or naval gunfire support of landing operations.” At least two years

of hard training would be needed to develop an effective amphibious force, he says.

What about airpower? China has bought 72 Russian SU-27 fighter jets in recent years—the equivalent of one U.S. wing. But while it has also acquired aerial-refueling technology from Iran, the Chinese Air Force currently lacks the skills to use it. So the fighters cannot fly into the southern reaches of the South China Sea. If they did, they would confront “the air forces of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, all of which possess advanced American or British aircraft and would be operating relatively close to friendly air bases.” Aircraft carriers? China has none. (The United States has 12.)

Beijing would need a “blue water” navy to pursue any larger regional ambitions, Reece notes. But a 1996 study indicates that China could not build or buy a modern regional navy by 2010 “without major assistance,” he says. “China does not possess the power plant, avionics and metallurgy technologies required to manufacture aircraft that can operate from aircraft carriers in any weather. Chinese pilots have little experience flying without ground control.” And Beijing doesn’t have a lot of money to spend. Its military budget is \$32 billion; the U.S. defense budget is \$264 billion.

Without a blue water navy, Reece says, China will be limited to minor excursions and “showing the flag.” As for protection of the sea-lanes on which it depends for imported oil, China, Reece says, is likely to do what Japan does: rely on the United States.

The Gift of Berlin

“The Fall of Berlin and the Rise of a Myth” by Donald E. Shepardson, in *The Journal of Military History* (Jan. 1998), Society for Military History, George C. Marshall Library, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Va. 24450–1600.

Almost as soon as Soviet troops hoisted their flag over the Reichstag building in Berlin on April 30, 1945, a myth arose that only American naiveté (in contrast with British realism) had prevented British and American forces from taking the German capital first. Former secretary of state Henry Kissinger

month had encountered fanatical Japanese resistance, and the atom bomb’s effectiveness was still unknown. Moreover, the Allied leaders were reluctant to alienate Joseph Stalin. They were counting on Soviet support in the war against Japan. A confrontation over Berlin would have shocked the American public, which had come to look on the Soviet Union as a gallant ally. In Britain, it would have split Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s coalition government, since his Labor Party partners would never have supported it.

In a 17-day campaign that began on April 16, the Red Army captured Berlin, paying a huge cost: 80,000 dead or missing, 280,000 wounded, 2,000 artillery pieces destroyed, and more than 900 aircraft lost. But Stalin also felt constrained by the need to maintain a united front against Japan, and thus did not challenge his allies over the division of Berlin to which they had agreed at Yalta in February. In



In 1945, as World War II drew to a close, war-weary Americans were in no mood to confront their Soviet ally over Berlin.

July, American, British, and French forces took possession of their respective zones. “Here was a gift,” Shepardson says.

recently expressed this view in his 1994 book *Diplomacy*. Shepardson, a historian at the University of Northern Iowa, replies that, faced with hard choices amid the rush of events in the spring of 1945, General Dwight D. Eisenhower and his superiors were more realistic than their later critics.

Eisenhower finally decided on April 14, 1945, to halt his forces at the Elbe River, 50 miles west of Berlin. The United States, Shepardson notes, wanted to defeat Germany quickly with minimum casualties, not only for humane reasons but so that U.S. troops could be deployed to the Pacific, where the situation appeared grim. The invasion of Okinawa that

The gift—which bedeviled Stalin and his heirs for the next 45 years—would not have been necessary if the Soviets had attacked Berlin before the Yalta Conference. By the end of January 1945, the Red Army was camped less than 50 miles from Berlin. But Stalin decided to pause. In later years, Shepardson dryly notes, Soviet critics would fault Marshal Georgi Zhukov for not persuading Stalin to press on. The two Soviet leaders, the critics said, should have been more realistic.

trayed by two prominent scholarly prophets, contends Gray, a professor of European

The Present Danger

“Global Utopias and Clashing Civilizations: Misunderstanding the Present” by John Gray, in *International Affairs* (Jan. 1998), Chatham House, 10 St. James’s Square, London SW1Y 4LE, England.

The end of the Cold War has transformed the world—but not in the ways por-

trayed by two prominent scholarly prophets, contends Gray, a professor of European

thought at the London School of Economics. What is different—and dangerous—today, Gray maintains, is “the new weakness of states.”

Francis Fukuyama’s famous 1992 prediction that liberal democracies will eventually prevail everywhere is unlikely ever to come true, Gray argues. He offers one simple reason: it is not whether a government is a liberal democracy that determines its legitimacy, but whether it meets the most fundamental needs of its citizens, namely, protection from “the worst evils: war and civil disorder, criminal violence, and lack of the means of decent subsistence.”

And contrary to Samuel Huntington’s 1993 “clash of civilizations” thesis, wars are still “commonly waged between (and within) nationalities and ethnicities, not between different civilizations,” Gray observes. “[The] old, familiar logic of territories and alliances often impels members of the same ‘civilization’ into enmity and members of different ‘civilizations’ into making common cause.” After armed conflict broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1988, for instance, such logic drove Iran to side with Christian Armenia, not Islamic Azerbaijan.

Fukuyama’s and Huntington’s “apocalyptic beliefs” only encourage the disabling illusion “that the difficult choices and unpleasant trade-offs that have always been necessary in the relations of states will someday be redundant,” Gray says. But

they are unavoidable, he declares. “Advancing democracy does not always foster political stability. Preserving peace does not always coincide with the promotion of human rights.”

In a variety of ways, Gray argues, the end of the Cold War rivalry has dangerously undermined the legitimacy of states. Some states, deprived of their strategic value, must make do without the outside support that previously sustained them. In other nations, such as Italy and Japan, the disappearance of Cold War imperatives has led to the disintegration of long-established political arrangements.

Economic globalization, encouraged by the collapse of the Soviet Union, has made it harder for governments of all kinds to limit the economic risks to their citizens that come with free markets, creating “a new politics of economic insecurity.” Thanks in part to the unregulated trade in arms in the global economy, Gray notes, many modern states are unable to maintain a monopoly on organized violence. “Today wars are often not fought by agents of sovereign states but waged by political organizations, irregular armies, ethnic or tribal militias and other bodies.”

“We have inherited from the totalitarian era a reflex of suspicion of government,” Gray concludes. “Yet no political doctrine could be less suited to the needs of our time than that which is embodied in the cult of the minimum state.”

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

The Perils of Europe’s Promised Union

A Survey of Recent Articles

European union—not just a common market but a common currency, a common defense, and a common diplomacy—has been talked about for decades,” Ronald Steel, author of *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (1980), notes in the *New Republic* (June 1, 1998). “In fact, the talk lasted so long that union came to resemble the kingdom of heaven: something to be devoutly desired but deferred into the indefinitely receding future. Many, myself included, doubted that European countries would ever scrap that essential attribute of

sovereignty—their currencies—as the price of unity.” But now, 11 European nations are doing just that.

Mere months from now, on January 1, 1999, if all goes according to plan, France, Germany, and the other nine countries in the European Monetary Union (EMU) will freeze their exchange rates, establishing, in effect, a single currency. People and companies will be able to write checks, use credit cards, and keep bank accounts in euros. Responsibility for monetary policy will shift from Germany’s Bundesbank and the other

national central banks to the new European Central Bank. On January 1, 2002, euro-denominated notes and coins will be introduced, and six months later, the deutsche mark, the franc, and the lira will be history.

While Washington is upbeat about all this in public, Steel says it “fears that a Europe moving toward real economic integration may be a less reliable and less predictable partner for the United States—or perhaps not even a partner at all.”

After World War II, American liberal internationalists were all for European unification. But now that the long-cherished dream is moving dramatically closer to reality, it is not just liberal neo-isolationists such as Steel who are making gloomy prognostications. Harvard University economist Martin Feldstein, writing in *Foreign Affairs* (Nov.–Dec. 1997) and the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (Fall 1997), warns that monetary union “will change the political character of Europe in ways that could lead to conflicts in Europe and confrontations with the United States.”

The one-size-fits-all monetary policy, Feldstein argues, is likely to provoke great discord among the European nations, especially when some of them experience severe unemployment and find the new central bank unwilling to cut interest rates. He predicts that the adverse effects of a single currency on unemployment and inflation will outweigh any gains that it will produce by facilitating trade and the flow of capital among the EMU members.

Economist Milton Friedman, now with the Hoover Institution, at Stanford University, agrees. In the United States, where there is a common language, a strong national government, and free movement of goods, capital, and people from one part of the country to another, a common currency makes sense, he points out in *New Perspectives Quarterly* (Fall 1997). But in Europe, where those conditions do not obtain to the same extent, it doesn't, he contends. There, flexible exchange rates have provided a better way for individual nations to adjust to the ups and downs of the business cycle. “If one country is affected by negative

shocks that call for, say, lower wages relative to other countries, that can be achieved by a change in one price, the exchange rate, rather than by requiring changes in thousands on thousands of separate wage rates or the emigration of labor.” Come January, however, that will no longer be possible for the 11 EMU nations.

The “real rationale” for monetary union is not economic, Feldstein writes, but political: the formation of a political union, “a European federal state with responsibility for a Europe-wide foreign and security policy as well as for what are now domestic economic and social policies.” But once the countries are in EMU, and unable to get out, he argues,

“conflicts over economic policies and interference with national sovereignty could reinforce long-standing animosities based on history, nationality, and religion.” Even another European war is possible, he maintains. “Germany's assertion that it needs to be contained in a larger European political entity is itself a warn-

ing. Would such a structure contain Germany, or tempt it to exercise hegemonic leadership?”

“Could Feldstein be right?” wonders Isabel Hilton, a columnist for the *Guardian* in London, writing in the *New Yorker* (Apr. 27 & May 4, 1998). “Is it possible that the euro could bring the whole edifice of Europe—with its new grand buildings, its thousands of bureaucrats, and its volumes of law—crashing down upon our heads? The idea is one that some European voters—who haven't yet bought their leaders' party line—seem to share. Most, in fact, have responded to the idea of a single currency with suspicion.” Hilton visited finance ministers in France, Italy, and Britain (which has elected to stay out of the EMU for the time being), and she found that none of them “believed in Feldstein's prophecy of doom, but each of them knew that monetary union was a leap into the unknown.”

That is because Europe is reversing the usual process of creating a state, argues Michael Portillo, who served in British prime minister John Major's Conservative cabinet



during 1992–97. “Normally, a new state establishes its institutions of government first, and then goes on to create its policies and its currency. In this case, the common European policies and the currency are being created first,” he observes in the *National Interest* (Spring 1998).

What is missing, Portillo says, is “a single European people. . . . The peoples of Europe are too different from one another, their histories, cultures, languages, and values are too diverse, for them to be brought together into one state.” Forcing individual nation-states, which are democratic, into the European Union, which in itself is not, is a grave mistake, he believes. “The traditional danger in Europe has come from extremist nationalism,” Portillo contends. “Political union seems likely to rekindle it, as national interests are ignored by policymak-

ers who are both remote and irremovable.”

The “forced march to unity” is endangering what has already been achieved in much of western and southern Europe, namely, “a new model of liberal order,” argues Timothy Garton Ash, a Fellow at Oxford University, writing in *Foreign Affairs* (Mar.–Apr. 1998). “What we should be doing now is rather to consolidate this liberal order and to spread it across the continent. Liberal order, not unity, is the right strategic goal for European policy in our time.” In Europe, “enlargement” is the theme of many critics of rapid unification.

But unity is the goal that most European nations are now pursuing. “It is difficult to see how the European Monetary Union can succeed,” writes former secretary of state Henry Kissinger on the op-ed page of the *Washington Post* (May 12, 1998). “It is even more difficult to imagine that it will be permitted to fail.”

Taming the Corporation

“The New Meaning of Corporate Social Responsibility” by Robert B. Reich, in *California Management Review* (Winter 1998), Univ. of California, 5549 Haas School of Business #1900, Berkeley, Calif. 94720–1900.

Back in the 1950s, it was a commonplace to say that major corporations ought to treat employees like family members and to function as good citizens in their communities. But times have changed, notes Reich, a professor of economic and social policy at Brandeis University and former U.S. secretary of labor. Today, he argues, government needs to step in and define corporations’ social obligations.

The current conventional wisdom, Reich observes, is that publicly held corporations have only one responsibility: to maximize the value of investors’ shares. And if doing that means laying off large numbers of workers, or getting 13-year-olds in Latin America to work 12-hour days for a pittance, so be it. After all, by helping to see that society’s productive assets are arrayed most efficiently, corporations not only benefit investors but promote economic growth and the creation of jobs. True, says Reich, but society still may want the artificial creatures of law known as corporations to take into account other considerations, such as the welfare of workers and communities.

Once, in the era after World War II, the top executives of America’s major corpora-

tions envisioned management’s job, as Frank Abrams, then chairman of Standard Oil of New Jersey, did in a 1951 address: “to maintain an equitable and working balance among the claims of the various directly interested groups . . . stockholders, employees, customers, and the public at large.” With investors quiescent and boards often docile, Reich writes, managers then could refrain from laying off employees, even though that might run counter to the best interest of the shareholders. But even in that era, he notes, corporations could take a minimalist view of their social responsibilities, as textile manufacturers did, for instance, when they abandoned the Northeast in search of cheap labor elsewhere.

Government does already “impose, by law, procedures by which stakeholders other than investors can participate directly in corporate decisions,” Reich observes. Collective bargaining, as spelled out in the National Labor Relations Act, is an example. But further expanding participation in this way, he points out, would only “prolong and complicate” corporate decision making, and promote inefficiency.

Reich believes that Washington must

define corporate social responsibilities on “major questions”: should they contract with “sweatshops” in Asia and Latin America? Should profitable companies lay off unneeded employees or retrain them for new jobs? These are not only ethical questions, Reich maintains, but issues of public policy, involving the weighing of competing social costs.

But corporations must not be allowed to subvert the process by political means—

through lobbying, campaign contributions, and advertising. “It is not possible to have it both ways,” Reich maintains. “The modern corporation cannot simultaneously claim, as a matter of public morality and public policy, that its only legitimate societal mission is to maximize shareholder returns, while at the same time actively seek to influence social policies intended to achieve all the other things a society may wish to do.”

Caution: Economists at Work

“Reassessing Trends in U.S. Earnings Inequality” by Robert I. Lerman, in *Monthly Labor Review* (Dec. 1997), Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, D.C. 20212.

That earnings inequality has been increasing in the United States is now conventional wisdom. But just what is “earnings inequality”? The answer is not as straightforward as one might think—and neither is the trend, argues Lerman, an economist at American University.

What data you measure, and how you measure them, goes a long way toward determining what answers you get, he says. Economists often measure inequality as the distribution of annual earnings among full-time, year-round workers, and even frequently further limit their sample to men or to workers within a certain age range. This may be fine when trying to gauge progress toward some ideal, Lerman says, but it is not the way to assess how large forces such as trade and technological change are altering the *overall* U.S. wage distribution.

Lerman examined census data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation, as well as the more commonly used Current Population Survey. Defining “earnings” as compensation per hour for all hours worked by all workers in the economy, he got this result: wage inequality increased between 1980 and ’86 (as other researchers have found), but then

stayed more or less the same through 1995.

This finding is not necessarily at odds with other, seemingly contradictory trends. For example, the earnings gap between the educated and the less educated appears to have widened since the mid-1980s. But it has been offset by the narrowing wage gaps between men and women, and between blacks and whites.

“Trends in inequality turn out to be highly sensitive to the definition of earnings and the sample of workers used,” Lerman points out. An Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development publication shows that between 1979 and 1991, earnings inequality in the United States grew among full-time, year-round workers by nearly 18 percent, but decreased by one percent among all workers, and declined by 11 percent when measured against the working-age population.

Lerman’s conclusion: “Earnings inequality did increase for some groups of workers,” and certain forces, such as trade and technology, may have had an impact on the overall situation. But in the U.S. labor market as a whole, the net effect—contrary to the conventional wisdom—has not been higher wage inequality.

SOCIETY

Johnny’s Grades Aren’t So Bad

“Are U.S. Students Behind?” by Gerald W. Bracey, in *The American Prospect* (Mar.–Apr. 1998), P.O. Box 383080, Cambridge, Mass. 02238.

Ever since a federal government report 15 years ago warned about a rising tide of mediocrity in the nation’s public schools,

reformers have pointed with alarm to the poor performance of American students in international comparisons of test scores.

Did Blacks Fight for Dixie?

Thousands of blacks served the Confederate Army in support roles, but how many enlisted as combat soldiers? Some estimates run as high as 30,000, but in an interview in *Southern Cultures* (1998: Vol. 4, No. 1), journalist Tony Horwitz, author of *Confederates in the Attic* (1998), says that, like leading Civil War historians, he believes the actual total was far lower.

Apart from the lack of firm documentation, several things make me skeptical. If there were already thousands of blacks fighting for the South, why did the Confederate Congress engage in heated debate about enlisting them in 1865? And why, earlier in the war, was [Confederate general] Pat Cleburne vilified for proposing that blacks serve? And where are the accounts by Confederates themselves? Almost all the evidence from the southern side is negative: "We don't want black soldiers." . . .

*Now, I do think we have to remain open to the possibility that new evidence might emerge. Talking to some academics, I sensed a knee-jerk reluctance to believe that any blacks at all served the South, and this seems wrong-headed to me. I agree with Ervin Jordan [author of *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia* (1995)] that it's simplistic and demeaning to regard wartime blacks as a monolithic group who somehow acted and thought in lock-step. We know there were black slaveholders. Why shouldn't there have been blacks who supported the Confederacy, out of personal loyalty to white soldiers they grew up with, out of fear of northerners, or for other reasons?*

But nothing I've read or heard so far convinces me that more than a handful actually fought. I don't think we'll ever know the precise number, but I'd guess that there were maybe a few hundred who took up arms at one time or another as true soldiers for the Confederacy.

Bracey, author of *Final Exam* (1995), contends that the picture painted is far worse than the general reality.

Take reading skills, for instance. In a major 31-nation study in 1992, American students finished second. Only students from Finland, a small, homogeneous country, did better. If only the top 10 percent of students are compared, young Americans come out the best in the world. Yet reformers are only interested in calling press conferences when there is bad news to report, Bracey notes.

What about math and science? A much-publicized finding from a 1992 study by University of Michigan psychologist Harold Stevenson and his colleagues is that only the top one percent of American students score as high in math as the average Japanese student. But that study was flawed, Bracey maintains: the samples were not representative. The American students, for instance, included a disproportionately large number of children from poor and non-English-speaking families.

There is a U.S.-Japan gap, Bracey says, "but Stevenson's data exaggerate" it.

Larger, more methodologically sophisticated multinational studies have provided a more reliable picture, Bracey contends. In a 1996 study, American eighth-graders got 53 percent of the math questions right, just two percentage points under the international average among 41 nations. They answered 58 percent of the science questions correctly, scoring two points above the international average. At the fourth-grade level, American students ranked 12th in math out of the 26 nations tested, and third in science. (It's true that only about 15 percent of American students scored as high on math as the *average* Japanese student. The difference, Bracey speculates, may be due to the extreme pressure put on Japanese youngsters from an early age to get into the right high school and college.)

"Aside from [Japan and three other] Asian nations at the top and a slightly larger number of developing countries at the

bottom,” Bracey points out, “the remaining roughly 30 countries (including all the developed countries of the West) look very much alike in their [1996 study] mathematics scores.” The story is much the same with the science grades.

In any event, Bracey argues, emphasizing *average* scores obscures the enormous differences among American students. In the 1992 international assessment, for instance, pupils from the top third of American schools had

average scores as high as those of the top two countries (Taiwan and South Korea), while the lowest third of U.S. schools did not even do as well as the lowest-ranking nation (Jordan).

Educational reformers talk as if the typical American school is in need of major repair, Bracey concludes, but the schools that really need it are those with the least resources and the worst social environments.

Where the Black Family Foundered

“Migration Experience and Family Patterns in the ‘Promised Land’” by Stewart E. Tolnay, in *Journal of Family History* (Jan. 1998), Sage Publications, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, Calif. 91320.

Did southern blacks who migrated north to Chicago and other cities earlier in this century bring with them a dysfunctional family culture—a legacy of slavery—that then played havoc with the urban black family? This thesis, popular in the 1950s and late ‘60s but then seemingly discredited by census studies, has been revived in recent years, notably by Nicholas Lemann in his 1991 bestseller, *The Promised Land*. Tolnay, a sociologist at the State University of New York at Albany, contends that southern migrants, in fact, “enjoyed *greater* family stability than native northerners.” The longer they stayed in the North, however, the more that advantage diminished.

In 1940, according to census data, 77 percent of the migrants’ children were living with two parents, compared with 72 percent of northern-born blacks’ children. Three decades later, the percentages had declined but the gap had widened: 69 percent of the families that had migrated during the pre-

ceding five years were intact, compared with 61 percent of their northern-born counterparts. The migrant “advantage,” significantly, was smaller for southern-born blacks whose migration had occurred earlier: 65 percent of their children were living with both parents. The next two decades saw a drastic decline in the figures—to 48 percent among “recent” migrants in 1990, 44 percent among “past” migrants, and 37 percent among northern-born blacks. Even so, the migrant “advantage” remained.

It is true, Tolnay notes, that the migrants’ edge is a bit exaggerated because migrant women whose marriages failed sometimes returned to the South, and so escaped being counted in the North. But that was a relatively small group. Even if they are included, the pattern—the greater stability of southern black migrant families—remains much the same. But this, Tolnay notes, only deepens the real mystery: what caused the erosion of that stability?

PRESS & MEDIA

Big Bad Bird?

“Educational Television Is Not an Oxymoron” by Daniel R. Anderson, in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (May 1998), 3937 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104.

“The worst thing about *Sesame Street* is that people believe it is educationally valuable,” grumped Jane Healy about Big Bird and his friends in her 1990 jeremiad, *Endangered Minds*. She and other critics claim that the long-running, fast-paced

PBS television program mesmerizes youngsters, renders them intellectually passive, shortens their attention spans, and interferes with their language development. Extensive research cited by Anderson, a psychologist at the University of Massa-

chusetts at Amherst, shows that, to use a bit of *Sesame Street* argot, the criticism “just doesn’t belong.”

Instead of being mesmerized, preschoolers seem to engage in “selective looking,” he says. Put in a room with toys, the children looked at and away from the TV screen relatively often—an average of 150 looks an hour, some only brief glances, others lasting several minutes. Older kids tended to pay more attention.

“If, as Healy and others claim, attention to *Sesame Street* is reflexively driven by visual movement and shot changes,” Anderson points out, “then attention should be maintained even if the program becomes difficult or impossible to understand.” But when he and his associates made the show’s dialogue less comprehensible (e.g., by putting it in Greek), the children paid much less attention. That showed, Anderson says, that meaning matters. Healy drew a different conclusion: that children easily give up on TV that is challenging. But Anderson cites another study of educational TV which found that making an announcement for children somewhat harder to understand but still within their “developmental level” did not prompt young viewers to turn away.

The claim that *Sesame Street*’s short segments and fast pace reduce the attention spans of young viewers seems to have arisen from a 1975 report that attributed the “hyperactive” behavior of two-year-olds to watching the program. But the study had no control group (i.e. a comparison group that did not watch the program). And when Anderson and his colleagues made both an exceptionally fast-paced version of the program and a slow one, they found that



preschoolers’ postshow attention spans did not change.

Despite the intellectual passivity rap, Anderson concludes that research indicates that young children “are about as cognitively active and engaged” with educational TV programs as they are when they read or listen to stories.

In fact, he notes, several studies show that, even allowing for level of parent education and other characteristics, children who watch *Sesame Street* generally score better than others on tests of vocabulary and readiness for school. The payoff is apparently long-lasting, according to a major study published last year. It found that among 570 high school students, those who had watched such programs as *Sesame Street* as five-year-olds frequently had higher *high school* grades in English, math, and science. That result should give even Oscar the Grouch something to smile about.

The Swedish Solution

“Ombudsman to the Swedes” by Steven Price, in *American Journalism Review* (Apr. 1998), 8701 Adelphi Road, Adelphi, Md. 20783–1716.

Sweden has what a lot of Americans who are fed up with news media “excesses” say they want—a formal nonjudicial system for handling complaints against the press. But Price, a lawyer and Fulbright Scholar from New Zealand who is working at the *Hot Springs Sentinel-Record* in Arkansas, doubts that it provides a good model for the United States.

Sweden’s press ombudsman, who investi-

gates about 450 complaints a year, is appointed by a special committee with representatives from the press, the government, and the Swedish Bar Association. The office is funded by the media, not the government. All the daily newspapers have agreed to abide by a code of ethics concerning accuracy, privacy, and rights of reply. (Broadcasters sign the code but are not under the ombudsman’s

purview.) The ombudsman reports to the Swedish Press Council, which includes journalists and publishers but is dominated by representatives of the public. If the council rules against a publication, as it did 46 times last year, almost always on the recommendation of ombudsman Per-Arne Jigenius, the offending newspaper or magazine must publish the council's decision and is fined about \$3,000.

More often, Jigenius is able, drawing on his 20 years of experience as a newspaper editor, to arrange a settlement, with the publication providing an appropriate correction and apology. He manages to resolve about 70 cases a year in this fashion. The ombudsman handles only complaints alleging harm to an individual from publicity (rather than beefs about ideological bias and the like), and he dismisses the overwhelming majority of the complaints he receives.

Only two or three complaints out of the 436 cases Jigenius handled in 1996 ultimate-

ly went to court. But that may be in part because libel laws are very weak in Sweden.

"Whatever its limitations," Price says, "it is clear that in a significant number of cases the [ombudsman] system gives injured members of the public what they want most—a prompt and inexpensive correction, while helping the media avoid what they most fear—a long and expensive lawsuit."

But the system may not work well elsewhere, Price says. It is "a product of a combination of factors that may be unique: a population that is accustomed to regulation and confident in bureaucracy as a solution to social ills; an industry that is prepared to cooperate—with remarkable unanimity—for mutual advantage; a government that may very well legislate if the media become overly irresponsible; and a culture that prizes rationality and consensus, and loathes confrontation and mudslinging." That hardly sounds like the rambunctious United States of America.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Morality and the Modern University

A Survey of Recent Articles

The University of Chicago and other elite colleges and universities are "fundamentally amoral" institutions. Aside from issuing formal condemnations of cheating, plagiarism, and academic fraud, they make almost no effort to give their students any moral guidance. Once it was different, of course. But the founding religious purpose of the University of Chicago and many other institutions was lost, and the effort by social scientists to develop an independent "scientific" morality proved a failure. "Today, elite universities operate on the belief that there is a clear separation between intellectual and moral purpose, and they pursue the former while largely ignoring the latter."

What sounds like a serious indictment of the University of Chicago in particular and of academe in general is, in fact, drawn from an unusually candid address on "The Aims of Education" that was given last year to Chicago's incoming freshmen by John J. Mearsheimer, a professor of political science at the university. *Philosophy and Literature* (Apr. 1998) reprinted the speech to kick off a

symposium including seven other scholars. The issue: whether institutions of higher learning are, or should be, in Mearsheimer's words, "largely mum on ethical issues."

Universities, in his view, have instead three aims: to teach undergraduates "to think critically . . . to broaden [their] intellectual horizons [and] to promote self-awareness." A University of Chicago education also serves as "a meal ticket," he observed. Though costing more than \$120,000 over four years, it enables those who possess it "to make lots of money" and "achieve an upper-class lifestyle." Not that moral questions are unimportant, or that students should pay them little mind, Mearsheimer said, but "for better or worse," his university and other such institutions offer little help in finding answers. Few classes at Chicago, he said, even "discuss ethics or morality in any detail."

Wayne C. Booth, an emeritus professor of English at the University of Chicago, says that Mearsheimer doesn't seem to know what is going on at their university. "Teaching about morality and how to think about moral

issues goes on almost everywhere here—most obviously, of course, in the humanities, but also in the sciences.” How, he asks, could anyone teach “Aristotle’s *Ethics*, the Gospel according to St. Matthew, the novels of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Jane Austen and Melville, the works of Plato, Kant, and William James—to choose just a few from this year’s rich offerings—without engaging students in genuine inquiry about what is moral or ethical behavior, and on what kind of persons they should try to become?”

In response, Mearsheimer concedes that students have the opportunity to discuss moral issues in detail in a “few” classes at Chicago, though even in them the teachers properly leave the students “to figure out their own answers.”

To John D. Lyons, a professor of French at the University of Virginia and former editor of *Academe*, however, the university

Mearsheimer describes “strikes me as a wonderful place, though very atypical of American higher education. . . . It looks to me as if the university, and particularly the faculty, is today more involved, collectively, in providing moral guidance to students than at any time in the last century.” Their guidance takes the form of speech codes, rules of sexual conduct, and other attempts to enforce political correctness.

That elite institutions of higher education have strayed so far from the traditional ideal of a liberal education as Mearsheimer’s description suggests “stunned” Patrick Henry, a professor of French at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, and coeditor of *Philosophy and Literature*. “Mearsheimer’s educational project is strong on critical thinking and promoting self-awareness but, despite the talk of broadening one’s horizons, it looks rather self-enclosed,

The Nothingness of Evil

In *Theology Today* (Apr. 1998), Jean Bethke Elshtain, a professor of social and political ethics at the University of Chicago, ponders the relevance today of Saint Augustine’s reflections on evil.

Augustine’s grappling with sin and the relation of sin to evil is the story of his struggle with Manicheanism. Repudiating the view that evil is an active, polluting force before which good is essentially passive, Augustine insists that evil is something each person has to contend with because no external force, no devil makes one “do it.” Augustine comes to the conclusion that evil is nothing: It is the removal of good; it is a kind of wasteland of the human spirit. . . . He rejects the notion that God created evil as a full-fledged malignant principle. The human person, from free will, commits a sin and partakes of that dearth we name evil. . . .

For Augustine, evil cannot generate. It can only reproduce itself through acts of debased mimesis. Only goodness has power and plenitude and generative force. Evil is a kind of noncreation, a draining away from that which is. “The loss of good has been given the name of ‘evil,’” Augustine writes in Book XI of The City of God. If evil were generative, one would have to hold that evil is embodied, that matter is the work of an evil demiurge, and that evil has creative power. This, I believe, is a direction our culture now tends. Much popular entertainment is awash in Gothic horror, with hauntings, slashings, and supernatural appearances of all kinds. We grant more power to evil than to good. It is difficult to get out of this essentially dualistic way of thinking, a habit of mind that, in our time, gives the edge (so to speak) to evil over good. Perhaps that is because it is much easier to blame either one’s own nature or some external force for evil than to see oneself caught in a world in which enmity comports with self-pride and is, deep down, hatred of our own finitude, which, in turn, means animosity toward our Creator. Augustine’s reflections on evil, in his own time and for ours, constitute a brave and brilliant attempt to strip evil of generative power.



contains no social conscience, and lacks an ethical dimension. Its so-called benefits are elitist, monetary, and egocentric.” Henry favors “forcing students to do *critical moral thinking* and to come to terms with the concept of moral excellence and with what might constitute the attainment of the good.”

The elite universities “probably have to be just what Mearsheimer says they are,” observes Eva T. H. Brann, dean emerita and a tutor at St. John’s College, in Annapolis, Maryland, a small liberal arts institution with a required “Great Books” curriculum. They are less communities than “disparate collections of atomic individuals joining in shifting patterns to accomplish various goals, among which the education of the young is not the least, but not the first

either.” Moreover, the many “assertively equal and vigorously competing disciplines” within the universities inevitably result in a multiplicity of “intellectual and ethical standards.”

The elite university will eventually disintegrate, Brann predicts, as “its own polymorphous and protean propensities drive it—aided by electronic substitutions—into increasing physical dispersion.” Meanwhile, she says, colleges and small universities can uphold the tradition of higher education. They can enforce certain standards of ethical behavior, and, at the same time, through common reading and conversation, in class and out, encourage “critical reflection about morality and virtue, about rules of action and ways of being.”

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

The End (of Cheap Oil) Is Near

A Survey of Recent Articles

With gasoline as cheap (in constant dollars) as it was when the Cadillac was still king, many Americans are happily tooling around in gas-guzzling sport-utility behemoths with all the insouciance of Alfred E. Neuman. They could be in for a big shock, if some oil industry specialists are correct.

“What, me worry?” may seem a reasonable attitude on the surface. After all, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is no longer “a force to be reckoned with,” observes Fadhil J. Chalabi, executive director of the Center for Global Energy Studies in London and former acting secretary general of OPEC (1983–88). OPEC shocked the world with two sudden and substantial price increases, in 1973 (accompanied by an embargo on shipments to the United States), and in the winter of 1978–79 during the Iranian Revolution. But this proved to be OPEC’s “last hurrah,” Chalabi writes in *Foreign Policy* (Winter 1997–98), as high prices encouraged conservation, exploration, and new production, as well as the use of other fuels.

But the cheap oil (about \$15 per barrel last spring) won’t be around forever. Colin J. Campbell argues in the *National Interest* (Spring 1998), and with Jean H. Laherrère in

Scientific American (Mar. 1998), that the next oil crunch is just ahead, and it will not be temporary. “Within the next decade, the supply of conventional oil will be unable to keep up with demand,” predict Campbell and Laherrère, both with long careers in the oil industry and both now associated with Petro-consultants in Geneva.

Their conclusion, they note, contradicts the conventional wisdom in the industry, which—based on unverified estimates from companies and countries gathered by trade journals—is that there are about one trillion barrels of “proved” reserves worldwide. That suggests “that crude oil could remain plentiful and cheap for 43 more years—probably longer, because official charts show reserves growing.”

The trouble with that comforting picture, say Campbell and Laherrère, is partly that the estimate of “reserves” (i.e. the amount that companies can pump out of known oil fields before having to abandon them) is unrealistic—too high, by about 190 billion barrels. More important, not all reserves are created equal. It is not true, they point out, “that the last bucket of oil can be pumped from the ground just as quickly as the barrels

of oil gushing from wells today. In fact, the rate at which any well—or any country—can produce oil always rises to a maximum and then, when about half the oil is gone, begins falling gradually back to zero.”

Some of today’s larger oil producers, including Norway and the United Kingdom, will, unless they cut back sharply, reach their production peaks in about two years, according to Campbell and Laherrère. Then they will have to reduce output. By about 2002, the world will be dependent on Middle Eastern nations—particularly, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—to satisfy growing demand. That raises the specter of another 1970s-style massive price increase. That would curb demand, leaving prices volatile. “But by 2010 or so, many Middle Eastern nations will themselves be past the midpoint. World production will then have to fall,” the two researchers predict. Unless demand for oil shrinks, prices will rise.

“The world is not running out of oil—at least not yet,” Campbell and Laherrère explain. “What our society does face, and soon, is the end of the abundant and cheap oil on which all industrial nations depend.”

Can anything be done? Yes, say other specialists writing in the same issue of *Scientific American*. Recent technological advances—in tracking the flow of underground crude oil, steering drills horizontally, pressurizing “dead” wells, and tapping oil fields that lie deep underwater—if deployed as planned on the largest oil fields within three to five years, “could lift global oil production rates more than 20 percent by 2010,” claims Roger N. Anderson, director of petroleum technology research at Columbia University’s Energy Center.

Another, unconventional source of oil is bitumen, “a black, tarlike substance . . . in

the pore spaces between the grains of certain sands and shales (solidified muds),” notes Richard L. George, president and CEO of Suncor Energy, a company involved in mining such resources. In Alberta, Canada, alone, he estimates, some 300 billion barrels could be recovered from oil sands—more than the reserves of conventional oil in Saudi Arabia.

Oil is not the only source of energy, of course. There’s nuclear fission, solar energy, and wind power, to name a few. Safaa A. Fouda, of CANMET Energy Technology Center, a Canadian government laboratory in Ontario, contends that natural gas holds great promise. It is not only the cleanest of fossil fuels but also one of the most plentiful: analysts estimate that there is enough readily recoverable natural gas in the world to produce 500 billion barrels of synthetic crude oil—more than twice the amount of conventional crude oil ever found in the United States. The challenge, she notes, is finding a cheap way to liquefy it, so that it can be piped to market inexpensively. Even today, she says, natural gas can be converted into liquid fuels at prices that are only about 10 percent higher per barrel than the price of crude oil. With the right process, liquid natural gas could even power cars and trucks that now run on gasoline.

Campbell and Laherrère also look to natural gas as a promising substitute for oil. “With sufficient preparation . . . the transition to the post-oil economy need not be traumatic,” they conclude. “If advanced methods of producing liquid fuels from natural gas can be made profitable and scaled up quickly, gas could become the next source of transportation fuel. Safer nuclear power, cheaper renewable energy, and oil conservation programs could all help postpone the inevitable decline of conventional oil.”

Bird Theory in Flight

“The Origin of Birds and Their Flight” by Kevin Padian and Luis M. Chiappe, in *Scientific American* (Feb. 1998), 415 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017-1111;

“The Big Flap” by Larry D. Martin, in *The Sciences* (Mar.–Apr. 1998), New York Academy of Sciences, 2 E. 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Is that feathered creature outside your window a dinosaur, or at least a descendant of one? Yes, beyond any “reasonable

doubt,” assert Padian, a professor of integrative biology and curator in the Museum of Paleontology at the University of

California, Berkeley, and Chiappe, a Fellow at the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

The long-running scientific debate over the origin of birds is now over, they claim: paleontologists have determined “that birds descend from ground-dwelling, meat-eating dinosaurs of the group known as theropods.” However, Martin, a paleornithologist and curator for vertebrate paleontology at the University of Kansas Natural History Museum, maintains not only that the debate is *not* over but that the bird-dinosaur link has become increasingly dubious.

The controversy began in 1870, when Thomas Henry Huxley, “Darwin’s bull-



An early depiction of a proto-avian descended from reptiles, as imagined by a Danish paleontologist.

dog,” first suggested that theropods and birds were closely related. A century later, Yale University paleontologist John H. Ostrom revived Huxley’s idea. After studying the bones of the 150-million-year-old *Archaeopteryx lithographica* (unearthed in Germany in 1861 and considered the oldest known bird specimen), Ostrom explicitly proposed that birds were direct descendants of theropods.

His conclusion has been “strongly validated,” Padian and Chiappe say, by cladistics, a new method of analyzing the nature of relationships among organisms. Unlike traditional techniques, which might exclude a species from a group solely

because it had a trait not shared by others in the group, cladistics arranges organisms on the basis of whether they have a set of newly emerged heritable traits in common. Cladistic analysis, write Padian and Chiappe, “shows that birds are not only descended from dinosaurs, they *are* dinosaurs (and reptiles)—just as humans are mammals, even though people are as different from other mammals as birds are from other reptiles.”

The evidence is not confined to shared skeletal features, Padian and Chiappe argue. Recent discoveries of nesting sites in Mongolia and Montana suggest some similar reproductive behaviors. Skeletons of the Cretaceous theropod *Oviraptor* (“egg stealer”) recently found atop nests of eggs, for example, indicate that instead of living up to their name, the dinosaurs were protecting the eggs in very birdlike fashion.

But Martin and other investigators are skeptical. “In spite of recent fossil finds that might support a dinosaurian origin for birds,” he says, “other new evidence contradicting that view is just as strong, if not stronger.” Two studies published in *Science* last fall, he notes, one focusing on lungs and the other on limbs, both argued that dinosaurs are clearly distinct from birds.

Martin himself grew disenchanted with the dinosaurs-to-birds theory after comparing some 85 anatomical features the two vertebrates were said to share. “To my shock, virtually none of the comparisons held up,” he writes. The confusion over anatomy is partly due, he believes, to gaps in the ornithological

literature about many aspects of the avian skeleton. Dinosaur specialists generally leave avian anatomy to the ornithologists, who usually prefer to study birds’ songs, plumage, and behavior rather than their bones and muscles. Existing anatomical knowledge of both dinosaurs and *Archaeopteryx*, meanwhile, is “just blurry enough” to justify bird-dinosaur comparisons of anatomical features that do not precisely match. “When the burden of ad hoc repairs became too heavy for me, I had to abandon the theory altogether,” Martin writes. “It was a disappointment. How wonderful it would have been if dinosaurs had escaped extinction!”

Blues for Deep Blue

“Chess Is Too Easy” by Selmer Bringsjord, in *Technology Review* (Mar.–Apr., 1998), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Bldg. W59, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

When IBM’s Deep Blue bested world chess champion Gary Kasparov last year, some scientists hailed the victory as a landmark on the way to creation of a machine with intelligence equal to the human sort. Bringsjord, who teaches logic and artificial intelligence (AI) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, argues that while computers may regularly checkmate human grand masters one day, they will never achieve intellectual parity with their creators.

Deep Blue’s triumph was a victory for proponents of so-called strong AI, who believe that all human thought can be broken down into a series of mathematical operations. If that sounds impossible, so, until recently, did formidable chess-playing computers—at least to some experts. In his 1992 book *What Computers Still Can’t Do*, Hubert Dreyfus, a philosophy professor at the University of California, Berkeley, said that such machines would forever remain science fiction. Yet chess, Bringsjord points out, theoretically *can* be reduced to a series of mathematical operations. The true test of computer intelligence, he argues, lies in something far more elusive: the ability to create.

A genuinely intelligent computer, for example, would be able to write fiction that is

rich in language, plot, and characterization. For the last seven years, Bringsjord has been working to build “a formidable artificial author of short short stories.” The latest result, he says, is a machine named Brutus.I, which can compose very short stories, provided they “are based on the notion of betrayal (as well as self-deception, evil, and to some extent voyeurism).” This feat was made possible because Bringsjord and a colleague were able to devise a formal mathematical definition of betrayal and implant it in the machine. But Brutus.I gets writer’s block when it comes to other great literary themes, such as revenge and unrequited love.

Bringsjord’s 10-year quest to construct a “silicon Hemingway” has three years left, he notes, but it already “seems pretty clear that computers will never best human storytellers in even a short short story competition.” For a machine to tell a “truly compelling story,” he points out, it would have to understand the characters’ “inner lives”—and that would require not just swift calculation à la Deep Blue but the ability “to think experientially,” mixing memory and perception as an artist does. The chess champs of the future may have reason to worry, but John Updike and his successors do not.

The Spices of Life

“Antimicrobial Functions of Spices: Why Some Like It Hot” by Jennifer Billing and Paul W. Sherman, in *The Quarterly Review of Biology* (Mar. 1998), 110 Life Sciences Library, State Univ. of New York, Stony Brook, N.Y. 11794–5275.

Folk wisdom has it that people in hot climates favor “hot” food because pungent spices mask the taste of food that’s past its prime. In fact, the spices have a far more sophisticated function: killing or inhibiting bacteria and other microorganisms that can spoil food and threaten human health.

Billing and Sherman, a graduate student and a professor, respectively, in Cornell University’s Section of Neurobiology and Behavior, believe that the taste for spices is an evolutionary adaptation. They looked at how often 43 spices were used in the meat-based cuisines of 36 countries. Ninety-three percent of the more than 4,500 recipes they found called for at least one

spice, and the average recipe called for about four. Onion (used in 65 percent of the recipes) and pepper (63 percent) were the most frequently used flavor enhancers, followed by garlic (only 35 percent), capsicums, lemon and lime juice, parsley, ginger, and bay leaf.

In 10 countries—Ethiopia, Kenya, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, and Thailand—*every* meat-based recipe called for at least one spice. By contrast, in Finland and Norway, about one-third of the recipes called for no spices at all.

Not only did people living in hot climates, where the food is more likely to spoil, use

many spices, and use them often, they also reached for the spices with the strongest antibacterial properties more frequently than people in cooler areas did. According to information gathered by Billing and Sherman, four spices—garlic, onion, allspice, and oregano—act against every bacterium on which they were tested.

Interestingly, lemon and lime juice and pepper, though among the most frequently used spices, are relatively ineffective against bacteria. Why are those spices used? Because they enhance the antibacterial effects of

other spices, the researchers say.

The folk wisdom that spices are used to disguise the smell or taste of spoiled or contaminated foods is “seriously flawed,” the authors maintain. Thousands of people are killed every year, and millions made ill, by ingesting foodborne bacteria. Even undernourished individuals would likely be better off passing up tainted meat. Using spices to disguise the danger would be evolutionary folly. Indeed, say Billing and Sherman, that may be precisely why humans are so sensitive to the smells and tastes of decaying food.

ARTS & LETTERS

The Last Modernist

“The Forgotten Killer” by Vince Passaro, in *Harper’s Magazine* (Apr. 1998),
666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.

By the time William S. Burroughs died last year, at age 83, he “had been commercially morphed into the grand old man of American freakdom,” a neatly dressed Beat icon, and “a ‘cool’ face in a Nike ad,” writes Passaro, a contributing editor of *Harper’s Magazine*.

The “real” Burroughs was a heroin addict, a homosexual, a masterly writer of satire and modern affect—and a killer. In 1951 in Mexico City, attempting, on his own initiative, to shoot a glass off his wife’s head, he missed and fatally shot her. Burroughs also was “a theoretician of crime and resistance,” notes Passaro, “someone who strove to forge the unspeakable into an art form.” Unlike his friends, the Beat writers Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, who belonged to “a tradition of spiritual exuberance and preacherly optimism” that includes Emerson, Whitman, and Twain, Burroughs drew on darker influences, such as Poe, Crane, and Kafka. Out of “the idioms of hard-boiled pulp and the lyrics of surrealism,” Passaro says, Burroughs “created a strangely effective hybrid of European symbolism and American criminality.”

The universe that he created, in such works as *Naked Lunch* (1959) and the trilogy that followed in the early 1960s (*The Soft Machine*, *The Ticket That Exploded*, and *Nova Express*), Passaro writes, was one of “shifting time, transmogrifying characters, and ambiguous geography in which forces of evil—generally represented as heavily repetitive, viral forms of images and addictions—

are eternally and invisibly at war for Control.”

Queer, written in 1952 but not published until 1985, now seems most to define Burroughs, says Passaro. In it, he found “his true comic-psychotic voice and his time- and character-shredding narrative style.” Of his protagonist, Bill Lee, Burroughs writes: “The limitations of his desires were like the bars of a cage, like a chain and collar . . . and his eyes looked out through the invisible bars, watchful, alert, waiting for the keeper to forget the door, for the frayed collar, the loosened bar . . . suffering without despair and without consent.” In his portrayal of Lee’s caged desires, Burroughs captured not only the condition of the heroin addict and the situation of the homosexual at odds with society, Passaro asserts, but the plight of “the individual in late modernity.”

A satirist in the great tradition of Swift, Sterne, and Gogol, Burroughs was also “a Modernist with a capital M,” Passaro writes. Bill Lee’s “condition of endless, frustrated want and the image of the caged animal predict a general return to savagery that Burroughs and other modernists identified not with the loss of civilization but with an elaboration of civilization so multiple, so attenuated, so fundamentally dishonest, hypermarketed, and lethal that it renders the individual a stranger to his community and to himself. This is absolutely the modern condition, and Burroughs was its last and one of its best American representatives.”

Sister Wendy's Wisdom

Dave Hickey, a columnist for *Art Issues* (Mar.–Apr. 1998), watched Robert Hughes's eight-episode documentary on American art, *American Visions*, and Sister Wendy Beckett's 10-part *Story of Painting*, both on PBS, and made a surprising discovery.

And what did I learn? Well, I learned that an English nun, who lives a fully contemplative existence under protection of a Carmelite monastery, is a more beguiling and reliable guide to the worldly practice of Western art than the dean of American art critics, simply because this cloistered sister accepts the fact that works of art are always compensatory objects made by fallible human beings for dubious reasons in an inadequate world—objects to be known as best we can know them and appreciated according to our own fallibility and desire. In other words, for Sister Wendy, works of art lack cultural transparency, and by maintaining this view, she goes a little way toward liberating the public perception of art from the prevailing cult of sociological legibility. . . .

This is Sister Wendy's advantage. She cares about art in her own odd way. Robert Hughes does too, of course, but he does not care about America, which turns out to be the real subject of his documentary. He knows about America, or thinks he does. He has an "American Vision." The cover of the book that accompanies his television series contends that American art can tell us something about the "American character." On screen, Hughes reverses these propositions and lectures us for four hours on the ways in which the "American character" tells us something about American art. The fact that Hughes's idea of the "American character"—deformed by Puritanism, beguiled by charismatic religion, and besotted by nature—describes no one of anyone's acquaintance does not deter him from using it as a template to select and blithely misconstrue those works that he finds suitably "characteristic" and to disqualify those works he finds "uncharacteristic" (which is to say, un-American).



Restorers or Vandals?

"Restoration Drama" by Daniel Zalewski, in *Lingua Franca* (Feb. 1998),
22 W. 38th St., New York, N.Y. 10018.

The cleaning of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescoes—a \$4.5 million, 14-year project completed in 1994—has been hailed by most Renaissance scholars as a revelation, notes Zalewski, a senior editor of *Lingua Franca*. Stripped of dirt, wax, and glue deposited over five centuries, the once somber-seeming frescoes now look "positively vivacious." Instead of the "sculptural" painter, more concerned with modeling of figures than with coloring, that he was long taken to be, Michelangelo now appears to these scholars as "a vanguard colorist" who boldly juxtaposed pure, flat pigments, in experiments that "laid the groundwork" for the Mannerists to come.

Nonsense, scoffs James Beck, a Columbia University art historian. He maintains, reports

Zalewski, that this "new Mannerist Michelangelo is less the product of careful cleaning than of the 20th-century imagination," that "the restorers inadvertently stripped a layer of shadows from the Sistine frescoes—a layer that Michelangelo himself had added in order to give his figures a chiaroscuro effect and unify and dampen the fresco tones."

Though Beck failed in his effort to halt the restoration of the Sistine Chapel, six years ago he founded ArtWatch International, a watchdog group that now has 600 members and chapters in New York, London, and Florence. The group's aim, Beck says, is to "stop foolish attempts to improve masterpieces with unnecessary, pseudoscientific cleanings."

There is no doubt that restorers have done

damage in the past. During the 1960s and '70s, a curator at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art told Zalewski, the Met applied a new synthetic varnish to several old-master works. "The idea," said the curator, who refused to identify the works involved, "was that the synthetic varnish wouldn't yellow because it lacked organic material. Well, it didn't. It turned gray. And we've since discovered . . . that removal is, if not impossible, extremely difficult."

Great advances in cleaning and conservation methods have been made in recent decades, Zalewski notes. "The techniques used today," asserts an adviser to London's National Gallery, "are as microsurgery is to the methods of the old barber-surgeons." Beck remains, to say the least, unconvinced. Museums, in his view, are inclined to make "invasive cleanings, using newfangled solvents," often on artworks that are "very well preserved." Some of the conservation work, he claims, amounts to "vandalism, even if well intentioned." Horrified by the recent

cleanings of Raphael's *Portrait of Pope Leo X with Cardinals Giulio de' Medici and Luigi de' Rossi* (1518–19) and Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538) at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Beck and ArtWatch are currently trying to prevent the museum from restoring Verrocchio's *Baptism* (circa 1474–75).

"Cleaning controversies are nearly as old as museums," notes Zalewski. "The Louvre's policies were assailed on the day of its public opening, in 1793." Later, French painter Edgar Degas successfully fought the Paris museum's attempts to clean the *Mona Lisa*. Said Degas: "Pictures should not be restored. . . . Anybody who touches one should be deported."

Most restorations, Zalewski observes, "aren't salvage operations for crumbling canvases: Typically, the biggest problem with an old-master painting is dirt and a dulled varnish." In such cases, Beck's recommended solution is to live with the dirt, "because a hands-off policy is the safer route." But in the art world today, that is very much a minority view.

Free Salieri!

"Did Salieri Kill Mozart?" by Agnes Selby, in *Quadrant* (Jan.–Feb. 1998),
46 George St., Fitzroy, Victoria 3065, Australia.

Popular history has not been kind to Antonio Salieri (1750–1825). A favorite of Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II and one of the leading composers of operas in late-18th-century Vienna, he is now remembered as the jealous musical mediocrity who poisoned Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91).

Leaving aside the question of music, the notion that Salieri murdered Mozart is a great injustice, according to Selby, a biographer of Mozart's wife, Constanze. It is the product of Viennese *Kaffeeklattsch* society gossip that was repeated in an 1823 newspaper story and then took wing with Pushkin's 1830 play *The Murderer Salieri* and a later opera. In the 20th century, playwright Peter Shaffer revived the Salieri-as-poisoner theme, and *Amadeus*, the 1984 film made from his play, gave it worldwide currency.

Salieri himself emphatically denied the 1823 story. In fact, Selby writes, he was "puzzled by the accusation. He had resigned from the Viennese Opera in 1790, well before Mozart's death during the following year. What would he have gained by Mozart's death? At the time Salieri's fame as an opera composer was far more widely spread than Mozart's, who was

not even appointed to the position Salieri had vacated at the Viennese Opera."

When the little-known Mozart arrived in Vienna in 1781, Salieri was already touring Europe, conducting one of his own operas at the opening of La Scala in Milan. He returned with the applause of the whole continent ringing in his ears. He had been a favorite of the emperor almost from the day he arrived in Vienna as a teenager recognized for his immense talent. Salieri's place was secure. But as Mozart's star rose—he was named court composer in 1787—so did the level of gossip about the "German outsider," and Salieri has been seen as a source. Some writers have claimed, for example, that he opposed the premiere of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* in 1786.

Nonsense, says Selby. Salieri actually revived *Figaro* in 1789 and frequently conducted Mozart compositions. Although not friends, the two men had a cordial relationship, Selby says. In 1789, Salieri was Mozart's guest at a performance of *The Magic Flute*, and a flattered Mozart reported to his wife that "Salieri listened and watched most attentively and there was not a single number that did not call forth from him a 'bravo' or 'bello.'" In 1822, a visiting journal-

ist found Salieri still enthusiastic about Mozart's work. (Salieri also taught Mozart's son, not to mention Beethoven, Schubert, and Liszt.)

Mozart's untimely death at age 35 aroused suspicions of foul play. But "in the light of contemporary evidence, one can only be amazed that Mozart survived as long as he did," Selby

observes. He had suffered everything from smallpox to rheumatic fever, and colds with "repeated renal complications." Indeed, modern medical investigators believe it was kidney failure occasioned by Henoch-Schönlein purpura, not a dose of poison, that killed the great composer.

OTHER NATIONS

A Democratic China?

A Survey of Recent Articles

Ten years from now, will there still be a state that calls itself the People's Republic of China and that is governed by the Chinese Communist Party?"

No, answers Arthur Waldron, one of 10 specialists taking part in a *Journal of Democracy* (Jan. 1998) symposium on the prospects for democracy in China.

"China's current system is simply inadequate to the challenges it is creating for itself," argues Waldron, a professor of international relations at the University of Pennsylvania. "China's prosperity already depends on the workings of a free market, but without the rule of law such an economy cannot function beyond a very low level. The communist regime is already too weak to impose its will by force alone, but it has no other tool to sway the people. . . . China requires a new government, for reasons that are not only moral but practical." He expects change to come in fits and starts, first from above, then from below, with foreign reaction tilting the process in a democratic direction.

Though Yizi Chen, president of the Center for Modern China in Princeton, New Jersey, agrees, foreseeing the likely "emergence of an electoral democracy in the next decade," the other *Journal of Democracy* contributors, notes Andrew J. Nathan, a political scientist at Columbia University, "generally acknowledge the staying power of what most of them see as essentially the same regime." Yet most also expect democracy to arrive—not soon, but eventually.

None deny that a good deal of liberalization has taken place since the early 1980s, almost wholly under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping (1904–97). One spe-

cialist—Harry Harding, dean of the Elliot School of International Affairs at George Washington University, goes so far as to assert that China has been fundamentally transformed and is no longer a totalitarian country. "The role of both the party and official communist ideology within the political system has been substantially reduced," he points out. "An increasing range of activity is outside the scope of central economic planning, ideological constraint, or political control." In his view, China today can best be described as hard authoritarian.

Robert A. Scalapino, a political scientist at the University of California, Berkeley, notes that China has made impressive economic gains in recent years—including annual productivity increases of more than 10 percent, low inflation, rising exports, and substantial new foreign investment—but that it also has some daunting economic problems. "Banking and financial institutions are in serious disarray due to uncollectible loans," he observes. "State-owned enterprises account for two-fifths of China's industrial output, yet fully half of these enterprises are operating at a loss." There is a "huge misallocation of workers," adds the *Economist* (Feb. 14, 1998). "Perhaps 20 million workers, out of some 110 million once employed by state firms, have been sacked or indefinitely sent home." As a result of the economic problems, foreign investors have been growing cool toward China. "That matters," the *Economist* observes, "because it is the money provided by foreigners that is largely responsible for China's export success. And most recent growth in the economy appears to have come from exports, which rose by over 20

percent last year.” Despite the problems, Scalapino expects the economic pluses to be strong enough “to propel China into the ranks of major powers” in the coming century.

“China currently enjoys more stability—with less coercion—than it has had in most periods of its past,” he writes. “Today’s leaders are better educated, more technologically inclined, and more experienced as administrators than their predecessors. No single individual, however, has the kind of power that Mao and Deng had at their respective zeniths.” Since Deng’s death in February 1997, President Jiang Zemin has functioned as first among equals.

Jiang “is relatively weak in terms of personal connections and credibility, has no cohesive social class or set of interests behind him, and enjoys only a rather limited degree of power and legitimacy,” writes symposium contributor Juntao Wang, a graduate student at Columbia University who spent five years in a Chinese jail after the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. A return to a full-blown dictatorship, he believes, is possible but

not likely. “Twenty years of reform, corruption, and power struggles have destroyed the supremacy of communism as an ideology and weakened the party’s political machine,” he notes, and China “is not the closed society it once was.”

From “a totalitarian state seeking morally to purify the inner lives of its citizens,” observes Thomas A. Metzger, a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution in Stanford, California, China has been shifting to “a kind of authoritarianism to which the Chinese people have long been accustomed. It existed in Taiwan before the democratization of the last decade and in China during many centuries of the imperial era.”

However, a 1995 opinion survey in Beijing found most respondents in favor of competitive elections, equal rights for all citizens regardless of their political views, and freer and more independent news media, report political scientists Jie Chen, of Old Dominion University, and Yang Zhong, of the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, writing in *Problems of Post-Communism* (Jan.–Feb. 1998). But these findings, they caution, may not be represen-

The Sour Taste of Affluence

Vacationing in Moscow last summer, Russian-born novelist Vassily Aksyonov, who has lived in the United States since 1980, found himself continually surprised by the cornucopia of Western goods available, and, he writes in the *Washington Quarterly* (Spring 1998), by the Russians’ reaction to their good fortune.

[It] is hard for Russians to recognize their newfound bliss and thank fate for such striking changes. The opinion is now widespread that the insidious West hauls into Russia products of a lower quality. Even a friend of mine who many times traveled abroad was starting to believe it. Our gullible public, he said, takes everything in a bright wrapping without question. Listen, I told him, the first priority for the big Western corporations is to keep their standards high; it rarely occurs to them to rely on deception in their business. This logic, however, doesn’t get through, and the anti-Western nonsense about the “bad things in bright wrapping” keeps spreading around.

More than once I saw in the food stores some ladies putting on airs before the French sour cream. How do you like that—we do not have our own Russian sour cream anymore, they exclaim. No doubt, these exclamations convey a certain patriotic message. Once I dared to take issue: It’s better to have a French sour cream than none, I said. We used to have plenty of our own sour cream, a lady said haughtily who had already packed her bag with “low quality” Western products. May I suggest, ma’am, I asked innocently, that to make such a claim you must have had access to a distribution center not available to the general public. She flared up with indignation: I bet you used to be afraid to poke out your nose, she cried, and now you sling mud at our past!

tative of China as a whole, which is 70 percent rural. The “vast majority” of Chinese, Metzger maintains, have no interest in free political activity.

Stability, notes Scalapino, “has a strong appeal” to the many Chinese worried that a change in regime might bring chaos. “Chinese authorities will continue to defend their regime by insisting that the

most meaningful freedoms for their people lie in the economic and social realms—a better livelihood, better education, and more social services. This will not be acceptable to exponents of democracy, but it will have considerable appeal nonetheless.” For China, he and many other scholars believe, democracy remains “a distant prospect.”

Israel's Ebbing Martial Spirit

“Israel's Revolution in Security Affairs” by Eliot A. Cohen, Michael J. Eisenstadt, and Andrew J. Bacevich, in *Survival* (Spring 1998), International Institute for Strategic Studies, 23 Tavistock St., London WC2E 7NQ England.

Fifty years after its founding, Israel is more secure than ever against conventional military attack. But the spread of ballistic missile technology in the Arab world and changing attitudes in Israeli society are undermining the “nation in arms” approach to national security that has defined the Jewish state's character.

Egypt and Israel's other immediate Arab neighbors may still be worrisome at times, but the gravest threat (besides terrorism), contend Cohen and Bacevich, both of the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, and Eisenstadt, of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, comes from Iran, Iraq, and Libya. They “do not share a border with Israel but . . . appear bent on acquiring a capability to strike Israel directly,” the authors observe. “Cruise or ballistic missiles tipped with chemical, biological or nuclear warheads are the likely weapons of choice.” For Israel to maintain a technological edge will require a “small, élite, and professional” military establishment, not a costly, cumbersome mass army. “Indeed, without an unlimited defense budget,” they write, “high technology and large numbers of people and equipment appear to be mutually exclusive.”

To opt openly for a “slimmer and smarter” force would be to challenge the cherished Israeli belief that virtually every youth, male and female, should serve in the army. “Actual practice, however, has begun to differ from this ideal,” Cohen and his colleagues observe. “Without fanfare—indeed without acknowledging that it is departing from past practice—the army is adopting a system of *de facto* selective service,” raising

the mental and physical requirements for active duty. Currently, some 17 percent of eligible males are exempted from service, and an additional 15 percent get early discharges for various reasons. (The surplus in the conscript pool is at least partly due to the influx of Russian immigrants since 1990.) The term of service for female draftees has been reduced from 24 months to 21, and even at that, only 50 percent of eligible women serve.

With Israel's economy booming (gross national product has grown an average of six percent per year since 1990), and with the nation's survival not appearing in immediate jeopardy, many young Israelis, including some of the “brightest and best,” now have their eyes on private enterprise, not the Israel Defense Forces, and on self-realization, not self-sacrifice. The authors discern “a growing tendency among draft-eligible Israelis to contrive physical or psychological excuses to avoid military service.” Among reservists, a 1996 report found absenteeism at 20 percent in some combat units and twice that in some noncombat ones. In a survey that same year, half of Israeli men said they would not do the demanding reserve duty (obligatory service until age 54, with active training typically amounting to a month each year) if it were not compulsory.

Cohen and his colleagues do not expect Israel to create an all-volunteer force or to cease relying on seasoned reservists. But over time, they think, a system will emerge that provides different “tracks” for different folks. The average soldier, for instance, might undergo basic training followed by reserve duty, while volunteers (perhaps encouraged by monetary incentives) would

stay on active duty for a period after basic training. Career-oriented professionals, meanwhile, would have renewable, long-term contracts. The principle of nearly uni-

versal service would thus be retained, but the mass citizen army—rendered unaffordable by expensive high-tech weapons systems—would not.

Miss Thailand's Many Meanings

“The Ideology of Miss Thailand in National, Consumerist, and Transnational Space” by William A. Callahan, in *Alternatives* (Jan.–Mar. 1998), Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1800 30th St., Ste. 314, Boulder, Colo. 80301-1026.

When the young women in a beauty contest strut their stuff, high national politics is usually the furthest thing from anyone’s mind, on stage or off. But the history of the Miss Thailand pageant tells a different story, suggests Callahan, a lecturer in East Asian politics at the University of Durham, in England.

The pageant got started in Siam (as Thailand was then known) in 1934, after two years of political turmoil that left Siam’s king in exile and a new democratic constitution in place. The new government inaugurated the “Miss Siam” beauty pageant as part of a “Constitution Festival,” in the hope, Callahan says, of promoting “modern, Western ideas—constitution, progress, civilization, nation—against the ‘traditional’ Thai absolute monarchy.” The first Miss Siam was awarded a crown engraved with an image of the constitution.

Starting in 1938, with the invading Japanese at war in China, the pageant’s government sponsors increasingly emphasized nationalism rather than constitutionalism. The Interior Ministry’s pageant office vowed to produce a “Miss Siam who is as beautiful as the beauty queens of other countries.”

Though interrupted by World War II, the Miss Thailand Pageant (as it became known after the country’s name change in 1939) was revived in 1948

and held almost every year until 1957, when a military coup brought an end to the constitution, its festival, and what might be termed Miss Thailand’s governmental phase.

In 1961, however, the Los Angeles-based proprietors of the Miss Universe Pageant came looking for “Miss Thailand,” and persuaded a local organization to convert its annual beauty contest into a new national pageant. It survived until a massive student uprising for democracy brought the curtain down on the shameful “meat market” in 1973.

But only for a time. “After 12 years in mothballs,” Callahan writes, “Miss Thailand was resurrected” in 1984 as a wholly commercial venture, sponsored by Colgate Palmolive and others. Not only is the contest a U.S. import, he observes, but so are some of the Miss Thailands! Miss Thailand 1988 had earlier reigned as Miss Teen California; all grumbling about that ceased when she went on to become Miss Universe.

“Neither the Thai government nor the Thai public seem to mind having U.S.-raised women representing them in international competitions,” Callahan notes. To him, this suggests that “nationalism, like ‘beauty,’ is not a natural category, but one constructed and reconstructed for various purposes—political, military, economic, and otherwise.” Nationalism, it seems, is in the eye of the beholder.



Miss Thailand is crowned Miss Universe 1988. She had come to America at age two and only returned to Thailand for the pageant that year.

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions

“Welfare Reform: A Race to the Bottom?”

Papers presented at a conference on March 27, 1998, at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C. The conference was cosponsored by *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*.

The fear that a community that is too generous to its own indigent will be deluged by poor people drawn irresistibly from neighboring communities has a long history in America. It has figured strongly in the continuing debate over the landmark welfare reform of 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, which turned welfare into a program of fixed block grants and gave states much more discretion over spending decisions.

The law made it easier for states to treat new residents seeking benefits differently from established residents—and by last summer, 21 states, fearful of becoming “welfare magnets,” had opted to do that. Critics feared that worse was to come: that states would join in a “race to the bottom,” with the down-and-out needlessly made even more so. Research presented at this Wilson Center conference suggests that the fears on both sides may be unjustified.

Scott Allard and Sheldon Danziger, both of the University of Michigan’s Poverty Research and Training Center, analyzed extensive data on the interstate migration of single-parent families between 1968 and 1992. They found that chasing welfare benefits was rare: in a typical year, only 2.8 percent of all single-parent households—and only 2.3 percent of those on welfare—moved to another state. Of the migrants, only four in 10 mothers who had been on welfare before got any benefits during their first year in the new state—and these benefits were usually *less* than what they had received before.

In a 1996 analysis of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefit levels between 1976 and 1989, Paul E. Peterson and Kenneth F. Scheve, Jr., both of Harvard University, and Mark C. Rom, now of Georgetown University, concluded that in setting benefits, states were very strongly affected by what neighboring states did, suggesting that a “race to the bottom” could be in the offing. However, in a paper delivered at the conference, Rom says that there is little evidence that such a race has begun. Moreover, the “bot-

tom” under the 1996 legislation, he points out, “is nowhere close to the absolute bottom.” Until 2002, states must spend at least 75 percent as much on the new Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program each year as they did on AFDC in 1994.

A 1997 study by the American Public Welfare Association found that most states have taken a “middle-of-the-road” approach, balancing “liberal” and “restrictive” reforms. Brown University political scientist Richard M. Francis found that the six New England states went their own ways. Connecticut and Massachusetts, among the nation’s wealthiest states, had the region’s most restrictive welfare plans, while Rhode Island and Maine were the most generous.

By placing many recipients in paying jobs, the recent state-level reforms (some antedating the 1996 law) have reduced welfare rolls, but benefits have not generally been cut, report Richard P. Nathan and Thomas L. Gais, both of the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government.

Many states, they were surprised to find, are “passing the buck” on key aspects of welfare reform. Fifteen states, including New York and California, have “state-supervised/county-administered” systems which leave it to local governments, as well as nonprofit and for-profit organizations, to train, counsel, and find jobs for welfare recipients and applicants. What’s going on locally in these states remains somewhat mysterious, Nathan and Gais complain: “Not very much can be learned about [local agencies’] activities from the data they are collecting, collating, and reporting.”

Some researchers remain pessimistic about the overall impact of the reforms. “While evidence for welfare migration is scarce, states continue to fear it. And they now have a welfare system that, like water, can seek its lowest level,” worry Sanford Schram of Bryn Mawr College and Joe Soss of American University. It is “highly likely,” they believe, “that the states will drift toward lower benefits, shorter time limits, and stricter work requirements.”

“Industrial Incentives: Competition among American States and Cities”

W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 300 S. Westnedge Ave.,
Kalamazoo, Mich. 49007-4686. 307 pp. \$29; paper, \$19

Authors: Peter S. Fisher and Alan H. Peters

To lure a Mercedes-Benz assembly plant to the town of Vance recently, state and local governments in Alabama granted automaker Daimler-Benz an estimated \$173 million in tax and other incentives. It was a dramatic episode in an escalating nationwide bidding war among states and municipalities—a competition that some critics want to end with a federal ban on such incentives.

Nobody knows the total cost of all the economic development incentives that state and local governments offer, note Fisher and Peters, both specialists in urban and regional planning at the University of Iowa, but it's clearly substantial. By 1988, state economic development agencies were spending \$1 billion annually. But those outlays do not include all the tax breaks, loans, and other weapons (such as infrastructure improvements) deployed. Moreover, scholarly efforts to gauge the effectiveness of these programs have produced contradictory results.

Fisher and Peters tried to conquer the measurement problems by testing how a group of hypothetical companies would fare under the standard economic development incentives offered in 112 cities in 24 states.

Their findings divide in classic good

news/bad news fashion. The good news is that incentives can indeed be effective, influencing corporate decisions about where to locate plants and offices. The most attractive city competing for a hypothetical drug-manufacturing plant offered a package of state and local incentives equivalent to a reduction of \$1.82 per hour from the labor costs of the least competitive city. The bad news? The size of the incentives bears little relation to the unemployment or poverty levels of the cities involved. In other words, the incentives are moving jobs around, but not necessarily to the areas that need them most.

Moreover, Fisher and Peters found, incentives are not very cost-effective: every dollar of subsidies is actually worth only 58 to 73 cents in benefits to the recipients. One reason: increased profits generated by incentives raise recipients' federal corporate income tax bills. (A study of the Daimler-Benz package concluded that the company derived only \$86 million in benefits from the \$173 million incentive package.)

Fisher and Peters doubt that Washington can curtail the incentive war. The best hope, in their view, is to provide policymakers “a better understanding” of the true costs and benefits of the incentives.

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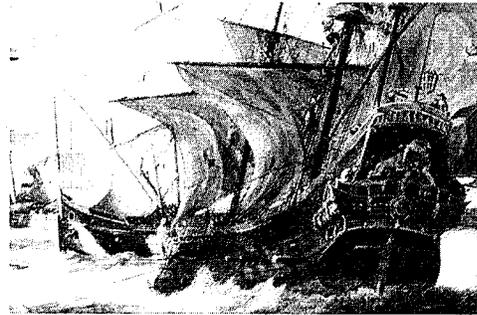
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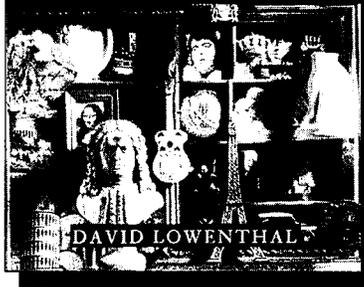
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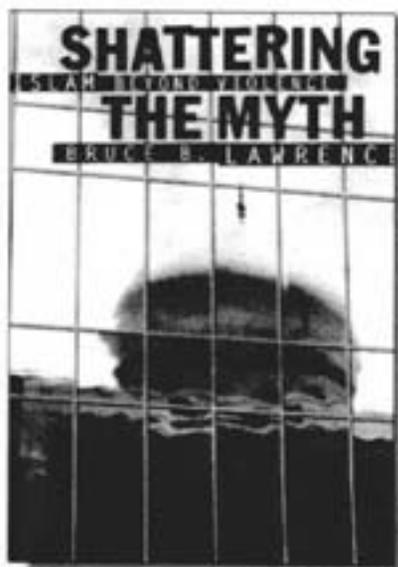
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