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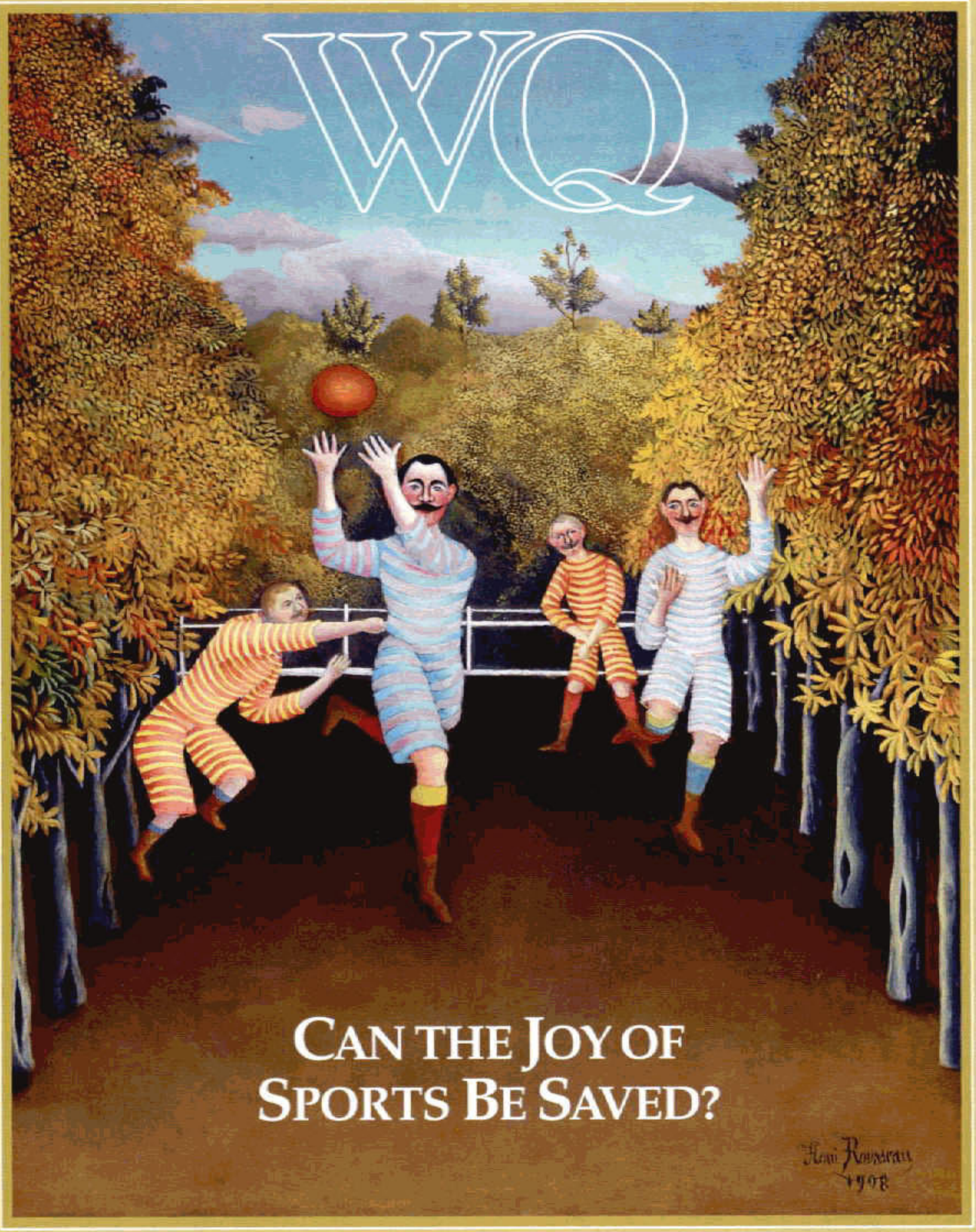

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50. The Use of Force

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Cover: Detail from Henri Rousseau's painting, *The Football Players* (*Les Joueurs de football*, 1908), courtesy of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Photograph by David Heald.
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Printed in the U.S.A.

The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

USPS 346-670 MPA **VOL. XIX NO. 1**

The Wilson Quarterly *(ISSN-0363-3276) is published in January (Winter), April (Spring), July (Summer), and October (Autumn) by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars at 901 D Street S.W., Suite 704, Washington, D.C. 20024. Indexed biennially. Subscriptions: one year, $24; two years, $43. Air mail outside U.S.: one year, $39; two years, $73. Single copies mailed upon request: $7; outside U.S. and possessions, $8; selected back issues: $7, including postage and handling; outside U.S., $8. Second-class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. All unsolicited manuscripts should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Members: Send changes of address and all subscription correspondence with* Wilson Quarterly *mailing label to Subscriber Service,* The Wilson Quarterly, *P.O. Box 420406, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0406.* **(Subscriber hot line: 1-800-829-5108.)** *Postmaster: Send all address changes to* The Wilson Quarterly, *P.O. Box 420406, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0406. Microfilm copies are available from University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. U.S. newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 2020 Superior Street, Sandusky, Ohio 44870 (for information, call 1-800-221-3148).*

"You don't die at 80 if you can live to 95."

HELEN K. YATES
HEMET, CALIFORNIA

In 1923, Helen Yates set out for China to teach school. She's been teaching those around her how to view life ever since.

She cruised the fjords of Norway at the age of 79, visited the West Indies at 93, and is planning a trip to Paris to see her 13th great-grandchild.

But for years, she battled hypertension so explosive that every beat of her heart was like a jackhammer in her head. In time, pharmaceutical research and her spirit prevailed. Thanks to a careful diet and a medication made possible by the research we do, Helen Yates is making plans for tomorrow.

Our health care system should ensure that this research continues, so companies like Pfizer can find new medications. And help more people like Helen.

"I'm outliving my teeth," she says.

We're part of the cure.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Season's greetings to readers near and far. As we enter our 19th year of publication, we are particularly mindful of how your loyalty—as measured by a truly remarkable renewal rate—has sustained us through years that have not been easy on magazines, new or old. For that we are grateful, and we hope in the year leading up to our 20th anniversary to hear more of your thoughts about what we are doing and where you would like to see us go. We hope, too, that you will make us known to friends, libraries, and other institutions to which you have ties. Word of mouth is still our best form of promotion.

An approaching anniversary also turns our thoughts to former staffers who have gone forth to accomplish great things in the world of journalism, writing, and editing. In particular, kudos to Linda Robinson, whose fine coverage of Latin America has kept readers of *U.S. News & World Report* abreast of developments in Cuba, Haiti, and cooler parts of her region. Praise to Brenda Szittya, who single-handedly has made the *Brookings Review* one of the more interesting journals of public policy now being produced. Cullen Murphy, managing editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, has brought out a superb collection of essays, *Just Curious*, that will give readers not already familiar with his work some idea of why he is so sorely missed back here. The *New York Times Book Review* named Robert Wright's provocative second book, *The Moral Animal*, one of the 10 best of 1994—no surprise to former colleagues who have followed his career at the *Sciences* and, more recently, the *New Republic* (where he is a senior editor) with steady admiration. Finally, founding editor Peter Braestrup, now senior editor of the Library of Congress, deserves great credit (and our somewhat nervous applause) for helping to develop the recently launched magazine, *Civilization*. The fourth edition of *Big Story*, his account of the media coverage of the 1968 Tet offensive, is now out from Presidio Press, complete with a new introduction and conclusion. To him and to all—best wishes.

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AT ISSUE

The Trouble with Elites

If elite bashing has become a national pastime—possibly *the* national pastime, in the absence of baseball—no one today appears to be playing the game better than Republican politicians. For their recent triumph at the polls at least some credit should go to skills they've been honing ever since the Reagan Revolution got under way in the early 1980s.

But Democrats have little room to complain. When the chips are down—and that's fairly often—these past masters of the game still take swipes at the wealthy, particularly the finance-and-broker types who did so well during the "Decade of Greed," even though it's not altogether clear that BMW-driving hard chargers truly qualify as the elite. It's awfully hard to get these things straight these days.

Indeed, defining who the elites are is very much what the modern game is all about. If few people now seem inclined to debate whether elites are in fact a bad thing, they will argue to their last breath about who the elites are. The reason is obvious: win this one and you win the game.

For Democrats of FDR's time and earlier, it was a whole different ball game. No one doubted who the elites were. They were wealthy plutocrats, East Coast establishment types, fat cats, robber barons, captains of industry. The challenge was to convince the people, the hoi polloi, that the elites needed reining in, their practices regulated, and at least some portion of their unseemly wealth redistributed for the greater good of the commonweal. The outcome of the game in those days was more easily determined. If times were bad, the people tended to go along with the elite bashers. If not, well, it was a lot harder to make the case, and the GOP fared better. Or at least this was the way it appeared to work.

The reality was always a little more complicated, of course, a little more fraught with ambiguities and ironies, such as the fact that some of the all-time great elite bashers, including FDR himself, looked very much like the elites they were bashing. But such qualifications aside, the game did seem simpler. If it wasn't out-and-out class warfare of the kind desired by Marxists, it did seem to play out a little more clearly according to crude economic interests.

Gone such clarity. Things have long since turned murky and cultural. Starting in the mid-1970s at latest, a new image of the elite began to acquire currency. This image partly derived from the perceptive social analysis of such thinkers as Daniel Bell and Peter Drucker. They and others noticed that in the new society aborning, the "knowledge society" as Drucker called it, a new class of symbol-manipulating professionals (lawyers, ad and PR people, university profs, high-level government bureaucrats, entertainment producers, and journalists) was assuming greater power and influence. But that's not all. The widening sway of this New Class, as the ascendant group was collectively dubbed, was perceived by some observers—mainly conservatives, but some liberals as well—to be of a not-wholly-beneficent character.

It comes as no surprise that many of the New Class folk were baby boomers, and, as such, were products of a very similar formation: that is, overindulged, overly secure, TV-besotted middle-to-upper-middle-class childhoods passed during two remarkably prosperous decades; leftish, dogmatically secular college educations; participation in, or at least flirtation with, the counterculture. Out of this shared background came a generation of wild-eyed experimenters, spoiled me-firsters, and glib cynics disdainful of tradition, hard work, and the simple virtues—or so a certain unfavorable group portrait suggested. Not surpris-

ingly, this portrait ignored the more positive results of the New Class's formation, including a healthy idealism that expressed itself in selfless volunteer efforts (from the Peace Corps to VISTA to countless other service organizations) and a commitment to healing America's enduring scars of race.

But if the unfavorable portrait was a caricature, there was more than enough truth to it to give force and credibility to the critique of the New Class that would be advanced so cogently by a congeries of apostate Marxists and mugged liberals (many of New York intellectual fame) called the neoconservatives. The tough-minded analysis of America's cultural and social drift that came from the pens of such thinkers as Bell, Irving Kristol, Nathan Glazer, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan would do an invaluable demolition job on the stale—indeed dangerous—left-liberal shibboleths and agendas embraced by so many of the New Class as their orthodoxy.

This critique accurately identified the self-deceptions and smugness of that orthodoxy. It diagnosed the destructive or ineffectual character of many of its social-engineering schemes. It exposed the deterioration of our schools and the nihilism and degradation cheerfully purveyed by the popular culture. It pointed out the biases of the news media. All of this and much else was for the good—and not only for the conservative movement in America, which had long needed intellectual stiffening and something more positive than a merely reactionary temperament. And in truth, the neoconservative critique benefited the Democrats at least as much as the Republicans—though the former seem more prone to forget their lessons.

In certain respects, though, triumphs always spoil victors. Once-astute criticism can become formulaic—or worse, disingenuous and ugly. Perhaps worst of all, truth may fall victim to partisan expediency. This has not come fully to pass, but troubling signs abound, nowhere more pointedly than in the rhetoric that now circles the word "elite," rhetoric that emanates from the Left as well as the Right.

To some extent, it's to be expected that politicians reaching for the populist mantle will call their opponents elitists. It even makes for a kind of giddy comedy in an age when we need all the laughs we can get. After all, what could have been sillier than the spectacle of the former president, highborn and Ivy League educated, calling his opponent an elitist? Or that of the current president and his wife thumping on the profiteers of the 1980s when they were involved in some pretty high-rolling money games themselves?

The danger, though, is that all this pounding on elites may begin to have consequences quite beyond those intended. Clearly, "elite" is being used as a code word, a shorthand term that stands for everything that one side of the political spectrum claims is wrong about the other. Whether it's conservatives railing against the influence of New Class types or liberals attacking profiteering Wall Street yuppies and corporate honchos, the term "elite" is made to serve as an all-purpose punching bag, indeed as a scapegoat.

Where might this lead? Again, portents bode ill. In his last book, *The Betrayal of the Elites* (reviewed in this issue), the late historian Christopher Lasch mounted a criticism of elites that so dexterously combines both the left-wing and right-wing populist uses of the word that it forms an almost perfectly Manichean picture of America. On one side, the side of Light, are the increasingly imperiled middle and lower-middle classes, consisting of hard-working, patriotic, God-fearing, and community-oriented folk who see everything they live for being destroyed. No mystery by whom. The villains of the piece, the forces of Darkness, are America's elite—in business, government, education, the media. These elites, internationalist in orientation, have no loyalty to communities or even to their own nation. In their urge to get ahead, secure in their protected buildings or walled communities, their children in private schools, they are mortgaging the welfare of the rest of the country.

Sad to say, there is more than a little truth

to this picture. America's elites, in all sectors of society and of all political persuasions, have become irresponsible, selfish, and hypocritical to a disturbing degree. At the very least, it's time on their part for soul-searching and mea culpas all around. But it would be disastrous if the idea of elites fell into total disrepute.

And it is in danger of doing just that. Today, cynicism about political leaders stokes the populist dream of direct democracy, which electronic technology already makes feasible. (Those who think democracy in this form would be a good thing should think twice about its dangers, some anticipated by America's Founders, including its susceptibility to media manipulation, subtle and not-so-subtle corruption, and demagoguery.) Contempt for business leaders encourages a mindless hostility toward the entrepreneurialism and innovation that is needed to keep our economy growing. And indiscriminate attacks on civil servants lead to a silly denial of the importance of services that government alone can provide.

The problem, quite simply, is not that we have elites; it is the quality of the elites we have. That might seem obvious, but amid all the elite bashing we hear remarkably little intelligent discussion of how elites could be made better. Clearly they could. Herewith three modest proposals:

The most important one applies not only to the formation of elites but to the formation of all Americans. It pertains to the education of character. The current campaign for school prayer is, as Stephen J. Carter points out in an essay in the *New Yorker,* a case of misguided energy and good intentions. A moment of nondenominational silence might be a fine thing, but a prayer of any kind would inevitably offend the beliefs of some parties. More important, though, it wouldn't be enough. What is needed is a curriculum that, through the serious study of religions, philosophy, history, biographies of heroic figures, and good literature, inculcates an awareness and appreciation of the virtues. The fact that this is not available at all levels of schooling—or if available, is barely adequate—is a scandal that needs immediate addressing.

The second proposal is that we find ways to cultivate an elite using criteria that include but go beyond simple test-taking skills. This is no easy matter in a society that has come to use raw intelligence as the single most important measure of rewardable talent. But it can be done. To some degree, America's service academies provide a model in the way they seek students who excel as leaders in all areas of life—in school, in sports, in church, in community service. The model can be replicated elsewhere if there is a social will to do so. We need not only to educate people of character but to reward and advance them.

Finally, we need to hold our elites to standards of performance throughout their careers. Like everybody else, elites have a tendency to insulate themselves from evaluation. The worst example is in the university, where mediocrity entrenches itself through the tenure system. But similar "tenure" systems prevail in other professions and fields. Civil servants are notoriously unaccountable for the programs they oversee. And many corporate leaders have insulated themselves (by packing corporate boards with allies, among other ways) from the harsher verdicts of the marketplace and the stockholder.

America is a meritocracy—not a perfect one, to be sure, but one that has grown generally fairer over time. As systems of bringing forth leaders go, it is hard to think of a better one. But a meritocracy can advance only what the nation gives it to advance. And the elite that emerges can reflect only what the larger nation values.

—*J. T.*

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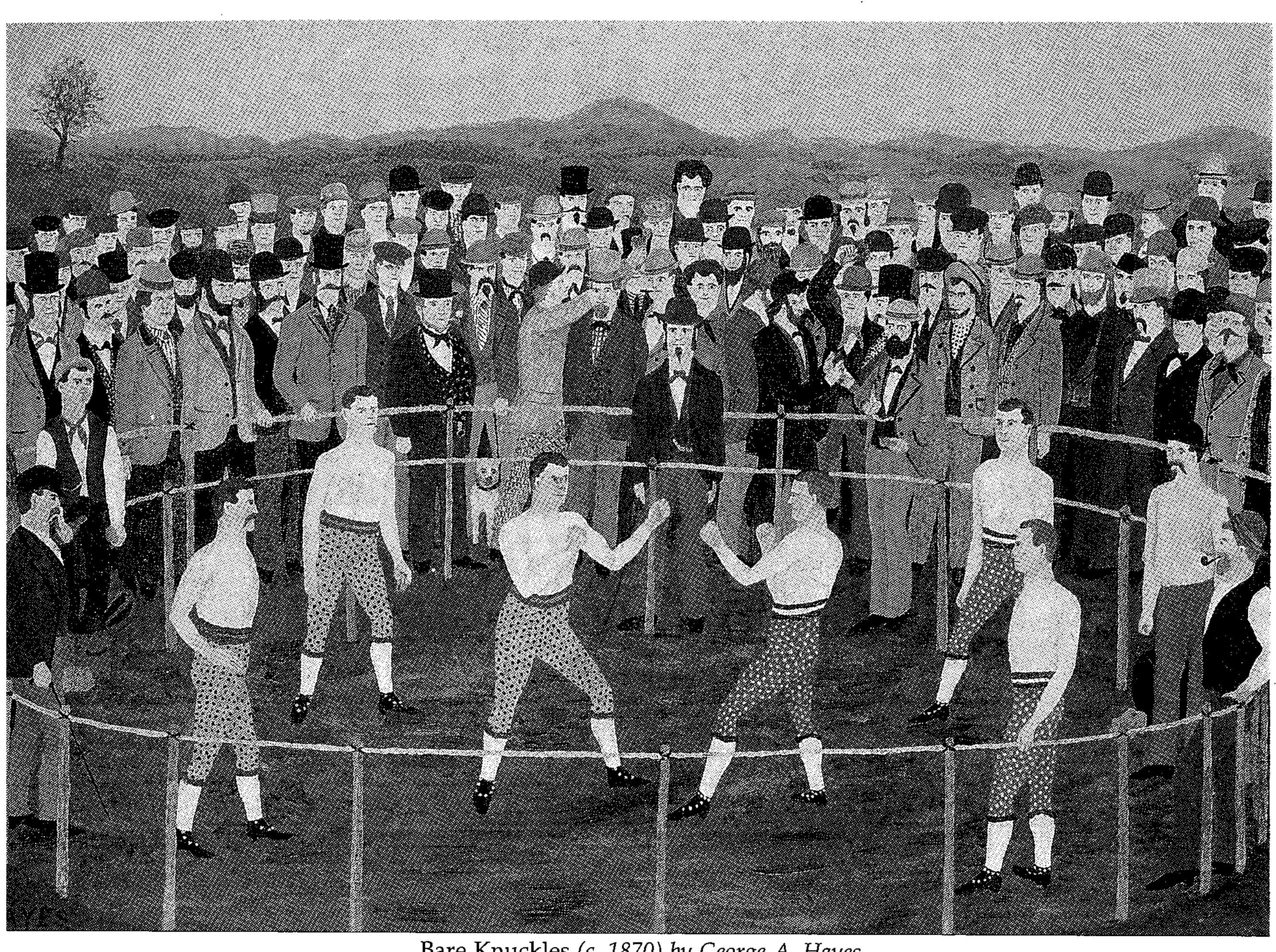


Bare Knuckles *(c. 1870) by George A. Hayes*

Endangered Pastimes

Sports are among the greatest of human pleasures and, in the age of Shaquille O'Neal and Emmitt Smith, constitute one of America's biggest industries. They are also, as the sociologist Norbert Elias observed, an essential part of the "civilizing process." Scanning the contemporary world of sports, our contributors explore the human value of athletic competition and discuss the challenges posed to sports by celebrity, money, performance-enhancing drugs, and technology.

WHY SPORTS MATTER

BY WILFRID SHEED

It's hard to say exactly when the new era began, but at some point lost in the smog of the 19th century, sports went from being officially a bad thing to being a very good thing indeed, virtually a pillar of state. England, where it all began, was coming into its maturity as an imperial power and the Industrial Revolution was turning country boys into city boys overnight, and society's guardians began to look at all forms of entertainment in the light of these developments, but especially at sports.

Thus preachers, who had previously considered sports the devil's work, open invitations to brutishness and gambling (how times have changed!), gradually perceived that they might be rescued and cleaned up in the service of the Lord—and what was good for God was good for England; likewise schoolteachers, who had once punished idle play, decided to join, not resist, and they began to enforce organized sports with such severity that some children grew to loathe and fear the very word "recreation."

And finally the last, because they had the most to lose, holdouts—Dickens's mythic factory owners, along with more-humane businessmen—came round too, on the understanding that if the workers must have some time off, there were worse ways to spend it than in a rule-bound, open-air, referee-dominated contest of skill and strength.

But perhaps the greatest benefit of all, to judge from the fuss that would be made about it, was that sports not only outlawed cheating but drilled its devotees to detect and despise it in each other and by extension in themselves. This was crucial. A nation on the verge of great transactions—a nation also in the midst of a population explosion that might have reduced it to Third-World, or at least downtown-Los Angeles, status overnight—needed a citizenry it could trust. Indeed, the English would go on to make such a fetish of fair play that it became an international joke. Yet the empire was sustained by this fetish at least as much as by force, and the British sportsman's knack of combining slyness and decency continued to baffle and frustrate more cynical nations right to the end.

But in promoting sport so zestfully, the powers that be had unwittingly unleashed a small monster of their own, albeit a wholesome one. By the '90s of this century, sports worship had grown and taken on a life of its own, beyond the wildest dreams of Thomas Arnold (1795–1842), the English public school headmaster who might be considered the founding father of the Sports and Character movement. And the educational establishment, having faithfully drummed sports into its charges, must now pause at some point to tell them—and itself—that "it's only a game," and prove it to them, or else watch sports grow and grow until they bury both the establishment and its schools: a force that can take on Sex can easily roll over Education. The president of a major university, writing in the *New York Times* op-ed page a few years ago, said that he wanted academics to be on a par with athletics at his place, a strangled cry which suggested that the monster was already standing on his chest close to his windpipe.

Thus, too, the clergy must worry about idolatry and the sin of False Worship, and the business community about the sheer waste of time and emotional energy committed to sport. A fan, perhaps even more than an athlete, who gets some of his obsessive energy out of his system by playing—can become so psychologically enmeshed in sports that the rest of life seems like a rather boring dream that must be gotten through somehow. Thus transfixed, one can sleepwalk one's way through anything from a dull job to an oppressive regime to a marriage that could possibly use some attention.

The good and the bad of sports are exquisitely balanced even at the best of times. Victory and defeat induce respectively a joy and despair way beyond the run of normal human experience. When a politician says he hates something viscerally—whether it's John Major on terrorism or Senator Windbag on flag-burning—one doubts his insides are much disturbed: as Dr. Johnson might say, he will eat his dinner tonight.

But a sports fan who has seen a sure victory slip away in the bottom of the ninth, or the work of a whole season obliterated by a referee's call in overtime, is disconsolate beyond the power of description, although Sophocles comes close. This author experienced such grief over the defeat of the Dodgers by the Cardinals in 1942 as an 11-year-old should not be asked to bear. An adult inflicting such pain on a child would be thrown in jail.

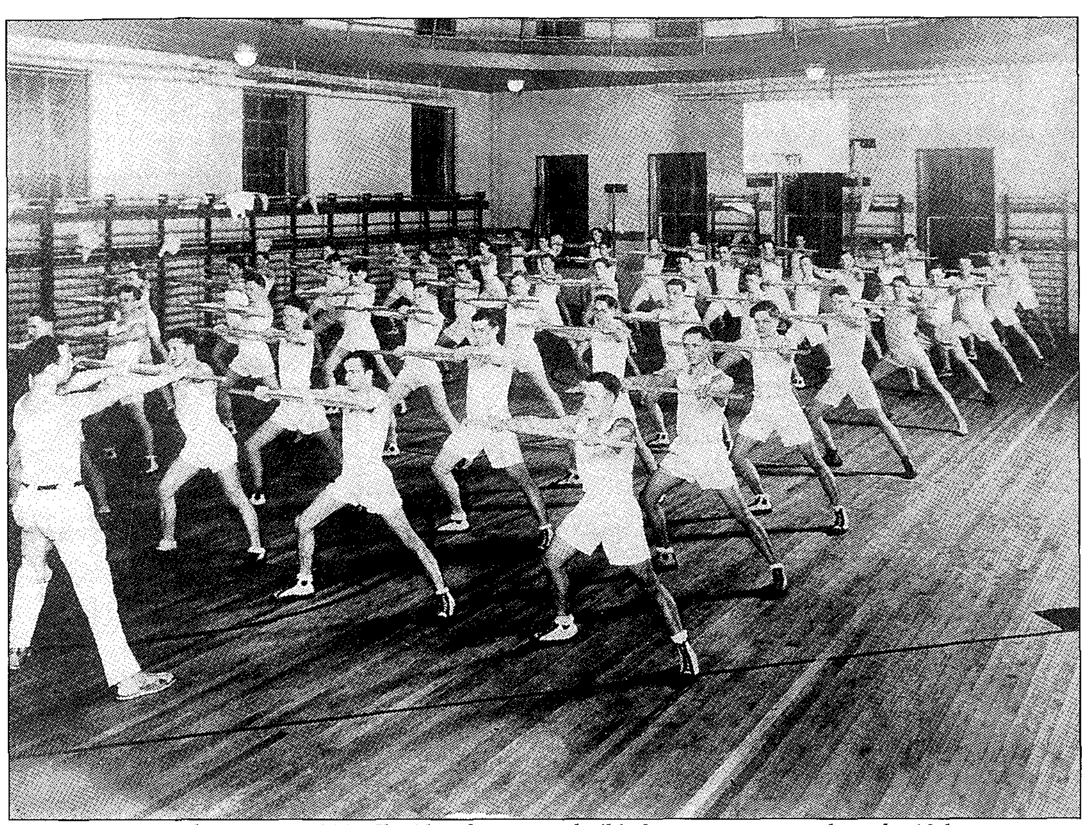
Yet I got over it, and was all the better for it, recovering sufficiently to root for the Cardinals over the hated Yankees in the World Series. This cycle of make-believe deaths and rebirths can actually be the healthiest thing about sports, or the most dangerous, depending on how you handle it. At its worst, it can cause riots and death, but at its best the pain of defeat is cleansing and instructive, a very good rehearsal for life.

Upon reading the second volume of William Manchester's life of Churchill, *The Last Lion* (1988), I was struck by the fact that the lion in question was splendidly imperturbable about such matters as the rise of Hitler and the fall of Poland, but was completely unstrung by any blow to his vanity, such as losing a by-election or failing to get a cabinet appointment. But if sports teaches you anything, it is that less important things can hurt more than important ones—but that they *are* less important, and that there are tricks for dealing with them: absorbing the pain and putting it in perspective, almost reflexively.

One of the glories of the human imagination is its capacity for alternative realities and its ability to live other people's lives to the emotional full, whether they be Oedipus or the Chicago Cubs (and that's another distinction for the civilized individual—art and sports). But if you don't learn that crying over something doesn't make it important—if you forget which reality is which for too long, or can't find your mental way out of Wrigley Field when the game is over—you might be better off if you'd never heard about sports to begin with.

"Meeting with triumph and disaster" (Rudyard Kipling would have made a, well, interesting football coach: "I want you men to go out there *and treat those two impostors just the same*, do you hear me?") is only one of several things that sports teach, and teach better than anything else. The problem is that in school, where many of the lessons of sports are learned, sports increasingly interfere with other lessons that must be learned.

Wilfrid Sheed is a critic, essayist, and novelist. His many books include The Boys of Winter *(1987) and* Baseball & Lesser Sports *(1991). His new book,* In Love With Daylight, *will be published by Simon & Schuster this winter.* *Copyright © 1995 by Wilfrid Sheed.*



A YMCA workout, circa 1900. The idea that sports build character owes much to the 19th-century "muscular Christianity" movement and the Young Men's Christian Association, founded in 1844.

A coach's discipline is different in kind from a regular teacher's, because the coach wants the same thing the class wants—to win. There is no such clear goal for a regular teacher. Whether a student pays attention in class is pretty much up to him. It's a one-on-one affair between student and authority figure, with the student, if anything, holding the edge, surrounded by allies, most of whom have no special desire to go where the teacher is going and are only too happy to keep the pace slow.

But the coach starts out with his class already at white heat: these kids will work for him to a degree unimaginable in a classroom, and with an eagerness and excitement that only creative kids in school ever experience. An English teacher looking at a football drill or a pep rally must overflow with envy: if he could capture just one ounce of such energy for his poetry class, his students would be the wonder of the nation. But in the classroom, the teacher is the only one who works as hard as that—like a coach doing solitary pushups and kneebends, while the students look on idly, waiting for something to interest them.

Yet sports don't have to be the teacher's enemy. At least the young athletes have learned discipline from *somewhere,* and there are no harder workers than jocks or ex-jocks if they can be made to see the point of it as clearly as they see the point of sports. Arthur Ashe, the great African American tennis player, once suggested that if making the team were made to depend entirely on one's grades, the grades would be achieved somehow or other by these highly competitive spirits.

Above all, every kind of athlete knows what many other students never will, that

nothing can be learned without discipline. The words are synonymous. And in the pursuit of what they want, athletes are already used to policing themselves and, if necessary, each other.

So all that seems to be required now is for the schools to show that they think that an education is as desirable as winning, if only by granting the student-athletes sufficient time to study and get one. The games themselves need not be a problem, providing as they do a God-given carrot, a natural incentive to cooperate with whatever the school really wants. The real problem, and it keeps coming back like a toothache, is that there is no such thing as moderation or cool judgment once you sign on for a big-time sports program. You must either keep growing helplessly with the others, or pull the plug on the whole thing, as Robert M. Hutchins did at the University of Chicago more than 50 years ago when he took his school out of the Big 10 for keeps, to a flourish of headlines. The lonely grandeur of that gesture tells you how unreal it would be to expect many more of them.

If it was hard to leave the table back in 1939, when you had nothing to lose but a few alumni contributions, it would be just about impossible to do so today with so much TV money floating around. And the TV money has also made it that much more difficult to slip any real moral wisdom or spiritual balance into the student-athlete's regimen. Since the players tend to have the impression that the school is already making a lot of money off their backs without paying them for it, except in devalued degrees, the school is the last place they are going to turn to for moral guidance.

Many years ago, a famous Yale coach told his team that playing in the Yale-Harvard game that day was the most important thing they would ever do in their lives, and he has been laughed at for it ever since. But subjectively he was right: in the make-believe part of one's psyche that thinks games are important enough to work and suffer for, it was the most important thing and always would be. Until the next Big Game.

But any way you read it, no story could tell one more about the difference between sports then and sports now. In the old days, the players were paid in nothing but glory, so the authorities laid on the glory with a shovel. But no up-to-the-minute coach today would dream of telling his team to do or die for Old State U. since he knows that some of them are barely on speaking terms with the place, and it's a bit much to ask someone to die for an institution where he hasn't completed a single serious course, or made one civilian friend, or even had time for the glee club.

If all that the new athletes are getting out of a college is the privilege of wearing its colors—and presumably making them look good—simple justice demands that they get paid real money for their pains, as many people are suggesting these days. If the Big Game is just another payday, and if the most important thing about it is the scout in the stands, and if the fight song just sounds like bad music—pay the man.

But this is a counsel of despair. Outside of the mare's nest of pay scales and competitive bidding and other uncollegiate games it would open up, professionalization would also make the athlete's isolation official: whether he would henceforth be looked up to as a professional or down on as a hired hand (it would probably depend on his value to the team), the one thing he would never again be is a regular member of the student body, which emphatically does not get paid for what it does between classes. The class distinctions that universities usually try so hard to keep outside come back with a rush the moment you institute a payroll.

To which, of course, a critic might retort that the athlete hasn't been a regular member of the student body for some time now

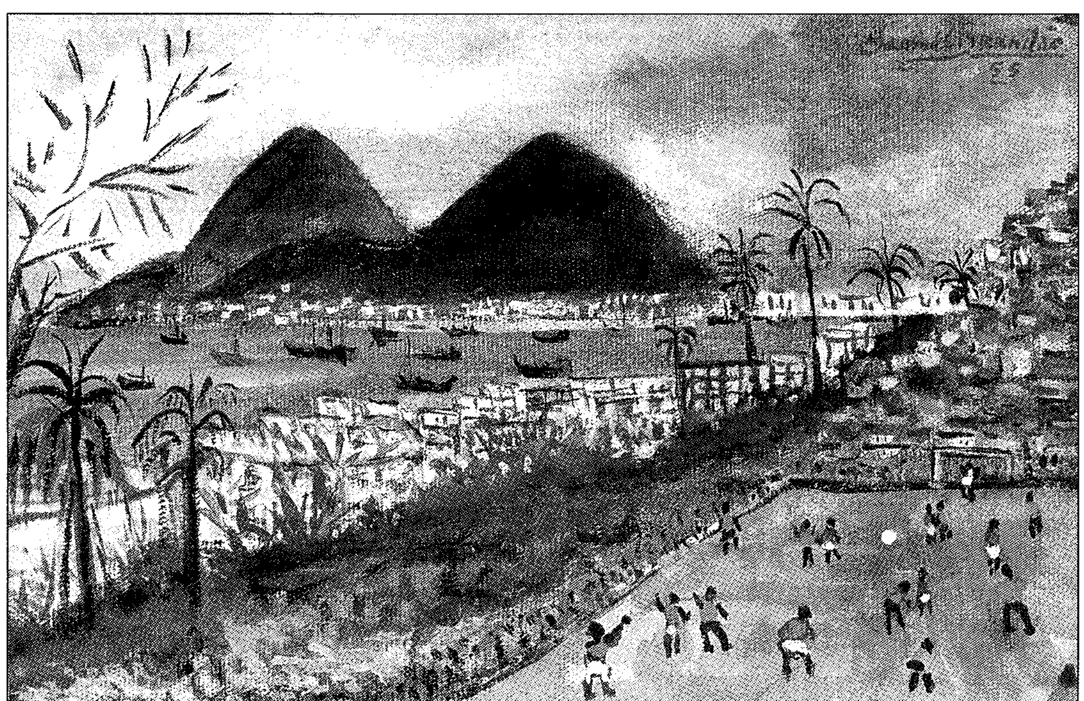
and isn't about to become one, so calling him a student-athlete just provides a hypocritical cover for not paying him his share of the proceeds. And the critic may be right. But if so, and if we follow his lead and give up on the very possibility of scholar-athletes, we should be clear about just what it is we're giving up.

The school that pays its students to play games for it not only loses some of its integrity as a school (i.e. as a self-sufficient exchange center for academic goods and services, ideas, and values), it is also saying some very peculiar things about the nature of games themselves and their relationship to other college activities across the board.

It is saying, for instance, that playing in the band at half time is still fun (no one has ever suggested paying the band), but that throwing and catching a ball is work—and that even this depends on what kind of ball you're using. A football equals work, a volleyball is only play. Appearing on television is obviously work, but even here distinctions are made: players work, cheerleaders have fun. Shooting baskets is work, helping to clean up afterward is its own reward.

The greatest chasm of all would open up between sports and the whole outside world of student activity, including such strenuous matters as staying up all night for a month to put the yearbook to bed, rehearsing the class play till your eyes cross, or working overtime in the lab. All of these tortures are considered so much part of the college experience that you actually pay the place to let you undergo them. But basketball is different. For basketball, the college pays *you*.

I have lingered over this hypothetical threat not simply because some strong voices are urging it but because it is so close to being here already. Collegiate athletes are already a quite distinct caste leading a



Soccer, born in Britain, spread rapidly around the world at the end of the 19th century. South American teams developed a distinctive style of play, dominating international competition for many years.

charmed but precarious life not unlike that of commandos in wartime, who live both better and worse than the regular army, but always apart. College athletes already have in many cases a potentially adversarial relationship with management. It doesn't take much to turn a sports team into a trade union, complete with grievance committee and perpetual chip on shoulder, and the latest TV packages would seem very close to being enough to do it.

Under the circumstances, it seems quixotic to talk about moral instruction at all—except that moral instruction is inevitable. Sports teach, it is their nature. They teach fairness or cheating, teamwork or selfishness, compassion or coldness. A coach who runs up the score against a weak opponent has taught his team plenty. And so did the much maligned Lou Holtz when he jerked two useful players out of Notre Dame's lineup on the eve of an Orange Bowl because, in his view, they had shown contempt for the team by skipping practice. Of course, the players may have wanted the time to study. (I didn't say the lessons were simple.)

Schools and colleges also teach something by their very natures, which is that you are now playing for a whole community and not just yourself, and that if you win, the community will join you in experiencing a kind of crazy collective joy that used to more than make up for not getting paid. Although even to talk about such things now sounds anachronistic and sentimental, over the years this particular experience has helped to define the American style of sports as much as any single factor—the simple fact that even the superstars once played in front of and in the name of cheering friends whom they saw in class the next day.

To the extent that we are losing this, if we are, we are losing a real natural resource and killing a lot of fun. But the possibility of plunging the athletes back into the community without disturbing the college sports juggernaut too much edges us somewhat beyond sports and into race relations. On many campuses, blacks apparently want no part of the white community anyway, sports or no sports, and in fact the sports teams are probably the most integrated thing on campus. So the logical next move would be for the *athletes* to teach the student body the values they've learned from sports—but I doubt if the juggernaut could spare them long enough for that.

Anyhow, whatever the academics may add or subtract, the sports lesson goes on like a machine that can't be turned off, affecting the whole style of the society around it in ways the society may not even be aware of. Concerning which, I call upon my first overseas witness.

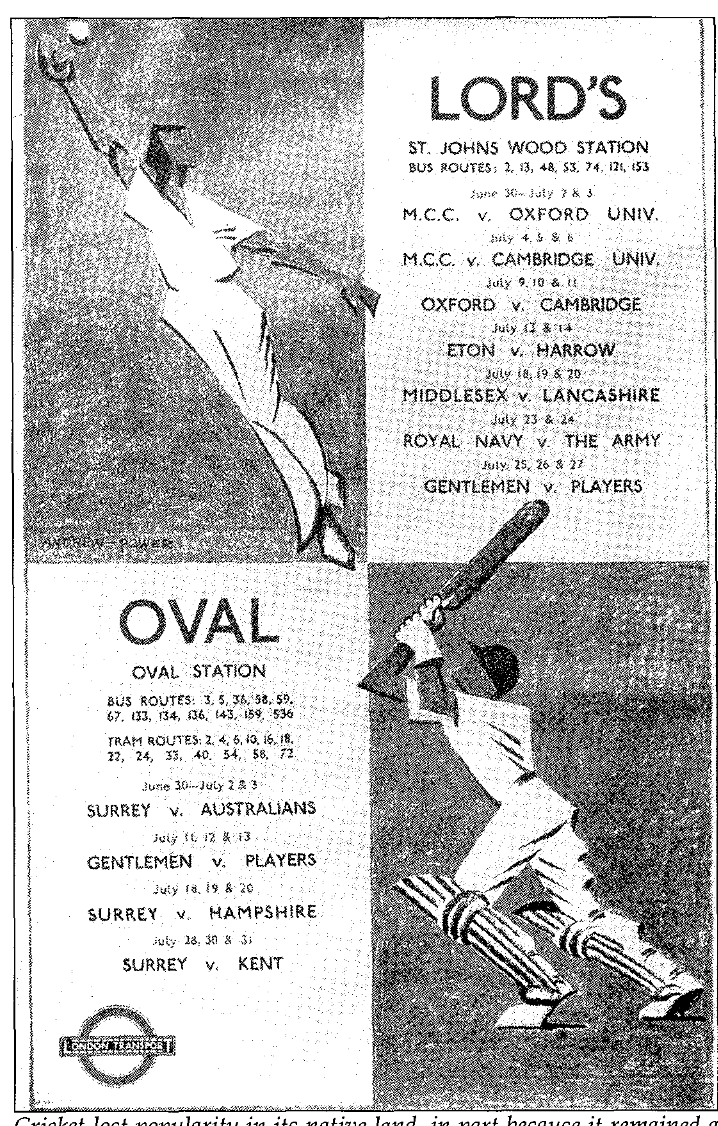
A few years back, I flew to Port of Spain, Trinidad, with my father to watch a cricket match between Australia and the West Indies. (My father would have flown to Mars if the mood was on him.) The match was over early and we found ourselves with three days left to kill, so we decided to spend them at the law courts where an acquaintance of ours happened to be presiding as judge.

The weather inside was stifling, and the ceiling fans only seemed to make things worse as they dragged the wet air slowly round and round the room. Yet both the judge and the lawyers wore wigs and winter-weight gowns, and the law they practiced hour after sweltering hour was as fiendishly sharp and serpentine as anything you'd hear at the Old Bailey on a cold day in London. And one couldn't help making the connection between the decorous aggressiveness of the law court and the figures in white we'd seen the day before playing cricket in the same heat with their own brand of courteous savagery. The surface of cricket is as silky smooth as the rules of court or the opening of a classic detective story: voices are subdued, clothes are immaculate. But at the center, the atmosphere

is murderously intense. Where Americans prefer to intimidate with noise and rudeness, the English and their erstwhile colonials go for silence and tyrannical politeness, such that the incoming batsman feels he is on trial for his life.

Obviously the connection is no accident: it is one of the great imperial clichés. First we'll show you our games (says Colonel Blimp), and then perhaps you'll understand our other institutions. What was striking about the above scenes was that Trinidad had triumphantly thrown off British rule several years before, yet maintained both the game and the institution more wholeheartedly than ever.

Anyone who has encountered Trinidadians, or Jamaicans, or Barbadians, will recognize a distinctive style—polite, ironic, tough—a style that has nothing to do with race and everything to do with culture. And while only a fanatic would attribute the style totally to cricket, only an equal and opposite fanatic would ignore altogether an activity to which the area's small fry have devoted more time than they have ever spent in church and more attention than they have ever paid in school. When a local Muslim ran amuck a few years ago and tried to stage one of those hostage-holding protests common to the rest of the world, a local professor observed, "We don't do things like that in Trinidad. We are a cricket-playing nation"—a remark no Englishman has made in 50 years.



Cricket lost popularity in its native land, in part because it remained a sport of the upper class—the Gentlemen on this late 1920s schedule.

In a sense, cricket was the demonstration sport of the whole Victorian ethos: the game that instilled the most patience and the most discipline and was, for long stretches at a time, the least like fun and the most like work. The fact that it is now played best and most authentically in the lands of calypso and sun is proof positive of the power of a sport to make its own way and impose its own style anywhere it takes root unless another sport got there first.

This last fact, in its turn, has recently taken on a global significance, as markets open up everywhere like spring flowers, and in each of them thousands of new TV sets are turned on to find out what the rest of us have been up to all this time and what interests us. And the latest word from America these days is sports, to an extent that might astonish the non-sports-minded, who probably think it's still things like movies, rock music, and fast food.

Each of these has served a turn at selling America, for better or worse, but our movies have been around so long by now that foreigners half-think they made them themselves. Rock music can be more or less produced locally, and McDonald's is already a cliché. (The real breakthrough will be enough food, never mind the speed.) American culture has triumphed so thoroughly that people scarcely know it's American any more.

But what's still new and different out of America is the Super Bowl, which, thanks to the extraordinary telegenic charms of American football, has swept the globe with the force of a new art movement, or at least a new dance craze: people stay up all night to watch it in Europe and Australia, and London betting parlors make book on it.

So another window opens on the American soul, and it may be the most revealing one since jazz, which introduced American blacks to the rest of the world back in the 1920s as something other than slaves—as masters in fact. Sports will do the same. But in introducing black musicians, jazz also introduced the black problem, and sports will do that too. Foreigners contemplating our football and basketball teams for the first time can only marvel at the number of blacks who seem to get a college education over here. Our problems must be solved, no?

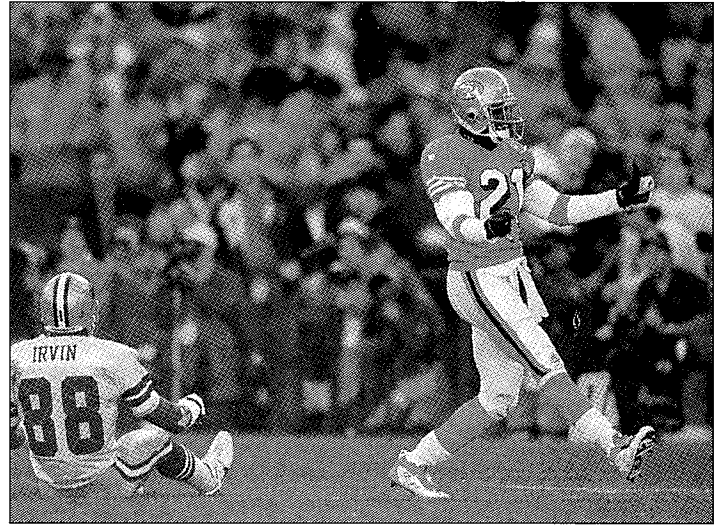
Well, not quite. Sports serve to remind the world that there are a lot of blacks in America. But they also remind it that it doesn't see that much of them the rest of the time. People observing American blacks playing a great deal of American music and sinking so many American baskets must wonder where they keep themselves between engagements.

But race isn't the half of it. How a nation plays can tell you something crucial about how it lives. Hitler's worldview, his aesthetics, and by implication his intentions were never more eloquently or hauntingly expressed than by the Berlin Olympics of 1936, or by Leni Riefenstahl's movie *Olympia* (1936); and one look at the East German swimmers in the last years of that nation, perched on their diving boards all swollen with steroids and joyless, told one how easily communism had back-slid into a form of National Socialism (if it had ever left) in which winning really was the only thing, beyond anything the theatrical Vince Lombardi ever had in mind.

For another kind of corruption closer to home, witness the ecstatic savagery of British soccer crowds, riding a violence high into Europe and getting banned from the Continent for their pains during the late 1980s, like a disease or a rabid animal. This, from the mother of parliaments, and of cricket, gives one special pause and is worth a longer look, because it shows where another strand of the great Victorian sports adventure led.

Sports hooliganism is actually not so much a new development as a regression or atavism. According to legend, the original game from which soccer, rugby, and, by extension, American football all derive was a primeval affair in which one village attempted by fair means or foul—legend says nothing about rules—to move an object (nothing so fancy as a ball, I imagine) to the far end of another: it was total war, with everyone pitching in, and while it sounds kind of jolly now, we know from records that the earliest English school games were just plain bloody, and had to be toned down

again and yet again—from kicking allowed above the knee, to kicking allowed *below* the knee, to no kicking at all—before they could begin to do the godly work that Thomas Arnold had in mind for them. (If the Battle of Waterloo really was won "on the playing fields of Eton," it must have been as much thanks to the brutality learned there as to the sportsmanship.)



"Neon" Deion Sanders, the exemplar of a new generation that is challenging old ideas of sportsmanship, celebrates after breaking up a play.

Interestingly enough, Charles Dickens's description of a village election in *Pickwick Papers* (1837) makes the politics of the period sound like a not-too-distant cousin of the mythic village Game: rough, corrupt, and of course jolly, always jolly.

At that stage cricket was actually more refined than voting, as a match described in the same book indicates. It was the country sport, in ethos, as football was the town one, but throughout the century both sports would grow side by side with elections in both sophistication and popularity, matching strides and suiting each other very well, with sports teaching the democratic virtues of fairness and team spirit, and democracy feeding back its own lessons: whatever the rest of life says to you, this game belongs to you, the players. The rules, however mystifying at times, have not been imposed on you from above, but have grown out of the sport itself and are designed to give you the best possible game each time out, so it's in your simple best interests to obey them. (The idea of shaping the rules to suit the spectators, and eventually the TV cameras, was far in the future.)

One can exaggerate the usefulness of sports to democracy, and many people have. Nothing could better illustrate how the same game can produce radically different effects in different settings than to compare India with the West Indies. When Rudyard Kipling wrote about "flanneled fools at the wicket and muddied oafs at the goal," he may to some extent have been voicing the exasperation of a myopic, sportless man, but he was also quite legitimately aiming at the smug insularity of the English, buffered on all sides by their playthings, their cricket and football and the rest. Kipling's first experience of this must have been in India, where members of the British Raj were wont to set up their wickets and disappear into cricket for years on end. Presumably, their servants would learn democracy by fielding for them.

In Barbados, which inch for inch has probably produced the finest cricket talent in the world, the game actually served to introduce the slaves to their masters, and to keep them on speaking terms through the squalls of emancipation, and leave them friendly afterward. A retired schoolmaster whom I met at the Bridgetown Cricket Club, surrounded entirely by blacks, assured me that the transition from white to black rule was as painless as it could be and that if there is such a

thing as a color-blind society, Barbados is it. And both sides agree that cricket had at least something to do with it.

This is further proof, if proof is still needed, that sports should not be left on automatic pilot, but require intelligence and breadth of vision at every turn to be of any use at all. In Barbados, the white minority has learned its lesson well over the years: a society that plays together had better do a few other things together as well, whether that society be a former colony or an American university.

But finally, it comes down to what a society wants its games to do for it. The English who settled in Barbados *wanted* a stake in their new country, so the Game became a sort of preliminary town meeting; the Anglo-Indians, contrariwise, were perched on the fringe of a vast country, doing their damnedest *not* to get sucked in too far: a colonial officer who Indianized was no use at all. So the Game was just a transaction, a handshake, a one-afternoon stand, if you will. Afterward one withdrew to the club to reorganize one's Englishness.

So when the roof finally fell in on them in the 1940s, many Anglo-Indians knew almost as little about the country they had been infesting as they had on arrival. Sports, if pursued too exclusively, can narrow the imagination and sap the curiosity. At the end of a good day, one feels drained and satisfied, and certainly in no mood to learn anything, let alone reform it, and the Anglo-Indian cricketers had hardly even had time to see the countryside, let alone talk to it.

It was in this sort of sense that sports failed even Mother England. (Sports can do only so much.) The British ruling class thought it knew its own people the way colonial officers thought they knew the natives, because they had played with them. But they had only played with some of their own people, and they had only played in a certain way.

Cricket reflected neither the rest of England nor even the century it was in. With exceptions, British working-class boys didn't consider cricket their game at all, but if anything, a symbol in the class war. When I lived in Britain in the early 1950s, the crowds at Lord's cricket ground seemed as different in tone from the crowds at the Queen's Park and Fulham soccer grounds as a first-class railway carriage was from third class, or the saloon bar from the public one. (The English could divide *any*thing into classes.) Sports did not resolve the class problem but if anything hardened it, and soccer remains, vestigially, the sport of resentment, the outsiders' sport.

So sport is not necessarily a force for good, just a force, and its value as a barometer is that it is not like the changing of the guard or some other ancient ritual that tells you all you need to know about a country 300 years ago. It is more like a kitchen window flung up on the present, showing how the neighbors go about getting what they want *right now*, at white heat, in the most competitive conditions they can devise.

Other countries, other messages. In his splendid, funny book, *You Gotta Have Wa* (1990), Robert Whiting describes a form of baseball so arduous and fraught with painful possibilities that one wonders why anyone bothers to play it at all—if play is even the right word. In fact, Mr. Whiting compares a typical Japanese mound conference with a Mitsubishi board meeting.

What they are discussing on the mound at such nerve-racking and momentum-destroying length is the imperative to avoid disgrace, both personal and collective. Nobody wants to make a decision that will embarrass himself or his colleagues, and besides, so long as they are out there, they are not only avoiding the worst, but cementing and advertising their *wa*, or team spirit, which is an even more precious substance than victory. In the same vein, the Japanese place a premium on full attendance at practice sessions, which they insist on holding in their entirety even after

rain delays and even if doing so means postponing the game itself.

It has always been easy to laugh at Japanese manners, which Americans are peculiarly ill-equipped to understand these days, and it would be a mistake to believe that this farcical surface tells the whole story. What you see is practically never what you get with the Japanese. But so far their philosophy of baseball has not proved very effective against American teams.

Baseball is the most individualistic of team sports, such that a side which played entirely for its various selves might easily beat one which played only for the collective. (How many bunts can you use?) In other words, our national sport is, appropriately enough, tailor-made for Americans: individualism, with just a dash of cooperation and a great deal of tolerance for the other individualists, who can break your heart. And it's an enduring puzzle that the Japanese, with all their capacity for superficial imitation, can't seem to grasp the value of this, or don't want to.

But surely there are also subjects for satire in a country such as ours, where the players are so bereft of *wa* that they use a world championship not to build another one but simply as a bargaining chip to raise their own price. Although everyone contributes to an American championship in a spirit that could easily be mistaken for *wa*, the gang tends to break up the next day as everyone rushes his piece of the prize to the pawn shop. In other words, the cooperation is strictly ad hoc. No one wants to get bogged down in it.

It is like two parts of the same joke, or comedy routine, with the Japanese taking the virtues of cooperation to hilarious extremes, while the other comedian agrees to carry his independence and self-reliance as far as the law allows in the other direction. Americans have always doted on the image of the free lance, the hired gun who arrives just in time and leaves before civilization, that is, team work, gets there; and we also like a man who is willing to bet on his own value. The ballplayer who holds out for the moon is putting his heart and his nerves on the line as well as his talent, because if he doesn't deliver, he can't hide in a corner with the money; he has to go out there each day and field his position in front of thousands of noisy, quick-to-anger fans, whose sympathy he has willingly forfeited.

Americans love an underdog, but this is a top dog, setting himself up to be hated for the sake of a challenge. Half the sitcoms made in America seem to be about the mighty being humbled one way or another—the celebrity going unrecognized, the father not knowing best; it is a source of endless delight in a democracy. So the athlete who draws a crowd by baiting this taste is playing a part in a ritual game as traditional in America as the tea ceremony is in Japan.

But as with all rituals, there is a right and a wrong way to perform it. Lately we have had such a slew of empty boasts and champions who didn't really mean it that it is hard to remember the excitement of a genuine challenge, or the little bit extra it could add to an event, like a huge bet being placed at the last minute. Muhammad Ali's trumped-up feuds and Falstaffian boasts not only filled seats but affected the intrinsic nature of his fights: his opponents were always fighting a myth, his myth, created and directed by him, from the name on down.

By now, everyone should be getting used to the mad dances that follow touchdowns these days and the wild hugging and pounding that greet the most routine plays in football—effusions of high spirits that distract the hell out of one and deform the game's symmetry, like the banging of tin cans in a symphony, but at least remind one that these things are played for fun, and that those heavily armored automatons out there have not quite had the life drilled out of them. It's a fair exchange—perfection for humanity—

anyway, it's the way we do it these days.

But there is a less attractive side to these displays that also tells something about us, and that is the extent to which even team sports have become vehicles for self-assertion and promotion. At times everyone out there seems to be selling himself, as indeed many of them have been since grammar school. Just as large fleas have smaller fleas, nowadays there is no level of sports competition so low that some observer from a slightly higher one may not be scouting it and checking the talent ad infinitum. So life becomes one long quest for the phantom scout's eye.

In discussing sports, one must constantly resist the temptation to label as evil that which is merely silly. Foreigners may never grasp the extent to which Americans can have fun and sell themselves at the same time. Anyone can sell himself, of course, but to do so exuberantly and without manifest cynicism or a trace of whorishness—that's us.

But it's finally self-defeating. A stadium full of salesmen, of carnival barkers hawking their wares, will not only not provide the best football game or whatever they're playing today, it will not even sell anything.

The same overkill has overtaken Joe Namath-like boasts that don't come true, most especially in the case of the mega-boast inherent in asking for the most money in history to play your game. At first the deal used to be, "Give me the money and I'll prove I'm the best." But this has degenerated into, "If I get the money, then I must be the best, and I don't have to prove a thing."

The only hole in this reasoning, and it's big enough to drown a whole sport in, is that market value is determined by what draws a crowd, and crowds are drawn by all sorts of things besides skill.

The world is thus getting a mixed bag with the current American athlete, as it is with our values in general. The figure of an ingratiating megalomaniac is a far cry from the 19th-century ideal of sports, or from the reasons we play games in the first place. He, or she, is also something of a caricature, and a warning. The fact that we still have so comparatively few of such megalomaniacs is a tribute to the innate healthiness of sports under the incredible pressures of a celebrity culture.

A sports team is a tiny parliament operating on a war footing. And what holds it together and makes it work is the much maligned cult of winning. An interviewer once asked Senator Bill Bradley (D.-N.J.), late of the New York Knicks, whether he didn't think we rather overdid our mania for winning, obviously expecting the liberal Bill to agree with him heartily. But Bradley knew too much, he had been in the trenches himself where false pieties are as useless as they are in real warfare, and he said in effect "No—if you don't emphasize winning over everything else, players tend to become selfish."

A team trying to win will clean itself like a cat of anything that slows it down. So the athlete who wants to show off must find ways to do it between plays, or between games, and in such a way that he doesn't hog the limelight totally and leave his teammates, who may also want to show off, in shadow. Thus we arrive at a breed of disciplined exhibitionists, affable egotists who like nothing better than to be photographed congratulating their *teammates*, or to be interviewed in the same capacity ("I guess I knew the Babe better than anybody")—a mixed bag indeed.

But these players are interspersed among perfectly normal young people who will probably represent their country in the sports era as attractively and accurately as anything the world has seen of ours since the GIs of World War II—who were also a mixed bag. But what is attractive about them will be precisely their unspoiled pre-money, pre-television essence, or whatever remains of it, a folk quality that sports keep alive against the odds, like an old religion in a modern

Running the 50-yard dash near Detroit in 1911 and the 200-meter run at the Seoul Olympics in 1988. Florence Griffith-Joyner took home three gold medals.

country. TV may change the look of it, and the cost of it, and even the way some of the athletes feel about it, but if you were lucky enough to see the American ice hockey team upsetting the Russians at Lake Placid in 1980, with the achievement gradually dawning and settling on the players' and fans' faces, you saw a sporting print of America as it was a hundred years ago and will be tomorrow if we don't mess up, next to which a political convention seems by now utterly contrived and synthetic, and untrue to its own nature.

While it is tempting to say that what an athlete gets out of his sport and his life is his own affair and no special business of anyone else's, it is in fact a matter of considerable public interest that he get as much out of both as possible, because the gap between what a fulfilled athlete can get out of life and the blinkered world of the hacker is dangerously wide,

and there are more young citizens playing around on the edge of it right now than ever before in history—ours or anybody else's.

A player who is simply going through the motions is a loose cannon even within his sport. Since he isn't quite sure why he's doing this, he leans towards the primary explanation: it must be for the money. And why not? That's why the coach is doing it, with his contract on the side with the shoe company, whose products our guy has to play in every night. And that's why the school is doing it, as it angles to get into the big-bucks tournaments and appear on TV, cutting his class time to nothing, if need be, in order to do so.

Fortunately for everyone, the best way that he, the player, can make some money too is to play the game as well as he can. And this is why the system seems to work despite itself. But, as I say, a player thus motivated is a loose cannon. Because if he doesn't get that money, or some kind of payoff outside of the sheer joy of playing, the best you can hope for is a malcontent, the worst a cheat, and the usual, a dropout.

American sports are more and more geared to make it seem that everything you do is aimed toward something else—the game toward the tournament; the tournament toward a better tournament next year; toward a better high school, college, pro team, winning pro team, more money with the pro team or I'll go to another one, never mind which; endorsements; agents; job opportunities—so that it's hard to say at any one point that *this* is what it's for. The American dream as currently construed is more like an order to keep moving until you fall off the continent and don't you dare stop dreaming.

One constant throughout this is, of course, money, which appears in every chapter like Woody Allen's mysterious character Zelig, reassuring the dreamer of some continuity at least. The psychological significance of this character may be judged by the intensity with which ballplayers bargain for meaningless additions to already vast salaries in order to make the most money at their particular position: if money is what you've always played for, you can't stop now, even though who gets the most depends on whose contract has come up most recently, so you can never rest there.

The other constant through every phase of the sports branch of the American dream is the game itself—baseball, football, whatever—which, like some improbable 18th-century heroine, has usually come reeling through this maze of temptation and corruption with its virtue more or less intact, if only because no one has yet thought of a profitable way of corrupting it. Unlike movies and the other arts, games are never more commercial than when they are played exactly as they should be. Of course, if any little thing can be done to make the contests even *more* commercial—eliminating this, shortening that, a designated hitter here and a 24-second clock there—it will be, but the heart of sports remains pure. An athlete shinnying up the greasy pole will find a recognizably similar game at the top to the one he played as a child—and this will be the guarantor of his innocence up there if anything can be.

What it guarantees for women is a brand-new question for most of us—too fresh to answer though never too fresh to talk about. To wit, if certain sports are in some sense an apprenticeship for, and escape from, the world of politics and business, it stands to reason that great numbers of women will want to play them too, however much the games themselves seem to have been designed exclusively by men for men, for example football, whose weekly injury list seems like a benign version of a war memorial.

So maybe we can expect some new rules shortly, or even a whole new game—but if so along what lines? Women have not succeeded so far in making either business or politics "kinder

and gentler" because the material itself won't permit it: you can't be kind with shareholders' money or gentle with Saddam Hussein, or even with Margaret Thatcher, if her country needs something.

But will sports prove that much more malleable? How much reform can they stand without losing their original point? The evidence so far suggests that the tide usually runs the other way, and that the sport changes the players long before they can change it. Most games, whether played in boardrooms or stadiums, have a way of dictating not only exactly how they should be played but with what attitude, so that the mildest of citizens may suddenly find his engorged face parked in that of an umpire without being quite sure how it got there. And this goes apparently whether one's name is Andre Agassi or Martina Navratilova.

But these matters of protocol may conceivably be negotiable at that. What isn't is the other thing that sports dictate, which is that you will always play them as hard as possible, since violence is the inevitable and often exhilarating by-product of taking your foot off the brake and seeing just what your body is capable of. And this is an element of sports that can't be compromised with without losing the point for sure. You can, if you like, put helmets on the boxers to reduce the damage, and you can bench your star quarterback to keep down the score, but what you can't do is tell either of them to take it easy, or to "have a heart."

And this, not the physical pain, will surely be the hardest aspect of competitive sports for many women to swallow: their sheer implacability and ice-cold legalism, which could break your heart even if you were playing touch football in a suit of armor. Sports are in fact as unfeeling as life itself. The ref still calls penalties against you even when you're down 50–0, and the scoreboard won't be adjusted afterward to make you feel better. Nowhere does self-esteem take a worse pounding than on a sports field—unless maybe it's at a chess board where "checkmate in three" can hurt worse than a blind-side tackle that breaks both legs. What you get in exchange for these ritual humiliations is a thimbleful of self-knowledge, a small but precious sense of how reality works, and all the self-esteem you can earn with your own muscle and sweat—and here, sports relents a little: it rewards duffers who try hard with almost as much self-satisfaction as it gives to champions.

This, for the last 150 years, is how men in the modern world have prepared themselves for life. If women decide to take this route too in significant numbers, and indications are that they are doing so, it will, if nothing else, test the sturdiest of all truisms, that men naturally are just and women merciful. Men are, it seems fair to assume, not really born just, but usually have it thrust upon them the first time they try to cheat someone, or someone tries to cheat them, and they realize that justice is the most kindness you can give to two people at the same time, if their interests differ. Any kindness you have left after you've played games long enough will be solid indeed—and of course, the generosity of athletes to teammates is legendary, and to foes only slightly less so. What one might hope women, or *somebody*, might effect is an opening up of this parochialism to let the rest of the world in.

If this should ever happen, I can only say the blessings of sports would be infinitely easier to argue than they have been in this essay.

THE TECHNOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE

BY EDWARD TENNER

The road from Princeton, New Jersey, to Philadelphia passes the handsome iron-fenced grounds of the Lawrenceville School, a private institution known not only for its high academic standards but also for its ample resources. Its gracious campus could easily house a substantial liberal arts college; in the summer, its auditorium does justice to professional opera productions. Though Lawrenceville's flush financial condition is news to no one, I was still surprised when driving by one day last autumn to see how grandly the school pursued the game of football. Looming over a practice field just beyond the fence was a railed platform suspended by two tonglike metal frameworks over a wheeled base the size of a small car. Standing atop this elaborate machine was a man with a video camera recording the team's practice session 10 or more feet below. Even here, a world away from the NCAA Division I, technology was literally raising its head—vivid evidence of the lengthening reach of the apparatus of professionalism.

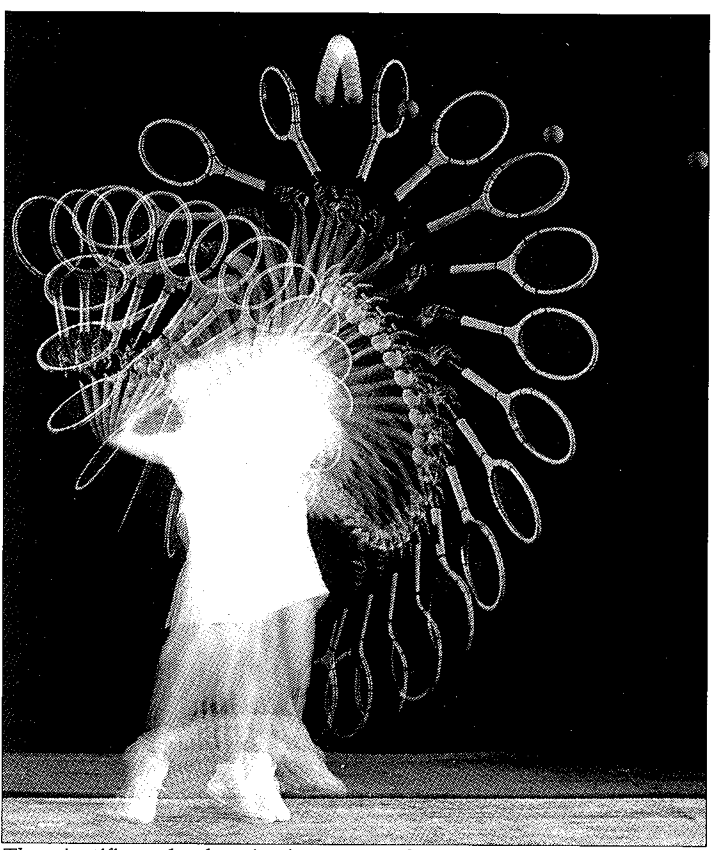
It is true that coaches have been analyzing film since the early days of moving pictures, that video cameras now start at only a few hundred dollars (though this one appeared to be a bigger and much costlier professional model), and that mobile lifts probably have some value for building and grounds crews as well as for the athletic department. And one would have to be Rip Van Winkle not to know that schools and colleges are working harder at sport and spending big money on new athletic technology. Only a few hundred yards from my apartment, on the banks of Lake Carnegie, Princeton rowing crews practice during New Jersey's often inclement weather in an enclosed tank. Across the road, a field of artificial turf is being installed for the lacrosse team at a cost of more than $1 million. (Competing teams were all using them, the coaches pointed out, and a generous alumnus picked up the bill.)

Yet the Lawrenceville image stayed with me: a portable tower with an all-seeing eye, a monument to the interpenetration of sport and engineering. It is a relationship that has improved athletic performance and challenged physicists and designers. It has often, though not always, made sports safer. It has also threatened the traditional virtues of athletic life. It is often said that the infiltration of big money, especially in such high-profile intercollegiate sports as football and basketball, is killing off the amateur ideal. But nothing is doing more to undermine the distinction between amateur and professional competition than the rise of sports technology—including not only athletic gear, but training and conditioning techniques and professional management—and its spread to all levels of sport.

It is not incidental that I spotted the

mechanical tower at a school that was the setting for Owen Johnson's famous turn-of-the-century Lawrenceville stories. In many ways, the stories and the school epitomized the older ideal of gentlemanly amateurism in sports. Athletics in such corners of American life, as in similar British ones, shared the antiprofessional outlook of the old humanities curriculum. "Just as the classics trained your mind for anything, games trained mind, character and body for anything," Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy notes in *The Old School Tie* (1978).

This gentlemanly model of sport was not at all inimical to training, but it put the emphasis on other aspects of competition. In one of Johnson's episodes, Dink Stover, the hero of the series, learns "that the scientific application of his one hundred and thirty-eight pounds, well-timed, was sufficient to counterbalance the disadvantage in weight." Yet Dink succeeds on the football field not by studying videotapes but by developing his character and his innate intelligence. In a big game, the opposing Andover 11 play "with a precision and machinelike rush that the red-and-black Lawrenceville team did not have," writes Johnson, leaving no room for mistaking his own view of the machine. At half time it is the teenaged team captain, not the adult coach, who harangues the Lawrenceville squad, urging them to hold back the Andover line. Only then does the adult coach, the professional, give brief advice to each young man. Inspired by his teammates' comradeship and spirit, and laying an old grudge against one of them aside, Dink goes on to score the winning touchdown. In this Lawrenceville of yore, it was the athlete's desire for honor and the esteem of his peers that mattered most, not his hunger for athletic scholarships or his hopes for a career in sports. In Dink Stover's world, spirit and character always triumphed over regimented efficiency.



The scientific study of motion in sport was born a century ago. Today, even casual players in many sports have their serves and swings analyzed.

The trouble, of course, was that in real life they neither could nor did. As sports historian Ronald A. Smith shows in *Sports and Freedom* (1988), college teams born as outlets of youthful rebellion against faculty paternalism and pedantry early in the 19th century began hiring professional coaches soon after the Civil War. On college playing fields,

at least, plucky amateurs such as Stover and his friends found themselves losing to teams that practiced under close adult scrutiny. As expenses and competition both grew toward the end of the century, colleges began to bring sports under their administrative control. The coach began his ascent from student-paid specialist to college-paid star. It stretches the point only a bit to note that this rise roughly coincided with that of the professional manager in the period's emerging large corporations. And unlike business executives, some early star coaches could have it both ways: the University of Chicago's first football coach, Amos Alonzo Stagg, not only received the executive-level salary of $2,500 when he was hired in 1891 but was made a tenured associate professor. (It was only fair that Stagg was given faculty standing, since he made the kind of original contributions—such as the end-around run and the man in motion—for which professors of any science get tenure.) President William Rainey Harper charged Stagg to send forth teams that would "knock out all the colleges."

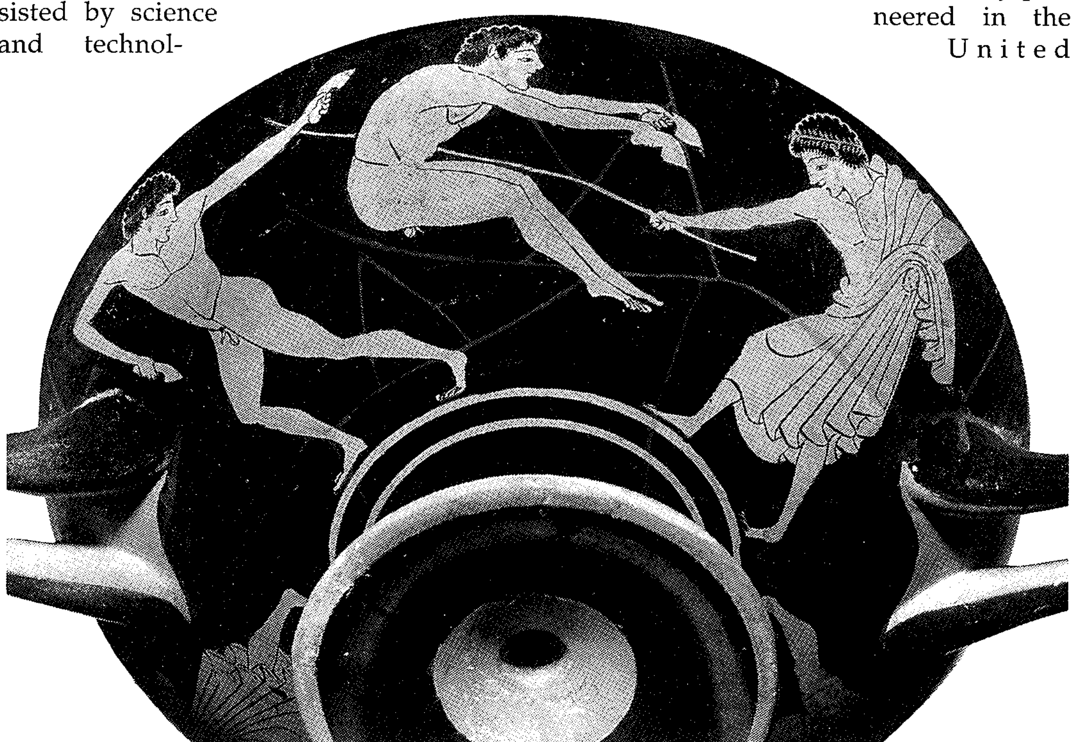
The decline of amateurism was not the product of technological forces alone. The ideal of athletic heroism began its downward course after World War I, with its brutal deflation of gallant rhetoric. Some of the real heroes who had survived the ordeal of war felt out of place in its aftermath. Princeton hockey star and World War I ace Hobey Baker was miserable as a bond salesman (and club player) after the war. He died under mysterious circumstances, crashing a military plane he had borrowed. Baker came of age a generation after the creator of Dink Stover, but he was one of the last gentleman paragons of sport. At Baker's Princeton, the bronze statue called "The Christian Student," a memorial to a high-minded football captain named Earl Dodge who had died of typhoid in his twenties, had stood unmolested for decades. By the 1920s, this statue of a handsome youth in a turtleneck football uniform, draped in academic robes and laden with books, had become a provocation. Undergraduates vandalized and travestied it so often that it was finally removed to the Massachusetts museum of sculptor Daniel Chester French. It was not athletics that had declined but heroism. In its place there was instead, for coaches as much as for athletes, stardom.

The decline of the heroic ideal is reflected in the history of protective technology. Football players and other athletes before World War I could have used much sturdier helmets and pads than they did, but they declined to do so for the same reason that professional boxers today (unlike their amateur counterparts) still do not wear headgear: spectators would have considered such protection unmanly. Indeed, early baseball gloves were dyed a flesh color in order to make it less obvious that players were not fielding the ball barehanded. In the late 20th century, conspicuous exposure to risk has become positively unfashionable except in a few events, such as downhill skiing and automobile racing. Athletes today do push the limits of protective technologies to gain an edge. Helmeted batters crowd the plate; linebackers and linemen risk paralysis and death by illegally "spearing" their foes with their helmets. Stronger ropes, lighter gear, and spring-loaded cams have encouraged mountain climbers to attempt previously impossible routes. But the point holds: few men and women still glory in doing without available protection, as Reinhold Messner and Peter Habeler did in 1978 when they climbed

Edward Tenner is a visiting Fellow in the Department of Geological and Geophysical Sciences at Princeton University. He is finishing a book on the unintended consequences of technology. *Copyright © 1995 by Edward Tenner.*

Mount Everest without supplemental oxygen. A small number of climbers have emulated them, but scores of others have littered the mountain with empty oxygen canisters.

Technological change may not have been directly responsible for the decline of the heroic ideal, but it was the driving force behind the new model of sport that challenged and ultimately replaced it. This new model envisioned sport as a higher craft, assisted by science and technology, frankly devoted to record setting and winning. In this new world of sport, excellence was seen not as something that grows from within, but as something shaped by endless practice, refinement of technique, and analysis. Achievements were registered not in the respect of teammates and peers but in box scores and record books. An important source of this emerging perspective, according to Allen Guttmann of Amherst College, was the rise of quantification and record keeping, especially after World War I. He quotes a French athlete's wish in the 1920s that his daughter would "one day recite the litany not of our battles but of our records, more beautiful than the labors of Hercules."



Athletes in ancient Greece often resorted to special diets, coaching, and other aids in attempts to improve performance. In this 6th century B.C. vase painting, a coach instructs two long jumpers.

What happened to sport was part of a broader movement to rationalize physical performance that had its origins in workplace time-and-motion study pioneered in the United States by the engineer Frederick W. Taylor (1856–1915). Analyzing the task, the tools, and the motions of factory workers, Taylor created what he called a new kind of "scientific management." By breaking down each activity into its component parts and analyzing each motion, Taylor believed he could optimize the worker's efforts and vastly improve performance on the job.

Scientific studies of athletic performance, animal motion, and industrial pro-

duction took giant steps together in the laboratory of Étienne-Jules Marey (1830–1906), a brilliant physiologist who held a chair of "natural history of organized bodies" at the Collège de France. Anson Rabinbach's *Human Motor* (1990) presents Marey's work in its scientific and social milieu. Marey developed an ingenious system of stop-motion photography that resolved action into microscopic increments of equal time. Sport was one of his chief subjects, and his books containing ingenious visual representations of motions over time in fencing matches and other activities were a sensation. Marey and his American counterpart, the photographer Eadweard Muybridge, probably enjoyed their greatest fame for settling the old sporting question of whether all four legs of a galloping horse are ever off the ground at the same time. (They are.)

Taylorist methods appeared in American athletics as early as the first years of the 20th century, and they increased the emphasis on coaching (professional management) and technical specialists. Ronald Smith notes that in 1905 and '06 the young Harvard football coach William Reid, Jr., studied photographs of punting to determine an optimal style and then trained the Crimson's kickers accordingly. Reid also began to experiment with new equipment designs. And he pioneered the practice of intensive scouting, traveling around the country to recruit exceptional players. Reid even kept a file card on every one of Harvard's 4,000 students to identify the best prospects for each position on the team. After World War I, systematic study and professional coaching spread to more and more sports. As early as the 1920s James Naismith, the inventor of basketball, deplored the serious coaching that had transformed his sport.

The cult of the coach has become one of the leading features of late-20th-century sport. In certain professional sports, such as tennis, the coach enjoys a status akin to that of a guru, and in team sports the coach (or rather the coaching *staff*) functions not only as a technical specialist and master mechanic of the sport's techniques but as a master planner and field marshal—in a word, the team's brain. How many professional quarterbacks today are allowed to call the plays for their team? And now pro football is experimenting with radio communications between the sideline and the playing field. The rise of the omnicompetent coach is another one of the forces working to erode the distinction between amateur and professional sports. Not only are advanced training techniques and other methods being disseminated down to the lowest levels of many sports, but coaches themselves move freely between the pro and amateur ranks. And thanks to summer training camps and other special arrangements, youngsters who show promise in some sports are now exposed to the influence of highly trained coaches before they reach their teen years.

If today's superstar coaches are the heirs of William Reid, the era's sports scientists are direct descendants of Marey and Taylor. Taylorism in industry has largely run its course, long since superseded by other theories of management. The scientific study of time and motion still matters in American industry, and even more in Japan. But the frontier appears to have shifted from maximizing physical performance to minimizing the new injuries of the postindustrial age, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, an affliction of constant computer users. Now it is the software developer who makes workers more productive. But the early-20th-century dream of the worker as a human motor, operating at top efficiency and approaching a theoretical minimum of fatigue, remains very much alive in sport. Records continue to fall. No one can predict the limits of human performance. This excitement has attracted a striking number of leading scientists and engineers to sport. The physicist Howard Brody

has published a tennis handbook; the engineer Enoch Durbin has designed a revolutionary tennis racket bearing his name; another engineer, Thomas McMahon, has developed "tuned" tracks with optimum springiness that help athletes set running records; another physicist-author, John Adair, consults on scientific questions for baseball's National League. Visiting the technical department of the United States Golf Association (USGA) in Bernardsville, New Jersey, recently, I saw researchers using digital television cameras to record golfers' drives for analysis on a powerful Sun work station.

Sports scientists have also produced enormous quantities of new equipment over the years. Sporting goods (including clothing) is a $45 billion industry—though it is often hard to tell whether it is competition in sports or in fashion that moves consumers to buy. The impact of all this new gear varies from sport to sport. Studies of professional performance in golf, for example, show a perceptible but very slow decline in average scores over the years. For ordinary players, however, the payoff is probably more psychological than ballistic. Frank Thomas, the USGA's technical director, believes that new equipment can keep the conscious brain from spoiling the unconscious brain's natural performance—for a while. Then golfers become self-conscious again and revert to their old problems.

Golf may be unusual for its gradual approach to technological change. New technologies have drastically altered certain sports: the fiberglass pole transformed pole vaulting during the 1960s; echolocators have given tournament bass fishing the quality of a video game. But again the overriding fact is that the same technology has been as readily available to amateurs as it has been to paid athletes. The professional's edge is mainly in service and customization, often provided without charge as part of an endorsement package.

The heroic approach to athletics still has many partisans. The Yale classicist Donald Kagan rejects the idea of elite athletes as highly skilled workers. He holds up baseball during the 1950s as an idyll of power and grace: "The Yankees ruled this world as the Olympian gods ruled theirs. . . . with steadiness, serenity, and justice, and only the unworthy gnashed their teeth in envy and prayed for chaos to shatter the unwelcome order." He prizes baseball's greatest players not for their "smarts" or perseverance but for "the qualities of courage, suffering, and sacrifice." And as any admirer of aristocracy must, he exalts inborn excellence over acquired proficiency.

Kagan wrote in good-natured reaction to George F. Will's best-selling *Men at Work* (1990), which is in many ways the distillation of modern attitudes toward sport. Will begins his book with a discussion not of a great hitter or legendary pitcher but of a manager, Tony La Russa of the Oakland Athletics. And there is not much that is heroic or inspiring about him. He is an intense and supremely watchful executive, armed with copious information about each opposing player. He pursues the game methodically and presides over a corps, not of heroes, but of master artisans in various specialties: third baseman, catcher, etc. Baseball La Russa–style is not pursued on a field of chivalry but in a kind of patriarchal athletic factory.

With the rise of sports science and technology, however, the modern athletic ideal is no longer the hero of Kagan or even exactly the artisan of Will, but something else: the professional. Reviewing a book on the rise of professional society recently, social historian Jose Harris observed that "work and play, brutally estranged from each other by the early stages of industrialization, have now reconverged." Harris went on to note that play is returning to work

through the rise of business lunches and other job-related social events, but it could be said with even greater force that work is rapidly finding its way into play. The tower at Lawrenceville, for example, points to a new incarnation of Taylorism. Once imposed on a recalcitrant working class, Taylorism has become the plaything of elites who are adopting it in their leisure time, voluntarily, for the sake of winning. Middle-aged tennis players even pay stiff fees to attend grueling "vacation" tennis camps conducted by famous coaches. As technology, training, and sports science improve performance, contests in many sports depend on smaller and smaller margins of superiority. In the Tokyo World Athletic Championships of 1991, Carl Lewis sprinted 100 meters two-hundredths of a second faster than Leroy Burrell, and all of the other four runners were less than 0.2 seconds behind Burrell. Because small differences can translate into immense differentials of reward, the athlete can no longer function as an autonomous agent, as the fictional Stover did, but must depend on the contributions of more and more people. He or she needs the help of many others—not just coaches and trainers but psychologists, shoe and equipment manufacturers, trainers, financial managers—the invisible teammates.*

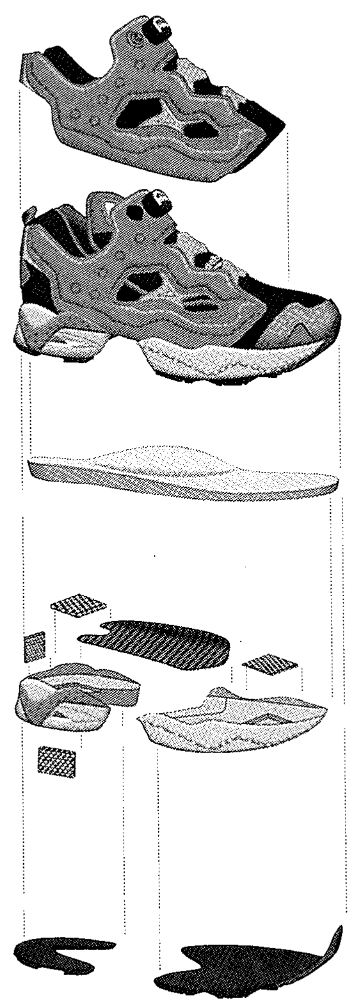
It isn't only the flood of money into college and Olympic sport that has undercut amateurism. As preparation becomes more arduous and intense, as standards rise, accomplishment requires a professional level of commitment. In the end, the rules and forms of amateur qualifications persist, but in many sports maintaining amateur status is a preprofessional ritual rather than a value in itself. Future contracts, signing bonuses, and endorsement income are subjects of open speculation. The line between philanthropic support of sports and commercial sponsorship blurs hopelessly. Is it any wonder that amateurism has become a hollow ideal, tainted by social exclusivism, a concept that went out with Avery Brundage and tennis whites? (The 11th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, published in 1910, reported that the Amateur Rowing Association of Great Britain disqualified anyone who had ever earned a living as a "mechanic, artisan, or labourer.")

In the postamateur world of sport, more and more participants are happy to be part of a technological system. About the same time that Lawrenceville adopted its hydraulic lift, there appeared at a local shopping center a new indoor golf practice range where players could have their swings videotaped. Some critics fear that we are "taking the play out of play"; some players seem happier than ever, though, with the latest oversized golf club or tennis racket. Will this continue, or will there be a traditionalist counterrevolution in sport as part of a more generalized reaction against professionalism in society?

In a sense, technology has restored some of the importance of the "natural," if not the hero. It has encouraged national and international talent searches that have turned up athletes whose body types are more and more precisely matched to the demands of their sports. As was noted recently on a public television show, swimmer Mark Spitz electrified the world by winning eight gold medals at the Munich Olympics of 1972, yet 20 years later none of his Olympic records would have been good enough to get him a place on the U.S. Olympic swimming team. In 1992, Spitz still had the world's most efficient technique by the standard test; his successors were just stronger and more powerful.

If a return to the cult of the natural player is unlikely, a cultural reaction against the rationalization of sport is more plau-

*Technology does not just introduce new materials and techniques. It develops extended networks of people. And that, paradoxically, is one reason for the absence of major new sports based on new technology. It takes a long time to build a network of athletes, manufacturers, and coaches, not to mention spectators. Better to refine existing sports. The end of this technology-rich century has no innovation to compare with the creation of basketball at the end of the last one.



Manufacturers now use the language of engineering to sell their wares—in this case, Reebok's new Instapump™ Fury running shoe. Americans spend more than $6 billion annually on athletic shoes.

sible. German sport may be most famous for the Nazi spectacle of the 1936 Olympics in Berlin and for the former East German training machine, but it also has a powerful romantic tradition. German gymnasts long resisted competitive scoring, as Allen Guttmann has pointed out, and refused to participate in Pierre de Coubertin's first Olympic games a century ago. Adolf Hitler, always a ruthless modernizer, had to dissolve the Deutsche Turnerschaft (German Gymnasts' Society) for its opposition to—in one writer's scornful list—"concrete stadium, cinder track, tape-measure, stopwatch, manicured lawn, and track shoes." In our own time, the romantic tradition in sport remains powerful—and not only among the genteel. Sylvester Stallone's *Rocky IV* (1985) has Rocky Balboa confronting the Russian champion Ivan Drago, a steroid-filled colossus who trains with technicians in a futuristic wonderland of sensors and monitors. Rocky, "all heart" as his trainer puts it, prepares for the fight in the homely seclusion of an Old Russian dacha, jogging through snowdrifts with logs in tow. Ultimately Rocky wins a rousing triumph against the giant's machine-like attack.

Some modern sportswriters speculate about the coming of a new age of cyborg athletics, pitting genetically selected or manipulated superathletes against one another. Their predictions may turn out to be correct. But no technological change is inevitable. Change is shaped by the law, by politics, by public opinion, and by many other diffuse influences. Decades of fantasies about synthetic food, clothing, and shelter were shattered by the growth of the popular taste for all things "natural" since the 1960s. In sports, spectators and athletes want to win as badly as ever, but the desire for a more humane style of sport and for the old sporting virtues remains strong. On the golf course, amateur players are perfectly free to agree among themselves to allow the use of asymmetrically dimpled balls banned by the USGA from tournament play, but they rarely do. They likewise spurn the me-

ticulously engineered putters that swamp the Patent Office. And professional baseball years ago rejected the aluminum bat. The renaissance of minor league baseball in the 1990s suggests that many people will forego world-class play for a friendlier setting. As a rule, the biggest sports stars are still those who, like Michael Jordan, are capable of breathtaking feats that are prized precisely because they would be impossible without some great gift of nature. And a few new sports, such as ultimate frisbee, roller-blading, and wind surfing seem to have benefited by purposely keeping their distance from big-time college athletics.

What is important about amateurism is not its fastidiousness about money. If writers and artists can accept corporate commissions without losing their souls, why can't athletes? It is the focus on the whole person, the refusal to let sport or work or anything else take over one's existence, that is most important. Technological intensification does not rule out this amateur spirit, but it does set traps, just as computer power does. The steroid-pumped colossus and the caffeine-and-sugar-braced computer hacker are stereotypes with bases in fact. The burden cannot rest only with individual athletes. Governing bodies in all sports must look harder than ever at new technologies and their likely effects, positive and negative, on the spirit of the game. The most sophisticated of these bodies, such as the USGA, have been able to walk the fine line between innovation that enhances the enjoyment of a game and escalation that robs it of its challenge.

Over the last 200 years, the typewriter and computer have not made writers better or even more prolific than Jane Austen or Charles Dickens. Even in major branches of science, from pure mathematics to evolutionary biology, today's best minds still revere and profit from Karl Gauss and Charles Darwin. Among the professions, only medicine and dentistry are unquestionably and consistently better than they were long ago. But thanks in large part to technology, athletes are still surpassing the accomplishments of their greatest predecessors. And many athletes at the highest levels are reaping unprecedented financial rewards from the power of television and other media to fuel the machinery of money and stardom.

But athletes have also found themselves embedded in an athletic-technological-entertainment complex that has them always in its sights. Like it or not, they have found themselves under the eye in the sky.

LISTENING TO STEROIDS

BY JOHN HOBERMAN

For a decade after his reign as the premier American marathoner of the early 1980s, Alberto Salazar failed to win a major race, and no one could figure out why. His years-long quest for medical advice that might salvage a distinguished career became well known among those who follow the running scene. Finally, the long-awaited breakthrough came with a victory in the 56-mile Comrades Marathon in South Africa in June 1994. But this personal triumph was accompanied by an odd and, for some observers, unsettling piece of news. After consulting with a sports physician and an endocrinologist, Salazar had concluded that years of intensive training had "suppressed [his] body's endocrine system." The treatment that he and his advisers chose was a drug that had no previous association with athletic performance and did not violate international rules: the now-legendary antidepressant Prozac.

No one familiar with the history of drug use in sports will be surprised by an athlete's innovative use of a medication, especially one that is prescribed to create courage and self-confidence in timid, lethargic, or demoralized people. Over the past century there have always been athletes willing to ingest substances, including potential poisons such as heroin and strychnine, to boost their performance. That many of them have been assisted by physicians and pharmaceutical companies reminds us that sports medicine has always been part of what one German sports scientist has called "a gigantic experiment on the human organism." At the same time, we must not overlook the quasi-scientific or pseudoscientific character of most experimentation. Consider, for example, the fuzzy medical logic employed by Alberto Salazar and his counselors. While Dr. Peter D. Kramer's phenomenal best seller *Listening to Prozac* (1993) makes many claims for the drug, the treatment of endocrinological disorders is not one of them. Equally revealing is the vagueness of the self-diagnosis that pointed Salazar toward the world's most popular antidepressant: "It wasn't that I was depressed or sad," he told an interviewer. "I just never had any energy or zest. I knew there was something wrong with my whole system."

Alberto Salazar's encounter with Prozac forged a high-profile link between doping in sport and the wider world of pharmacology that affects us all. The existence of powerful drugs forces us to think about human nature itself and how it can or should be transformed. As modern science increases our power to transform minds and bodies, we will have to make momentous decisions about how the human beings of the future will look and function, how fast they will run, and (perhaps) how fast they will think. To what extent do we want to preserve—and to what extent do we want to alter—human traits? It is already clear that in an age of genetic engineering advocates of the medical transformation of human beings sound reasonable, while the proponents of preserving human traits (and, therefore, human limitations) are likely to sound naive and opposed to progress in principle. The unequal contest between those who favor experimentation upon human beings

and those who oppose it will be the most profound drama of 21st-century postindustrial society. Yet few people are aware that its essential acts have already been rehearsed during the past century of scientific sport.

Drugs have been used to enhance sexual, military, intellectual, and work performances as well as sportive ones. Yet sport is somehow different. Its exceptional status as a realm of inviolable performances becomes clear if we compare it with some other vocations. Consider, for example, another group of performers for whom mental and physical stress is a way of life. Their life expectancy is 22 percent below the national average. They suffer from tendinitis, muscle cramps, pinched nerves, a high incidence of mental health problems and heart attacks, and anxiety levels that threaten to cripple their performance as professionals. These people are not fire fighters or police officers or athletes; they are orchestral musicians, and many use "beta-blocker" drugs to control their stage fright and thereby improve their performances. The use of these same anti-anxiety drugs has been banned by the Medical Commission of the International Olympic Committee as a form of doping.

What accounts for this discrepancy? What makes sport the one type of performance that can be "corrupted" by pharmacological intervention? One might argue that an orchestral performance, unlike a sporting event, is not a contest. Since the performers are not competing against one another, deceit is not an issue. Yet even if we leave aside the prominent international music competitions, this argument overlooks the fact that an entire field of equally doped runners who knew exactly which drugs their competitors had taken would still violate the ethics of sport, which require both fair competition and the integrity of the performance itself—an untainted, and therefore accurate, measure of human potential. But why is the same requirement not imposed on the orchestral musician? Indeed, one would expect "high" cultural performances to carry greater ethical and anthropological significance than sportive ones. Sport's role as a special index of human capacity makes drug use by athletes uniquely problematic.

The "doping" issue within pharmacology thus originates in a tension between the licit and the illicit, a conflict that is inevitable in a society that both legitimizes and distrusts pharmacological solutions to human problems. The enormous market for substances that are supposed to boost the human organism in various ways benefits from the universal presumption that almost any attempt to expand human capacities is worth trying. Technological civilization always tends to turn productive activities into measurable performances, catalyzing an endless search for performance-enhancing technologies, from psychotherapy to caffeine tablets.

The modern obsession with performance enhancement is reflected in the wide range of substances and techniques enlisted on behalf of improving the human organism and its capacities. Commercial "brain gyms" employ stress-reduction devices such as flotation tanks, biofeedback machines, and somatrons (which bombard the body with musical vibrations) in an attempt to affect the brain waves and thereby increase intelligence, boost memory, strengthen the immune system, and combat phobias. So-called "smart drugs," none of which have been proven effective in scientifically valid trials, are sold to promote

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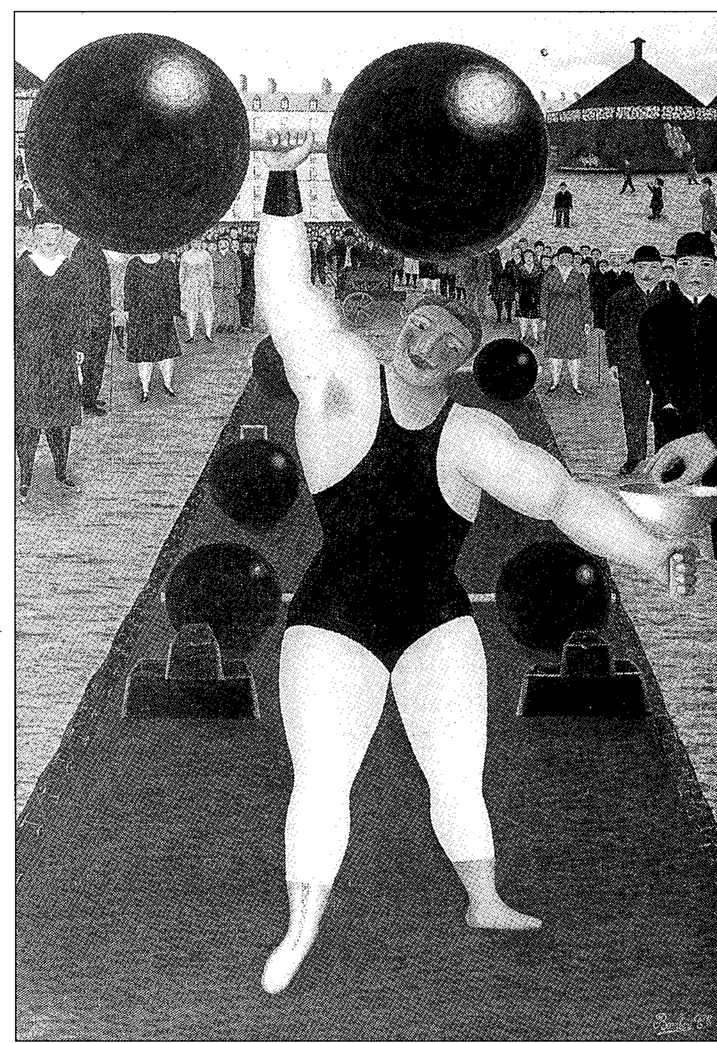
"cognitive enhancement."

The never-ending contest between the performance principle and the cultural restraints that work against it blurs the line separating the licit and the illicit. Consider, for example, the response in 1993 to charges of steroid doping among Chinese swimmers. A Chinese newspaper responded that the swimmers' world-class performances had been made possible by a "multi-functional muscle-building machine" that sends electronically controlled bursts of electricity through the muscles. That is to say, an accusation of illicit performance boosting of one kind was met with earnest assurances that Chinese athletes had succeeded by employing an equally artificial (but still legal) procedure. Few anecdotes could better illustrate the prevailing opportunism in the field.



L'athlète forain *(1930) by Camille Bombois*

Doping in sport has been banned for the past 25 years, yet less than a century ago European scientists were discussing pharmacological aids to athletic performance without any qualms. The physiologists of that time understood that the pharmacologically active substances they worked with displayed a range of effects: they could be medicines, stimulants, depressants, intoxicants, antiseptics, narcotics, poisons, or antagonists of other drugs. But during this phase, physicians and others had little interest in using drugs to improve athletic performance. Sports simply did not have the social and political importance they have today. At the same time, the athletic world did not yet recognize drugs as a threat to the integrity of sport. The distinction between performance-enhancing and therapeutic medications—a prerequisite of the doping concept—was not yet established.

The absence of such a norm explains why the French scientists who gave experimental doses of drugs such as alcohol and kola nuts to cyclists in the 1890s were untroubled by ethical doubts. The pioneering sports physician Philippe Tissié, for example, could both carry out experiments on human subjects and warn against the medi-

cal dangers of stimulants. Tissié saw athletic physiology as one approach to the study of the human organism. His attempt to prolong a cyclist's endurance by feeding him rum and champagne during a 24-hour distance trial may have been the first scientifically controlled experiment of its kind. Yet he was consistently cautious on medical grounds about the use of stimulants.

Tissié's attitude toward athletic stimulants appears strangely conflicted to those of us accustomed to the antidrug propaganda of the sports world today. How could the same physician who had urged his cyclist around the track for the purpose of identifying effective stimulants also condemn them as dangerous? To dissolve this apparent contradiction, we must abandon our conditioned reactions to the idea of doping and project ourselves back into Tissié's world. If he had no qualms about energizing his cyclist, it was because his experiment occurred before stimulants had come to be regarded as a threat to equitable competition. In any event, Tissié was not interested in producing record-breaking cyclists. It was medical prudence, not morality, that prompted his frequent cautionary remarks about stimulants. Indeed, his condemnation of alcohol is immediately followed by a recommendation that "the better beverage" for boosting performance is sugar water.

A similar ethical nonchalance is evident in a 1913 article, "Sport and Stimulants," by the early German sports physician Ferdinand Hueppe. Modern life is impossible without stimulants, he wrote, and the task of the physician is to replace harmful substances with more benign alternatives. Hueppe's disapproving references to "doping"—an internationally understood term

High ideals in international sports, some critics argue, are not matched within the sports establishment by a strong commitment to drug testing.

even at this early date—concerned the uselessness or potential dangers of drugs, not their possible use as illicit performance-enhancers.

Condemnation of doping on ethical grounds appeared during the 1920s as sport became a genuine mass-cultural phenomenon. The growth of international sporting events after the first modern Olympics, held in Athens in 1896, created a new arena for nationalistic competition that served the interests of various governments. Larger financial investments and the prominence of sport in the emerging mass media gave elite athletes a new social and political significance, which helped foster new suspicions about the competitive practices of others. Having left its age of innocence behind, sports medicine was now embarked upon a new experimental phase involving the collaboration of athletes, trainers, physicians, and the pharmaceutical industry. At the same time, a new international sports establishment arose championing an ideal of sportsmanship that was threatened by the use of drugs.

The debate over doping in Germany during the 1920s and '30s anticipated today's doping controversy in almost every respect. Drug use among German athletes was widespread and openly discussed. The German sports literature of this period offered antidoping sermons, justifications for the use of various substances, and rationales for drawing lines between what should and should not be forbidden. Some German physicians clearly believed that certain substances did improve athletic performance, and they were not reluctant to prescribe them. The prominent sports physician Herbert Herxheimer, for example, claimed in 1922 that the commercial product "Recresal" (primary sodium phosphate) produced a detectable increase in physical fitness. More interesting than his endorsement, however, were the verbal gymnastics that followed. With the approach of the spring sports season, he said, the aspiring athlete would need his full dose of phosphates. Without mentioning the word "doping," he went on to assure his readers that this ergogenic "aid" was not comparable to the many "stimulants" in use, since it merely "supported" basic physiological processes. Echoes of Herxheimer's argument have been heard in recent years from former East German sports scientists who still seek to portray steroid use as a form of beneficial "hormonal regulation" for athletes under stress.

By 1930 a less restrained attitude toward the use of Recresal was evident. W. Poppelreuter, a professor of medicine in Bonn, claimed that wartime tests on German troops and later experiments on mountain climbers had confirmed positive laboratory results. Feeding this substance to horses, cows, and pigs had caused them to grow larger, look better, sweat less, work harder, give more milk, and produce better litters. Poppelreuter's own experiments indicated that Recresal also improved arithmetic performance: the speed of mental calculations rose while the number of errors went down—an important finding, he said, because the mental dimension of athletic performance had become increasingly clear. He was adamant about the propriety of Recresal therapy, which he called "a normal hygienic procedure" that merely supported basic physiological processes.

The most controversial technique in Germany at this time was the use of ultraviolet radiation (UV) to invigorate all or part of the athlete's body. From one standpoint, UV was about as invasive and "artificial" a procedure as standing in sunlight. But from another perspective, UV light was the product of "technical and machine-like devices" that threatened to destroy the "honorable competition" sport was meant to be. The debate over UV became a textbook confrontation between the antidoping purists and their more up-to-date opponents for whom per-

formance was the first priority.

Such problematic distinctions between "nutrients" and "stimulants," between supplemental nutrition and more ambitious regimens, constitute the core of the "doping" issue. The sports medical literature of the interwar period is filled with arguments over variations on this fundamental dichotomy: the "natural" versus the "artificial," rehabilitation versus performance enhancement, restoring the organism versus boosting it, and so on. Then as now, debates over specific drugs or techniques were less important than the larger question of whether society should impose limits on athletic ambition and certain methods that serve it, whether athletes should attempt to improve performances by resorting to what one German physician of this period called "deviations from a natural way of life."

Medical objections to doping in Germany did not command universal support among physicians for two reasons. Some of these medical men, like their modern counterparts, were simply spellbound by the prospect of boosting athletic performance in ingenious new ways. But the more fundamental problem, then as now, was that there were simply too many ways to rationalize the use of what were believed to be performance-enhancing drugs within the standard guidelines for medical practice. The line between healing the organism and "improving" it could not be drawn in a clear and definitive way.

Lacking a systematic definition of doping, biomedical conservatives adopted a position based on a kind of moral intuition. Dr. Otto Riesser, director of the Pharmacological Institute at the University of Breslau, was one of the few who understood the biochemical complexities of doping and its uncertain effects. In an address to the German Swimming Federation in 1933, he deplored widespread doping in German sport and blamed physicians for their collusion in these unethical practices. Riesser's response to the problem of defining doping was to say that in difficult cases "common sense and conscience must be the final judges." Such homespun wisdom, though it could not always prevail over the temptation to cheat, was an important statement of principle. Similarly, when Riesser wrote about digitalis in 1930, he speculated that it might help the long-distance skier. "I don't know whether that sort of thing has been tried," he commented. "But all of us feel a healthy inner resistance to such experiments in artificially boosting athletic performance, and, perhaps, a not unjustified fear that any pharmacological intervention, no matter how small, may cause a disturbance in the healthy organism."

The history of doping tells us that our "healthy inner resistance" to such temptations is constantly being subverted by the problem of distinguishing between licit and illicit techniques. The idea of doping—and its notoriety—are, after all, cultural constructs. The rise of an antidoping ethos during the 1920s shows that the culturally conservative response to drug use in sport required about a generation to formulate itself. The culturally conservative response to performance-enhancing drugs, in society at large as well as in sport, is today under siege as it has never been before. In *Listening to Prozac*, Peter Kramer makes a point of undermining what he calls "pharmacological Calvinism," defined as "a general distrust of drugs used for nontherapeutic purposes." Pharmacological Calvinism, he suggests, "may be flimsy protection against the allure of medication. Do we feel secure in counting on our irrationality—our antiscientific prejudice—to save us from the ubiquitous cultural pressures for enhancement?" As Kramer (and his critics) well know, we do not. Indeed, the transformation of Otto Riesser's "healthy inner resistance" into "antiscientific prejudice" is one more sign that Kramer's enormously popu-

lar brief on behalf of "cosmetic psychopharmacology" has benefited from (and strengthened) an increasingly activist view of therapeutic intervention.

The rise of the therapeutic ideal has made the stigma attached to performance-enhancing drugs seem increasingly implausible. In the therapeutic model, the distinction between enhancement and the treatment of specific disorders is blurred. Therapy aims at human improvement, not necessarily the curing of a specific malady. Precisely because we now treat the legitimacy of "therapy" as self-evident, we overlook its expanded role in modern life. Drugs in particular have a vast range of applications that extend far beyond the treatment of organic diseases. Drugs now in wide use help people cope with such "normal" challenges of daily life as work performance and mood control. The elastic concept of therapy easily accommodates the physiological conditions and psychological stresses experienced by high-performance athletes, and the fusion of everyday stress and extreme athletic exertion makes it difficult to condemn doping in sport on a priori grounds. We simply do not employ a typology of stressful experiences that distinguishes on a deep enough level between the pressures of everyday life and sportive stress. The modern English (and now internationalized) word "stress" homogenizes an entire spectrum of experiences and simultaneously implies the need for "therapies" to restore the organism to its original healthy state.

The power of this therapeutic ideal is already transforming the status of the male hormone testosterone and its anabolic-androgenic steroid derivatives. These hormonal substances have been leading a double life as (legitimate) medications and (illegitimate) doping agents for almost half a century. Over the past three decades, steroid use by male and, more recently, female elite athletes has become epidemic, covertly supported by a prosteroid lobby among sports physicians that has received almost no media coverage outside Germany.

The legitimate medical career of synthetic testosterone compounds began within a few years of the first laboratory synthesis in 1935. By the early 1940s, methyl testosterone and testosterone propionate were being promoted by pharmaceutical companies and administered to patients as an experimental therapy for a variety of disorders both real and imagined: to treat the "male climacteric" (fatigue, melancholia, and impotence) in older men, to deal with impotence in younger men, to treat hypogonadism (testicular deficiency), to restore libido in women, and to reverse homosexuality—a particularly problematic use of testosterone, as was recognized at the time. Early practitioners groped toward safe and effective treatments, sometimes administering megadoses (for breast cancer) that dwarfed the lifetime consumption of the most heavily doped East German athletes of the 1970s and '80s. These clinicians divided into more and less cautious factions, but no one questioned the legitimacy of hormonal therapy as a medical technique.

Even at this early date, ambitions for testosterone transcended strictly clinical uses. The idea that synthetic testosterone might become a restorative therapy for millions of people dates from the early period of its commercial development. In 1938 a Yale scientist told a meeting of the American Chemical Society that testosterone propionate "rejuvenated" old men by relieving depression. While the idea of using testosterone to boost athletic performance does not appear in the medical literature, it was becoming apparent to this generation of scientists that testosterone played a role in physical fitness. In 1942, for example, three American researchers correctly guessed that the combination of megadoses and exercise would alter "responses to fatiguing exercise"—an early

harbinger of steroid use in elite sport.

Paul de Kruif's popular book *The Male Hormone* (1945) promoted the idea that testosterone would soon become a mass therapy for the fatigue and waning sexual potency of aging males, and pharmaceutical companies advertised testosterone preparations in professional journals during the decade. Yet testosterone never caught on as a mass-market drug.

A half-century later, new developments are again encouraging the widespread use of testosterone. For one thing, hormone therapy is now a conventional procedure, even if certain applications remain controversial. Pediatric endocrinologists, for example, treat thousands of children of subnormal stature with synthetic human growth hormone (HGH). At the same time, they face increasing demands from parents to prescribe the same therapy for children who are only somewhat short. Such pressures are likely to legitimate the wider use of HGH. Inevitably, some parents will want HGH to boost the athletic potential of their children. Others have already requested steroids for the same purpose. A National Institutes of Health (NIH) plan to recruit healthy children to test the efficacy of biosynthetic HGH is yet another sign that social barriers to hormonal treatments are falling. According to the NIH panel that approved this clinical trial several years ago, "There is substantial evidence that extreme short stature carries distinct disadvantages, including functional impairment and psychological stigmatization." The commercial interests of drug companies also play a role in promoting hormone therapies. In October 1994, less than a week before the federal government was to outline complaints at a congressional hearing against the two major manufacturers of synthetic HGH, Genentech and Caremark, Inc., both companies agreed to curtail aggressive marketing campaigns.

Testosterone therapy is now a standard treatment for hypogonadal males. The resulting demand has stimulated a growing market for testosterone patches that athletes (among others) can use for nonclinical purposes. But again the significance of hormonal therapy extends far beyond the clinic and into the public sphere, where medical "disorders" and "crises" are defined in accordance with social and commercial demands. Thus in 1992 the National Institutes of Health requested research proposals to test whether testosterone therapy can prevent physical ailments and depression in older males. We may now ask whether the aging process itself is about to be officially recognized as a treatable deficiency disease. "I don't believe in the male midlife crisis," commented Dr. John B. McKinlay, an epidemiologist at the New England Research Institute who is a specialist on aging. "But even though in my perspective there is no epidemiological, physiological or clinical evidence for such a syndrome, I think by the year 2000 the syndrome will exist. There's a very strong interest in treating aging men for a profit, just as there is for menopausal women." The emergence of such a syndrome would bring with it new definitions of physiological normality and male identity, and it would help to legitimize other grand ambitions to "boost" the human organism.

The advent of mass testosterone therapy would represent a dramatic cultural change. The use of sex hormones as a "popular nutritional supplement" (as one German expert has put it) to strengthen aging muscles would be a major step toward equating therapy with performance enhancement. And if testosterone products proved to have a restorative effect on sexual functioning in the elderly, this would surely foster a new ideal of "normal" sexual capacity that many people would regard as a "health" entitlement. The certification of low doses as medically safe would transform the image of these drugs, "gentrifying" testosterone products and paving the way for wider use by athletes

and body builders.

The meteoric career of Prozac is culturally significant because Prozac is regarded not strictly as a treatment for a specific disorder but as a performance-enhancing drug for a competitive society. The history of Prozac is a case study in how the legitimization of a performance-enhancing drug proceeds. *Listening to Prozac* is a fascinating book because it presents in autobiographical form the entire cycle of initial discovery, ethical doubt, therapeutic concern, and transformative ambition that constitutes the history of doping in the 20th century. (Whether Prozac has actually transformed the lives of a large number of patients remains a matter of dispute.) The author's periodic references to his own doubts about the ethics of prescribing Prozac function as evidence of his bona fides: "I became aware of my own irrational discomfort, my sense that for a drug to have such a pronounced effect is inherently unnatural, unsafe, uncanny." The resolution of this ethical discomfort is an important aspect of Kramer's narrative, and it is achieved by witnessing the relief afforded his patients by Prozac therapy. The transformative phase is where real ethical peril lies, and once again Kramer sees himself swimming with the historical tide: "If I am right, we are entering an era in which medication can be used to enhance the functioning of the normal mind." It will take bravery for human beings to decide to change themselves, he suggests, but history is on the side of Prozac and psychobiological transformation.

Scandal du jour: after a string of surprising performances, several members of the Chinese women's swim team tested positive for steroids in 1994.

By now the voice of a famous cultural diagnostician from the last century has become faintly audible. We return to the text for further clues and read that Prozac "seemed to provide access to a vital capacity that had heretofore been stunted or absent." The trail grows warmer. We read on and find that Prozac "lends people courage and allows them to choose life's ordinarily risky undertakings." Now the voice is more distinct. Finally, on the last page of the book, the missing theme falls into place. The most profound moral consequence of Prozac, we learn, will be "in changing our sense of constraints on human behavior, in changing the observing self." The idea of human self-transcendence has been the key all along. Now we understand that Kramer is the prophet of a Nietzschean pharmacology that exalts a more dynamic, biochemically enhanced human type.

Doping is Nietzschean pharmacology because it defies biomedical conservatism in the name of a biochemically engineered superperson. But the legitimization of doping takes place not under the charismatic banner of the Nietzschean superman but under the humane rubric of therapy. The use of doping substances is driven by the ambiguous status of drugs that have (or may have) legitimate medical applications as well as performance-boosting value for elite athletes. The "dual-uses" of such drugs make it difficult to argue that they should be banned from sport as medically hazard-

ous. Medical researchers have already confirmed the benefits of human growth hormone for AIDS patients. The amino acid L-carnitine, which appears on a list of legal "steroid alternatives" compiled by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, is another "dual-use" drug that is targeted at both the physically powerful and the physically enfeebled. Sold to athletes in Europe as "supplementary nutrition," it has also been promoted by researchers who claim that it may play a role in preserving mental and physical capacities in the elderly. Making L-carnitine a standard part of geriatric medicine would certainly promote its legitimacy as a performance-enhancing drug for both athletes and the general public.

The gradual "gentrification" of such drugs will have diverse effects. Testosterone products will be more available to the elderly and thus more acceptable to everyone, creating a market much larger than the estimated one million American males who now buy these drugs on the black market. Gentrification will also undermine the campaign against doping in sport. At the same time, destigmatizing these drugs will enable physicians to treat large groups of patients in new ways. Ironically, the criminalization of steroids has been an obstacle to their use for legitimate purposes. At the Ninth International Conference on AIDS, held in Berlin in 1993, physicians urged that anabolic steroids become a standard treatment for AIDS patients and people who are HIV-positive. The potential market represented by these patients already numbers in the tens of millions around the world.

The official pharmacological Calvinism of organized sport is thus under siege from within and without. While drug use has been epidemic among elite athletes since the late 1960s, the new respectability of testosterone products will put international sports officials in an unprecedented bind. How will the Medical Commission of the International Olympic Committee maintain the official notoriety of steroids once these drugs have become a standard medical therapy for millions of ordinary people? In a word, the hard line against doping is not likely to survive the gentrification process. This outcome of the contest between our "healthy inner resistance" to doping and ambitions to "improve" the human organism will have fateful consequences. New roles for drugs will promote the medicalization of everyday life at the expense of our sense of human independence from scientific domination. It will certainly affect our thinking about licit and illicit applications of genetic engineering.

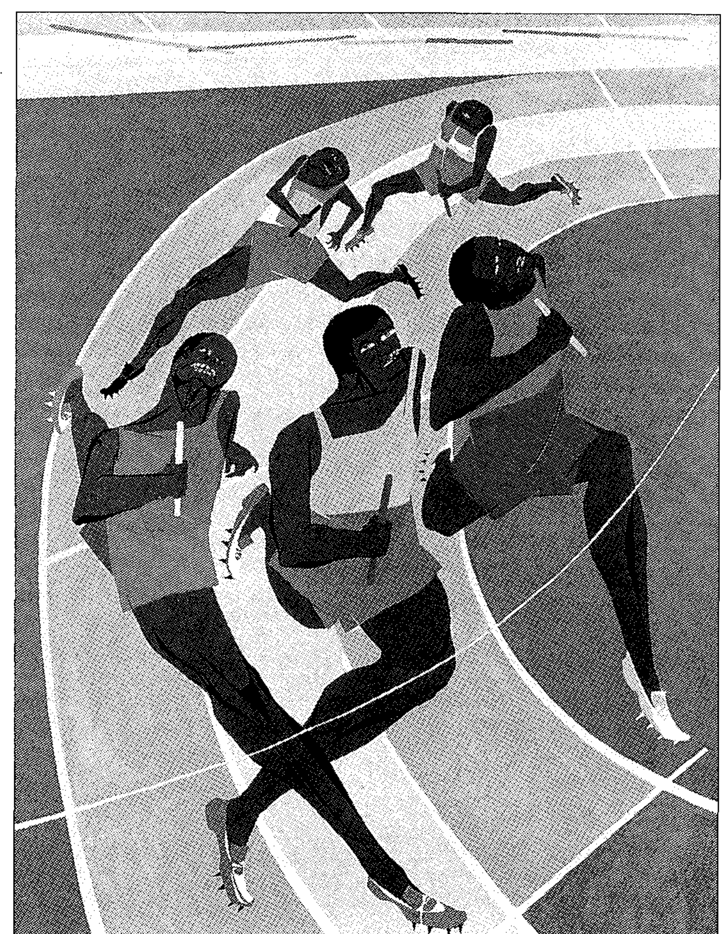
While it is easy to endorse the medical wisdom of warnings against the widespread use of steroids and other potentially dangerous drugs, the history of athletic doping in this century shows that it has been very difficult to enforce such pharmacological Calvinism in the face of growing demands for the "therapeutic" benefits of enhanced performance. The elastic concept of therapy will help to legitimize hormonal manipulation as a mass therapy of the future. It is interesting to speculate about how the advertising experts will promote these products. It is hard to imagine that they will not turn to elite athletes, portraying them as pharmacologically improved examples of supercharged health. One can see the athletes now, lined up at the start of an Olympic final early in the next century, their drug-company logos gleaming in the sun.

Sports and Society

A generation ago, scholars interested in the history of sports were so few, and their publications so infrequent, that there was scarcely a book to recommend to readers who wanted something more than the sports pages of their daily newspaper. Today, scholars specializing in sports history are so numerous and their output so prodigious that it is difficult to limit one's recommendations to a manageable number.

Richard D. Mandell's **Sport: A Cultural History** (Columbia, 1984) has to be among the first studies that come to mind. A grand master of the significant anecdote, with an artist's eye for striking illustrations, the University of South Carolina historian moves from the funeral games of Homer's *Iliad* to the massed gymnastic displays of the Soviet Union. He investigates the role of sports in societies as different as ancient China and modern Germany. **Sports in the Western World** (Univ. of Illinois, 1988) by William J. Baker, a historian at the University of Maine, is narrated with similar flair and illustrated with an equally fascinating set of images. Here, too, one encounters every conceivable kind of athlete, from gladiators to golfers. Both authors are perceptive analysts of sports as thrilling demonstrations of extraordinary physical skill and prowess, and both also have an informed sense of the ritual contexts and aesthetic appeal of sports.

Nowhere have the ritual and aesthetic aspects of sports been more in evidence than at the ancient and the modern Olympic Games. Given the innumerable studies of antiquity's most important sports event, readers disinclined to take on thousand-page tomes in academic German are advised to turn to M. I. Finley and H. W. Pleket's **Olympic Games: The First Thousand Years** (Viking, 1976). In this brief, beautifully illustrated book, Finley and Pleket describe the mythic origins of the ancient athletic festival, and they dispel a number of modern myths, such as the notion that Olympic athletes were amateurs. (The concept of the amateur athlete is a 19th-century invention



Study for the Munich Olympic Games, *by Jacob Lawrence.*

of the British upper middle class, which was anxious to exclude the lower classes from the Henley Regatta and other old-boy events.) As for the modern games, my own book, **The Olympics** (Univ. of Illinois, 1992), is an attempt to describe briefly what happened—between Athens in 1896 and Seoul in 1988—to Pierre de Coubertin's dream of sports as the embodiment of international harmony and good will. Despite the many boycotts and the horrors of commercialization, there are still reasons to be hopeful about the Olympic spirit. Richard D. Mandell's **Nazi Olympics** (Univ. of Illinois, 2nd ed., 1987) demonstrates why the 1936 games (where Adolf Hitler did *not* snub Jesse Owens) were a triumph of pageantry and drama—and a travesty of Olympic ideals. William J. Baker's **Jesse Owens** (Free Press, 1986) is, incidentally, a model biography of the man whom even the Germans acknowledged to be a *Wunderathlet*.

Modern sports, as I attempted to show in **From Ritual to Record** (Columbia, 1978), are very different from those of earlier times. In the ancient world, for instance, neither times nor distances were measured, and contests were never decided by "points." We moderns find it hard even to imagine sports without the ubiquitous quantified results that are the basis of the uniquely modern concept of a sports record.

Since modern athletic games are essentially British inventions—Americans contributed basketball and volleyball at the end of the 19th century—it is appropriate that British sports are the subject of many fine books, among the best of which are **Sport in Britain**, edited by Tony Mason (Cambridge, 1989), and Richard Holt's **Sport and the British** (Oxford, 1989). The first is an encyclopedic illustrated account of the gamut of British sports. The second subtly examines the ramifications of social class in athletics. In **Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players** (New York Univ., 1979), Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard trace the evolution of modern soccer and rugby football from the almost murderously violent traditional game of folk-football.

Americans are, inevitably, likely to be most interested in American sports. To indulge that interest, one can hardly do better than to begin with **A Brief History of American Sports** (Hill & Wang, 1993), by Elliott J. Gorn and Warren Goldstein, historians at Miami University of Ohio and the State University of New York at Old Westbury, respectively. Emphasizing the ways that sports have reassured American men about their masculinity in a world where women have increasingly challenged them in the political and economic realms, the authors also cover such conventional topics as the creation of sports leagues and the achievements of sports heroes (and heroines). My own book, **A Whole New Ball Game** (Univ. of North Carolina, 1988), which makes no claim to comprehensiveness, takes up some specific problems. Why was it, for instance, that the South, which prided itself on its hardy sportsmen, was the last part of the United States to accept modern sports such as baseball, football, and basketball? How can economists claim that black baseball players are the victims of discrimination when their average salary is higher than that of white players? (The answer: if one calculates salary on the basis of "productivity," as measured by such things as batting average, yards gained rushing, and rebounds, African-American athletes are underpaid.)

What about America's leading team games? Gorn and Goldstein have interesting things to say about football's evolution from the British sport of rugby and about the game's spread from the campus to the television screen. But there is, unfortunately, no definitive history of American football. Basketball enthusiasts have the advantage here; they can satisfy their curiosity with Robert Peterson's **Cages to Jump Shots** (Oxford, 1990). The first word of the title refers to the wire mesh that surrounded the court in the days before the out-of-bounds rule; the ball was kept in play and the players, who ran or fell or were shoved against the mesh, were kept in bandages.

Baseball has attracted an immense army of sportswriters, ghost writers, fiction writers, and historians. The most detailed account of "the national game" is Harold Seymour's magisterial three-volume **Baseball** (Oxford, 1960–90), a study comprehensive enough to satisfy all but the most insatiable fan. The best one-volume social histories are Charles C. Alexander's **Our Game** (Holt, 1991) and Benjamin G. Rader's **Baseball** (Univ. of Illinois, 1993). Readers of all three books will have to surrender their childhood belief in the myth of Abner Doubleday—he did *not* invent baseball—but they will be rewarded with exciting narratives that lend some perspective on Ken Burns's public television series. Hero-worshipers can also choose from hundreds of biographies and autobiographies. One of the best is Robert W. Creamer's **Babe** (Simon & Schuster, 1974).

If the covers of *Sports Illustrated* are any clue, boxing ranks with baseball, football, and basketball among the most important American sports. The best social history of "the fight game" is Jeffrey T. Sammons's **Beyond the Ring** (Univ. of Illinois, 1988). The New York University historian tells (and interprets) the stories of John L. Sullivan, Jack Johnson, Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis, Muhammad Ali, and many others.

The lives and careers of black athletes are discussed in many comprehensive histories and detailed biographies, but it is rather a scandal that there is no really good general history of African-American athletes. The late Arthur Ashe was a great tennis player and an admirable person, but his three-volume survey, **A Hard Road to Obey** (Warner, 1988), is long on facts and lamentably short on interpretation. The scholarly deficit in this area is partially overcome by a body of books on African-American baseball players in the Negro National League and (after 50 years of exclusion were ended) in the major leagues. The story of the move from segregation to integration is told, movingly, in Jules Tygiel's **Baseball's Great Experiment** (Oxford, 1983). Jackie Robinson is, of course, the central figure of the stirring drama, but Tygiel, a historian at San Francisco State University, provides a full cast of characters, villains as well as heroes.

Jewish athletes have been luckier than their African-American counterparts. Peter Levine's **Ellis Island to Ebbets Field** (Oxford, 1992) is hagiography of the highest order. His argument that American Jews have been able to devote themselves to sports with no sacrifice of their traditional religious identity is questionable, but his narrative is masterful. Nat Holman leaps from these pages to sink another two-pointer, and Hank Greenberg emerges for another run around the bases.

Until very recently, female athletes were almost totally neglected, by historians as well as by sports spectators. At best, they were given a separate chapter in the histories that purported to tell the "saga of American sports." Now, in addition to innumerable biographies and special studies of women in cricket, soccer, baseball, golf, tennis, track and field, mountain climbing, and almost every other imaginable sport, there are many books that attempt a more comprehensive view. My own **Women's Sports** (Columbia, 1991) begins with Queen Hatshepsut of ancient Egypt and ends in the era of Florence Griffith-Joyner and Katarina Witt. En route, I discuss Spartan girls at the Heraia (games sacred to the goddess Hera), Roman matrons who mimicked gladiators, medieval huntresses, 18th-century Englishwomen who fought in bare-knuckle prizefights, Vassar College undergraduates who formed baseball teams, and female physical education instructors who appealed to the International Olympic Committee to exclude women from the Olympic Games. The book concludes with speculations on the erotic appeal of female athletes, an ideological hornet's nest in this age of feminist protest. Susan Cahn's **Coming on Strong** (Free Press, 1994), concentrating on American sports, is, as her subtitle indicates, a detailed study of "gender and

sexuality in 20th century women's sport." Cahn is a historian at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Mariah Burton Nelson's lively, controversial work is more radically feminist (and more positive about the erotic element in sports): **The Stronger Women Get, the More Men Love Football** (Harcourt Brace, 1994).

Another way to approach sports is to examine their institutional context. Economic historians have produced a number of fairly technical studies of American sports. Most of them require a strong background in economic theory, but Andrew Zimbalist's **Baseball and Billions** (Basic, 1992) is an exception. Zimbalist is a wizard at explaining such matters as the legal technicalities of baseball's famed (and now largely defunct) "reserve clause" and the intricacies of cartelization, arbitration, and the baseball owners' exploitation of the tax shelter. Zimbalist, an economist at Smith College, is ready to practice what he preaches: he is among those planning to launch a new baseball league to rival the strike-crippled major leagues.

The debate over ethics in intercollegiate sports has been as bitter as the struggle over money in professional sports. Ronald A. Smith's inappropriately titled **Sports and Freedom** (Oxford, 1988) is an account of the beginnings of intercollegiate sports. The Pennsylvania State University sports historian proves conclusively that most of the infractions punished today by the National Collegiate Athletic Association were familiar on 19th-century campuses. College sports were full of athletes who lacked the ability or the motivation to benefit from the curriculum, under-the-table payments, coaches who earned more than the college president, and a determination among players and coaches to win by fair means or foul. Of the many analyses of the woes of intercollegiate sports today, **College Sports, Inc.** (Holt, 1990), by Indiana University English professor Murray Sperber, may be the best. He describes, among other abuses, the extraordinary fiscal and administrative autonomy enjoyed by many athletic departments at NCAA Division I universities.

Finally, for readers curious about the people in the stands and in front of the television screens, there is my **Sports Spectators** (Columbia, 1984), which moves from antiquity, when the most violent sport (gladiatorial games) had the most peaceful spectators, to the present, when British, European, and Latin American soccer games are occasions for violent rampages by young, unemployed, working-class men. But readers worried about the disorderly behavior of contemporary spectators will be comforted to learn that today's tumults are nothing compared with the Nike riots of A.D. 562, which began at Constantinople's chariot races and left 30,000 dead.

—*Allen Guttmann*

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THE USE OF FORCE IN OUR TIME

BY A. J. BACEVICH

America's victory in the Persian Gulf War seemed a resounding confirmation of conventional U.S. military thought. Yet to cope with a world in which terrorists and warlords pose as great a challenge as massed armies, a radical revision of military thinking is essential.

Every nation is caught in the moral paradox of refusing to go to war unless it can be proved that the national interest is imperiled, and of continuing in the war only by proving that something much more than national interest is at stake.

—Reinhold Niebuhr,
The Irony of American History **(1952)**

When the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr wrote these words, the Cold War—a crisis in international politics touching virtually every aspect of American life—was at its height. Yet the source of the paradox that Niebuhr referred to was not so much political as military. It derived less from the East-West confrontation than from profound changes in the character of warfare, changes that predated by several decades the Cold War itself. The paradox in which the United States found itself caught in the 1950s was a product of what the historian Walter Millis labeled "the hypertrophy of war." A series of changes in warfare had plunged the military profession into a prolonged crisis. An understanding of that crisis—and the military's efforts to evade its implications—is an essential point of departure for understanding today's controversies surrounding the use of force.

To Niebuhr and other observers, the conflicts of 1914–18 and 1939–45 had demonstrated with awful clarity that war in the 20th century had become "total." This transformation of war was the product of several converging developments. Advanced societies had evolved vast capabilities to marshal human, industrial, and financial resources for military purposes. The collaboration of soldiers, scientists, and engineers had produced new weapons of extraordinary destructive power. Military staffs had devised techniques for bringing awesome

Confusion reigns as gunfire erupts on a Port Au Prince street. Some 6,000 U.S. troops are in Haiti under Operation Maintain Democracy, one of many unconventional missions now assigned the U.S. military.

accumulations of materiel to bear on the battlefield. Yet these impressive achievements had yielded precious little of political value. Although it was a staggering event, the bombing of Hiroshima merely punctuated what already seemed evident: that war as an instrument of reasoned policy had reached a dead end. War had become too destructive to wage.

Thus by the time Niebuhr wrote, with the world divided into two hostile camps, each brandishing nuclear weapons, traditional conventions of Great Power politics no longer provided adequate guidance on the proper role of force in regulating international affairs. When the slightest miscalculation might upset the precarious global equilibrium and touch off World War III, only the most important national purposes, involving true vital interests, could justify the use of force. "In the face of the horrors of nuclear war," speculated Henry Kissinger in one of the decade's most influential books, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (1957), "perhaps force has ceased to be an instrument of policy save for the most naked issue of national survival."

Yet wars were still fought in the peripheral regions of the world. Although constrained from employing the full weight of their military might, the larger powers found themselves ineluctably drawn into such conflicts—American involvement in the Korean "police action" being a case in point. On those occasions when advanced democracies did engage in protracted conflict, mere national interests could hardly suffice to justify the costs incurred: the havoc wreaked as a by-product of modern military campaigns, the suffering of combatants and noncombatants alike, and the resort to morally objectionable methods in the pursuit of victory. The longer and more

brutal the war, the more exalted became the purposes it allegedly served. Thus, for example, in Korea and in Indochina—both theaters of war when Niebuhr wrote—Western belligerents attempted to vindicate their conduct by citing purposes that transcended the mere *raison d'état*. During the second Indochina War this was to be even more the case. Indeed, as representatives of a nation that had fought one world war in order to "end all wars" and "make the world safe for democracy," and whose participation in a second signified the triumph of the ideals informing the first, American political leaders were particularly given to such exercises in national self-justification.

II

If the threat of Armageddon through much of this century has vastly complicated the statesman's problem of when and how to use force, soldiers have for the most part tried gamely to carry on as if nothing fundamental has changed. Military professionals have attempted to evade Niebuhr's paradox, rejecting or minimizing the implications of total war.

They could hardly be expected to do otherwise. After all, the autonomy and institutional authority of the military profession and the status and self-esteem of its members depend upon arrangements very much at odds with Niebuhr's paradox. Those arrangements rest on three essential assumptions. The first is that the international system—"the world"—is composed of competing nation-states, each possessing unambiguous sovereignty. According to the second, the ultimate mechanism for making adjustments to that system and for preventing its breakdown is war, conducted between nation-states in compliance with certain recognized rules. The third is that access to the coercive means needed to wage war is permitted only to national elites (of which soldiers form an integral part).

The century has not dealt kindly with these propositions. Since World War I, sovereignty has been progressively circumscribed. Deference to supranational authority has constrained nation-states, and even the Great Powers, from acting in pursuit of their own immediate interests. In addition, the lines that traditionally demarcated war as a realm of activity have broken down. As conflict has assumed devastating new forms, the distinctions between politics and war, between combatants and noncombatants, and between what is legitimate and what is impermissible in the conduct of warfare have become increasingly blurred. Nor have national elites succeeded in maintaining their monopoly over the machinery of war. Instead, subversives, terrorists, partisans, guerrillas, paramilitary groups, and self-proclaimed revolutionaries have usurped the state's control over the instruments of violence.

For the better part of the century, hidebound soldiers—and even the experience of total war at first hand could not guarantee a cure for incorrigible obstinacy—have insisted that war has not changed, that hallowed precepts of military practice should remain unaltered. Yet other soldiers, the clever ones, have sensed that war is indeed being transformed. Furthermore, they understand the imperative of devising a response in order to prevent their vocation from becoming obsolete.

In the aftermath of World War I, the cleverest and most perceptive soldiers by far were the Germans. For the German officer corps, the catastrophe of 1918 was not simply that Germany had suffered a great defeat but that the German army had failed demonstrably to fulfill the task that justified its elevated status within German society: securing the decisive victory that would

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resolve the political crisis of Europe to Germany's permanent advantage. Demonstrated repeatedly over the course of four crippling years of war, this failure had in the end unleashed a host of dangerous social forces that during the 1920s and '30s jeopardized values and institutions cherished by the German military caste.

As historian Michael Geyer argues, the imperative to stabilize the social order and uphold its own privileged place within that order provided the true stimulus for the German military's outpouring of innovation and creativity during the interwar decades. It was this implicitly counterrevolutionary agenda rather than the narrow technical problem of breaking the stalemate of trench warfare that motivated German military reformers such as General Hans von Seeckt (1866–1936). The central intellectual problem confronting the officer corps of the interwar period, notes Geyer, was to devise ways "to limit war in order to make it, once again . . . purposeful and instrumental." By restoring the possibility of rapid decision achieved at tolerable cost, the German army would once again "make war feasible," thus preserving its own status and prerogatives within German society as well.

The world would come to know the results of these labors as "blitzkrieg." Yet despite a succession of dazzling operational performances beginning in 1939, the methods devised by German military reformers failed. Instead of limiting war and making it purposeful, German reforms laid the basis for a conflict even more horrible than that of 1914–18. Once again, war jumped the neat institutional boundaries to which military professionals sought to confine it. Once again, the search for that single decisive stroke that would produce ultimate victory—a modern Cannae—eluded the best efforts of generals and their staffs. Once again, war became a matter of indiscriminate slaughter, encompassing whole societies and devouring combatants and noncombatants alike. Once again, the sheer dimensions and duration of the conflict gave rise to political and social forces that altered the existing order in ways neither foreseen nor desired by reigning elites on either side.

Despite this second recurrence of total war in a quarter-century, the military profession (in the countries where it survived) remained steadfast in insisting that the principles of traditional military practice had not outlived their usefulness. In an age when the prerogatives of sovereignty were repeatedly challenged and progressively diminished, when weapons of mass destruction continued to proliferate despite their manifest uselessness in waging war, when the failure of national elites to restrict access to instruments of violence became undeniable and perhaps irreversible, and when real wars time and again exposed the limits of military orthodoxy—throughout this age, professional soldiers persisted in their quest to restore "institutionally contained warfare between armed forces," thereby reversing the revolution set in motion by the onset of total war.

III

In the aftermath of World War II, overall responsibility for the restoration of the older idea of war devolved upon the nation that had inherited the mantle of world's leading military power: the United States. From our vantage point in the 1990s, it may appear that American soldiers were at first slow to take up the challenge. Lacking the stimulus of defeat that motivated the Germans during the interwar period, American military thinking from the late 1940s into the 1960s was lackluster. It derived less from sustained engagement with the implications of total war than from obstinate parochialism and fierce interservice rivalry.

Many will recall this period as a golden age of impressively original American

thinking about war. But the innovators were civilian "defense intellectuals," not soldiers, and their preoccupation was averting wars, not fighting them. By comparison with the sophisticated contours of the civilians' deterrence theory, the nuclear "warfighting" scenarios created by military professionals appear crude and simplistic. The army's ill-conceived "Pentomic" experiment of the 1950s, for example, called for the fielding of whole new families of nuclear weapons but sought to fit them into the framework of traditional campaigns and battles. Indeed, American civilian leaders never showed much interest in the military's doctrinal excursions, indulging them only to the extent that they might add credibility to America's deterrent posture by showing that the nation's professional soldiers were undaunted by the prospect of fighting World War III.

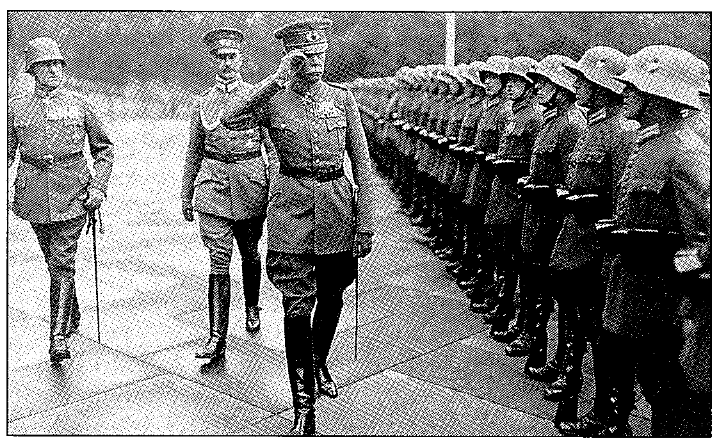
President John F. Kennedy's fascination with counterinsurgency and nation building in the early 1960s stands as the exception to this civilian indifference, but it was an exception that ill-served the cause of military professionalism. The premise underlying counterinsurgency doctrine as it developed during the late 1950s and early '60s was that by supplementing existing routines with a smattering of novel technique, conventional military institutions could deal with the noxious "brushfire wars" that had become increasingly commonplace after World War II in places such as Malaya, the Philippines, and Indochina. That premise proved to be false. Instead of allowing soldiers to expand the reach of professional competency, the flirtation with counterinsurgency paved the way for the disaster of the Vietnam War.

Vietnam made it impossible for American soldiers to sustain the pretense that all was well with their profession. So-called strategic weapons, developed at enormous expense during the 1950s and '60s, were largely irrelevant to the problem at hand, and even "tactical" nuclear weapons, if their use had been politically possible, offered little prospect of meaningful operational effect. Concepts of conventional war found no ready application: there were no enemy field armies to encircle, no battle fleets to destroy, no vital industrial centers to bombard.

Nothing remained but to engage the enemy on his own terms, waging unconventional war with forces not specifically tailored to the task. This American extemporizing produced a harvest of tactical successes, a hugely gratifying development to those managing the Vietnam War. After all, such minor victories provided the stuff from which even greater success at the operational and strategic levels could be constructed—at least that was the lesson of earlier wars. The art of generalship lay in marshaling tactical successes so as to win battles and campaigns. Yet in Vietnam this was the problem that stymied senior commanders. What was the operational significance of a dozen scattered firefights, of ambushes and patrols, of firebases defended, of weapons captured and bodies counted? No one knew. Despite the expenditure of American blood and treasure on an ever more lavish scale, American soldiers found themselves fighting a war of attrition that they could not win. As had been the case in the trenches of World War I's Western Front, the sergeants and the captains did their job well enough; the generals failed utterly in theirs.

To be sure, no sooner had the futility of American efforts become undeniable than efforts commenced to absolve the generals of blame for defeat. American soldiers had fought the war under absurd restrictions that condemned them to failure, it was said. The generals' hands had been tied by civilian political appointees: the McGeorge Bundys and Walt Rostows, Robert McNamara and the Whiz Kids

running roughshod over the Pentagon brass, all the bright but naive Ivy Leaguers who had responded to JFK's summons. The responsibility for defeat in Vietnam belonged to those civilians. Yet at no time during this long war did such restrictions move any senior officer to resign in protest. To the very end they soldiered on, collecting medals and promotions, bidding their weary subordinates to persevere in a struggle that had long since lost all purpose.



Attempting to make conventional war quicker and less costly, General Hans von Seeckt radically redesigned the German army between 1920 and '26.

Furthermore, as with Germany's defeat in World War I, the political and social dimensions of the crisis provoked by Vietnam loomed at least as large as the military-technical ones. Although it was a conflict waged on a far smaller scale than the war of 1914–18, Vietnam took on some of the qualities of total war, engaging whole societies and producing aftershocks that reverberated through virtually every quarter of American life. Besides nearly ripping apart the American political system, the war generated long-term changes that soldiers could only view as inimical to the well-being of their profession.

Anxious to "reconcile" and to "heal old wounds," Americans today seek to smooth the rough edges of memory about Vietnam. But in the collective psyche of incumbent military leaders the rough edges remain. Understanding their perspective is impossible without first recalling the way the world looked to them 20 years ago, when they were subalterns recently returned from a failed and bitter war.

In those days, the national landscape as viewed from inside the American military could hardly have looked more depressing. Vietnam had legitimized mass resistance to war and to military service. To have protested and refused to fight was recognized as a sign of enlightenment, a view that persists even today, albeit with some ambivalence, in influential sectors of society. Many of those who had fought and who remained in the post-Vietnam military felt shunned and unappreciated. Soldiers nursed a smoldering grudge against the news media, blaming biased and sanctimonious reporters for puncturing the image of the American fighting man as selfless patriot, casting him instead as either a dupe or an accomplice in war crimes. Although seldom voiced openly, a deep-seated cynicism about politics and a contempt for politicians imbued the officer corps that came home from Vietnam. The officers felt that they had been used and betrayed by civilian elites. As a result, the war left in its wake an unhealthy residue of civil-military distrust. Even more broadly, the war served as catalyst for a cultural explosion, giving rise to changes that soldiers instinctively viewed as antithetical to their ethos. Expectations that the military should somehow accommodate itself to the agenda of Black Power, feminism, gay liberation, and the cult of the imperial self provoked dismay and resentment.

IV

Yet to its everlasting credit, the military wasted little time feeling sorry for itself. The American defeat in Vietnam, much like Germany's humiliation in 1918, soon produced a period of intense introspection and spectacular creativity. As with the German response, this American reform effort, ostensibly rooted in military-technical issues, had its wellsprings in the imperative of responding to the larger institutional crisis that defeat had brought to a head. The overriding task in the 1970s paralleled the one that German officers had faced a half-century earlier: re-establishing a basis for military professionalism by affirming that war as an extension of politics remained the special province of a warrior caste that could rightfully claim a distinctive status within society.

In one critical respect, however, the German and American responses differed. German military reform evolved within the narrow strategic framework defined by Germany's position in the heart of Europe. This setting obliged German soldiers to pursue professional rehabilitation by refighting the war they had lost. Working within the spacious strategic parameters permitted a truly global power, American military professionals felt no similar compunction to devise solutions to the problems of counterinsurgency (solutions that inevitably would have collided with the canons of military orthodoxy). For American officers, the starting point for retrieving their professional legitimacy lay in avoiding altogether future campaigns even remotely similar to Vietnam. Among German soldiers after World War I, the Western Front that had cost them so dearly became an obsession; their aim was to get it right the next time. With only a few exceptions, American soldiers evinced little interest in refighting the last war. Even those who were willing to revisit the conflict joined in the unanimous conclusion: never again.

Yet in another sense, the American search for professional redemption after Vietnam did mirror the German experience. In both cases, the aim was inherently counterrevolutionary: to restore limits and boundaries to war, so that outcomes would be determined by the clash of opposing armies, not the mobilization of entire societies. American soldiers would have to convince a public and elites scarred by Vietnam that war did not necessarily mean costly stalemate—the notorious "quagmire." They would have to demonstrate the feasibility of achieving decision at tolerable cost and without widespread collateral damage and incidental slaughter. The element of *time* was critical. Vietnam had convinced American soldiers that modern democracy's capacity to withstand the strains of war was severely limited. In any conflict in which success was not soon forthcoming, popular impatience might lead to the withdrawal of support, with devastating consequences for the war's outcome and for those who fought. Therefore, an overriding imperative in future conflicts was to win quickly. The corollary was equally important: conflicts in which the prospect of early decision appeared problematic were to be avoided at all costs.

In short, the officer corps that came home from Southeast Asia devoted precious little energy to dissecting the war that it had just endured. Doing so would have advanced the cause of professional revival minimally, if at all. Rather, soldiers threw themselves headlong into an effort to restore the possibility of decision-oriented warfare directed by military elites—an effort undertaken in the face of skeptics (mostly on the political Left) persuaded by Hiroshima on the one hand and Vietnam on the other that all war had be-

come an exercise in futility.

The bind to which these critics pointed was a real one. The post-Vietnam American military attempted to escape it by reasserting the existence—indeed, the primacy—of conflict in the zone between all-out nuclear war on the one hand and unconventional war on the other hand, between apocalypse and people's war. Nor was it absurd to claim that such a zone existed. The unfolding military history of the modern Middle East provided examples that were as instructive as they were fortuitous.

Even as the agony of Vietnam played itself out, the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973 reminded American military officers how wars were supposed to be fought: warrior pitted against warrior in a contest whose stakes, military as well as political, were straightforward and unambiguous; commanders empowered to command and backed by political leaders who refrained from operational meddling; civilian populations that were spared direct involvement as belligerents but that had no difficulty determining whose side they were on. Best of all, these wars ended within a matter of days with an outcome that was unequivocal. In the performance of the Israeli Defense Forces, and in the IDF's status within Israeli society, American soldiers found inspiration for their own recovery.

The problem was one of adapting the style of warfare practiced by the Israelis to fit American strategic requirements. For the United States, the "threat" was not Arabs but the Soviet empire. The critical battlefield was not the desert. It was certainly not the jungle or rice paddy. It was the "Central Region," the expanse of industrialized and democratic Europe extending from Denmark south to Switzerland, from the Iron Curtain west to the Atlantic ports. By re-establishing itself as a force that with its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies could win handily any face-off against the Warsaw Pact, the American military establishment might begin to undo the effects of Vietnam. Even without fighting—indeed, the overriding criterion of success was to prevent a fight—the American military profession could recover the stature and legitimacy lost in Southeast Asia.

Thus disposed, most American officers came to regard the Vietnam War less as a defeat than as a digression from real soldiering, as lost years during which the United States fell behind the Soviet Union. Beginning in the mid-1970s and continuing through the 1980s, the Soviet "other" provided both focus and a sense of urgency to their campaign of military revitalization. Leaving few parts of the armed forces untouched, this effort manifested itself most prominently in the realm of doctrine, particularly in the AirLand Battle Doctrine unveiled by the army in 1982 and formally endorsed by the air force as well. AirLand Battle provided the blueprint according to which outnumbered U.S. forces would turn back a full-scale non-nuclear Warsaw Pact attack, relying on superior technology, superior training, and superior personnel to compensate for the enemy's greater numbers.

The Cold War's unexpected end meant that this plan would never be tested in battle. But it turned out that even a Battle of Western Europe might not have provided that test: war plans acquired from the former East Germany show that the Warsaw Pact intended to employ nuclear weapons on a mass scale at the outset of an attack. One of the most critical assumptions informing the vision of AirLand Battle had been wrong all along.

Yet even though the demise of the Warsaw Pact came not with a bang but with a whimper, the hosts designed to defend Europe from attack did have their day in battle. In one of the great ironies of

military history, forces made redundant by the end of the Cold War and soon to be disestablished were handed the reprieve of one final mission.

No war is to be welcomed. But if the United States was destined to fight a war in the Persian Gulf, the timing of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait could not have been more opportune. The American-led response to this act of naked aggression culminated in an extraordinarily one-sided victory. The strategic consequences of that triumph continue to ripple throughout the Middle East. No less important, Operation Desert Storm quickly turned American thinking about war upside down. President George Bush and others concluded that the nation had at long last kicked the Vietnam syndrome. The war's neat convergence of national interest and international morality combined with an awesome display of military prowess (and extremely low casualties) fed increased popular expectations about what American power and leadership might accomplish in shaping the post–Cold War world. And although some theorists glimpsed in Desert Storm the outlines of yet another profound revolution in military affairs—a revolution driven by technology that promised to change the very nature of war—soldiers saw it as validating the reforms of the previous 15 years. By liberating a small desert oligarchy from the clutches of a ham-handed aggressor possessed of a large army but no nuclear weapons, they had reasserted the preeminence of "real war." In this sense, Desert Storm seemed to signal the long-sought redemption of military professionalism.

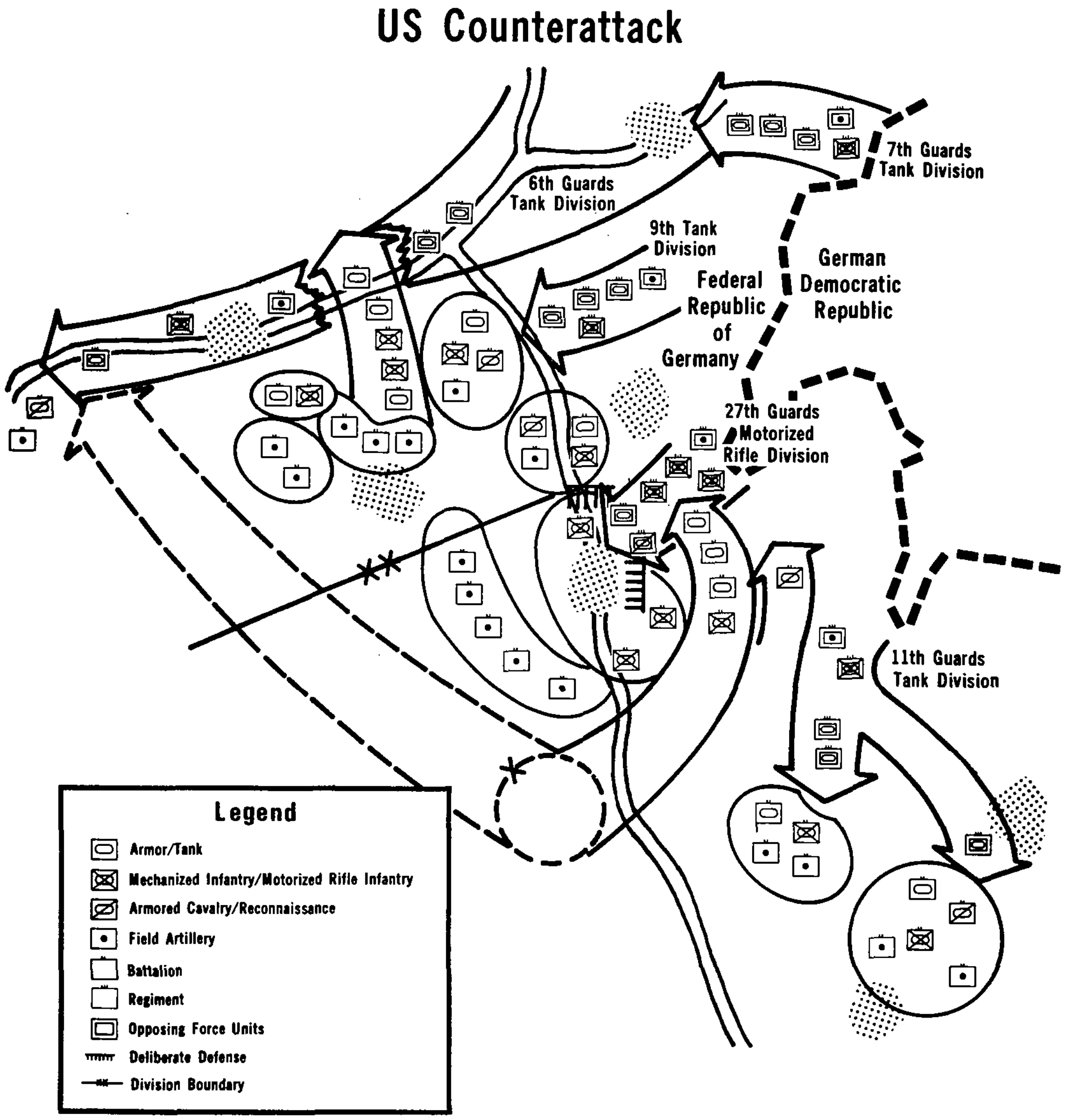
V

And so for the United States at least, Desert Storm seemed to herald a release from Niebuhr's paradox. To soldiers, it promised an end to the long crisis of their profession. Yet subsequent events have dashed all such hopes.

Rather than bring about an age of harmony, the end of the Cold War gave way to an era in which confrontation and conflict promise to be endemic. Although mostly small-scale and seldom posing a direct threat to American security, post–Cold War military crises such as those in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, and North Korea have proven impossible to ignore. Furthermore, despite America's overwhelming military power, these crises have defied ready solution.

To be sure, none of them have yet culminated in full-fledged disaster for the United States. Yet when one recalls the confidence and renewed sense of purpose presumed to form part of the legacy of the Persian Gulf War, the difficulty experienced by the United States in bringing its power to bear on these lesser problems is striking. Despite agonizing that has been protracted and almost embarrassingly public, consensus on questions of purpose, means, and method has remained beyond the reach of American policymakers and their military advisers. At the pinnacle of its military superiority, the United States has seemingly drifted once again into a state of confusion about when and under what circumstances to employ force.

In short, it has become increasingly apparent that the end of the Cold War and victory in Desert Storm have not allowed the United States to escape from the implications of Niebuhr's paradox after all. At most, the end of the Cold War has turned that paradox inside out. Once only vital national interests could justify a decision to employ force. Expectations prompted by victory in the Gulf changed that. The perception that American military power might with minimal risk be employed to serve "something much more than" the nation's immediate inter-



During the 1970s and '80s, American military planners energetically developed and refined plans for the defense of Central Europe. This 1983 scenario involves Germany's Fulda Gap and Hessian Corridor.

ests seemed to oblige the United States to make that effort. The illusion of unchallengeable military superiority magnified the call of conscience. In some instances—the rescue of the Kurds, the intervention in Somalia, and the peaceful occupation of Haiti are examples—conscience impelled intervention in the near-total absence of substantive national interests.

Formerly, according to Niebuhr, once a nation found itself militarily engaged, leaders groped for larger purposes to justify and sustain the commitment they had made. Today, the admirable objectives that provide a compelling argument for going in may not suffice to justify staying. Americans want to do good in the world, but their willingness to pay for doing good is limited, especially if payment is demanded in American lives. Once the

bullets have begun to fly and it becomes apparent that success may involve substantial costs, the larger purposes that inspired the decision to intervene lose their resonance. The ensuing debate over how long to sustain a commitment reverts to the question of whether doing so contributes directly to the well-being of the United States. Failure by responsible officials to answer that question in the affirmative undermines popular and political support for an operation. An enterprise that yesterday seemed expedient is today not worth the blood of a single American soldier. In the case of Somalia, such thinking led the United States to abandon its commitment altogether. In the *Harlan County* incident in Haiti, it aborted a mission barely under way. So the bind identified by Niebuhr in 1952 has reasserted itself in a somewhat altered form. Its effects remain the same: despite an abundance of available military power, the obstacles confronting efforts to translate that power into political advantage are seemingly insurmountable.

VI

But why is this the case? With the Cold War now history, with Desert Storm as a recent model of how to use power effectively, why is American military policy once again so apparently ineffectual? The interpretation most frequently advanced by critics is the political one: responsibility for bootless U.S. policies can be traced directly to an irresolute leader and the maladroit advisers who serve him. But that explanation is incomplete, if not altogether misleading.

Rather, the limited utility of American military power stems in no small measure from the persistent limitations of professional orthodoxy. In an officer corps buoyed by success in the Gulf but still haunted by memories of Vietnam, that orthodoxy has if anything entrenched itself more deeply. Adversaries as different as Mohammed Farah Aidid and Radovan Karadzic have all too readily grasped the opportunities implicit in that fact. No doubt they respect the American military establishment for its formidable strengths. They are also shrewd enough to circumvent those strengths and to exploit the vulnerabilities inherent in the rigid American adherence to professional conventions regarding the use of force.

None of this is new and most of it is unavoidable. As I suggested earlier, the abiding theme of 20th-century military history is that the changing character of modern war long ago turned the flank of conventional military practice, limiting its application to an ever narrowing spectrum of contingencies. Despite expectations to the contrary, Desert Storm did not reverse that trend. Nor is the revolution in military affairs to which Desert Storm supposedly pointed likely to do so in the future. On the contrary, as the predicaments posed by Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, and North Korea suggest, the military history of the post–Cold War era is likely to continue to evolve along the lines of the past several decades.

Unlike the brazen "criminal trespass" that made Iraq such a choice villain in the Persian Gulf, political violence after the Cold War only infrequently takes the form of one state directly victimizing another. Three of the four cases cited above involved some variant of internal conflict. In the fourth case, a state desperate to make up for its own failings has employed nuclear threats to extort concessions from the international community. Yet even in this instance, North Korea has carefully refrained from overt aggression.

In other words, when political disputes turn violent, seldom does the nexus of conflict take the form of one sovereign entity directly violating another. So long as this is

true, the concept of Major Regional Contingencies (MRC), featured in the Clinton administration's Bottom-Up Review of defense as the supposed template for future American military operations, will rarely prove useful. Indeed, none of the four cases cited above have served to validate this planning tool. Perhaps this should not be surprising. Although dressed up in postindustrial garb, the MRC is an attempt to revive a model of limited war more suited to an 18th-century system of international politics than to our own.

Implicit in the MRC model is the expectation of U.S. forces operating in pursuit of clearly defined purposes, waging campaigns of limited duration, and relying on the high-tech weaponry that is the American strong suit. Yet the varied military crises of the past two years have repeatedly frustrated such expectations. Local conditions have undermined efforts to translate political aims into crisp military objectives. What was the mission in Somalia? To feed the starving? To rebuild a failed state? To get General Aidid? Urged to add peacekeeping and peacemaking to their repertoire of missions, professional soldiers bridle, perhaps catching a whiff of rice paddy or triple-canopy jungle. Such missions raise the specter of open-ended commitments under circumstances in which every other party involved possesses the ability to extend the quarrel indefinitely while no one possesses the capacity to bring it to a conclusion.

Nor have circumstances on the ground—whether actual as in Somalia or prospective as in Bosnia—accommodated the preferred American operational style. Mountainous terrain and crowded cities do not facilitate the effective employment of ultra-expensive, precision-guided munitions. The intermixing of combatants with noncombatants confronts U.S. regulars with the unwelcome prospect of once more fighting adversaries who are undistinguishable from their surroundings—and of being saddled with the blame for the civilian casualties that are a by-product of fighting in such circumstances. Even in North Korea, arguably the most clearcut military problem with which the United States has wrestled of late, Pyongyang's shadowy nuclear capability has vastly complicated efforts to define operational concepts that are feasible and make sense politically. As Roger Molander, military analyst and former member of the U.S. National Security Council staff, has commented, North Korea suggests that, with the possible exception of Iraq, the nonnuclear MRC may already be a myth.

For reasons such as these, American military leaders have in case after case stood in the forefront of those arguing against direct U.S. military intervention. In a sense, this is not unusual: soldiers are habitually reluctant interventionists. Yet their specific objections—the difficulty of translating political purpose into clear military objectives (Somalia and Bosnia), the lack of a precisely defined operational endpoint (Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti), the prospect of conflict involving nuclear weapons (Korea), the risk of casualties beyond a level acceptable to American opinion (almost anywhere)—emphasize the point that the conditions permitting effective military action in the Persian Gulf were the exception rather than the rule. In short, if military professionals saw Desert Storm as restoring "real war" to pride of place, subsequent efforts to apply that experience to the problems of a turbulent world have foundered. The long crisis of military professionalism continues unabated.

VII

The point of emphasizing the enduring nature of this crisis of military professionalism is not to condemn or belittle the efforts of those in uniform who wrestle with it. If soldiers cling stubbornly to the

premises that have defined the essence of their calling, they are behaving in ways that are predictably human. How could it be otherwise? Indeed, an appreciation of the dilemma that soldiers face should temper expectations about how far existing military institutions can be stretched to incorporate unorthodox conditions. Americans may properly insist that their military attempt to adapt itself to new circumstances, but they should do so with the understanding that only modest change will occur. They may ask why the nation's vast military capabilities are so seldom relevant to the actual sources of upheaval in the world, but they should not expect their queries, objections, or complaints to have more than modest effect. Given the framework of military professional orthodoxy, reinforced by the American experience of the past 25 years, the range of circumstances in which U.S. military power is likely to find application will remain narrow. No amount of railing against senior officers for their perceived timidity is likely to change that. Nor is foisting some new weapon system on the military or demanding changes in doctrine or force structure. Nor will any so-called revolution in military affairs provide any near-term remedy.

Those who would nudge the military toward accepting a somewhat wider range of contingencies need to find ways to reassure soldiers that such departures from strict orthodoxy will not put the status and prestige of the military at high risk. To accomplish that, political leaders and others must encourage Americans to shed unrealistic expectations about the near-term political payoff of even the most successful military operations. When Somalia or Rwanda collapses, military intervention can establish conditions that permit humanitarian operations to proceed. But no military action can create or restore functioning societies. When Haiti falls victim to military thuggery, the perpetrators can be deposed through military intervention and duly elected officials can be restored to power. But military action cannot democratize a nation in which few of the prerequisites of democracy exist.

Americans must also be disabused of the notion, vastly reinforced by the fabulous success of Desert Storm, that technology is sanitizing war or paving the way for an era when technologically advanced countries such as the United States will employ the military instrument bloodlessly. With rare exceptions, the effective use of force will almost invariably carry with it a substantial risk of American casualties. Indeed, a capacity for absorbing casualties provides one measure of a nation's military credibility.

Any new attitude toward the use of force will thus require a few modest steps toward the de-sentimentalization of the American soldier. The United States should never send its warriors in harm's way without good reason. It should train them well and arm them with the best available equipment. It should honor their sacrifices. It should mourn their loss when they fall in battle. But if the United States intends to be taken seriously as a world power, the death of American soldiers—volunteers and professionals all—should not in and of itself lead the nation to reverse or abandon stated policy. Americans need not worry that their military leaders will treat cavalierly the lives of those placed in their charge. By conveying their own realistic appreciation that the use of force entails the likelihood of casualties and that the loss of a single rifleman does not necessarily constitute unacceptable calamity, Americans will encourage the military itself to evaluate the potential use of force without inordinate anxiety about the impact of casualties on public support for its mission and status.

By coaxing American military leaders into becoming marginally more responsive to the world as it is, such changes in public

attitudes might for a time enable the United States to use its military power more effectively. But adjustments of this sort would provide at most a temporary palliative, merely postponing the final resolution of the century-long crisis of military orthodoxy.

Clinging to orthodoxy will in the end only undermine the special status and prestige of the military which that orthodoxy is designed in part to protect. For the moment, in the lingering afterglow of Desert Storm, the American public feels little eagerness to peer behind the imposing facade of military professionalism. The abiding appeal of military pomp and display, the allure of war machines as testimonials to national strength and ingenuity, and perhaps above all the reservoir of esteem and affection for the mythical G.I.—all of these and more maintain the public's inclination to accept the status quo. Yet no amount of popular esteem can sustain the facade indefinitely. If nothing else, the unfolding history of our era will see to that. Each time the United States submits to nuclear extortion (having established the precedent with North Korea), each time terrorists successfully penetrate American cities and take American lives, each time professional soldiers respond to episodes of ethnic cleansing or genocide by declaring such problems outside their brief, a few more of the citizens who pay so dearly to uphold their country's status as the World's Only Superpower will venture to ask what they are getting for their money. Such doubts will erode—and may eventually demolish—the public's support for military professionalism as it exists today.

Faced with such erosion, military leaders will awaken to the unwisdom of blanket opposition to missions that fail to conform to their own preferences and priorities. As a device to shore up public trust and confidence, they may feel obliged to accept an incrementally greater role in such undertakings as multilateral peacekeeping or drug interdiction. Yet reluctant acceptance of nontraditional missions that is not accompanied by thoroughgoing institutional change carries risks of its own. As has often been the case with past efforts at half-hearted improvisation, the chief risk is one of failure—to the detriment of the nation as well as the military's own agenda.

The expectation that traditional military thinking and traditional military practice can satisfy the requirements of the United States in the 21st century is a delusion. Yet devising workable substitutes remains a challenge. That soldiers themselves may yet summon the vision to adapt their ideas and institutions to the requirements of this new era—even at the cost of giving up their traditional definition of what it means to be a military professional—remains a possibility. But it is a remote one. It is more likely that a renewal of American military thought will be the work of people outside the military but able to view the soldier's dilemma with sympathy. Given the weight of the traditions with which they must contend, the reformers' task will be a huge one, demanding creativity and even genius. It will require a grand-scale rethinking of war, the use of force, and military purpose. Yet it is not too much to say that American security and even the survival of American democracy may hinge on the success of their efforts.

VIETNAM SINCE THE WAR (1975–1995)

BY FREDERICK Z. BROWN

Twenty years ago, Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese and the long war came to an end. With the communist victory, Vietnam seemingly became unified and independent. But "liberation" brought its own tragedies and sorrows. Now, with their Soviet patron gone and the U.S. trade embargo lifted, Vietnam's communist leaders are looking outward, betting on economic reform, and stirring new hopes.

Tanks with victorious North Vietnamese soldiers enter Saigon's Presidential Palace on April 30, 1975.

Khong co gi quy hong doc lap tu do.

—There is nothing more precious than independence and freedom.

Bright, red-lettered banners bearing the words of the sainted communist leader Ho Chi Minh (1890–1969) hang from government buildings in Hanoi and other cities and towns throughout the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. But few citizens now pay much attention to once-rousing slogans. With fully half of the present population born since 1975, Vietnam is in more ways than one a new country. Today, its citizens are more concerned with the everyday demands of the present than with the struggles, however heroic, of the past—a reality that may well distress the aged veterans of Dien Bien Phu and other memorable battles, taking their ease in the parks along the shores of Hanoi's lakes. But ambitious city dwellers, working hard to earn a living by day and then, in many cases, learning WordPerfect for Windows, or studying English, or holding down a second job by night, are too busy to care about that. As for the farmers, who still make up three-quarters of Vietnam's 73.5 million people, their overriding concern is the same as it has been for 2,000 years: to plant the next rice harvest.

Yet the ubiquitous slogan of Uncle Ho carries more meaning than the busy populace perhaps quite realizes. His cherished "independence," bought with much blood and seemingly secured 20 years ago when Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese, remains a question mark—and a very important one. "Freedom" also remains a particularly elusive quality. Within the Communist Party, and especially among the 77-year-old General Secretary Do Muoi and other members of the ruling Politburo in Hanoi, there is much uncertainty about where Vietnam is going—and whether the party will still be in power when it gets there. Outside party circles, there is also widespread uneasiness. It is evident, for instance, in the cynicism toward party and government that ordinary Vietnamese often display, even to foreigners, after several bottles of "Seventy-Five" beer (the "revolutionary" brew that replaced the French-brewed "Thirty-Three" beer popular in South Vietnam). In Hanoi, one finds graffiti that pointedly truncate Uncle Ho's slogan: *Khong co gi* ("There is nothing").

The uneasiness is well-founded. The regime's policy of *doi moi* ("renovation"), now in its eighth year, is limited to economics in theory, with the party attempting to set its extent and pace. But control is increasingly difficult. Even though the stultifying bureaucracy has slowed down renovation, *doi moi* could easily go too far. As the party has come to understand, economic reform cannot fail to have political and social consequences. With the Soviet Union no longer around to prop Vietnam up, the communist leaders have had no real choice but to open the country to the outside world and hope that they can subdue the forces thereby unleashed. Whatever the ultimate fate of the regime, and of its Marxist-Leninist ideology, there is

an even larger question that cries out for an answer. For centuries, what has happened in Vietnam has been determined less by the Vietnamese themselves than by others—by the Chinese especially, but also, of course, by the French, the Japanese, the Americans, and, more recently, by nationalists in thrall to a foreign ideology. With Marxism discredited and Leninism increasingly uncongenial to the younger generation, will the Vietnamese at last be able to find their own authentic identity, and with it, true independence and a greater measure of freedom?

* * *

On April 30, 1995, it will be 20 years since the Democratic Republic of Vietnam ("North Vietnam") overcame the Republic of Vietnam ("South Vietnam"). To Vietnamese who were on the winning side, the "liberation" of the South in the face of the tremendous effort and vast resources of the United States still evokes pride. Shortly after the last U.S. chopper lifted off from the roof of the American embassy on the last day of April 1975, Vietnam became a unified country for the first time since 1887, when the French completed the absorption of the Nguyen dynasty into their Indochina empire.

Once the Americans were gone, Ho Chi Minh vowed, Vietnam would be rebuilt and made "10,000 times more beautiful." Yet today, in addition to pride, there is disillusion. It is not just those Vietnamese who fought on the losing side who are now dispirited. Twenty years after the "Great Spring Victory," the quality of education and of health services, once the pride of the communist regime, has declined, and most of the people continue to live in poverty. Annual per capita income is less than two million dong (about $185).

Americans, too, have mixed emotions 20 years later. How could a venture begun with such good intentions have ended so tragically? Millions of veterans do not easily forget their own futile efforts or the deaths of 58,000 of their comrades. Avoiding "another Vietnam" has become the conventional wisdom of U.S. foreign policy. And despite President Bill Clinton's February 1994 decision to lift the embargo on trade with Vietnam, the wounds Americans suffered from the war that ended 20 years ago are not yet healed.

Nor are they in Vietnam, where life nevertheless goes on. The war with the United States was only one of many wars in Vietnam's long history, and Saigon did not really "fall." It was renamed Ho Chi Minh City, and even that change was superficial. Today, most of its three million inhabitants, including the party cadres, still call their city Saigon.

On a hot summer's Saturday night, thousands of young Vietnamese boys and girls circle the center of the city on shiny new Honda and Kawasaki motorbikes. "Swarming," they call it, this seemingly endless circling of tightly packed bikes and bodies, sometimes three or four people to a bike, the riders clad in blue jeans or black leather or, in the case of some of the girls, silken *ao dais*. The colorful stream flows around the old Hotel Continental, where Graham Greene set his prophetic novel *The Quiet American* (1956), and around the Ben Thanh Hotel. Back in the days when the Ben Thanh was named the Rex Hotel, U.S. Army officers reported there to brief the press on progress in the war against the Viet Cong.

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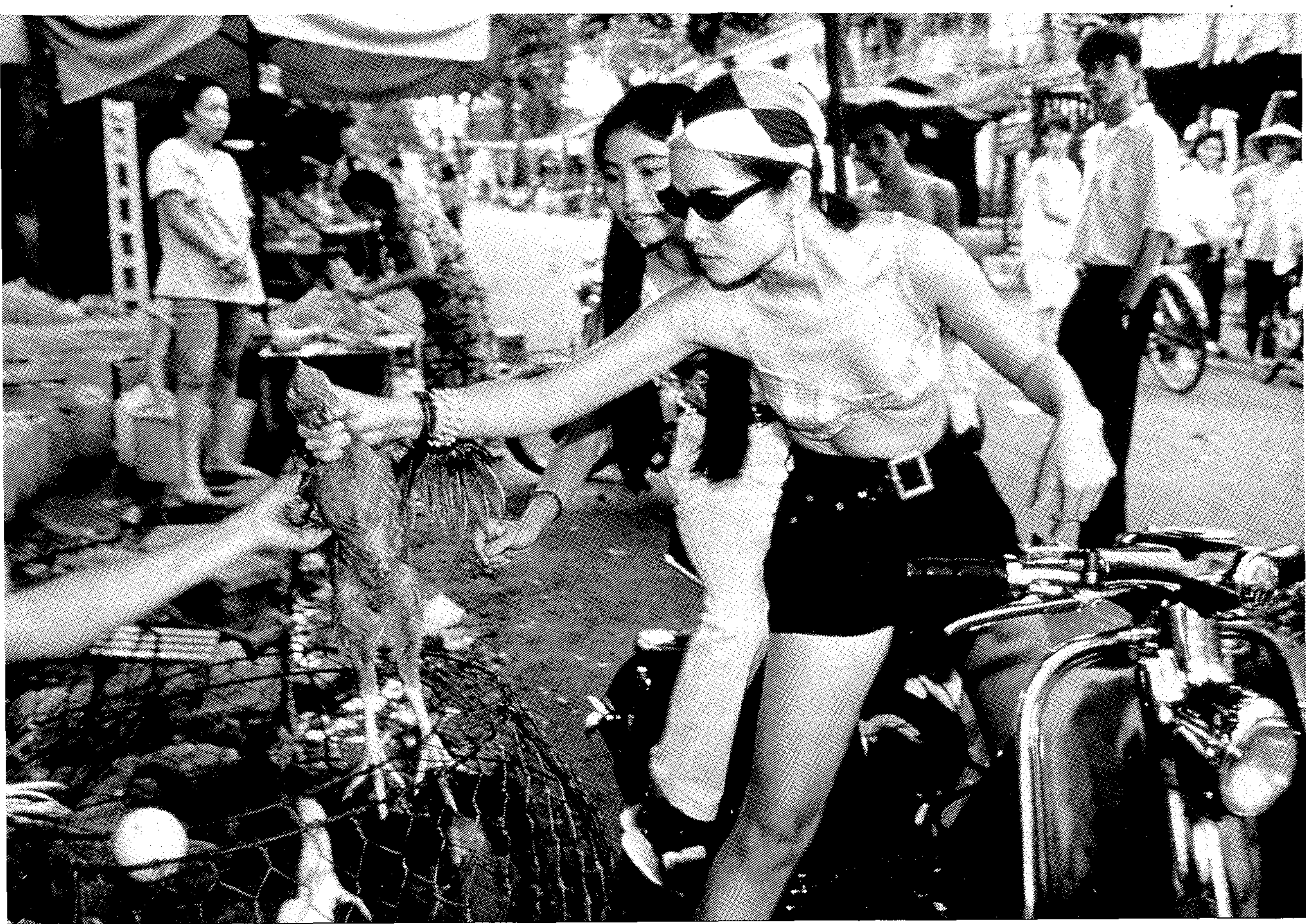

Phuong Anh Nguyen escaped Vietnam with her family in 1978 and settled in California. The San Jose State College graduate moved in 1991 to Ho Chi Minh City, where she designs interiors for restaurants.

Reporters called the daily briefings the "five o'clock follies."

Today these hotels are filled with foreign tourists and businessmen. And in many ways, Ho Chi Minh City is as much a center of capitalist activity as it was in the days of Ngo Dinh Diem and Nyugen Van Thieu. Every imaginable commodity, from expensive European cosmetics to the most sophisticated computer devices, is available in Cholon, once the Chinese heart of Saigon's commercial district. Food markets abound, featuring a dozen varieties of rice and packed with succulent vegetables and fruit from the Mekong Delta, as well as imported delicacies. Bookstalls are crowded with students poring over American economics textbooks and the latest French novels. Not surprisingly, the Western influence, in the form of books, movies, music, and dress, is much more visible in Ho Chi Minh City than in the less prosperous capital of Hanoi, but even there, one finds a burgeoning interest in the West.

To an American who took part in the U.S. crusade in South Vietnam, as I did (as a U.S. foreign service officer in Vinh Long

The photographs appearing on this and most subsequent pages of the article are from *Passage to Vietnam* (1994), created by Rick Smolan and Jennifer Erwitt. Published by Against All Odds Productions/Melcher Media and distributed by Publishers Group West, *Passage to Vietnam* features the work of 70 photojournalists from 14 countries, including 15 Vietnamese photographers. For seven days in late March 1994, they were given unprecedented access by the government of Vietnam, resulting in what may be the most comprehensive look at Vietnam and the daily lives of its people ever assembled. To order the book, call 1-800-634-6850, department 400.

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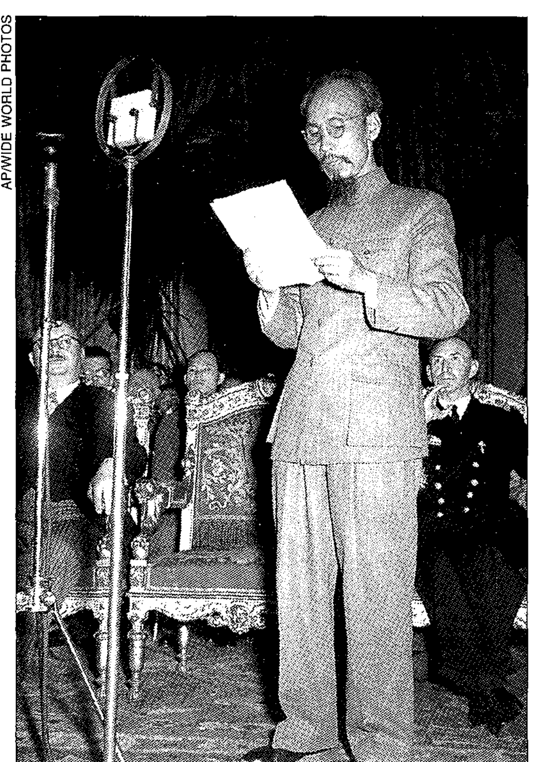
province and in Da Nang), returning to that land now, during the era of *doi moi*, is especially poignant. Arriving at Tan Son Nhut airport in Ho Chi Minh City, one finds that the monument South Vietnam erected to "Our Gallant Allies"—a huge sculpture of an American and several other soldiers that once dominated the circle at the airport's gate—has been replaced by an open-air market. There is a vitality now that was absent as recently as 1988. That year, I was driven from Tan Son Nhut to my hotel in a 1947 Renault taxicab without floorboards. Six years later, many of the cabs in use are relatively new, good-condition Nissans, brought in from Singapore by way of Cambodia. On my taxi ride in 1988, the driver apologetically made a stop for gas, explaining that he wanted to fill up before noon, when the price was to go up another thousand *dong*. Inflation then was running at almost 1,000 percent; now, it is down to almost 10 percent.


AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Born in central Vietnam, Nguyen Van Thanh became the revolutionary, Ho Chi Minh ("He Who Enlightens").

Change is evident in the North, too, in what was once the capital of the enemy: Hanoi. The heavily traveled road from Noi Bai airport—which U.S. pilots had been instructed to bomb carefully in 1972 in order to avoid hitting Soviet planes on the runway—consisted in 1988 of two potholed lanes, lined with tiny family plots of vegetables and herbs destined for the city market. Today the roadway has become a smooth four-lane highway on which travelers are whisked through the rice fields . . . to end up, if they please, at the Hotel Sofitel, still known by its French name, the Metropole. At $300 a night, it is Hanoi's finest. The bartender there—at least until two years ago—had studied nuclear physics in Moscow (and could make some fairly explosive drinks). Most evenings in the lounge, one is likely to see businessmen from Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan cutting deals for offshore oil pipelines, computer assembly plants, and frozen-shrimp export licenses.

The economic reforms made under *doi moi*, the shift of the economy toward a free market, have made life better for many Vietnamese (although, it should be noted, few frequent the Metropole and 90 percent of Vietnam's roads remain unpaved). The improvement is especially evident in the South, where many of those who lived under the American-backed government possessed the entrepreneurial skills and outlook that were needed to take immediate advantage of the *doi moi* reforms. In the greater Ho Chi Minh City area, the average income of $500 per year is more than twice the national average, thanks partly to dollar remittances from relatives living abroad. The American influence, clearly, is not wholly a thing of the past. Nor, for that matter, is the old split between the northern and southern regions of Vietnam.

* * *

Ever since the 17th century, when the Vietnamese—after their centuries-long *nam tien* ("drive to the south")—reached the Mekong Delta and the Khmer fishing village

VIETNAM
International boundary
French Administrative Zone boundary
Railroad
National capital
100 kilometers
100 miles
CHINA
LAOS
THAILAND
CAMBODIA
MYAN-MAR
TONKIN
ANNAM
COCHIN CHINA
Gulf of Tonkin
South China Sea
Gulf of Thailand
Hainan (China)
Phu Quoc (Vietnam)
1954 division (17th parallel)
Hanoi
Ho Chi Minh City
Mekong
Red
Black
Lam Nam Chi
Mae Nam Mun
Xe Kong
Tônlé Srêpôk
Mengzi
Wenshan
Jingxi
Guixian
Simao
Ha Giang
Cao Bang
Nanning
Yulin
Lao Cai
Tuyen Quang
Pingxiang
Lai Chau
Yen Bai
Thai Nguyen
Lang Son
Beihai
Phôngsali
Viet Tri
Zhanjiang
Son La
Bac Giang
Hong Gai
Hai Duong
Louang Namtha
Ha Dong
Haiphong
Hoa Binh
Nam Dinh
Thai Binh
Xuwen
Xam Nua
Ninh Binh
Haikou
Thanh Hoa
Louangphrabang
Ban Ban
Ky Son
Xiangkhoang
Basuo
Jiaji
Nan
Dien Chau
Vinh
Sanya
Muang Pakxan
Ha Tinh
Vientiane
Nong Khai
Ron
Loei
Udon Thani (Udorn)
Muang Khammouan
Dong Hoi
Phitsanulok
Quang Tri
Hue
Savannakhét
Khon Kaen
Da Nang
Saravan
Tam Ky
Ubon Ratchathani
Nakhon Ratchasima (Korat)
Pakxé
Quang Ngai
Warin Chamrap
Sisaket
Surin
Attapu
Dac To
Sara Buri
Kon Tum
Pleiku
Bangkok
Qui Nhon
Aranyaprathet
Sisŏphŏn
Siĕmréab
Tuy Hoa
Bătdâmbâng
Rayong
Sattahip
Kâmpóng Thum
Krâchéh
Buon Ma Thuot
Ninh Hoa
Poŭthĭsăt
Nha Trang
Trat
Kâmpóng Cham
Dak Nong
Loc Ninh
Da Lat
Cam Ranh
Krŏng Kaôh Kŏng
Phnom Penh
Phan Rang-Thap Cham
Tay Ninh
Kâmpóng Spœ
Thu Dau Mot
Bien Hoa
Phan Thiet
Kâmpót
Tan An
Sa Dec
Ha Tien
Vinh Long
My Tho
Vung Tau
Long Xuyen
Ben Tre
Rach Gia
Can Tho
Tra Vinh
Soc Trang
Bac Lieu
Ca Mau
20°
16°
12°
104°
108°

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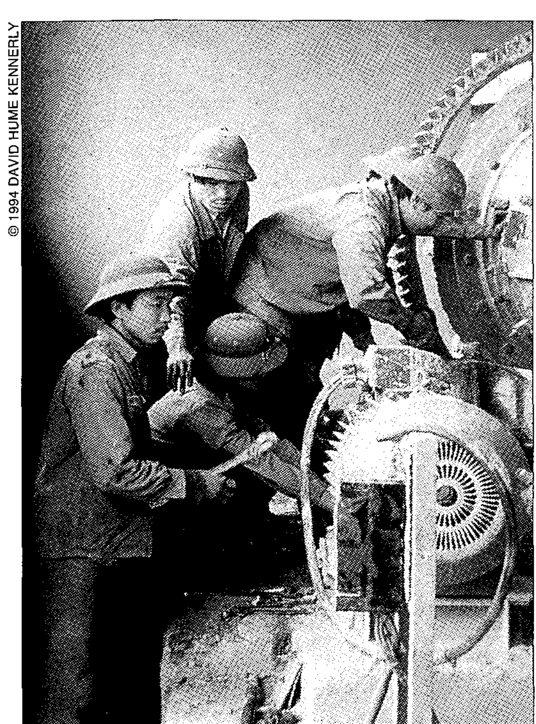


Workers repair a Soviet-made rock grinder at a cement factory in Lang Son, near the Chinese border.

that was to become known as Saigon, the northern and southern regions have developed along different lines. Life was easier in the South, which had a gentle climate and abundant agricultural resources; in the North, where physical conditions were harsher and the populace more numerous (since the Viet "tribe" had been living there for a millennium), life seemed more of a struggle. Meanwhile, the people living on the narrow coastal plain in the center of what is now Vietnam developed their own character: taciturn, tough, and somewhat disdainful of both the North and the South. The French accentuated these regional divisions during their colonial rule by creating three different administrative zones.

At the 1954 Geneva Conference, which ended France's rule and its war with Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh, the country was divided at the 17th parallel into two administrative zones, North and South. The division was supposed to be temporary. The Viet Minh agreed to withdraw its forces from the South, while the French left the North; then, in two years, nationwide elections were to be held to select a leader of the whole country.

Although Vietnam was halved, Ho Chi Minh held effective sway over about two-thirds of the country. Largely because of American fears of a communist victory at the ballot box, the 1956 elections never took place. In 1954, the last of the Nguyen dynasty emperors, Bao Dai, who was living in indolence and luxury in France, chose Ngo Dinh Diem to be the prime minister of the new South Vietnamese administration. A devout Catholic who had once contemplated the priesthood, Diem was then staying in a Benedictine monastery in Belgium; earlier he had lived in the United States, at a Maryknoll seminary in New Jersey. There, he favorably impressed several influential Americans, including then-senator John F. Kennedy. With the assurance of U.S. material and political support, Diem was installed in Saigon in 1954 as the leader of the anticommunist South.

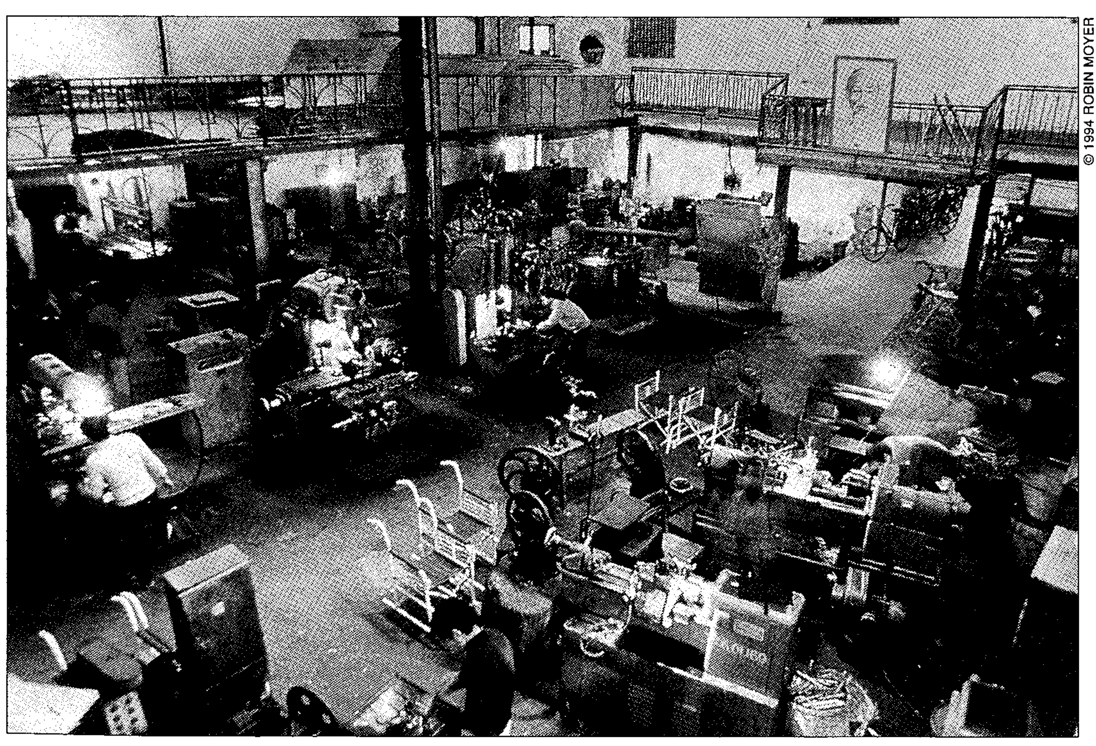
A civil war soon commenced between Ho's communist forces—supported, at first cautiously, later strongly, by the Soviet Union and China—and the U.S.-backed Saigon regime. Initially, the war pitted communist guerrillas, mainly in rural areas in the South, against the Diem regime; in 1960, recognizing that the South Vietnam government had become firmly established, Hanoi decided to unify the country by force and began infiltrating troops into the South. (The fiction was maintained, however, that the struggle for liberation was being carried on independently of Hanoi. The People's Revolutionary Party, formed in 1962, was ostensibly an independent organization of southern communists [Viet Cong], but it was actually under the control of Hanoi's Communist Party.)

By the early 1960s, Vietnam had become a prime battleground in the Cold War, with the United States eager to test its counterinsurgency techniques against communist

"liberation movements." In March 1965, some 3,500 U.S. Marines went ashore at Red Beach near Da Nang, and in May about 3,500 men of the U.S. Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade, stationed in Okinawa, were brought to the Bien Hoa air base, northwest of Saigon, and to the base at Vung Tau, on the coast. By the end of that year, there were 184,300 U.S. troops in the country—and the Vietnam conflict had turned into a "big battalion" war. As it went on, and expanded—and the oft-glimpsed "light at the end of the tunnel" seemed always to recede—the war became a source of great and prolonged agony in the United States. In 1973, the United States signed a peace agreement that all but guaranteed the demise of the Saigon regime—after a "decent interval." In April 1975, North Vietnamese Army tanks crashed through the gates of Saigon's Presidential Palace (which had served as the office of South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu), and the war finally came to an end. Colonel Bui Tin, the ranking North Vietnamese officer on the scene and a veteran of the war against the French, accepted the South's surrender.

The "Great Spring Victory" had come far sooner than the North Vietnamese had anticipated. Heady with their triumph, they proceeded during the next four years to make a succession of disastrous political and economic decisions. It is no small historical irony that in 1991, Bui Tin, the lifelong Communist who had received the South's surrender, left the country and defected from the Hanoi regime, blasting the party's postliberation policies in an open letter to the Politburo. For the North Vietnamese, it turned out, winning the war was not quite the same as making Vietnam an integrated nation with a functioning economy and a reconciled population.

The communist "liberation" of the South, great "revolutionary" triumph though it was, and achieved only after dec-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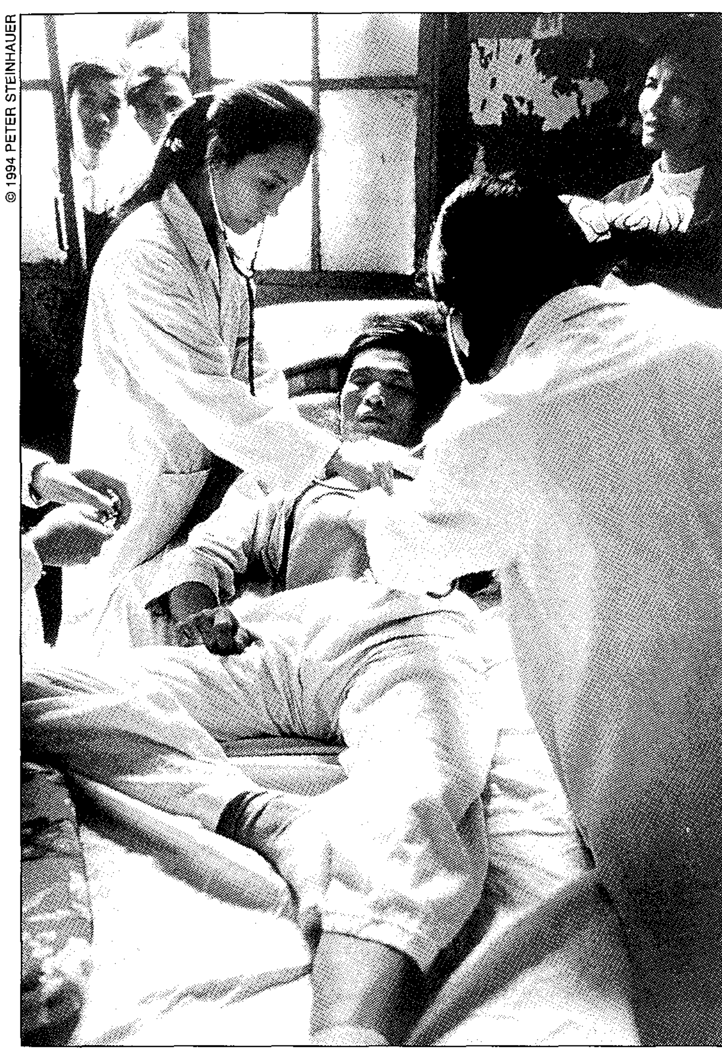
At French-built Vitta Factory in Hanoi, workers turn out bicycles under the watchful eye of Uncle Ho.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Doctors make their rounds of the cardiology ward at Hanoi's Bach Mai Hospital. Vietnam has 9,000 clinics and more than 23,000 physicians.

ades of hard and costly struggle, evoked little enthusiasm from the South's populace. Its most natural supporters, the indigenous Viet Cong, had seen their ranks severely thinned during the Tet offensive of 1968. Although most southern Vietnamese were still poor seven years after Tet, they had had a taste of capitalism and of multiparty politics. U.S.-sponsored "pacification" campaigns had poured resources into rural areas. Many villages had experienced rudimentary forms of self-government. The "land to the tiller" program in the Mekong Delta had created a new class of independent farmers, who owned their own land. Several brands of "miracle rice" (which, with the aid of chemicals, multiplies the yield from a kernel of rice two or three times), developed specifically for Vietnam at the Philippines International Rice Institute, grew abundantly in the delta. And the war-stimulated economy had encouraged the growth of a middle class in the cities and towns.

Although the South Vietnam regimes, from Diem's (1954–63) to Nguyen Cao Ky and Nguyen Van Thieu's (1965–75), had often governed corruptly and with a heavy hand, most of the populace had little appetite for the communist alternative. The triumphant North Vietnamese were perceived less as liberators than as potential oppressors. Yet, exhausted by war, many southerners were probably ready to give the victors a chance. Hanoi, however, missed it. By its obtuse actions, the North confirmed the historical mistrust that southerners harbored, and mutual hostility has affected life in Vietnam ever since.

The case of General Tran Van Tra illustrates the problem. Born in the South in 1918, Tra had joined the Indochina Communist Party during the 1930s, spent years in French jails, and taken part in a 1945 Viet Minh uprising just before Ho Chi Minh—with World War II over and Japan defeated—declared Vietnam an independent country. During the Viet Minh's subsequent war against the French, Tra rose through the

Victory Day at Tan Son Nhut

Kien, a North Vietnamese Army infantry officer in the long war against the South Vietnamese and the Americans, is the protagonist of The Sorrow of War: A Novel of North Vietnam *(the English translation forthcoming from Pantheon Books), by Bao Ninh, a novelist who served in North Vietnam's Glorious 27th Youth Brigade and today lives in Hanoi.* The Sorrow of War *was a best seller in Vietnam in 1991. In the following scene, set shortly after his unit took Tan Son Nhut airport on April 30, 1975, Kien tries unsuccessfully to lose himself in the drunken revelry. But a haunting image from those strange first hours of victory—the naked corpse of a woman—will never leave his thoughts.*

Kien began drinking. There was plenty of free booze at the airport. He wandered around watching the soldiers looting, and joined in the drinking and destruction. The entertainment seemed riotous, but it wasn't the least bit amusing. They turned over furniture, smashed and ripped fittings and scattered them everywhere. Glasses, pots, cups, wine bottles, were all broken or shot up. They used machine guns to shoot out the chandeliers and the ceiling lights. Everyone drank heavily and they all seemed to be drunk, half-laughing, half-crying. Some were yelling like madmen.

Peace had rushed in brutally, leaving them dazed and staggering in its wake. They were more amazed than happy with peace.

Kien sat in the canteen of the Air France terminal, his legs up on a table, quietly drinking. One after another he downed the cups of brandy, the way a barbarian would, as if to insult life. Many of those around him had passed out, but he just kept on drinking.

A strange and horrible night.

At times the noise of machine guns and the sight of the red, blue, and violet signal flares fired into the air at random created a surreal atmosphere. It was like an apocalypse, then an earthquake. Kien shuddered, sensing the end of an era.

Some said they had been fighting for 30 years, if you included the Japanese and the French. He had been fighting for 11 years. War had been their whole world. So many lives, so many fates. The end of the fighting was like the deflation of an entire landscape, with fields, mountains, and rivers collapsing in on themselves.

As dawn approached it grew noisier, then the racket died down.

Kien felt the sharp contrast between the loud, chaotic night and the peaceful morning. Suddenly, he felt terribly alone; he sensed he would be lonely forever.

In later years, when he heard stories of V-Day or watched the scenes of the fall of Saigon on film, with cheering, flags, flowers, triumphant soldiers, and joyful people, his heart would ache with sadness and envy. He and his friends had not felt that soaring, brilliant happiness he saw on film. True, in the days following 30 April he had experienced unforgettable joys after the victory. But on the night itself they'd had that suffocating feeling at the airport. And why not? They'd just stepped out of their trenches.

Yes, he had drunk his way through the night sitting in the Air France lounge. It wasn't until morning that his brain started reeling. He began to have nightmares about the naked girl they'd dressed up. The floor beneath him felt as though it was heaving, a glass wall before him seemed to go up in smoke. The apparition of a naked girl appeared before him, her chest white, her hair messy, her dark eyes swarming with ants, and on her lips a terrible twisted smile. He looked steadily at her, feeling pity. This was a human being who had been killed and humiliated, someone even he had looked down on. Those who had died and those who lived on shared a common fate in this war.

He reached out unsteadily and tried to embrace the ghostly shadow of the girl. In his drunkenness he was blubbering, generating deep pity for her poor lost soul as he blathered on with words of consolation for her.

When he spoke of these events in later life, others found it inconceivable he would waste his time becoming nostalgic over a girl at Tan Son Nhut airport who had not only been a corpse but the corpse of someone Kien had never met! Yet the woman had, strangely, left a tragic and indelible imprint on his mind. She became the last of his enduring obsessions.

ranks of the People's Army of Vietnam; during the late 1950s, he became deputy chief of staff, and during the 1960s, he served underground in South Vietnam and was the National Liberation Front's ranking military officer in the final campaigns. After the "liberation," Tra was immediately named head of the Military Management Committee in Saigon, in effect, the military governor of the defeated capital. Nobody, North or South, could doubt Tra's loyalty to the communist cause.

But during a liberal interlude from 1988 to '89, Tra's association of southern communist veterans, the "Club of Former Resistance Fighters," dared publicly to criticize the Communist Party for failing to practice openness. It also blamed party "conservatives" for the failure of *doi moi*. In response, the government in 1990 denied the club permission to exist independently of the "Fatherland Front," the party's official organization of more than 100 groups. Tra's club was forced to merge into the Vietnam Veterans Association, which is under firm central control. Southerners, as this action made quite clear, were still suspect.

In 1991, when several colleagues and I met him, Tra was living in retirement in Ho Chi Minh City in a modest bougainvillea-draped villa that once might have housed a midlevel American diplomat. Tra, we knew, had been elected to a seat in the National Assembly, which in recent years has become more prominent in Vietnam's political life. (The election had been confined to communist-approved candidates.) During our conversation, we congratulated Tra on his chairmanship of the assembly's veterans committee. Smiling, he informed us that he had just been "dis-elected" from the Assembly. The reason: his leadership of the club of former southern resistance fighters.

* * *

In 1975, the Vietnamese Communists had achieved their long-sought goal. The Americans were gone, and South Vietnam was theirs. Now, Hanoi had to create a unified nation. To accomplish this, General Secretary Le Duan and other members of the Politburo decided, they had to get rid of what was left of the "enemy forces," consolidate their power, integrate the South into the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and transform the southern economy into a socialist one. This was a tall order, and in trying to fill it, the Communists committed a series of blunders, with disastrous consequences.

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Amerasians are outcasts in family-centered Vietnam. About 75,000 Amerasians and members of their families have come to the United States.

First, they set about dealing with those who had been officials in the vanquished regime and with the military officers and men who had served it. General Tra, the newly installed military governor of Saigon, and his fellow Communists dealt harshly with those who had been in authority or who seemed to represent a future threat. The Vietnamese Communists were less barbarous than their counterparts in Cambodia, the notorious Khmer Rouge, but they were capable of brutality. Many thousands of

A Southerner's 'Re-education'

Jade Ngoc Quang Huynh was an apolitical 18-year-old Saigon University student when the city fell to the Communists in 1975. He was sent to labor camps for "re-education." Escaping from Vietnam in 1977, he ended up in the United States. In this excerpt from his memoir, South Wind Changing *(Graywolf Press, 1994), Huynh describes what happened in one of the labor camps after the commandant, Comrade Son, told the inmates, surrounded by armed guards, how a prisoner who tried to run away had been shot. "This is a very good lesson for all of you," Son said.*

"Come here!" [Comrade Son] pointed to a new captive who wore glasses.

The guard shoved the new man in the back with his gun to make him walk up to Son.

"You look handsome with your glasses. You are an intellectual from the south, huh? You know too much. You are the one who had a revolution against us, against our people, against our country for over 20 years and our people had to bleed all that time. You are a traitor, you are an idealist. Am I right, our citizens?" he rasped in his heavy accent full of scorn. Then he grinned.

"Yes, comrade, yes, comrade. He's our traitor!" we all shouted as if we were furious. Many guns were held at our backs ready to fire. I felt so bitter since every bad thing I said about others made my mouth dirty. Did I have any choice? The prisoner wearing glasses said softly:

"No, comrade, I'm not an intellectual person. I'm a mechanic in the army and I never held a gun to anyone. Look, look at my hands. They're all dirty with calluses. I'm not a traitor. Please forgive me!" He raised his voice louder and louder, repeatedly, but the crowd's voices were overpowering his.

"Don't lie to the party," Comrade Son shouted. "I have all your files here. You were working for the secret police. You have to confess to us now!"

The crowd quieted. The prisoner kneeled down and crawled over to him and begged for forgiveness. "I'm not a traitor, please forgive me!" He patted his hands on Son's legs and bowed down; Son pushed him away. He crawled back again, but this time the guard who stood next to Son raised his gun and knocked him down. The blood began to dribble from his mouth.

"Who will volunteer to punish our traitor?" Comrade Son asked.

One of the men in the antenna group, the prisoners who spied for the guards, stood up and walked over to him like a dog obeying his master. Son threw him a rope. He held it, pulled the prisoner's arms to his back and firmly tied the left thumb to the right toe and the left toe to the right thumb. He jerked the man toward the flagpole, dragging him in the dirt like an animal. I didn't know if I was an animal or a human being at this moment. The antenna group man walked over, picked up the glasses and gave them to Son while the captive was moaning, trying to get up on his feet. He couldn't see anything without his glasses, his face was close to the ground. He pushed with his head, trying to sit up, but he didn't succeed. Son walked over to him and pulled him up. The inmate stood silently, his mouth bleeding. Son held his glasses in front of his face.

"Are you trying to act blind? We are the people; we are the justice. We know you so well, traitor. Why don't you come and get them?" Son waved the glasses in front of his face and the captive stood still. "You ignore me." Son dropped the glasses into the dirt, lifted his foot, then brought it down, grinding glass into the dust. He laughed.

southerners (the precise number is not known) were summarily executed, and at least one million were sent to "re-education camps."

The severity of the punishments meted out varied somewhat according to the location and the whims of the local party organization. Generals and colonels in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, and senior civilian officials, were sentenced, as a rule, to terms of about 12 years in the camps, while captains and majors often got sentences of eight years.

In many cases, these terms were tantamount to death sentences because of the extremely harsh camp conditions. Enlisted soldiers and low-ranking civilians sent to the re-education camps were generally released after a few days or weeks.

The communist victory and ensuing crackdown on the erstwhile enemy prompted an exodus of refugees in the spring of 1975, mostly from South Vietnam's upper crust—officers, doctors, lawyers, senior civil servants. Almost 200,000 Vietnamese refugees came to the United States that year. They would be but the first wave.

Next on Hanoi's agenda came the consolidation of power. Before the defeat of South Vietnam, the Communists had hinted that unification of the country would take place in phases, over a 15-year period. This was probably no more than a ploy to win over "undecided" southerners who had misgivings about northern domination. In any case, only a few months after Saigon's fall, Hanoi decided to get rid of the separate communist organizations that had been set up for South Vietnam during the war. The leaders of the Provisional Revolutionary Government and of the National Liberation Front were obliged to vote their organizations out of existence in November 1975. Then, in April 1976, a new National Assembly for the entire country was elected, in a process closely controlled by the party. The assembly soon approved a new government for the newly unified country: the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. On paper at least, unification was finally a reality.

Hanoi then turned to the question of the southern economy. After the 1968 Tet offensive, the economy had revived somewhat thanks to President Richard Nixon's "Vietnamization" of the war and an infusion of U.S. resources into the rural "pacification" program. But the cumulative effect of the gradual withdrawal of U.S. military forces by 1973, the closing of American bases, and the drastic cuts made in U.S. aid in 1974, resulted in massive unemployment. By April 1975, as provinces and whole regions of the South passed into communist hands, the southern economy was in desperate shape.

As party leaders tried to figure out what to do, an old debate was revived. During the war, Truong Chinh, who had been general secretary from 1941 to 1956 and was the party's premier ideologist, had argued that building socialism in the North was more important than waging the war in the South. Le Duan, the general secretary since 1960 and a former Viet Cong leader in the South, had taken the contrary view: the liberation struggle deserved priority. Now, with that "liberation" accomplished, the same argument came back in new guise. Truong Chinh, the ideologist, argued that the South should be forced to change course immediately, undergo a "revolution in production relations," so that its economy could be transformed into a socialist one. Le Duan, once again, took the opposite view: that the "growth of productive forces" in the country as a whole was more important, and that, in effect, the South's economy should be kept in roughly its current form and its considerable economic potential harnessed to serve the entire nation and, in particular, to help reconstruct the North. He and others were keen on tapping the rich agricultural resources of the Mekong Delta to feed the undernourished North.

At the Fourth Party Congress in 1976, the party resolved the debate by deciding that it wanted *both* economic development (so what was left of capitalism in the South could remain, temporarily) *and* the complete "socialist transformation" of the South by 1980. In pursuit of these contradictory ends, the congress's Second Five Year Plan set extremely ambitious—and totally unrealistic—production goals for the entire nation. Central planners, not market forces, determined the targets. Heavy industry was stressed, farms and light industry in the South were collectivized, the need to give farmers and workers incentives was disregarded. And, in practice, it all worked about

as well as might be expected, which is to say not at all. Popular discontent grew, and by late 1979 the Vietnamese economy had ground to a near halt.

As if that were not bad enough, Hanoi in 1977 and '78 mounted vicious campaigns to close down all small private businesses in the South, in the Saigon area and the Mekong Delta. The result was a stampede of hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese small businessmen and their families to get out of Vietnam. The refugees—many of whom were "Hoa people," ethnic Chinese whose families had been in Vietnam for generations—came not only from the South but also from the North, skilled mechanics from Haiphong's port, for example. Escaping by sea in most cases, these "boat people" wound up on the Chinese mainland or in camps in Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and some made their way to the United States and Canada, the second wave of the Vietnamese exodus.

Why did Hanoi, with military victory achieved, follow so self-destructive a course? Why did Le Duan and the other communist leaders, having achieved the independence for which they had fought so long and suffered so much, take their nation down the road to economic ruin, and then drive away so many people who could have been of use to their country?

The main reason has to be that they were simply blinded by their Marxist-Leninist ideology: they could not analyze the situation they faced, except in terms of communist dogma, and this, to put it mildly, was a poor guide to reality. But fear also played a part—fear that unless they used all available means to secure their control over the former South Vietnam, they might again be faced with enemies there, either from the old Thieu regime or, even worse, from the cadres of the erstwhile National Liberation Front. (That fear would not go away, which is why Hanoi would later not tolerate General Tra's independent club of southern veterans.)

And hubris, the sort of pride that comes naturally to people who have won a great victory, also played a role in determining Vietnam's self-destructive course—and not just at home but beyond its borders as well. By virtue of their stunning victory, Le Duan and the others saw Vietnam, in his words, as "an impregnable outpost of the socialist system, an important factor of . . . national independence, democracy, and social progress in Southeast Asia." With Moscow's encouragement, the communist leaders saw a now-unified Vietnam as a springboard for revolutionary movements elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

* * *

Throughout its long history, Vietnam has been buffeted by forces beyond its borders, and frequently beyond its control. Foremost among those forces is China, Vietnam's colossal northern neighbor. In the Hanoi Historical Museum today, the exhibits pertaining to the French and American adversaries occupy just two rooms, but the exhibits about the Chinese take up most of the large building. Vietnam's struggles with the Chinese have been going on for millennia.

In 111 B.C., the Han dynasty conquered the Sinitic tribe that lived in the North's Red River Delta, and for the next thousand years China ruled over "Vietnam." In A.D. 39, a successful but short-lived revolt against that rule was led by two sisters named Trung; the *hai ba Trung* became a legend (and streets are named after them in every modern Vietnamese city). Nearly 900 years later, in A.D. 938, the Vietnamese finally drove the Chinese out, and then, between 1257 and 1287, repulsed several invasions mounted by Mongol China and Emperor Kublai Khan. Tran Hung Dao, a military leader during this period, is venerated today for the ingenious tactics he used to defeat a vastly superior Chinese force.

But Tran Hung Dao and the emperors of the Le dynasty, who reigned from the 15th through the 17th centuries, were feudal lords who commanded only limited populations and resources. Subsequently, Vietnamese kings decided that their interests were best served by paying tributes to China. The Confucian and mandarin influence of the "Greater Dragon" to the north remained dominant until the French began their colonial conquest of Vietnam in the 19th century. By then, the Vietnamese had expanded steadily south, absorbing the Cham Empire and what was left of the Khmer Empire in the Mekong Delta.

The French turned the South (Cochinchina) into a colony, and the Center (Annam) and the North (Tonkin) into protectorates, ruling all three Vietnams with more or less an iron hand. But the hand stayed inside a glove of cultural velvet. The French used the beauty of their literature and art to seduce the Vietnamese aristocracy and commercial class. And in the South, the French even allowed political parties to be formed and elections to be held, although the electorate was very narrow; in the North and the Center, no such political participation was permitted. Meanwhile, as the 19th century gave way to the 20th and the years went on, the masses of exploited peasants and a generation of intellectuals began to develop a hatred of the French *colons*. Through the charismatic Ho Chi Minh's clever manipulations, Vietnamese nationalism became intertwined with communism, and Vietnam began moving down the road that, in time and after much bloodshed, led to the "liberation" of April 30, 1975.

After the war, Hanoi's leaders presumed that the ideology that had served them well in their struggle against the French and the Americans would also serve them well in building a "socialist" Vietnam and in encouraging the growth of socialism elsewhere. They were wrong. For reasons that were deeply historical as well as ideological, Hanoi soon found itself embroiled in costly conflicts with its neighbors that diverted badly needed resources at a time when the regime was coping with severe economic problems at home.

China, Vietnam's ancient foe, could not be ignored. The bitter quarrel between China and the Soviet Union that erupted in the early 1960s had made life difficult for Hanoi during the war, since it needed the support of both communist "big brothers." After the 1972 rapprochement between China and the United States, Hanoi's and Beijing's mutual suspicions increased. When in 1978 Vietnam strengthened its economic links to the Soviet Union and concluded a new mutual-security treaty, China saw itself "encircled" by unfriendly powers. But Vietnam now had a more urgent problem: Cambodia (Kampuchea).

Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital, had fallen to Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge just 13 days before Saigon was taken by the North Vietnamese. Once in power, the Cambodian Communists proceeded to kill more than one million of their fellow countrymen. During 1977–78, Pol Pot's forces made bloody forays into Vietnam's southern provinces, inflicting thousands of casualties, as well as disrupting the Mekong Delta's reconstruction. Pol Pot's men also systematically executed several thousand Khmer Rouge guerrillas who had been trained in Vietnam during the 1960s and '70s, and did not neglect to kill their families as well.

In December 1978, Hanoi struck back. Vietnamese forces invaded Cambodia, deposed the Khmer Rouge regime, and, using former Khmer Rouge military figures who had fled for their lives from Pol Pot's madness, installed a client regime in Phnom Penh in 1979. The new government's socialist character (and pro-Vietnamese orientation) was declared "irreversible." But that did not end the war with the Khmer Rouge.

As a result of its aggression—even though the victim was an extraordinarily heinous regime—Vietnam became a politi-

cal and economic pariah, condemned by the United States, the European Economic Community, Japan, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. But there was an even more forceful response to Hanoi's actions: in early 1979, Chinese forces invaded Vietnam, devastated its northern provinces, and then withdrew about two months later.

For the next decade, the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) was involved in a guerrilla war in Cambodia that it could not win, a quagmire from which it found it hard to extricate itself. To an American with experience in Vietnam, the situation seemed all too familiar. In August 1988, on a flight from Da Nang to Ho Chi Minh City, I happened to be seated next to a PAVN colonel who had just finished a nine-year tour of duty in Cambodia. He told me of the frustration he had had in dealing with his former Khmer allies. Vietnam's invasion and long occupation of Cambodia, he had come to believe, had been a grave mistake: Vietnam's forces could not achieve a military solution to the Cambodian problem. "Never again," he seemed to be saying.

During the Vietnamese Communists' struggle for liberation, Marxism-Leninism had served as a fighting faith, promising the downtrodden that a better future would come with national "independence and freedom," and that ultimate victory was scientifically guaranteed. The ideology also had been the glue that enabled Ho and his supporters to put together an effective fighting organization. Without the bond of communist ideology, it is highly unlikely that they would have received the support they did from the Soviet Union and China—and without that support, North Vietnam could not have won the war. Ideology was not everything. Ho, the masterful General Vo Nguyen Giap, and other Vietnamese leaders brought great political and military skills to their cause, as well as the required ruthlessness. (They killed noncommunist Vietnamese nationalists or otherwise eliminated that threat to their movement, and in the process drove many noncommunist nationalists into the arms of the French and later the Americans.) Nevertheless, the communist ideology counted for a great deal.

After liberation, however, Marxism-Leninism became part of Vietnam's problem, helping Hanoi's leaders to send their economy to the brink of ruin. Socialist solidarity did not keep Vietnam out of the Cambodian quagmire. Nor had the ideological glue continued to stick in China's case—and, in time, the bond with the Soviet Union also would come apart.

* * *

The state of ruin to which their ideologically driven policies had reduced the economy by 1979 forced Vietnam's communist leaders to recognize that some change was necessary. Conservatives contended that, with perhaps just a bit of modification, the Marxist-Leninist program would produce prosperity. But reformers such as Politburo member Nguyen Van Linh—a native of the South who had spent much of his life advancing the communist cause there—believed that tinkering with the economic system now was useless, that there had to be profound changes. The very survival of socialism, they argued, depended on renovation, on change that was *selective* but nonetheless real.

As an influential member of the ruling Politburo during the late 1970s and early '80s, and as party chief in Ho Chi Minh City from 1981 to '86, Linh pushed hard for economic reform and achieved some modest results. The party in 1979 approved the use of "output contracts" in both agriculture and industry, allowing families in cooperatives to sell on the open market any excess they produced above the quota they had to deliver to the state. This approach was first tried in limited areas, and the incentives increased production significantly. In early 1981, "output contracts" went into use throughout the nation. Other market-oriented reforms also were cautiously introduced.

Vietnam's economy began to recover—but the hyperinflation that accompanied the

nascent recovery wiped out much of the improvement. The reforms were deemed a failure, free-market activities were curtailed, and the reformers were made scapegoats. At the Fifth Party Congress, in March 1982, Linh was ousted from the Politburo and kicked off the party's central committee. "Restore socialist order in the market," *Nhan Dan*, the party newspaper, demanded.

But this retreat did not do much for the economy. On the contrary, production in all areas declined and inflation soared to 700 percent by 1986. The situation once again turned desperate. That December, after the death of General Secretary Le Duan, Linh (who had been brought back to the Politburo the year before) was chosen at the Sixth Party Congress to succeed him. No doubt inspired somewhat by the example of Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* in the Soviet Union, Linh and the party now took bold steps to move away from a command economy and toward a free-market one. The trick for the party was to do that without abandoning "socialism"—or, perhaps more to the point, power.

In 1989, as Hanoi was about to withdraw its forces from Cambodia, Moscow began to cut back deliveries to Vietnam of fuel, fertilizer, steel, chemicals, and cotton. After independence, Vietnam had been heavily dependent on Moscow, receiving $1 billion a year from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in economic and military assistance. Now, tens of thousands of Vietnamese guest workers in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, witnesses to the failure of communism there, were sent home. These developments spurred Nguyen Van Linh's reform efforts, pushing Vietnam toward a free-market economy.

During 1988–89, Linh and the party somewhat relaxed their controls on the press in the South, which led immediately to outspoken criticism. After that, Linh's influence in the party began to diminish. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and of the Soviet Union itself in 1991 made it crystal clear to the Hanoi Politburo that while economic change was urgent, any political change would have to be very carefully controlled. At the Seventh Party Congress, in June 1991, Linh was replaced as general secretary by conservative Do Muoi, whom the party judged better equipped to achieve those objectives.

Recognizing its growing isolation and the limits of its military power, Vietnam tried to improve its relations with China and began to seek a negotiated exit from Cambodia. In October 1991, it joined in a United Nations-sponsored comprehensive political settlement of the war. With the Soviet Union crumbling, Hanoi, still keeping a wary eye on its Chinese neighbor, had come to see that its own interests now lay with the other, noncommunist nations of Southeast Asia, with Japan, and with the West. By agreeing to an end to the Cambodian war, Vietnam was now able to move closer to those nations and to its former enemy, the United States.

Since 1991, Vietnam has made some impressive economic progress. The Communist Party and the government have sanctioned private entrepreneurship in a wide range of small and medium-size enterprises, and collectivism in agriculture has been all but abandoned. The party has agreed, in principle at least, to reduce its effort to administer the economy on a daily basis. Prices of commodities—with the notable exceptions of gasoline, electricity, public transportation, and certain food staples—are determined now by market forces. Gross domestic product increased by eight percent in 1993 to 125 trillion dong ($11.5 billion), and was expected to grow by about nine percent in 1994. Inflation was around 11 percent in 1994, roughly one-hundredth of what it had been during the late 1980s.

Total trade amounted to $6.25 billion in 1993, and was expected to increase by about 30 percent in 1994. With last year's lifting of the U.S. embargo on trade and investment, pledges of foreign investment have grown,

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The Soviet Union may have fallen but Lenin continues to be honored in Hanoi, with a statue and a park that bears his name.

adding up to more than $10 billion as of last September. By that time, Americans had announced 21 investment projects worth $187 million. U.S. firms are building part of a new highway system along Vietnam's central coast, and an American-led consortium is creating a huge resort area near Da Nang. Citibank and Bank of America have opened branches in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. With Mobil, Continental, and other U.S. firms involved, oil has become one of Vietnam's most important exports. Rice is another. Food-deficient until recently, Vietnam is now the world's third-largest rice exporter, after Thailand and the United States. Despite the lifting of the U.S. embargo, American investments so far have been relatively modest. Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Japan have been far ahead of the United States in trade with, or investment in, Vietnam.

Even with *doi moi,* Vietnam is far from being the picture of economic health. With help from international financial organizations, rehabilitation of the country's physical infrastructure has begun, but it will take decades for Vietnam to catch up with its noncommunist neighbors. The international trade market now is intensely competitive, and office space in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, because of the scarce supply and big demand, is almost as expensive as in Hong Kong and Tokyo. According to one survey, a square meter of prime office space in Ho Chi Minh City now rents for as much as $475, which is more than in any other major city in Southeast Asia—and is a clear disincentive to foreign investors.

The full-fledged conversion of Vietnam's economy to anything like a free market one is by no means accomplished, or even assured. Many basic problems remain. Under the 1992 constitution, the state is still the sole owner of land, although individuals have the right, avowedly extending for 50 to 70 years, to use, divide, and inherit it. The ultimate ownership of the land remains a controversial issue.

Moreover, the regime seems to be deliberately dragging its feet on privatization, and it could well reverse course at any time. A large number of state-owned enterprises are being kept alive through subsidies or special loans from the state bank. And in the more market-oriented economy, Communist Party members and party-controlled organizations still have significant advantages. Even the army has gotten heavily involved in business. The net result of all this is that "private" enterprise in Vietnam has become the preserve of those with connections.

Letter from Vietnam: Hopes and Sorrows

Carole Beaulieu, a Canadian journalist and senior writer for the Montreal-based newsmagazine L'actualité, *lived in Vietnam with her husband, Pierre, during 1992-94, when she was a Fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs, in Hanover, N.H. One of the many newsletters she wrote for the institute during her time in Vietnam concerned "people who do not make the news." Some edited excerpts from that February 1993 report:*

It is freezing cold in Hanoi. I am typing with my gloves on as the sounds of exploding firecrackers fill my room. Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, is approaching. The narrow streets are filled with holiday shoppers buying sweets, rice wine, peach trees with pink blossoms, and *banh chung*, the traditional rice cake which is boiled for seven hours. In four days, the Year of the Rooster will begin. "And the American embargo will be lifted," says Son, a 19-year-old student and rock singer from Hanoi. "There will be many changes then."

Hope. There is so much hope these days in Hanoi that you can feel it in the air. Hope is everywhere. In the new neon signs, in the thumping of the bricklayers, the whizzing sound of the blowtorches. Hope also shines in Son's long, unruly black hair. "I got in some trouble at school because of the long hair," says the 19-year-old, laughing. "But God gave us hair, why cut it?" Son's favorite songs are the American hits "Hotel California" and "Stairway to Heaven." The small band he sings with favors heavy-metal groups such as Black Sabbath, a British band, and Metallica, an American one. "We practice in a warehouse," says Son in his shaky English. "At home we cannot turn the volume up because of the neighbors."

We are sitting in a century-old lakeside coffeeshop eating sunflower seeds and drinking coffee so strong it could start a car engine. "The war was crazy," says Hoang, bass guitarist in Son's group and a student of foreign trade. "We lost 20 years."

Born during an American bombardment, Hoang dreams of visiting the United States. In his room, near the ancestors' altar, he has pinned a Metallica poster. "I wanted to study at the Conservatory," he says, "but my parents would not let me. They said I had a better chance of earning a living if I studied foreign trade."

Hoang and Son both believe the Year of the Rooster will bring the end of the long-standing American embargo. Others, like Tran (not his real name), hope it will not. A government official in his mid-thirties, Tran could be called a progressive. He supports the market reforms and wants them speeded up. He sees the American embargo as a way of putting pressure on the Vietnamese government.

Nguyen Xuan Phong, head of the Americas Department of the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, disagrees. "Our reforms were not triggered by the pressure of the embargo," he says. "The reforms came out of a need to give a better standard of living to our people."

But Tran has other reasons to hope the lifting of the embargo will be delayed. "When the embargo is lifted, a lot of money will be dropped in the hands of the government," he insists. "They are not ready. They will not know how to use it well. They need time to learn about the market economy, to learn to decide on facts, not pride or wishful thinking."

We originally had planned to live at Tran's house in Hanoi. He had suggested the idea and his enthusiasm won us over. But when we got to the capital, Tran had changed his mind. It was mainly because of his father, who is not as progressive as his son, more of a hard-line Communist. When he heard about the plan, he was not at all pleased. "My father feared he would come under attack if others found out his son was renting a room to foreigners while he was criticizing the open-door policy." Tran was so worried about letting us down, he did not tell us until we arrived in Hanoi.

So, back to square one: looking for a house. Renting to foreigners is one of the hottest businesses in town. Many people are renovating their houses, creating small apartments for rent.

"This house is brand-new," insists Fon, a mathematician, as he shows us a two-story house a half-hour's bike ride from the center of

town. The owner wants $1,000 a month for it. Fon has found housing for quite a few foreigners, but we are not as rich as they, so he takes us to another house, smaller and less modern.

* * *

In Ho Chi Minh City, Pierre and I lived with a revolutionary and a bear. No joke. I can tell you the bear's name but not the old man's name. You see, his wife broke the law. She did not pay any tax on our rent. (She was no exception. Most people around here seem either to totally ignore that law or declare a much lower rent than the one they really collect.)

We enjoyed staying on the second floor of their villa, where our room was a perfect picture of what life must have been for the French in colonial times: high ceilings, slow-turning fans, large windows with wooden shutters, a roofed terrace where you could slowly rock in a hammock while listening to the rain beating on the roof.

The old man was a founding member of the Communist Party in the South. Until he fell ill a few months ago, he was a high-ranking party officer. He lived in the large French villa and kept a black Soviet-made Volga sedan with green government plates in his garage.

In early morning, through the shutters, we could hear Saigon wake up. The roosters sang at 5:30. At 6, the two maids washed pots in the courtyard, and after that, there was no point trying to sleep as the hubbub of Saigon honked its way into our room amid the songs of street vendors.

We did not see the old man much. Despite his illness, he was often in Hanoi. And when he came home, many people came to talk to him. I wish he had been home more often. He had deep-set, bright eyes, a warm smile, and a firm handshake. He understood French well but did not speak it with us.

We saw more of Baloo the bear: a small black vegetarian bear, roughly the size of a large dog. The old man's wife bought it from poachers who had intended to sell it to Taiwanese buyers who would have cut off its paws and sold them. Baloo led a peaceful life in the courtyard, swinging from a fence, eating bread and fruit.

The old man had a sister-in-law, a bright woman who had earned the highest honors at the Sorbonne in Paris and spoke flawless French. Years of hardship had dimmed her beauty, but one could see behind her mass of gray hair and finely shaped face the striking beauty she must have been in her Parisian youth. I called her "Madame Soeur."

She did not talk much, especially not about politics. But one night, as we sat together watching the news, she said: "I should have stayed in France. I was offered a good job as the head of a research laboratory. I could have discovered something. Silly girl I was. I felt a responsibility to my people, my family, my country. I came back and found these imbeciles running the university. We had no resources. I could do nothing. I wasted my life. I lost everything."

I sat motionless. The depth of her sadness was overwhelming. "Maybe your presence helped the students you taught during all those years?" I tried. The look she gave me shut me up. Only she knew what the past 15 years had been: the incompetent but politically correct teachers being promoted, the good ones demoted, disciplined, silenced; the students being taught unscientific methods; the sons and daughters of officials getting the overseas fellowships that better students should have received.

Madame Soeur was lucky. Members of her family were powerful. She was spared a lot. "I know of a simple-minded man who was sent to re-education camp because he played an American song on his accordion," she recalls. "He died there."

Life is easier now, she admits. The openness is real and a new wind blows through the universities. But she feels old, too old to start over again.

Never again was Madame Soeur to be so open hearted with me as she was that night. Like most of the Saigonese I met whose lives were crushed by the wheels of the revolution, she usually carried her burden with a dignified serenity.

It was the same with our friend Hung. In his youth he had been a promising embassy secretary, well-educated and fluent in foreign languages. Since 1975, he has been unemployed. Whenever I spoke about improvements and hopes for the future, he listened carefully. But he never agreed.

[P.S. (September 1994): *Hung writes me that he has been offered a job teaching law at Ho Chi Minh University. While his doubts and sorrow linger on, the country's apparent new effort at legal reform is rekindling his hopes.*]

Corruption is massive and growing at all levels of Vietnamese life, a condition that the party seems unable to rectify—in large measure because it is itself a part of the system.

* * *

As Chinese prodemocracy students were assembling in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in May 1989, college students in Hanoi were making their own demands on the Communist Party and the state regarding food, housing, and scholarships. In contrast to the bloody crackdown that took place in China, the local party committee in Hanoi quickly declared the Vietnamese students' demands "legitimate" and made some concessions.

The episode was an indication of the stirrings in the country that were prompting intense debate in the party's upper reaches. During the 1988–89 liberalization, journalists for the first time were encouraged to investigate official wrongdoing and permitted to publish their stories without prior consultation with party censors. Having gotten a whiff of freedom, journalists hoped for more. The editor of *Quan Doi Nhan Dan*, the army daily, expressed regret that the press could debate only "the means of applying policies," not the correctness of the policies themselves.

Vietnamese writers and artists also were given greater leeway during this period. As Gareth Porter, author of *Vietnam: The Politics of Bureaucratic Socialism* (1993), noted in 1990, "Writers are increasingly choosing themes based on their own lives rather than on the party line and writing in styles far removed from the 'socialist realism' that had been in official favor." In popular plays of the late 1980s, war heroes returned to a life of alienation and spiritual emptiness, and party officials were shown as petty and arrogant. The dramas played to packed houses in Hanoi.

Many publishing restrictions that had been in force were dropped. "Popular literary works by anti-communist authors of the prerevolutionary period—such as Nhat Linh and Khai Hung—that had been banned previously were now allowed to be published or performed," Porter observed. And, like journalists, writers and artists began to voice their desire for greater freedom. At a meeting with General Secretary Linh in October 1987, a group of them called for an "untying" of culture from party control. Linh pledged to act on their complaints, and an official resolution a few weeks later said that literary works—other than those that were "anti-people, anti-socialist, or anti-peace"—could be "freely circulated and placed under the assessment and judgment of public opinion and criticism."

But as demands for greater freedom began to be linked to the idea of ending the Communist Party's monopoly on power, Linh and other party leaders began to speak out strongly against political pluralism. "Why We Do Not Accept Pluralism" was the title of a major speech Linh, the leading proponent of *doi moi*, delivered in May 1989. In another important address later that year, he stated, "Democracy does not mean that one is free to say what one wants to, write what one wants to write." Those, he said, were "anarchist acts," and political pluralism was just a "scheme of imperialism." His two speeches—collected and published under the title *Following the Road Chosen by Uncle Ho*—were widely distributed for study by party members and others.

Linh's efforts to limit the movement for political change could not disguise the fact that political liberalization had taken place under his leadership. In mid-1991, as earlier noted, he was replaced as general secretary by the conservative Do Muoi. Party leaders soon retreated from the dangerous liberalization.

In Article Four of the new national constitution, adopted by the National Assembly in 1992 after months of debate, there was, however, a slight change of wording. The 1980 document had declared that the party was "the only force leading the state and society." In the new constitution, the word *only* was deleted.

As the modesty of that modification suggests, Vietnam's leaders continue to try to

limit political change. "Stability" is the watchword. Improvement of the material lives of the people can happen only if political order is maintained, and that can be accomplished only if the Communist Party remains in sole control of Vietnam's political life. Although the National Assembly assumed a more prominent role with the 1992 constitution, it remains firmly under party control. "The South had pluralism, a lot of political parties bickering among themselves—look what it got *them*," as one party official told me once.

The party's determination to preserve "stability" limits the respect it shows for human rights. According to Amnesty International, at least 60 prisoners of conscience were in jail at the end of 1993. No criticism of "Ho Chi Minh thought" or advocacy of pluralism is permitted. Freedom of religion is carefully circumscribed. The government has set up its own "Vietnam Buddhist Church" to pre-empt the existing Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, which has demanded the right to have education and social groups independent of party direction. Some demonstrations during the last few years have resulted in violence, and several Buddhist leaders have been arrested. The Catholic Church has fared somewhat better, thanks to the Vatican's long reach, but here, too, the government has co-opted many Catholics through various party-dominated groups it has set up.

Despite the absence of political freedom and other liberties as they are known in the West, the promise of *doi moi* remains. But can the government deliver on it without paving the way to a liberalism that would destroy the party's political monopoly? I have asked young professionals in Vietnam about the contradictions in their country today and about whether or not there really is a desire for more change. They have been amused by my puzzlement, and their reply is almost standard: "We don't talk about peaceful evolution. We just *do* it."

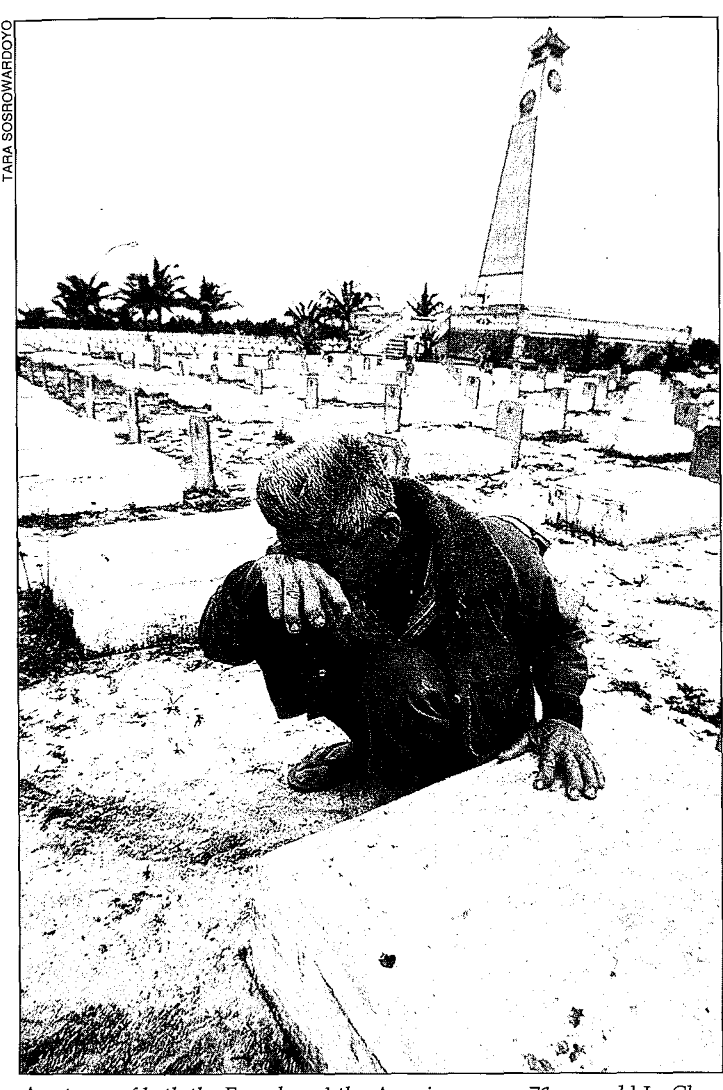
* * *

The ideological preachments of the Vietnam Communist Party seem very remote from what one sees and hears now in the streets. Vietnamese listen to foreign news broadcasts without interference. Many Western magazines and books—so long as they do not violate major taboos—are available. American rock music and Vietnamese variations on it are almost impossible to avoid. American films are shown in theaters and available on videotape. Blue jeans and other types of Western dress are popular with the young. Many young people are studying English, French, and Japanese in hopes of getting jobs as tourist guides for foreign firms in Vietnam. Fax machines and copiers are widely available. The gradual increase in foreign companies doing business in the country can only add to the sense of a traditional society that is more and more in a state of flux.

Despite the restrictions on them, Vietnamese writers and artists still seek to express the truth as they see it about themselves and their people. Filmmaker Luu Trong Ninh's *Please Forgive Me* (1993) explored the generational conflict between the older Vietnamese who romanticize their role in the "liberation" of the country and the younger people, who are more fun-loving and cosmopolitan. The movie was shown briefly before official censors banned it, insisting that Ninh cut several scenes (including one in which a character declared that Vietnamese communist troops, as well as U.S. soldiers, had committed acts of brutality during the war). Outspoken novelist Duong Thu Huong—who at age 20 led a Communist Youth Brigade into action during the war, and later chronicled the 1979 conflict with China—became a vocal advocate of human rights and democratic reform. She was expelled from the Communist Party in 1989 and imprisoned without trial for seven months in 1991. Her four novels, including *Paradise of the Blind* (Morrow, 1993) and, forthcoming in English, *Novel Without a Name*, have been effectively banned in Vietnam.

Making their own, less dramatic contribution to the ferment in Vietnam are the one million Vietnamese living in the United States, the *Viet kieu*, as they are known. Some of them have gone back to live in Vietnam. The number is

TARA SOSROWARDOYO



A veteran of both the French and the American wars, 71-year-old Le Chau Phong today tends the graves at a cemetery in Thanh Trach village, Quang Binh province. "Many of my friends are in this cemetery," he says.

small, but since the lifting of the U.S. embargo, it has been growing. Camellia Ngo, a 28-year-old American lawyer who fled Vietnam with her parents two decades ago, is one who has decided to go back, along with her Vietnamese-American husband, a mechanical engineer. Her memories of Vietnam are not of the war but of the beauty of the country and the joys of childhood, of "playing hopscotch with my friends and using things like banana peels and stones." She will represent her Oakland law firm, which is acting as a middleman for foreign investors. "We want to do business here," she told a *New York Times* reporter, "but business is mainly our means of getting here."

For the most part, however, the influence of the *Viet kieu* is exerted from afar. The refugees who fled their homeland in 1975, and their children, are now well-established as doctors, nurses, engineers, businesspeople, even graduates of U.S. military academies. Many *Viet kieu* send back to their relatives and friends in Vietnam remittances that in all are estimated to amount to $500 million a year, and the total has increased since the end of the U.S. trade embargo in 1994. The government no longer permits dollars to circulate freely and instead requires them to be officially exchanged for Vietnamese currency. This has enabled the government to take a share of the money—and also has revived the black market. The remittances not only allow the recipients to live better but let them buy more foreign goods. And the *Viet kieu* are sending more than money or gifts home. They also are transmitting ideas and information. The impact of these is hard to gauge, though the government in Hanoi fears that it may be considerable. But because the regime cannot shut out the outside world that it needs, there is little it can do.

The pressure for greater economic and political latitude seems to be growing ever stronger. The knowledge of Western affluence, the sight of Western and other foreign goods, have

stoked popular discontent with the economy. The reforms of *doi moi* hold out hope, but the lumbering bureaucracy and massive corruption diminish it. The South's increasing prosperity makes people in the North and in central Vietnam more resentful. The gap between rich and poor has widened.

Do Muoi and his colleagues in Hanoi, leaders of one of the few remaining communist regimes in the world, know that they must change—or perish. They are reluctant to take *doi moi's* reforms much further—but they cannot go back. Nor can they keep unwanted foreign ideas and influences out. Technological advance alone has seen to that. And Hanoi now needs the United States and its allies not only to improve its economy but also to serve as a political counterweight to its northern neighbor, China.

Just how closely Vietnam is reading the strategic tea leaves is suggested by the warm welcome extended last October to Admiral Richard C. Macke, the commander-in-chief of U.S. forces in the Pacific. Hanoi has shown "tremendous" cooperation, Macke said, in the continuing effort to account for the 2,214 U.S. servicemen still considered "missing in action." He and Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet discussed not only that subject but also the question of maintaining stability in the region. The possibility of future U.S.-Vietnam military cooperation was not ruled out.

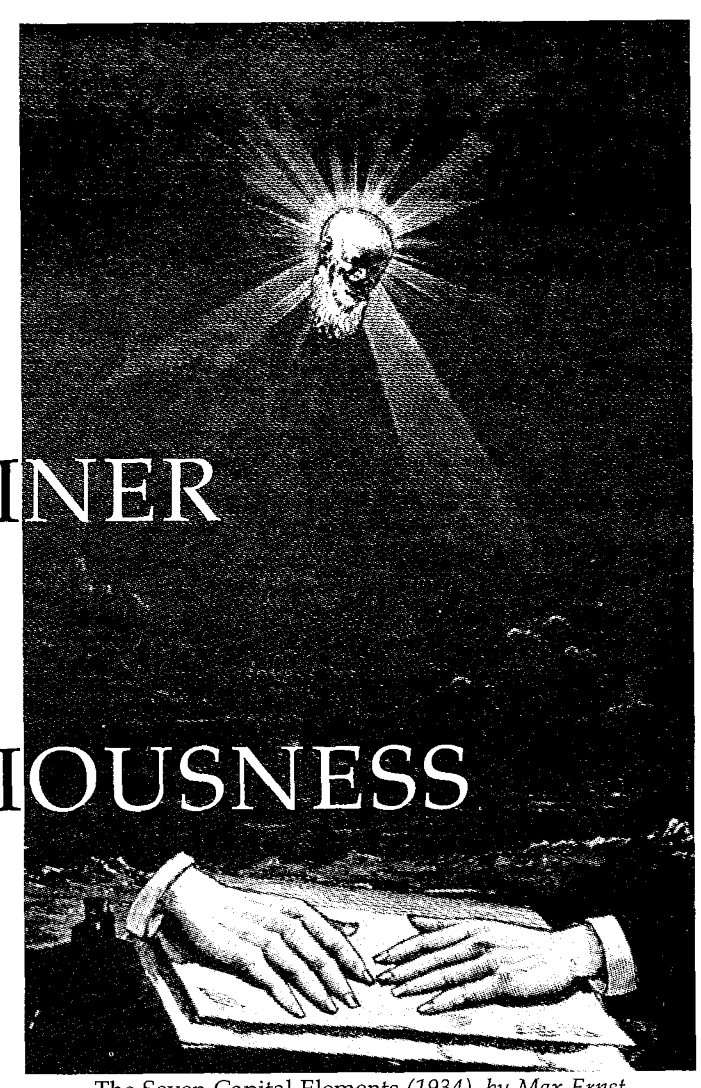
Vietnam now has "observer" status in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), whose members include Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Brunei Darussalam. These relatively prosperous nations have had free-market economies for decades, and also had, during the Cold War, a U.S. security "umbrella." Vietnam is likely to be invited to join the association this year, which will be a distinct plus for the nation's commercial relations. Membership will also enable Vietnam to take part in the association's "Regional Forum," where security issues are discussed. There, it will find strong agreement that the oil and mineral resources of the South China Sea should be shared regionally, not exploited solely by China.

As Vietnam shifts its position in the world, so, inevitably, will it have to change at home. "Peaceful evolution" is dismissed by the Vietnamese communists as something cooked up by foreigners, an anti-Vietnam plot. But, in truth, peaceful evolution—perhaps toward the sort of "soft authoritarianism" practiced in Singapore, which draws on Confucian values and allows multi-party elections, or toward the "guided democracy" of Indonesia—now appears to be the only realistic course open to them. Giving the Vietnamese people more say in their own governance seems essential if the regime hopes to build popular support. Independence alone, it is evident, is not enough.

Pluralism is not the only thing Vietnam needs. It also needs to be honest and conciliatory in dealing with the past. Along virtually every road one travels in the South, there are small cemeteries in which are buried the local Viet Cong soldiers killed in their long struggle for Ho Chi Minh's "independence and freedom." The cemeteries—in some of which doubtless lie the bodies of North Vietnamese soldiers—are carefully preserved. Families come to leave flowers and worship at the graves of their loved ones. And yet, to the best of my knowledge, there are no such cemeteries for the Vietnamese soldiers killed fighting for South Vietnam. Indeed, after 1975, some cemeteries containing the graves of soldiers in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam were deliberately bulldozed over.

It may well not be until generations hence that *all* the dead of that war can be given the respect they deserve. But it seems to this writer that until the Vietnamese come to terms with their own recent past, their quest for an authentic and secure national identity will not be at an end.

The Book As a Container Of Consciousness



BY WILLIAM H. GASS

The Seven Capital Elements *(1934), by Max Ernst*

"So! You've written a book! What's in it?"

When Hamlet was asked what he was reading, he replied "words, words, words." That's what's in it.

Imagine words being "in" anything other than the making mouth, the intervening air, the receiving ear. For formerly they were no more substantial than the rainbow, an arch of tones between you and me. "What is the matter, my lord?" Polonius asks, to which Hamlet answers, "Between who?" twisting the meaning in a lawyerlike fashion, although he might have answered more symmetrically: pages, pages, pages . . . that is the matter . . . paper and sewing thread and ink . . . the word made wood.

Early words were carved on a board of beech, put on thin leaves of a fiber that might be obtained from bamboo and then bound by cords, or possibly etched in ivory, or scratched on tablets made of moist clay. Signs were chiseled in stone, inked on

unsplit animal skin stretched very thin and rolled, or painted on the pith of the papyrus plant. A lot later, words were typed on paper, microfilmed, floppy disked, photocopied, faxed. As we say about dying, the methods vary. Carving required considerable skill, copying a lengthy education, printing a mastery of casting—in every case, great cost—and hence words were not to be taken lightly. (They might have been, indeed, on lead.) They were originally so rare in their appearance that texts were sought out, signs were visited like points of interest, the words themselves were worshiped; therefore the effort and expense of writing them was mostly devoted to celebrating the laws of the land, recording community histories, and keeping business accounts.

These marks, each and every one, required a material that would receive them, and a space where they might spread out, since they were becoming visible for the first time, made formerly from air and as momentary as music. They were displacing themselves from their familiar source: the lips, teeth, tongue, the mouth from which they normally emerged on their journey to an ear. Before there was writing and paper and printing, though words remained in the trail left by their maker like the ashes of a fire or the spoor of a deer, another sort of stability had to be achieved, since it would scarcely do the speaking soul much good or the listener any harm, if words were no more felt than a breeze briefly touching the cheek. As we know, many of language's earliest formations had a mnemonic purpose. They made play with the materialities of speech, breaking into the stream of air that bore their sounds—displaying speed and vehemence, creating succession—and working with the sounds, the *oh*s and *ah*s themselves, possibly because, like the baby's babbling, it was fun, and a fresh feat for a new life, but more practically because, when the sense of a sentence or a saying was overdetermined, and the words connected by relations other than the ideas they represented by themselves, then they were more firmly posted up in memory, and might like a jest be repeated, and like a jingle, acted on, leading to the casting of a vote or the purchase of bread, to the support of the very cause which the sentence, wound like that snake around one of Eve's limbs to beguile her, had slyly suggested.

When cast in lead, carved in bark, billboarded by a highway, up in lights, words had a palpability they had never had before. Nor did they need all the machinery of rhyme and rhythm and phrasing, of rhetoric's schemes or poetry's alliterations, since they could be consulted again and again, pored over, studied, annotated, lauded, denied. For Plato, though, the written word had lost its loyalty to the psyche that had been its source, and Phaedrus could hold beneath his cloak a roll on which another's words were written, words that Phaedrus thought he might soon pronounce, allowing them to seem his, performing passions and stating beliefs not necessarily held or felt by him, handing his conscience over to a ghost, practicing to be a president. Although the written word made possible compilations of data, subtleties of analysis, persistence of examination, and complexities of thought that had hitherto seemed impossible, it contributed to the atrophy of memory, and, eventually, by dispelling the aura of the oral around words, to the absence of weight, consequence, and conviction as well.

Except that poets and prophets and canny politicians continued to write as if they spoke for the soul, and to this end their sentences sometimes still sang in a recognizable voice. However, the displayed word was almost immediately given fancier and fancier dress; calligraphic sopranos soon bewitched the eye; creatures, personalities, events, and other referents were pictured alongside lan-

guage to amplify it, dignify it, illuminate it, give it the precious position it deserved. So unchecked and exuberant was this development of the visual that writing was often reduced to making headlines or composing captions.

Add radio to print and the word became ubiquitous. It overhung the head like smoke, and had to be ignored as one ignores most noise. It was by loose use corrupted, by misuse debased, by overuse destroyed. It flew in any eye that opened, in any ear hands didn't hide, and became, instead of the lord of truth, the servant of the lie.

Readers were encouraged to race like a motorcar across the page, taking turns on two wheels, the head as silent as an empty house, eager for the general gist, anxious to get on. Rarely did a reader read in the old-fashioned, hesitant, lip-moving way—by listening rather than by looking, allowing the language fastened on the page its own performance; for then it would speak as though souled, and fly freely away into the space of the mind as it once had in the rarer atmospheres of the purely spoken world.

New notations confound old orders and create essential changes. The alphabet helps make the mind, and language becomes not only the very vehicle of thought but much of its cargo. Music bursts forth into its modern form when signs that facilitate sight-reading emerge from neumes, and when the voice learns it must do more than merely rise and fall to please. As a consequence of the miracle of the modern scale, the composer could take down imagined music. Similarly, more than memory is served when objects are reduced to reproducible, transmissible dots. The image is now as triumphant as money, as obnoxious as the politician's spiel, as ignored as other people's pain, as common as the cold.

In sum: there is the observed word, watched as you might an ant or an interesting bird; and there is, of course, the spoken word as well, since we still make conversation, go to plays, and look on in a contrived night while movie stars enunciate clichés as if such commonplaces were the only language. But, in addition, there are the silent sounds we make within the hall of our head when we talk to ourselves, or take any prose or poetry seriously enough to perform it, to listen to it with our brains, as we do when we read this delicious bit from Jeremy Taylor, one of English prose's greatest masters, about the difficulty of dying:

> Take away but the pomps of death, the disguises and solemn bugbears, the tinsel, and the actings by candlelight, and proper and fantastic ceremonies, the minstrels and the noise-makers, the women and the weepers, the swoonings and the shriekings, the nurses and the physicians, the dark room and the ministers, the kindred and the watchers; and then to die is easy, ready, and quitted from its troublesome circumstances.

These are lines composed for the pulpit and delivered to the ear as honesty ought. Nearer to our time, there is now and then prose whose performance is only hoped for, bidden but rarely achieved, as any of Proust or James or, as in the following passage, Joyce:

> I call her Sosy because she's sosiety for me and she says sossy while I say sassy and she says will you have some more scorns while I say won't you take a few more schools and she talks about ithel dear while I simply never talk about

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> athel darling she's but nice for enticing my friends and she loves your style considering she breaksin me shoes for me when I've arch trouble and she would kiss my white arms for me so gratefully but apart from that she's terribly nice really, my sister. . . .

It is natural to suppose that the splitting up of the printed line (composed of alphabet blocks and blocklike spaces), as well as the arrangement of these lengths in rows on the plane of the page, and the subsequent piling of pages one upon another to form the material volume of the text, which the book's case will then retain and protect, are all the most normal and modest of conventions, as, of course, the sounds and letters are (indeed, it comprises a perfectly Euclidean lesson in spatial construction, beginning with points, assembling their numbers into lines, combining the lines to form planes, and, by stacking these, eventually achieving volume); and that there is nothing about the book, as a material entity, neither in its pages, nor in its lines, nor in its principles of manufacture, which is essential to the meaning and nature of its text, no more than the shelf that holds the spices is a spice itself or adds to their piquancy or savor.

Even if sounds once wonderfully mimicked the various kinds of things and creatures that populated nature, and even if ancient hieroglyphs depicted their referents as faithfully as the most vulgar bourgeois painter, by now these resemblances have been forgotten and are no longer relevant, because it is the sheerest accident, as far as sense goes, that "book" and "look," "hook" and "crook," "brook" and "spook," "nook" and "cook" share twin *o*'s, like Halloween eyes, and terminate in *k*, as do "kook" and "rook." Moreover, the relation between "hoot" and the owl's "toot" and the train's, "soot" and smudge, "loot" and L.A., is perfectly arbitrary, could be anything at all, except that frequently used words tend to be short, and coarse words Anglo-Saxon.

So one is inclined by common sense and local practice to consider the book as a simple vehicle for the transportation of texts, and no more does the meaning of a text change when clapped between unaccustomed covers than milk curdles when carried by a strange maid.

However, as the philosopher Whitehead suggested, common sense should find a wall on which to hang itself. That the size of type, the quality of paper, the weight of what the hands hold, the presence and placement of illustration, the volume's age, evidence of wear and tear, previous ownership and markings, sheer expense, have no effect upon the reader, and do not alter the experience of the text, is as absurd as supposing that *Aida* sounds the same to box or gallery, or that ice cream licks identically from cone or spoon or dish or dirty finger.

I hear an objection: the meaning of the text cannot change unless the text changes. Any reaction to that meaning is certainly dependent upon external factors, including one reader's indigestion and another reader's mood. However, the text remains the text, regardless of print, paper, and purse strings, unless you alter the words and their procession.

Let us consider the word, first, in terms of the ontology of its composition. This will be the same, in a way, as considering any larger units, whether they be phrases, paragraphs, pages, volumes, or sets.

The words I am writing now, for instance, are not words in the full sense; they are, first of all, marks on an otherwise unmarked page, then sounds undulating in a relatively quiet space. However, these marks and these sounds are but emissaries and idols themselves, what logicians call tokens, of the real English words—namely "now," namely "writing," namely "m," namely "I," namely "words," namely "the"—or what logicians refer to as the Language Type. If this were not so, then, if I were to erase the word "word" from this

paragraph's opening clause—"the words I am writing now"—or if I were to fall firmly silent in front of the *w* and refuse to go on; then there'd be no more "word" for word, written or spoken, like that momentarily notorious expression, "dibbit ulla rafiné snerx," which was said once—just now—written hardly at all, given this temporary body only to disappear without ever gaining a soul, that is to say, a significance.

To be precise, we do not write words or speak them either. We use their tokens, or stand-ins. Each hand, each voice, is unique; each stamp, each line of print, is somewhat less so, though they form the same message, ACCOUNT OVERDRAWN, on the checks of so many members of Congress, in the headlines of the papers, in the accusations of impropriety by their constituents. But the Language Type is the same, whatever the ink, the cut of the stamp, the font, the accent, tone of voice. At this level a word is more than its meanings; it is also a group of rules for its spelling and pronunciation, as well as a set of specifications that state its grammatical class and determine its proper placement and use in the normal sentence. That is, if my recent paragraph's opening had been "I am words writing the," we should recognize the tokens—"the" is still "the" there, as far as its marks mean and its sounds sign, but we should have trouble assigning them their Language Types, for "the" is not where "the" belongs, articling up to something.

Let us journey into Plato's country for a moment, and speak of the Pure Type, not merely a linguistic one. Although *mot* means "word" and *wort* means "word" and *parole* means "word" and *word*, to be fair, means *logos* means *verbum*, and so on, from tongue to tongue, the pure Word they each depend on, and which comprises their common core, has no rules for its formation, since it escapes all specific materiality, has been, in fact, never written, never spoken, never thought, only dreamed during our extrapolations, envisioned solely by great Gee'd Geist, large aR'd Reason, or the high-sided eM of Mind.

This progression—from verbal token to Language Type, and from that Type to unspoken Idea—has always seemed to some philosophers to be eminently reasonable, while it appears to others as an example of Reason capitalized, another case of reification, and, like Common Sense before, leading us astray. But imagine for a moment that all the tokens of a particular Language Type have been removed from past or present use, as the Führer wished to do with Jewish names. Even so, we would be able to generate tokens once again, since we should still have a definition, know the word's part of speech, and understand its spelling. Indeed, only intellectually is it possible to separate the spelling of a word from the word itself. To show how a word is spelled, one writes the word. However, if the Language Type were also removed, the word would at once disappear, and disappear for good, because the Pure Type has no material instantiation. It is a limit. Which means that words have a special kind of nonspecific or floating residence, because our belief even in a Pure Type depends on there being at least one material instance (or the rules for making such an instance) in existence. Which is as true of the book as the word, for, in a way, the book itself isn't "in" any one example of its edition either, although at least one copy has to be about, or the printer's plates, along with the outline for its manufacture.

In any case, something interesting happens when we examine an extended text from the point of view of these distinctions. *Madame Bovary*, for instance, has been translated into many languages, but does this feat mean there is a Pure, un-French *Madame B*, one beyond any ordinary verbal exactness or lyrical invention? Clearly *Madame Bovary* is confined to its language, and that language is not merely French in some broad,

undifferentiated sense, but is Flaubert's so particularly that no other hand could have handled the studied pen of its composition. In short, as we rose, somewhat dubiously, from the token to the Pure Type, we now, more securely, mark the descent from a general language such as French to the specific style of artists such as Flaubert or Proust. With their native tongue they speak a personal language, and may even, as in the case of Henry James, have a late as well as an early phase.

They achieve this individuality of style, as we shall see, by being intensely concerned with the materiality of the token, whether of word or sentence form or larger rhetorical scheme, although a text may be notable for its ideas or particular subject matter as well. In doing so, such authors defy the idea that the relation between token and type is purely arbitrary. By implication, they deny that a book only hauls its passengers.

Words really haven't an independent life. They occupy no single location. They are foci for relations. The Pure Type may sit like a sage on its mountain top, pretending it is a Holy Thing, but the Language Type is dependent in great part upon the history of use that all its tokens have, for the oddity is that if the word is not the token, it is nevertheless the token which does the word's work.

If the word is an accretion formed from its history of use, then, when it scrapes against another word, it begins to shave the consequences of past times and frequent occasions from its companion as well as being shorn itself. We can imagine contexts that aim to reduce the ambiguous and rich vagueness of language and make each employed term mean and do one and only one thing. (Gertrude Stein says she aimed at this effect for a time, and insisted that when words were so primly used, they became nearly unrecognizable.) And there are certainly others whose hope is to employ the entire range of any word's possibilities, omitting not even its often forgotten roots (as Joyce does in *Finnegans Wake*). The same token can indeed serve many words, so that, while the word "steep," set down alongside the word "bank," will withdraw a few meanings from use, it may take an adjective like "muddy" to force the other "banks" to fail. Differentiation and determination are the goals of great writing: words so cemented in their sentential place they have no synonyms, terms so reduced to single tokens they lose their generality; they survive only where they are, the same size as their space, buried words like buried men:

> Though grave-diggers' toil is long,
> Sharp their spades, their muscles
>   strong,
> They but thrust their buried men
> Back in the human mind again.

All our lines of language are like the rope in a tug of war. Their referential character pulls them one way, in the direction of things and the material world, where "buried men" are covered corpses, no otherwise than fossil bones, while the conceptual side of our sentences drags them toward a realm of abstraction, and considers them in their relation to other ideas: those, first of all, that define terms and tell us most matter-of-factly what it is to be buried, but only word for word; second, associations that have been picked up over time and use, like dust on travel clothes, and that shadow each essential sense to suggest, in this case, that death in one life is life in another; and, third, those connections our own memories make—for instance, if these lines remind us of a few of Edwin Muir's, and link us suddenly with a land frozen into flooring, a place whose planks are crossed, let's say, by a miller's daughter one cold winter's day, in another country and in another poem, and where the implications for the buried

are quite otherwise than those suggested by Yeats.

> But they, the powerless dead,
> Listening can hear no more
> Than a hard tapping on the sounding
>   floor
> A little overhead
> Of common heels that do not know
> Whence they come or where they go
> And are content
> With their poor frozen life and shallow
>   banishment.

Our own awareness, too, is always being drawn toward its objects, as if it were being sung to by sirens, at the same time that it's withdrawing, in the company of the cautious self-regarding self, into the safe citadel of the head—unless, of course desire is doing the driving, for then the same sensation that is sharply focused on the being of another (an exposed chest, a piece of moist cake) will find itself inside hunger's stomach.

These brief considerations should be sufficient to suggest that the word may be troubled by the same ontological problems that plagued Descartes (and all of us who inherited his hobbies): there are two poles to the person that are pulling the person apart, namely mind, meaning, and mathematics, inside the circle of the self; and body, spatial location, and mechanics, within the determined realm of things. A book is such a bodied mind. Descartes described these spheres (in the way, it seemed to him, accuracy required), as so separate, so alien from one another, indeed, as so opposed in every character and quality that we might naturally wonder how self and world could combine, meet, or merely hail one another, if they are at such ontological odds. And we have seen, as I have said, how bodylike the book is, how mindlike the text, and if Descartes's critics complained that he had made of us a ghost in a machine, we might now understand the text as thought slipped warmly between cold sheets, elusive as a spirit, since its message cannot be injured by ripping up its pages or destroyed by burning its book. Dog-earing can do no damage to the significance of the sign, according to the Cartesian division, nor can the cruel reader's highlight pen clarify obscurity, a check mark change a stress, an underline italicize a rhyme. This bifurcation of reality can be made persuasive, yet does our experience allow us to believe it?

Of course, we continue to call them copies, as if there were an exemplar still, and every book were but a vassal of its Lord, and Adam to its Maker. This medieval scheme is gone. There are no books copied piecemeal any more. Rather the book is an object of mass production, like a car (there is no first Ford), and both language and printing confer upon it a redoubtable generality to accompany its spiritual sameness. Like citizens in our country, all copies are truly equal, although this one, signed by the author, is somewhat more valuable, and this one, from the original edition, is to be preferred to all subsequent impressions, and this one, bound beautifully and illustrated by Picasso, is priceless (see, it's wrapped in tissue), and this one, dressed in vulgar colors and pretending to be a bosom not a book, like a whore flaunting its contents but ashamed of its center. Such a book asks to be received as nothing but an object, a commodity for learning or for leisure use, certainly not as a holy vessel, a container of consciousness, but instead as a disposable duplicate, a carbonless copy, another dollar bill, and not as a repository for moments of awareness, for passages of thought—states that, we prefer to believe, make us most distinctly us.

Descartes endeavored (it was a futile try) to find a meeting point for mind and matter, a place where they might transact some business, but consciousness could not be moored to a material mast like some dirigible, and his famous gland could not reside in both realms at once, or be a third thing, neither one nor t'other, not with realities so completely contrary. Yet if he had looked inside his *Cogito* instead of pursuing

its *ergo* to its *sum*, he would have found the simple, unassuming token, made of meaningless ink as its page is of flattened fibers, to which, in a formal yet relaxed way, was related both a referent in the world and a meaning in the mind. It was not that world; it was not that mind. Both had to happen along and find their union in the awareness of the reader.

Normally we are supposed to say farewell to the page even as we look, to see past the cut of the type, hear beyond the shape of the sound, feel more than the heft of the book, to hear the bird sing whose name has been invoked, and think of love being made through the length of the night, if the bird's name is the nightingale. But when the book itself has the beauty of the bird, and the words do their own singing; when the token is treated as if it, not some Divine intention, was holy and had power; when the bird itself is figured in the margins as though that whiteness were a moon-bleached bough and the nearby type the leaves it trembles; and when indigo turbans or vermilion feathers are, with jasmines, pictured so perfectly that touch falls in love with the finger, eyes light, and nostrils flare; when illustrations refuse to illustrate but suggest instead the inside of the reader's head where a consciousness is being constructed; then the nature of the simple sign is being vigorously denied, and the scene or line or brief rendition is being treated like a thing itself, returning the attention again and again to its qualities and its composition.

> If it's ever spring again,
> Spring again,
> I shall go where went I when
> Down the moor-cock splashed, and
> hen,
> Seeing me not, amid their flounder,
> Standing with my arm around her;
> If it's ever spring again,
> Spring again,
> I shall go where went I then.

What is this as-if "if"? It is as if the tokens were rebelling against their simple dispensable utilitarian status; it is as if they were appealing to the meanings they ostensibly bear by saying, "Listen, hear how all of me helps you, for I won't let you merely declare your intention to return to a place and a time when you saw the moor-cock amorous with his hen and held your own love fast in tribute to him, but I shall insist that my very special music become meaning too, so that none of me, not a syllable of my substance, shall be left behind like an insignificant servant, because, as you can hear and see and feel, I am universal too, I am mind, and have ideal connections."

Yet it is only a long-standing philosophical prejudice to insist on the superiority of what are called the "higher" abstract general things, for they feel truly ghostly, orphaned, without even a heaven to make a shining mark on, and beseech the material world to give them a worthy home, a residence they may animate, and make worthwhile; they long to be something, to be someplace, to know the solidity and slow change of primal stuff, so they—these ideas, these designs—will rush into the arms of Thomas Hardy's lines, and instead of passing away into one realm or other, will remain and be repeated by us, revisited as the poet revisits that meadow full of springtime: "I shall go where went I when." Like a kite, the poem rises on the wind and longs to be off, yet the line holds, held by the page, pulling to be away, required to remain.

> Wandering through cold streets
> tangled like old string,
> Coming on fountains rigid in the frost,
> Its formula escapes you; it has lost
> The certainty that constitutes a thing.

This stanza of Auden's describing "Brussels in Winter" discloses what rhymes do. They mate. They mate meanings on the basis of a common matter; on the basis of an accidental resemblance argue common

blood. Through this absurd connection, they then claim equivalent eloquence for the mute as for the vocal.

> Only the old, the hungry and the
> humbled
> Keep at this temperature a sense of
> place,
> And in their misery are all assembled;
> The winter holds them like an Opera-
> House.

Rows of words become the frozen scene, while the scene is but the sounds the syllables align.

> Ridges of rich apartments loom
> tonight
> Where isolated windows glow like
> farms,
> A phrase goes packed with meaning
> like a van,
>
> A look contains the history of man,
> And fifty francs will earn a stranger
> right
> To take the shuddering city in his arms.

Rhymes ball their signs like snow, then throw for fun the hard-packed contents of the fist at the unwary backside of a friend, who will nonetheless laugh when he receives the blow.

It was Emerson who wrote:

> He builded better than he knew;
> The conscious stone to beauty grew.

The stone is carved by the consciousness of the carver. That way consciousness achieves the dignity of place, and the stone overcomes its cold materiality and touches spirit.

The oscillation of interest between "thing" and "thought" inside the sign is complemented by a similar vibration in consciousness, inasmuch as we are eager to lose ourselves in our experience, enjoy what Nietzsche called a Dionysian drunkenness, and become one with what we know. But we are also anxious to withdraw, observe ourselves observing, and dwell in what Nietzsche said was a dream state, but I prefer to imagine is made of the play of the mind, an Apollonian detachment, the cool of the critical as it collects its thoughts within the theater of the head.

The book contains a text. A text is words, words, more words. But some books want to be otherwise than cup to coffee at the diner's anonymous counter. That's what I've so far said. They want to be persons, companions, old friends. And part of their personality naturally comes from use. The collector's copy, slipcased and virginal, touched with gloves, may be an object of cupidity, but not of love. I remember still a jelly stain upon the corner of an early page of *Treasure Island*. It became the feared black spot itself, and every time I reread that wonderful tale, I relived my first experience when, toast at a negligent tilt, I saw Blind Pew approaching, tapping down the road, and Billy Bones, in terror of what he might receive, holding out a transfixed hand. I licked the dab of jelly from the spotted page.

I scribbled many a youthfully assured "shit!" in my earliest books, questioning Pater's perspicacity, Spengler's personality, or Schopenhauer's gloom (even if marginally), but such silly defacements keep these volumes young, keep them paper playthings still, in their cheap series bindings and pocketbook colored covers, so that now they are treasures from a reading time when books were, like a prisoner's filched tin spoon, utensils of escape, enlargements of life, wonders of the world—more than companions, also healers, friends. One is built of such books, such hours of reading, adventures undertaken in the mind, lives held in reverential hands.

In a book bin at the back of a Goodwill store in St. Louis, I come upon a copy of *The Sense of Beauty*. By what route did Santayana's first work reach this place? We scarcely wonder what wallet has previously

enclosed the dollar bill we're on the brink of spending, but I for one get romantic about the vicissitudes of books' voyages, about hurt spines, dust, thumb prints on certain sheets, wear and tear, about top edges that have faded, and feel that some texts age like fine wine in their pages, waiting for the taste of the right eye, the best time. Pure texts have no such life. Only their tokens, and the books that keep them safe, wallow in the world.

Decorations did not always dirty the word by disgracing its depth and subtlety with lazy loops, silly leaves and flowers, poorly imagined scenes, or with characters as crudely drawn as most comics. Nor were banal texts invariably embarrassed by leather bindings, complex enclosing borders, and initial letters as elaborately tacky as a Christmas tree. The better matches were reminders of the Book's ideal: to realize within its covers a unity of type and token, the physical field supplying to its pastured words the nutrients they need to flourish, and actually making the text serve the design of a beautiful thing, while that object itself becomes something of a symbol, enlarging on the significance of the text and reminding the reader where his imagination belongs—on that page where "a phrase goes packed with meaning like a van."

If, then, the miseries of metaphysics are to be found in author, book, and reader, as well as in the whole unheeding world, and if, as its geometry suggests, a book is built to be, like a building, a body for the mind, we might usefully peer into that head where the text will sometime sound and see what elements need to be combined to complete its creation and its containment of a consciousness.

Clearly, the epistemological passage begins with the kind of awareness of the world and its regulations that the writer of our text achieves. When a thing is seen it says its name, and begs to be perceived as fully and richly as possible, because sensing of any kind transforms its innocent object, as Rilke so often wrote, into an item in consciousness: that stone jug, standing on a trestle table, gray as the wood, its lip white with dried milk, or the old mill whose long-stilled wheel showers every thought about it with the tossed fall of its working water, or the worn broom, dark with oil and dust, leaning now like a shadow in a corner, quietly concerned about who will take hold of it next, and bird call, of course, and the smell of anciently empty dresser drawers, the coarse comforting feel of dark bread between the teeth. Would any of these qualities be realized without the valiantly alert observer, dedicated to the metamorphosis of matter into mind, with the obligation to let nothing escape his life, never to let slip some character of things: the way wood wears at corners, or rust grows rich, or lamps stand on carpets?

Our ideal writer will naturally understand that experience is everywhere toned by our mood, soothed or inflamed by immediate feeling, and that these emotions are modified by what we see or think or imagine, so that sometimes new ones will emerge. I take an emotion to be a perception of the relation of the self to other things: fear or hate when they threaten me or mine, jealousy when I am faced with loss, envy when I wish I had someone else's talent, luck, or favor, love when I identify my own well-being with another's, then more generally, loneliness as a recognition that I am not sought or valued by my environment, alienation when I believe I have no real relation to the world, happiness when sufficiently deluded, melancholy when I see no possibility of improvement in my affairs, and so on. About these judgments a person may be correct or mistaken. And our ideal writer will be right about hers, able to empathize with those of others, and be adept at measuring how feeling deforms things or how

cannily it makes most of its assessments.

Thought is another essential character in consciousness, going on sometimes at a tangent to perception or in indifference to emotion (as philosophers like to brag it ought), though, if I am right about one of the functions of awareness, each and every element is cognitive; and it is a fortunate person, indeed, who has feelings the head trusts, and perceptions his other faculties can count on. I can feel persecuted and be deceived; I can see snakes, and be d.t.'d; I can believe in my project of squaring the circle, and be deluded; and we do know people who can't get anything right, who marry wrong, who embrace a superstition and call it faith, whose perceptions lack clarity, color, and depth, and who have never once heard the horn in the forest. Such a person might very well wish to possess the character of a good sentence.

For the most part, our formal thought goes on in words: in what we say to ourselves, in the sotto voce language I have already spoken of. Plainly a meditative person will need the data his perception furnishes and the support which sound emotions lend. But he will, in addition to the disciplines of logic, mathematics, and the scientific method, need to possess a rich vocabulary, considerable command of it, and the fruit (in facts and their relations, in words and theirs) of much skilled and careful reading, because reading is the main way we discover what is going on in others; it is the knothole in the fence, your sight of my secrets, my look at what has been hidden behind your eyes, since our organs are never shared, cannot be lent or borrowed. In order to be known, we speak. Even to ourselves.

We must notice our drives, our desires, our needs, next, although they are always calling attention to themselves. They put purpose in our behavior, position the body in the surf, urge us to overcome obstacles, or make hay while the sun shines. And whatever we desire, Hobbes says, we call good, and whatever we are fearful of and loathe, we insist is bad, avoiding it even if at cost. These are cognitions, too, and we discover, when we realize our aims, whether we were right to want to go home again, or were once more disappointed in the pie, the place, the conversation, and the trip.

Finally, in addition to our passions, purposes, and perceptions, the skills and deftness of our brains, there is what Coleridge called the "esemplastic power"—that of the creative imagination. As I am defining it, the imagination is comparative, a model maker, bringing this and that together to see how different they are, or how much the same. The imagination prefers interpenetration. That's its sex. It likes to look through one word at another, to see streets as tangled string, strings as sounding wires, wires as historically urgent words, urgent words as passing now along telephone lines, both brisk and intimate, strings that draw, on even an everyday sky, music's welcome staves.

Having read the classics closely, the inner self with honesty, and the world well—for they will be her principal referents—the writer must perform the second of our transformations: that of replacing her own complex awareness with its equivalence in words. That is, the sentence which gets set most rightly down will embody, in its languid turns and slow unfolding, or in its pell-mell pace and pulsing stresses, the imperatives of desire or the inertia of a need now replete; it will seize its subject as though it were its prey, or outline it like a lover, combining desire with devotion, in order to sense it superbly, neglecting nothing its nature needs; it will ponder it profoundly, not concealing its connections with thought and theory, in order to exhibit the play, the performance, of mind; and it will be gentle and contemplative, if that is called for, or passionate and rousing, if that's appropriate,

The Readers *(1924), by Fernand Léger*

always by managing the music, filling each syllable with significance like chocolates with creme, so that every sentence is a bit of mindsong and a fully animated body made of muscle movement, ink, and breath.

Last, as if we had asked Santa for nothing yet, the adequate sentence should be resonant with relations, raise itself like Lazarus though it lies still upon the page, as if—always "as if"—it rose from "frozen life and shallow banishment" to that place where Yeats's spade has put it "back in the human mind again."

How otherwise than action each is, for even if—always "even," always "if"—I preferred to pick the parsley from my potatoes with a knife, and eat my peas before all else, I should have to remember the right words must nevertheless be placed in their proper order: that is, parsley, potatoes, and peas . . . parsley, potatoes, and peas . . . parsley, potatoes, and peas.

That is to say, the consciousness contained in any text is not an actual functioning consciousness; it is a constructed one, improved, pared, paced, enriched by endless retrospection, irrelevancies removed, so that into the ideal awareness that I imagined for the poet, who possesses passion, perception, thought, imagination, and desire, and has them present in amounts appropriate to the circumstances—just as, in the lab, we need more observation than fervor, more imagination than lust—there are introduced patterns of disclosure, hierarchies of value, chains of inference, orders of images, na-

tures of things.

When Auden, to return to him, lullabies this way:

> Lay your sleeping head, my love,
> Human on my faithless arm;

he puts a most important pause—"my love"—between "head" and "human," allowing the latter to become a verb, and then, by means of an artfully odd arrangement, resting the *m*'s and *a*'s and *n*'s softly on the *a*'s and *m*'s and *r*'s.

Of course, we can imagine the poet with a young man's head asleep on an arm which the poet knows has cushioned other lovers equally well, and will again; and we can think of him, too, as considering how beautiful this youth is, and pondering the fleeting nature of his boyish beauty, its endangerment now calmly ignored:

> Time and fevers burn away
> Individual beauty from
> Thoughtful children, and the grave
> Proves the child ephemeral:
> But in my arms till break of day
> Let the living creature lie,
> Mortal, guilty, but to me
> The entirely beautiful.

Yet it is scarcely likely that Auden's contemplating mind ran on just this way, making in that very moment the pun on "lie," or creating that delicious doubled interior rhyme "but to me the entirely" which so perfectly confirms the sentiment. It's probable that the poet, passion spent, looked down on his lover in a simple song of sympathy. Later, he recalled his countless climbs into bed, in sadness at their passing, perhaps, but with a memory already resigned, recollecting, too, certain banal routines, in order, on some small notebook's handy page, to cause a consciousness to come to be that's more exquisite, more—yes—entire, and worthy of esteem, than any he actually ever had, or you, or me. What the poem says is not exceptional. This midnight moment will pass, this relationship will die, this boy's beauty will decay, the poet himself will betray his love and lie; but none of that fatal future should be permitted to spoil the purity of the poet's eye as it watches now, filled with "every human love." Nor can we compliment Auden's art by repeating Pope, that what it says has "ne'er so well been said," because that formula misses what has so beautifully been given us: a character and quality of apprehension.

Sentences, I've said, are but little shimmied lengths of words endeavoring to be similar stretches of human awareness. They are there to say I know this or that, feel thus and so, want what wants me, see the sea sweep swiftly up the sand and seep away out of sight as simply as these sibilants fade from the ear; but such sentences present themselves in ranks, in paginated quires, in signatures of strength; they bulk up in the very box that Cartesian geometry has contrived for them, to stand for the body that has such thoughts, such lines that illuminate a world, a world that is no longer their author's either, for the best of writing writes itself.

How wrong it is to put a placid pretty face upon a calm and tragic countenance. How awful also to ignore the essential character, the profounder functions, of the container of consciousness—to think of it even as a box from which words might be taken in or out—for I believe it is a crime against the mind to disgrace the nature of the book with ill-writ words of puffery or to compromise well-wrought words by building for them tawdry spaces in a tacky house. "The book form," Theodore Adorno writes,

> signifies detachment, concentration, continuity: anthropological characteristics that are dying out. The composition of a book as a volume is incompatible with its transformation into mo-

mentary presentations of stimuli. When, through its appearance, the book casts off the last reminder of the idea of a text in which truth manifests itself, and instead yields to the primacy of ephemeral responses, the appearance turns against the book's essence, that which it announces prior to any specific context. . . . The newest books [have] become questionable, as though they have already passed away. They no longer have any self-confidence; they do not wish themselves well; they act as though no good could come of them. . . . The autonomy of the work, to which the writer must devote all his energies, is disavowed by the physical form of the work. If the book no longer has the courage of its own form, then the power that could justify that form is attacked within the book itself as well.

It remains for readers to realize the text, not only by reachieving the consciousness some works create (since not all books are bent on that result), but by appreciating the unity of book/body and book/mind that the best books bring about; by singing to themselves the large round lines they find, at the same time as they applaud their placement on the page, their rich surroundings, and everywhere the show of taste and care and good custom—what a cultivated life is supposed to provide; for if my meal is mistakenly scraped into the garbage, it becomes garbage, and if garbage is served to me on a platter of gold by hands in gloves, it merely results in a sardonic reminder of how little gold can do to rescue ruck when ruck can ruin whatever it rubs against. But if candlelight and glass go well together, and the linens please the eye as though it were a palate, and one's wit does not water the wine, if one's dinner companions are pleasing, if the centerpiece does not block the view, and its flowers are discreet about their scent, then whatever fine food is placed before us on an equally completed plate will be enhanced, will be, in such a context, only another able element in the making of a satisfactory whole; inasmuch as there is nothing in life better able to justify its follies, its inequities, and its pains (though there may be many its equal) than getting, at once, a number of fine things right; and when we read, too, with our temper entirely tuned to the text, we become—our heads—we become the best book of all, where the words are now played, and we are the page where they rest, and we are the hall where they are heard, and we are, by god, Blake, and our mind is moving in that moment as Sir Thomas Browne's about an urn, or Yeats's spaded grave; and death can't be so wrong, to be feared or sent away, the loss of love wept over, or our tragic acts continuously regretted, not when they prompt such lines, not when our rendering of them brings us together in a rare community of joy.

CURRENT BOOKS

Blaming the Elites

THE REVOLT OF THE ELITES and the Betrayal of Democracy. *By Christopher Lasch. Norton. 248 pp. $22*

The title of Christopher Lasch's last and regrettably posthumous book pays a backhanded tribute to *The Revolt of the Masses* (1932), José Ortega y Gasset's worried meditation on the character of democratic society. Ortega y Gasset thought mass culture had created a new human type, the person whose horizons were bounded by the desire for creature comforts, whose attitude toward "high" culture was one of resentful suspicion, and who threatened liberal individualism by trying to impose the herd's mentality on the elite. Lasch, as one would imagine from his book's title, turns these old anxieties on their head: it is not the masses but their more-or-less liberal social superiors who have all but destroyed democratic values.

The Revolt of the Elites is one of several recent denunciations of the social irresponsibility of the beneficiaries of the economic changes of the past two decades. Robert Reich's *Work of Nations*, Mickey Kaus's *End of Equality*, Kevin Phillip's *Arrogant Capital*, and Charles Murray's contribution to *The Bell Curve* are a small sample of the variations lately played on a common theme that runs pretty much like this: since the 1960s, the American economy has generated increasing economic inequality. At the top of the economic ladder are what Labor Secretary Reich has called "symbolic analysts." At the bottom gasps a desperate new underclass. In between struggles an increasingly insecure and hard-pressed working class.

Like Reich and Kaus, Lasch is pained to observe the way the economic elite has separated itself from the rest of American society. Its children go to private schools, it lives in planned communities that pay for private policing, and its tastes and interests link it more closely to foreigners of the same economic status than to Americans of a different status. This new elite has abandoned the rest of American society to its fate.

What Lasch catches with particular poignancy is the fate of those caught in the middle. They never aspired to climb some imaginary ladder. Indeed, Lasch challenges the idea that "social mobility" is an essential component of democracy. The folk in the middle, he insists, aim only to lead secure, self-respecting lives. A modicum of comfort is necessary for self-respect, but the indefinite accumulation of consumer goods certainly is not. Cultural goods of a slightly elusive kind are more necessary than any but the most basic economic goods. And these cultural goods depend on geographical and technical considerations in a more complicated fashion than most economists have understood.

Self-respect depends upon the respect of others, even though it enables us to survive the absence of that respect when necessary. It depends on our having something for which we respect ourselves—a skill, a job well done, children whom we have brought up to be good citizens and decent people. This means, in part, that we need to have stable, skilled work to do. We also must live in neighborhoods where others know us well enough to appreciate our worth. Torn-up neighborhoods, riven by crime, ethnic hostilities, and ineffectual schools will not do. Malls with their fast-food outlets and comfortless walkways will not do. Pubs and cafés do the trick; Main Street does the trick.

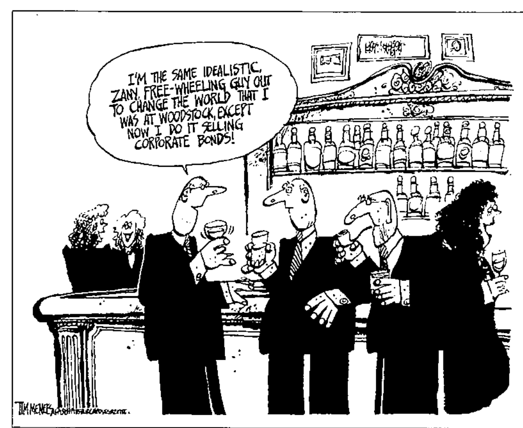
Unlike older American critics, who wrote off the small town as the home of prejudice and bigotry and hankered after the cosmopolitan city, Lasch celebrates the small town's virtues as well as the big city's. Or rather he sees, though he does not say so with any great clarity, that there need not be a sharp contrast between the one and the other. The greatest cities are cities of neighborhoods. But neighborhoods are just what the new, financially

driven economy has been wrecking, whether in their small-town or their big-city shape. As a consequence, democracy has been going down the drain, both politically and culturally.

One can of course debate how much of this should be laid at the door of an elite. One source of self-respect, according to Lasch, is a productive job, a job in which we create something that can be visibly better or worse made. The more production is replaced by services, he argues, the further we are from doing such work—and the more likely we are to despise manual work and admire cleverness to the exclusion of all else. But is this wholly true? Why—apart from income—must flipping hamburgers be less desirable than working on a GM assembly line? Why can't the "instinct of craftsmanship" survive in the crafting of software? But Lasch is certainly right about one thing: it is bloodless financial calculations that now largely drive the economic changes that he deplores.

Lasch is even more unhappy with the fragility of the American family. Parents struggle against the tide of sex and violence that pours out of the television and into the bedrooms of their children. They cannot pride themselves on having brought up their children well, since it is almost impossible to do so. Yet how can we lay this complaint at the door of the elite? Surely it is not the symbolic analysts who have determined television's popularity or who have made the burdens of family life so difficult.

The collective title of these essays is thus misleading, even if it was too good to pass up. The process Lasch describes and laments is not a "revolt" so much as a secession. We know what an insurgent elite looks like: Lenin's Bolsheviks or the Jacobins of the French Revolution—a revolutionary class or cadre bent on seizing the reins of power. Lasch's elite is not revolutionary, not insurgent, not even conscious of itself as an elite. Its desires are more nearly those of the masses as described by Ortega y Gasset—namely, desires for wealth, creature comforts, worldly goods, security. Its desire to hang on to the economic power it has accumulated over the past two or three decades has nothing in common with the ambitions of revolutionaries. In



fact, what is wrong with this present elite is an unwillingness to do its social and political duty. And what is wrong with *The Revolt of the Elites* is that it is fairly unclear what that duty might consist of.

Lasch wrote *The Revolt of the Elites* under what he stoically describes as "trying circumstances." Indeed, he was dying of leukemia. So it may seem churlish to complain that a book so written against the clock is not wholly coherent or that it is easier to see what Lasch disliked about the world than to form any clear idea of what we might do to repair things. But in Lasch's case, it would be more churlish not to complain. His earliest books—*The New Radicalism in America* (1965) and *The Agony of the American Left* (1969)—were as good as Dwight Macdonald's or Edmund Wilson's critiques of our political culture. *The Culture of Narcissism* (1979) threw a much-needed bucket of cold water on the nascent self-help movement, and it is hardly to be held against Lasch that it did little to slow the American descent into the present bog of self-exculpation and blaming. The best tribute to a critic such as Lasch is to argue with him.

The Revolt of the Elites shows Lasch in a

bind from which he could never quite escape. He was a populist who believed that the common people were intrinsically decent, morally serious, culturally conservative, sturdy and sensible. Yet statistics show they have been rather easily debauched, as evinced by soaring divorce rates, the low level of popular culture, abysmal levels of political knowledge and participation. What is the remedy? Is it to recall the elite to their duty of setting a good example to the lower classes? That hardly sounds like populism, though it is a rational enough view. Is it to deny that the people have been debauched? But then who subscribes to the cable channels that produce the garbage that pours into our children's minds, if not the common people? Something in Lasch's argument has to give. His contempt for self-indulgent upper-class liberals was so intense that he could not bring himself to see how far his critique of the decay of the republic reflects on all of us, not just on his favorite target.

The question about the relationship between the elite and the common people in a successful republic is a very old one. It goes back to Machiavelli and the politics of Renaissance Italy. It was thoroughly understood by James Madison and the American Founders, and it underpinned their understanding of the Constitution. The great question was how to instill civic virtue in ordinary people.

This is very much Lasch's theme. In the old story, it was understood that the common people could easily turn into a mob, that they were cowardly unless properly led, that they were superstitious unless their religious sentiments were disciplined. But if given a proper social and political discipline, they would be brave, loyal, public-spirited, rational, and far less likely to be swept away by greed and ambition than their social superiors. Governments get the people they deserve, and if you want to keep your republic, then civic education of the ordinary people is one of your main tasks. How badly our current rulers have done that job, they themselves have just begun to discover.

Lasch here claims that liberals have always hoped to do without civic virtue—a strikingly silly remark that suggests he never heard of John Stuart Mill. The proper retort is that he himself failed to take the full measure of the bleak elitism of the democratic and republican tradition that he set opposite to liberalism. This tradition was, as he says, "populist"; but it was also, as he is somewhat less candid about acknowledging, utterly elitist. The people were to curb corruption in their rulers, but only if they were taught their job by their rulers. The people could display civic virtue, but only if it was instilled in them.

To think that civic virtue can be instilled in us presupposes that politicians have enough control to provide the things that Lasch wanted, such as more democracy at work and the protection of a livable environment against greedy developers. It presupposes that politicians can instill an awareness that it is worth forgoing personal economic advantage for the sake of a more satisfactory social climate. The evidence of the past three decades is that politicians have no such control. The "symbolic analysts" whom critics such as Lasch blame for the decay of democracy were not invented by some evil force as a malign joke. They came into their own as a result of ill-understood and all-but-irresistible technical and commercial changes.

To control these changes, we need to do a great deal more than rail against the culture they have brought with them. Above all, we need a cool, sociologically intelligent understanding of what is and is not politically possible. Among the many reasons for lamenting Lasch's untimely death, we shall never know what he might have suggested once he turned from lamentation to construction. It is easy to be grateful for the savagery of his criticism, easier still to regret that there was not time for his mellowing and encouragement.

—Alan Ryan, a professor of politics at Princeton University, is the author of Bertrand Russell: A Political Life *(1988).*

The Music King from New Orleans

BAMBOULA! The Life and Times of Louis Moreau Gottschalk. *By S. Frederick Starr. Oxford. 564 pp. $35*

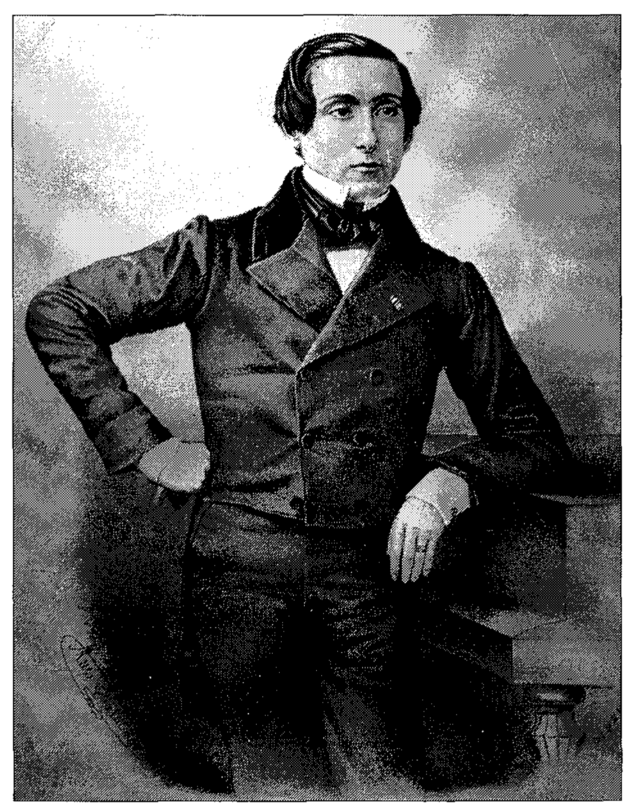
World famous in the mid-19th century, the American piano virtuoso and composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk is all but forgotten today. Is this obscurity deserved? Or is it an injustice for which we should blame a snobbish musical establishment that has never fully appreciated America's distinctive musical legacy? In *Bamboula!* the historian S. Frederick Starr goes a long way toward answering these questions—and tells a colorful tale in the bargain.

Gottschalk (1829–69) was born in New Orleans to a mixed Jewish and French Creole family. At the age of 12 the young prodigy went to study in Paris, where a few years later he won acclaim for his Louisiana quartet. For these four pieces, including *Bamboula,* he drew upon the vernacular music of his New Orleans childhood, especially the Creole melodies that he picked up from the songs of his Haitian nurse and the syncopated rhythms that he heard in the music of the city's enslaved black population.

Gottschalk's borrowings were, to some extent, consistent with contemporary European musical practice. Among the early romanticists, folk music was considered a fresh source of vitality, an antidote to the stale artificiality of classicism. But Gottschalk did something far more radical than any early European romanticist imagined. He drew on Afro-American music. Half a century before ragtime and jazz even appeared, much less found their way into the work of such European modernists as Debussy, Milhaud, and Stravinsky, Gottschalk was writing complex pieces in which the songs and rhythms of African people in the New World played a significant part.

Indeed, Gottschalk hardly thought of his borrowings as borrowings at all. Unlike European music folklorists, he was not, Starr says, self-consciously seeking "an exotic alternative to the world in which he moved." What were "noble savages" to European musical audiences were to him real people, and he was tapping "a living voice from deep within his own receding past." "Let his audience treat *Bamboula* and other Creole pieces as exotica," Starr writes. "For Moreau they bore the stamp of the viscerally familiar, of loss, of nostalgia."

Yet the very authenticity of Gottschalk's folk sources might have hurt his reputation. In the early 19th century, the Germans were



among those who embraced folk music as a challenge to the universal claims and aesthetic rigidity of French classicism. But by midcentury that challenge had been met, and the triumphant musical culture of Germany was beginning to make its own universal claims and impose its own aesthetic rigidity. In the process, the Germans came to despise folk music as vastly inferior to their ideal of "absolute music" as the highest art, accessible only to the cultivated elite.

Gottschalk fell short of the new German-fostered ideal, not least because he was a shameless entertainer. After his early trip to Paris, he never returned to Europe. Instead, he lived out his days on the road, hustling a living as a musician from one end of the Americas to the other. Starr brings out the picaresque quality of Gottschalk's life, and many scenes in *Bamboula!* brim with details and atmospheric qualities reminiscent of the works of Latin American magical realists. Gottschalk toured western Puerto Rico in 1857, for example, packing a pair of pistols to protect himself. After one concert, "live doves with gilded plumage and adorned with ribbons descended on the stage, and then the entire party proceeded to a huge banquet." With similar vividness, Starr portrays Gottschalk in the winter of 1864, crammed into cold, sooty trains with rowdy Union recruits; in 1865, making scandalous headlines in San Francisco; in 1866, being cheered by a huge Santiago crowd that included the president of Chile and the country's archbishop.

Throughout his career, whenever he could, Gottschalk would organize crowd-pleasing "monster" concerts featuring scores of pianos and hundreds of musicians. On such occasions, as in today's stadium rock concerts, musical expression was sacrificed to sheer spectacle and volume. It may be said, in Gottschalk's defense, that these excesses were committed in an era lacking electronic amplification. Nor was Gottschalk the only such culprit. "Monster" concerts were a staple of most 19th-century virtuosos, European as well as American.

The highbrow charge against Gottschalk is that, over time, his romanticism degenerated into sentimentalism. His most popular compositions, selling millions of copies in sheet music, were songs such as "The Last Hope" and "The Dying Poet," each of which he himself referred to as *"un succès des larmes"* (a tear-jerking hit). Starr reminds us that these songs expressed the heartache of ordinary Americans aggrieved by the losses and hardships of the Civil War or by the uprooting effects of industrialization. But the fact remains that, musically speaking, they are kitsch.

The best description of kitsch as a decadent form of romantic music comes from the German musicologist Carl Dahlhaus:

> When the *noble simplicité* of a classical style descends to the marketplace, the result is banality—the mere husks of classical forms—but hardly ever kitsch. Kitsch in music has hybrid ambitions which far outreach the capabilities of its actual structures and sounds. . . . Instead of being content with modest achievements within its reach, musical kitsch has pretensions to big emotions, to "significance," and these are rooted in what are still recognizably romantic preconceptions, however depraved.

Against the charge of kitsch, it is impossible to defend Gottschalk completely. With his contemporary Stephen Foster, he stands convicted of founding the maudlin "hearts and flowers" school of American popular song.

But one should not forget Gottschalk's other side, the side represented by his use of Afro-American music. For Gottschalk's actual playing did not just delight his upper-crust audiences; it won the admiration of his "sources," from the Afro-Cuban musicians who introduced him to *contradanzas* to the Puerto Rican drummers who taught him the difference between a *tresillo* and a *cinquillo*

rhythm. In ragtime and jazz, Gottschalk (and the early European modernists after him) found wit, simplicity, and emotional restraint—qualities that amount to the very opposite of kitsch.

Gottschalk's attraction to Afro-American music raises a critical question. The exuberance of this sound comes, as we know, from that elusive but essential rhythmic quality known as "swing." Swing is made up, according to the French musicologist André Hodeir, of several ingredients, the most important being "infrastructure," or a regular structural beat, often implied rather than played, and "superstructure," or other rhythmic patterns surrounding the structural beat, often given equal if not greater accentuation. The problem with most European composers' uses of Afro-American music is that they borrow the irregular patterns of the "superstructure" but fail to place them in proper tension with the structural beat. "By destroying the basic pulsation," Hodeir writes, "our composers killed the principle of attraction on which the phenomenon of swing depends." This leads to the question: did Gottschalk know how to swing?

Alas, we will never know, because Gottschalk's playing, like that of his fellow virtuosos, is lost to us. Recording had not yet been invented, and Gottschalk failed to notate many of his compositions. In part he feared having his work purloined, but Gottschalk also understood the difficulty, well known to 20th-century composers, of notating Afro-American rhythms. Though we may never know for sure, it is possible that Gottschalk was the Count Basie of his time.

Even if he was, that would have done little for his reputation among the guardians of "absolute music." Quoting Gottschalk's archenemy, the Boston music critic John Sullivan Dwight, Starr emphasizes how chilly the judgments of such guardians could be:

> For Dwight, the ideal performer would be an all-but-invisible person who . . . would perform with no "show or effect," so that "the composition is before you, pure and clear, . . . as a musician hears it in his mind in reading it from notes." The inevitable next step was for members of the audience to bring the score into the concert hall. In Dwight's Boston, score-reading became a mark of culture. Gottschalk loathed the practice.

The loathing was returned, expressed in endless gossip about Gottschalk as a mercenary and rake. Remarkably, this prudish tone persists even today. In the liner notes to a recent recording of Gottschalk piano pieces, the German writer Klaus Geitel sneers at Gottschalk's "love of money," which "rained down upon him copiously," and sniggers about the composer's reputation as being "a Don Juan who delighted in creating havoc among the crowds of enchanted ladies who formed his continual entourage."

True, Gottschalk did spend most of his adult life trying to make money. And, yes, he was a handsome fellow whose music thrilled men and women alike. But as Starr's biography makes clear, the gossips rarely stopped to consider how hard Gottschalk's life truly was. A sensualist and an aesthete, Gottschalk enjoyed flirting with innocent young girls. But he was also a near celibate. The lifelong burden of providing for his penniless and incompetent relatives (mother and siblings both) kept him from developing lasting romantic relationships.

Implicit in Starr's narrative is a defense of Gottschalk on the grounds that art music cannot flourish long without a vital connection to the musical vernacular. Indeed, it was the loss of this connection that hastened the decline of German music, first into the self-indulgence of late romanticism and then into the sterility of serialism. Gottschalk himself was a Jacksonian democrat who distinguished between refined "airs" and true refinement of mind. He had no patience with the European snob-

bery that sees only money-grubbing commerce in America. To the contrary, he saw a positive, enterprising spirit with the potential to apply America's wealth to the task of educating America's taste.

Anyone familiar with Starr's superb *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union* (1985) may expect *Bamboula!* to extend the earlier book's thesis that a commercial culture provides a healthy environment for the arts. *Red and Hot* illustrates the difference between the deadly "people's cultures" designed for the masses by their totalitarian masters and the rich popular culture that developed in the more-or-less free marketplace of America, giving rise to jazz among other musical glories.

Yet Starr's sympathy for commerce remains strangely muted in *Bamboula!*, possibly out of reluctance to pass final judgment on Gottschalk the composer. Unfortunately, this reluctance means that Starr stops short of assessing Gottschalk's proper place in the history of Western music. But Starr does make it clear that even if the greatest strength of Gottschalk's music was a rhythmic force lost with live performance, his place should not be forgotten. Indeed, now that young musicians routinely gain fluency in both the European and the Afro-American idioms, a swinging revival of Gottschalk's music may be in store. Beyond that possibility, the life of this forgotten eccentric, this failed aesthete, sheds real light on how the music and culture of the last century gave rise to the perplexities of our own.

—*Martha Bayles, formerly the television and arts critic for the* Wall Street Journal, *is the author of* Hole in Our Soul: The Loss of Beauty and Meaning in American Popular Music *(1994).*

How Beastly Our Beatitudes?

THE MORAL ANIMAL: Evolutionary Psychology and Everyday Life. *By Robert Wright. Pantheon. 467 pp. $27.50*
THE HUNGRY SOUL: Eating and the Perfecting of Our Nature. *By Leon Kass. Free Press. 248 pp. $24.95*

What can the study of nature, and, above all, of human nature, teach us about how we ought to live? According to both Robert Wright and Leon Kass, the answer is clear: a great deal. Such an answer marks a valuable turning away from the dominant assumptions of an age that, believing in the moral silence of an indifferent nature and the moral neutrality of objective science, sees human nature as nearly infinitely malleable and solely shaped by social forces. Both Wright and Kass are convinced that such a mistaken view of human nature, fostered by our social and natural sciences, is in part responsible for the moral confusions from which we suffer today. By their willingness to examine human nature, both authors return us to the originating Socratic question of our philosophical tradition.

Yet, beyond that common purpose, Wright and Kass can agree on very little because they look for human nature in opposite directions. Wright, gazing backward at our evolutionary past, constructs just-so stories of how our natural tendencies may have *come into being*; Kass, "taking human nature as we find it," explores its *current* meaning and its possible improvement through custom and culture. Which approach, then, is the correct one? Which ac-

count is more illuminating and compelling?

In *The Moral Animal*, Wright, a senior editor of the *New Republic* and a highly respected science writer, seeks to popularize the new science of "evolutionary psychology." This science, as he explains, is the study of human mental and moral traits as evolved devices for the maximization of genetic fitness. To Wright, evolutionary psychology constitutes a breakthrough in our scientific understanding of human nature. Its practitioners have discovered that we are really machines endowed with a common set of emotional "knobs" (love, guilt, hatred, empathy, etc.), the "exact tunings" of which are determined "by a generic, species-wide developmental program that absorbs information from the social environment and adjusts the maturing mind accordingly." The underlying bio-logic of these knobs and tunings is to pass on as many copies of our genes as possible to subsequent generations by flooding our psyches with feelings, impulses, and judgments that will motivate us to act as natural selection "wants" us to act.

Wright believes this perspective has profound implications for our moral and political lives. "Can a Darwinian understanding of human nature help people reach their goals in life?" he asks. Can it help us choose properly from among our many impulses and goals, distinguishing the practical from the impractical, the legitimate from the illegitimate, and the worthy from the unworthy? "The answers," Wright boldly asserts, are "yes, yes, yes, and finally yes."

Wright's aims, however, go well beyond information and instruction. This book is, as he puts it, "a sales pitch for a new science . . . [and] for a new basis of political and moral philosophy." Such candor is welcome, but, as with any "sales pitch," readers should be wary of false promises and flashy packaging that conceal the same old contents. If we strip away the label of "evolutionary psychology" in *The Moral Animal*, we find "sociobiology" printed underneath. The name has been changed for marketing purposes because, as Wright notes, the harsh criticisms of sociobiology's flaws had made the word too "tainted" for use. In some respects, *The Moral Animal* is an updated version of E. O. Wilson's *On Human Nature* (1979) and Richard Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene* (1976), complete with their reductionism, exaggerated determinism, and moral confusion.

For Wright, as for his predecessors, "everything that matters" about us, both high and low, is just a "device" designed by our "creator"—that "ingenious craftsman," natural selection. Romance and rape, honesty and deception, humility and social climbing are all part of our genetically constructed psychological repertoire that we employ as circumstances demand to enhance our genetic fitness. Sympathy for others is an "investment" aimed at long-term genetic returns; the grief of parents over the death of an adolescent child is just regret over lost "assets." Adultery is no vice and fidelity no virtue but simply the appropriate sexual strategies for different circumstances. Even the teachings of Jesus, Buddha, and Lao-tzu are merely ideologies serving their own personal social status and hence genetic interests.

Wright knows no bounds in his unmaskings, except for his own efforts, of course. But what follows from such a perspective? What of the behavioral insights and moral guidance Wright has promised? While Wright does succeed in demonstrating the fallacy of equating a Darwinian perspective with conservative politics, the implications and insights he offers tend to be either trivial or contradictory. Do we really need evolutionary psychology to tell us that human beings are often selfish and hypocritical and that our moral sense is often self-serving, or to learn that women in poor communities are more amenable to sex without commitment? If his analysis of Darwin's personality, which is presented as a "test of the explanatory power" of the new doctrine, culminates in the "verdict" that "he was a product of his environment," what have we gained?

Wright's attempts at moral guidance are even more problematic, not because they are unworthy but because his moral preferences, however admirable, are at odds with the theory that is supposed to sanction them. He fills hundreds of pages describing human beings as "robots," "puppets," "machines," and "Swiss watches" programmed by natural selection—a natural selection that he manages to endow with all the qualities of ingenuity, reason, and creativity that he denies to human beings. How then can he argue that "there is no reason to derive our values from natural selection's 'values' " because we are now free to choose our moral ideals? If "biochemistry governs all," how can we reflect on this "fact" and its underlying "value" (genetic fitness) and reject them both? Where do these non-evolutionary values come from and how are we to choose them if free will, as Wright tells us repeatedly, is sheer illusion, an illusion we can *choose* to abandon?

Wright recognizes that evolutionary psychology's unmasking of all thoughts and feelings as genetically programmed "investment strategies" may have a corrosive effect on our moral principles and social order through the cynicism, relativism, and despair that it seems to nourish. To escape such a prospect, he proposes a return to 19th-century utilitarianism as a natural moral ground upon which our lives are to be reconstructed. Leaving aside the problems with utilitarianism as a moral philosophy, how can Wright argue that Darwinism *leads us* in the direction of a non-hypocritical "brotherly love" and "boundless empathy" which truly recognizes that "everyone's happiness counts equally," when he has already told us that Darwinism unmasks such feelings as mere devices "switched on and off in keeping with self-interest"? If natural selection is "a creative process devoted to selfishness" and has "programmed" us accordingly, why wouldn't our understanding of this "fact" lead us to honest and self-conscious genetic selfishness instead? In short, Wright's utilitarianism requires a leap of faith, the very possibility of which his own theory denies. Faced with such contradictions, many readers will, I fear, find more grounds for rationalizing their moral failings and brutal interests than for their "love of humanity."

Kass's *Hungry Soul* is a powerful antidote to works such as Wright's that attempt to reduce living beings to mere machines. Kass may not have any breakthroughs to sell, but he has crafted a splendid and thoughtful essay. Through an examination of human eating, he sheds valuable light on the distinctiveness of human nature and how it is to be nurtured and perfected.

To Kass, a medical doctor by training, reductive accounts of our nature are "unnatural" because they ignore the reality of our *lived experience*. They are also "ethically subversive" because they discredit the moral sentiments, aspirations, and teachings by which we have attempted to guide our lives. Kass's "more natural science" aims at recapturing that lived experience, both our own and that preserved in "our accumulated moral and cultural wisdom."

Kass presents a fascinating account of human eating and the various taboos, customs, manners, and rituals surrounding it, to show what these reveal about ourselves. Even the eating behavior of animals requires that they possess the ability to recognize and respond to inner needs, sense the outer presence of what is needed, and act to incorporate it. In simple organisms such as bacteria, these powers may be experienced " 'automatically,' without deliberation or conscious intention." But in complex organisms, such as mammals, the "nascent self" becomes more fully developed as the organism gathers and processes more information and coordinates more complex actions to satisfy its needs. In humans, consciously felt need and consciously directed actions generate a "realm of freedom" from automatic control by instinct or biochemistry, a "free-

dom" which is qualitatively different from other animals' experience.

Transformed into "hunger" and "craving," our metabolic needs stimulate both imagination and reason, which enable us to pursue satisfactions that may range far beyond physiological need, even to the point of harming our health. We come to eat for pleasure and not simply for nutrition and find pleasure in meals as diverse as an Atlantic City buffet or the Japanese delicacy of pufferfish, whose lethal poison, tetradotoxin, rewards thrill-seeking gourmets with either euphoria or death.

But just as these "pleasures of the palate can be pursued as ends in themselves," so too may the other pleasures of the table that accompany them—conversation, fellowship, and refinement—which may ultimately become the real focus of the meal. Every step along the complex path by which our species satisfies its nutritional need, from planting crops to the preparation of food, requires faculties and pleasures of mind that can be applied beyond, and even against, the demands of our stomachs to satisfy our yearnings for understanding and meaning. With reason and imagination we can thus track down and capture an animal larger and swifter than ourselves and then worship rather than roast it.

Here, in the play of manners and cuisine, we see the ultimate inadequacy of reductive evolutionary accounts of our nature that explain divergence from adaptive value as a "malfunction." Wright acknowledges this inadequacy in the appendix to his book when he tries to explain the development of human homosexuality, a pattern of sexual behavior that defies evolutionary logic. Homosexual behavior points instead, Wright says, to "the malleability of the human mind" and a "general principle" of life: "Once natural selection has created a form of gratification—genital stimulation, in this case—that form can come to serve other functions." Wright's intellectual honesty here is laudable, but by acknowledging the freedom and openness of human possibility, he is contradicting the argument of his work.

For Kass, it is precisely this potential freedom "to serve other functions" that constitutes our distinctive nature as a "moral animal" because of the possibilities for virtue and perversion that it opens up. How then to choose from the vast range of the possible—and choose we must—that which is better, while avoiding that which is worse? Kass proposes that our understanding of nature can serve as a "suggestive teacher." Those customs, laws, and beliefs—such as the ones surrounding civilized dining—that restrain the purely animal while cultivating the distinctively human qualities of intellect, self-command, civility, and reverence are "truer" and "better" than those that fail to do so.

As a guide to our inescapably moral lives, this image of human nature—human nature in the Aristotelian sense of what we can grow into, rather than what we have grown out of—may be imperfect. We may certainly disagree about which customs, laws, and beliefs best cultivate that distinctive human nature, but Kass has succeeded brilliantly in reminding us of who we really are so that we may endeavor to act accordingly. At a minimum, Kass's reminder enables us to reject images of our nature, such as those celebrated in evolutionary psychology, that are neither true nor good. In an age when such false images encourage our embrace of genetic reprogramming and biochemical manipulation, this in itself is a remarkable and valuable achievement.

—*Howard Kaye is a professor of sociology at Franklin and Marshall College and the author of* The Social Meaning of Modern Biology, from Social Darwinism to Sociobiology *(1986).*

OTHER TITLES

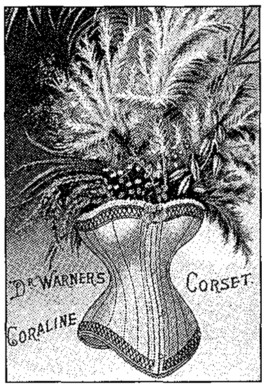
History

FABLES OF ABUNDANCE: A Cultural History of Modern Advertising. *By T. J. Jackson Lears. Basic. 492 pp. $30*

Jackson Lears's fascinating history of advertising is really two books in one. The first tells the story of how, around the turn of the last century, advertisers put their Barnumesque past behind them and remade themselves as professionals. Distancing themselves from patent-medicine salesmen and itinerant peddlers, the new breed of advertisers traded old-fashioned images of plenty and a carnival rhetoric for a technocratic language of efficiency and control. Contrary to popular opinion, the consumer culture they created did not promote hedonism; instead, it subordinated longings for a bountiful agricultural paradise to the demands of modern industry. This 1909 counsel from the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency handbook might have served as a kind of manifesto: "The chief work of civilization is *to eliminate chance*, and that can be done by foreseeing and planning."

As Roland Marchand did in *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920–1940* (1985), Lears emphasizes the role of advertising in promoting a scientifically managed world. In this brave new world, expert authorities and mass-produced commodities combined to dispel the uncertainties not only of a market economy but of the human condition. Advertisements repeatedly stressed the victory of a scientific civilization over the limits of nature, including human nature. Early-20th-century ads were obsessed with bodily odors, slimness, and intestinal "regularity," and suggested that a "unified, controlled, sincere selfhood" was necessary to successful competition in the modern marketplace. In 1926, Guardian Memorials carried this strain of advertising to its logical conclusion: "The thought of its clean, dry, airy above ground crypt is a constant consolation to those still living."

Lears has done more, however, than remake the case against advertising's vision of a sanitized world of happy, robotic consumers. His other story is that of late-19th- and early-20th-century writers and artists who formulated similar critiques of modern consumerism. Marcel Proust, Rainer Maria Rilke, and artists such as Kurt Schwitters, the abstract expressionists, and—above all—Joseph Cornell objected to the advertising culture of consumerism not for its materialism but for its careless betrayal of the material world. "The materialism promoted by advertisers was antimaterial," Lears writes; "the success of the corporate economy depended less on the esteem accorded material things than on the constant restimulation of the desire for more of them." Lears describes artists such as Cornell (1902–72), a semirecluse in Flushing, New York, who made surreal boxes filled with the paraphernalia of everyday life—stuffed birds, buttons, toys, fragments of old theatrical posters—juxtaposed and treated with the moral authority of religious icons. To counter modern advertising's drive for mastery over nature, Cornell revived an irrational, "magical" outlook that valued apparently useless objects and attempted to reconnect dreams and reality, "matter and spirit, thoughts and things."



Lears's two stories—of advertising as an agent of bureaucratic order and of the artistic counterappeal to a holistic worldview—coexist uneasily in this volume. Indeed, Lears seems less interested in reconstructing the rise of the advertising profession than in probing the spiritual resources of artistic modernism. What inspire Lears at his best are not the conceptual boxes of social history but the actual boxes in which Cornell assembled a more sensuous and fantastic private world. By reconstructing this subterranean celebration of animism and hedonism in modern American culture, Lears brilliantly redefines the debate about con-

sumer culture and, in the process, establishes himself as a profound and original cultural critic in his own right. *Fables of Abundance* is a rare picture of an intellectual searching for fresh, new ground on which to stand as an interpreter of modern life.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHAIRMAN MAO: The Memoirs of Mao's Personal Physician. *By Li Zhisui. With the editorial assistance of Anne F. Thurston. Trans. by Tai Hung-chao. Random House. 682 pp. $30*
BURYING MAO: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping. *By Richard Baum. Princeton. 489 pp. $35*

Ever since Mao Zedong officially founded the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, the inner workings of its political system have remained clouded in mystery. Two new books plumb that mystery and uncover, at bottom, a large irony: a country supposedly governed by ironclad ideology was buffeted this way and that by a few men's personal whims.

Li Zhisui was Mao's personal physician (his great-grandfather had also been physician to a Chinese emperor), but his story of Mao's private life belongs less to medical annals than to the *National Enquirer*. Mao's insatiable appetite for young women (he passed on venereal disease to hundreds of them), his slovenly personal habits (he neither bathed nor brushed his teeth), his drug addiction, and his extravagant "imperial" processions from city to city hardly fit his once-popular image as an ascetic, ideologically inspired patriot. Convinced that Chairman knows best, Mao trusted few and worked closely with no one. When thwarted, he would contemplate returning to the mountains to launch a new guerrilla campaign. He seems to have enjoyed few things as much as the terror and chaos caused by his Cultural Revolution (1965–68).

But can this tale, with its lurid sex and the relentless pettiness of Mao and his vicious, self-indulgent wife, Jiang Qing, be entirely believed? Anne Thurston, a noted China authority, has shaped and written much of the book, and her contribution gives a creditable historical background to Li's anecdotes. Li's source materials, his diaries, were burned in 1966, yet he asks the reader to accept verbatim dialogues as well as minutely observed details of events he could not have personally witnessed. Nor can Li qualify as an unbiased observer when it is obvious that he allowed few standards, political or ethical, to interfere with his role as Mao's physician, confidante, and servant.

Baum, a political scientist at UCLA, readily admits that he is using limited and questionable documents, but he nevertheless manages to construct a richly textured and convincing portrait of the political transformation that ensued after Mao's death in 1976 at the age of 82. Deng Xiaoping, the master manipulator, demonstrated again the centrality of personal control in China, and during his reign the scheming of factions and rivals customarily took the place of policy debates. It was, after all, his ambivalence about market reforms and political liberalization that led to the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989. Deng is now 90 years old and sick, and the People's Republic stands on a precipice once more, with few institutions in place that can guarantee stability, economic reform, political change, or even the shunning of nationalistic militarism. Baum makes clear that Deng's one-man show has been better for China than was Mao's. But Deng, too, has cast the Chinese people adrift in complex and dangerous circumstances, being no more willing than Mao to trust China's fate to independent political processes he cannot dominate.

THE SOUTHERN TRADITION: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism. *By Eugene D. Genovese. Harvard. 138 pp. $22.50*

If any more evidence is needed that the end of the Cold War turned the world upside down, this book should do it. It is not so much the author's argument that "southern conserva-

tive thought, shorn of its errors and irrationalities" deserves a "respectful hearing" that is topsy-turvy as the fact that the author is the nation's most eminent historian on the left.

Genovese, Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence at Emory's University Center in Atlanta, is alluding not to the free-market conservatism of Georgia's Newt Gingrich but to a traditional conservatism that has its origins in the antebellum writings of men such as John C. Calhoun. It is a conservatism that grants pride of place to community, hierarchy, and order, a conservatism that looks with horror upon today's visions of individual freedom, whether those of liberals or conservatives. It achieved its second wind with the Agrarian movement, which included writers and poets such as Allen Tate and Robert Penn Warren and produced the famous manifesto, *I'll Take My Stand* (1930), and was continued by scholars such as Richard Weaver (1910–63) and M. E. Bradford (1934–93). Today, it is preserved in two intellectual magazines, *Chronicles* and *Southern Partisan*, and partially represented in the political arena by Patrick Buchanan.

This older southern conservatism is a tradition nearly as hostile to the market as it is to socialism and communism. Against the homogenizing and leveling influences of the national state and international finance capitalism, the southern conservatives have held up a vision of regional autonomy, "small property," and "Christian individualism." They are appalled by most of what modernity has wrought. "There is ground for declaring that modern man has become a moral idiot," Richard Weaver wrote in 1948. "For four centuries every man has been not only his own priest but his own professor of ethics." Genovese finds many flaws and a few things to admire in these arguments, but he is rightly drawn to the traditionalist idea of egalitarianism, which is based on moral skepticism rather than the usual utopian assumptions about the goodness of man. Most southern conservatives would agree with C.S. Lewis's judgment that "mankind is so fallen that no man can be trusted with unchecked power over his fellows."

The power of the southern conservatives' cultural critique is not matched by their political program, which suffers from internal philosophical gridlock. Those who in the past opposed segregation, for example, did little to promote integration because of their commitment to community rights, "and their particular communities . . . were implacably hostile to black demands," Genovese notes. Today, they fear international capitalism but, because of their distrust of the national government, they are reluctant to propose effective means of regulating it. Genovese believes that the southern conservatives could have "surprising strength" in national politics. Such a conservatism, traditionalist in economics and morality, may hold lessons for the Left, but it is hard to see how it has much to offer a larger public apart from an admirable but finally inchoate longing for community.

Arts & Letters

THE RUIN OF KASCH. *By Roberto Calasso. Trans. by William Weaver and Stephen Sartarelli. Harvard. 385 pp. $24.95*

The Ruin of Kasch is literary but not a novel, historical but not a history, philosophical but not formal philosophy. Its author, Roberto Calasso, is a distinguished Milanese publisher and the author of *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony* (1993), and here he has composed an extended meditation on the downward course of civilization and the emergence of the modern world.

Kasch makes its own genre, albeit one quintessentially European in tone and feel. (Had Calasso been around, and of different views, he might have been hired for the *Encyclopédie*.) Calasso follows, at least in this work, the mind's leaps rather than the footprints of earthbound narrative. He thus devotes only nine pages to the legendary African kingdom of Kasch, but the tale resonates forward and back through every chapter as an example of what happens as we move from apparently primitive to apparently enlightened practices. What such a

transition entails Calasso traces through his random (but artfully so) disposition of the text, and that apparent randomness comes to mirror the disconnectedness of modern consciousness itself, which Calasso believes has severed all ties to a larger sustaining realm.

Calasso builds much of his case around Charles Maurice de Talleyrand (1754–1838), the French statesman who leaped from regime to regime and from era to era with a cat's ease. Before the French Revolution, Talleyrand was a very worldly Catholic bishop, and he later observed that those who never knew the ancien régime would never know the sweetness of life. Yet Talleyrand went on to support the Revolution and then to serve the Directory, Napoleon, and finally the restored House of Bourbon. Talleyrand presides as master of ceremonies here because he achieved a wholeness despite historical ruptures and discordancies; even his deathbed reconciliation with the church managed to round the circle of his various life interests.

In addition to Talleyrand, Calasso's cast includes—and this is a mere sampling—French kings and Vedic seers, Plato, Marx (Karl, though Groucho might easily have found a place), Jeremy Bentham, Hegel, Max Stirner, Charles Baudelaire, Pol Pot, and Cecil B. De Mille. The list suggests a larger degree of playfulness than the book generally manages. For Calasso writes in a tone of icy and ironic omniscience that one might call Olympian but for a suspicion that he would prefer something a bit higher. Himalayan, say. Consider: "If we really must find a distinction between what can be said of the Modern and everything that we encounter in previous ages, might it not perhaps be a certain ability . . . to ignore limitations even when explicitly defending them—to invade every off-limits area, perhaps on the pretext of guarding it against all violations?"

This is pure Calasso. The observation is striking (and may even be true), and the pair of hedging *perhaps*'s is entirely in character. But the sentence only finally appears on page 293 of a book that has labored mightily, up to that point, precisely to find a distinction between the modern and what came before. Under the circumstances, the "If we really must" is maddening and provokes an exasperated "Well, whose idea was this anyway?" No matter: the reader who takes to the extraordinary mind will readily forgive the manner.

THE WESTERN CANON: The Books and School of the Ages. *By Harold Bloom. Harcourt Brace. 578 pp. $29.95*

A reader could grow hoarse talking back to this book—at times in annoyance, more often in admiration. Bloom teaches literature at both Yale and New York universities, and *The Western Canon* is his summation of a lifetime of reading great literature as well as watching what he considers its growing debasement in the universities and schools.

Bloom has always been a critic provocateur. As such, he attaches three appendices that identify what's canonical down through the 19th century and a somewhat diffident fourth appendix about the 20th century that he calls "a canonical prophesy." It is these lists, which go on for 36 pages and are, by turns, traditional, quirky, and tentative, that have made the book controversial. They also have diverted attention from *The Western Canon*'s larger achievement.

For the Greeks a *kanon* was a rod or bar used to keep things straight. Today, the word *canon* has been stripped of its original and all subsequent meanings but one: the body of work that has kept the study of literature fixated on the writings of dead, mostly white, mostly European, mostly male authors. Antagonists of Bloom's idea of a canon now command the academy—feminists, Marxists, Afrocentrists, New Historicists, Deconstructors—all of whom he ridicules for their insistence that literature must serve political and social ends. "One breaks into the canon only by aesthetic strength," he argues, by "mastery of figurative language, originality, cognitive power, knowledge, exuberance of diction."

In the beginning and concluding chapters, Bloom mourns the current loss of concern for preserving a tradition of great literature.

These two elegiac chapters serve as bookends for 21 essays on individual authors whom Bloom believes most important "for both their sublimity and their representative nature." By focusing on individual writers, Bloom can put into practice his famous theory of literary influence. Indeed, what is best about *The Western Canon* is the way Bloom reads the writers against one another—ingeniously, persuasively, implausibly. Writers go at each other in these pages head-to-head like sumo wrestlers. The most powerful figure with whom they all must contend is Shakespeare—for Bloom, "the largest writer we ever will know," his hero, idol, god, the Western canon all compact in a single vessel. This book is Bloom's homage to Shakespeare, and one likes to imagine the playwright responding in kind: "Here is a reader! When comes such another?" When indeed?

Philosophy & Religion

NET OF MAGIC: Wonders and Deceptions in India. *By Lee Siegel. Univ. of Chicago. 455 pp. $60 (hardback); $19.95 (paper)*

Twice as sonorous as "abracadabra" is the invocation that begins an Indian magic show: *yantru-mantru-jalajala-tantru.* In India the changing phenomena of daily life are considered to be "maya" or illusion, and so a book about the profession of illusion, or magic, promises to be a rather revealing affair. *Net of Magic* indeed makes a good introduction to contemporary India because it captures so zestfully that country's noises, odors, sensory feel, tumult, and contradictions. Siegel, professor of religion at the University of Hawaii and the author of *Laughing Matters: Comic Tradition in India* (1987), describes, for example, riding out to the Delhi slum where street magicians reside, and his prose rhythms duplicate the swelter and back-and-forth rocking of the taxi: "The hot and dusty breath of the earth, the pant and moan of it, and the hot and rude rub of the sky, the growl and grunt of it, were inescapable."

The book has no shortage of magic. Small boys are decapitated and their heads grow back, mango trees spring up instantly from dust, pigeons turn into pigs. But for those who want to believe in a world of wonders—bad news. Asked by Siegel if there was *real* magic, one magician answered, "No, but I shouldn't ever say it. I earn a living only if people believe . . . at least in the possibility of miracles. But there are no real miracles, and all the holy men and god-men, Sai Baba and Jesus and other men like them, are just doing tricks, tricks that I can do, that I can teach you to do." This relation between magic and miracle, between staged spectacles and genuine religion, is at the heart of Siegel's investigation. When Paul Brunton wrote *A Search in Secret India* (1934), that country was synonymous in the Western imagination with everything mystical, mysterious, occult. A half-century later, *Net of Wonders* makes India seem the last place to look for religion, a country where, for foreigners, religion is a tourist attraction—with Hinduism as India's Disneyland—and for Indians, a set of mundane rituals without epiphany, without *frisson.*

Siegel's argument, however, is that, while the miracles of religion and the allure of magic may be false scientifically, they can be "true" aesthetically, in their emotional appeal. He wants to recreate that emotional experience of Indian magic for Western readers, and his approach resembles Robert-Houdin's *Confessions of a Prestidigitator* (1859), in which the famous magician wrote, "My audience shall be my reader, my stage this book." Like a good magician, Siegel also keeps changing perspectives, from analyzing ancient Sanskrit and Pali texts to reporting his own travels with Indian magicians to writing fictional short stories about their inner world. "As I leave the plane and make my way toward the counter—Indian Immigration and Customs," so his narrative starts, "I sense that the magic show is

about to begin." Indeed, Siegel's subsequent experiences in India, such as procuring airline tickets to Kashmir when none were available, often mirror the "wonders and deceptions" in an Indian magic show. Eventually he succeeds in transferring the fascination and complexity of the magic show from itinerant conjurers on dusty street corners to the workings of the society surrounding them. A study of magic becomes a way of understanding, and experiencing, contemporary India.

Earlier belletrists aimed only to think well and write charmingly. *Net of Magic* represents a newer academic genre, in which the scholar leaves his desk and does original field research, and then returns not with a monograph but with literature.

Contemporary Affairs

THE BELL CURVE: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life. *By Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray. Free Press. 845 pp. $30*

The Bell Curve is not the seminal, groundbreaking work its authors suggest. Nor is it the semilunatic, right-wing tract that some critics have charged. Herrnstein (who died last year) was a psychologist at Harvard University and Murray is the author of *Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950–1980* (1986); together they have written a sober critique of "the ideology of equality." They argue—not so controversially—that the present, singleminded leveling in *all spheres* is a far, far different thing from the Founders' notion of the *moral* equality of all men.

Were this all their argument, Herrnstein and Murray would be indistinguishable from a dozen other conservative commentators. What makes *The Bell Curve* the most controversial book of the year is that it places human intelligence at the center of social-policy debate. Herrnstein and Murray have aroused a furor by reviving evidence that black Americans, as a group, score consistently and considerably lower on IQ tests than whites. They further argue that IQ tests measure something real and are not culturally biased. Finally, they conclude that society's organized efforts to raise IQ scores, such as the Head Start program, have been dismal failures. At this point, Herrnstein and Murray may begin to sound a bit like two good old boys making racial slurs and then claiming they are only reciting the facts of nature.

Yet underneath their sometimes smarmy tone they present an argument that is more qualified, more ambiguous, and not without its ironies. Although they believe that intelligence has a genetic component, they point out that cognitive abilities are hardly immutable. There has been, for example, "substantial" narrowing of the black-white gap in IQ scores in the past 20 years. Indeed, Americans generally are scoring better than ever: "On the average," Herrnstein and Murray write, "whites today may differ in IQ from whites, say, two generations ago as much as whites today may differ from blacks today." That admission could be read as an implicit endorsement of welfare state policies, and in fact the authors do endorse such proposals as a modest income redistribution through increased earned income tax credits.

But ultimately Herrnstein and Murray want to draw the curtain on the welfare state. If they concede that certain societal changes—from the democratization of higher education to better nutrition—have equalized environmental influences and created a meritocracy in America, they also argue that all such possible improvements have by now been accomplished. Any further efforts, they argue, will come up against genetically determined differences in intelligence. This is a point many Americans will not want to hear—certainly not black Americans. Perhaps the case for unchangeable disparities in group intelligence could be made without much ado in, say, Sweden, but to argue thus in a racially diverse, ethnically divided America is like lighting a stick of dynamite. Indeed, if the "science" of *The Bell Curve* has proved debatable, its policy recommendations, under a varnish of sophistication, come close to being politically naive. Though the authors maintain that the welfare state cannot bring us equality, they suggest nothing else for dealing with the entrenched inequality they have described.

JUST CURIOUS: Essays. *By Cullen Murphy. Houghton Mifflin. 248 pp. $21.95*

Readers of the *Atlantic Monthly* already know that one of the finer essayists of our time is that magazine's managing editor, Cullen Murphy. No matter how deeply he dips into his seemingly bottomless bag of worldly arcana—one month it may be a harrowing view of the world as seen from the Centers for Disease Control's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*; the next, a string of facts from the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* that helps explain why cats have replaced dogs as Americans' favorite household pet—he unfailingly fetches a gem that illuminates the world and ourselves. Humor and revelation are the touchstones of Murphy's craft. In an essay on double lives, he muses upon the impossibility of meeting the time demands of even a single life in our day: "There are occasions when, upon being interrupted politely with the words, 'Is this a bad time?' I must suppress a giddy, maniacal laugh, of the kind Herbert Lom descends into when Inspector Clouseau finally drives him over the edge." (In prose as in live performance, Murphy shows, timing is almost everything). Some of his more memorable long essays, such as his account of the scientific study of the Shroud of Turin, are not included here, but his look at the Thomas Aquinas editing industry shows his skill in the longer, expository form. This collection, indeed, adds up to something more substantial than the sum of its delightful parts. It is an oblique self-portrait—in this case, of a wry, boundlessly energetic observer who, without ever passing judgment, discerns a moral pattern behind the world's rich and surprising variousness. A curious mind, in other words, but never *just* curious.

CONOR: A Biography of Conor Cruise O'Brien. *By Donald Harman Akenson. Cornell. 573 pp. $35*
ANTHOLOGY. *By Conor Cruise O'Brien. Ed. by Donald Harman Akenson. Cornell. 356 pp. $39.95*

Civil servant, diplomat, essayist, politician, historian, professor, administrator, playwright, poet, biographer, columnist, editor, activist—Conor Cruise O'Brien has worn an astonishing number of hats in his 77 years. Most of these roles, one might note, have been quite controversial. For much of his career, according to his biographer Akenson, O'Brien has been "simultaneously the most hated man in Ireland and the most admired [Irishman] outside of it."

Whatever else may be said of O'Brien's career, its likes will not be seen again, not in this age of credentialism. Ever since he graduated from Dublin's Trinity College in 1940, a new metamorphosis every four or five years appears to have been O'Brien's rule. His career began on the parallel tracks of civil servant and writer (the latter under the pen name Donat O'Donnell). Among his public roles, he was United Nations representative in the war-torn Congo in 1961, vice chancellor of the University of Ghana (under chancellor President Kwame Nkrumah) during the mid-'60s, a member of the Irish Parliament in the early '70s, then a cabinet minister, and in the late '70s editor-in-chief of the London *Observer*. Almost every turn in his career has left in its wake a book, starting with his controversial *To Katanga and Back* (1962), which exposed the inner workings of the UN; his later Cold War polemics against anticommunist containment policies were even more controversial. For his opposition to the Irish Republican Army's terrorist campaign—and to the general romanticism of violence in Ireland—he was practically drummed out of his own country.

While not concealing his admiration for O'Brien, Akenson is frank about his subject's faults. O'Brien is, he writes, "unnecessarily combative and often egregiously arrogant," and if "the Cruiser" is O'Brien's famous nickname, he has also been called "Lunchtime O'Boozer." Yet despite the drinking and combativeness O'Brien is, Akenson claims, "the most important Irish nonfiction writer of the 20th century." This new anthology of O'Brien's writings—ranging from poems to essays on fascism, from evaluations of Yeats to reports on Biafra—certainly suggests that O'Brien is modern Ireland's most wide-ranging intelligence.

In 1992 O'Brien published *The Great Melody*, possibly his crowning literary achievement. In this admiring biography of the 18th-century

conservative Edmund Burke, O'Brien astonished many critics by having located a soulmate in such a staunch defender of the status quo. But O'Brien argued that Burke's ragings against the abuses of power in France (and in England) were evidence that he was a liberal, in the oldest and best sense of the world. Burke and O'Brien are, in fact, distant kinsmen, and, beyond blood ties they are related by being early and late examples of that now-dying breed—the public intellectual who believes that ideas matter in political life.

Science & Technology

JOURNEY TO THE ANTS: A Story of Scientific Exploration. *By Bert Hölldobler and Edward O. Wilson. Harvard. 228 pp. $24.95*

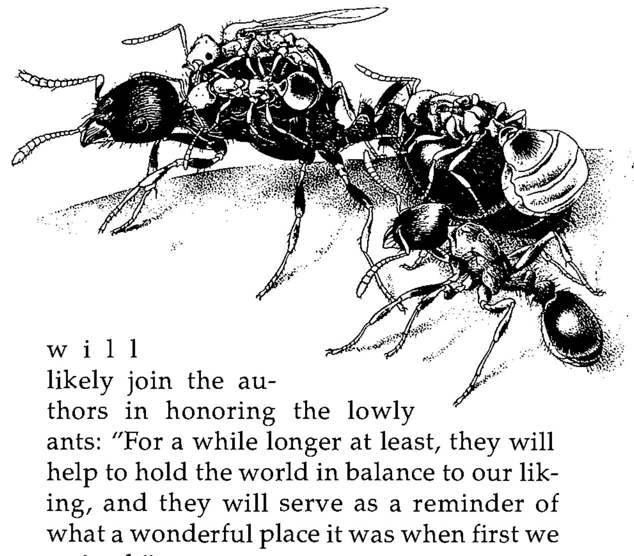
Looking for an exciting new career? How about myrmecology?

The humble ant occupies anything but a humble place in the world's ecosystems. "If all the ants somehow disappeared," Hölldobler, a physiologist at Germany's University of Würzberg, and Wilson, an entomologist and sociobiologist at Harvard University, write, the effect would be "catastrophic. Species extinction would increase even more over the present rate, and the land ecosystems would shrivel more rapidly." Without ants to collect and recycle the detritus of animal and vegetable matter, they explain, "the world would rot. As dead vegetation piled up and dried out, narrowing and closing the nutrient cycles, other complex forms of vegetation would die, and with them the last remnants of the vertebrates." Think about that the next time you squash an ant on your kitchen floor.

Hölldobler and Wilson's earlier, Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Ants* (1990) was an attempt to distill everything currently known about the family *Formicidae*, and immediately established itself as the pre-eminent work in the field. Unfortunately its dense technical language may have daunted the average reader, and here the two myrmecologists attempt to enlist nonscientists in the study and preservation of these wondrous insects.

Ants have been around since dinosaur days—that is, roughly 60 million years. Conservative estimates place their number today at 10 thousand trillion, distributed among tens of thousands of species. Ants are tiny in everything but sociobiological complexity. They communicate, for example, by releasing a medley of chemical-based substances from different parts of the body that register alarm, attraction, the discovery of food, and a diversity of other signals. "Ants, like humans," the authors write, "succeed because they talk so well." Collectively, each colony functions as a kind of "warrior state," in which "organized conflict among colonies of the same species is far more frequent than human war." Various species employ "propaganda, deception, skilled surveillance, and mass assaults singly or in combination to overcome their enemies." Their behavior is strikingly varied: African weaver ants form chains of their own bodies to cross wide gaps between leaves, while honeypot ants climb on top of each other when fighting to gain a size advantage.

At the end of this *Journey*, many readers



will likely join the authors in honoring the lowly ants: "For a while longer at least, they will help to hold the world in balance to our liking, and they will serve as a reminder of what a wonderful place it was when first we arrived."

POETRY

L. E. SISSMAN

Selected and introduced by Anthony Hecht

The poetry of Louis Edward Sissman has not lacked admirers, among whom perhaps the most dedicated has been Peter Davison, his editor at what was then Atlantic-Little Brown and himself a poet. Others include Hilton Kramer, James Dickey, Howard Moss, and S. J. Perelman, who enthusiastically declared: "Unquestionably a major poet and a man of dazzling talent. Sissman's range of evocation, his wit, and his sensitivity would clearly have appealed to T. S. Eliot, whose influence is manifest."

Perelman was right. And yet, sadly, Sissman is ignored by most poetry readers. He has remained the possession and delight of only a tiny cult, a miniminority. When his first book was still in galleys, it was submitted for the Lamont Poetry Prize. The jury of five included James Dickey and me. We two were the only ones to favor Sissman, and by majority vote the prize went to another poet, whose work has not held up as well. Only in the very long run, perhaps, is majority rule capable of doing justice to the arts.

Sissman's first book, charmingly, wittily, movingly titled *Dying: An Introduction* (1968), was written by a young man who had learned two years before that he had Hodgkin's disease. What was startling about the book, apart from its manifest and mature skills, its resonant borrowings and echoes, was its sheer exuberance, undefeated by the author's knowledge that he was the victim of an incurable illness. The poems, even the title poem (with its epigraph from Philip Larkin, warning about picking up "bad habits of expectancy"), were alive with a youthful gaiety, a love of the inflections of language, the nuances of college-age frivolity, and the lilt of jocund lyricism. They expressed a unique kind of pleasure associated with the very act of the imagination. Consider, as a modest example, the following, from "The Tree Warden," a sequence of sonnets:

III. DECEMBER THIRTY-FIRST

The days drew in this fall with infinite art,
Making minutely earlier the stroke
Of night each evening, muting what awoke
Us later every morning: the red heart

Of sun. December's miniature day
Is borne out on its stretcher to be hung,
Dim, minor, and derivative, among
Great august canvases now locked away.

Opposed to dated day, the modern moon
Comes up to demonstrate its graphic skill:
Laying its white-on-white on with a will,
Its backward prism makes a monotone.

In the New Year, night after night will wane;
Color will conquer; art will be long again.

There's much to admire here. With his first line the poet adopts, by the word "drew" and the phrase "infinite art," the metaphoric premise of his poem in which painterly and calendrical terms move hand in hand throughout as cordial equivalents. The "art" of time is exhibited in the subtlety of its minute diminutions, both of the length of the day and the vividness of color. By December the days are miniatures, the wooden stretchers of their canvases serving also as the medical stretchers of enfeebled casualties, unfavorably compared to the richly colorful ("august," both as majestic and autumnal) canvases of the fall season. "Day" is dated because of the calendar and because in winter it becomes almost passé, the sun giving way to the moon as presiding source of light. The moon is "modern" both because it is up-to-date and because its "white-on-white" is the title of a Kazimir Malevich painting (which critic Robert Hughes described as a work that seemed "to mark the farthest limit of painting's escape from its depictive role"). The moon's prism is "backward" because prisms break up ordinary light into a rainbow spectrum, whereas winter moonlight condenses all hues to a more-or-less uniform white.

The poem ends with an echo from Seneca. But when we recall the whole of that phrase—*Ars longa, vita brevis est*—we suddenly realize that delicately folded into all this wit lies something deeply personal. That stretcher in the second quatrain, that bloodless white in the third, the intimation of life's brevity at the end—all this is tactfully muted by the poet who does not initially appear to be writing about himself. His control throughout is superb.

S. J. Perelman was right: Eliot not only would have liked his poetry but would have found himself echoed and imitated in Sissman's work. The opening lines of Eliot's *Waste Land* contain fragments of conversations overheard in the Hofgarten. Sissman made whole poems of fragmented conversations, one of which, set in a Provincetown, Massachusetts, bar, and filled with literary quotations, concludes this way:

"Shut up." "There's something calm about you." "Where?"
" 'At the first turning of the second stair.' "
"Please, Michael, don't." "The Louvre." "Let's go outside."
"Her diction stinks." "My analyst just died."

But his allusions, far from being confined to Eliot (as in the second line above), range over the poetic gamut, from Scottish poet William Dunbar (c.1460–c.1530) to the moderns, with elegant homages along the way to Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, the whole lot. And a small though sa-

lient pleasure of this poetry consists in what Melville and later Edmund Wilson called "the shock of recognition." Sissman writes not only with an agile but with a well-stocked mind.

He was born on the first of January, 1928, in Detroit, and died at the age of 48. He had been a Quiz Kid on national radio, a student at Harvard University, an advertising executive, and a writer for the *New Yorker*. His three books of poems, together with a posthumous collection, were assembled under the editorship of Peter Davison in an invaluable volume called *Hello, Darkness* (1978). That book and its author deserve far more notice than they have received.

The 20th Armored: A Recurrent Dream

Ah, sinners who have not to Ossining
Gone in the rank inconsequence of spring,
Hear a returning traveller: you cannot know
What—past that sickening old apple bough—
Magnificence flares forth, like shook Reynolds Wrap,
From that think tank atop the liberty cap
Of Overkill, Dutch sabot of a hill
Above the obsolescent rocks and rills
Of the outmoded Hudson. Turn, instead,
To our greater-than-Arlington factory of dead
Americans, where quick machines give birth
To the ultimate inheritor of the earth:
A cortex of shelved, tabled facts, a core
Of memory. My classmate, Major Hoare—
A 20th Tanker all of his natural-born,
Mechanically corrected days since horn
Of Roland stirred him in the passages
Of A. MacLeish, shows me the messages
Out-printed by the printout where the in-
Put of the thinkers comes full circle, and
Elicits answers from thermistors; where,
Short years ago, the warren of the hare,
The nest of pheasants, the rough shoot of owls
Made way for war rooms in the balmy bowels
Of Overkill, where G-6 officers
(The Hardware Corps, all hardened sophisters)
Now hold forth and hold out until the day
When miracle machines will have their way
And sweep us all, even their armorers,
Under the land, like Housman characters,
Under the beetling forelock of the hill
Once known to men in Dutch as Overkill.

East Congress and McDougall Streets, Detroit, May 25

Now winter leaves off worrying our old slum,
And summer comes.
Already docks,
Daisies and dandelions, thistles and hollyhocks
Begin to camouflage the tin in vacant lots.
(Some vegetable god ordains these plots
Of plants to rule the earth.
Their green clothes mask the birth-
Marks of a blight.)
Look down the street: there is nobody in sight
As far as Mount Elliott Avenue (where
We kids in knickers took a double dare
To hop a Grand Trunk freight;
Where, every night,
Those marvellous whistles came from).
This dead kingdom,
Composed of empty shanties under the sun,
The arc lamp swinging overhead (the one
That hung there in 1930), the same sidewalks
Of dog-eared squares of slate marked with the chalks
Of the persisting children, the sad board
Fences which shored
Up private property falling into the alley,
This was Jerusalem, our vivid valley.

In our dead neighborhood
Now nothing more can come to any good.
Least of all the Victorian orphanage that still stands
Behind an ironic fence on its own grounds
Diagonally opposite.
The convict children have forsaken it:
In one mad prison break, foiling their guards,
They burst out from its wards—
Long as the Hall of Mirrors, high as a kite,
Carved like a cuckoo clock, capped with grey slate—
Leaving an archive of curses on its walls,
A dado of dirt at hand height in its halls,
And a declivity in each doorsill.
Now the street-Arabian artillery
Has lobbed a brick into each gallery
And opened every window from afar.
Each outer door, ajar,
Is a safe conduct to the rat,
The mouse, the alley cat.
Under its exaggerated eaves,
The orphanage endures. Here nothing leaves,
Nothing arrives except ailanthus trees.

My thirst for the past is easy to appease.

From Provincetown, 1953

III. MANN'S PLACE

"Have you met Sondra?" "The entablature
Is filled with generals in relief." "I said, 'Look—
You can just shove your fellowship.' " "I love
That yellow maillot. Saks?" "The Pleistocene
Or earlier." "No. Double bitters." "Ham
Has played the Cherry Lane." "A Ford V-8."
"He had this great dead fish, my dear." "*Solfège*."
"No. She was Peter's cousin." "You have such
Astonishing green eyes." " 'Stuprate, they rend
Each other when they kiss.' " "No, please, no more
For me." "You just try teaching 101."
"Pure crimson lake." "Fourth down and two to go
And getting dark." "Say, who's your friend?" "Casals
Just swallows you in tone." " 'I do not hope
To turn again.' " "Oh, Harry's not so bad."
"Shut up." "There's something calm about you." "Where?"
" 'At the first turning of the second stair.' "
"Please, Michael, don't." "The Louvre." "Let's go outside."
"Her diction stinks." "My analyst just died."

From In and Out: A Home Away from Home, 1947

4. *Five-Fifty*

Later, as racy novels used to say,
Later, I turn to see the westering sun
Through the ailanthus stipple her tan side
With yellow coin dots shaped to fit her skin.
This Sally now does like a garment wear
The beauty of the evening; silent, bare,
Hips, shoulders, arms, tresses, and temples lie.
I watch her as she sleeps, the tapering back
Rising and falling on the tide of breath;
The long eyelashes lying on her cheek;
The black brows and the light mouth both at rest;
A living woman not a foot away.

The west wind noses in at the window,
Sending a scent of soap, a hint of her
Perfume, and the first onions of the night
Up the airshaft to where I lie, not quite alone.

From Small Space

III

MAKE THESE THREE
MISTAKES IN SPEECH?
Hear them mermaids
On the beach
Singing real low
Each to each?
Had I ought to
Eat a peach?

Safety at Forty: or, An Abecedarian Takes a Walk

Alfa is nice. Her Roman eye
Is outlined in an O of dark
Experience. She's thirty-nine.
Would it not be kind of fine
To take her quite aback, affront
Her forward manner, take her up
On it? Echo: of course it would.

Betta is nice. Her Aquiline
Nose prowly marches out between
Two raven wings of black sateen
Just touched, at thirty-five, with gray.
What if I riled her quiet mien
With an indecent, subterrene
Proposal? She might like me to.

Gemma is nice. Her Modenese
Zagato body, sprung on knees
As supple as steel coils, shocks
Me into plotting to acquire
The keys to her. She's twenty-nine.
Might I aspire to such a fine
Consort in middle age? Could be.

Della is nice. Calabrian
Suns engineered the sultry tan
Over (I'm guessing) all of her long
And filly frame. She's twenty-one.
Should I consider that she might
Look kindly on my graying hairs
And my too-youthful suit? Why not?

O Megan, all-American
Wife waiting by the hearth at home,
As handsome still at forty-five
As any temptress now alive,
Must I confess my weariness
At facing stringent mistresses
And head for haven? Here I come.

Amazing Grace, 1974

In this night club on Fifty-second Street,
An aeon after Auden's suppressed sigh,
A singer, warming up the audience—
A congeries of critics here to judge,
A bleating herd of suckers to be fleeced—
For the top comic, lone star of the night,
Goes out, infantrywoman, to the point
Of contact with that mumbling enemy,
Her many-headed hive of auditors,
And lays her unfledged talents on the line
Between réclame and dank ignominy.
She belts out songs into the banks of smoke
Caught by the same spotlights that capture her
Innocent sequins, peach, green, peacock blue,
And innocent features, pink with makeup, white
With apprehension, peach with youth. The mob
Is plainly restive—where is their overdue
Impressionist, for whom they have endured
Hours in this noisome cellar, *prix-fixe* meals
Made out of orts of cattle, melting drinks,
And unexampled decibels of sound?
She sings on doggedly. "Amazing Grace"
Is her next text, and, with amazing grace,
The social contract holds; she sings as if
The audience were hers to have and hold
In the perspiring hollow of her hand;
Her listeners, rising to her distress—
Theirs also, but for grace, at any turn
Of any corner, clock, or calendar—
Hush their cross talk and manfully applaud
As, on a reedy note, she finishes
And flashes her back's sequins (indigo,
Rose, rust) in a half bow that could also
Be a half sob. Applause. Amazing grace
Laves all of us who, chivvied by unchance,
Anxiety, disaster on our way
Out of the wide world, pause to clap our hands
For one who fails full in the face of us,
And goes down to defeat to our applause.

From On the Island

To an isle in the water
With her would I fly.
—*W. B. Yeats*

1. Friday Night

We issue from the meat of Pineapple Street,
Skipping in unison in the jet rain to
The cadence of our footsteps left behind
Just momentarily as we bound on
To water, laughing, soaked, four-legged and
Three-armed, two-hearted, Siamese, unique,
And fifty put together. On the Heights,
We embrace like trenchcoats on a rack at Brooks.
You taste like lipstick, wine, and cigarettes,
And, now quite irrecoverably, you:
A tear in the material of memory
No reweaver can match. Nevertheless,
I feel your rainy face against mine still,
Hear your low laugh join boat hoots in the night
(One Song, one Bridge of Fire! Is it Cathay?),
And see, just past the corner of your eye,
Our city momentarily at bay.

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THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

A Plague of (Alleged) Plagiarists

A Survey of Recent Articles

The list of writers and scholars put in the dock of public opinion for alleged plagiarism has grown rapidly in recent years. Historian Stephen B. Oates, civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., *Roots* author Alex Haley, writer Joe McGinniss, novelist and translator D. M. Thomas, and novelist David Leavitt are just some of the accused. Yet even as the plagiarism caseload has increased, the precise nature of the crime itself has become less clear.

"Most of us in the academic world were brought up to believe that originality was the supreme virtue," Morris Freedman, an emeritus professor of English at the University of Maryland, recalls in the *Virginia Quarterly Review* (Summer 1994). "We looked on plagiarism as the primal sin, as little short of a fall from grace. Proof of [it] used to end professorial careers and warrant the immediate failure of students in courses and, on occasion, their expulsion from an institution." But increasingly today, he says, "we equivocate about plagiarism on campuses and in the world at large."

Such equivocation became especially evident in the wake of the 1990 revelation that the late Martin Luther King, Jr., in writing his doctoral dissertation at Boston University during the early 1950s, had relied extensively, and largely without acknowledgment, on an earlier dissertation by someone else. "Nothing can be gained by attempting to minimize or understate either the amount of King's plagiarism or the seriousness of the academic wrongdoing that it represented," King biographer David J. Garrow cautioned in the *Journal of American History* (June 1991). Yet just such attempts have been made.

Keith D. Miller, an English professor at Arizona State University, argues in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Jan. 20, 1993) that King then and throughout his career was drawing upon an oral tradition in which sources habitually went unacknowledged. (King's famous "Let freedom ring!" conclusion to his 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech was lifted from an address given by Archibald Carey, a black pastor, to the 1952 Republican national convention.) In Miller's view, the definition of plagiarism, even in an academic context, needs to be rethought. "While we must teach students to avoid plagiarism, we also need to appreciate the difficulties that some may have in negotiating the boundaries between oral and print traditions," he declares.

While such arguments may seem like (or even be) transparent exercises in politically correct rationalization, defining what constitutes plagiarism is often not a simple matter. Marcel C. LaFollette, of George Washington University's Center for International Science & Technology Policy, points out in the *Journal of Information Ethics* (Fall 1994)—the second of two special issues devoted to the subject—that "use" does not necessarily equal, or imply, plagiarism. She writes: "Within soci-

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eties and professional communities that condemn 'plagiarism' or 'theft of ideas,' most single out the *deceptive* aspect of the act, not the use of another's insights or ideas per se. In intellectual and academic life, utilization of ideas and insights (whether expressed through word choice, research approach, or interpretation) is central to progress."

In the world of literature and art, things are somewhat different. Some self-described postmodernist artists are challenging the very idea of originality. Sherrie Levine has "earned herself a place in the pantheon of American artists," David Galef of the University of Mississippi writes in the same *Journal of Information Ethics*, by copying the works of well-known artists and peddling them with ironic titles that reveal their provenance. Her lofty intentions are supposed to remove any taint from her works; they are acts of "appropriation" that make a political statement. Galef, however, likens them to political kidnappings.

Even in cases of outright theft, there is no guarantee that the thief will be arrested and punished, or even seriously condemned. Writing in the *American Scholar* (Autumn 1994), Neal Bowers, a poet and professor of English at Iowa State University, tells how his poetry also has appeared in publications under a plagiarist's pseudonym. "My plagiarist has stolen from other poets as well, among them Mark Strand, Sharon Olds, Marcia Hurlow, and probably from still others as yet unidentified; but, for reasons unknown to me, he has specialized in the theft and publication of my work, specifically of two of my poems that he took from *Poetry* magazine. To date, I know of 18 different literary journals that have published or accepted his plagiarized versions of my two poems." Lawyers whom Bowers consulted seemed to think the thievery did not matter since poetry is so unremunerative, while his friends and associates generally sympathized less with him than with the still-active thief. ("One said the plagiarist had actually improved my poem by altering the line breaks at the end, as if plagiarism were just another form of editing or 'workshopping,' " Bower says.)

Where theft and attempted deception are not obvious, difficult questions remain: what may properly be used without attribution? If use is to be acknowledged, *how* should it be acknowledged?

Take the case—as the *Journal of Information Ethics* (Spring 1994) does in detail—of Stephen B. Oates, a historian at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and author of *With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (1977). In 1990, he was accused by literary critic Robert Bray of Illinois Wesleyan University of having plagiarized Benjamin P. Thomas's *Abraham Lincoln, A Biography* (1952). "I have determined," Bray writes in the *Journal*, "that Oates, for whatever reason, has freely used Thomas's information, his language, and even his narrative structure at many points . . . without crediting Thomas's work."

Nonsense, responds Oates in the same issue: "Bray has not proven a single instance of plagiarism because there is no instance of it in my book. Plagiarism means, and has meant, the verbatim lifting of whole sentences, paragraphs, and pages from another author's work and presenting them as one's own creation." Oates contends that Bray edited passages from the two books "to create the *appearance* of plagiarism," and misdefined plagiarism.

There exists, Oates points out, "a common body of knowledge about Lincoln, particularly his well-known early years, that has accumulated for more than a century and is in the public domain." Both his book and Thomas's draw on that body of knowledge, and hence there are similarities between the two works. There are also similarities, Oates points out, between Thomas's work (which was not footnoted) and earlier Lincoln biographies and studies. "Contrary to what Bray claims, I did attribute my debt to Benjamin Thomas. In my references to Lincoln's early years, I acknowledge him *seven times* for facts or quotations," he says.

Twenty-three prominent Lincoln and Civil War scholars came to Oates's defense, saying the charges against him were "totally unfounded." In 1992, the American Historical Association found that he had not committed plagiarism but detected "an insufficiency of acknowledgment of one particular source"—an exoneration almost as ambiguous as the contemporary understanding of plagiarism itself.

Liberalism's Forgotten Founder

"Herbert Croly & Progressive Democracy" by Kevin C. O'Leary, in *Polity* (Summer 1994), Thompson Hall, Univ. of Massachusetts, Box 7520, Amherst, Mass. 01003–7520.

In his influential 1909 book, *The Promise of American Life*, Herbert Croly (1869–1930) argued that in urban, industrialized, 20th-century America, a strong national government was needed to counter the nation's emerging large corporations and to improve the welfare of the average citizen. Hamiltonian government, he urged, should be used for Jeffersonian ends. His argument provided much of the intellectual foundation for Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. While Croly's state-building program has been carried out, writes O'Leary, a political scientist at Claremont McKenna College, the rest of his reform agenda has been forgotten.

In Croly's view, spelled out in *Promise* and in *Progressive Democracy* (1914), it is America's unique purpose to make the democratic ideal a full-fledged reality. Unlike other nations with liberal democratic institutions, America had no feudal past to overcome, and its national identity was forged more out of common ideas than out of a shared past. Realizing the democratic ideal—in which liberty is balanced by equality, and the people have a sense

Reinventing the Budget

"Genuinely new ideas in public management don't come along that often," observes Alan Ehrenhalt, executive editor of *Governing* (Nov. 1994). To make up for this deficiency, old ideas keep getting renamed.

More than 50 years ago, the Nobel-laureate-to-be Herbert Simon began promulgating the eminently sensible idea that instead of just spending money because they have it, governments should decide what they want to accomplish and then keep track of whether their expenditures are helping them accomplish it. In 1949, at the federal level, the Hoover Commission recommended almost exactly the same thing, and called it "performance budgeting."

But unknown to the Hoover Commission, the history of this particular name game was only beginning. Performance budgeting returned in the Defense Department in the 1960s as "planning-programming-budgeting systems" (PPBS); in the Carter White House in the 1970s as "zero-based budgeting" (ZBB); and in textbooks of the 1980s, public and private sector alike, as "management by objective." The concept never changed much, but every time it received a new name, it got a public relations booster shot that kept it alive that much longer.

In the 1990s, Herbert Simon's insight celebrated the beginning of its second half-century by returning to the stage as "benchmarking"—the identification of targets that a government wants to achieve and the continuous measurement of progress. It is a good idea. It was a good idea in 1943. But it is basically the same idea it was in 1943. It just keeps getting renamed.

Now there is still another variation—"investment decision making"—touted by its promoters as the first real refinement of the performance budgeting idea to come along in decades. It is interesting not only because of that claim but because it is the first product of the brand-new "Design Laboratory" created under the auspices of the Alliance for Redesigning Government, chaired by David Osborne [co-author of Reinventing Government *(1992)]. . . .*

[By] using names like "invention" and "laboratory," the believers in government reform are hoping to convince us that it is a scientific enterprise, governed by hard rules and hard data, and subject to the same precise measurements that scientists in real white coats use in real laboratories. But is it?

of national community—*is* "the promise of America," maintained Croly, who was the founding editor of the *New Republic.*

Mere procedural democracy was not enough, he believed. He wanted to go well beyond majority rule to achieve consensus, or a general will. The progressive thinker was "an American Rousseau," O'Leary points out, who insisted that in a genuine democracy "participation, debate, and deliberation function to create agreement and commitment to shared purposes."

Unlike some later advocates of "participatory democracy," O'Leary notes, Croly did not believe that the ideal democracy could be achieved overnight. Ignorance and apathy, habitual political conflict, and social and economic inequalities would have to be overcome first. But progress, he was sure, could be made in stages.

The first stage was "primitive" or procedural democracy. The second, described in *The Promise of American Life,* involved building a strong state to counter the power of corporations and fostering a sense of national democratic community. O'Leary says that Croly believed "that strong moral leaders, of the stature of Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt," would be needed to woo Americans "away from our excessive adherence to Lockean individualism."

Then, in Croly's third stage, "progressive democracy" was to arrive, as the burgeoning sense of national democratic community, in O'Leary's words, "acts to heal sectional and ethnic divisions and corporate power begins to be checked by a strong federal government." As that happens, "the need for dynamic leadership lessens and grassroots activism takes on major importance." The voices of minorities can be more easily heard, so some of the political system's checks against the tyranny of the majority can be safely lifted. The people are ready for more responsibility.

We now have the kind of national state that Croly wanted, O'Leary writes. Without energetic efforts to achieve the rest of Croly's vision, his legacy could become "a large bureaucratic state vulnerable to the claims of interest groups and powerful corporations, and a public disenchanted with democracy and prone to the excessive individualism that Tocqueville feared."

ACLU Ad Absurdum

"Has the ACLU Lost Its Mind?" by Amitai Etzioni, in *The Washington Monthly* (Oct. 1994), 1611 Conn. Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

After it was founded in 1920, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) played an important role in the protection and expansion of First Amendment rights. In just its first year, it helped to gain the release of hundreds of prisoners whose only "crime" had been to speak out against World War I. During World War II, the ACLU condemned the relocation of Japanese Americans in internment camps, and during the 1950s it battled "loyalty oaths." Today, the ACLU still does worthwhile things, such as fighting to protect the jobs of whistleblowers. More often, however, it can be found championing bizarre causes, contends Etzioni, a sociologist at George Washington University and a leader of the communitarian movement. Some examples:

• The ACLU's New York chapter protested when Mayor Rudolph Giuliani sought to use community police officers to help locate truants and return them to school. The ACLU chapter objected because, as its executive director explained, "the cops see these kids as criminals." Educators would be better suited to the job. But how the police view the truants is irrelevant, Etzioni points out. After all, they are not arresting the youths, just bringing them back to school, "where everyone agrees they belong."

• The ACLU's Southern California chapter opposes the use of metal detectors in schools, and is also against the expulsion of students caught carrying guns. That, says the chapter, could consign students "to a life even more disadvantaged than it might have been otherwise." In short, Etzioni comments, "it's better for all students to learn in fear of being shot than to expel the ones carrying guns."

• The ACLU was critical of President Bill

Clinton's proposed national health security card, which would have had a magnetic strip containing the card holder's medical history and other relevant information. "The problem," said an ACLU official, "is that the databases are enticing. People want to use them for other purposes." What ominous other purposes? "Seeking deadbeat dads, university graduates who welshed on their student loans, and illegal immigrants," Etzioni says. "But these people violated the law, and the public is . . . fully entitled to find them and help ensure that they will make amends."

• The ACLU has argued that a New York City teacher's right to free speech was being violated because he was suspended pending hearings. The reason for the suspension? The teacher, a leader of the North American Man/Boy Love Association, whose slogan is "sex after eight is too late," openly advocates having sex with young boys. "Unless you believe that the only value we care about is free speech," Etzioni notes, "we are entitled to wonder whether parents should be expected to leave their children with an advocate of pedophilia."

Individual liberties must be protected, but too often today, concludes Etzioni, the ACLU "trivializes rights and adds to litigiousness."

Thousands of ACLU members quit the organization after it defended the right of Nazis to hold a rally in heavily-Jewish Skokie, Illinois, in 1978.

An Enemy of the People?

"The Infernal Senate" by Tom Geoghegan, in *The New Republic* (Nov. 21, 1994), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Rotten borough n. *An election district having only a few voters but the same voting power as other, more populous districts.*

Even when the Democrats controlled the Senate, which was only yesterday, they could not seem to pass liberal measures to help working people, the cities, minorities, and the poor, complains Geoghegan, author of *Which Side Are You On: Trying to Be for Labor When It's Flat on Its Back* (1991). And he thinks he knows why: "We have a Louisiana Purchase of rotten boroughs," and the sparsely populated states—a majority of them in the West—rule the roost.

Half of the nation's 100 senators together represent only 16 percent of the American people. And with a Senate filibuster much easier to employ today than it was only a few years ago, a "supermajority" of 60 votes is more often required to get a bill passed. Consequently, even senators who represent an overwhelming majority of all Americans, Geoghegan points out, can be powerless to get a bill through the Senate.

For many years, he argues, the Senate was able to serve the broad public interest, despite the unequal representation of population. There were strong, well-organized "factions"—first, small farmers,

and later, unions—that could sway the Senate to act in behalf of "the middle class, the wage earners, and the small farmers." But these forces no longer exist. The result: gridlock.

The time for something like majority rule in the Senate is long overdue, Geoghegan argues. He favors a graduated system under which the most populous states would get five senators and others would get four, three, two, or one, depending on their size. It is the only way, he believes, to break the strangle hold of the rotten boroughs.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Don't Fool with NATO

"NATO: Use Only in Moderation" by Daniel N. Nelson, in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (Nov.–Dec. 1994), 6042 S. Kimbark Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60637.

Now that the Soviet threat has disappeared, the United States and other countries in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) seem bent on expanding its membership to include Eastern European nations. Nelson, who directs the graduate programs in international studies at Old Dominion University, contends that the allies are taking NATO down "the wrong path."

There is a need for collective security, he says. Western Europeans fear that disorder in the East may spill over onto them, while Central and Eastern Europeans feel vulnerable because they do not have superpower guarantees or a regional security arrangement. But the security threats that Europe now faces, such as political terrorism, international organized crime, and plutonium smuggling, can seldom be successfully met by using military force, he says: "NATO's role—the strictly military defense of the North Atlantic democracies—is substantively different and decisively separate from the wide range of potential disruptions of life in the Vancouver-to-Vladivostok hemisphere."

So far, NATO's steps toward expansion have been hesitant. The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), offered to Eastern Europe in lieu of NATO membership after the 1991 NATO summit, "has no power, no budget, and no agenda," Nelson notes. And the Partnerships for Peace, unveiled at a NATO ministerial meeting in the fall of 1993, "may do more harm than good," as the Eastern states vie to mount "earlier, larger, and more sophisticated military exercises" so as to be the first to enter NATO.

Despite rhetoric to the contrary, he asserts, the Clinton administration "has begun to make the terrible mistake of once again drawing lines in Europe. Rather than seeing security as indivisible and collective, it appears that the United States will offer guarantees to those it finds most compatible, not to those whose peace and prosperity are endangered."

Common defense and collective security should not be confused, Nelson argues. "In other words, let NATO be NATO rather than let it metamorphose into a large, indistinct organization with blurred roles, ends, and means. NATO's focus should remain West European and North American, with members among whom interstate conflicts are no longer plausible."

To counter the "more diffuse" threats facing Europe, Nelson says, "NATO needs the help of a vibrant companion organization—one with universal membership, with confidence building, early warning, and conflict resolution mechanisms, as well as observer and peacekeeping missions—all duties aimed at reducing the chance that threats will multiply or intensify beyond capacities to constrain them. These are roles for a fully institutionalized, politically sophisticated collective security organization, not a power-projecting military alliance."

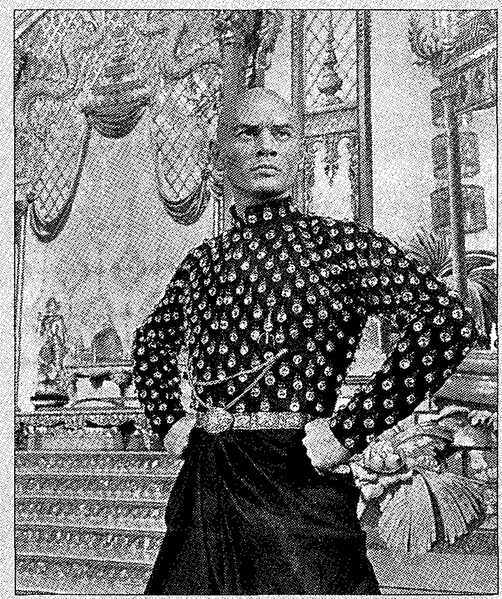
Combining the existing Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the recently added NATO appendages (NACC and the Partnerships for Peace), Nelson suggests, would be a good start at bringing the needed organization into being.

The Great White Way to War

Why were we in Vietnam? In *Theatre Journal* (Oct. 1994), Bruce A. McConachie, a professor of theater and speech at the College of William and Mary, offers a truly dramatic answer.

In his book American Foreign Policy *[1974], Henry Kissinger drew a sharp distinction between Western and Third World views of reality. . . . Without the aid of Western advisers, believed Kissinger, the people of Southeast Asia could not understand their lives and their place in the world. He and [Richard] Rodgers and [Oscar] Hammerstein [II] assumed that the West had a monopoly on knowing reality.*

Building on this assumption, these makers of musicals and of U.S. foreign policy centered their symbolic actions upon metaphors of containment. The nucleus of a group of related metaphors, images of containment circulated in many arenas of American culture during the Cold War. Drawing on the new historicism of Stephen Greenblatt as modified by the cognitive psychology of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, I hope to demonstrate that the popularity of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "oriental" musicals, The King and I, South Pacific, *and* The Flower Drum Song, *helped to establish a legitimate basis for the American war against the people of Southeast Asia in the 1960s. As historian James William Gibson suggests, the "deep structural logic" of our culture and society—even including such seemingly innocuous practices as Broadway musicals—helped to draw us into Vietnam.*



Tailhook Revisited

"Tailhook: What Happened, Why & What's to Be Learned" by W. Hays Parks, in *Proceedings* (Sept. 1994), U.S. Naval Institute, 2062 Generals Highway, Annapolis, Md. 21401.

In October 1991, when U.S. Navy leaders learned that news of the Tailhook debauchery was about to break, they immediately tried to send a strong message: sexual harassment would not be tolerated. In their rush to judgment, contends Parks, a retired marine colonel, they actually sent a very different message—one that ironically helped to ensure that those guilty of criminal wrongdoing at the 1991 Tailhook convention would ultimately go unpunished and that there would be no serious study of the larger question of male attitudes toward women in the navy.

Then-Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett III and other naval leaders received reports about the "unprofessional" behavior at the Las Vegas convention well before the public did. Even before the four-day conclave in September 1991 ended, Lieutenant Paula Coughlin, an admiral's aide and naval aviator, reported that she had been physically assaulted in the now-notorious "gauntlet" set up in the hotel's third-floor hallway. Yet a month went by before an official investigation of her allegation was ordered.

Nor did a strongly worded October letter sent to aviation commanders by Captain Frederic G.

Ludwig, Jr., president of the Tailhook Association, prompt Garrett to take public action. In his letter, Ludwig told of some "distressing" incidents at the convention and denounced "the rampant unprofessionalism of a few." Only after the press obtained that letter did Garrett express "absolute outrage" at the Tailhook events. But he portrayed Ludwig's letter as a self-indictment by the Tailhook Association rather than the expression of outrage at the misconduct that it was. Garrett cut off all navy support for the quasi-official group and removed a rear admiral from his command for not immediately forwarding Coughlin's complaint.

Instead, Parks contends, Garrett and other naval leaders should have squarely faced the larger question of whether the Tailhook incidents, including many that were not in violation of the law, were symptomatic of a bigger problem involving attitudes toward women. The Tailhook incidents, he says, should have been "a 'wake-up call' for naval leaders who, up to this point, had paid only lip service to the problem of sexual harassment." An investigation of Tailhook was needed, Parks says, but a blue-ribbon panel should have been named to carry out an impartial inquiry of the larger question.

The public actions that Garrett and other navy leaders took were seen by many as an expedient attempt to shift the blame for any sexual harassment away from the naval leadership and onto the Tailhook Association and, by implication, male aviators generally. Out of more than 4,000 people who attended the convention, Parks points out, eight to 12 are believed to have committed criminal assaults, and 20 commissioned officers (both male and female) apparently were guilty of indecent exposure.

The implication of collective guilt made male junior officers reluctant to cooperate with investigators, Parks says. Many female officers who did not regard themselves as victims also proved uncooperative. The inquiries (seven were ultimately launched) were also hampered by memories fogged by alcohol and a trail grown cold as a result of the navy's late start. In the end, although scores of naval officers, including some flag officers, received nonjudicial punishments or less severe administrative rebukes, no one was convicted by court-martial for criminal conduct at Tailhook '91.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Success Secrets of Korean Entrepreneurs

"An Analysis of Korean Immigrant-Owned Small Business Start-ups with Comparisons to African-American- and Nonminority-Owned Firms" by Timothy Bates, in *Urban Affairs Review* (Dec. 1994), Public Policy Research Center, University of Missouri—St. Louis, 8001 Natural Bridge Road, St. Louis, Mo. 63121-4499.

What accounts for the remarkable success that South Korean immigrants have had as proprietors of food stores and other small businesses in the inner city? And why have local African-Americans not done as well? The usual answer is that the Koreans have a stronger network of family and friends to call on for help in getting their businesses started and keeping them running. That is only part of the story, contends Bates, an economist at Wayne State University. He found some surprises in census data on 893 Korean-owned and 3,803 black-owned small businesses that were formed between 1979 and 1987.

Seven out of 10 Koreans borrowed money to get their businesses going, compared with four out of 10 African-Americans. The Koreans who borrowed were indeed twice as likely as the blacks to turn to family members for loans and also to look to friends. Forty-one percent borrowed from family, 25 percent from friends. A 1990 study found that between 11 and 30 percent of the Korean-owned garment manufacturers in Los Angeles obtained loans from rotating-credit associations (whose

members make regular cash contributions, creating a pool from which they can borrow).

The big surprise is that these lenders were not the most important source of start-up capital for the Korean entrepreneurs, Bates says. Owner equity capital and loans from financial institutions were. Together they provided more than $50,000 of the roughly $60,000 in financial capital that the average Korean-owned firm had when it started. Equity capital (almost all of which represents household wealth) amounted to more than $33,000 for the average Korean firm. By contrast, the average black-owned business started with much less capital (about $20,000), including only about $9,000 in equity capital.

Korean entrepreneurs not only are apt to be more affluent than African-American ones, they also are likely to be better educated. Of the Korean businesspeople, nearly 50 percent were college graduates, compared with less than 33 percent of the African-American ones (and 37 percent of white proprietors of small businesses). "Operating marginally profitable small-scale firms may be a form of underemployment for many highly educated Korean-immigrant entrepreneurs," Bates suggests. Their education and relative wealth, as well as their strongly supportive families, give the Koreans the edge.

Too Much of A Good Thing?

"Extend Profits, Not Product Lines" by John A. Quelch and David Kenny, in *Harvard Business Review* (Sept.–Oct. 1994), and "The Logic of Product-Line Extensions," in *Harvard Business Review* (Nov.–Dec. 1994), Soldiers Field, Boston, Mass. 02163.

New products that are often just slight variations on old ones have popped up on store shelves with astonishing frequency in recent years. Crest and Colgate toothpastes, for example, together now come in more than 35 flavors, types, and package sizes. Although most companies today are aggressively expanding their product lines, Quelch, a professor of marketing at Harvard Business School, and Kenny, a vice president of Bain & Company, a Boston consulting firm, contend that bombarding consumers with brand name clones can be a mistake.

The popularity of product-line extensions with managers is not hard to fathom, the authors note. Such extensions "offer quick rewards with minimal risk," which appeals to executives who do not want to invest time or risk damage to their careers by trying to develop a new brand. Successfully launching a new brand costs an estimated $30 million—and only one new product in five stays on the market longer than one year. The successful launch of a product extension, by contrast, costs only $5 million.

For many companies, the cheaper strategy has paid off handsomely. Nabisco's new array of Fat Free Fruit Bars, an extension of its familiar Fig Newtons, helped that firm's total cookie sales grow three times faster than the overall market. Frito-Lay's new Cool Ranch Doritos led the way to sales of more than $1 billion for the entire Doritos line of corn chips.

But extending a product line too far can bewilder potential customers and weaken their brand loyalty, the authors maintain. Faced with a confusing array of different laundry detergents under one brand name, for example, shoppers may switch to a rival brand that offers a simple, all-purpose product, such as All Temperature Cheer. Line extensions also can cause problems with retailers. In response to the product proliferation, grocery stores and other retailers have been rationing precious shelf space, charging manufacturers for the display of new items, and demanding extra fees for those that fail to sell well within a few months. Disenchanted retailers have also been allocating more shelf space to their own private-label products.

Some companies that went in heavily for product-line extensions have since reversed course, the authors note. Proctor & Gamble, for example, which in 1989–90 introduced 90 new items, not one of them carrying a new brand name, announced in 1992 that it was going to eliminate some of the slow movers. Quelch and Kenny applaud this bold step backward: Proctor & Gamble "can now close less productive plants, reduce marketing-management overhead, concentrate advertising resources on its strongest brands, and open up shelf space for genuinely new products." Sometimes, less really is more.

The Quotas Nobody Hates

"Geography: The Invisible Preference" by Alan Grob, in *Reconstruction* (Vol. 2, No. 3, 1994), 1563 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138; "Old 'Quota' Under Attack" by Ben Gose, in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 29, 1994), 1255 23rd St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

Critics of affirmative action seldom object to another departure from the meritocratic ideal: geographic preferences in college admissions and scholarships. Yet these quotas have nothing like affirmative action's "morally compelling" justification, argues Grob, a professor of English at Rice University. Indeed, given Americans' mobility and the reduction in regional and state differences, he believes that geographic favoritism no longer makes much sense.

The practice is widespread, however, notes *Chronicle* assistant editor Gose. Top private universities, which like to boast of attracting students from all over the country, ease admission standards for applicants from poorly represented states, while some prestigious private institutions, such as Duke University, and some leading public ones, such as the University of Virginia, favor in-state applicants. Virginia and other institutions also give preference to applicants from rural areas.

Geographic quotas also play a significant role in the competition sponsored by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. It uses scores on the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test to select students for semifinalist standing, a prerequisite for scholarships. To make sure that students from all 50 states get scholarships, the corporation automatically names 0.5 percent of each state's graduating seniors National Merit semifinalists. Hence, Grob says, students from states where fewer youths score high, such as Mississippi and South Carolina, have an edge.

Students who benefit from "largely invis-

Kids and Computers

Computers can be useful in education, David Gelernter, a computer scientist at Yale University, says in the *New Republic* (Sept. 19 & 26, 1994), but they should be used "only during recess or relaxation periods. Treat them as fillips, not as surrogate teachers."

Computers should be in the schools. They have the potential to accomplish great things. With the right software, they could help make science tangible or teach neglected topics like art and music. They could help students form a concrete idea of society by displaying on-screen a version of the city in which they live—a picture that tracks real life moment by moment.

In practice, however, computers make our worst educational nightmares come true. While we bemoan the decline of literacy, computers discount words in favor of pictures and pictures in favor of video. While we fret about the decreasing cogency of public debate, computers dismiss linear argument and promote fast, shallow romps across the information landscape. While we worry about basic skills, we allow into the classroom software that will do a student's arithmetic or correct his spelling.

Take multimedia. The idea of multimedia is to combine text, sound and pictures in a single package that you browse on screen. You don't just read Shakespeare; you watch actors performing, listen to songs, view Elizabethan buildings. What's wrong with that? By offering children candy-coated books, multimedia is guaranteed to sour them on unsweetened reading. It makes the printed page look even more boring than it used to look. Sure, books will be available in the classroom, too—but they'll have all the appeal of a dusty piano to a teen who has a Walkman handy.

ible" geographic quotas are rarely, if ever, stigmatized for taking the place of academically superior students, Grob points out. Black or other minority students who benefit from affirmative action should not be stigmatized, either, he says.

Black Crime, Black Victims

"The Question of Black Crime" by John J. DiIulio, Jr., with commentaries by Glenn C. Loury *et al.*, in *The Public Interest* (Fall 1994), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036; "The State, Criminal Law, and Racial Discrimination: A Comment" by Randall Kennedy, in *Harvard Law Review* (April 1994), Gannett House, Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

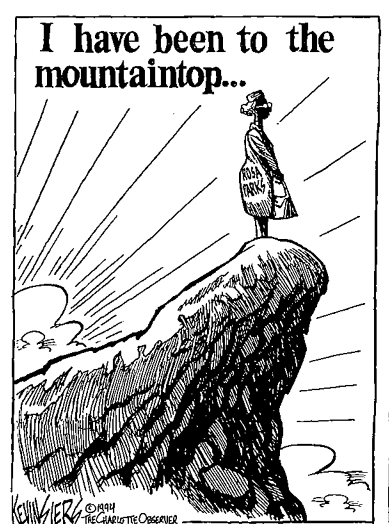
Believing that America's criminal justice system is stacked against African-Americans at every turn, many black and white-liberal critics seek, in the name of civil rights, to constrain law-enforcement authorities in various ways. This stance works against the best interests of most black Americans, contend DiIulio, director of the Brookings Institution's Center for Public Management, and Kennedy, a Harvard law professor.

"America does not have a crime problem; inner-city America does," DiIulio asserts. Despite the widespread anxiety about crime, only seven percent of Americans polled in 1991 regarded crime as a major problem in their own neighborhoods, up just two percentage points since 1985. But among black Americans living in central cities, the percentage soared during the same period from 10 percent to almost 25 percent.

In the nation's 75 most populous urban counties, blacks constituted 20 percent of the general population but 54 percent of all murder victims (and 62 percent of all defendants). In Washington, D.C., about three-fourths of all homicides between 1985 and 1988 involved young black males slaying other young black males.

Today's liberal reformers, Kennedy contends, do not recognize that the main problem is no longer "white, racist officials of the state, but private, violent criminals (typically black) who attack those most vulnerable to them without regard to racial identity." About 84 percent of the violent crimes committed by a lone black person, and nearly 90 percent of those committed by two or more blacks, are crimes against blacks. Black communities are not receiving "the equal *protection* of the laws," Kennedy insists, often because of a racist devaluation of black victims of crime but also partly because of misguided opposition to law enforcement.

DiIulio advocates a get-tough agenda: more police in inner city neighborhoods, and longer sentences for violent and repeat criminals. He also urges consideration of a more radical measure: taking inner city children out of "dysfunctional or crime-infested environments" and putting them in group



Civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks was added to the list of black crime victims in 1994 when a young black man assaulted and robbed her in her Detroit home.

homes or similar institutions.

Although skeptical about this last measure, Glenn Loury, an economist at Boston University, finds the case for longer incarceration of violent and career criminals "compelling." But he sees a huge obstacle in the way, namely, that law-abiding black Americans are ambivalent about their crime problem, and understandably so. "The young men wreaking havoc in the ghetto are still 'our youngsters' in the eyes of many of the decent poor and working-class black people who are sometimes their victims. The hard edge of judgment and retribution is tempered for many of these people by a sense of sympathy for and empathy with the perpetrators."

Civilization vs. Culture

Writing in *Chronicles* (Sept. 1994), the noted historian John Lukacs laments the breakdown of American *civilization*.

There is plenty of "culture" thrown at children in our schools, but very little of civilization. We now have hordes of young people to whom not only the notions but the very words "civilization" and "civilized" are hardly known—at a time when more people mouth the world "culture" than ever before. . . .

When a civilization functions, so do its public institutions. A hundred years ago, American public schools, public hospitals, etc., were among the best in the world. Since that time the very sense of what is "public" has decayed: our public schools, public hospitals, public transportation are avoided and shunned by many people. But at least in one important respect there is no difference between those public schools where the young maim and occasionally murder each other and the most expensive of private institutions. All American schools are hardly more than custodial institutions now—to keep young people off the streets and away from home, and not only in the event that both of their parents are at work. . . . Whether in an inner-city school or at Harvard, the young are not taught civilization. I do not mean the teaching of good manners—that disappeared some time ago. (Though Goethe was right: there are no manners which do not have a moral foundation somewhere.) Nor do I mean the older American public school practice of teaching good citizenship. I mean a respect for life, for an orderly life that is inseparable not only from a respect for learning but from a respect for one's provenance, for language, and for the ability to read, write, and listen. Almost half of our young now spend nearly 20 years in schools, with the result that most of them cannot read and write and express themselves adequately.

This has something to do with the propaganda about the Information Explosion. ("Explosion," with its destructive connotation, is the mot juste.*) There is a breakdown of communication, part and parcel of the breakdown of civilization, an information "culture" that has nothing to do with in-formation, for* that *requires listening. Since entire generations no longer know how to listen, we have this widening breakdown of communication (and, thus, of civility) between parents and children, husbands and wives, lovers, teachers and students, and so on. When "culture" can (as it already does) degenerate into mere entertainment, "civilization," too, can degenerate into mere telephoning.*

Civilization includes paying attention to others. Rare that is now, particularly in the world of scholarship—or, as the cliché goes, in "the community of scholars." There is no such community. There is the old saw about the specialist who knows more and more about less and less. There was nothing very wrong with that. What we now have are academic bloviators who know less and less about more and more, while the majority of their colleagues read less and less and write (or, rather, process words) more and more. If that is culture, then the hell with it.

Ultimately, as DiIulio himself says, law-abiding blacks hold the key to solving the black crime problem. Kennedy sees a hopeful sign: a movement, "across the political spectrum and within black communities," toward giving more sympathy to the victims of crimes than to those who commit them.

School Choice for Some

"Somebody's Children" by Diane Ravitch, in *The Brookings Review* (Fall 1994), 1775 Mass. Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Since the early 1980s there has been wave after wave of education reform, yet the worst schools, the inner city schools so wretched and dangerous that they should not even be called schools, remain largely unchanged. Although she considers herself a supporter of public education, Ravitch, a Senior Research Fellow at New York University and a noted historian of education, says she has come around to the view that parents faced with such dreadful schools should be given a choice.

"The best solution I see," she writes, "is for states, cities, or the federal government to provide means-tested scholarships to needy families, who may use them to send their children to the school of their choice, be it public, independent, or religious." The size of the scholarship would vary according to family income, with needier children getting larger grants. "For the neediest, the grant should be at least equal to the state average per pupil expenditure. . . . Since funds will necessarily be limited, highest priority for such scholarships should go to children who are now enrolled in schools identified by public authorities as the worst in the district."

She proposes, in other words, a "liberal" version of the school-choice idea championed by some conservative reformers. Putting tuition money in the hands of the parents of "at risk" urban children would encourage creation of the sort of schools such youngsters need, Ravitch maintains. "Whether public or private, the most successful urban schools share certain characteristics. . . . All have in common a sense of purpose, a mission, an identity of their own. And all function *in loco parentis*, with the knowledge and assent of parents who welcome a partnership with the school."

Fears that a "choice" program of the sort she advocates would destroy public education are groundless, Ravitch asserts, citing a survey showing that only 19 percent of all public school parents would like to send their children to a private school. "In a means-tested system, many of these families, of course, would not qualify for scholarships," she notes. The public schools would retain 80 percent or more of all students (instead of today's 90 percent). "Far from being destroyed," she concludes, "the public school system would be strengthened because it would be able to shut down bad schools."

Proto PC

"Political Correctness and American Academe" by Peter F. Drucker, in *Society* (Nov. 1994), Rutgers—The State University, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

The current attempt to impose an orthodoxy of "political correctness" on the American university is not unprecedented. The Stalinists did much the same thing during the late 1930s and early '40s, recalls Drucker, a professor of social science and management at Claremont Graduate School. The tactics then and now, he says, were quite similar: "intimidation, character assassination, hounding of 'resisters' and 'reactionaries,' denial of discourse and of freedom of thought and of speech." But academia then was a very different place—and, as a result, so were the radicals' strategic goals.

Today, Drucker says, the proponents of political correctness seek to gain control of colleges and universities. These institutions "have become power centers through control over the granting of degrees which, in turn, controls access to jobs and careers;

through their budgets which rival those of big business; through the numbers of their students and their faculty."

A half-century ago, in contrast, the university was far from being a center of power, Drucker says. "The Stalinists were actually not a bit interested in academia itself and even less in students," he notes. "No attempts were made to dictate what or how a faculty member should or should not teach. . . . What the Stalinists were interested in were American politics and American public opinion; academia was to them a 'bully pulpit.' "

While academia itself had little influence, individual professors then enjoyed a great deal, Drucker says. Prominent scholars in fields from classics to economics "were 'personages,' if not 'celebrities.' " Their books made the best-seller list, they were in demand on the lecture circuit, they were often interviewed by the press, and they appeared on "serious" radio programs. And it was they whom the Stalinists sought to influence.

"Fellow travelers" were more numerous than party members among the professors, Drucker notes, and they could be used to form "front organizations" and lend "bourgeois" respectability to communist ventures. "And for every fellow traveler in academia there were a dozen apolitical colleagues who were being sweet-talked" into signing petitions or otherwise going along, by the argument that all who opposed Nazism and anti-Semitism had to stand together. There also were promises of jobs, promotions, and tenure. "And if promises did not work there were threats: those who resisted were fired—as I was at Sarah Lawrence College in the spring of 1941." (He had refused to sign a manifesto that "viciously and falsely attacked" the liberal president of Brooklyn College.)

With a handful of courageous exceptions such as New York University philosopher Sidney Hook, academic leaders failed to stand up against the Stalinists, Drucker recalls. His followers were defeated in the end by Stalin's own acts. Today's "new barbarians" have no similar "Stalin" to do them in, but Drucker sees "signs that academia is beginning to realize the danger and is beginning to fight back, especially against the imposition of political correctness on freedom of thought and speech."

PRESS & MEDIA

Famine Frenzy

"Feeding a Famine" by Michael Maren, in *Forbes MediaCritic* (Fall 1994), P.O. Box 762, Bedminster, N.J. 07921.

When 1,800 U.S. Marines in full combat regalia hit the beaches in Mogadishu in December 1992 to do battle with famine, they were met by American newsmen wearing T-shirts and Levi's Dockers. At that point, asserts Maren, a former food assessment specialist for the U.S. Agency for International Development, "everyone should have known something was wrong."

None of the reporters at the time asked why troops were needed when they themselves were able to move about Somalia safely. For many months, journalists had given the world a simplistic and emotional story about mass suffering, Maren argues, and so helped "[to] create a crisis demanding international attention." What they failed to communicate was that conditions in Somalia had been improving before the U.S. armed forces showed up.

Even in relatively good times in Somalia, and indeed elsewhere in Africa, he notes, people die of diseases related to malnutrition. The famine in Somalia, like most on the continent, "had its roots not in poor harvests or drought but in colossal malevolence on the

part of the country's civil authorities. Food and food aid became highly contested economic and political tools, just as they had in relation to the famines in Biafra, Mozambique, the Sudan, and Ethiopia."

Occasionally, reporters got at the fact that, as Michael Hiltzik of the *Los Angeles Times* wrote on September 24, 1992, the Somali famine, like many others, was a "man-made" phenomenon. For the most part, however, Maren says, "reasoned reportage" was lost among all the renditions of "the more marketable emotional story."

Private relief agencies working in the area, eager for more aid, spurred much of the press coverage, Maren observes. Few reporters

Opiate of the People?

Kishore Mahbubani, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, a country with limited press freedom, offers an outsider's view of the American news media in *New Perspectives Quarterly* (Fall 1994).

The greatest myth that an American journalist cherishes is that he is an underdog; the lone ranger who works against monstrous bureaucracies to uncover the real truth, often at great personal risk. I never understood this myth when I was in Washington. Cabinet secretaries, senators and congressmen, ambassadors and generals promptly return the phone calls of journalists there and cultivate them assiduously. Some of these powerful officeholders are good at seducing American journalists; but none would dare tell an American journalist on a major paper to go to hell. It is as inconceivable as trying to exercise dissent in the court of Attila the Hun. A key assumption of the American Constitution is that unchecked power leads to irresponsibility. It is therefore puzzling that many American journalists assume their unchecked power will do no fundamental harm. . . .

It would be impossible for me to prove absolutely that there is a causal connection between a more aggressive free press and increasingly bad government. It may have been purely a coincidence. After all, the American press has been second to none in exposing the follies of the American government. But have all their exposures served as opiates, creating the illusion that something is being done when nothing is really being done?

Most American journalists have no doubt that they are ultimately doing good because of their belief that any time they surface the truth in a society, this will automatically lead to a better society. This assumption is both dangerously simplistic and flawed. As far back as the 19th century, Max Weber warned that good intentions do not necessarily lead to good results. As he said, "It is not true that good can follow only from good, and evil only from evil, but . . . often the opposite is true. Anyone who fails to see this is, indeed, a political infant." In short, ferocious unchecked efforts by the American media to uncover the truth need not result in a well-ordered society. Metaphorically speaking, they may have the same effect as acid thrown on established physical structures—it corrodes; it does not build.

The inability of many American journalists to see this result perhaps reveals a certain flaw in the American mind: the inability to accept paradoxical truths. Throughout the Cold War, the well-intentioned argued in favor of disarmament as the way to end the Cold War. But it was the rapid arms buildup of the Reagan era that ended it instead, following an old adage: "To make peace, prepare for war." The domestic corollary for this, as Asian experience suggests, is that to have more freedom in society, one should sometimes increase the boundaries not of freedom but of order and discipline.

pointed out that Somalia had already received "massive amounts" of U.S. assistance, especially since the beginning of Operation Provide Relief in the summer of 1992, or that death rates were declining. Journalists implied, however, that the West had to act to stop Somalia's suffering. "Here," wrote the *Washington Post*'s Keith Richburg on August 12, 1992, "civil war has been compounded by a famine that is starving entire villages. But unlike the Balkans, the Somali crisis has attracted little international attention or aid, and only faint, distant calls for Western military involvement."

Reporters in Somalia, or their editors back home, "proved incapable of altering the terms of the story they had often simplistically shaped, a tale in which the United States had to do, as *New York Times* columnist Anna Quindlen put it, 'the moral thing,' i.e., send in the troops."

Some 28,000 U.S. troops ultimately were dispatched by President George Bush to clear relief channels blocked by Somali gangs and to get food to the starving Somalis, a mission expanded under President Bill Clinton to building a nation. The U.S. commitment came to an abrupt and tragic end after a firefight in Mogadishu in October 1993 left 32 Americans dead or fatally wounded.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Education For What?

"Meiklejohn and Maritain: Two Views on the End of Progressive Education" by Carol Thigpen, in *Teachers College Record* (Fall 1994), Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 West 120th St., Box 103, New York, N.Y. 10027.

In his 1942 book, *Education between Two Worlds*, liberal reformer and educator Alexander Meiklejohn (1872–1964) insisted that the day of John Dewey's philosophy of pragmatism was done. Pragmatism, which exalted science and saw meaning only in consequences, was unable, Meiklejohn declared, to formulate "a positive program of action for the 20th century." To provide the values, authority, and order that could serve as a foundation for Western civilization, as religion once had, Meiklejohn looked to the ideal of a democratic state. In his opinion, students should be trained, and the content of the school curriculum shaped, to serve that ideal. Pupils and teacher would be "agents of the state."

Echoes of Meiklejohn's functional conception of the curriculum are frequently heard today, argues Thigpen, a writer who lives in Berkeley, California. High school courses are often justified in terms of the subject's "usefulness" in reaching some extrinsic goal, whether it be gaining admission to college, getting a job, living in a democracy, overcoming racism, or learning how to think critically. The idea that the subject itself might be intrinsically interesting or meaningful usually gets short shrift. No wonder that students often become bored, Thigpen says. A better approach—one based on Dewey's pedagogical theory and French Thomist philosopher Jacques Maritain's conception of curriculum—could hold and keep their interest, she contends.

Dewey (1859–1952) attacked the distance that traditional teaching put between the knowledge to be imparted and the child's own experience. He thought that the teacher should draw out connections. Dewey thus offered educators "a way out of the rigidity, absolutism, and passivity of traditional pedagogy," Thigpen says. But the "narrowness" of his problem-solving pragmatism, devoid of higher purposes, "left human beings stranded as spinning gyros (processors of information) without meaningful direction or engagement."

In reaction, Meiklejohn looked to the idealized state for meaning and purpose. But in doing so, Maritain (1882–1973) argued in his 1943 critique of progressive education, *Education at the Crossroads*, the educator was only carrying pragmatism to its logical conclusion—the technocratic state in which spiritual meaning is denied.

"The essence of education," Maritain contended, "does not consist in adapting a potential citizen to the conditions and interactions of social life, but first in *making a man*, and by this very fact in preparing a citizen." Education's true aim, he maintained, is to guide man as "he shapes himself as a human person—armed with knowledge, strength of judgment, and moral virtues," while simultaneously transmitting to him the spiritual heritage of his civilization.

Maritain admired Dewey's pedagogic principles and innovations, but he faulted progressive educators for failing to stress the intrinsic importance of what is being taught. "The wrong begins," he said, "when the *object to be taught* and the *primacy of the object* are forgotten, and when the cult of means—not to an end, but without an end—only ends up in a psychological worship of the subject"—that is, the child.

As this 1837 drawing of a camp meeting suggests, Methodism thrived in the American backcountry, from Maine and Vermont to Tennessee and Kentucky.

The Triumph Of Methodism

"The Puzzle of American Methodism" by Nathan O. Hatch, in *Church History* (June 1994), Swift Hall, 1025 E. 58th St., Chicago, Ill. 60637.

Historians of religion in America usually have looked askance at Methodism, finding in its bland, moralistic, and intellectually unchallenging outlook little of interest. Yet the American followers of John Wesley (1703–91) formed "the most powerful religious movement in American history," writes Hatch, a historian at the University of Notre Dame. The Methodists turned Christianity in America into "a mass enterprise."

That would not have seemed likely around the time of the American Revolution. The Methodist Episcopal Church in 1771 had only four ministers and 300 lay members in the colonies, and the Revolution prompted all but one of the leaders to go back to England. Nevertheless, under the direction of Francis Asbury, the Methodists flourished in America. Unlettered itinerant preachers spread the word of "God's free grace, the liberty of people to accept or reject that grace, and the power and validity of popular religious expression—even among servants, women, and African Americans." When Asbury died in 1816, there were some 2,000 Methodist ministers and more than 200,000 members.

Between the Revolution and the Civil War the growth was explosive, and greatly alarmed more established denominations, Hatch says. From less than three percent of all church members in 1776, the Methodists grew to more than 34 percent by 1850. With over one million members, Methodists became "far and away the largest religious body in the nation and the most extensive national institution other than the federal government."

"Methodism in America transcended class barriers and empowered common people to make religion their own," Hatch writes. "Unlike Calvinism, which emphasized human

corruption, divine initiative, and the authority of educated clergymen and inherited ecclesiastical structures, the Methodists proclaimed the breathtaking message of individual freedom, autonomy, responsibility, and achievement." And they did not discourage "the impulses of popular religion, dreams and visions, ecstasy, unrestrained emotional release, preaching by blacks, by women, by anyone who felt the call."

For people low on the social ladder who craved respect and opportunity, Methodism had great appeal. "As a movement," Hatch says, "Methodism became a powerful symbol of social mobility, a beacon of aspiring respectability." Wilbur Fisk, who began his ministry as a defiant outsider, ended up as president of Wesleyan University. Between 1840 and 1860 Methodists founded at least 35 institutions of higher education, and went on to establish a like number between the Civil War and the end of the century. With the election of Methodist William McKinley to the presidency in 1896, John Wesley's heirs "sealed their place as the nation's largest and wealthiest Protestant body."

Although historians have been more interested in Puritanism, Hatch concludes, Methodism reveals "much more" about religion as it came to be practiced in America: "not great, not sophisticated, not awe-inspiring, but what it is."

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Big Science Blues

"Democracy and Super Technologies: The Politics of the Space Shuttle and Space Station *Freedom*" by W. D. Kay, in *Science, Technology, & Human Values* (Spring 1994), Sage Publications, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, Calif. 91320.

In 1969, astronaut Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon and proclaimed it a small step for a man, a giant leap for mankind. In more recent years, "big science" government projects such as the space shuttle, the Stealth fighter-bomber, the Hubble space telescope, and the *Freedom* space station have seemed more prone to stumbles than to giant leaps forward. The problems are usually blamed on poor administration. But Kay, a political scientist at Northeastern University in Boston, fingers another culprit: democratic government.

Government officials, he argues, face a Catch-22 situation: big projects require broad political support, from the public or from various interest groups. But getting that support, in ordinary times, leads to further increases in the scale, expense, risk, and uncertainty of such projects. That makes them more likely to fail.

The space shuttle, for example, was conceived during the Nixon administration as a support system for a space station. But in the post-Apollo era, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) had to delay the station, and it needed to forge a powerful political coalition just to get the shuttle built. It persuaded the U.S. Air Force to use the shuttle to deploy reconnaissance satellites. But that required a much larger cargo bay and more powerful engines to lift the payload. For military reasons, the air force also demanded that the shuttle be able to return to its launch point after a single orbit. Further changes had to be made. To gain support from scientists, NASA promised, in effect, that the shuttle would be able to perform most of the missions originally proposed for the space station. And to make approval by the president and Congress more likely, NASA unrealistically promoted the shuttle fleet as a "low-cost" way of putting payloads into orbit. Finally, to meet objections from the Office of Management and Budget, NASA "drastically scaled back the shuttle's design to minimize its initial R&D costs."

Approved in 1972, the shuttle was plagued from the start by "a long series of technical problems, delays, and cost overruns." The *Challenger* disaster in 1986 was followed by

"the grounding of the entire shuttle fleet for much of 1990." The shuttle has scored some dramatic successes, such as 1993's daring repair in space of the disabled Hubble telescope. But political support has ebbed, and funds for operations have fallen.

Project Apollo succeeded in part because Cold War fears seemed to obviate the need for the government to satisfy a wide variety of interests. Such conditions are not likely to be seen again. In these more "normal" times, Kay concludes, "big science" may simply be too much for democratic government to handle.

Puffinology

"The Puffins Keep Their Secrets" by Les Line, in *National Wildlife* (Aug.–Sept. 1994), National Wildlife Federation, 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, Va. 22184.

Pity the puffin. Forever overshadowed by the penguin, this plucky sea bird leads a colorful life veiled in obscurity. Even careful scientific study, reports Line, former editor of *Audubon,* fails to reveal much about what puffins do or why.

Although puffins and penguins are similar in stature and demeanor, they are entirely unrelated and inhabit opposite ends of the earth. Like penguins, puffins swim well underwater and mob islands once ashore, but they can also take to the air. Puffins belong to the auk family of northern sea birds, populating islands in both the Atlantic and the Pacific. Penguins are confined to the far south seas of Antarctica. An estimated 15 million Atlantic puffins nest in Iceland, Newfoundland, California, and Maine. Pacific puffins—the rhinoceros auklet, the horned puffin, and the tufted puffin—number about six million and are spread from the Aleutian Islands to the Alaskan mainland.

Puffins disappear for eight months at sea. "What they do out there, even where they go in winter," Line notes, "remains a scientific mystery." They court and mate on water, sporting attractive bills, tufts, and horns whose brilliant colors disappear after the breeding season. The same eye-catching, triangular bills later serve as chisels when the puffins come ashore to dig their nesting burrows and lay their eggs. With dogged persistence, they scrape and push their way into the island turf until their burrows are spacious and rock-free. Home remains home every year thereafter—to be redug and reused until, in some cases, the island is stripped bare by excavation, wind, and weather.

Such labors seem extreme for one egg—all that a puffin will lay in a season. Six weeks pass before the egg hatches and six more pass before the puffin chick is ready to experience sea and sand. During that time its parents are diving as deep as 200 feet in the ocean, several times a day, to fetch fat-laden sand eels and capelin (smelts) for their young. This nutritional treasure is guarded from pirating herring gulls in a unique way: puffins coming home from the hunt hover above their colony, forming a large group, and land all at once to discourage attacks on individuals. But against a far more serious threat, the radical reduction of the capelin fisheries by fishing fleets, the puffins have no defense whatsoever. And that, says a specialist quoted by Line, "doesn't bode well" for the puffin and other denizens of the northern seas.

The Secrets of Baby Talk

"Phases in the Child's Development of Language" by John L. Locke, in *American Scientist* (Sept.–Oct. 1994), P.O. Box 13975, Research Triangle Park, N.C. 27709.

When baby utters his first "mama" at age one, adults exult that he has finally begun learning to speak. But his lessons in language began long before. Even in the womb, the infant's neural and vocal senses are being actively developed, writes Locke, director of the neurolinguistics laboratory at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

Most theories of language assume that in-

fants are motivated to talk by a desire to convey information. But Locke and other researchers believe that a thirst for social and emotional interaction is responsible, bred by a mother-infant bond that has its origins before birth. French researchers found, for example, that by the time they were only four days old, babies born of French-speaking mothers preferred the sound of French to Russian. Between mother and child flows a constant exchange of emotion conveyed by verbal and facial expressions: the baby smiles, coos, and eventually talks to get the mother's attention. Language "piggybacks" on this channel.

Locke believes that language and emotion are literally bound together by biology during the first years of life. In adults, speech and certain analytical functions are governed by the left hemisphere of the brain, while emotion is largely the province of the right. But Locke and others have found that the right hemisphere plays an important role in language during the first three to seven years of life. One sign: in the act of speaking, the right side of an adult's mouth tends to open first, because motor control of the right side of the body and control of speech are both vested in the left hemisphere of the brain. But in young children, both sides of the mouth open at the same time. Apparently, in them the right side of the brain, which controls the left side of the mouth, also houses speech centers.

According to Locke, language develops in four phases. During the first, babbling is the main form of vocalization. The fact that even deaf infants babble is one piece of evidence that biology rather than a desire to imitate is responsible. Biology also seems to dictate the production of certain universal sounds. Locke discovered that in nearly every language, the "m" in mama is present early on. Only later in a child's babbling stage do sounds that are rare or unique to his language, such as the "r" in rabbit, appear. Yet biology is not everything. When an infant talks on a toy telephone, Locke notes, he "babbles, pauses, babbles, pauses again," seeking to secure a social bond by acting and sounding like the adult he sees the most.

Around the second birthday, phase two begins: children begin stocking up on vocabulary. The right hemisphere still has a powerful role in speech, so while toddlers can parrot adults, they cannot form complex thoughts.

In phase three (between 20 and 36 months), children say memorably cute things like "We goed to the store" and "I saw some mouses." The errors occur because the children are beginning to learn—and to misapply—the rules of language. The left hemisphere of the brain is asserting greater control over language.

The next stage is integration, or, in lay terms, learning the ropes of language. And after that the real babbling begins.

Wasted Efforts

"Road to Nowhere" by Herbert Inhaber and Harry Saunders, in *The Sciences* (Nov.–Dec. 1994), 2 East 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Americans don't agree on many things, but since the 1973 Arab oil embargo, most have viewed efforts to increase energy efficiency as a good thing. What better way to reduce dependence on foreign oil and to conserve precious resources for the future? Inhaber, a scientist at the Westinghouse Savannah River Company in Aiken, S.C., and Saunders, director of the San Francisco Bay office of Decision and Risk Analysis, see a flaw: the assumption that increased energy efficiency leads to lower energy consumption.

Consider the automobile. Throughout the 1950s and '60s, the average U.S. car got no more than 14.5 miles to the gallon. After the energy crisis of the mid-'70s, government regulation and rising gas prices prompted automakers to do better. By 1989, average mileage had jumped to 20.5 miles per gallon. The result? "Between 1973 and 1992," Inhaber and Saunders write, "the total gasoline supplied to American consumers hovered around seven million barrels a day, plus or minus perhaps five percent." With more-fuel-efficient cars, Americans drove more. They collectively logged 62 percent more highway miles in 1992 than they did in 1975, and bought 75 percent more new vehicles.

Efforts by public utilities to encourage customers to use energy-efficient lightbulbs, insu-

late their homes, and so forth, seem just as futile, Inhaber and Saunders observe: "Overall energy consumption refuses to drop toward the cellar. People always seem to find new uses for energy—hot tubs, floodlighting for their houses, central air conditioning—most of which were unknown a generation ago."

Is the failure to reduce consumption a bad thing? The authors think not. Energy independence is an unrealistic goal in the modern world, they believe. And reducing overall energy use does not necessarily help future generations. Twentieth-century Americans, the authors note, would be no better off if their 19th-century forebears had insisted on hoarding their chief source of energy, wood.

ARTS & LETTERS

Middlemarch
Down the Aisle

"George Eliot for Grown-Ups" by Gertrude Himmelfarb, in *The American Scholar* (Autumn 1994), Phi Beta Kappa Society, 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

What a disappointment it was for many viewers of the recent PBS television series based on *Middlemarch* (1871–72), not to mention generations of readers, when the high-minded Dorothea wed the morally flawed Will Ladislaw. The idealistic Dr. Lydgate (who, inconveniently, was already married) seemed so much more suited to her. But even a marriage to Lydgate—had author George Eliot (1819–80) contrived to make him available—would have had some feminists gnashing their teeth. To them, Eliot (whose real name was Mary Ann Evans) is a feminist role model who defied the bourgeois, patriarchal convention of marriage by living in sin with the man she loved. Why, then, in her greatest novel, could she not create an equally independent spirit in Dorothea?

Love and reverence *is the message of George Eliot's* Middlemarch*—and the motto on her memorial stone.*

"The simple answer," writes Himmelfarb, the noted historian, "is that Eliot herself was not a feminist in the modern sense." Indeed, she honored the bourgeois virtues even in the breach. Yes, she defied convention by living with George Henry Lewes without marrying him, but "she did not willfully choose that role; she had no alternative, since Lewes was already married and could not get a divorce." Nor did she flaunt her defiance of convention. "Although Eliot lived with Lewes in that 'irregular relationship,' as the Victorians delicately put it . . . she tried to 'regularize' it by making it as much like a proper marriage as possible."

Eliot referred to Lewes as her "husband" and to herself as his "wife." She signed letters "Marian Lewes," and asked friends to address her as "Mrs. Lewes" (and even the real Mrs. Lewes did so). The 24 years that Eliot and Lewes were together "were spent in perfect domesticity and fidelity," Himmelfarb says. After he died, she wed John Cross, "with all the trappings of a proper marriage: a trous-

My Doppelgänger

In *Antaeus* (Spring 1994), John Updike considers the "other" John Updike, the one who writes all those novels, essays, and poems.

I created Updike out of the sticks and mud of my Pennsylvania boyhood, so I can scarcely resent it when people, mistaking me for him, stop me on the street and ask me for his autograph. I am always surprised that I resemble him so closely that we can be confused. Meeting strangers, I must cope with an extra brightness in their faces, an expectancy that I will say something worthy of him; they do not realize that he works only in the medium of the written word, where other principles apply, and hours of time can be devoted to a moment's effect. Thrust into "real" time, he can scarcely function, and his awkward pleasantries and anxious stutter emerge through my lips. Myself, I am rather suave. I think fast, on my feet, and have no use for the qualificatory complexities and lame double entendres *and pained exactations of language in which he is customarily mired. I move swiftly and rather blindly through life, spending the money he earns. . . .*

I brush my teeth, I dress and descend to the kitchen, where I eat and read the newspaper. . . . Postponing the moment, savoring every small news item and vitamin pill and sip of unconcentrated orange juice, I at last return to the upstairs and face the rooms that Updike has filled with his books, his papers, his trophies, his projects. The abundant clutter stifles me, yet I am helpless to clear away much of it. It would be a blasphemy. He has become a sacred reality to me. I gaze at his worn wooden desk, his boxes of dull pencils, his blank-faced word processor, with a religious fear.

Suppose, some day, he fails to show up? I would attempt to do his work, but no one would be fooled.

seau, a church wedding, and a honeymoon."

"The idea that only in marriage can Dorothea find her personal happiness as well as her moral mission seems peculiarly Victorian. And so it is," Himmelfarb says. "For the Victorians, even for Victorian feminists, marriage and family were the primary human relationships. . . .Victorian families, recent scholarship has shown, were not nearly as oppressive or patriarchal as was once thought. But the idea of the family was very nearly sacrosanct, and that idea implied that men and women had distinctive natures and virtues which bound them together in a complex relationship of rights, duties, and, if they were fortunate, love."

Dorothea marries Ladislaw, by her own account, because of their mutual love. But *Middlemarch*, Himmelfarb says, is also what Henry James called a "moralized fable." Precisely because Ladislaw is morally imperfect, he provides Dorothea with "her mission: to redeem him." Her love and faith in him can make him "a better human being . . . worthy both of her and of society." For Dorothea to marry the noble Lydgate, on the other hand, would have been lacking in moral drama. He sought to do "great work for the world," and did not need a wife to help him. The ending of *Middlemarch*, Himmelfarb concludes, is not tragic, but rather, "as Eliot meant it to be, eminently moral, even heroic."

When Opera Had Sex Appeal

"Finding a 'Real Self': American Women and the Wagner Cult of the Late Nineteenth Century" by Joseph Horowitz, in *The Musical Quarterly* (Summer 1994), Oxford Univ. Press, Journals Dept., 2001 Evans Road, Cary, N.C. 27513.

In the late 19th century, the operas of Germany's Richard Wagner (1813–83) dominated musical high culture in America. This did not, as in Eu-

rope, herald an iconoclastic modernism in the arts, writes Horowitz, executive director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra. But it did create a remarkable Wagner cult among respectable, middle-class women.

When Anton Seidl, Wagner's protégé and American emissary, conducted his operas at New York's Metropolitan Opera House during 1885–91, one journal reported, "middle-aged women in their enthusiasm stood up in the chairs and screamed their delight for what seemed hours." Those who listened to Wagner, maintained the influential bohemian Mabel Dodge Luhan, "were only listening to their own impatient souls, weary at last of the restraint that had held them."

More than half of Seidl's performances at the Met were Wagnerian operas, including the American premiers of *Das Rheingold*, *Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung* (which, along with *Die Walküre*, comprise the tetralogy, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*), *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and *Tristan und Isolde*. He also conducted during the summers at Coney Island's Brighton Beach, and on Wagner nights—sponsored by the Seidl Society of Brooklyn, an organization of women who diligently read Wagnerian literature and attended lectures explicating the meaning of the *Ring* and the Christian content of *Parsifal*—the 3,000-seat music pavilion was filled to capacity.

"The *Tannhäuser* Overture, by far the most popular Wagner extract [a century] ago, embodied Wagner's role as a timely inspirational bulwark, buttressing faith, banishing looming 20th-century doubt," Horowitz writes. However, the later Wagner, exemplified by *Tristan und Isolde*, "occupied libidinal realms more menacing." Yet the middle-class, urban women of the Gilded Age also responded enthusiastically to it.

At Brighton Beach or at the Met, the devoted Wagnerians "were transfixed and transformed," Horowitz says. "No less than the roller coasters and revival meetings that serviced the lower classes, Wagner was a necessary source of violent excitation."

The women's excitement was due to more than just "Seidl's charisma and Wagner's sensuality," Horowitz contends. Among the devoted Wagnerians were "women of passionate sensibility for whom Wagner represented a consuming alternative to a world of marriage and men." The German composer gave musical expression to repressed sexual drives, Horowitz says, and the profound impact that *Tristan*, the *Ring*, and *Parsifal* had on middle-class women of America's Gilded Age was a measure of "the emotional repression they suffered."

The Mystery Of Jean Stafford

"Green Visors and Ivory Towers: Jean Stafford and the New Journalism" by Maureen Ryan, in *The Kenyon Review* (Fall 1994), Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio 43022.

Why did Jean Stafford (1916–1979), the acclaimed novelist and short story writer, suddenly switch from fiction to journalism in the mid-1950s? All three of her recent biographers agree that her need for cash was paramount. And they tend to dismiss her writing after the shift as a tragic diversion from art, as "hackwork written, begrudgingly, for money," observes Ryan, dean of the Honors College at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Ryan thinks that dismissal is a mistake. Stafford's nonfiction writing, she contends, must be seen as part of the New Journalism. During the 1960s and '70s, writers on both sides of the fiction-nonfiction divide, from Norman Mailer to Tom Wolfe, concluded that the techniques of journalism and fiction were straitjackets. To create a literary form adequate to the new reality they saw being born, the New Journalists melded the two techniques. Stafford's journalism emerged from similar challenges, Ryan believes. She was never able to complete her fourth novel, *The Parliament of Women*, in part because it was as much autobiography as fiction. Stafford was well aware that fashion had passed—for the moment—her fictional methods by. When her *Collected Stories* won the 1970 Pulitzer Prize, she expressed surprise that "a writer as traditional as I can be recognized." Finally, Stafford's relationship, beginning in the mid-

1950s, with veteran *New Yorker* writer A. J. Liebling, famed for his distinctively literary journalism, increased her regard for nonfiction writing.

She certainly published her fair share of it, appearing everywhere from *McCall's* to the *New York Times*. Her New Journalism-style portrait of Lee Harvey Oswald's mother, *A Mother In History* (1966), complete with personal asides, received mixed reviews. She churned out articles such as "Love among the Rattlesnakes," on Charles Manson, "It's Not the Thought That Counts," revealing her aversion to Christmas, and "Somebody Out There Hates Me," a response to the hisses and boos that greeted her Oswald book.

For all that, Ryan notes, Stafford was out of step with the New Journalism in one important regard. A cultural conservative, she was appalled by all the "isms" of late-20th-century America, from consumerism to feminism, and especially by what she saw as the decline of her beloved English language. Stafford wrote that she yearned for a world "predicated on the principles of construction and conservation," for a new "Age of Order"—perhaps for a culture more hospitable to "a writer as traditional as I."

OTHER NATIONS

Ukraine's Crash Landing?

A Survey of Recent Articles

"What Ukraine needs is radical market reform—look at the political and social situation here, and you'll see that there's no alternative." So declared President Leonid Kuchma in October to the Communist-dominated Rada (parliament), which also happens to be the chief obstacle to such reform. Kuchma, who took office in July, said that he would reduce industrial subsidies, cut taxes, and begin massive privatization. He hopes thus to qualify for $750 million in aid from the International Monetary Fund. Whether he will be able to get all of this done is an open question. Indeed, Ukraine's continued existence as a sovereign state is also an open question.

When Ukrainians voted overwhelmingly for independence from the Soviet Union in a referendum on December 1, 1991, many of them believed that democracy and the free market would automatically follow, writes Angela Stent, a Georgetown University political scientist, in *World Policy Journal* (Fall 1994). Now, they know better.

Ukraine (pop. 52 million) is still governed by its Soviet-era constitution because the Rada has blocked efforts to have a new one drawn up. And while free elections for the parliament and the presidency have been held, Ukraine's economy is in a shambles, beset by high inflation and unemployment. Hardship is "widespread," Andrew Cowley reports in the *Economist* (May 7, 1994). The cost of food, by one estimate, rose more than 4,300 times between December 1991 and March 1993.

Under independent Ukraine's first president, Leonid Kravchuk, there was much talk about economic reform—but no reform. Misha Glenny, author of *The Fall of Yugoslavia* (1992), notes in an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (July 14, 1994) that Kravchuk "remained an unreconstructed Communist."

Kuchma, former head of the world's biggest missile factory, at Dnepropetrovsk, served as Kravchuk's prime minister from October 1992 to September 1993, when he resigned over the government's foot-dragging. He defeated Kravchuk in a run-off election for the presidency last July. That gives Ukraine "a chance to start over and take on the challenge of internal reconstruction," notes Eugene B.

Rumer, a senior staff member with the RAND Corporation. "But," he adds in *Foreign Policy* (Fall 1994), "it is only a slim chance, and the odds are even less in Ukraine's favor than they were at the outset of its independence."

The political gridlock that has blocked economic reform reflects a much larger problem facing Kiev. "The histories and traditions of both eastern and western Ukraine are so different," Misha Glenny notes, "that the creation of a democratic, independent Ukraine involves unifying two countries." The western region, which is overwhelmingly Ukrainian in language and culture, is a hotbed of nationalism, while in the highly Russified east, which has much of the country's heavy industry and is closely tied to the Russian economy, the sense of national identity is weak. The mother tongue of most easterners is Russian.

Many of Ukraine's 11 million ethnic Russians supported independence in 1991, in the belief that it would raise their living standards, F. Stephen Larrabee, another senior staff member with the RAND Corporation, points out in *Arms Control Today* (July-Aug. 1994). "But if Ukraine's economy continues to decline while Russia's rises, it could provoke increased pressure for [regional] autonomy and closer ties to Russia. The result could be a growing split between eastern and western Ukraine, possibly even leading to civil war. In such a case, Russian military intervention cannot be excluded."

Ukrainian nationalists may look upon their country's history as a story mainly of victimization, but Russians take a very different view, observes Paula J. Dobriansky, an adjunct fellow at the Hudson Institute and a U.S. National Security Council staff member during the Reagan administration. "Russians genuinely believe that, the commonly suffered privations of communism aside, throughout most of its history their country has behaved altruistically toward fellow Slavs in general and Ukrainians in particular," she writes in the *National Interest* (Summer 1994). For generations, Russian textbooks have depicted the 1654 Treaty of Pereyslavskaya Rada, which brought Ukraine into the Russian Empire, "as a glorious event that freed Ukraine from Ottoman and Polish oppression."

Most Russians today find the existence of an independent Ukraine hard to accept. "For them," RAND's Stephen Larrabee says, "Ukraine is inextricably tied to Russia through language, culture, and history." Most Russians, according to opinion surveys, including most of the country's democratic politicians, regard Ukrainian independence as "a tragic mistake" in need of correction, Dobriansky notes. Even so, Russia's mainstream political leaders seem content for the moment to wait for that correction to happen by itself.

Ukraine imports 90 percent of its natural gas and 50 percent of its oil from Russia. "Over the past year," Larrabee writes, "Moscow has several times shut off the supply of both because Kiev has not paid its debts, which amount to about $3.2 billion." Ukraine has had little choice but to forge closer economic ties to Russia.

Ukraine's economic woes apparently played an important part in getting then-president Kravchuk to make a nuclear deal last January with Russian president Boris Yeltsin and President Bill Clinton. Ukraine (which has 1,800 nuclear warheads, the third biggest atomic arsenal in the world, mostly strategic missiles put in place by the Soviet Union) is gradually to transfer all of its nuclear warheads to Russia, where they will be dismantled. In return it will receive aid, including an estimated $1 billion worth of fuel rods to power Ukrainian civilian nuclear reactors, and cancellation of part of Kiev's debt.

"The most serious threat to the integrity of the Ukrainian state," in Stephen Larrabee's view, comes from Crimea, the traditional vacation spot on the Black Sea for Russian tsars and the Soviet *nomenklatura*. In 1954, Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev "gave" the Crimea to Ukraine in celebration of the 300th anniversary of Ukraine's unification with Russia. Khrushchev's grand gesture had no practical meaning at the time, but now, with an independent Ukraine, it does. Some 70 percent of Crimeans are ethnic Russians. In December 1991, 54 percent of Crimean residents voted for an independent Ukraine. Since then,

the economy has crumbled. Now Crimeans—and their ethnic Russian president, Yuri Meshkov, elected last January—seem to want independence *from* Ukraine. Kiev has urged Russia not to encourage that desire, Eugene Rumer notes, and so far Moscow has shown restraint. But three years after it emerged as an independent state, Rumer says, Ukraine seems to be "on a downward spiral."

Down and Out In Western Europe

"The Future of Europe" by Daniel Bell, in *Dissent* (Fall 1994), 521 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017; "Europe and the Underclass," in *The Economist* (July 30, 1994), 25 St. James St., London, England SW1A 1HG.

To most Americans, it is a depressingly familiar story, the linked details forming an almost numbing litany of social failure: urban poverty, chronic unemployment, crime, drug abuse, single-parent families. Now, sad to say, the underclass has ceased to be a strictly American story. "In cities across Western Europe—such as Frankfurt and Berlin, Lyons and Paris, Amsterdam and Utrecht, Naples and Dublin, Liverpool and Manchester—the shadowed lives of the urban poor are getting darker," the *Economist* reports. Long-term unemployment appears to be the driving force, and the munificent European welfare state seems to be making the problem worse.

Manufacturing jobs in Western Europe are fast disappearing, and not enough new jobs are being created to absorb the long-term unemployed. More than 40 percent of the 17 million jobless in the European Union have been out of work for a year or longer; one-third have never worked at all. Most are native whites. Four Dutch sociologists found that about 55 percent of the long-term unemployed in their sample taken in three Dutch cities had stopped looking for work. Some had simply lost heart. But more than half had found "other activities to give meaning to their lives: hobbies, voluntary work, studying, or working in the informal economy." With its generous welfare benefits, the Dutch researchers concluded, Holland had produced "a group of enterprising and calculating unemployed people . . . the strategically operating welfare client." Holland now has only four full-time workers for every three nonworkers receiving benefits.

For political, economic, and even moral reasons, social-welfare spending in Europe has reached its limit, sociologist Daniel Bell declares. Such spending accounts for 25 percent of the gross domestic product, compared with only 15 percent in the United States and 10 percent in Japan. "Economic costs have reduced industrial competitiveness," he says, "while the large social-insurance benefits reduce labor mobility, since workers often prefer to draw on unemployment compensation rather than move elsewhere." When the state takes too much away from those who work and gives too much to those who are idle, the incentive to work is reduced. That is a familiar conservative argument—but now, perhaps signaling how serious the situation has become, it is appearing in the socialist magazine *Dissent*.

Excessive social welfare is not the only major reason for the long-term unemployment, Bell argues. The other is that Europe, particularly Germany, is failing to make the transition to a "postindustrial" economy, and insists on propping up inefficient smokestack industries such as steel and autos. In "the crucial areas of microchip technology and [computer] software," Bell points out, "there are no major players in Europe."

There is much talk in Europe today about what to do, but the focus is on such "illusory" solutions as enhanced social benefits and work sharing, Bell says. The real solution is "to create more jobs"—something, the *Economist* mournfully notes—"for which Europe seems to have lost the knack."

Dressed for Success

"The Fabric of Independence" by Susan S. Bean, in *Parabola* (Fall 1994), 656 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.

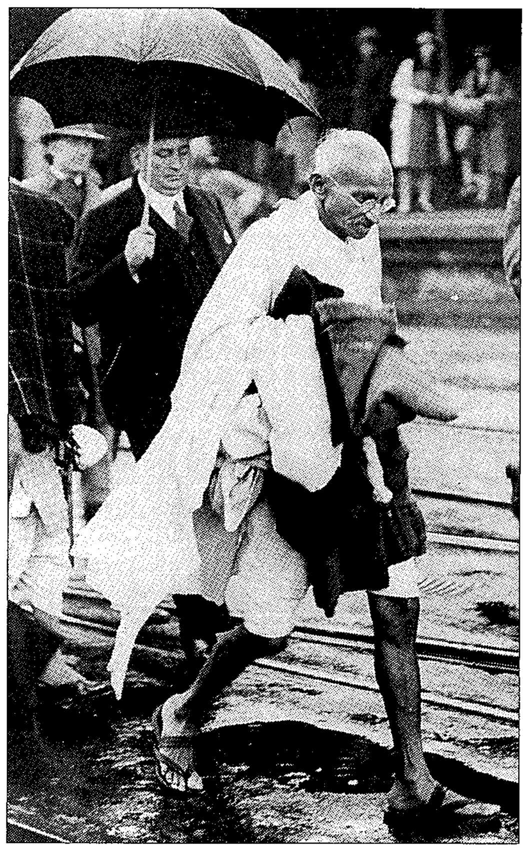
In the familiar photographs, Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869–1948) is clad in only a loincloth and, sometimes, a *chaddar* (shawl). The clothes did not exactly make the man, but they certainly helped to make the man the Mahatma (great soul), writes Bean, chief curator of the Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts.

Gandhi's choice of garb, she says, came only after much experience, some of it unpleasant, with the social and political meanings of clothing. Arriving in England in 1888 to study law, Gandhi wore white flannels—only to discover to his embarrassment that they were not worn in late September. Soon he jettisoned his Bombay-style clothing for an evening suit from Bond Street, patent leather shoes with spats, and a high silk hat.

In 1893 Gandhi moved to South Africa, where he "confronted his indelible Indianness," Bean writes. Advised that Hindus visiting the Durban court had to remove their turbans, Gandhi decided to keep his, but to balance it with a fashionable English suit. He was soon reminded that clothes could not make him a full citizen of the British Empire. Despite his sartorial splendor, he was thrown off a train to Pretoria a few days later for traveling first class.

When he arrived in India from England in 1915, Gandhi "was dressed as a Kathiawari (Gujarat) peasant, in *dhoti* [loincloth], *angarkha* (robe), upper cloth, and turban, the most thoroughly Indian of his costumes." His attire identified his region of origin, class, and religion. Precisely because it was so authentically Indian, however, it proved inadequate. Gandhi needed clothing that would symbolically transcend divisions among rich and poor, Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim.

His final costume change took place in 1921, when he was the dominant figure on India's political stage. His program of nonviolent noncooperation with the British included a boycott of British manufactures.



Gandhi, in his characteristic garb, arrives in England in 1931 for Round Table Conference with British.

Khadi (homespun) was scarce and expensive, so he urged Indians to follow his example and wear as little clothing as one decently could. As he later put it: "[Insofar] as the loincloth . . . spells simplicity let it represent Indian civilization." No longer the English gentleman, Gandhi was now the Indian ascetic and holy man, the Mahatma.

"Engaged in the simple labor of spinning, dressed as one of the poor in loincloth and *chaddar*," Bean writes, "this important and powerful man communicated the dignity of poverty, the dignity of labor, the equality of all Indians, and the greatness of Indian civilization, as well as his own saintliness." And when he visited the viceroy in 1921—and a decade later, attended the Round Table Conference in London and visited the king and queen in Buckingham Palace—his mahatma garb conveyed a new message of power.

COMMENTARY

We welcome timely letters from readers, especially those who wish to amplify or correct information published in the Quarterly *and/or react to the views expressed in our essays. The writer's telephone number and address should be included. For reasons of space, letters are usually edited for publication. Some letters are received in response to the editors' requests for comment.*

Dealing with Pain

As I read the essays on the historical, psychological, and cultural dimensions of pain ["Pain's Dominion," *WQ*, Autumn '94] I searched but did not find suitable reasons for why both laymen and health-care professionals still do not know that pain may be harmful to one's health and is now optional.

Over the last 25 years, pain management has developed as a science and as a discipline in which health-care providers may now specialize. As with any new science, re-education takes time. Yet no wonder drugs are necessary for the relief of most types of pain. Many pain-relief measures now available are simple, safe, and inexpensive but greatly misunderstood and even feared. For example, it is actually safer to consume daily doses of oral morphine than to take aspirin on a daily basis. For over three decades research has shown that taking morphine or other narcotics for pain relief rarely, if ever, causes addiction. Yet fear of addiction remains a major barrier to appropriate use of narcotics. Is this merely lack of education?

Most patients with pain suffer in silence, and they suffer needlessly. Further, patients are not aware of the great physical harm that pain can inflict, such as hampering recovery from surgery and compromising the immune system.

Why do we fail to promote the knowledge that pain can and should be relieved, that it no longer must be endured? People with pain should be asked, Do you want to experience that pain? Pain should be a choice, not an inevitable, unalterable condition. We are not powerless over pain. Why do we continue to act as if we were?

Margo McCaffery, RN, M.S., FAAN
Consultant in the Nursing Care of Patients with Pain
Los Angeles, Calif.

David Morris, Kathleen Foley, and Richard Selzer eloquently address the complex issue of pain as it affects our experience. Morris's prescient analysis provides a historical perspective on pain and culture and points to an important aspect of the evolution of the ability to deal with pain. Since the spiritual aspect of suffering is an integral part of human experience, how could it not be at the center of the scientific understanding and treatment of painful conditions? Perhaps the problem dates back to the trial of Galileo, where matters of science were separated from matters of philosophy and religion. This opened the path to pure science, which could not only produce atomic and germ warfare but also systematically ignore pain and suffering as an important aspect of medical training. Hermann Hesse, in his short story, *The Rainmaker*, reflects on the loss of ancient wisdom as societies progressed. There are indications that we paradoxically are losing certain battles medically as we become more technologically proficient. Technology such as MRIs and improved surgical techniques for treating lower-back pain has allowed us to justify invasive procedures that may have little clinical relevance. The role of exercise in the healing process has received very little scientific scrutiny and, therefore, is generally treated in a cavalier fashion. The muscular origins of pain (soft-tissue pain and injury) are not seen as generally important, leading to futile, complicated strategies that could be avoided with a re-emphasis on basic physical assessment of the patient along with sufficient time to understand the person physically and spiritually. We have all been inundated with the economic impact of our medical-care system. Will medicine as big business move us closer to or further from the Hippocratic oath to relieve pain and suffering?

Norman Marcus, M.D., F.A.B.P.M.
Director, New York Pain Treatment Program at Lenox Hill Hospital
New York, N.Y.

What has been newly learned about pain applies mainly to *acute* and noxiously based pain and its chemical and physiological underpinnings, and often is found not to apply to chronic pain.

Acute pain is a warning system and is thus *useful*. How is chronic pain useful? Perceptual, affectively laden states can become more unpleasant threats to emotional stability than pain. Chronically maintained pain and suffering can be *useful* by serving to unconsciously forestall the threatened emergence of these dysphoric states, and thereby become *an attempt* to adapt to the threat.

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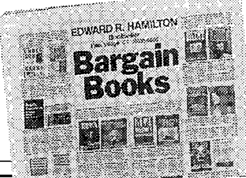

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Treatment that does not appreciate the conceptual differences between acute and chronic pain will have poorly understood results.

Richard Selzer reminds us with a poetic spirit how individual and changing is the perceptual experience we call pain. Man requires the fullest use of his unique language to try to bring into focus the suffering to which pain is attached. Again, we find that to question the reality of anyone's pain—even when it is in a dream—can itself be a denial of reality.

Jack Pinsky, M.D.
Associate Clinical Professor
Director, Pain Medicine
Department of Neurological Surgery
University of California, Irvine
College of Medicine

David Morris has written a fine essay that highlights some of the new concepts about pain developed by modern researchers and clinicians. Whether or not we are ahead of the artists and philosophers he alludes to is debatable. Although his "biocultural" is identical to the "biopsychosocial" of George L. Engel and his intellectual descendants, Morris does not adequately emphasize the interactions between the individual and his or her environment that lie at the heart of the experience of pain. Human beings are always social animals. That being said, we must recall that human behavior is generated by the electrochemical processes within a person's brain. How those occur in response to either environmental factors or internal derangements of function will be the business of the 21st century. The absurdity of mind-body dualism is visited upon us today as the equally dangerous dichotomy of internal versus environmental causation of pain. Kathleen Foley and Richard Selzer demonstrate their understanding of this distinction with eloquence.

John D. Loeser, M.D.
Director, University of Washington
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Seattle, Wash.

David Morris addresses many of the perplexing aspects of the experience of pain in his writings. However, he does not directly address the concept of gain—not the "no pain, no gain" concept of an apocryphal American sports coach, but the Freudian psychoanalytic concept.

Primary gain in contemporary usage appears to describe the psychological benefits that accrue as the result of an illness or pain. These may range from blocking memory of previous traumatic events to the psychological satisfaction of knowing that the pain may be the means of salvation (in some religions). There are few studies of the role of primary gain in pain states, however.

The question of the scientific validity of the secondary gain concept has been addressed recently by Fishbain, Rosomoff, and colleagues. They addressed the several permutations of the definition: "interpersonal or social advantage attained by the patient as the result of illness" (Freud), "acceptable or legitimate interpersonal advantages that result when one has the symptom of a physical disease" (Barsky), and "the gain achieved from a conversion symptom in avoiding a particular activity that was noxious to the patient and/or enabled the patient to get support from the environment that might not otherwise be forthcoming" (DSM-III-R). In addition, the "sick role" may be awarded to the patient who reports pain. This role/reward relieves the patient of the usual demands and obligations and takes priority over other social roles: the patient is now entitled to be cared for. These authors concluded after carefully reviewing the 38 studies in the literature that the secondary gain concept is important and relevant to pain and illness behavior.

A much more nebulous concept is that of tertiary gain. Data are difficult or impossible to obtain, so the following comments, based on "clinical observation" (notoriously flawed), must be viewed with that in mind. Tertiary gain in pain or illness is the gain that accrues to persons other than the patient—the family, the treating physician or other therapist, and the attorney. There appears to be an increasing tendency for society (represented by judges and juries) to administer financial compensation for "pain and suffering." In the quest for reduction in health/illness costs, tort reformists call for a limit to such awards. Payments are distributed to patients, after deduction of the customary contingency fees (which are also under scrutiny). There seems to be the potential for a conflict of interest in such situations. The patient's attorney needs to have the patient as sick as possible for as long as possible to increase the patient's (and attorney's) award. On the other hand, the opposing attorney needs to depict the patient as healthy, and may even imply malingering. Recent headlines have been made by the breast implant case, in which thousands of millions of dollars have been set aside for restitution of "pain and suffering." There is a mushrooming industry related to keyboard redesign as the result of "pain and suffering" from computer keyboard use. On the other hand, it is sometimes said of medical treatments that the indication for surgery or the implantation of a pain-control device is the

presence of health insurance coverage. It could be concluded that physicians might obtain tertiary gain from a patient's pain by being rewarded for utilizing expensive equipment and procedures. The gain is not necessarily monetary. It is possible to achieve fame through a patient's pain and suffering, in both the medical and the legal arenas.

It can probably never be determined how much each component of a patient's pain contributes to the total suffering. It is imperative, however, for medical attendants to reduce those components that can be reduced. With present knowledge and techniques, the purely physical, neurophysiological, and nociceptive components can often be significantly reduced or eliminated. Unfortunately, this might not have a significant impact on metaphysical suffering.

It is therefore no surprise that the language of pain and suffering, even in English (which has more than 100 adjectives for pain), is inadequate for conveying the biopsychosocial nuances. To the three classical dimensions of pain, the qualitative, the quantitative, and the affective, should be added the cultural. It is this last dimension that is the real frontier.

Peter R. Wilson, MBBS, Ph.D.
Consultant in Pain Medicine
Mayo Clinic
Rochester, Minn.

David Morris's essay seems rather a timid advance in light of the evidence the article presents on pain or cessation of pain without physical cause. If a totally mechanistic model is accepted as a hypothesis worthy of discussion, why not a totally mental one?

It is surprising that phenomena such as the placebo effect, the couvade syndrome, the "real" pain experienced by Richard Selzer during a dream, and all the other evidence of mental influence or determinism presented do not inspire a radical rethinking instead of just an incremental departure from the medical model.

When the determinative effect of mental action becomes more generally acknowledged, the next challenge will be to transcend the inherently unstable nature of the human mind.

Kurt Smith
Douglas, Alaska

Oppenheimer Reconsidered

Regarding "Oppenheimer Investigated," [*WQ*, Autumn '94], a few remarks. I followed the Oppenheimer travail as it unfolded, and I later worked with, and for, a number of people who were associates of Oppenheimer during the Manhattan Project years.

J. Robert Oppenheimer had a mental acuity and analytic talent that would rank him—if such capabilities can be quantified—surely among the 100 most brilliant people of this century. Nevertheless, intellectual attainment and ordinary judgment (common sense) do not necessarily equate. Given the tenor of the times during the 1930s, sympathy with and support for Marxism (and the Soviet Union) were quite ordinary for intellectuals both in the United States and Europe. We are all entitled to be misguided in our thoughts. It is Oppenheimer's actions that were, and that remain, suspect.

When Igor Guzenko, the Russian "code clerk" in Ottawa, defected in the early 1950s, it was revealed that a portion of the first sample of highly enriched uranium ever separated was spirited out of the Radiation Laboratory (University of California, Berkeley), sent to Ottawa, and then to Moscow in a matter of days. It is inconceivable to

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me that anyone below director's level at the laboratory would have had the opportunity to divert such a sample and put it straight into the Soviet supply line. Klaus ("Red Rudy") Fuchs might have hoped to thwart the security measures of the Manhattan Project, but in the case of the U-235 sample one doubts he had the opportunity. But J. Robert, or perhaps his brother Frank, would have had that opportunity. Without that breach of security, it is doubtful that the Soviets could have built their own nuclear weapons as quickly as they did.

I suspect that Oppenheimer yearned for a world government that would impose world peace by keeping vain nationalists from provoking wars. He somehow convinced himself that Marxism was the preferred political format for such world government. After all, a tenet of faith was that World Communism was a historic inevitability. If that be so, he was answerable to no national government but only to the world community.

Putting the kindest possible face on the matter, we are entitled to suspect that had he been directing the Soviets' weapons development, he would have shared their secrets with the United States out of a belief that he was furthering the cause of world peace. I believe he fancied himself as far above such petty concerns as patriotism or nationalism.

Two more quibbles: It is my recollection that Frank Oppenheimer was not "fired by the University of Minnesota as a former Communist" but rather for giving false testimony about his communist connections. Perjury, I believe it is called.

As to the "floppy prospector's hat Robert affected during the California years," I believe you will find that his "porkpie" hat (a snap-brim rather than floppy brim) was almost a signature with him at that time.

Robert W. Clack
River Ranch, Fla.

Hamilton's Legacy

Thank you for "Hamilton's Legacy" [*WQ*, Summer '94]. Michael Lind and Mr. Hamilton have put the solution nicely: ensure that ordinary people elect honest, talented officials; do not rely on capitalist operations alone. A strong central government, staffed by extraordinary leaders whose interest includes posterity, is the key to a successful democratic state.

But since Hamilton's time, ordinary people have arguably only rarely elected leaders who favorably influenced the lives of future generations. If this is so, some institutional change has to be promoted that will improve the judgment of ordinary people and improve the performance of leaders. "Hamiltonian thinking" suggests what that might be:

a. In a world where industry surpasses agriculture as the economic engine of the nation-state, the employment of citizens as marginal farmers becomes impractical over time.

b. Unemployment (a rarity where marginal farming absorbs the efforts of citizens without capital) is a threat to the collective good judgment of ordinary people who are unemployed or on their way to becoming unemployed.

c. If government assumes the burden of advancing risk capital to ensure full employment, including self-employment as the employer of last resort, it will tend to improve the judgment of those who elect its leaders.

d. If government further assumes the burden of advancing risk capital to ensure maximum economic output, through automation and robotics, it will tend to protect the value of monies advanced for full employment, for automation, and for all other purposes.

e. If government still further assumes the burden of advancing reorganization loans for organizations whose very high output may have depressed prices and profits, it will tend to keep its financial house in order under conditions of maximum employment, automation, and institutional stability, within a private enterprise system.

f. If government devises sufficient audit and inspection tools to minimize corruption in the aforesaid federal monetary system-based growth economy, it will tend to make Hamiltonian principles work over time.

g. If the aforesaid financial tools work to allow government to increase its defense and anti-terrorist forces, to improve its military and police intelligence systems, its environmental, education, and health programs, all because the excuse of inadequate money has evaporated in the face of more-than-adequate output of the things that money can buy, then the Hamiltonian desire for a secure and democratic nation-state will have found one modern prescription for its achievement.

To accept the constraints on production and consumption imposed by current credit and tax policies is to invite the decline of American power, security, morality, and purpose. A market free to ignore the loss of marginal farm employment in an industrial age is a market in search of terror, decline, and eventual world war.

John Gelles
Ventura, Calif.

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(signed)
Kathy Read, Publisher

FROM THE CENTER

So much for resolutions. I managed to break one of my own even before the New Year arrived. I had resolved not to write a word in this column about the meaning and consequences of the November 8 elections. But try as I might, I repeatedly found myself in the position of the student who was ordered to stand in the corner for half an hour and *not* think about an elephant. Even the pachyderm came to symbolize the impossibility of the task I had set myself. But take heart, readers. Rather than join the legion of scholars, columnists, and pundits who continue to tell us what it all meant, I offer only a few general observations.

The first is that the conventional pre-election wisdom that the voters' mood was overwhelmingly one of anti-incumbency seems difficult to reconcile with the results. *Every* incumbent Republican senator, representative, and governor who ran for re-election was returned to office. And on the other side, of the 16 Democratic senators who ran for re-election only two, Jim Sasser of Tennessee and Harris Wofford of Pennsylvania, failed to win. This would seem to confirm the notion that while voters have an exceedingly low opinion of Congress, they tend in remarkable numbers to make exceptions for their own senators and representatives. Even such dramatic cases as the defeat of Speaker of the House Thomas Foley may be attributed to local issues rather than to a national anti-incumbent groundswell.

But it is clear that something important happened on November 8. The House of Representatives is packed with newcomers. Only one veteran of the last Republican-controlled House, Sidney Yates, will sit, 40 years later, in the newly elected Congress. If the explanation is not anti-incumbency, it is important to both political parties and to the nation that some consensus be reached about what the voters were saying. The actions of our government during the next two years, as well as the choice of candidates in 1996, will be determined in large measure by how the voters' message is interpreted.

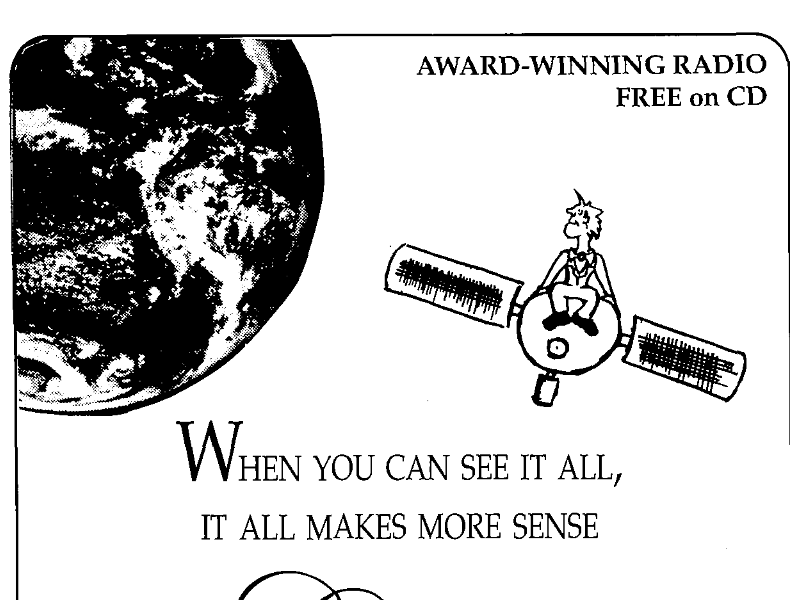
While the reading of tea leaves continues, some results of the Republican victory are already clear. When I ended my previous column with a few words of praise for the largely anonymous members of congressional staffs, I scarcely imagined that some 2,000 of these dedicated men and women would find themselves unemployed as a result of the November election. Of course, it remains to be seen whether such a dramatic reduction in force will result in a more effective, "downsized" legislative operation or in a Congress unequipped to perform its large and complex legislative and oversight functions. But there is no question that the reduction will sharply reverse a trend that has continued for decades.

With his usual flair for making the abstract concrete, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, in a 1988 essay, places this trend quite properly in the context of the Constitution-bred rivalry between the executive and legislative branches: "Political scientists observe a pattern of sorts: organizations in conflict become like one another." Moynihan begins his story with the building of the West Wing of the White House, initiated by William McKinley and completed under Theodore Roosevelt in 1902. In response comes the considerably larger House Office Building, opened in 1908, followed by the Senate Office Building in 1909. Franklin Roosevelt builds the East Wing of the White House, the House of Representatives soon afterward builds its second office building, and in the 1950s the Senate puts up *its* second office building. Since then, the House has erected the Rayburn Building, the White House has taken over the buildings on the west side of Lafayette Park, and the Senate has built the Hart Office Building. Moynihan concludes: "Unlike the palaces of Peter the Great, these monumental piles were not justification unto themselves. They had a plain, utilitarian purpose, as becomes the republic. They were to house *staff*, the ultimate weapon in the war between the branches." The numbers tell the story more dramatically if less colorfully: between 1945 and 1993 the total staff of the House of Representatives grew from 2,096 to 12,101, while in the Senate the growth was proportionately even slightly larger, from 1,177 to 7,409.

Intuitively, a six- or sevenfold increase seems on its face excessive, and a 10 percent cut no more than a modest correction. Nevertheless, one cannot help speculating about the plight of 535 members of Congress confronted with a 1,400-page health-care bill or a 22,000-page General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. If the new, leaner structure works, if hordes of lobbyists do not, as some suggest, fill the void left by departed staff members, it will clearly be because legislative procedures are improved and the activities (many would say the intrusive activities) of the federal government are drastically curtailed.

But after all is said and done, perhaps *this* would be the correct interpretation of what voters were trying to say last November.

Charles Blitzer
Director



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