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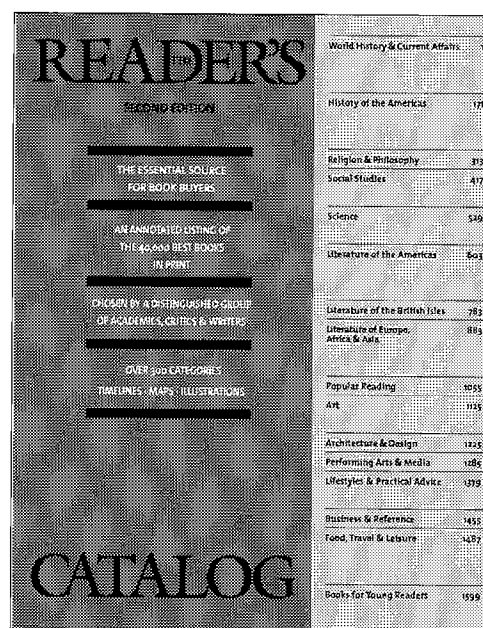
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WQ

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Although the *Wilson Quarterly* has never limited itself to publishing the work of Woodrow Wilson Center Fellows, Guest Scholars, or staff, one of the happy developments of our 20-year relationship with the Center, itself now entering its 29th year, is that it grows increasingly difficult not to draw from the Center's ever-expanding pool of intellectual talent when we set out to explore a subject. Regardless of topic, we need only turn to a formidable list of Wilson Center alumni, or easier yet, arrange for a lunch at the Castle with one of the current Fellows, to get our initial bearings and, often, to find our author.

This issue sets something of a record as far as authorship goes: five of our seven major articles are written by Center alumni. These authors range from a New Zealand-born historian of European intellectual history to a *Wall Street Journal* reporter specializing in military and security matters to a social scientist who concentrates on Latino and immigration politics in the United States. That variety of backgrounds and interests is typical of the Wilson Center. And it explains in good part why the Center brings something unique to the nation's capital. Here at the Center, theory and practice, as well as past and present, meet on a daily basis. In a headline-driven city, it is one place where people—and not only idea-hungry editors—can reliably find long perspectives and relatively dispassionate analysis.

Even if Center Fellows and staff are not the authors of every one of our essays, their work—and the activities of the Center at large—lie behind almost every word we publish. You might say that it's the ethos of the Center, its commitment to strengthening the "fruitful relation between the world of learning and the world of public affairs," that gives this publication its life and purpose. We hope to be able to extend both for at least another 20 years.

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Rediscovering Good Taste

The different emphases of the two essays in "The Rise and Fall of Civility in America" [WQ, Autumn '96]—Richard Bushman's account of how gentility became associated with a style of consumption and James Morris's analysis of the decline of standards—tell us something important about the way we think about civility and its related concept, taste. As your essayists make clear, sometimes we think of taste as an attribute of the self, which can easily degenerate into styles of consumption and social snobbery; at other times, taste becomes a faculty of judgment concerned with the aesthetic quality and moral character of our common world. We are left struggling to establish legitimate standards by which to guide such judgments.

Recall, however, that even when notions of taste were first formulated, in the 18th century, versions of both ideas were already contained within them. Enlightenment thinkers, including Immanuel Kant, David Hume, and Hugh Blair (the famous Scottish lecturer on rhetoric and belles-lettres), envisioned taste as one of the key virtues that would enable a person to approach the new ideal of the self—cultivated and refined, social and sentimental, polite and cosmopolitan—which was consonant with the emerging commercial society. But they also spoke of taste as a faculty of judgment and were dedicated to proving wrong the popular maxim that "there was no disputing taste." They repeatedly declared that a world where all judgments were equal was "absurd." Against neoclassicists, they insisted that taste did not obey rules; nor was it the same as reason. Against the more romantically inclined, they insisted that taste was not mere feeling or sensibility. They agreed that taste was not arbitrary; if it appeared idiosyncratic, it was the fault of the individual who had failed to transcend the confines of his subjectivity through what Kant called "enlarged thought"—the capacity to take various standpoints of others in imagination.



Since our contemporary society holds the 18th-century ideal of civility in contempt, taste as a moral attribute has been deprived of its context and therefore is hard to understand as anything but the self displaying its styles of consumption. Furthermore, since we live in a time that has made a cult of particularism and relativism, the effort to regard taste as a faculty of judgment that necessarily transcends one's limited personal perspective is mistakenly dismissed as a form of cultural imperialism. All of which suggests that, unless we can recover what was worthy in 18th-century ideals of civility and cosmopolitanism, we are pretty much doomed to inhabit the world so vividly captured in Morris's essay.

Rochelle Gurstein
New York, N.Y.

Growing up in the 1940s and '50s as a member of the poverty class in American society, I discovered there was a great difference between "civility" and "genteelness." Civility was expected, gentility was a luxury we could not afford. We were not proud to be poor, but we were proud to *be*. Poverty is not synonymous with vulgarity. Manners and good taste were a way of life not confined to beautifully decorated parlors.

Frankie Cotty
DeRidder, Calif.

James Morris writes, truly, that "the old formal rules of etiquette" were always less important than "instilling a sensibility of concern and regard." But how do we instill such a thing?

In a country as religious as America, there is a strong disposition to believe that sensibilities are a matter of the heart. The conversion experience and its secular equivalent, the moment of truth, are the prisms through which we view the moral world. The best way—the only authentic way—to show concern for others is to feel concerned.

Etiquette takes a different tack—starting

with hats and table manners, and letting good habits work inward. Whoever gave “110 Rules of Civility” to young George Washington to copy out hoped that that would be the result. “Every action done in company ought to be done with some sign of respect to those that are present,” says Rule #1. But to respect those that are present, you must first be mindful of them. In Washington’s case the rules worked spectacularly; the man with the most daunting political task of his generation succeeded in part because he had been schooled in the first form of politics, which is politeness. Maybe the trajectory of our chief executives is not unrelated to the trajectory of our manners.

Richard Brookhiser
New York, N.Y.

Editors’ Note: Brookhiser is the editor of a new edition of 110 Rules of Civility, published by the Free Press.

Indonesia’s Future

James Clad has written an engaging portrait of Indonesia [“The End of Indonesia’s New Order,” *WQ*, Autumn ’96], nicely bringing to light the mysticisms, contradictions, and uncertainties that infuse Javanese politics.

I agree with the prediction that stability is likely to be the top priority of Indonesia’s elite in the coming succession period, and, consequently, that autocracy will remain the preferred ruling style for some time after Suharto is gone. But I question the assumption that this is cause for relief.

Suharto’s rule has been long, personal, and tightly controlled. Political aspirations of Indonesia’s professionals and swelling middle class have been bottled up for more than 30 years. If there is no formal space to vent these aspirations, they will become apparent in other ways: witness the July riots in Jakarta. Keeping these aspirations out of sight during a presidential transition will be no easy feat, and may require a harder form of autocracy than Suharto, for the most part, has been known for. Heightened political repression will only generate new incentives for finding extra-constitutional means of political expression.

Nor is it the case that “more of the same” on the political front should be seen as a boon for the economy. Suharto is rightly praised for the economic gains he has brought to Indonesia. But it is also true that big business in Indonesia often follows more the dictates of patronage than the rule of law. One result is to bring the

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Congress established the Center in 1968 as an international institute for advanced study, "symbolizing and strengthening the fruitful relation between the world of learning and the world of public affairs." The Center opened in 1970 under its own presidentially appointed board of trustees, headed by former vice president Hubert H. Humphrey.

Chosen in open annual worldwide competitions, some 50 Fellows at the Center carry out advanced research, write books, and join in discussions with other scholars, public officials, journalists, and business and labor leaders. The Center is housed in the original Smithsonian "castle" on the Mall. Financing comes from both private sources and an annual congressional appropriation.

wrong kind of investment to Indonesia, often at inflated prices. Sustained economic growth will require more transparency, more political input from a larger slice of the population, and more serious rules of the game. An Indonesian future that "looks more like its present than its past" won't do the job.

Adam Schwarz
Bangkok, Thailand

James Clad's article on Indonesia admirably synthesizes a great deal of information and does a service in helping inform more Americans about this major but still woefully under-appreciated country.

Several small quibbles aside, there is only one fundamental point on which I would differ with Clad's analysis. This is his conclusion that President Suharto's successor will be basically another autocrat, and the related suggestion that the sooner such a ruler is in place, the happier Indonesians will be.

I would argue that, assuming a peaceful transition, Suharto's initial successor cannot approach the authority that Suharto had even at the start, when he was seen as having rescued the country. Further, nearly three decades of sustained economic growth have greatly expanded the number of Indonesians with an interest in access to the decision-making process. Clad correctly notes that this will not necessarily translate into pressure for political democratization as Americans would understand it. Nevertheless, it will bring pressures on a successor regime, especially given the lack of a strong framework of political institutions and processes through which political claims can be channeled.

Ironically, the longer Suharto hangs on and postpones serious preparations for the transition, the weaker the position of his successor will be and the more likely that the overall transition will ultimately be messy. It is this prospect that most concerns many thoughtful Indonesians. In turn, the more chaotic the transition process, the more plausible Clad's projected outcome becomes—that the reins will be picked up by another strongman promising stability. But this outcome is certainly not inevitable, and it behooves us not to jump prematurely to such conclusions.

Richard W. Baker
Senior Fellow, East-West Center
Honolulu, Hawaii

Continued on page 141

FINDINGS

THE EMBATTLED BOOK: In the pages of the *New Yorker*, writer Nicholson Baker has been waging a one-man literary war against the computerization of library card catalogues and other high-tech "improvements." When the San Francisco Public Library moved into a new building, Baker charges, librarians threw out some 200,000 old books. A recent essay in *Daedalus* (Fall 1996) raises another set of questions about libraries and the electronic world. Donald S. Lamm, the chairman of W. W. Norton & Company and a member of the Wilson Council, points out that library book purchases, while accounting for less than 10 percent of publishers' revenues, are the difference between life and death for many books. "With the library prop knocked out," he writes, "at least a third of the roughly fifty thousand books now published annually would be eliminated before the century's end." Much serious nonfiction and two-thirds of all novels—including most literary fiction—would never make it between covers.

Library-book buying is already in decline, Lamm says, and the high costs of computerization are an important (though not the only) cause. He worries about future cuts in public funding for libraries. But in many ways more worrisome is the fact that even the putative guardians of the book are bewitched by electronic enchantments. Many librarians are eagerly giving up their role as custodians of intellect for the more wired job title, "information manager." "To the extent that librarians become transfixed with the sheer quantity of information that can be tapped electronically," Lamm writes, "they ally themselves unwittingly with those who measure the worth of ideas by their applicability."

READ IN PEACE: How far has the decline of the reading public gone?

Further than many of us thought, judging by one desperate publisher's spring list. Apparently seeking to resurrect, in the literal sense, the lost audience for books, Henry Holt & Company is reaching beyond the grave with a new book, *Living Posthumously: Confronting the Loss of Vital Powers*. Possible blurb: "the last word in self-help books."

TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT: Why, in this era of rising income inequality, don't we hear more sounds of class conflict? Michael Mandel, economics editor of *Business Week*, offers an intriguingly simple explanation in his new book, *The High Risk Society: Perils & Promise in the New Economy*. A comfortable income and a reasonably secure job once went together like steak and potatoes, he says, but now those well-padded



paychecks come with big dollops of risk and uncertainty. *Security* is now the thing Americans crave most, and thus what attracts the most envy. "The groups receiving most of the animosity—welfare recipients, government workers, the elderly, CEOs of large companies—are precisely those people who seem to be protected from the rise of uncertainty or seem to be escaping most of the effects of the high-risk economy," Mandel observes. He might have added to his list professors, who are hearing unprecedented criticism of the tenure system.

THE PH.D. SOLUTION? Nowhere is the divide between security and insecurity more radical than inside the academic world, where comfortably tenured professors work alongside gypsy scholars who struggle to survive by stringing

together badly paid temporary and often part-time teaching jobs. And the gypsies have to count themselves pretty lucky. Fewer than half of all new Ph.D.'s in history, for example, can hope to find any kind of academic job at all. Yet the number of Ph.D.'s awarded annually keeps growing.

What to do? Louis Menand, who teaches English at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, has a novel solution: "There should be a lot more Ph.D.'s awarded, and they should be a lot easier to get." Writing in the *New York Times Magazine* (Sept. 22, 1996), he proposes limiting Ph.D. programs to three years, with no dissertation and no part-time employment of graduate students as teachers of undergraduates. Currently, Menand notes, "the median elapsed time between the B.A. and the Ph.D. is . . . 10.5 years, of which 7.1 are spent as a registered student." Under his proposal, graduate education would become more focused and efficient, he argues. Each field would have to be reconceived "as a sequence of courses . . . rather than the present potpourri of specialized classes reflecting the particular research interests of the professors who happen to be teaching in a given semester."

As more students entered graduate school without a commitment to an academic career, Menand believes, they would bring with them a healthy skepticism toward the reigning scholarly wisdom in their field, yet they would also take away a better understanding of what the denizens of academe are up to. One thing many professors would apparently be doing, if Menand's proposal were to become a reality, is a lot more teaching and a lot more research unassisted by graduate students. Could that mean his solution will get a failing grade?

DRESS CODES: To those who were educated in the 1960s but may have forgotten Herbert Marcuse's theory of "repressive tolerance," the recent corporate practice of allowing employees to dress down on casual Fridays may serve as

a helpful reminder. Before you get too happy about those jeans in the office, think about the ever-expanding workload and the ever-shrinking paycheck. Next treat will be sleep-over Saturday.

GOING FORWARD, ROBUSTLY: The mortality rate of lovely words in the English language remains worryingly high. The latest fatality is *robust*, a word once associated with the taste of red wine, the aroma of coffee, and anything having to do with Sophia Loren. But now social scientists have gotten hold of the word and turned it to dust in the mouth. Rarely does an economist or sociologist or political scientist emerge from the statistical netherworld these days without announcing that he has procured "robust" results. You can practically see these poor devils beaming with pride at their ability to use a real, live English word—like a terrier bringing its still-warm prey to its master.

From the business world, meanwhile, comes a new phrase of choice which, though vastly overused, seems an interesting addition: *going forward*. Its participial momentum shoulders aside the blandly prepositional *in the future*. How charming to think that moving into the future always means moving forward. We have our doubts, especially if the future involves trading more words like robust for the likes of going forward.

MR. OWNER: Honorifics seem to have disappeared from American life, but one of the odd corners where they've survived is organized sport. At least it's our observation that the captains of this industry—the owners of football, basketball, and baseball teams—usually receive the honorific *Mr.* (with the occasional *Mrs.* thrown in) when referred to by the media, the coaches, the players, and even us schlemiels. It's not any special merit that earns George Steinbrenner and his colleagues a "Mr.," we suspect, but the fact that organized sport falls somewhere between two other realms where honorifics survive—the military and organized religion.

Imagine, Europe

Two years from now, Europe will take a giant stride toward economic integration and the more elusive goal of political union. On January 1, 1999, the 15 member states of the European Union (EU), or at least those that have taken the prescribed steps to set their economies in order, will lock in their exchange rates in relation to each other's and begin the final countdown to a single currency. Three years later, at the dawn of 2002, participating countries will start circulating the "euro" (currently valued at about U.S. \$1.20) alongside their francs or deutsche marks, and by July of the same year, citizens of the single-currency states will be using euros, and only euros, to pay their rent or buy their groceries.

Momentous as this will be—after all, few things define a nation's sovereignty more sharply than the power to establish the coin of the realm—European finance ministers, central bankers, and other government officials are making confident noises that the goal will be achieved. And there is far more than noise. The elected heads of Germany, France, Spain, and other member nations have taken severe and often unpopular measures to bring budget deficits below three percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and public spending under 60 percent of GDP. (The other two convergence criteria set at the Maastricht summit in 1991 pertain to interest rates and inflation.) So far, only three countries—Ireland, Denmark, and Luxembourg—have met all four criteria, but Union officials predict that 12 of 15 nations will eventually satisfy all standards.

Official confidence is one thing; the confidence of the citizenry is another. And therein lies a thorny problem. Despite aggressive government promotion, Bruce Barnard reports in the November 1996 issue of *Europe*, "more than 60 percent of Germans have steadfastly rejected the idea of surrendering their cherished D-mark, one of the world's strongest currencies, for the unknown

euro." If that's the mood in Germany, a driving force behind European integration, single currency is certain to be an even harder sell in, say, London or Stockholm.

Popular misgivings about a single currency underscore the delicate nature of the enterprise that began with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951. That tentative first step was followed by a more decisive move in 1957, when the Treaty of Rome brought six nations together into the European Economic Community. Since then, with a number of name changes and the addition of new members, the body has moved ever closer to its goal of "establishing a common market and progressively approximating the economic policies of the members."

To be sure, this movement provoked outbursts of popular opposition even before the current single-currency campaign, for reasons not hard to fathom. Writing in these pages seven years ago about the prospect of the coming Single Integrated Market, German journalist Josef Joffe located part of the popular uneasiness in the unique character of Europe's drive to unity: "Western Europe has chosen a path that knows no precedent. It is not political will that fuels the engine but economic necessity. . . . Economic forces—the need for economies of scale or for international competitiveness—are supposed to lead the way." Such a strategy could succeed, Joffe continued, only if the member states were willing "to merge their sovereignties into something that is more powerful than each and all." Rightly, he sensed that the greatest challenge would come later, with the attempt to create a truly common monetary and fiscal policy.

Later is almost here, and will have fully arrived when the single-currency states find their economies marching to the directives of a powerful supranational institution, the European Central Bank, which is slowly emerging from its chrysalis as the Frankfurt-based European Monetary Institute. EU officials reassure Europeans that the bank will be



sensitive to local economic variations. The directors, after all, will come from the central banks of the member states. But that may provide little reassurance to many citizens—particularly wage workers and farmers—who feel that their own central bankers already pay too little mind to such matters as unemployment and easy credit.

The impending surrender of national sovereignty in matters of the wallet raises even more fundamental questions about the union that the EU is attempting to bring about. What sort of commonalities are there among nations that will find themselves using the same currency, commonalities that might inspire mutual trust and a modicum of fellow feeling?

Politics, as Joffe noted, is the usual place where common ground is found and made, but the EU nations not only have different political traditions but also different views of the Union's own governing institutions. Italians may see the European Parliament as a possible way out of political disorder at home, but most Britons remain intransigently suspicious of what Margaret Thatcher called a "European superstate."

The contrast with the American experience could not be more striking. In this country, political debate and compromise were the necessary antecedents to the kind of centralized economic control and regulation that Europe hopes to achieve, as it were, overnight. Indeed, it took the United States more than 100 years to centralize its monetary and regulatory systems, a period that saw the rewriting of the nation's central political charter and a great deal of thrashing, bargaining, and compromise. Ongoing negotiations were made possible by the fact that Americans had common political institutions, practices, and ideas even before they came together as citizens of an independent nation. Such shared political foundations are crucially missing in Europe, and their absence makes one wonder whether the shocks of economic centralization can be addressed in any truly democratic fashion.

A similar question must be asked about Europe's vision of its place in the world. So far, as the Bosnia crisis most dramatically

demonstrated, the members of the EU appear to be far short of a consensus that would allow them to act as one. Indeed, many EU countries remain suspicious of each other's motives when it comes to delicate matters of foreign policy.

Beyond politics, there is the larger matter of culture, beginning with language. EU bureaucrats may feel that they are at the vanguard of an easeful multilingualism, but even they are touchy when their native language goes conspicuously unused in official meetings or documents. Perceived slights abound. Germans, for example, were reputedly unhappy with the first name proposed for the single-currency unit, the ECU (the European Currency Unit), because it sounded too French. If seasoned internationalists can be so easily offended, how might more rooted nationalists react to linguistic challenges?

The fact is that Europeans have given relatively little thought to the cultural conditions and consequences of a truly integrated Europe. This is nowhere more obvious than among European culture makers themselves—artists, novelists, and filmmakers. "We have all been supporters of Europe for a long time," says German novelist and Wilson Center Fellow Peter Schneider, "but we are finally realizing that the Union is becoming a reality, and we have no idea what this means culturally, for everyday life." To address that uncertainty, Schneider is helping to organize a conference of writers and artists to be held in Berlin in the spring of 1998. The discussion will be long overdue.

What Europe is, and what it might be, are complex questions, whose historical roots we explore in this issue. Not surprisingly, the lessons of history are sobering, but history does not set all limits or determine all outcomes. The European Union, under its various names, has so far defied all predictions of imminent failure. Sometimes, however, nothing is more dangerous than the prospect of success. Europeans may have to think even harder about their Union, now that they find its reality staring them in the face.

—Jay Tolson

EUROPA

THE PAST AND FUTURE OF AN IDEA

To consider Europe is to recall St. Augustine's reflections on time: we know what it is until we start to think about it. A continent that is not truly a continent, Europe is equally problematic as a civilization—or, perhaps, a bundle of civilizations. And those forces that have traditionally given Europe its claim to unity may today be waning, even as 15 European nations work to build a stronger Union.



Map of the world from an 11th-century manuscript of the Commentary on the Apocalypse of Saint John by Beatus of Liebana

What Do We Mean by Europe?

by J. G. A. Pocock

Europe today is a contested notion. Historians and critics debate whether it is one of those “inventions” that elites have imposed upon others in order to consolidate positions of power and authority. Statesmen, administrators, and corporate executives view Europe as, for better or worse, a very real entity, with a clear and definable past and a palpable present. A subset of this group—supporters of what has come to be called the European Union—hope that the present is prologue to an even more substantial future: a powerful supranational order bringing peace and prosperity to all member nations. An opposed group, whom we might call the Euroskeptics, hold that such a consummation is devoutly to be resisted, so fatal would it be to democratic national sovereignty and the power of citizens to determine their political destinies.

Contemporary debates about the meaning of Europe are unquestionably tied to current political, economic, and intellectual preoccupations. But they have behind them a long history of the use of language in presenting and controlling human experience. It is part of that history that I want to tell, the story of how the word “Europe” has been used and how over time it came to denote, first, a continent and, second, a civilization. I shall speak as a moderate Euroskeptic—one not so much hostile to the present project of “Europe” as doubtful that it will work.

We should note first off that the initial naming of Europe took place in a saltwater area of very limited size, namely the Aegean Sea, as that part of the Mediterranean between present-day Greece and Turkey is called. The ancient peoples who used that sea and lived around it became aware of what we call—because they did—the Bosphorus, the narrow waterway that connects the Aegean with the larger and, to them, less known, Euxine or Black Sea. They developed myths and folktales that had the effect of giving the name “Europa” to lands lying west of the Bosphorus and the name “Asia” to lands lying east of it.

At the same time, a third name, or rather a pair of names, came to denote another coast and its hinterlands lying well to the south of the Aegean. One of these, “Egypt,” was the Greek Aegean term for the peoples of the Nile valley and its delta, an ancient and literate people who could give their own accounts of who they were and how long they had existed. The other word, “Africa,” tended to move westward, away from the Egyptians, and adhere to other coastlands—also known as Libya, Mauritania, and so on—with which the Aegean Greeks and Phoenicians came in contact as their ships explored the Mediterranean basin.

Once we start talking about the movement of words from one coastland




La Vergine Europa, a symbolic map by Johannes Putsch (1592)

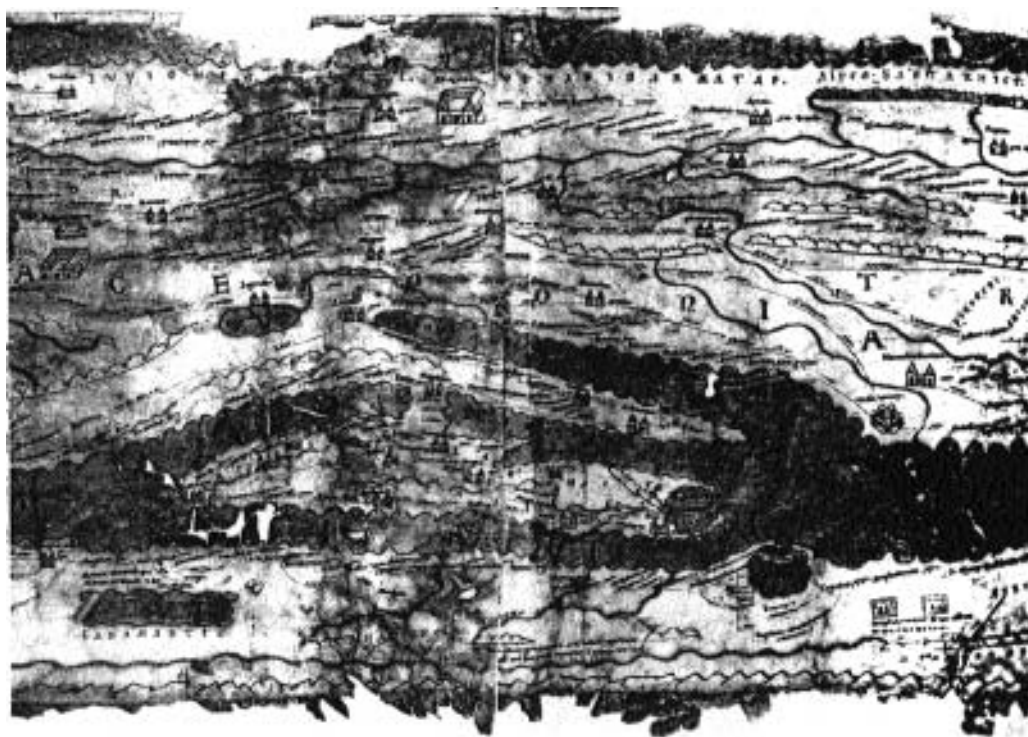
and hinterland to another, we have begun talking about geography and cartography: the description of configurations of land and water and their reduction to spoken and written words and images. Here the story is how over many centuries—perhaps more than 20 from start to finish of the mapping process—the Aegean words Europe, Asia, and Africa moved outward from the coastlines to which they had originally been applied and traveled deeper and deeper into the hinterlands behind them, until finally they became the names of what were by then called continents. By the 16th century at the latest, *continent* had come to denote a landmass of very great size, possessing a well-defined maritime perimeter, and linked to other continents either by a single isthmus—as Africa is joined to Asia and the two Americas to one another—or not at all, as in the cases of Australia and Antarctica, the two island continents in the Southern Hemisphere.

But the anomaly in our typology of continents—an anomaly that shows how Aegean and Mediterranean concepts still dominate our thinking—consists in our habit of listing Europe as one of the seven continents, when it does not comply with the above definition at all precisely. The “continent” of Europe is a product partly of the Mediterranean need for a term to inscribe and describe the lands west of the Bosphorus, and partly of the exceptionally self-centered and world-dominating outlook developed by a civilization that evolved in those lands. The notion of a “continent” was formed in that civilization, but it applies only inexactly to “the continent of Europe.”

In the 16th century, there existed a map and image of Europe (see p. 13) described as “the first part of the earth in the form of a virgin.” It was shaped by the rule of the Hapsburg family over Spain, the Netherlands, the German Empire, and Austria, and showed “Europe” as a crowned woman, whose head was the Iberian Peninsula and whose heart was located at Prague. Her left arm was the peninsula of Denmark, and she held a scepter ruling over the Baltic and the North Sea; her right arm was the peninsula of Italy, with which she grasped the island of Sicily, as an imperial orb giving power over the Mediterranean. But the skirts of her robe floated freely over the vast and indeterminate regions between the Black Sea and the Baltic, to which the draftsman affixed such names as Scythia, Muscovy, and Tartary.

ne can see that the mapmakers pushed the Baltic as far east and the Black Sea as far north as they dared, hoping to bring them close enough to each other to justify the description of Europe as a continent. But it is not possible to link Europe to Asia by an isthmus with sea on either side. Europe is not linked to Asia so much as it is an extension of it, a peninsula or subcontinent such as India, and even then there is no huge mountain barrier like that of the Himalayas, separating the peninsula from the rest of the continent that we might call Eurasia. The skirts of the imperial robe float over an enormous plain in which there are neither seas nor mountains, nor any natural frontier at all. Subsequent-

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A section of the Tabula Peutingeriana, a 13th-century copy of a Roman map of the known world, believed to date from the first century A.D.

ly there arose the habit of terminating Europe at the Ural Mountains, which marked no important climatic or cultural or political characteristics. It is another characteristic of the Hapsburg map that it can touch only the coasts of Scandinavia north of the Baltic Sea. One might almost say that Scandinavia is a separate peninsula of the Eurasian continent and that Europe is another. When Scandinavia came to be considered part of Europe is a historical question.

The process of defining continental Europe was not quite complete when the Frenchman Voltaire, who though a great historian was not a great scholar, wrote his *History of Russia under Peter the Great*, published in 1760. Certainly, he wrote to celebrate the work of Peter and his successors in bringing Russia into the civilization Voltaire thought of as European. But at the same time he was inclined to include Sweden, Baltic Germany, Poland, and Russia in an area he called simply "the north" (*le nord*) and did not consider fully European. What is more, Voltaire remarked that if you situate yourself imaginatively about the Sea of Azov, just east of the Crimean, it becomes quite impossible to tell where Europe leaves off and Asia begins, and he said it would probably be better to abandon both terms, expanding the term *le nord* into *terres boreales* or *terres arctiques*, corresponding to the *terres australes* and *antarctiques*, terms he and his contemporaries used in speaking of the great continent they believed to exist in the Southern Hemisphere.

Very soon after Voltaire wrote this, European navigators in the Pacific dissolved the southern continent into the two island continents called Australia and Antarctica, perhaps confirming the presumption that continents must be situated in the ocean. But we have not

given up the practice of describing Europe as a seventh, or rather as the first, “continent,” though we have long known perfectly well that its eastern aspect does not separate it from Asia but establishes a continental heartland in which all frontiers, physical or cultural, are essentially indeterminate. This tells us a great deal about the civilization that has grown up in “Europe” and calls itself by that name, and it compels us to turn from the subject of “Europe” as a continent to that of “Europe” as a civilization.

The word “Europa” was in use in the Roman Empire but was not employed self-descriptively; Rome may have known that it was in Europe but did not characterize itself as European, since the word was not used that way. The reason for this was that the Roman Empire was not continental but Mediterranean. It was formed by the hegemony of a central Italian people over all three of the coastlands—Asian, African, and European—and deep into the hinterlands behind each: in Asia as far as Armenia and Mesopotamia, in Africa as far as the cataracts of the Nile and the Sahara, and in Europe by a series of conquests, first over the Iberian Peninsula, then beyond the western Alps into Gaul and Britain and the delta of the Rhine, and finally over a series of provinces along the Danube from modern Switzerland to modern Romania. The poet Ovid found himself exiled to the shore of the Black Sea, on the edge of Voltaire’s *nord*, which the poet thought of as Scythia, not as Asia. In central Germany, the Romans were closer than they knew to the vast indeterminacy of Eurasia.

Today, what we call “Europe” is a civilization, rather peninsular and transalpine than Mediterranean in any comprehensive sense, created in the last group of Roman provinces after the disintegration of a unified Roman Empire. That disintegration—Edward Gibbon’s famous “decline and fall”—came about by stages. The first, most “European,” and to him for various reasons the most prominent, was the collapse of Roman control over the far western provinces, and over Italy itself, which happened when an upheaval originating in nomadic central Eurasia caused German peoples to move over the Danube and Rhine in greater numbers than the Romans could absorb.

This extinction of the empire “in the West” was Gibbon’s primary theme both because it happened first and because he was preoccupied, as a European, with the rise of the feudal kingdoms and the papal church. But it was followed, two centuries later, by an even greater event, when a religious revolution in the Fertile Crescent led to the Muslim Arab conquest of most of Roman Asia, all of Roman Africa, and Spain: the destruction of Mediterranean cultural unity, which was never quite recovered. This produced a double separation of “Europe” from the other Mediterranean hinterlands: the western provinces going their own way, and a surviving empire based on Constantinople, with one foot in ancient Asia and the other in ancient Europe, one east and the other west of the Bosphorus which had originally separated the two.

Four centuries after the appearance of Islam, Muslim Turks from central Eurasia began the conquest of Arab Asia and Egypt, and of Byzantine Asia and Europe, concluding it 400 years later. Meanwhile, the principedom of Muscovy set itself up as the Third Rome, the heir of Byzantium, thus completing a process by which the concept of “Europe” migrated irreversibly to the far western provinces, with the result that we are no longer quite sure whether the former Byzantine world (ex-Ottoman or ex-Soviet) belongs in

“Europe” or not. Another consequence is that the great indeterminacy of “Europe’s” eastern borderlands has taken on a cultural as well as a geographic significance.

What we are now beginning to consider is the important fact that as the geographical concept of “Europe” has moved west, to the point that it defines an Atlantic peninsula by calling it a continent, so the historical concept of “Europe” has similarly migrated, to the point where everything we mean when we say “the history of Europe” in fact refers to the history of the political and religious culture—the highly distinctive civilization—that arose in the far western Latin-speaking provinces of the former Roman Empire. This has become what we mean by “Europe,” and its history is what we mean by “the history of Europe.”*



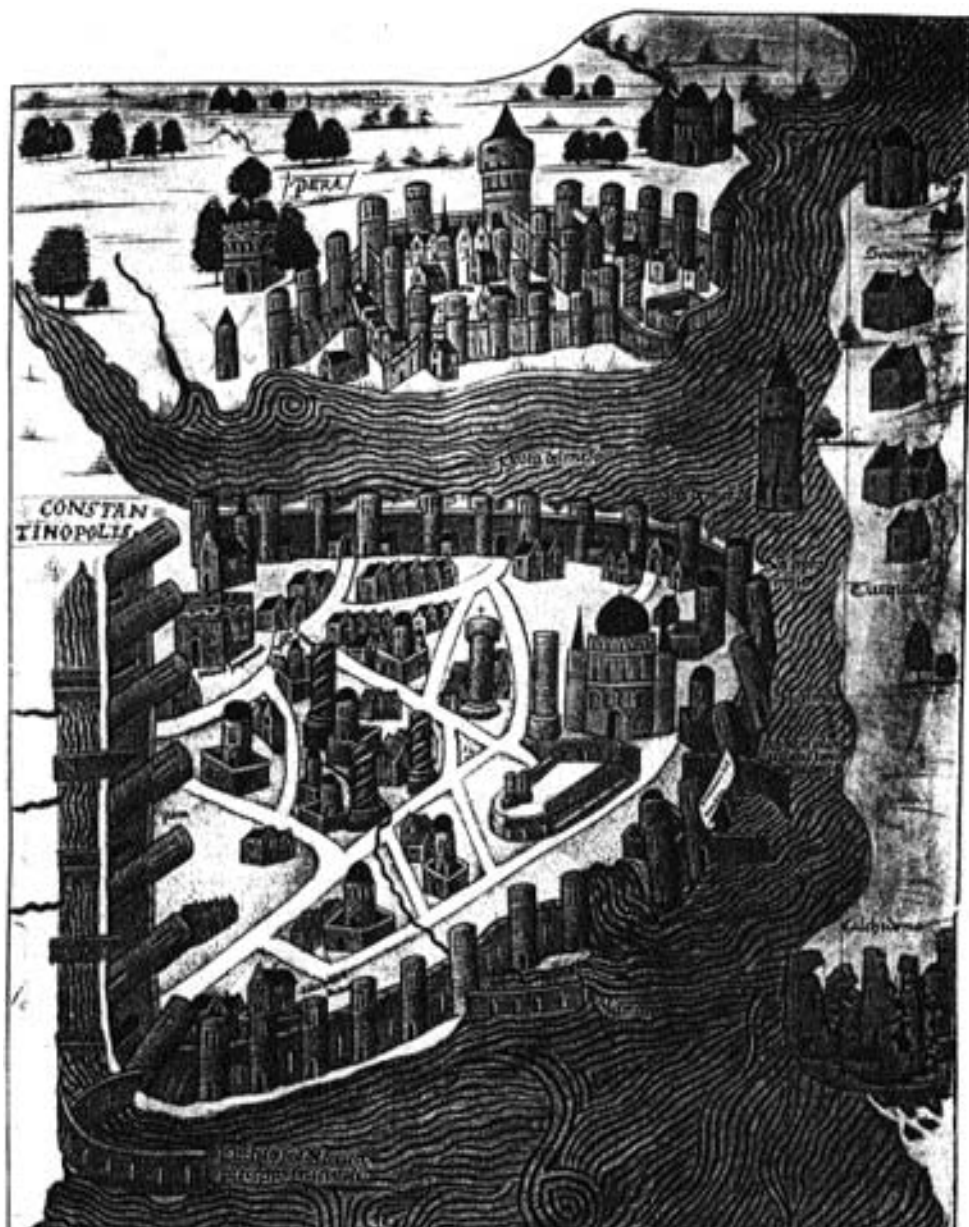
*The “Cottonian” or “Anglo-Saxon” map of the world
(c. 10th–11th century)*

By the same process, the lands to which the term “Europa” was originally applied—Thrace, Macedonia, Illyria, the more modern Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, even Greece—those which the Byzantine emperors considered their European “themes” or provinces, have become in our minds only marginally European, inhabited by uncouth warring tribes whose history is not ours and whose problems are none of our business. We are no doubt very wrong in having this perception; the point, however, is that we have it, and it is important to understand how we acquired it.

In the western provinces, which were lost by the Romans to a diversity of German-speaking settlers, two things happened. The Christian Church acquired the formidable organization of papal authority, and the barbaric kingdoms acquired the formidable military might of the feudal system, complete with heavy-armored horsemen. All this happened a long way from the sophisticated urban societies of the Greeks, Arabs, and Iranians, but the consequences have been such that it has stolen the narrative of history from them.

In a recent book significantly entitled *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (1993), Robert Bartlett examines how this far western culture—feudal, papal, monastic, Latin—began in the 11th and 12th centuries to expand aggressively: westward at the expense of Celtic peoples, beyond England into Wales and Ireland;

*To say “the history of the West” is to include that of the Americas, which “Europe” desires to exclude from its history.



Constantinople, in the Liber insularum Archipelagi of Cristoforo Buondelmonte (1422)

eastward at the expense of Slavic and Finno-Ugrian peoples, beyond Saxony into the heartlands of the European peninsula, and southeastward at the expense of the Byzantine Empire and the increasingly Turk-dominated Arab Khalifat, in the far less stable and enduring enterprise of the Crusades.

It was the last expansion that led the early-12th-century Greek historian Anna Comnena to write that all “Europe” seemed to have uprooted itself and poured in on the civilized world that she inhabited.* But the fact that she also referred to the mainly Frankish and Norman crusaders as “Celts” tells us that she was using what old Greek and Latin terms she could find to describe far western phenomena, and that there was no reason why she should think of herself as either European or Asian. She was a Roman. It

**The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, translated by E. R. A. Sewter (1969).

The lands to which the term ‘Europa’ was originally applied—Thrace, Macedonia, Illyria, the more modern Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, even Greece—have become in our minds only marginally European, inhabited by uncouth warring tribes whose history is not ours and whose problems are none of our business.

had not yet happened that the new Latin civilization—to Anna Comnena purely barbaric—could claim a monopoly on the word “Europe” and a monopoly on history by calling itself by that name.

The episode of the Crusades did not last. It was the expansion of “Europe” into the Slavic heartlands, concurrently and later, that altered the historical map by creating what we think of as the problem of “Central Europe.” By this we mean that certain Catholic provinces of Latin culture were created—among Lithuanians, Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Croats—that we can think of as sharing that “European” history which is the history of the Latin papacy and empire and their aftermath, but that these existed in proximity with other peoples—Russians, Ukrainians, Serbs, Greeks, and Turks—whose history is not Latin and whom we may think of as Europeans or not, as we choose. The point is that we have to choose and do not quite know how to choose, and that these peoples have the corresponding problem from their own perspectives.

The eastward expansion of the western Latins entered that broad zone where there is neither a maritime nor a terrestrial frontier permitting us to say where “Europe” leaves off and “Asia” begins, and in this zone—known to geopolitical theorists at the beginning of this century as the Heartland of the World Island—the Latin civilization that came to call itself “Europe” found itself without any fixed cultural, ecclesiastical, or political frontiers. To the southeast, the lands originally called “Europe” passed increasingly from Greek Orthodox to Turkish Muslim control, culminating in the temporary Ottoman conquest of Catholic-Protestant Hungary in 1526. In the indefinitely extensible heartlands between the Baltic and the Black seas and the lands to the east, the contact between Latins and Greeks was overwhelmed in the 13th century by Mongol power, which deeply affected the history we call Russian and left Poland and Lithuania vulnerable to Crimean slave raiders well into the 17th century.

Is all this history “European” or not? It depends on what we want to say, and on whether we want to decide what we want to say. History since 1989 suggests that we—whoever “we” are—would rather not have to decide. Is this the product of a prudent awareness that “Europe” has no frontiers in the east, or of some deeper weakness of will?

Let me now return to the history we all know, more or less, and describe as the history of Europe. When did it begin to be said that Europe had a history, and when did it begin to be implied that all history was the history of Europe?

A good answer—though, like all good answers, a simplification—can be



Charles Towneley in His Gallery, by Johann Joseph Zoffany, captures the fascination of 18th-century Europeans with their classical roots.

given by fastening on the great historians of the 18th century, the age of Enlightenment: on Voltaire, Edward Gibbon, David Hume, William Robertson, and the extraordinary partnership of Guillaume-Thomas Raynal and Denis Diderot, because it was they who set about defining Europe as a secular civilization and supplying it with a secular history and an age of modernity, neither ancient and Roman nor medieval and papal.

For these historians, writing history was a weapon against the church,

Protestant as well as Catholic, and in consequence they wrote a history of the church designed to reduce it to the role of a malignant force within secular history. The weakness of the Roman Empire, for them, had coincided with the rise of the church, and there was a polemic against the history of Greek philosophy, because the Christian theology which gave the church authority had been shaped in the old Greek East, in Alexandria and Antioch and Constantinople. Islam, which the Enlightened historians rather admired, had progressively destroyed that Greek world. But in the far western provinces lost to the Franks, Saxons, and Normans, a new Latin theology had arisen, designed to buttress the universal jurisdiction of the pope. In the historians' eyes, it made the Latin church the greatest enemy ever faced by the authority of human society over itself.

Gibbon wrote that the beginnings of modern history should be sought in the eighth century A.D., when the papacy allied itself with the Frankish kingdom that became the empire of Charlemagne. Notice that he used "modern" to mean "not ancient" (and therefore Christian), and had not reached the point of using it to mean "not medieval" (and therefore no longer wholly Christian.) For all these historians there had followed a long struggle between the empire and the papacy, each created by the other, that reached a climax about 1300, when the papacy called in the French Angevins to defeat the Hohenstaufen in Italy, and the French kings defeated Pope Boniface VIII and removed the papacy from Rome to Avignon. The history written largely by French scholars and

publicists now removed its center from the Church Universal to the kingdom of France, not universal but hegemonic.

This was a history of feudal as well as clerical power, in which the Crusades figured as the ultimate lunacy of both. It was of course a wholly Latin history, dominated by an obsession with the pope. Greek Orthodox history, which we might want to call “European” on the grounds that it continued Christian and Roman history in a non-Latin way, was excluded from it once the Byzantines were driven out of Italy in the eighth and ninth centuries. Gibbon declared that he could find nothing in Byzantine history except its fall that deserved more than a summary, and that it was better to study the far more dynamic peoples—Latins and Normans in the west, Arabs and Turks in the east, Bulgars and Russians in the north—who had supplanted the Byzantines. Latin history contained its own dynamic. Its external enemies remained external, and even its critical expansions into Spain, Ireland, Scandinavia, and “Central Europe” remained peripheral to the struggle between church and civil society, which had happened nowhere else. Here is the germ of the idea that history happens only in Europe, while other peoples never change.

The Enlightenment narrative proceeded to the late 15th century, when “Europe” could be said to have become “modern” in the sense of “not medieval,” that is, to have begun emerging from the feudal and clerical, barbaric, and religious culture that had enveloped it ever since Charlemagne, or perhaps Constantine. This was partly a result of the recovery of pre-Christian classical culture—for which, significantly, “Europe” was supposed to have been indebted to the fall of Constantinople and the extinction of Byzantine civilization—but also of a series of technological innovations—gunpowder, the compass, and the printing press—unknown to the ancients. We associate these with the discovery of the New World, but it is important to realize that for Voltaire and Hume and Robertson they had a prior importance as factors in the creation of powerful military monarchies controlling their own resources, pursuing their own policies, and acting independently of the papal church. Once there were several of these monarchies, “Europe” could be said to have endowed itself with a states system, whose *raison d'état* and *jus gentium* (law of nations, or international law) took the place of the political theology of empire and papacy, and this states system, or system of international relations, began to become the definition of Europe itself.

The great Edinburgh historian William Robertson (1721–93) wrote of Europe as an entity that had pre-existed the Romans themselves, had been half-destroyed and yet half-civilized by Roman conquest, flung into barbarism half-redeemed by religion when the Roman Empire collapsed, and a millennium later was emerging into conditions under which a civilized religion could again exist. All these were events in the history of Europe, and their culmination occurred, for Robertson, with the empire of Charles V, which seemed to threaten “Europe” with a new universal empire, but in fact ushered in the age of reason, of state, and the balance of power, when the French monarchy, resisting the Hapsburg dynasty, and the English monarchy, adapting itself to this struggle, began educating “Europe” in the conduct of secular power. The balance of power was “Europe,” and “Europe” was the balance of power.

We wrongly call this the age of the nation-state, but from the Hapsburg



Europe in 1617, as depicted by Guilielmus Janssonius

to the Napoleonic empires, the European states system was the work of powerful multiple monarchies, which did not disappear until 1918. In its Renaissance and Enlightenment forms, this system of power was Spanish and French, English and Burgundian, German within the structure of the Holy Roman Empire, but never really Central European at all. Its energies were turned inward on the problems of Latin civilization, and the explosion of that civilization into Mexico and Peru belonged, said Robertson, in a history that would have to be written separately.

The French philosophes Raynal and Diderot had already begun to write the history of the Europeans' conquests, first, of the planetary ocean, which had brought them into contact with all the cultures in the world simultaneously, and, second, of the two American continents, which was leading to the creation of European societies beyond Europe. The discovery of America, said Hume, marked the true beginning of "modern history."

Robertson, however, confined his history to the first half of the 16th century and did not continue it through the 17th. Unlike Voltaire and Hume, he chose to avoid the history of the wars of religion, in which the Enlightenment mind saw Lutheranism, Calvinism, and anabaptism as merely the reverse side of the papacy they sought to destroy: religious fanaticism threatening civil authority in a new way. Voltaire and Hume did not see the Wars of Religion as ending at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648; they were preoccupied with their aftereffects: the wars of the Fronde in France, the Wars of the Three Kingdoms in the British Isles. These carried the story into Voltaire's *Age of Louis XIV* (1751), the first and most central of his histori-

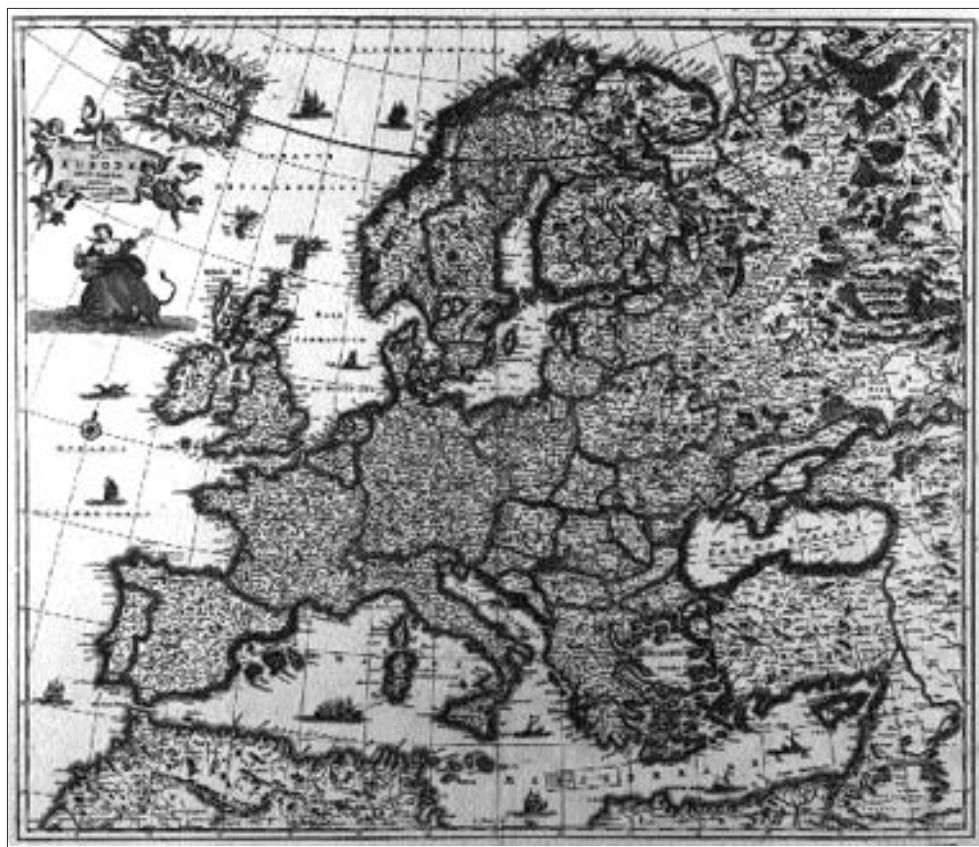
This was the ‘Europe’ that Edmund Burke, writing in the 1790s, declared had been destroyed by two disastrously regressive events: the French Revolution and the partition of Poland.

cal writings, in which he saw the emergence of a “Europe” modern in the sense of “not early modern,” emerging, that is, from the last phase of religious fanaticism into an age of enlightened sociability fostered by both courtly monarchy and commercial refinement.

A peripheral debate was carried on by those who held that Louis XIV had threatened “Europe” with another universal empire like that of the Romans, and that the states system constituting “Europe” had been achieved only when Louis’s adversaries brought him to terms (or he them) in the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. But French and Scottish historians could agree that Utrecht had achieved a Europe that had outgrown barbarism, fanaticism, and conquest. It was a republic or confederation of states held together by treaties to which wars were merely auxiliary, and by a common system of civilized manners communicated everywhere by commerce—a European economic community, in fact, but one composed of states whose sovereignty was the precondition of their capacity for commerce.

This was the “Europe”—the civilization of states, commerce, and manners—that we so misleadingly call the *ancien régime* (it was totally and self-consciously modern), and that Edmund Burke, writing in the 1790s, declared had been destroyed by two disastrously regressive events: the French Revolution and the partition of Poland. The first occurred in the very heart of Enlightenment “Europe” and was disastrous because it restored the climate of fanaticism and returned “Europe” to the atmosphere of the Wars of Religion, with ideology taking the place of theology. The second occurred closer to the periphery, in what we have been calling “Central Europe,” and to understand its meaning to Burke, it may help to recall that the great Enlightenment histories were written mostly around the time of the Seven Years’ War (the French and Indian War in America) of 1756–63, which enlarged a “European” war into a global struggle, and in the process modified the concept of “Europe” itself.

The system founded on the Treaty of Utrecht was in essence an Anglo-French condominium, with Spain, the Netherlands, and Austrian-dominated Germany and northern Italy as auxiliaries, but the Seven Years’ War transformed it in two ways. West of the Atlantic, it became so far-reaching a struggle for empire in North America and the Caribbean that Raynal and Diderot could propose that wars for power in “Europe” were now dominated by wars for oceanic commerce and empire. They set out to write the first history of the world system created by “European” conquest of the ocean, arguing that Europeans were still barbarians who had not fully escaped from the Middle Ages and asking whether even an enlightened system of global free trade could improve them. This is the first history whose authors endeavor to view “Europe” in its global setting, but it is still the maritime far west of the peninsula they are looking at. France, they declare, is “at the center of Europe” because it lies between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.



Frederico de Wit's 1670 map of Europe

East of, let us say, the river Elbe, the other face of the Seven Years' War enlarged the limited warfare of the system founded on Utrecht into a struggle between three military empires, the Austrian, the Prussian, and the Russian. The Central European space in which their war went on merged into the vaster space in which "Europe" and "Asia" can no longer be told apart—Voltaire's *nord*, created by such far-reaching processes as the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the transformation of the Russian state by Peter the Great and his successors. Voltaire's *History of Russia*, which I referred to earlier, is the major response of Enlightened historiography to all this. Voltaire sees Peter as creating a "European" state fit to take part in the treaties and commerce of "Europe," and even imagines that contacts between Russia and the Ch'ing emperors will induce China to take part in this system. He believes that Russia and China between them will domesticate the Central Asian steppe and end that phase in world history when Huns or Mongols might dominate or destroy the settled civilizations around them.

This is to imagine "Europe" as "tomorrow, the world." Voltaire was enraged by Rousseau's insistence that Peter did too much damage to the customs of his subjects, so that sooner or later the Europeanized Russian state would collapse and the Tartars would return to Europe. But if the far western imagination did not travel all the way to China and Kamchatka, it might at least stop on its own doorstep. Gibbon, having carried his history to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, could in

principle have gone on to the greatness and decline of the Ottoman Empire and the politics of its Austrian and Russian successors. But there is no Enlightenment history of Central and Eastern Europe, none which tends toward or offers to explain the partition of Poland by the three monarchies of Central and Eastern Europe. Gibbon chose instead to return to his starting point amid the ruins of the Capitol and write three chapters on the city of Rome under the popes as far as the Renaissance. The imagination of Catholic-Protestant-Enlightenment “Europe” always came home, to its deeply critical concern with itself.

Enlightened “Europe”—the states system of the Treaty of Utrecht—has been principally a set of political and cultural arrangements imposed by the maritime states of the Atlantic coastlands. It was brought to an end—if we follow Burke’s analysis—by two series of events: first, the occurrence of revolution in the maritime states themselves—France, the Netherlands, perhaps Ireland, but never Britain—and in those states’ extension beyond the Atlantic to English, French, and Spanish America, a world which Burke’s *Annual Register* (a journal he edited) included under the heading “History of Europe” but which Raynal and Diderot showed was hard to fit into European notions of history; second, the growth of military empires in the great spaces where Europe shades into Eurasia, which, by partitioning Poland, indicated their power to redefine the states system which

“Europe” recognized as part of itself but which existed in a world Western Europeans found very hard to recognize or understand.

In a recent book, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (1994), Larry Wolff describes how 18th-century Europeans, as they traveled beyond Germany into Catholic Poland, Orthodox Russia, and the still-Ottoman Balkan Peninsula, felt themselves to have suddenly entered an alien and archaic world of vast distances, enserfed peasantries, and brutal petty officials—a world that corresponded all too easily to their received notions of “oriental despotism.” This last concept was not exclusively an invention of maritime imperialism, though of



The borders of Europe’s nation-states as they appeared on the brink of World War I.

course it was that. It also reflects the encounter of “Europe” on its open eastern frontier with forms of government derived from the Ottoman or Mongol empires or shaped by these as they withdrew. (It was a problem for the British in India whether they were going to join the family of military despotisms or attempt something different.)

The indeterminacy of Europe in the east, however, may help explain the rather strange way in which Larry Wolff’s pages are pervaded by the notion that Western Europeans ought not to have evaluated Central and Eastern “Europe” as they did, that it is not for “Europeans” to decide who is “European” and who is not. This belief reflects the deeply confused way in which we now think about cultural identity, but it also reflects the fact that the decision about it is difficult both to make and to avoid. We don’t know whether to say that the affairs of the former Yugoslavia ought to be arranged by “Europe” because the erstwhile Yugoslavians are part of it, or whether to say that this area is a barbaric frontier, or rather a collision of archaic frontiers in a world still barbaric, which it is better to avoid trying to control. Should an empire seek to assimilate its barbarians or to exclude them? If we reply that it should not have defined them as barbarians in the first place, the question arises of the terms in which it ought to have understood them. The lands originally called “Europa” are those in which “Europe” experiences a continuing problem in culture contact, and discovers that to define oneself is also to define others.

But this is to anticipate the history of “Europe” since the end of the Enlightened settlement. That was succeeded by the transitory if spectacular Napoleonic interlude, when the revolutionary empire of France over Latin Europe proved itself very nearly capable of dominating the three military monarchies of Europe’s eastward expansion. But the resistance of Austria, Russia, and the maritime empire of Britain over the Atlantic and Mediterranean led the French empire to overreach itself, collapse, and be succeeded by an attempt to restore that “Europe” of several states linked by treaty and trade in which Enlightenment thinkers had seen the security of civilization itself.

To work, though, this Concert of Europe, heir to the early-modern states system, had to be guaranteed by, and therefore had to include, the eastward military monarchies themselves: Prussia, Austria, Russia (but not the Turkish empire, seen as barbaric, oriental, decadent, and on the way to relegation to the colonial world over which “Europe” ruled). The technology of industrialism transformed the old empires and republics into formidably unified military states, capable of conscripting their entirely willing citizenries into great national armies, and an era of great states, great wars, and great revolutions that can be said to have lasted, rather neatly, from 1789 to 1989, and the United States and Japan to have played their parts in it.

In the history of “Europe,” we take as cardinal the two world wars of the 20th century, in which the German empire-state twice proved itself capable of simultaneously threatening to dominate both the Rhenish Netherlands, thus provoking war with France and Britain on the ancient battle-grounds of historic “Europe,” and Poland and Ukraine, thus provoking war with Russia in and about that great debatable land which geopoliticians used to proclaim the Heartland, declaring that whoever ruled it ruled the world. Both the world wars were so destructive to “Europe” as to produce huge systemic collapses and the intervention of both the continental super-

states created by European settlements beyond “Europe”: the United States of America and the Eurasian empire of Russia. After 1945, and for the greater part of my adult lifetime, it was a commonplace among the most trendy historians to say that the European age had ended, and that “Europe” itself had been partitioned by the intercontinental superpowers. But we now know that assessment to be false, and something calling itself “Europe” has emerged and claimed a powerful role in its own affairs and those of others.

The European Economic Community, Community, and Union—to list the names by which it has successively called itself—seems to display a series of characteristics.

First, it was, and has remained, a Franco-German consortium, a series of arrangements designed to ensure that France and Germany will not again go to war by inducing them to merge their institutions and economies to a point where armed conflict ceases to be possible. This laudable aim could not be pursued without drawing in adjacent populations in Italy and the Low Countries, and so forth. The economic benefits of German industrial recovery were such that many were willing to join in the enterprise. But because it was recognized from the start that the enterprise entailed inducing democracies to give up their sovereignty—which is to say their capacity for self-government—the strategy adopted from the start was that which a Quebec statesman more than a year ago unwisely described as tempting lobsters into the pot, inducing them to take the first step and then revealing to them that it was irrevocable, so that no way remained but forward.

There is no more liberally employed phrase in the rhetoric of Europeanism than “we (or you) have no other choice”—language I was interested to hear reused in the United States when the North American Free Trade Agreement was being debated. When, therefore, I hear it said, as I do all the time, that the separate histories, Irish or British, French or Spanish, German or Swedish—but not yet Polish or Hungarian, and certainly not, for the foreseeable future, Russian—merge in the history of something called “Europe,” which has not been written yet, I wonder what this indeterminacy means, and I think we had better set about writing the history of “Europe” and seeing how it comes out when we do. There are numerous ways of writing it.

Second, the institutionalization, and the creation of a mystique, which went with the idea of a union to be called “Europe,” went on in



Land without borders: Europe as seen from space

We had better set about writing the history of
'Europe' and seeing how it comes out when we do.
There are numerous ways of writing it.

the era of the Cold War, the Iron Curtain, and the partition of Europe. This partition, by which the Soviet Union hoped to protect its domination of the Heartland and its own unity, ran well west of the indeterminacies of that region and cut deep into Latin and Enlightenment "Europe." It separated Lutheran East Germany from Catholic West Germany, and Catholic Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia from the Western Europe of which they might be considered extensions. In the era of partition, "Europe" was far from clear about what it intended to do about the Central and Eastern "Europes," apparently lost to Soviet domination. Its ideology was never in practice what it was in principle: an affirmation of Catholic-Protestant-Enlightened Europe against the Orthodox and Muslim Europes and a "Eurasia" now ruled by a semi-Enlightened Russia.

Turned westward, the ideology of "Europe" became the instrument of a dispute with its other protector: France and Germany, the losers in World War II, against the United States as the principal victor, and also against Britain, while that state continued to belong to the maritime world of the British Commonwealth and the "special relationship." It was a sense of defeat in that set of relationships which led the United Kingdom to accede to "Europe," and as "Europe" has not allayed that sense of defeat, the British relationship to it remains deeply ambivalent. I speak as a citizen of the former Commonwealth, but I do so without hesitation. "Europe" must see itself as a new Norman Conquest, the Channel Tunnel as a revival of the camp at Boulogne in 1805; the power of the Napoleonic and German bureaucracies, now serving the international market, seeks to extend itself over the British Isles.

But if "Europe" was a product of the partition of "Europe," it has had to survive the end of that partition and the downfall of the Soviet Union and may even have to survive in the future the downfall of the Russian state created by Peter and Catherine and their successors. This means that the door is open wider than at any time in recent history toward those areas in which "Europe" has no frontiers, and any attempt to withdraw them or extend them must be equally arbitrary—toward the old Heartland where Catholic-Protestant-Enlightened "Europe" shades into Orthodox-Muslim-Communist Eurasia, and toward the ancient original "Europa" now known as the Balkan Peninsula, whose problems are still those created by the expansion and contraction of the Ottoman Empire. Amid the innumerable alarming possibilities of this situation—in which the possible disappearance and the possible renewal of Russian great-power capacity appear equally threatening—occurs the thought that "Europe" may now be what "Germany" formerly was: an imperial power secure in the Atlantic coastlands but obliged to attempt imperial control in one or both of the great marchlands to the east. In times gone by, this role entailed great-power

rivalries and world wars. Unless a Russian great power revives, these may not occur again, but the history of European and American dealings with the former Yugoslavia brings to light one more characteristic of contemporary “Europe.”

We have considered two eras in which “Europe” was defined largely as an economic entity, in order to put an end to periods of destructive war. The first was the era of Enlightenment, from 1713 to 1789, when “Europe” was presented as a republic of states held together by commerce, after the end of the Wars of Religion and the threat of universal monarchy. The second era is our own. But whereas the Enlightenment theorists invented “Europe” as a system of states in which the partnership of civil sovereignty and civil society was necessary to commerce and the spread of manners, we find ourselves apparently committed to the submergence of the state and its sovereignty, not in some pan-European or universal confederation but in a postmodern arrangement in which the global market demands the subjugation of the political community and perhaps of the ethnic and cultural community also; we are to give up being citizens and behave exclusively as consumers.

This is why the European Union is ineffective as an empire. An organization designed to break the will of the state to govern itself necessarily reduces its own will to use military power to police its own frontiers, notably when these are drawn in parts of the world in which only a strong and clear political will can establish where these frontiers lie. “Europe” is a set of arrangements designed to ensure that peoples will not again define themselves as states, and will surrender both the power to make war and the power to control the movements of market forces. The question for the new century is whether Europeans will retain any capacity to govern themselves by political means—a question not yet, perhaps, confronting the United States. Unfortunately, the power to decide on the use of military force cannot be detached from the retention of the former capacity as completely as we should like. Europe, the cradle of the state, may be about to discover what it is like to do without it.

Land of War, Land of Peace

by Michael Howard

Europe for most of its history has been a land of war. By Europe, I mean that land coextensive with what was once known as “Christendom”: the region over which for a thousand years the Western Christian church held sway, or rather whose rulers were legitimized by the sanction of that church, from about the ninth century until the secularization of European society a hundred years or so ago. This Christendom was a warrior culture, though it may embarrass some Christians to have to recall it. It had to be, if it was to survive. The families who ruled Europe during this millennium justified their power and their privileges by their successful conduct of war. First they defended Christendom against heathen invaders. Then they consolidated their power against one another through the formation of states (which usually involved destroying the autonomy of many distinct cultures, regions, and communities). Finally, from the 15th century until the 20th, they extended European hegemony over the rest of the globe.

Whether this continual Hobbesian struggle for power and survival acted as a motor for European development or as a brake has been a matter of debate among historians, but it has been an existential fact. Regions such as China, where an effective central hegemony made possible eons of at least apparent peace, may have been happier, as romantic Western Sinophiles like to believe; but it was the bellicose and (literally) belligerent Europeans who were at the cutting edge not only of military but of economic and ultimately scientific and intellectual advance. Whether or not this militarism was a necessary condition for the development of Europe’s magnificent high culture, as John Ruskin and others would have us believe, may be debatable, but it certainly did nothing to inhibit it.

The militaristic nature of European society until at least the 18th century is thus hardly in doubt. In his fascinating *History of Warfare* (1993), John Keegan has taken issue with Karl von Clausewitz’s rationalistic definition of war as an instrument of politics by pointing out that, for many societies, war has been an innate and continuous cultural activity. Europe for centuries was certainly one such society. Until the 18th century, the rulers of the continent were looking for excuses to fight wars rather than reasons why they should not. Elizabethan audiences surely understood and applauded Hamlet when he declared:

Rightly to be great,
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour’s at the stake.

And why not? War, if successful, paid off handsomely in terms of power and territory for those who conducted it, and in loot for those who fought

it. If it was not successful, the burden was borne by people who did not matter very much, the peasants who were unfortunate enough to get in the way. Even so, their villages were rapidly rebuilt and their crops resown, and even for them, war provided almost the only avenue of social mobility. When, in the Thirty Years' War, the damage that war caused to the social environment became too prolonged and widespread, rulers sought ways of waging it more economically rather than of abolishing it.

Then came the great watershed of the Enlightenment and the first stirrings of an “antiwar movement.” But that movement was fueled at least as much by practical as by moral considerations. By the end of the 18th century, war—within Europe at least—was becoming counterproductive. Its expense to the taxpayer was mounting, its benefits in terms of territorial acquisition were becoming marginal, and, with the very significant exception of colonial conquests, it did nothing to increase the wealth and status of the rulers. Immanuel Kant and his followers were not wholly at fault when they suggested that war persisted in Europe in the 18th century largely as a way of life among the ruling classes. Where these thinkers were optimistic, however, was in suggesting that once those rulers had been replaced by others more bourgeois and rational, war would come to an end.

Why did it not? For one thing, war remained instrumental even for the most strictly rationalistic societies, if only for self-defense. Democratic leaders found that the skills and values transmitted by the old military culture could not be dispensed with if their own states were to survive. The French revolutionaries discovered this in 1793. So did Prussian liberals in the Jena campaign of 1806—to say nothing of Americans trying to preserve the Union half a century later. For another, war might be necessary if democracies and nation-states were to promote and extend their values, liberating peoples from the oppression of feudalism and, later, forging the new nations of Germany and Italy. In the 19th century, the peoples of Europe were encouraged to transfer or to extend their loyalties from ruling dynasties to national entities which claimed to embody values that were either unique or universal, the defense or extension of which took on a quasireligious significance. So long as wars could be conducted economically, as on the whole they were in Europe during the 19th century, or carried on in the remoter parts of the African or



A detail from the Bayeux Tapestry, an 11th-century depiction of the Norman Conquest of England

Asian continents, the peoples of Europe showed themselves as cheerfully belligerent as their ancestors. It was in this mood that they went to war in 1914.

As we know, it was a mood that barely survived World War I and was totally extinguished by World War II. By 1945, the peoples of Europe wanted only to live in “a land of peace.” But this disenchantment with war had less to do with the spread of “democratic values” than with the development of industrial warfare. This not only brought the huge and inconclusive slaughter of conscript armies on the battlefields but wrecked the

There is little point in arguing that Europe has ever been a land of peace.

cities and economies of Europe, bringing untold suffering to civilians on a scale that, even to the victors, did not appear balanced by any comparable gains. But if war could be conducted comparatively cost-free, as Hitler almost

succeeded in doing in Western Europe during 1939–41, it could still command substantial public support. It still can, as the British discovered in the Falklands in 1982 and the Americans in the Persian Gulf War in 1991. If technology can make it possible, there is little indication that this situation will change in the future, democracy or no democracy. But one thing is clear: war can no longer be fought cost-free in Europe itself.

There is thus little point in arguing that Europe has ever been a land of peace. Nor can Europe lay much claim to having been a land of democracy. Democracy as we understand it today was the child of the Enlightenment, with its belief in innate natural rights, the recognition of which should be the fundamental duty and justification for all human government. This movement was certainly initiated as much by European as by American thinkers, and its first stirrings can be traced to religio-political developments in the Netherlands and the British Isles a century or so earlier. But whereas the ideals of the Enlightenment took root and flourished in the United States (genocide and racial subjugation notwithstanding), they had a long, uphill battle in Europe. There, the entire 19th century and the early part of the 20th were taken up with a virtual and, in places, an actual civil war between what became known as the “Party of Movement” and “the Party of Order.” The first espoused the ideals of the French Revolution: secularization, democratization, the rights of “peoples” (however defined) to self-determination and self-government. Supporting the latter were not only the embattled forces of the old order, rooted in the agrarian dominance of the ruling classes and the entire culture that supported them, but the immense power of the Catholic Church, whose influence reached down into every tiny village. It was a conflict that split France into two rival and hostile cultures until the beginning of this century and which has persisted in Spain and Italy into our own day.

North of the Alps, where the Catholic Church held less sway, the values of the Enlightenment were combated by an even more formidable creed.

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It was one still rooted in the authoritarian, hierarchical monarchism of the old regime but strengthened by a populist nationalism, which sought legitimacy in communal values based on concepts of historic group-personalities and ethnic solidarity, and which disdained as alien the egalitarianism, individualism, and trivial materialism which it identified in “Western values.”

The genealogy from the Counter-Enlightenment to fascism has often been traced, as has the more paradoxical process whereby the former led, via Slavophilism, to the Leninist rejection of the Western roots of Marxism. But whether combating clerical authoritarianism or populist irrationalism, democrats in large regions of Europe, West as well as East, remained an embattled minority until World War II, and in places even later than that. During that war the appeal of fascism, or National Socialism, whether in combating the barbaric egalitarianism of the East or the materialistic internationalism of the West, was far greater throughout continental Europe than it has been fashionable, until very recently, to admit.

So let us not deceive ourselves: the “European culture” that we have inherited is not synonymous with the “Western values” of the Enlightenment. It is something far more ambiguous and complex. We do not have to dig very deep into the past that has shaped our societies to strike the hard rock of aristomonalarchical militarism and of authoritarian clericalism: precisely the two targets against which the Enlightenment directed its fire. The third troubling element in our past, irrational populist nationalism, is not specifically European: the Americans have shown themselves to be as prone to it as anyone else. But the fact is that the splendid European cultural heritage on which we pride ourselves

and which has done so much to enrich humanity—the great cathedrals and abbeys, the palaces of ruling dynasties, the chateaux and country houses of aristocrats, together with all the works of art carried out at their commission and now preserved for our enjoyment—are artifacts produced by a society with whose values most of us would not identify ourselves, except in moments of ironic nostalgia.

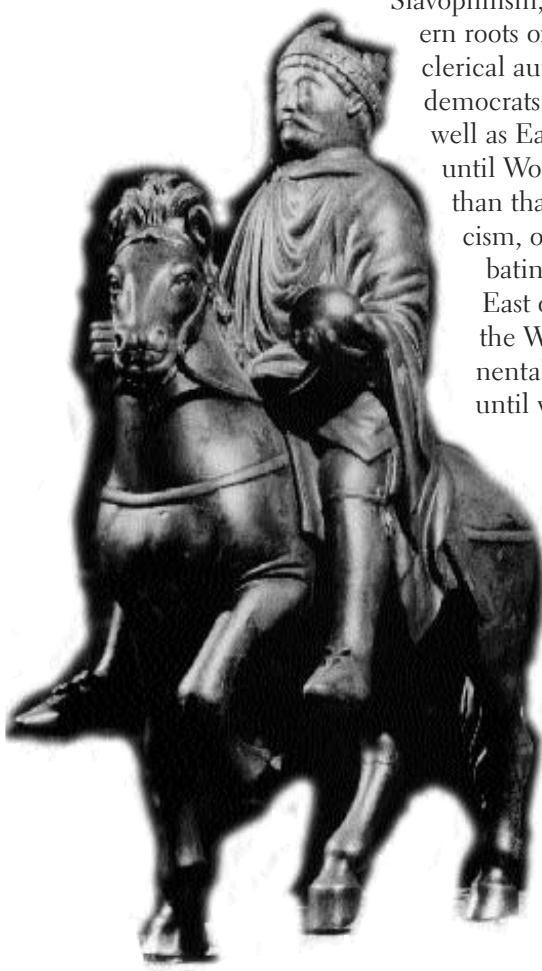
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Now we Europeans want Europe to be a land of peace. Purged by suffering of the habits that made the Europe of our ancestors a “land of war,” we are now left with little if anything to distinguish us from our transatlantic colleagues, who can bring to our



*A ninth-century bronze statuette
of Charlemagne*



Liberty Leading the People (1830), by Eugene Delacroix

problems rationalistic assumptions derived from a past untroubled by such sinister ambiguities. Whether there are specifically “European” values that distinguish us from the Americans and that we should consciously try to salvage from the shipwreck of our continent is an interesting matter for debate. I myself would not like to argue it: the hubristic claim of Harold Macmillan, that we could act as Greeks to the American Romans and guide their naive strength with our superior subtlety and skill, is one that can be recalled today only with acute embarrassment.

We may try to restore and retain traditional cultural environments where we can ourselves live comfortably and which will attract lucrative tourism, but such cultural theme parks are in fact as alien to the mass of our own population as they are to visitors from Japan. They are iridescent shells whose original inhabitants have been swept away by the tide of history and in which only a tiny minority of us are sometimes fortunate enough to be able to make our homes. The huge bulk of the population of Europe, modernized, bureaucratized, and bourgeoisified, lives in conditions indistinguishable from those of the United States and shares similar tastes and interests. The classless and international modernity prophesied and dreaded by Nietzsche, the struggle against which, for some right-wing thinkers, justified the fighting of the two world wars, has now engulfed Western Christendom and is being hungrily embraced by our Eastern cousins. We are now a “land of peace” all right, but many of our ancestors might have been horrified to see it.

Being a land of peace, we need no longer prepare to fight one another.

Few people today need reminding that societies are held together not by abstract rational principles or convenient administrative arrangements but by deeply held habits of consensus and belief.

er, and barely need prepare to fight anyone else. We no longer face any serious external threat to our survival, and we can still assume that if one were to revive, the United States would take it as seriously as we would ourselves. Today our security problems are those not of war but of peace: not of the military, that is, but of the police. And here again, they are no different from those of any other developed society, anywhere else in the world.

The problems may be universal, but that does not mean that there are any universal solutions. The homogeneity of our peoples is more apparent than real. There is, for example, nothing on the surface to distinguish the Catholic and Protestant populations of Northern Ireland, to say nothing of the Serb and Croat peoples of the former Yugoslavia, but the surface features of their modernized lives conceal profound cultural differences. We are not Americans, a monolingual people with common cultural roots and a government based on explicit principles which, however much they may be reinterpreted, remain fundamentally unquestioned. We are not even “Europeans” except in a geographical sense. We face a fundamental paradox: if we were to become “Europeans” in the sense that some idealists would wish, with single organs of government and justice and above all a common working language, we would cease to be the people, or rather the peoples, that we actually are. (The fact that such a common language would almost certainly have to be English only adds to the paradox.) Some of us are, for understandable reasons, more eager to reject our past than others, but too much has happened to us during the last 500 years to make it possible, even if it were desirable, to restore a Carolingian cultural and political unity on the model of Western Christendom.

Few people today need reminding that societies are held together not by abstract rational principles or convenient administrative arrangements but by deeply held habits of consensus and belief. Nothing has happened over the last 200 years to invalidate the warnings that Edmund Burke issued, during the early months of the French Revolution, of the evils that were likely to follow if abstract principles, however admirable in themselves, were applied to the conduct of human affairs. There is an irrational dimension to all human relationships. Past regimes—whether those held together by religious belief, by dynastic loyalties, or by the sentiment of nationalism—all recognized and exploited this truth, but in exploiting it they also tamed it and made it socially productive. Attempts to ignore it, and lay out society on new, just, and rational principles, have produced only wilder and more terrible outbursts of irrationalism.

So in considering how best to manage our affairs, whether to centralize or decentralize or subsidiarize, whether to create new foci of government or restore old ones, abstract principles of administrative convenience are not enough. When Denis Diderot wrote



In 1953, Jean Monnet (second from right) and other officials of the European Coal and Steel Community—precursor of the EU—celebrate their cooperative agreement.

to Catherine the Great urging on her certain unquestionably necessary, humane, and rational reforms, she replied sadly that it was all very well for him: he had to write only on paper, but she had to do it on human skin.

So we Europeans must understand our past if we are not to repeat it; understand why we have been a land of war if we are successfully to remain a land of peace. That is why I am always uneasy when I hear our American friends talk about “a new European architecture.” Peoples are not building blocks; neither are we building on an open-field site. If there has to be an analogy, let it be that of a garden. The peoples of Europe and their institutions should be regarded as distinct and living organisms, rooted in the peculiar soil of their regions, their communities, and their cultures. Like all plants, their institutions need manuring, training, and sometimes drastic pruning of dead or diseased vegetation. Weeds must be watched for and eradicated. And this must be done not by the modern equivalent of the 18th-century “enlightened despots,” teams of expert consultants with degrees in agronomy, but by the peoples themselves, who know their own soil and have a feel for what will grow there and what will not. And as with all gardens, the work of cultivation is never-ending.

BACKGROUND BOOKS

Europe

A day will come,” announced Victor Hugo at an international peace convention in 1849, “when . . . all of you, nations of the Continent, will, without losing your distinctive qualities and glorious individuality, be blended into a superior unity, and constitute a European fraternity.” It is doubtful that Hugo anticipated the Common Agricultural Policy, the euro, or any other such glories of the evolving European Union. But his words are testimony to the fact that people imagined a Europe that is something more than a collection of neighboring states long before the Treaty of Rome established the European Economic Community in 1957. For centuries, “Europe” has been not so much a geographical designation as an aspiration, a model of progress and peace.

Voltaire, in *The Age of Louis XIV* (1751), argued that under the benevolent guidance of France’s Louis XIV (r. 1643-1715), all of Europe had adopted the sciences, reason, and the spirit of striving to achieve “greatness of the human spirit.” William Robertson, a Scottish contemporary of Voltaire, gave credit to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (r. 1519-56) for forging “the political principles and maxims” that became Europe’s “one great political system.”

Today, scholars emphasize the influence of long-term processes rather than individuals. Robert Bartlett, in *The Making of Europe* (Penguin, 1993), dates the origin of European cultural unity to the later Middle Ages, when the rise of commerce and banking, along with the spread of the first universities, helped speed the dissemination of ideas across borders. Silvia Benian, in *From Renaissance to Revolution* (Kennikat, 1970), pegs the origin to the Renaissance, with its emphasis on individualism and the sciences. And George Fasel, author of *Modern Europe in the Making* (Dodd, Mead & Co., 1974), believes that European identity and culture have really only existed since 1789. They were fashioned, in his view, out of French revolutionary politics,

English industrialization, and ideas emanating from romanticism and other 19th-century movements.

Scholars have also tried to assess Europe’s impact on the rest of the world. Is “Europe” a civilizing force, or the source of all the world’s woes? Flora Lewis, in *Europe: Road to Unity* (Touchstone, 1992), contends that Europe, despite its small size and flagging economic power in the global economic race, continues to dominate world civilization: “Europeans established the foundations for hope of a humane future, and discovered the principles for building a device that could end all hope.” A more pessimistic assessment of Europe’s impact on the trajectory of civilization is offered in Benedetto Croce’s *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century* (Harcourt, Brace, 1933). To Croce, an ardent antifascist, World War I reaffirmed the sad truth that national and social conflicts are deeply entrenched in European history and are difficult to resolve. Still, he believed that the idea of “Europe”—a frictionless continent where different nations could progress together toward prosperity—was a realistic goal and one that all Europeans should work for.

How has Eastern Europe figured into the “European idea?” William McNeil, in *Europe’s Steppe Frontier* (University of Chicago, 1964), argues that geographical peculiarities steered East and West onto separate paths. The open steppes to the east allowed the armies of the Austrian and Russian empires to subjugate the Slavic and Polish peoples; the western countries, relatively sheltered by more challenging topography, had better opportunities to develop their economies and cultures. Larry Wolff attacks that notion in *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, 1994). He contends that the very idea of an “Eastern Europe” is a cultural artifact: the region was “invented” by Enlightenment thinkers as a “barbaric” foil to the West’s “splendor,”

and the image was reinforced throughout the 19th century, when the West used it to justify its political and economic domination over Eastern Europe.

Giovanni Spadolini, in **The Crisis of the Societies of the East and the Return to a Common Europe** (European University Institute, 1991), argues that the two Europes will eventually bridge their differences, as the East strives for the “European” ideals of democracy and freedom. Timothy Garton Ash, the author of several books on east-central Europe, including **In Europe’s Name: Germany and the Divided Continent** (Random House, 1994), is not so sure. Garton Ash describes the reunited Germany as a conduit between East and West: “It [is] possible that tolerance, pluralism, democracy and virtues of ever closer cooperation [will] spread from west to east,” but it is also conceivable that “intolerance, tribalism and the forces of disintegration [will] spread from east to west.”

Hundreds of books have been written on the establishment and prospects of the European Union (EU). One of the earliest is Arnold Zurcher’s **Struggle to Unite Europe** (New York University, 1958), published in the first year of the EEC’s existence. His account reflects the era’s unbridled optimism about the power of the new entity to unite warring nations through shared prosperity.

If there is any consensus among today’s scholars about the prospects of the EU, however, it is that the future is very uncertain. D. M. Harrison, author of **The Organization of Europe: Developing a Continental Market Order** (Routledge, 1995), notes that the EU is an altogether new model for a continent that is still developing. The transfer of powers from the national to the supranational level is unprecedented; its progress cannot be “easily explained in terms of traditional political models.” Jack Hayward and

Edward Page, editors of **Governing the New Europe** (Duke, 1995), similarly argue that the end of the Cold War “detonated the fundamental assumptions underlying past analyses” of Europe. The trajectory toward (or away from) convergence among nations is unclear, though Howard and Page maintain that the EU has a dynamism that will “overcome the obstinate forces of inertia.”

A less positive assessment is offered in **An Imperfect Union** (Westview, 1996), by Michael J. Baun. He regards the European Community as a product of the Cold War. Sweeping structural and geopolitical changes have brought new concerns—the resurgence of a united Germany, the fragility of Eastern regimes, the turmoil in the Balkans—that the EU will be institutionally unable to handle.

Randall Henning argues in **Reviving the European Union**—a book he edited with Eduard Hochreiter and Gary Hufbauer (Institute for International Economics, 1994)—that chronic recession, unemployment, and the EU’s hesitant response to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia are all signs of trouble. “There is a widening gap between the ambitions of the European Union for further integration and the economic conditions and political momentum needed to realize those ambitions.”

That view is shared by Tony Judt, author of **A Grand Illusion? An Essay on Europe** (Hill & Wang, 1996). Judt regards the EU as a stagnant institution, restrained by economic recession and a persistent fear of Russia from extending its jurisdiction eastward. Judt recognizes the EU’s economic, social, and diplomatic achievements over the past four decades. But he cautions Europeans against thinking of “Europe” as a panacea. “We must remind ourselves not just that real gains have been made,” he concludes, “but that the European Community which helped to make them was a means, not an end.”

The Strange Politics of Affirmative Action

Few issues in American politics are more hotly debated than affirmative action. Yet the programs themselves are only one source of controversy, our author writes. Another is the new style of politics that has accompanied the rise of affirmative action and other issues, a politics of “weak membership,” maximum publicity, and sharp confrontation.

by Peter Skerry

Not long ago, a California labor organizer complained to me about how hard it was to create a Latino caucus in the state employees' union. She recounted how time and again, after helping a member with a grievance, she would go back and ask the person to lend a hand to her effort, or at least to contribute a few dollars. The response was almost always the same: “Thanks, but I got what I deserved here. I don't see any need to contribute to your caucus.”

Researchers with the Diversity Project at the University of California at Berkeley heard something similar from a Chicana undergraduate: “Yeah, I do belong at Cal. Affirmative action may have helped me get my foot in the door, but I walked through the door by myself.”



A new kind of political leader has come to the fore, media-savvy and eager for conflict, often fitting the mold of New York's flamboyant Rev. Al Sharpton.

Or listen to the words of the young black executive quoted by Yale University law professor Stephen Carter in *Confessions of an Affirmative Action Baby* (1991): “I’ve made it because I’m good.”

When we hear such claims, we tend to focus on the word “good”—the speaker’s self-conscious claim of accomplishment and achievement, of meritocratic virtue. But we should also pay attention to the “I”—the individualistic claim that *I* made it because of my own hard work and effort.

Vignettes such as these remind us that, as sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset observes, “affirmative action policies have forced a sharp confrontation between two core American values: egalitarianism and individualism.” And, as these illustrations show, it is not only white Americans who feel the conflict. Affirmative action poses a challenge to the individualistic values of its minority beneficiaries as well. This is not to say that these beneficiaries reject affirmative action. But it does force them to confront unsettling questions: How do members of minority groups reconcile the benefits they receive from affirmative action with their own individualistic values? Does their individualism pose problems for minority leaders trying to attain group objectives?

These questions point to a paradox that lies at the heart of affirmative action. Even though they are frequently criticized for granting “group rights” to designated minorities, affirmative action programs do nothing of the sort. They in fact grant benefits to individuals—directly—without their having to belong to a formally constituted group or organization. Yes, one must be a member of a designated minority, but these minority groups have no official membership rolls or criteria. So in contemporary America it is possible to benefit from “group rights” without formally belonging to a group—and without having to give anything back to it.

Critics such as George Will may in some sense be justified in characterizing affirmative action as “racial spoils.” Yet in American political history, the “spoils system” refers to a quid pro quo between vic-

torious politicians and their loyal supporters. This is the Tammany Hall tradition, the system that fueled machine politics from Boston to San Antonio, where fealty to the local ward heeler might lead to a reduced property tax assessment or maybe even a personal loan to get through a rough patch. But with affirmative action there is no organizational tie—no reciprocal connection of reward (and restraint) between individual beneficiaries and leaders.

Only if one looks at how group boundaries are defined and policed in other nations does the curious nature of affirmative action in the United States become clear. In Malaysia, for example, the federal constitution establishes membership criteria for Malays and other protected groups. Those who wish to take advantage of employment and educational preferences must produce documentary proof that they are members of the appropriate groups. Similarly, in the former Soviet Union (as well as present-day Russia), each citizen is assigned a nationality at the age of 16, typically on the basis of the mother’s nationality. An individual can belong to one and only one nationality, which is recorded on his or her passport and cannot be changed. Such tightly regulated groups and official membership criteria simply do not fit with fundamental American notions of individual liberty and choice. The American alternative to officially recognized groups has always been voluntary associations.

To be sure, in the past the status and composition of minority groups, especially of the black population, were not matters of individual choice but were rigidly defined and policed by the state. But this is hardly the situation today. Indeed, it is striking that under affirmative action we leave it to potential beneficiaries themselves to declare if they are members of a favored group. Similarly, the U.S. census tallies racial and ethnic data based on how individuals identify themselves to the government, not on how the government identifies them.

> PETER SKERRY, a former Wilson Center Fellow, is a Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution. He is the author of *Mexican Americans: The Ambivalent Minority* (1993). Copyright © 1997 by Peter Skerry.

In short, affirmative action is not a system of officially designated groups with enforced boundaries and memberships. Affirmative action is an example of American exceptionalism, another unique but typically American hybrid: rights are afforded to groups that are weakly constituted. To put it differently, these are group rights in which the benefits are received by individuals without the mediation of any meaningful organizational effort or tie. The group rights of affirmative action get refracted through our individualistic political culture. The result is neither as compatible with American values as its supporters suggest, nor as balkanizing as its critics assert.

Yet this very ambiguity may help explain why affirmative action is so contentious. To be sure, much of the controversy surrounding affirmative action can be traced to the challenge it presents to long-held American values. But a good deal of that controversy can also be attributed to the specific institutional context within which we conduct our political business today. In other words, the continuing controversy over affirmative action has as much to do with the nature of contemporary American politics as with the state of race relations. And while some comfort can be had in this finding, it also suggests that the controversy will be all the more difficult to resolve.

The fierce national debate over affirmative action has obscured the fact that members of minority groups share the traditional American attachment to individualism. Analyzing all the available survey data on affirmative action, political scientists Lee Sigelman and Susan Welch conclude that “blacks, like whites, believe in merit as the major criterion in hiring.” Yet they also report that “blacks are more supportive of affirmative action than whites.” How can this be? Sigelman and Welch argue that blacks are caught between their very American commitment to individual merit and their belief that racism and discrimination hinder its realization. The authors conclude that blacks and whites define affirmative action differently: “Most blacks concede that preferential treatment is unfair, but still support the other compo-

nents of affirmative action [specified by the authors as compensation for past racism and assurance of future fairness].” Whites, however, tend to see preferential treatment as a damning “central component” of affirmative action. There is no question, however, that there is a significant commitment to individual merit among black Americans.

Of course, individualism among blacks competes with intense pressures for conformity or, to use a more positive term, solidarity. Sociologist Elijah Anderson captures some of these crosscurrents in *Street Wise: Race, Class, and Change in an Urban Community* (1990), a study of a racially and ethnically diverse big-city neighborhood. Anderson identifies two social types among blacks. One type, generally working- and lower-middle-class in character, tends to “view the social world mainly in terms of ethnicity and color.” Its members see “retaining their racial identity, or ‘blackness,’” as a central problem in their lives. The other type, more typically middle-class, includes those who “are inclined to see themselves as ‘individuals’ and thus to choose their friends not so much by color as by apparent social attitudes, interests, and affinities.” But as political scientist Terri Susan Fine concludes from her analysis of the survey data, such educated, individualistic, and self-reliant blacks are the most likely to back affirmative action. Far from being antithetical to black individualism, support for affirmative action actually correlates with it.

The two distinct types identified by Anderson can and do coexist within individuals. For testimony to this fact one need look no further than the recent spate of well-received memoirs by prominent black writers. To varying degrees, Carter’s *Confessions*, Brent Staples’s *Parallel Time* (1994), Gerald Early’s *Daughters* (1994), and Henry Louis Gates’s *Colored People* (1994) are portraits of successful people struggling with the contest between the individualism of mainstream America (however imperfectly realized) and the group ties of black America.

Yet the point here is not psychological or even sociological, but political—rather, it concerns the character of political organi-

zation in contemporary minority politics. Whatever their personal values, the beneficiaries of affirmative action encounter few, if any, organizational ties that would oblige them to acknowledge that they owe at least part of their success to someone or something outside themselves. Such individuals are what economists call *free-riders*—beneficiaries of efforts to which they have not contributed.

Many of today's minority leaders seem acutely aware of this phenomenon. New York activist Rev. Al Sharpton recently scolded minority journalists attending a convention in Atlanta for criticizing the civil rights movement: "The movement created options for many of you to get the jobs you have. You come in and condemn something that really sponsored your careers." John Jacob, former president of the National Urban League, observes that "we have now raised a generation of young people who've never known poverty, who've never lived in our 'segregated' communities, who went—by America's definition—to the finest schools and who have come to believe that their achievement is predicated on the fact that they are smart." Or, as a middle-aged Mexican-American politician once said to me about the younger generation, "There's no way to make them feel guilty."

Curiously, this free-rider problem was anticipated by black nationalists in the 1960s. As Stephen Carter recounts in his memoir, leaders of the black power movement considered affirmative action nothing more than an attempt by the terrified white power structure to co-opt "the talented tenth": "By opening to them the rewards that corporate capitalism bestows upon those at the top, the system would skim off the cream while leaving essentially unchanged the situation of those at the bottom."

The excesses of the 1960s black nationalists should not keep us from appreciating their prescience about the negative impact of integration and affirmative action on disadvantaged blacks. Black nationalists also worried about the destructive impact of American individualism—a concern demonstrated by Harold Cruse's use of the phrase "Individualism and 'The Open Society'" as the title of the first chapter of

his 1970 polemic, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*. Cruse did not object to integration out of any hatred of whites or even race pride—though there is an undeniable strain of the latter in his writing. Rather, his objection was based on his preoccupation with the contradiction between America's formal regime of individual rights and the political power actually exercised by groups:

America, which idealizes the rights of the individual above everything else, is in reality, a nation dominated by the social power of groups, classes, in-groups and cliques—both ethnic and religious. The individual in America has few rights that are not backed up by the political, economic, and social power of one group or another. . . . Thus it can be seen that those Negroes . . . who have accepted the full essence of the Great American Ideal of individualism are in serious trouble trying to function in America.

For Cruse, "the crisis of the Negro intellectual" was precisely that black intellectuals, and the middle class from which they emerge, are more susceptible than other blacks to the attractions of individualism and its rewards. If they succumbed, he feared, ordinary blacks would be deprived of the leadership critical to forging the political solidarity necessary for genuine advancement in America.

Echoing Cruse, Charles Hamilton and Stokely Carmichael based their case for black power (in their 1967 book by that title) explicitly on the experience of European immigrants. What was the model for black power? Irish power. "Italians vote for Rubino over O'Brien; Irish for Murphy over Goldberg, etc.," they wrote. "This phenomenon may seem distasteful to some, but it has been and remains today a central fact of the American political system."

It was only a short step from this insight to an embrace of the white ethnics' instrument of political advancement: the political machine. Writing in the late 1960s, Hamilton and Carmichael were predictably critical of what was left of the machines, but they also held a grudging respect for their adversaries' *modus operandi*.

This should come as no surprise. The

political machine provided what black nationalists understood to be missing in programs like affirmative action: an institutional mechanism to bridge the gap between the upwardly mobile and those left behind. In other words, a mechanism to tax the free-riders and bind the fates of the two groups together. One can exaggerate the extent to which machines served this function. But for countless immigrants through decades of American history they did provide a means of preserving ethnic ties despite the atomizing effects of assimilation.

Today, of course, the machines are gone—in great measure because their ethnic-group loyalties offended the ethos of American individualism. At the same time, however, Americans have developed extraordinarily high expectations about including minorities, the poor, and other previously excluded groups in the political process. Minority leaders thus feel acutely the lack of disciplined, community-based institutions capable of mobilizing the disadvantaged and maintaining their loyalty.

Faced with an enormous gap between means and ends, these leaders and their allies have done what might have been predicted: they have created new organizations with drastically reduced membership costs—costs measured not merely in dollars but in commitments of time, energy, and loyalty. In some instances, those costs have been reduced to zero.

The quintessential example is the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), which seeks to represent not only all Mexican Americans but all of the nation's 27 million Latinos. This claim is widely accepted, and the organization has played a prominent role in recent debates over immigration and affirmative action. Yet MALDEF has no members. It gets most of its funding from corporations and foundations, especially the Ford Foundation, which played the critical role in establishing it in the late 1960s. Lacking members, MALDEF has no real bonds of accountability to the communities it strives to represent.

With *no* membership base, MALDEF is an extreme case. But it differs more in degree than in kind from other organizations repre-

senting minorities, such as the National Council of La Raza and the National Urban League.

And the phenomenon is hardly confined to minority politics. For MALDEF and similar organizations are part of a broad public-interest movement that since the 1960s has sought to represent a variety of otherwise unrepresented interests or constituencies. These groups span the spectrum, ranging from Common Cause to Mothers Against Drunk Driving, from the Center for Individual Rights to the Children's Defense Fund.

All of these groups represent interests that are difficult to organize and that do not ordinarily get articulated. The individuals concerned may lack the resources—money, time, skills—to create a vehicle to advance their interests. Or they may be stymied by being geographically dispersed and not in easy or frequent contact with one another. Indeed, they may not even be aware of one another's existence and common interests. Finally, the broad interests concerned may be relatively marginal to the day-to-day, narrowly defined, and explicitly self-interested concerns that conventional interest or professional groups typically pursue.

In overcoming such obstacles, public interest organizations invariably assume certain characteristics. As I have already suggested, they may not actually enroll members. If they do, the members do not typically provide a substantial share of the money necessary to run the organization. Such organizations have what political scientist Jeffrey Berry refers to as "cheap membership," consisting of little more than writing a check for annual dues. Indeed, as Harvard University political scientist Robert Putnam observes, public interest organizations are low in "social connectedness." As Putnam noted in his controversial 1995 article, "Bowling Alone," members of such groups typically do not attend meetings, and in fact "most are unlikely to ever (knowingly) encounter any other member." Their ties "are to common symbols, common leaders, and perhaps common ideals, but not to one another."

The weak membership ties of public interest organizations also reinforce the tendency, present in any organization, for the

leadership or headquarters staff to dominate. Not surprisingly, the leaders of these organizations are more accountable to the wealthy patrons, foundations, and government agencies that provide the bulk of their resources than to the constituents whose interests are being represented. And to the extent constituents or members are dispersed across the nation or even the world, the need to maintain contact with them causes leaders to rely on high-tech communications (such as computerized direct mail, fax machines, and Web sites), which further devalue whatever social and communal resources the grassroots might be able to muster.

Public interest organizations also tend to supplement the quiet, inside lobbying of traditional interest groups with “outside” strategies that involve attracting public—especially media—attention. One reason why is suggested in a study of public interest law firms by Burton Weisbrod and his colleagues at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. They point out that because the services of such firms are not for sale in the market, their sponsors assess performance in terms of positive media attention rather than revenues. Unlike conventional law firms, public interest firms end up maximizing publicity, not profit.

Political scientist Jack Walker, of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, points to another factor feeding the public interest groups’ appetite for publicity. Because these organizations are not rooted in the face-to-face interactions of individuals who live or work together, they must rely on the media to keep their widely dispersed members (and patrons) informed. To keep all these parties engaged, public interest leaders resort to a kind of high-pitched revivalism, continually and publicly recommitting the organization to its lofty goals—and in the process pointing out threats from enemies. Some of the media that leaders use are internal, such as newsletters, but the incentives to reach out by grabbing the attention of TV, radio, and newspapers are strong. After all, as Walker argues, those drawn to public interest activities expect to see results in the *public* arena.

Such regrettable tendencies may emerge

in any political endeavor. Yet they consistently characterize public interest politics. And while public interest organizations hardly dominate contemporary American politics, they have helped acclimate us to a style of politics in which the participants are “organizations” virtually in name only and in which posturing and confrontation play a central role.

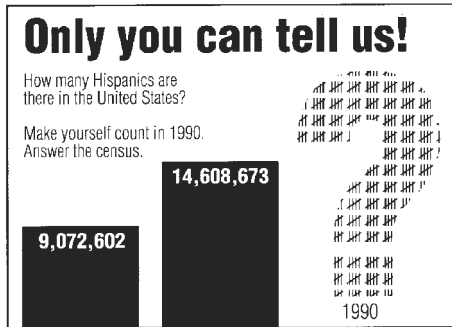
More to the point, the curious and often perverse dynamics of public interest politics shape controversies involving race and affirmative action. The 1994 ouster of Benjamin Chavis as executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is a good example. The internal rift over Chavis’s management of the organization’s \$3.8 million debt was widely reported in the press. But it was seldom noted that his removal was instigated not by the membership but by the Ford Foundation, which withheld a major grant until the NAACP’s finances were put in order. One of the few observers who did note it was *Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry, who wrote: “The obvious question is how such a venerable organization, still 600,000 members strong, has come to the point not just of being in debt but also of being beholden to a private foundation for its survival?” Answering his own question, Raspberry cited the NAACP’s “inability to ask its natural constituency for what it needs.” Such is the effect of foundation patronage even on a well-established organization that—unlike MALDEF—has a substantial membership base.

The use of outside strategies to make up for weak organizational ties to minority constituents shows up in other controversies, such as the disputes in 1980 and 1990 over the undercounting of minorities by the U.S. census. As noted earlier, the census gathers racial and ethnic data based on the self-identification of individual respondents. In 1990, minority leaders spent considerable resources—theirs as well as the government’s—urging their constituents to “make yourself count.” That meant not only filling out and returning census forms but checking the boxes identifying themselves as members of the appropriate racial and ethnic groups. As part of the same high-profile

Hágase contar para que lo tomen en cuenta.

Subígame en el censo para que se tome en cuenta su voz y su voto. Los hispanos son importantes en la comunidad y en el país. Haga su voz y su voto valer. Haga su voz y su voto valer. Haga su voz y su voto valer.

**1 de abril de 1990.
Responda al censo.**



Population of Hispanics as reported by the 1970 and 1980 Censuses.

Organizations with weak membership must use publicity to reach their constituents, as Hispanic groups did in a “make yourself count” campaign during the 1990 census.

CENSO '90



**¡Esta Es La Nuestra!
Participe En El Censo.**

effort, minority advocates also launched lawsuits challenging the Census Bureau's methods of counting. In a world of more traditional membership-based organizations, it would have been a relatively simple matter to pass the word to cooperate with the census. But now passing the word means mounting an expensive and often divisive public relations blitz.

A similar dynamic was evident, if not obvious, in the 1991 controversy over Clarence Thomas's nomination to the Supreme Court. In that battle, minority leaders and their allies tried to block Thomas's nomination because he held to a conservative judicial philosophy. They were outraged by Thomas's position on affirmative action, not simply because he opposed it but because, though an admitted beneficiary, he refused to pay his dues by supporting the very policy that had aided him. In essence, Clarence Thomas was saying, “I made it because I'm good.” And he was effectively urging other minority-group members to say the same thing.

In a public drama like this, appearances are not always what they seem. We tend to assume that minority leaders make waves in

order to sway the majority. Yet in our strange new political world, minority leaders must go to extraordinary lengths to convince their own constituents that they owe them—the leaders—a debt. Since they have no power to sanction those who benefit from the programs they have fought for, minority leaders aim their rhetoric not just at guilty (and not-so-guilty) whites but at all those beneficiaries out there who are even tempted to follow Clarence Thomas's example.

What may we conclude from this analysis? Does the peculiar admixture of individualism and group rights that we have concocted bode well or ill for the ability of America to sort out its racial affairs at the end of the 20th century?

On an optimistic note, the contrast between the politics of affirmative action and the politics bred by rigid group boundaries in other parts of the world should remind us that, however daunting our racial and ethnic problems, the United States is not Bosnia, or even Quebec. The elixir of American individualism is still too powerful to permit such intense and overriding group loyalties to flourish.

Yet neither should this analysis offer any false hope. It may be tempting to conclude that the principle of individual merit is so fundamental to our way of life that it will eventually undermine affirmative action. But this assumes that black Americans and members of other minority groups are not really committed to affirmative action. I believe that they are, albeit by means of a specific, and perhaps strained, interpretation of how such programs work.

Still, the forces of individualism in America are so strong that they create other problems—and this is my real point. For the irony is that just when America sees itself as a society rent by hostile groups and verging on balkanization, the reality is that the barriers between groups have probably never been lower. Despite some trouble signs, Americans still enjoy substantial social, economic, and residential mobility. One of the most telling indicators—intermarriage rates—is strikingly high. Demographer Barry Edmonston of the National Academy of Sciences and his colleagues report that 12 percent of married Asians in 1990 had non-Asian spouses, while 19 percent of married Hispanics had non-Hispanic spouses. For the children and grandchildren of Asian and Hispanic immigrants, intermarriage rates are much higher. To be sure, the intermarriage rate for black Americans was only six percent in 1990, but even this figure is higher than it was a generation ago.

The catch is that the high degree of mobility among Americans helps weaken the ties between individuals and larger groups, fueling the intense group competition and conflict that we are enduring today. Precisely because many political leaders have such anemic ties to those they seek to represent, they must resort to the publicity-seeking, media-oriented tactics that are so inflammatory. The lack of strong, organized bases of support also helps explain why black leaders have been willing to dilute their historically unique claims on the American conscience by accepting women, Hispanics, and the handicapped as equal claimants for the benefits of affirmative action. Deprived

of the organizational resources formerly available to leaders that allowed them to discipline as well as reward constituents, minority leaders today resort to rhetoric and ideology to enforce conformity. Shorn of patronage, they resort to passion.

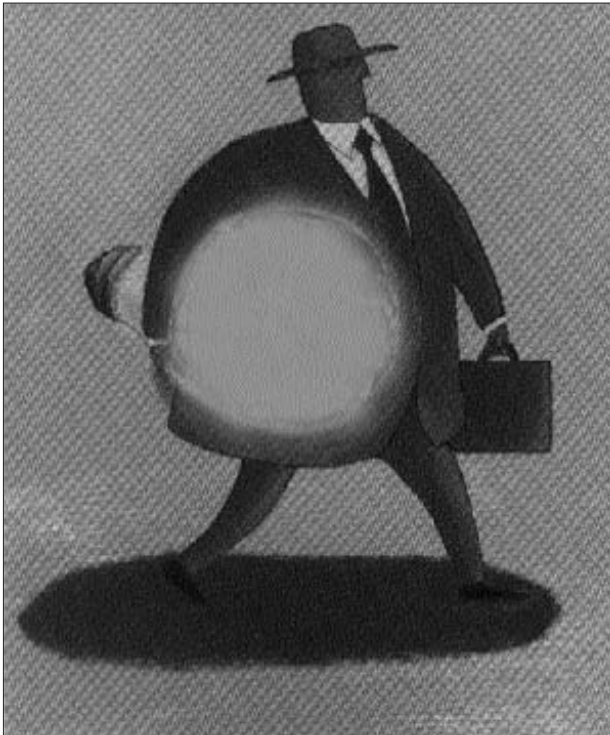
The lesson, then, is a sobering one. Our problems with affirmative action may be more intractable than we realize. If we assume, as I believe we must, that the political aspirations of minorities are not about to abate (or be sublimated, as some have urged, into economic activity), then it is clear that those aspirations will continue to be channeled through the kinds of socially disconnected, funder-dominated organizations that I have examined here. There are not many alternatives on the horizon.

A glimmer of hope is represented by the work of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), founded more than 50 years ago by Saul Alinsky. Infused since the 1960s with a new generation of leaders, the IAF attempts to build genuine grassroots organizations in minority and nonminority neighborhoods around the nation. Outfits such as Communities Organized for Public Service in San Antonio and East Brooklyn Churches in New York manage to avoid many of the problems that beset weak-membership groups. Still, the IAF approach is hardly without difficulties, not the least of which is a dearth of skilled organizers. But the bigger problem is that the IAF is fighting a lonely uphill battle against powerful social, cultural, and political trends.

These trends explain why Californians, having just approved the anti-affirmative action Civil Rights Initiative, may now find that it is easier to eliminate affirmative action *programs* than to temper the excesses of affirmative action *politics*. For the same reasons, there is cause to be suspicious of claims that class-based affirmative action would be significantly less rancorous and divisive than race-based efforts. The unhappy imperatives of politics in contemporary America would certainly remain unchanged. Indeed, class-based affirmative action might pull even more of us into the maelstrom.

GIVING AWAY THE STORE

At the close of the 20th century, a new global information economy is being born, and knowledge is its coin of the realm. Nations now measure their wealth in software codes and chemical formulas rather than gold and silver. Knowledge-based industries such as software, computers, and pharmaceuticals generate half the output of the world's richer countries. Swarming around them, our authors warn, is a whole new breed of postindustrial spies and pirates, poised to strip an unwitting America of some of its most precious assets.



While America Sleeps

by John J. Fialka

Slender threads of brownish smoke rose from a forest of chimneys and twisted upward into the winter mist. Collectively they wove a dark cloak that shrouded Edinburgh as a well-appointed carriage bearing an American family appeared in the gloom. The coachman's faint lamp barely penetrated the gathering darkness as the carriage rattled past the outlines of the city's tall, narrow tenements. In search of lodging, the Americans had found themselves in a damp, forbidding place, reeking of dung and smoke—a place that might have served as the perfect setting for a suspenseful spy story.

It was December 1811, and one thing distinguished Francis Cabot Lowell, his wife, and his young children from most other people navigating the city's narrow streets that afternoon. The Lowells had plenty of money, and it showed. Alert coachmen hustled them through the knotty traffic of downtown Prince's Street, and innkeepers always summoned up an extra bit of warmth.

Lowell came from great wealth, but he was no mere rich man's son. A Harvard graduate, he had used his skill as a mathematician to expand a Boston docking and warehouse business. Now, at 35, well dressed and studiously self-effacing, he was a man looking for a much grander venture. Lowell played to local prejudices about the inferiority of the American environment by letting it be known that he was in Scotland for reasons of health. Lowell's neighbors observed that as winter receded the Lowell family carriage appeared almost daily in front of the house, and Mr. and Mrs. Lowell, leaving their children behind with the governess, went on extended trips into the countryside. They often visited places as far away as Lancashire and Derbyshire to take the country air.

That was the cover story. In fact, Lowell was the most skilled economic spy of his generation, and he had ambitions to take in much more than country air. By hitching cotton-weaving machinery to the cheap, perpetual motion of waterpower, Britain had revolutionized the textile industry, transforming Lancashire and Derbyshire into places of phenomenal riches. The newly built mills had literally created the world's industrial age. Lowell plotted his tours as methodical explorations of this 18th-century Silicon Valley. Huge fortunes had been made there by replacing the skilled hand labor of many thousands of people with water-driven looms so simple and so reliable that they could be run by a handful of unskilled women and children. The perpetually humming, swishing, clanking machines changed cheap imported U.S. cotton into bolts of fancy calico that fetched fancy prices in Paris, Berlin, and Boston. They had made rural England and



A mastery of textile technology helped Britain become an industrial colossus.

Scotland into a money machine that was the envy of the world.

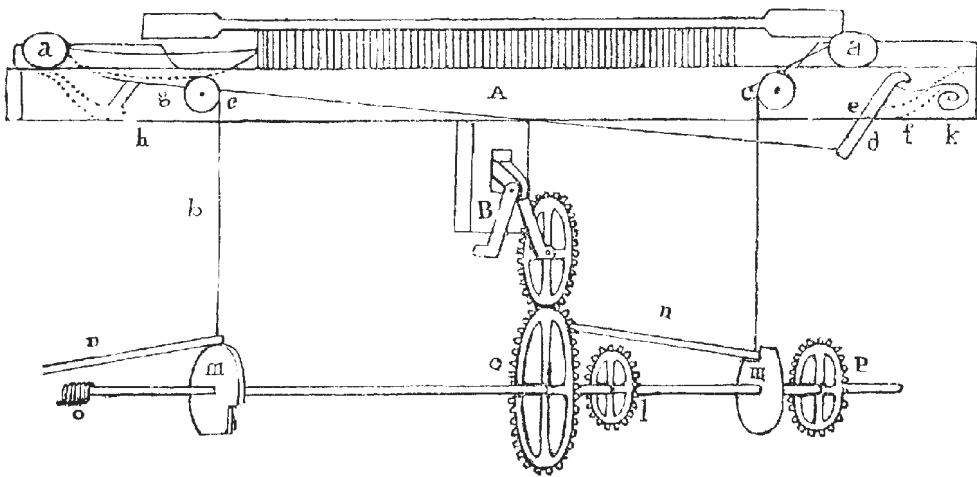
Not surprisingly, His Majesty's Government was determined to protect the sources of the Industrial Revolution from outsiders. By the end of the 18th century, the British passed rigorous patent laws and banned the export of cotton-weaving technology. When foreigners found loopholes by recruiting skilled workers and luring them abroad, this was made a crime. So were the acts of making and exporting drawings of the machinery in the mills. Fortresslike walls topped with spikes and broken glass quickly grew up around the mills, and workers were sworn to secrecy. Skilled technicians who went abroad under false pretenses had their property summarily confiscated by the Crown.

Spies are normally associated with wartime and the theft of military technology. In the vast popular literature about espionage, there is hardly a mention of the peacetime industrial spy. One reason may be that spy stories tend to blossom when wars end. War is relatively clear-cut: there is a winner and an eventual loser, a beginning and an end. The end is normally the signal for the memoir writers to begin, but the economic struggle that attracted Lowell's stealthy genius is not clear-cut. Winners win quietly, and losers are often either unconscious of loss or too embarrassed to admit it. And it is a war that does not end. The stage for the studiously low-key dramas of economic espionage is set, as one perceptive French writer puts it, in a kind of perpetual limbo, where there is neither war nor peace.

Moreover, because economic competition often seems peaceful, economic espionage is usually a more fruitful, less risky business. Sentries are more apt to be napping. Often there simply aren't any. The work of spies in wartime is dangerous and frequently only marginally useful, but the damage a clever spy can wreak in a supposedly peaceful economic setting is often invisible and decisive. And the victims—especially if they must answer to angry stockholders—are not often inclined to want a history.

Against this background, the magnitude of what Lowell achieved has few parallels, even in spy fiction. Few Americans recognize his name, but we are all indebted to this shrewd Yankee. By stealing Britain's most valuable secret, by analyzing it and quickly acting upon it, he brought the Industrial Revolution to New England and built the economic engine that later helped drive the North to victory in the Civil War. That, in turn, laid the cornerstone for a level of prosperity that created the American Century and led to the formation of the world's largest and richest economy.

Yankee ingenuity being what it once was, there were plenty of prominent Americans trying to steal secrets from Britain. But none went so far as Lowell. He was after the Cartwright loom, the crown jewel of the British textile industry. This was a water-driven weaving machine invented by Edmund Cartwright, the fourth son of a country squire, a restless, seemingly unfocused man who dabbled in poetry, the ministry, and experimental farming until he became intrigued by the shortcomings of some of the machinery he chanced to observe in the neighboring Derbyshire mills. So he dabbled in machinery. The result was a loom so powerful and efficient that the British Parliament later awarded him a bonus of £10,000. The importance of the Cartwright loom to Britain's booming economy placed it



A section of the Cartwright loom

at the top of a pantheon of industrial secrets.

We still don't know how Lowell got the detailed plans for this tightly guarded machine, but the arrogance of the new lords of Britain's industry probably helped him. They tended to look down upon outsiders, especially the American rustics. Some, such as Edward Temple Booth, owner of a Norwich worsted mill, waived the rule stipulating that all plants be closed to foreigners. He reasoned: "When machinery is peculiarly complicated you may show it with good effect, I think, because it makes the difficulty of imitation appear greater." British customs officers, perhaps sensing that something was up, went through the Lowells' baggage twice when they

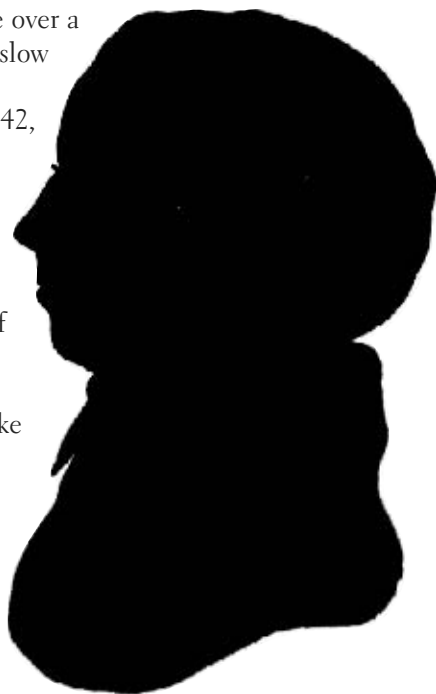
> JOHN J. FIALKA, a former Wilson Center Guest Scholar, is a reporter with the Washington bureau of the Wall Street Journal. He is the author of *The Hotel Warriors: Covering the Gulf War* (1992). This essay is excerpted from *War by Other Means: Economic Espionage in America*, by John J. Fialka. Copyright © 1997 by John J. Fialka. Reprinted with permission of the publisher, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

embarked for home in 1813. They found nothing unusual because Lowell, who is credited by most historians with having a photographic memory, probably carried the blueprints in his head.

Back home, Lowell rented a Boston storefront and hired a first-rate mechanic. Together, they built a scale model of the Cartwright loom. Then Lowell hired a second man to turn a crank until they had all the gears and pulleys working in the rigid, reliable mechanical dance necessary for a perpetual weaving machine. When they had it right, Lowell quickly implemented his other plans, which involved new ways to integrate labor and capital into industrial plants where raw materials would be turned into finished products in the same factory. His company built its first mill at Waltham and later constructed a mill complex in Lowell, the city named for him. By producing up to 30 miles of cloth a day in a nation that then knew very little besides hand labor, Lowell, Massachusetts, provided the first big shock that jolted America into the industrial age.

The object of economic espionage, however, is not simply to gain some secret advantage over a competitor. Steps must then be taken to slow the competitor's attempts to recover. In 1816, a year before he died at the age of 42, Lowell journeyed to Washington, where he persuaded Congress to impose a punishing 6.25 cent tariff on each square yard of imported cotton.

From Sidney Reilly to Aldrich Ames, the secrets of wartime spies are the stuff of great drama when they emerge at war's end. But economic wars don't end, and Lowell appears to have taken pains to make sure his secrets would never emerge. He kept no diary, confined his letters to family matters, and appears to have shared the method of his great triumph with no one. A man whose impact was so profound that one historian calls him "an American Newton," Lowell almost managed to erase his own likeness from posterity. But after he died, a workman found a silhouette stuck behind the



Francis Cabot Lowell

frame of an old picture in Lowell's office. It shows a man with a long, sloping nose and a weak chin. Apart from the largest, richest industrial economy on earth, it is all we have left to remind us of Francis Cabot Lowell.

If there were a way to revive Lowell and bring him back to his beloved country at the end of the 20th century, the story of Rip van Winkle would not begin to describe the otherworldly shock, the endless ironies, and the boundless frustration that this spy of spies would experience.

He would discover that his world had been stood on its head during the 180 years of his slumber. Let us take him, stumbling, bearded, and bleary-eyed, through some of the many corridors of our economy and see what he would find.

First, the spark of economic life that he helped bring into being has become a beacon to the entire world. The United States of America, once decidedly an economic backwater, a place of dubious investment opportunities, a haven for adventurers, visionaries, and the cast-off poor of other cultures, has become a glistening machine that produces \$6.8 trillion in new wealth every year.

But while Lowell's Washington had politicians who had firsthand experience with the results of unheeded security threats—such as being chased out of the White House by British troops during the War of 1812—the Washington that Lowell would find today is a place where most politicians believe that such threats are a thing of the past. Winners of a game that has supposedly ended, they talk endlessly of the perquisites and obligations of “the world's only remaining superpower.” The United States has the most powerful economy, the biggest single market, the richest technological treasures, the most widely circulated currency, the largest and freest flow of information, the most powerful military, the most admired university system, and the most elaborate and costly apparatus of protective laws, lawyers, judges, intelligence services, and law enforcement units the world has ever seen.

But once he overcame his initial shock at millions of people whizzing along wide freeways and at vast, brazen cities winking at him by night, Lowell, a remarkably shrewd man, would quickly sense that something was missing. The public's belief in the value of economic intelligence—a belief that made him a national hero and sometimes led citizens in Revolutionary-era communities to parade in the streets when discoveries were brought in from abroad—seems to have vanished entirely. While Lowell knew a citizenry that was hungry for development and preoccupied with building an economy out of scraps of knowledge imported from overseas, he would now find a different breed of American, born with the assumption that all necessary knowledge is here. He would find an America drifting into a profoundly introspective, isolationist, and even anti-intellectual mood.

There would be no end to the paradoxes Lowell would find. Where there was once a small elite of entrepreneurial citizen-spies like himself who rubbed shoulders with the Washingtons, Jeffersons, and Hamiltons of their day, today the business of collecting intelligence has become for Americans a strangely professional, closed, and often suspect activity. It is dominated by huge bureaucracies that seem almost indifferent when it comes to economic affairs. Unlike the people of economic powers such as Japan, Sweden, China, France, South Korea, and Taiwan, countries where citizen-spies such as Lowell still abound, Americans have the feeling they are above this sordid business and that they are somehow removed and protected from it.

Only—Lowell would discover—they are not. The game of economic espionage continues, as it has for thousands of years, but now the tally of wins and losses is locked inside the nation's sprawling intelligence apparatus, which costs some \$28 billion a year to maintain. And there is yet another fundamental difference: whereas Lowell's America searched the world for fresh economic intelligence, the United States in the 1990s seems content to stay at home. This America has become the chief target of the world's economic spies—a sizeable force hailing from at least 20 major countries whose identities and doings remain closely guarded state secrets.

Lowell was a wily Yankee who knew how to obtain secrets, so let's suppose that in an effort to orient himself he got his hands on a copy of a report by an intergovernmental working group, the National Economic Council (NEC), which includes experts from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the departments of Treasury, State, Defense, Commerce, and Justice, and representatives from the White House. Prepared for Congress's intelligence committees in 1994, the report is stamped SECRET NO FORN. (This indicates that the information is not to be shared with any foreign powers, including allies.) The document notes that, "Reports obtained since 1990 indicate that economic espionage is becoming increasingly central to the operations of many of the world's intelligence services and is absorbing larger portions of their staffing and budget."

In the early 1980s, it was estimated that at least 1.2 million people were working in one capacity or another for the world's spy agencies. Lowell would see that, as the NEC reports, nations had turned much of their Cold War spy apparatus to economic espionage, including giant computer databases, word-activated eavesdropping scanners, spy satellites, and an almost unbelievable array of bugs and wiretaps.

Economic espionage against the United States breaks down into three major styles. Agents from China, Taiwan, and South Korea are aggressively targeting "present and former nationals working for U.S. companies and research institutions," according to the NEC report.

The second category is headed by France, which is said to prefer classic Cold War recruitment and technical operations, including bribery, discreet thefts, garbage searches, and aggressive wiretapping. Russia and Israel carry out similar spying with varying degrees of government sponsorship. Germany is described as planning to increase the number of its Federal Intelligence Service (BND) agents in Washington to improve its collection capabilities. Japan, which does not have a formal intelligence agency but sometimes collectively resembles one, falls into the third category. Japanese industry and private organizations gather "economic intelligence, occasionally including classified proprietary documents and data." The result is an exceptionally efficient spy network that is described as "not fully understood" by the United States.

The United States is now the chief target of the world's economic spies.

The most aggressive operations against U.S. companies occur overseas, especially in home countries where spy agencies are freer to act and where, the NEC report notes, "government controlled national phone networks" and other electronic means can be used to slither inside company communications and data banks. The best place to recruit foreign nationals who work for U.S. companies overseas is in third countries, where "a host country's counterintelligence services do not pose a serious barrier to effective foreign intelligence operations directed against U.S. targets. Furthermore, U.S. citizens tend to be more lax about security matters when living in countries perceived as friendly to the United States."

"Lax" is probably a polite way to describe the laid-back attitudes that

Lowell might find if he wandered among his countrymen today. A recent study by the National Research Council found that one way Japanese businessmen collect information about developments within the U.S. aerospace industry—a major Japanese target today—is to get their U.S. counterparts to brag: “Ego comes into play as engineers try to impress their foreign contacts.”

The sublime mismatch between war-trained spies and business people schooled to expect the proverbial “level playing field” has also become worrisome in Canada, where Chris MacMartin, coordinator of the technology transfer program for Canada’s Security Intelligence Service, says that of 500 companies queried, fully one-third brought up security problems. Many of them had discovered that people they had once trusted were harvesting company secrets for a foreign government.

“When you’re carrying over the family jewels and you’re traipsing across several countries who would crawl over broken glass to get what you’ve got in your briefcase, you will inevitably find that the government has far greater capability to do damaging things to you than your competitor,” explains MacMartin. Naive businesspeople who entrust a document in their briefcase to the hotel safe might “just as well photocopy it and give it to the company [that competes with them], because that’s where it’s going,” MacMartin adds.

Just how much espionage costs companies is hard to say. “We have seen damage in terms of lost jobs, lost contracts, and diminished contracts. We have spoken to companies who have had messages intercepted and computers penetrated,” MacMartin admits. But nobody wants to talk openly about it. “Companies have very solid reasons not to make this public. They usually have shareholders who think that secrets are what make the company valuable. Invariably in all of these cases, somebody screwed up.”

Canada is not about to point fingers at any specific country, but MacMartin says that 39 percent of the spy incidents occurred in Asia and another 30 percent in Western Europe.

U.S. companies aren’t much more talkative. An International Business Machines (IBM) representative told a U.S. House of Representatives committee in 1992 that the company had suffered losses “in the billions” from thefts of proprietary information, including thefts by unnamed government agents intent on stealing IBM’s software and other secrets for competitors in their country. Corning, Inc., complained of state-sponsored efforts to steal its fiber-optic technology. “It is very difficult for an individual corporation to counteract this activity. The resources of a corporation—even a large one such as Corning—are no match for espionage activities that are sanctioned and supported by foreign governments,” explained J. E. Reisbeck, then an executive vice president of the company.

While the need seems obvious, the question of how to mobilize U.S. intelligence agencies to support and protect the U.S. economy has bobbed to the surface in Washington every few years since World War II. When the Truman administration assembled 20 top government officials for a secret meeting in the CIA’s cramped, makeshift administration building on the Mall in November 1950, they were told that because foreign economic intelligence was collected by 24 different agencies, many of which didn’t communicate with one another, there were “important gaps in the collective knowledge of the government.” The turf battles

involved in reassigning areas of responsibility in information gathering proved to be too difficult for this cabinet group, however, and a CIA committee was established to study the problem.

The issue came up again in 1970 when Nixon administration officials, shocked by Japan's bold and well-aimed assault on the U.S. auto industry, told the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB) to suggest remedies. Gerard P. Burke, then PFIAB's chief of staff, recalls that his four-man staff spent about a year studying the problem.

A few organizational changes were made to bring economic officials onto policy-making boards in the intelligence community, but as Burke recalls, no one could find a way to address the real issue he had discovered: while the United States was tinkering with its organizational charts, the intelligence agencies of major allies, including the British, the French, the Swedes, and the Swiss, had begun providing direct support to their countries' businesses. "We discussed it ad nauseam," Burke remembers. "We thought U.S. companies needed [support], but we didn't think it should be provided by the U.S. government. There were obvious conflicts of interest."

Stansfield Turner, the retired navy admiral who took the helm of the CIA in 1977, during the Carter administration, pointed to the same problem. Beyond the Soviet Union, the major threat to the United States came from the economic sphere. "Goddammit," he remembers thundering once at a group of aides, "if [the economy] isn't a national security matter, then what is!?"

But the aides had questions. Should you collect information for Ford and not General Motors? Had CIA agents signed up to risk their lives for a corporation? What about providing intelligence to a U.S. company that was partly owned by Japan? In the end, the aides' skepticism prevailed. Since that debate in the late 1970s, CIA task forces have studied the issue two more times. Each study found a problem but backed away from practical solutions. Admiral Turner recently fired another salvo. One way to break out of this stalemate, he says, is simply to make for-



A rare catch: Bin Wu worked for Chinese intelligence (and as a double agent for the FBI) before being found guilty in 1993 of illegally exporting high-technology equipment to China.

eign espionage assaults on U.S. companies public. "That may aid U.S. corporations less than some would like, but it also can lessen an advantage foreign corporations have over American firms," he says.

In 1985, during the Reagan administration, Michael Sekora, a young physicist working in the Defense Intelligence Agency, became alarmed by moves being made by French, German, and Japanese intelligence operatives in the commercial arena. Some of them were busy collecting ideas from U.S. universities. Why not create a database to follow the development and flow of key technologies around the world, tapping the whole government for information? he suggested. President Reagan's people liked Sekora's idea and wanted the database and a small staff installed in the White House. The project was called Socrates. But the incoming Bush administration strangled Socrates in its crib. The project posed too many questions. "You can't look at the Japanese, they said, because they're our friends. You can only look at the Russians because they're the bad guys. What we wanted to do was look at the technologies, regardless of who had them. We wanted to get to the bottom line truth, as did the philosopher," Sekora says.

Sekora resigned and is now peddling Socrates in the private sector, with mixed results. He points out that many U.S. companies, preoccupied with quarterly results and the domestic market, have cut back on research units and see no use for strategic information gathered overseas. "When I go into a company, sometimes an old engineer will come up and say that's what we used to do before World War II. We sent our people all over the world."

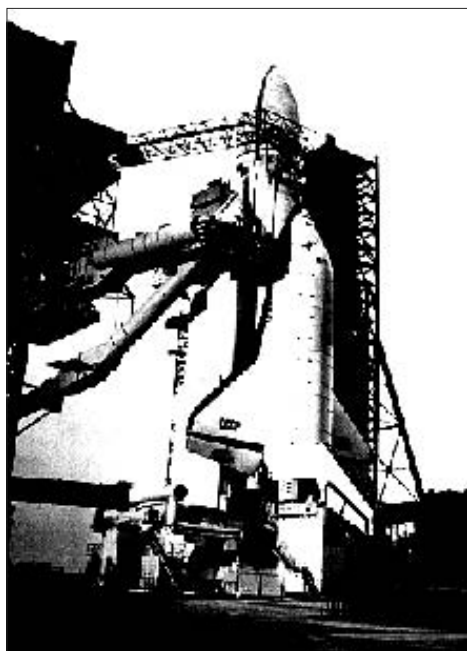
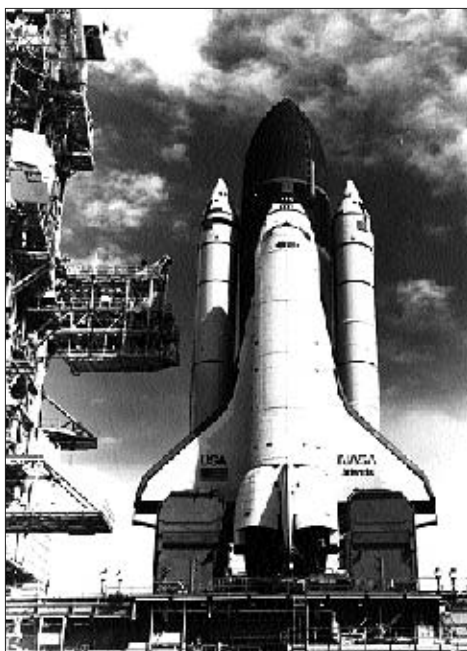
The uncanny ability of American corporations to improve on outside innovations astonished European industrialists in a way that is strikingly similar to the way Japan's success perplexes American managers today.

Indeed they did. The practice of collecting information overseas didn't end with Lowell's generation. "Technology-gathering missions to Europe were commonplace during the late 19th and early 20th centuries as American corporations sent their leading scientists and engineers

abroad to learn advanced techniques," writes Richard Florida, a technology expert at Carnegie-Mellon University. "The uncanny ability of American corporations to improve on outside innovations astonished European industrialists in a way that is strikingly similar to the way Japan's success perplexes American managers today."

In his strolls around modern Washington, a place he knew as a tiny village where carriages traveling the unpaved streets often got stuck in red clay mud, Francis Cabot Lowell would find that the report of President Clinton's commission to study the overhaul of the nation's intelligence apparatus had a familiar ring. The first item on its "new agenda"? "Increasingly, the ability of U.S. industry to compete successfully in the world market is seen as a critical element of U.S. security."

In the years between 1950 and 1996, as proposals to do something about obtaining economic intelligence kept getting mired in Washington's bur-



Which shuttle is which? The Soviet Union used stolen plans to build its shuttle.

eaucracy, three successive waves of economic espionage rolled over the country. Measured in terms of economic and strategic impact, they were all tsunamis, probably the most damaging peacetime assaults ever mounted on a nation's economy. Each, in its own way, was worse than the next. But compared with real wars, they caused hardly a ripple.

First came the Russians. In the early 1980s, just as it was about to rev up the arms race, the Reagan administration learned from the French how the Soviet economy, with all its glaring faults, managed to match U.S. technology so quickly: the KGB had been systematically stealing information from U.S. research and development programs. "The assimilation of Western technology is so broad that the U.S. and other Western nations are thus subsidizing the Soviet military buildup," concluded the authors of a CIA report on the matter.

A group known as the VPK, or Military Industrial Commission, a special board of the top executives of Soviet defense manufacturing ministries, had been spending as much as \$1.4 billion a year ordering technology and secrets from the West, much of it taken from the electronic brains of new U.S. weapons systems. The list, provided by a KGB spy dubbed "Farewell" by French intelligence agents, was endless and alarming—and embarrassing to the Pentagon. The radars that guided the missiles fired from Soviet fighters were copied from blueprints of the radars on U.S. F-14, F-15, and F-18 fighters. The Soviets' space shuttle was created from documents carted away from NASA. The Soviet Ryad computer had been copied from the architecture of the IBM model 370 mainframe computer. In all, about 5,000 categories of Soviet military equipment entering its arsenals during the 1980s were products of the KGB's efforts; about 60 percent of the blueprints and other documents were taken either from the United States or U.S. allies.

Farewell's reports showed that the KGB had caught the United States

with its barn doors wide open. While the Defense Department verified the information's authenticity, other agencies, true to the ostrichlike code of behavior that prevails among victims of economic espionage, tried to minimize it. The CIA kept most of the evidence under tight wraps. Some former officials of the FBI, which is in charge of counterintelligence, cling to their belief that the barn was never invaded.

Big as it was, the Soviet wave of economic intelligence collection was soon overshadowed by Japan's efforts. While the Soviet Union's industry outside the defense area couldn't readily assimilate U.S. technology, the Japanese economy could, and in the 1970s and '80s it did so at an awesome pace. Like the Soviets, the Japanese found U.S. universities an enormous source of free, lucrative information, and, oddly, the Japanese provided a kind of political cover for the Soviet "students."

Jan P. Herring helped run the CIA's counterespionage efforts in the early 1980s. After several Soviet KGB types were caught stealing secrets at universities, he recalls, the U.S. government was seriously thinking about kicking out all foreign students. But, he says, "the Japanese just went ape over this, so we backed off." Later, as a vice president for the Futures Group, a Boston-based consulting firm, Herring went to universities hunting for ways to help U.S. firms compete against foreign businesses—a novel idea for some of his clients. "We often found that MITI [Japan's Ministry of International Trade Industry] or JETRO [MITI's technology information collection service] had already been there talking to these people. In fact, we didn't run across too many that the Japanese hadn't talked to."

When it comes to other people's ideas, the Japanese are relentless bargain hunters. Every scrap of information is collected and studied. They set up an elaborate network of small research laboratories in university towns. Gaining a sense from the universities of where the cutting-edge U.S. technology was, the Japanese then went out and bought some 40,000 patent licenses for it at bargain basement rates. U.S. experts later concluded that this was a "windfall" that gave Japan the means to take over the television market and muscle into semiconductors. It taught some "hard lessons" to U.S. companies, which enjoyed their royalty checks until Japan's products drove them out of their own markets.

U.S. economists, locked for years in an almost monastic argument over the sanctity of "free trade," have only recently awakened to the notion that the carefully targeted, government-driven campaign Japan uses against the United States in high-technology areas is something different from the bustle and hum of free markets working. It is more like the attack profile of a smart missile: a strategic, "beggar thy neighbor" assault that targets high-tech jobs and snuffs out whole industries. Laura D'Andrea Tyson, who recently resigned as chair of President Clinton's National Economic Council, estimates that Japan's aggressive efforts cost \$105 billion in lost U.S. sales between 1985 and 1989, and that "the lion's share of the loss was matched by offsetting Japanese gains."

What is left is a hollowed-out economy that somehow continues to function, even to boom, but is a decidedly pale version of America's manufacturing past. In constant, uninflated dollars, average weekly wages have dropped for 20 years. There are fewer, poorer, "dumber" jobs for blue-collar workers. It is a hollowness that will increasingly res-

onate as an office-threatening issue to politicians who ignore it.

We are losing at a game of economic jujitsu in which Japan, which keeps its markets closed and does relatively little research within its largely closed university system, uses one of the U.S. system's main strengths—its openness—against it. And the struggle continues as MITI targets the remaining crown jewels, the aerospace, biotechnology, and software industries, which are expected to be the drivers of the U.S. economy in the early 21st century. While the fabled and probably fictitious “missile gap” was used politically to galvanize U.S. concerns in the 1960s about the Soviet Union, the patently real “intelligence gap” opened by the Japanese has caused no outcry. But to the eye of a practiced collector such as Lowell, the gap would look ominous and perhaps even frightening. In 1988, Japan sent 52,224 researchers to the United States. Meanwhile, only 4,468 U.S. researchers traveled to Japan. Japanese companies invest the time and money needed to teach English and the rudiments of American culture to the employees they send here, while U.S. companies rarely provide more than minimal cultural orientation for their overseas workers.

What Japan has accomplished in the United States has caused a stir of envy in China and other Pacific Rim nations, including Taiwan and South Korea. Collection efforts by these countries may eventually loom larger and more threatening than the Japanese campaign, which the other Asian powers appear to be using as a model. Like Japan, they have begun in U.S. universities. In 1991, 51 percent of all science and engineering doctorates awarded by American universities went to students from Pacific Rim nations, with the largest share going to the two Chinas. Many of these students, educated largely at the expense of the U.S. government, linger in the United States after obtaining their doctorates, and a large number of high-tech companies and government research laboratories are becoming hooked on this stream of cheaper, often smarter, and more biddable talent. Some of these students eventually become U.S. citizens and help renew the American dream by achieving breakthroughs that mean new jobs and new markets for their adopted country. But more return to their homelands, and government recruiters from their native countries are working in the United States to lure more home, where they join the payrolls of some of America's serious and sometimes dangerous competitors. Meanwhile, the faltering U.S. public education system produces fewer and fewer qualified applicants for graduate-level science and engineering programs.

By far the largest, most problematic player is the People's Republic of China, a nuclear power that is using U.S. technology and some of the profits from a ballooning trade surplus with the United States to modernize its army, navy, and air force. It has begun to flex its growing military muscle in the Pacific. In a series of war games in the Taiwan Straits in March 1996, it fired its new solid-fuel M-9 missiles at target ranges situated near Taiwan's main seaports. China's chief intelligence agency, the Guojia Anquan Bu, or Ministry of State Security (MSS), has flooded the United States with spies, sending in far more agents than the Soviets did even at the height of the KGB's campaign. About half of the 900 illegal technology transfer cases being investigated by the FBI and the U.S. Customs Service on the West Coast involve the Chinese. The MSS recruits students. When money is not persuasive, threats against family members back home are tried. And unlike the KGB's agents, China's spies easily find protective cover in the United

States, among this country's large Asian population.

Although the FBI makes an effort to watch foreign students and business-people, China's flood has simply overwhelmed the bureau. "The FBI is ensnarled in a cesspool of Chinese agents and their cases are all stuck at first base," says James Lilley, former U.S. ambassador to China and former CIA station chief in Beijing.

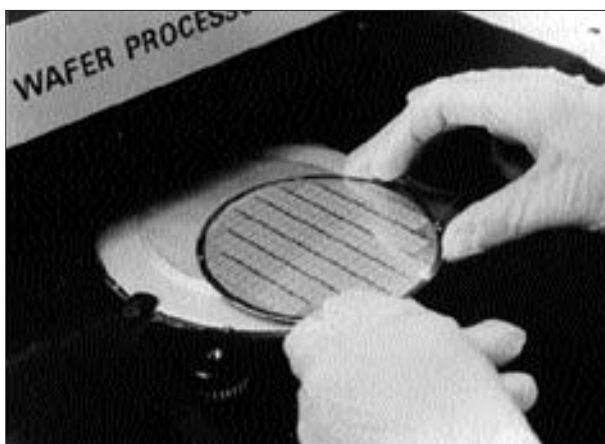
Unlike the Japanese, who have focused on ways to take over commercial markets, China's strategists have military goals. They covet technology such as missile guidance systems that can use signals from the U.S. satellite-based Global Positioning System for precise targeting information. They go after small cruise missile engines, night-vision equipment, upper-stage rockets, and nose cones for globe-spanning nuclear weapons—all items that may shift the balance of power in the next decade and drive countries such as Japan and Taiwan into full-blown nuclear weapons programs. "You're going to see an arms race in Asia that is unequaled in history," predicts Nicholas Eftimiades, the author of *Chinese Intelligence Operations* (1994), the first open study of China's massive efforts.

Despite the ominous look of things, Lowell would find that the worrying was confined to a small group of academics, corporate security experts, and intelligence analysts, and that most of his fellow Americans were oddly serene. They have become accustomed to this seemingly comfortable new post-Cold War drift of things. In the news media, the lowering of trade barriers and the influx of foreign students are often portrayed as part of a vast, multicultural economic march toward a peaceful "globalism." Increasingly, the notion that national borders still matter is dismissed as outmoded.

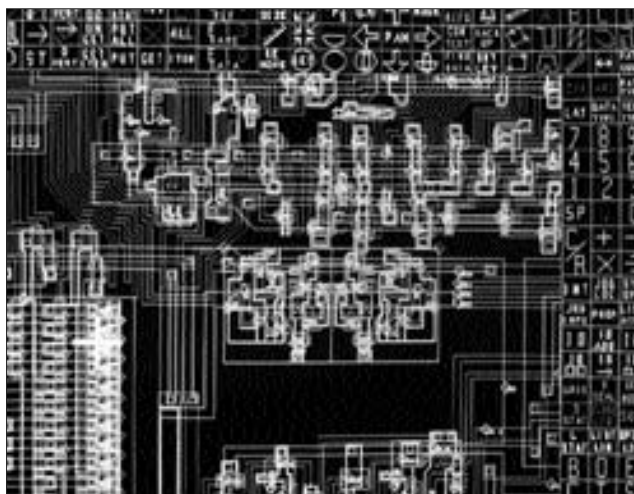
"In Taiwan," according to a recent front-page *New York Times* article, "the high-tech migration is being called the '*rencai hiliu*,' literally the 'return flow of human talent.' But for the thousands of American-trained scientists, weaned on late-night pizza at the computer center and shopping at the mall, it is simply called the reverse brain drain."

To the modern American mind, this might seem normal. To Lowell's 19th-century mind, fresh from a time when the United States fought for its borders and established its industrial base, it would raise a thousand questions. Why were foreign science and engineering students increasingly taking top graduate research posts at places like Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology? Why was the U.S. government subsidizing these positions? Why had U.S. students' scores in math—a subject that gave Lowell great pleasure and great wealth—dropped to among the lowest in the industrial world? Who had let the U.S. public school system—once the envy of the civilized world—decline to such an abysmal state? Were U.S. brains being drained or starved and rejected? Was the nation's base for creating technology, the bedrock of preparedness for all wars in this century, being exported? Why?

The notion that the United States is in the midst of a "war by other means" might seem foreign to some, but certainly not to Lowell. A fan of protective tariffs, he would not be surprised by the malign effects of lowering trade barriers. One of the more dire effects, not yet widely noticed, is the formation of an alliance among the Russian and Italian mafias and Colombian drug cartels. These allies, taking advantage of the new regime of relaxed national sovereignty, now move money from country to country much faster than national police forces can track it. According to the U.S.



Knowledge-intensive industries such as semiconductors are key targets of economic espionage. The United States recently regained its lost lead in semiconductors.



Treasury Department, criminal organizations now send some \$100 to \$300 billion around the world looking for investments. Casualties caused by the flow of drugs into the United States already closely approximate those of a war. And the massive profits that flow out of this alliance light the fuses of future wars by criminalizing entire countries and buying elections, politicians, and officials to thwart U.S.-backed reforms.

Lowell's world was Darwinian: you could keep what you could protect. It is still Darwinian when it comes to cross-border transactions, but Americans in the post-Cold War era feel they are protected in a snug global cocoon of laws, customs, and rights. When it comes to some new things, such as the nation's addiction to electronic information, the cocoon is hardly more than a fiction.

"People don't understand what's out there," explains Ambassador Anthony C. E. Quainton, who until recently headed the State Department's Overseas Advisory Council (OSAC). The council was formed in 1985 to help U.S. corporations deal with the threat of terrorism. In the 1990s, reports from some of the 1,300 U.S. corporations in communication with OSAC shifted the group's attention more toward economic espionage.

The most aggressive intrusions come in Japan, South Korea, and China, where the threat begins with the telephone sitting on the hotel room's nightstand. Quainton says he knows of entire hotels where the phones are

set to receive, even when they're hung up. "The whole hotel is live." He strongly advises business people not to talk about technology, patents, or business plans in their rooms. "If they can't see the enemy, they may not think he's there, but he is."

This is a hard notion to sell to normally garrulous American executives. Jan Herring, the former CIA counterintelligence expert, recalls making many visits to U.S. companies to warn executives that when they make calls from overseas, they are "talking to the world." On the average call, Herring estimates, a "minimum" of five countries could be listening. "It always begins with your host country, then there were the Soviets, the British, the Chinese, and the Japanese." (By law, he notes, the U.S. National Security Agency, America's eavesdropping agency, can't listen in on Americans, but it might be tapping the second party on the line if that party is a foreigner.) While governments still hold sway over the phone lines, newer forms of communications, including satellite links and cellular phones, are much easier to tap, and have thus tempted thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of amateurs to get into the spy game.

And the threat is still greater when it comes to computer communications. "If you are using the information highway internationally, especially without encryption, you are at great risk," Roger P. Watson, an FBI deputy assistant director, recently told a group of business security executives. But the bureau has found that new habits are hard to change. Harold Henderschot, the FBI's top computer expert, says he often visits companies and finds they have piled their computer security equipment in a corner, uninstalled. The usual explanation is that it makes the computers too cumbersome and slow.

Lowell, a man used to thinking in terms of the whine of gears meshing and the rhythmic stutter of levers working, might have trouble getting his Newtonian mind around electronic technologies, but he would quickly recognize the law that protects them—the law that hasn't changed all that much since his time. Today, it lags far behind the threat. Part of the problem is that victims don't complain. "The only thing a company will protect more than its information is the fact that they've lost it," explains Dan Swartwood, head of a private security consulting company. If there are mute victims, or victims who don't know they are victims, there are no witnesses, no complaints, no cases, no new law, and no actuarial base for insurance underwriters.

A new survey of 325 unnamed American companies by Swartwood and a colleague, Richard J. Heffernan, shows that this troublesome void is rapidly growing. The anonymous companies reported 32 cases of theft of intellectual information per month in 1995, more than three times the rate found in a similar survey in 1992. The losses amounted to \$5.1 billion. The most common suspect was a former employee, contractor, supplier, or temporary. Ranked by nationality and frequency of complaints, the top perpetrators were Chinese, Canadian, French, Indian, and Japanese, in that order.

The survey findings roughly track with the experience of the FBI, which is currently investigating 800 economic espionage cases in 23 foreign countries. The agency's load of such cases has doubled since 1994.

Then there are pesky problems of definition. If a horse is stolen from the neighbor's barn, that is a serious theft; but if his exotic, proprietary, million-dollar software program is surreptitiously removed and zipped away on the

Internet, that may not be a serious theft because the “horse,” the original copy, is still in the barn.

Similarly, if a spy comes out of a foreign embassy and snatches a company’s secret, that is espionage and automatically brings in the FBI. If a spy comes from a private company or a university and steals the same secret, the FBI may not have a legal basis to intervene. More than a few corporate victims decide to suffer their losses in silence (out of the view of stockholders) and not summon the FBI. “I know it’s a controversial topic . . . there are a whole myriad of problems here, but we need each other,” explained Pat Bryant, the FBI’s chief of internal security, to a group of corporate executives at a recent OSAC meeting at the State Department. He pleaded with the companies to give the bureau more detail about the nature of their losses, and urged them to use their lobbying clout to help push for more modern laws.

“What we need is more ammunition from you to show how great the threat really is,” countered one executive.

Edward Miller is a former president of the National Center for Manufacturing Sciences, a government-industry consortium founded in 1984 to help renew U.S. high technology and promote it abroad. He often hears the same kind of death-spiral, chicken-or-egg logic. Without dramatic proof of theft and damage, he says, U.S. companies simply won’t change their ways. But unless they do change their ways, many companies will never be able to generate dramatic proof. Miller worries that, thanks to America’s feeble defenses against economic espionage from the 1960s to the 1980s, the scent of blood is in the air. It creates a hunger for more. He recalls a barrel-shaped Czech engineer yawning during a technical meeting in Prague some months ago. Miller, also an engineer, had been talking about the promise of new U.S. machines. The Czech shrugged; that wasn’t the need in his factory.

Miller challenged him. “I said, if I went into your facility, would I find the latest design capabilities, the latest computer-controlled machines? He says, ‘Yeah.’”

During the Cold War, anything the Czechoslovakian government factory needed, the engineer explained, was quickly stolen by the KGB from the United States or developed from stolen blueprints. The process took a few months. Thanks to the KGB connection—now ended—Czech plants today are relatively modern. What we need, said the engineer, are management skills, marketing, and accounting.

“I had one U.S. government representative there whose jaw hit the floor,” recalls Miller. “What they were essentially telling us was that their espionage defeated us. If they defeated us when our guard was up, do you honestly think they would stop?”

To Miller, understanding the problem of economic espionage is simple; dealing with it, though, is a formidable problem. “We are an open society. What we have to learn is how to get as much as we give away.” It will be a new and daunting challenge for some, but one that would make Mr. Lowell feel quite at home.

Guarding the Wealth of Nations

by Patrick Marshall

Intellectual property, once a subject with all the sizzle of tort law reform, has suddenly become a major issue in U.S. foreign policy. Conflicts over patents and copyright protection are now a powerful irritant in America's relationships with several foreign powers. The subject was high on President Bill Clinton's agenda during his postelection swing through Asia last fall, and it is sure to remain a premier concern in the decades ahead as the United States fights to hold its place in the new knowledge-based world economy.

American business and political leaders are alarmed that important U.S. industries—mainly those that sell easily copied intellectual property, such as computer software, movies, and recorded music—are being mauled by a new breed of foreign pirate armed with computers, CD recorders, and tape decks. And even those industries that deal in less easily copied intellectual properties—such as patented seed varieties and pharmaceutical formulas—are losing money and, perhaps in the long run more important, competitive advantage. By some estimates, the losses are big enough to sway the U.S. balance of trade, already chronically in deficit.

Although it is difficult to gauge the full magnitude of the problem, evidence of large-scale theft abounds. In March 1996, for example, authorities in Singapore, acting on tips from the U.S.-based Business Software Alliance, conducted two raids that resulted in the seizure of more than \$2.4 million worth of pirated computer CDs. In May 1996, South Korean authorities raided a video piracy operation in Seoul, seizing 1,176 VCRs, 145,794 unauthorized copies of motion picture videocassettes, and 111 other machines used in the duplicating process. That same month, police in Siedlce, Poland, confiscated approximately \$4 million in copying equipment and pirated video and audio tapes during a raid on four warehouses.

Overall, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) estimates, U.S. companies are losing about \$40 billion per year in overseas sales through such piracy of intellectual property. Most of the losses are experienced by three industries: computer software, entertainment, and pharmaceuticals. And by most estimates, the biggest losers are software companies. According to the Business Software Alliance, U.S. software companies lost \$15.2 billion to overseas pirates in 1994, the latest year for which figures are available.

These are not trifling sums. Two years ago, a dispute over software piracy almost ruptured U.S.-Chinese relations. In February 1995, after repeated complaints about the sale of illegal copies of U.S. software in China, the Clinton administration threatened to impose \$1 billion in trade sanctions on China. The threat was lifted after Beijing promised to crack down on the pirates, a vow that some in the industry say has been only partially fulfilled. But China is far from the worst transgressor. While the

Software Publishers Association estimates that \$187 million worth of software was pirated in China in 1994, that figure is dwarfed by the losses in Japan and Germany. According to some estimates, \$2 billion worth of software was pirated in Japan in 1994 and \$1.8 billion in Germany. But these figures represent only a fraction of software sales in these countries—and relatively little of the theft is the work of organized counterfeiters.

All pirates aren't foreigners, of course. While the software industry estimates that roughly 85 percent of software piracy occurs outside the United States, that still leaves 15 percent—or nearly \$3 billion worth—that takes place within U.S.

borders. The culprits range from people who peddle hot videotapes to friends who share a copy of WordPerfect or Netscape Navigator.

Some critics have charged that the numbers used in this debate are at least slightly cooked. The estimates are, for example, usually based on guesses about how many legal copies of a program or a video movie *should* have been sold in a given country, assuming buying patterns similar to those in industrialized countries. That is a rather large assumption, however. Nor are estimates of losses to U.S. companies based upon known sales of pirated software or other products a particularly reliable guide. Just because pirates may be able to sell a large number of videotapes at \$5 per copy doesn't mean that legitimate versions priced at \$15 would sell as well. Every sale of a pirated product does not, in short, necessarily equal a lost sale of a legitimate product.

While the exact amount of the losses is debatable, there is no doubt that they are significant. And the United States—with an economy based increasingly on knowledge-related goods—has made it plain that it intends to pressure trade partners as well as international organizations to provide stronger protections for such properties.

But there is another side to the issue. During the latest round of negotiations surrounding the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT),



In Hong Kong, as in many other Asian cities, it's often easy to find stores openly selling pirated computer software.

Brazil and India led a group of developing countries that argued that strict patent and copyright protections give unfair advantages to developed countries. They argued that since the industrialized countries generate the most patents and copyrighted works, strengthening protections would only serve to perpetuate their dominance. Indeed, they said, it was insane to increase the industrialized world's grip at the very moment when knowledge has become far more vital than ever before to national economic success.

There are, in fact, important tradeoffs that occur in patent and copyright protection—tradeoffs that must be reckoned with at the national as well as the international level. Deciding how much protection to extend to intellectual property involves judgments not only about the rights of inventors and other creators but about how best to encourage creativity. Is it fostered by granting relatively large rewards to creators, thus spurring individual effort, or by ensuring greater access by more people to the fruits of invention?

The very notion of creators' "rights" is largely a product of the West, which is home as well (and by no accident) to the idea of private property rights. Kings and other potentates throughout recorded history paid rewards or pensions to those who provided special services—including inventions or other innovations—to the state. But it was in Western Europe that this practice was formalized into a system. The term *patent* itself is of English origin and is derived from *letters patent*, which were documents that conferred some royal privilege upon the recipient, often a monopoly market. In return for such favors, the artisan was expected to train a certain number of local citizens in the art or craft in question. Often, the service provided by the artisan was not even an original invention. In the early 14th century, for example, King Edward III of England awarded royal grants to foreign weavers who agreed to settle in England. Similarly, in 1440 John of Shiedom was given a letter patent in return for having imported a new method of processing salt.

This was not just an English practice. Galileo, for example, received a 20-year patent from the doge of Venice in 1594 for an irrigation device he had invented. But it was in England that patents were elevated from the personal dispensation of a ruler to a matter of law. The first statement of the rationale that underlies modern patent law was made in England in 1559. An Italian living there, Giacompo Acontio, applied to the crown for a patent, arguing that without it others would copy the furnace he had designed. "Those who by searching have found out things useful to the public should have some fruits of their rights and labors," Acontio argued. He received a pension of £50 a year and a letter patent.

In practice, however, letters patent were often abused. They usually guaranteed tidy profits to those who held the monopolies and, indirectly, to the monarch, but it was generally citizens who footed the bill in the form of higher prices, with no real innovations being introduced to the community in return. As a result, the Statute of Monopolies—the first statute directly addressing patent issues—was adopted in England in 1623. It declared patent monopolies invalid, with a single exception: patents of up to 14 years could be granted to "new manufactures within this Realm to the true and first inventor or inventors thereof." In short, patents were now to be given only for inventions, and only to the person or persons who invented them.

> PATRICK MARSHALL is research manager of InfoWorld, a weekly magazine covering the computer industry. Copyright 1997 by Patrick Marshall.

Is creativity fostered by granting relatively large rewards to creators, thus spurring individual effort, or by ensuring greater access by more people to the fruits of invention?

It was the United States, however, that set up the first formal system of considering and awarding patents. Prior to the American Revolution, most of the colonies had procedures for granting such patents. Indeed, the first patent in British America was awarded in 1641, not very long after the first European settlers arrived. But it was after the Revolution that the former colonists carefully set about formalizing a patent system as a goad to innovation. Intent on catching up to European industries, not bound by a set of existing legal traditions, and already working on a new legal framework for the country, Americans must have come almost naturally to the idea of grounding patent and copyright protection in the Constitution. Accordingly, Article I of the Constitution grants Congress the power “To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries.”

The first copyright laws are of somewhat more recent vintage than the first patent laws. After all, until the means to copy written works on a large scale existed—printing presses and, more recently, copy machines and other new technologies, such as the Internet—there was not much fear of unwarranted copying. And as with patents, the first copyright laws were motivated by a desire to circumscribe rather than bestow a monopoly right. During the late 17th century, book publishing in England was controlled by a small group of publishers. The Statute of Anne, enacted by Parliament in 1710, limited this monopolistic control over works to a specified number of years, after which anyone could publish the work.

The main changes in U.S. patent and copyright laws over the years have entailed alterations in the types of things covered and the period of protection offered. Currently, U.S. patents—which protect original inventions of products or processes—have a life of 17 years, with a possible extension of five years under certain circumstances. Copyrights—which protect written works and works of art, including illustrations and music—provide protection for the author’s lifetime plus 50 years. But even today the lines are not always clear. Until relatively recently, for example, software was treated solely as copy-rightable material. Beginning in the 1980s, under pressure from some companies that wanted the shorter-term but more far reaching protections offered by patents, the Patent Office began awarding patents to software under the rationale that software is a process that operates a machine.

While no one has seriously argued against the importance of copyright laws, some critics, including even major software vendors such as Oracle Corporation, developer of one of the most popular database programs, argue that patent laws can have a chilling effect on innovation. The cost of simply applying for patent protection—which involves a search costing about \$10,000 to see if there are any conflicts with existing patents—can be daunting for small businesses and individuals. Patent insurance, designed to protect companies against losses due to patent infringement suits, is also expensive, usually running around \$50,000 per product.

The burden of keeping up with relevant patent applications filed by others while trying to develop products can also be chilling. A programmer writing a new application, for example, needs to keep on top of new patents to make sure his program won't infringe on someone else's patent and perhaps land him in a multimillion dollar lawsuit. Over the next year, the U.S. Patent Office will grant more than 100,000 patents, and of those around 4,000 will be software patents.

Even if the system runs like clockwork, there is room for abuse. One San Diego software company was recently driven out of business when a judge forced it to pull a product from the market because a competitor had filed a patent infringement suit. It didn't help the hapless company when the suit was later found to be groundless.

Many critics argue that patent protection has been extended to some types of products and processes that should not enjoy it. Computer software is one of those questionable areas. Critics argue that the Patent Office's examiners are generally not qualified to judge whether a program is sufficiently original and innovative to deserve patent protection. That is why, for example, Compton's NewMedia was granted a patent for basic techniques for searching and retrieving information from CD-ROM databases in August 1993, only to have the patent withdrawn the next year after other computer companies complained that there was nothing unique in Compton's method.

An even more obvious problem area is patents for surgical and medical procedures, which the Patent Office has been issuing since 1952. This wasn't a problem until recently, in large part because such patents were not enforced by the patent holders. Over the past 10 years, however, that has changed. In one recent case, Samuel Pallin, an ophthalmologist, attempted to collect a small fee for use of his patented procedure for sutureless cataract surgery. His fellow ophthalmologists responded by lobbying for federal legislation to prevent such patents from being awarded, and H.R. 1127 was duly introduced in the House of Representatives in March 1995. It does not appear to have much chance of passage.

Pallin's patent was declared invalid by a federal court in 1995, but his claim raises troubling questions. Even some medical groups, such as the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, have come out against patents for medical procedures on the grounds that they tend to slow the dissemination of techniques and lead to higher health-care costs. Critics also note that, just as with software patents, the Patent Office does not have examiners qualified to determine if a particular procedure is unique and deserving of a patent. Finally, given that most innovations in procedures come out of research hospitals and universities, it's not at all clear whether patents serve as an incentive, since research will continue at those institutions whether the patents are available or not.

Patent and copyright policies are political compromises that attempt to strike a balance between two important interests. On the one hand, society at large has an obvious interest in seeing innovations publicly disclosed, disseminated widely, and commercialized as quickly and as inexpensively as possible. On the other hand, patent and copyright policies assume that innovations will not be as forthcoming, or that disclosure will be slower in coming, if the inventor or author does not have the expectation of controlling their creation. In the short run, consumers may pay higher prices for things that enjoy such

protection, but in the long run they will benefit from a larger number of innovations.

Many of these issues are played out in a different form on the international stage, where the fact that the key actors are countries rather than individuals and companies—and the fact that the wealth of nations is at stake—profoundly changes the terms and tenor of the debate.

While most countries today have some sort of patent and copyright laws, there are significant differences between U.S. laws and most foreign laws, differences that U.S. patent and copyright owners say often work to their disadvantage. The United States, for example, is virtually alone in reserving patents for the first inventor of an invention, and in keeping the details of an invention secret until the patent is issued. And some countries, particularly in Asia, have historically refused to offer patent protection to foreign inventions that affect protected domestic industries. Some countries allow the foreign invention a local patent but make licensing to local manufacturers compulsory.

The extent of copyright protection also varies widely around the world. Some countries—including Costa Rica, Romania, and Turkey—do not extend protection to software at all. Many developing countries have provided protection only to copyrightable works that are first published locally. Indeed, even the primary international agreement on copyrights—the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works—does not yet include software among protected works. (The Berne Convention may, however, soon be amended to include protection for software.) As a result, some countries have not honored software copyrights granted by other countries. Even Canada did not provide copyright protection for software until 1988.

The most recent round of GATT negotiations did result in clear movement toward global standardization of patent and copyright policies. Under the new agreement, completed in 1994, a minimum duration of 20 years from the filing date was set for patents. What's more, members must provide such protection "without discrimination as to the place of invention, the field of technology and whether products are imported or locally produced." Copyrights were not overlooked, either. Copyright protection was specifically extended to software under the agreement, to last for not less than 50 years.

What is perhaps most significant is that the signatories—and there are more than 120 members of GATT, including most of America's major trade partners, with the notable exceptions of China and Taiwan—promised to provide "national treatment" to foreign patent and copyright applicants. That is, for-

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Software "pirates" include those who share programs with friends. U.S. piracy amounts to \$3 billion.

eign applicants will face the same requirements and be offered the same protections that are applied to local applicants.

Still, there are lots of trap doors in the agreement. For example, it doesn't eliminate compulsory licensing. And it allows countries that are just beginning to offer patent protection for pharmaceuticals and agricultural chemicals to overlook the existing patents of foreign products.

What's more, while GATT members were given a period of only one year following activation of the agreement, on January 1, 1995, to implement the provisions, developing countries and those moving from a centrally planned economy to a free-market economy—meaning the former Soviet-bloc countries—are exempt for an additional four years. And the least-developed countries have up to 10 years to comply.

The biggest joker in this deck of international agreements, of course, is enforcement. While the GATT agreement and other international treaties provide mechanisms for resolving disputes, experience indicates that such forums rarely deliver satisfactory results.

As U.S. trade officials noted during the 1995 copyright dispute with China, all the necessary international and Chinese laws were already in place to protect American software. It was only the will to enforce those laws that was lacking. It took the threat of U.S. sanctions to help Beijing find its will. But could a lesser trading partner have won China's compliance by working through an international forum? Not likely. In short, while recent changes in international law affecting intellectual property are important, for the time being it is realpolitik, chiefly in the form of bilateral trade pressures, that will continue to have the greatest impact.

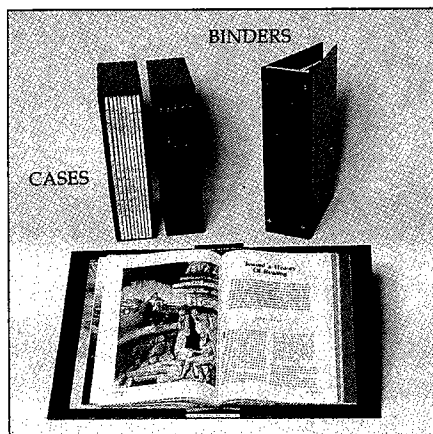
But while the world's industrialized countries, led by the United States, continue to step up efforts to counter international thefts of intellectual property, they would do well to consider both the historical context of intellectual property and the longer-term political implications of tighter enforcement measures. Most of the now-industrialized countries, including the United States, achieved that status by building upon the innovations of other countries in an age when "borrowing" an idea—for a better plow design, a textile loom, or a new variety of wheat—didn't lead to potentially crippling international trade sanctions.

Can the United States reasonably blame a developing country for allowing local companies to produce badly needed drugs at one-tenth the cost of those obtained from a U.S. pharmaceutical company? And can the United States reasonably blame a developing country if it does not want to support the idea of patent protection for seed varieties if it means the country's farmers will have to pay five times as much to plant their crops?

Ultimately, a system that encourages innovation by securing appropriate rewards for inventors provides the biggest payoff for everyone. But the industrialized countries need to recognize that if they are going to change the rules of the game—and formal intellectual property protections do represent a change in the rules for most countries—they are going to have to help provide alternative routes of economic development.



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The Death of The Footnote

(Report on an Exaggeration)

Like reports of Mark Twain's death, those announcing the demise of the footnote have been somewhat exaggerated. But if not dead, the footnote, and its uses, are generally misunderstood. Our author explains.

by Anthony Grafton

For a few weeks in the late summer and early fall of 1996, men bit dogs. Well, not quite, but something almost as surprising happened. Footnotes grabbed headlines. An article in the *New York Times* informed astonished readers that a controversy had broken out on this uncompromisingly obscure subject. Many scholars, the reporter claimed, are turning away from footnotes. Experienced historians, intent on communicating with their readers, spurn annotations as excess baggage weighing down their lively prose. Distinguished literary scholars, intent on exploring their own experiences in personal essays, see no need to waste space on traditional forms of documentation. Once upon a time, extensive footnotes identified their authors as veteran explorers of libraries and archives. Now they merely reveal the pedantry of young writers trying, and failing, to find the elegant outlines of readable books in the rough stone blocks of their dissertations. Songs of experience have become songs of innocence.

University presses traditionally specialized in bringing out books in which a thick overgrowth of footnotes covered, and

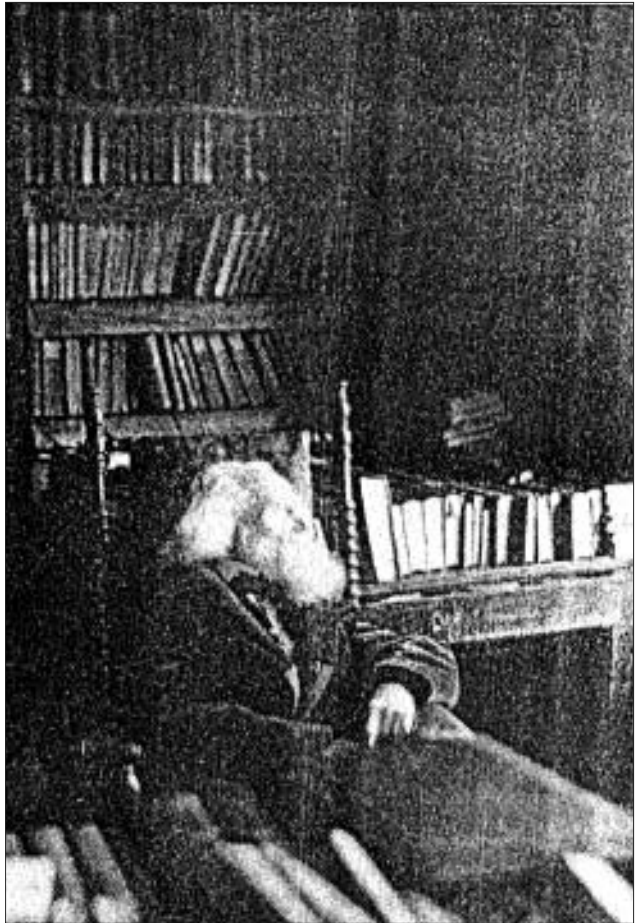
sometimes even overwhelmed, the pages they belonged to. But even university press editors have brought out their pruning shears and begun to cut. Well-educated baby boomers, so it seems, cry out for elegantly written and printed essays to read amid the bubbling cappuccino machines and smooth paneling of Borders and Barnes & Noble superstores. But trade publishers take little interest in such titles, since they usually sell only a few thousand copies. Subsidized learned presses have rushed in where free-market angels feared to tread. Discouraging or refusing the monographs that once filled their lists, editors are hunting for experienced scholarly authors willing and able to write for a larger public—and to do so without citing tons of primary and secondary sources. Pedantry is out, essays are in. Perhaps the distinguished historian Gertrude Himmelfarb was prescient when she asked, in an essay published a few years ago, “Where have all the footnotes gone?” The footnote—or so the *New York Times* article indicated—has become an endangered species, abandoned by its own progenitors and stripped of its fragile niche in the ecology of publishing.

This dramatic story provoked widespread discussion. The *Guardian*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and many other publications weighed in with essays, most of them deploring the footnote's supposed decline and fall, many of them deploying heavy-footed humor at the expense of that ever-attractive subject, the folly of scholars. Footnotes, after all, have served as the butt of countless jokes. Noel Coward notoriously remarked that turning from a main text to a footnote is very much like ceasing to make love in order to go downstairs and answer the door. Yet once a brush with extinction loomed, this unloved literary device found more articulate defenders than did the blue whale or the whooping crane.

As usual, however, the blare of the Anglo-American publicity machine did more to drown out than to further serious discussion of the subject on which it had seized.

Few of the columnists and reporters who followed up the original piece went into the situation as deeply as its author: none of them significantly revised his account. Yet he did not, and naturally could not, treat the issues exhaustively. In fact, the footnote is hardly endangered, and this is only one of the many features of its past history, present state, and future prospects that are widely misunderstood.

A closer look at scholarly publishing in the 1990s reveals a scene far more varied—and in part more traditional—than the Footnote Furor of '96 suggested. It's true that many trade publishing houses find the books that once made up the middle of their lists unappealing, while university presses welcome them. Sales of 3,000 to 5,000 copies will not carry the costs of a trade title—but they will fill university press managements



Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886) is considered the father of modern, documented historiography.

with glee, and their coffers with a modest amount of gold. Many university press directors and editors like to stress these facts, which give their calling and their products a new glamor. Fairly enough, they emphasize that the books that now head their lists might have graced a trade list 10 years ago and are aimed at a wide, if not an enormous, readership. Certainly, such books are the likeliest university press products to find a place among the Starbucks mugs and T-shirts at a shopping mall bookstore.

But no alert consumer of university press books would suggest that essays written for a general public dominate their lists. For the most part, university presses still publish learned books. Editors still commission scholars to write reports assessing the manuscripts submitted to them; they still try to help authors attain more accuracy in content as well as more

polish in style; in short, they still try to publish books that offer the reading world new knowledge. And even though most editors insist that they do not wish to help universities make decisions about the promotion of junior scholars, their default product remains the first book of a recent Ph.D. recipient out to shed the chrysalis of assistant professorship for the wings of tenure. A press's willingness to offer a firm contract for publication may well determine the outcome of a young scholar's career. The books that win such approval almost always retain the scars of their origins, in the form of extensive documentation. Without this, after all, authors unknown to anyone but the directors of their dissertations can hardly expect to be taken seriously.

As to the senior scholars who professed their distaste for footnotes, they belong to a special, long-established category—that of the GOSH, or Grand Old Scholar and Historian. Daniel Boorstin and Gordon Craig, both of whom the *New York Times* quoted, sailed into port decades ago, on books that carried substantial cargoes of erudition in their holds. They have demonstrated their command of vast numbers of primary and secondary sources over and over again since then. Editors, reviewers, and readers don't need footnotes to assure them of such scholars' competence and probity—any more than they did when Princeton University Press published R. R. Palmer's magnificent, footnoteless *Twelve Who Ruled* (1941), which received universal acclaim and found tens of thousands of buyers, more than 50 years ago. The liberties that university presses allow such authors are hardly new, any more than is the search for readable books by reputable scholars. For all the changes in the retail book market, in other words, and despite the financial incentives and problems to which university presses must respond, source references are hardly in

danger. Nor are the kinds of books for which they have traditionally been written. A little historical perspective instills calm.

Today, as in the past, a look at the characteristic products of most university presses will cure insomnia. Jargon still clots the language, learning still knots and gnarls the sentences, and footnotes or endnotes still supply a quarter to a third of the content of most university press books. Most of them are more likely to bring a glaze like that of fine Sung porcelain to the eye of the general reader than they are to kindle controversy—or to ring up sales. Most of them, in fact, will find buyers in the mid three figures, and many will lose money for their publishers. And that is as it should be. University presses, like other complex organizations, have many purposes. But they receive tax exemptions because they vigorously promote the distribution of new and financially unremunerative forms of knowledge. I myself have cheerfully lost large sums of money for distinguished academic publishers in this country and abroad. But I have never had the slightest difficulty finding a university press to take on my large and unsaleable books. (One editor in England did murmur, when I handed in a typescript of more than usual length and complexity, that I seemed to want to confirm the widespread view that Oxford is the home of lost causes.) As long as this is true, footnotes are not in danger.

In one respect, however, the *Times* story on footnotes was more than overdue. For if the footnote's safety seems assured for the foreseeable future, its nature and history have gone unexamined for far too long. Even the strongest defenders of the footnote have generally not reflected very hard or long on where this strange literary device comes from. And that seems very odd. Scientists' strategies for gathering, recording, and publishing their data have been intensively studied in recent decades. The social transactions that go into the creation of experi-

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ments and the rhetorical conventions that govern the publication of their results—so we now know—have a history of their own. No one interested in the origins and development of the sciences in the modern world can ignore it. The social and rhetorical histories of humanistic scholarship, by contrast, have barely begun to be examined. In his notebooks, Louis Pasteur recorded his procedures in unsparing detail, much of it not meant for public consumption. These have been analyzed in great depth and have provoked sharp debate. But the notebooks and drafts of Leopold von Ranke, the 19th-century Berlin professor who is usually considered the founder of modern, documented historiography, have attracted little attention—even though they too raise fascinating questions about the distance that separates Ranke’s “private science” from his publications.

Ranke, as everybody knows, transformed the writing of history from a literary genre to a scientific practice, relying on massive comparative study of archival documents to show “*wie es eigentlich gewesen*”—“how it really was.” He often typifies a better age than this one in nostalgic accounts of that bygone era when historians were men and footnotes were footnotes. In fact, however, a comparison of Ranke’s published histories with his working drafts and notes suffices to show that nostalgia for an age of real erudition is misplaced. Ranke transformed history, in theory, by insisting that every narrative about the past should be accompanied by a systematic analysis of the sources it rested on. But his practices were far less rigorous than his theoretical professions. Ranke worked as sloppily as any modern. Only after he had composed his texts did he add footnotes to them. Sometimes he could not find the original source or document from which he had drawn a fact or a conjecture—a problem which he dealt with not by altering his text but by the simpler expedient of omitting the footnote in question. For all his brilliance as a stylist and critic, in other words, Ranke, the father of modern historiography, was no master of the footnoter’s craft. This may help to explain why he was sav-

agely attacked, soon after his first book appeared, for the inaccuracies and oversights that disfigured its documentation. Ranke might have been the Altvater of the modern historical profession, but his footnotes—and the research procedures they recorded—hardly deserve to be cited as paragons for the old to lament or models for the young to imitate.

The story of the footnote in fact began long before Ranke, or the 19th century, dawned. Even in the ancient world, when most historians saw their genre as one that depended on oral reports from participants in the events they described, some found it necessary to cite official documents, such as treaties. Josephus, the historian of the Jews, and Eusebius, the historian of the early Christian church, produced elaborate compilations of earlier sources. They wanted to show irrefutably, by full quotation of the relevant materials, that the Jewish tradition was older and more profound than the Greek and that the best of pagan philosophy and theology looked forward to Christianity. Church history, in short, not only relied on, but largely consisted of, large gobbets from primary sources—as it still does, in devout Catholic and Protestant circles alike.

The Roman lawyers and Catholic theologians who produced the authoritative commentaries and reference books of late antiquity and the Middle Ages also devised systems of abbreviations and glosses to indicate the sources they relied on. Systematic documentation, in short, has existed for a long time. Practitioners of intellectual professions that rely on authoritative core texts have used it extensively for millennia; historians have done so almost as long, if less consistently. Evidently the footnote didn’t come into being, like the modern university, in early 19th-century Berlin. It belongs to the long-term history of scholarship and narrative.

The modern footnote—with its full bibliographical ideals, discussion of variant texts and sources, and separate place on the page—is only one species of this larger genus. It seems to have arrived at its definitive form in the later 17th century. In that age of systematic and shattering doubt, when all certainties about the Bible, God,



The scholar cloistered among his books has long been a popular target for satirists, as in this 15th-century German woodcut from Sebastian Brant's *Das Narenschiff* (Ship of Fools).

and nature seemed to dissolve, Descartes and a slew of lesser critics denied that historical knowledge was either certain or useful. Footnotes couldn't prove the utility of studying the past. But they could prove—or so many scholars thought—that a particular story about the past rested on all the best sources, that it had as much certainty as statements about human and historical affairs could attain. Pierre Bayle's great *Historical and Critical Dictionary* of 1697, which consisted in large part of footnotes (and even footnotes to footnotes), amounted to a massive, polemical demonstration that a limited measure of historical knowledge could be rescued from the criticism of the skeptics. His book had numerous rivals, scores of imitators, hundreds of readers. Within a few decades after it had appeared, scholars were producing footnotes by the bushel—and satirists were making fun of them for doing so. (One of them, Rabener, wrote an entire dissertation in footnotes, without a text; after all, he explained, nowadays erudite footnotes, not eloquent texts, made authors

famous.) The footnote as we know it, in other words, is the precipitate of philosophical discussions that almost all makers and readers of footnotes have forgotten.

As this awkward fact suggests, footnotes can't in fact perform all of the functions that most writers and readers think they can. They were never intended to do so. No historian can back up every statement of fact in a tightly constructed narrative with a footnote—the sheer accumulation of detail would be staggering. And no accumulation of footnotes can prove that a historian has really captured the truth. Footnotes indicate some of the ways in which their author has analyzed the sources and drawn inferences from them. But the next historian to work through the same archive will find different documents, or different passages from the same documents, more important—or will read the same passages in quite different ways. (Consider, for example, the way in which Daniel Goldhagen, reading archival documents about the German police battalions that slaughtered Jews during World War II, wove quite a different story from them than did Christopher Browning, who had based a pioneering book on the same texts a few years before.)

At best, footnotes can only document part of a story—and a subsidiary one at that. The historian's text offers a narrative about the past—a narrative that, as theorists love to remind us, follows literary conventions rather than obeying purely factual constraints. The historian's footnotes offer a narrative about the historian who wrote the text—one just as literary, just as conventional, and sometimes just as fantastic as the text above them. They tell a story of sources consulted, reading done, interpretations accepted or dismissed: they amount to a staccato, partial intellectual biography. But as a device never intended to do more than shore up one version of a contentious event or interpretation, they cannot possibly support an entire book, detail by detail.

Nonetheless, footnotes are vital to modern scholarship. They are vital, first of all, because they give us reason to believe that their

authors have done their best to find out the truth about past events and distant countries. In an impersonal world, where credentials give the only assurance that a particular doctor or dentist is “good enough” to remove our appendix or fix our teeth, solid, well-executed footnotes indicate that a particular historian is “good enough” to interpret the thought of the Founding Fathers or the development of sanitation. They give us reason to trust what we read—even when, as usual, we don’t check them.

Footnotes have a second, even more important role, as well. They give the concerned reader purchase, leverage, an Archimedean point from which to shift and crack the apparently marmoreal certainties of the text they supposedly support. Ancient historians wrote to give pragmatic and moral instruction, couched in the form of examples that would hit home more forcefully than general precepts. Their texts admitted questions about politics and morality. But they generally assumed that the core narrative was something set, assured, solid, not to be argued about. Modern scholars, by contrast, write to offer the best hypotheses they can, on the basis of

the sources they know, about what happened and why. Their reconstructions of the past offer the closest approximations possible to a truth that eludes final establishment as determinedly as Daphne eluded Apollo. Footnotes, though always radically incomplete, at least suggest the processes of research and thought that scholars have carried out. By doing so, they also suggest ways that the author’s own formulations can be unraveled. Devised to give texts authority, footnotes in fact undermine. They democratize scholarly writing; they bring many voices, including those of the sources, together on a single page. By doing so, they make the reading of many modern works of scholarship—for example, those of the great Weimar émigré scholars, such as Erwin Panofsky and Ernst Kantorowicz—a peculiar and wonderful experience. The reader hears, and even takes part in, a conversation, with the author and the author’s witnesses alike—a conversation more intense, more critical, and more suggestive than the reading of a bare text can ever be. Long may footnotes wave—or, if they refuse to do anything so undignified, long may they drown the reader in a happy variety of emotions, anecdotes, and opinions.

Malraux's Mission

Official symposia and ceremonies marked France's "Malraux autumn" last year.

But they were not the end of interest in the writer who became his nation's first minister of cultural affairs. His vision of the unifying power of national culture grows even more pertinent, to France and to other nations, in these contentious times.

by Herman Lebovics

On November 23, 1996, amid elaborate and solemn ceremony, the remains of the writer, freedom fighter, and statesman André Malraux were transferred—*translated* is the mediievally correct term—from the Verrières cemetery outside Paris to France's highest place of honor, the Pantheon. President Jacques Chirac spoke on the occasion, though not so movingly as Malraux had himself in 1964, when, as minister of cultural affairs, he presided over the same rite for the Resistance hero Jean Moulin.

The tradition of translating the remains of France's secular heroes to the Pantheon (exclusively a men's club, until Marie Curie's recent arrival) extends to the rise of the First Republic in 1791. But even before that, the domed church that Louis XV built at the highest point in Paris's Latin Quarter, on the site of an even older abbey church, provided earthly shelter for the remains of Saint Geneviève and an assortment of sacred relics. These were unceremoniously tossed out in 1791, when the structure was given its classical Roman name, but scenes from the saint's life adorning the interior walls and a cross at the top of the dome suggest a religious legacy that three secularizing republics have been unable entirely to erase.

The Pantheon's mingling of sacred and secular elements provides a particularly appropriate setting for the remains of André Malraux (1901–76). No other Frenchman in this century, save perhaps

his patron Charles de Gaulle, worked harder to sacralize the French republic. De Gaulle's strategy was to recover the glory of France through a bid for European and even global leadership, the strategy of great power politics. Malraux sought to do so through the preservation and extension of French culture, hoping to make it not only a powerful force in the world but the pre-eminent force for unification in a divided nation.

The Pantheon reburial is only one recent attempt at enshrining Malraux. In his new biography of the man, *Signé Malraux* (1996), Jean-François Lyotard, the philosopher famous for having announced the demise of all grand "metanarratives" such as Christianity and Marxism, declared his deep affinity with Malraux. According to Lyotard, the Malraux of the years after World War II was a man courageously living and acting in a world with neither the "God-story" nor any of the humanist variants to guide him.

Lyotard's attempt to annex the spirit of postwar Malraux to his rewarmed existentialism is understandable, but it requires him to play a little too loose with the biographical facts. After all, how existential is a man who embraces the ideal of a renewed France, with art as the weapon and de Gaulle as its savior?

Still, Lyotard's gambit points us toward a central mystery in the life and career of Malraux. How did this man who lived through so many of the nonre-

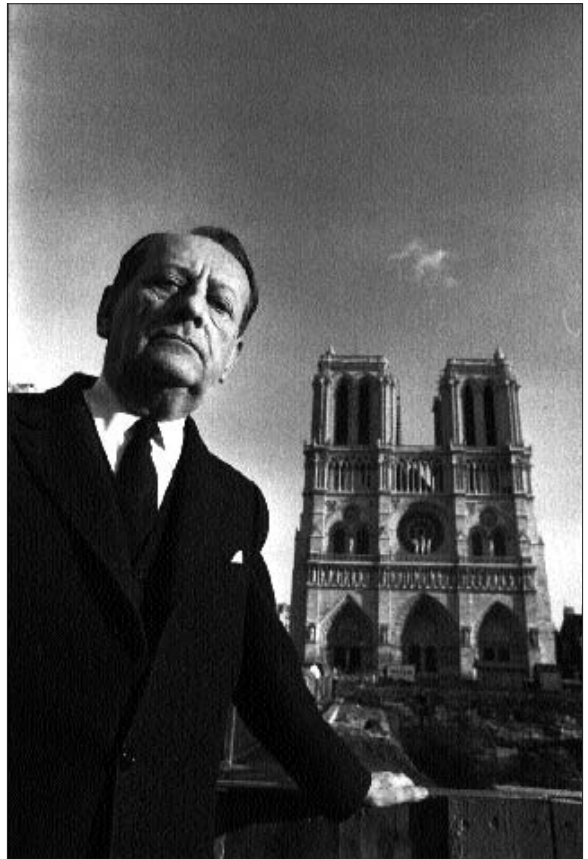
ligious metanarratives of the 20th century—aestheticism, communism, anticolonialism, and finally a kind of mystical nationalism—do so while preserving the persona of the rebel—a rebel, moreover, who seemed to invent himself, again and again, under the pressure of some of the more dramatic circumstances of our century? How do we make sense of this human paradox, this rebellious true believer?

His beginnings hardly augured a heroic life. Born in 1901 into a lower-middle-class family, Malraux spent most of his childhood and adolescence in the drab Paris suburb of Bondy, where his mother, grandmother, and aunt tended a small grocery store near the local railroad station. (His father, a man of uncertain employment who gambled on the stock market, separated from Malraux's mother in 1905.) By the time he had finished elementary school, in 1914, he had begun reading widely, if unsystematically, both French and foreign authors, and, when possible, attending the theater in Paris—habits he kept through his middle-school years, while the Great War took its heavy human toll. Formal schooling ended at age 18, when his application for admission to the Lycée Condorcet was refused. He later wrote that he had hated his childhood, but being the only male in a house with three doting women must have made him into what the French call a *fils gâté*, a spoiled son.

How to live? He could always be a grocery clerk. But that was not very promising. So Malraux began the practice of self-invention that would characterize his entire life. Years before, while a schoolboy, he had found books at bargain prices in the stalls and quayside boxes of Paris's second-hand dealers. He now devoted himself full-time to haunting the used book and print dealers, looking for unnoticed treasures, which he then resold to upscale

rare book and antique print dealers. Postwar economic uncertainties had driven French investors into safe and tangible investments, including rare books, prints, and objets d'art. Systematically working the shops, he lived from his work as a *chineur*, as such scourers were called, and at the same time continued his aesthetic self-creation.

One of his buyers, the rare book dealer René-Louis Doyen, started a literary magazine in 1920. He invited the young aesthete to write something for the first issue. Malraux's article was appropriately trendy: an appreciation of cubist poetry. Valuing both his entrepreneurial skills



André Malraux (1901–1976), minister of cultural affairs, stands before Notre Dame in the late 1960s.

and his aesthetic judgment, another dealer offered to underwrite a literary series, the authors of which Malraux would select. He moved then to the avant-garde leftist review *Action*, and then to edit books on cubist art for the important dealer of avant-garde art, Daniel-Henri Kahnweiler. Kahnweiler

would publish Malraux's first book, *Paper Moons* (1921), a fantasy with strange animals acting in surreal ways, illustrated by Juan Gris, Georges Braque, and Fernand Léger.

As Malraux moved around the Latin Quarter, he met and became friends with most of the leading literary figures of the day: Blaise Cendrars, Louis Aragon, Jean Cocteau, Raymond Radiguet, Paul Éluard, Tristan Tzara, Antonin Artaud, Erik Satie, André Derain, Maxim Gorki, Ilya Ehrenburg. Most important, he formed a fast friendship with the poet Max Jacob, a Breton-born Jew whose conversion to Catholicism would fail to spare him from death in a concentration camp in 1944.

Throughout the 1920s, Malraux lived a calculated if feverish aesthetic existence, sporting a fresh rose in his buttonhole and striding through the Latin Quarter in a silk cape. An early biographer, Jean Lacouture, described the young artist as "a cautiously subversive dandy, a poet alertly spacey, a talented critic, polymath, collector of rare sensations, and aesthete of unquenchable curiosity, [who] threw himself into the movement of the day."

While working at *Action*, Malraux met and fell in love with Clara Goldschmidt, the daughter of German Jews who had settled in France before the war. At the review, Goldschmidt specialized in finding and translating German authors who were part of the Weimar Republic's lively intellectual scene. In his first phone call to her, she recalled in her memoirs of those years, she already recognized "the value he attached to each word, the nuance which individualized for him this one, or discolored that one." Malraux courted her successfully by, among other little sweet things, telling her that she was the most brilliant person—after Max Jacob—he had ever met. They eloped to Italy and, when their money ran out, returned to be mar-

ried at a local *mairie* in Paris.

The aesthete's pursuits put little food on the table, but for two years the new couple lived adequately off investments in Mexican mines that Malraux had made with his wife's small inheritance. When the mine stocks plunged in 1923, André proposed to Clara that they go to Cambodia and rob a temple, or at least as much of one as they could carry out of the jungle. The Royal Road, extending from Siam (Thailand) to Cambodia, had many well-known temples along its way, the most famous of which, Angkor-Wat, stood at its southern terminus. They would travel the road, find one of the lesser temples, and, as Clara remembered him saying, "take some statues and sell them in America."

So off to Indochina they went, locating the temple of Baneai-Srey and making off with some of its reliefs. On their return to Phnom Penh, however, their plan was foiled. They were arrested by the Sûreté, the colony's counterpart to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and were charged with archaeological theft. Only by mobilizing the literary world back in Paris did Clara Malraux save her husband from a three-year prison term. Impressed by the great names on the petition that she and André Breton, the surrealist chief, had circulated, the judge suspended the sentence.

This brush with colonial justice and a new friendship with his Saigon lawyer, Paul Monin, an active supporter of the Vietnamese in their growing resistance to French rule, moved Malraux toward involvement with the anticolonial struggle. That such activity would allow the as yet unrepentant plunderer to get back at the authorities who had thwarted his collecting and charged him with a crime made the enterprise all the more compelling.

With Monin, Malraux launched an opposition newspaper, *L'Indochine*. The

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Biographer Jean Lacouture described Malraux as ‘a cautiously subversive dandy, a poet alertly spacey, a talented critic, polymath, collector of rare sensations, and aesthete of unquenchable curiosity.’

timing couldn't have been better. The Chinese Revolution was still unfolding; its Russian counterpart was not a decade old. Young Vietnamese intellectuals—both the nationalists and the communists—were beginning to mobilize their compatriots for the struggle against French rule. Publishing the first of 46 issues in June 1925, a talented team of European, Vietnamese, and Eurasian contributors waged a spirited if brief journalistic campaign to win greater rights for the people of Indochina.

Regretting that he had licensed the troublemaking paper, the colonial governor-general decided to shut it down. In the last issue, published on August 14, Malraux warned the French against the folly of denying Cochinese and Vietnamese access to France and to French culture: “Young Indochinese will leave and be educated elsewhere. Full of resentment, they will return hostile to the France that made them second-class subjects of the Empire.” Twenty-five years later, as minister of cultural affairs, he would express a similar belief in the binding power of national culture. Some claim that Malraux acquired his belief in the political uses of culture during his involvement with the communists of the Popular Front in the mid-1930s, but it is clear that the revelation came 10 years earlier, in Vietnam.

After this period of political activism, Malraux began to turn his Indochinese experience into literature. During his return to France, he drafted *The Temptation of the West* (1926), which, like Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*, explores the crisis of values in European civilization from the perspective of a visitor from the Orient. Two years later, he published *The Conquerors*, a novel set during the Chinese Communist struggle against the

Kuomintang in Canton. Two years after that came *The Royal Way*. This cautionary tale of treasure hunters in Indochina dramatized the folly of mistaking the way of alienation, violence, and crime for the royal road—a moral failure that Malraux now at last recognized in himself.

Malraux's literary career reached its zenith in 1933, when he received France's coveted Prix Goncourt for *Man's Fate*. As Hitler assumed power in Germany and went about crushing all remnants of leftist opposition, this novel treated a hauntingly similar event in another part of the world: the Kuomintang's bloody suppression of the 1927 communist revolt in Shanghai, China's first and only urban proletarian uprising. The title of the book, an explicit reference to Pascal, evoked the 17th-century Catholic writer's overwhelming sense of the divine power over human destiny. Malraux's novel responded to Pascal's determinism by speaking of people's need to struggle against their destinies, to define their humanity by acting, even if the end for us all, finally, is death. The theme struck a responsive chord among progressive readers throughout the world.

Despite his lionization as one of the leading European novelists of the Left—and despite receipt of an enviable sinecure with the Gallimard publishing house—Malraux felt that he could no longer live solely for art. Longing for the fraternity he had experienced while editing *L'Indochine*, Malraux jumped into leftist politics in the 1930s, landing close to—but not among—the French Communists. There would be writers' congresses, visits to the Soviet Union, a trip to Hitler's Berlin with André Gide to seek the release of political prisoners, and direct involvement in the Spanish Civil War. For the last, Malraux organized a squadron of volunteer pilots and, though a novice himself, flew several sorties against Franco's fascists.



Malraux, in uniform, talks with Albert Camus (extreme left) and other editors of the Resistance newspaper Combat in 1944.

in late 1936 and early 1937 before republican generals ordered him and his ragtag España unit back to France. The novel *Man's Hope* (1937), and a film of the same name that he made during the last days of the Spanish Republic, provided moving testimony to a lost struggle against the encroaching barbarism.

Man's Hope would be the last of Malraux's major novels. Many other works would follow, more (though slighter) fiction, autobiographical works, and, most important, his books on art, written mostly after World War II. But his engagement with politics and his intensified search for some collective "Anti-Destiny" meant that his days of dandified aestheticism were definitely over.

In March 1937, he sailed to the United States to raise money for the Spanish Republic. At a fund-raising banquet in New York, speaking about the heroic resistance to Franco's troops, Malraux seized the occasion to combine political with cultural criticism. Specifically, he denounced the fascists' "aestheticization of war," a phrase he had learned from the German

culture critic Walter Benjamin, then living in exile in Paris. The ideas that Benjamin had set forth in a recent essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," would have a decisive influence on Malraux's thinking not only in the late 1930s but up through his years as the minister of cultural affairs.

Benjamin had begun his influential Essay by pointing out that the making and showing of art first took place in the context of community and ritual. The communal and spiritual setting gave the artwork its meaning and its satisfactions, its personal immediacy and its awesome majesty. He called that effect of both immediacy and distance the work's "aura." In our secular age, Benjamin explained, art had lost the aura that, for instance, a 13th-century Christian experienced when looking at the stained glass windows of Sainte-Chapelle. Today, we can still admire their fineness, their richness of color, and their glorious translucence. We are both drawn to them and awed by them as a unique cultural creation, as we are by

a great musical or theatrical performance. But in the modern age, when art no longer has a context besides other art, the aura originates in the special rapport between what live artists do and the impact of the work of art on the feelings of the audience at the moment of performance, viewing, or creation. This is not community; it is only a moment of communion. And with mechanical reproduction—records, radio, photographic reproductions of artworks—even this kind of aura is in jeopardy. Moreover, Benjamin concluded, there is no returning to auratic art. Any effort to do so produces only false community, specious unanimity, coercive harmony—the art of Nazi and Fascist rallies and parades, ceremonies and political symbols.

In an article he wrote the year before he went to the United States, Malraux took up Benjamin's argument. "No one believes that reading a *chanson de geste* is the same as hearing a bard reciting it." Nor could contemporary art be given back its aura by artificially connecting it to the *Volk* or the masses. Malraux would not defend what he called "the old chimera" of art guided by the masses and submitted to them for approval. Nor was he expressing nostalgia for a lost pious aesthetic traditionalism. Rather, he wanted to tie the present to the past in a unique way: "Each art innovation of our day, modifies the whole of the past heritage of the Civilisation in which it is done." Art comes from, and belongs to, all of humanity in all its varied and dialectical manifestations. This both socialists and liberals understand. Fascists and National Socialists, by contrast, employ categories such as race and nation; they posit essential differences in humankind. The communion fascists seek can be realized only in a military order. "And fascist art, when it exists, [promotes] the aestheticization of war."

But here Malraux set off in his own direction. Benjamin wanted to reveal the vicious politics behind the intoxicating rituals. He praised Bertolt Brecht's plays and poems for doing just that. Malraux proposed something more existentially hopeful, a kind of aesthetic immortality: we may die, but the great art we create continues and deepens the humanity of all

past and future generations. He wanted all that made up "*le destin*"—a term he used to mean, depending on the context, all determinisms, all limits, fate, and death itself—"transformed into human consciousness, awareness." In this formulation of 1936, we see already his emerging vision of the importance of art for both the present and the future of humanity: art was the highest expression of the human, the liberation from the limits of the human condition.

But how to carry out such a vast transvaluation? Here Malraux marked a path for the rest of his life, one that he stayed on despite his transformation from a militant communist ally to a fervent Gaullist. At the end of his 1936 essay, he called for a new "idea, a new state structure, a heritage, and a new hope." In 1936, in the midst of Popular Front activities in France and the Civil War in Spain, he meant the triumph of a communist state. In the wartime Resistance in southwestern France and Alsace, where he fought bravely and was wounded several times, the state began to mean something like the unity of the French people against foreign oppressors. By the end of the war, in fact, he had given up his hopes for communism. He judged the world had changed. The Soviet Union was not endangered but rather a cause of danger to its neighbors.

While fighting in the Resistance, Malraux had written to de Gaulle in London offering his support. The message never got through, and Malraux thought he had been snubbed. But after the war, mutual friends who knew that the two men admired each other arranged for a meeting, and the historic alliance was formed.

The search for an Anti-Destiny had brought Malraux from a quirky political leftism to an even more quirky mystical Gaullism. Gaullism held two completely contradictory and yet, for him, necessary attractions: one was instinctive and personal, the other, deliberate and social. In an interview he gave last fall, Jorge Semprun, a former minister of culture in Spain, explored his old friend's Gaullist infatua-



Bringing Mona Lisa to America: Malraux with the Kennedys in 1963

tion: “Malraux loved the rebel in de Gaulle. Although ideologically completely opposite from Malraux, de Gaulle said no [to German victory and to the Vichy regime], and battled the course of history. De Gaulle said no. The rebel attracted Malraux, fundamentally, despite what would become institutional Gaullism.”

The initial attraction seems plausible, but why did Malraux, the eternal rebel, stay with de Gaulle until the very end of the General’s reign? The answer lies in Malraux’s complex adaptation of Benjamin’s thought. By 1945, disappointed by the failure of Soviet communism to create true community, Malraux had accepted Gaullism as the means of restoring the lost social frame of French culture.

De Gaulle, Malraux gambled, had both the mystique and the political skill to restore the aura that united people and culture.

Joining the General’s effort to renew the nation meant losing many long-time friends on the left and bearing up under the frequently hurled charge of turncoat. It also meant having to collaborate with right-wing Gaullist politicians who worried that, deep down, he was not a true convert, that he had abandoned neither the aesthetic dandyism of the 1920s nor the social radicalism of the 1930s. Malraux, for his part, believed that his Gaullist persona was a part he had to perform in order to accomplish what he believed was necessary for France and for the arts. As he confided to his friend Roger

Stéphane, “Intelligence is knowing how to play your role in the play.”

After serving as information minister in de Gaulle’s short-lived postwar government, Malraux served his leader during the out years by championing a principled left-Gaullism, refusing to deal with Franco or his Spain, signing letters denouncing the use of torture against Algerian rebels, voicing support for the fledgling nation of Israel. But the threat of civil war brought de Gaulle and his followers—including Malraux—back to the middle of the political fray. In 1958, units of the French army fighting in Algeria were threatening to revolt if Paris admitted defeat and surrendered the country to the insurgent Arab and Berber majority. Parisian politicians, fearful *pièdes noirs*, and the putschist military all put their hopes in de Gaulle. Again, he came to power and acted decisively. Staring down the generals, he made peace with the Algerian rebels and conceded the dissolution of most of the empire.

The cultural dimensions of the conflict were less easily solved and, in fact, plague France to this day. In Algeria, the *pièd noirs* had developed a settler mentality that identified the people of metropolitan France as superior to all others. The repatriation of one million of these *pièd noirs* to France made their racism increasingly a French national problem, especially with three million North African Muslims now living in the country.

Soon after becoming president of the new Fifth Republic in 1959, de Gaulle asked Malraux to be France’s first minister of cultural affairs. “Cobble together some offices for Malraux,” he instructed his premier, Michel Debré. “It’ll enhance the image of your government.” Bending to de Gaulle’s will, but not very enthusiastically, the stolid technocrat installed the loose cannon in his new ministry.

Malraux served in that post for 10 years. He began by immediately taking over the funding of Henri Langlois’s jumbled treasure house of classic films, the Cinémathèque. He initiated a thor-

ough scrubbing of the walls and buildings of Paris, uncovering the beautiful white-gold surfaces of the city so long coated with the purple-black patina of careless urbanism. He had historic districts defined, saving many urban neighborhoods and whole towns from what had happened in so much of the United States.

Besides preserving culture, he worked hard to support the creation of new works. Shortly after taking office, he organized the first International Exhibition of Young Artists. To help young directors of the cinematic New Wave make movies, he created a loan fund by arranging for a special tax on box office receipts. He commissioned Georges Braque to paint a ceiling in the Louvre, André Masson to do the same for the Odéon theater, and Marc Chagall to apply his brush to the domed ceiling of the Paris Opéra.

To Malraux, art could be diplomacy by other means. In 1963, he sent Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* to Washington and New York City to add to the luster of the Kennedy cultural awakening and—more important—to enhance the prestige of France as the cultural capital of the world. Just as he brought America its first blockbuster art show, so Malraux and his ministry provided inspiration for

The search for an Anti-Destiny had brought Malraux from a quirky political leftism to an even more quirky mystical Gaullism.

the National Endowment for the Arts, created under John F. Kennedy’s successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, in 1965.

Administratively, Malraux oversaw most of France’s beaux-arts institutions, including the school of architecture and art, all the state museums, the Paris music conservatory, the national theaters, and the film administration (including its school). Applying a lesson he learned from the Popular Front government, he began building multipurpose houses of culture throughout France, bringing Paris, as it



May '68: Malraux supports his leader.

were, to the provinces. He was not given the national radio or television to administer. Seeing them more as entertainment or political tools, de Gaulle kept these, and the powerful Ministry of Education, out of Malraux's hands.

Building on the tradition of both royal and republican France, Malraux established the Fifth Republic's political commitment to enhancing the cultural life of its citizens. He saw himself as completing the work of the Third Republic's schoolmasters, who had brought quality national education to every town and village of the French hexagon. Malraux reined in or upstaged many of the fossilized culture guilds, including the French Academies. With his regional houses of culture, he prepared the way for subsequent culture ministers to decentralize cultural policy and spending. Today, in a nice equilibrium, French people still speak of a national culture, but regional councils and mayors spend most of the nation's culture budget.

The student uprising of May 1968 undid de Gaulle and with him Malraux. As part of their rejection of France's centuries-old *dirigiste* tradition, the student rebels rejected a culture that seemed to them imposed by the state from above. Aestheticism, communism, and Gaullism—the worldly schools in which Malraux had studied—had done little to prepare him for the demand for cultural democracy. Being the target of a rebellion of young idealists was painful to the one-time rebel. At the height of the street disorders, he wanted to place himself at the head of his chief administrators on the bottom step of the grand stairway of the old Louvre—his arms spread wide to block the vandals from the treasures of the nation.

The Christlike sacrifice was unnecessary. The students spared both the Louvre and the ossified Comédie Française. Instead, they vandalized the stock exchange and occupied the art school, the Odéon theater, and the Sorbonne. Malraux withdrew from politics to write—in various guises—his memoirs. We can understand why, a few years later, well into his seventies, he wanted to go fight, one last time, to save Bangladesh.

The ministry Malraux created not only survived the upheaval of 1968 but thrived, attracting France's most talented civil servants and taking its place alongside the other important offices of French government. In 1981, François Mitterrand added the portfolios of radio, television, and national education to culture minister Jack Lang's office. Yet though the ministry went forward and expanded, the May student uprising cast serious doubt on the most important part of Malraux's mission: producing condi-

At the height of the street disorders, Malraux wanted to place himself on the bottom step of the grand stairway of the old Louvre—his arms spread wide to block the vandals from the treasures of the nation.

tions under which “aura” could be approximated through the creation and display of artworks in a shared culture. No one could deny that Malraux had created a ministry of artists. Yet by putting most of his energy and discretionary budget into the care and feeding of the art makers, he had left the public behind and in some cases alienated it—a problem that is familiar to Americans who have followed their own nation’s culture wars, particularly the battles over work supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Given Malraux’s complicated legacy, it is possible to read several meanings into what the French government last year called its celebratory “Malraux Autumn.” Paris cynics point to the colorless nature of President Chirac’s Gaullist regime. With no celebrated contemporary intellectuals to crown the current administration, the latter-day Gaullists appeared to be digging up and recycling an old figure of undisputed standing. At the same time, the Gaullists’ desire for closure might have been as important as their need for orchestrated nostalgia. Writing “finished” to the Malraux–Lang era permits the current culture minister, Philippe Douste-Blazy, to propose a new direction, revamping arts training and focusing aid on what he calls the “culture industries” of film, radio, television, and recording.

Yet in all the official fuss about Malraux the writer, the engagé, and the trustee of culture, there was also a recognition—from both the Left and the Right—that the goal of constructing an inclusive national culture for the sake of a

stronger national community is laudable and perhaps essential. Having found emptiness rather than liberation in post-modern disengagement and irony, many French intellectuals who are seeking sustenance in public engagements such as support for Bosnia or justice in Africa also find themselves defending old institutions of art and taste as well as the idea of a mystical True France. To them, Malraux’s project holds great interest.

In particular, it brings into focus the dilemma of cultural modernity in France and in other societies dealing with the challenge of multiculturalism. How can a degree of community and aura be revived amid the centrifugal forces of competing identity movements? Both in France and the United States, when culture is left to the private media conglomerates, then sitcoms, flashy-fleshy music videos, dumb-bad movies, and violence-saturated songs end up being the main agencies “constructing” the citizenry. But when the state tries to function as a bridge between the cultural heritage (including the tradition of the new) and the living nation, it risks its legitimacy among some groups with its failures, and among others with its successes. Artists, meanwhile, risk being taken as political hostages in the combat. The French are right to honor Malraux for engaging these dilemmas. The mission he set for himself, even with its dissonances, has increased in urgency, for France and for all other nations in which the ties of social solidarity are frayed and in risk of breaking.

CURRENT BOOKS

Abel Strikes Back

BORN TO REBEL:

Birth Order, Family Dynamics, and Creative Lives.

By Frank J. Sulloway. Pantheon. 653 pp. \$30.

by Andrew Mendelsohn

Western history has never looked simpler than in *Born to Rebel*. In this celebrated study, history begins in—and never really leaves—the playpen. At every moment, in any family, brothers and sisters struggle against each other for parental investment, emotional and material. The skills and attitudes developed through this striving, according to historian of science Sulloway, make up a large part of what we call personality. And personalities fall into two groups because siblings enter this intrafamilial Darwinian struggle from two different and unequal starting points: first-born and later-born. Since the first-born starts (ideally speaking) with everything, with the undivided attention of the parents, his or her main task is to keep things the way they are. The task of the later-born is to change the status quo. First-borns tend to be “conservative”; later-borns, rebellious and innovative. The engine of history, writes Sulloway, is this family dynamic “writ large.” Revolutions begin not with a bang but a bicker.

Scientific revolutions from Copernicus’s to Darwin’s to Einstein’s, and social revolutions from the Protestant Reformation to the French Revolution, have been led, we learn, by later-borns. First-borns tend to oppose such radical changes. Sulloway backs up these assertions with what is surely the most impressive database and statistical analysis in the history of historiography. He has spent 25 years gathering biographical information on 3,890 participants in 28 scientific revolutions and on some 1,500 participants in social revolutions, including a number of American reform movements. With the statistical apparatus of *Born to Rebel*, history writing truly enters the computer age.

The simplicity of Sulloway’s thesis doubtless accounts for some of the book’s success at

garnering attention from the news media, to whom facile solutions to intractable problems are always good copy. The same simplicity may well make for a more skeptical reception among scholars. The big surprise of the book, however, is the complexity of Sulloway’s model of family dynamics and how they shape personality. No less than eight variables go into scoring each individual on the scale of radical behavior: birth order, parent-offspring conflict, the number of siblings, the age gaps between them, gender, age at parental loss, social class, and temperament. What more multiplicity could a model accommodate? Although the starkness of its thesis and the presence of statistics may lend *Born to Rebel* an aura of reductionism, the book is in fact no more reductive or one-sided than many of the major theses that have been advanced by historians. Sulloway’s modeling shows that statistical methods can sometimes render generalizations about human behavior *more* subtle and sensitive, not less so.

Sulloway needs all these variables, it is worth adding, else he would be stuck with an embarrassing problem: many revolutionaries were first-borns, including Galileo, Einstein, Newton, Freud, and Luther. This problem is surmountable because, as Sulloway points out, his argument is not that birth order is an infallible predictor of revolutionary personality but, rather, that it is a better predictor than any other variable. Even more embarrassing is the inconsistent pattern of later-born participation in Sulloway’s 28 scientific revolutions. For example, he reports that laterborns were 4.6 times more likely than firstborns to support Darwin and 3.6 times more likely to support Einstein on special relativity—but only 1.3 times more likely to support Einstein on *general* relativity. Some scientific revolutions, such as germ

theory, turn out to have been led by first-borns; they were 3.3 times more likely than later-borns to support it.

In an apparent effort to resolve this inconsistency, Sulloway groups his scientific revolutions by their radical or conservative *political* implications rather than by the degree to which they broke with scientific precedent. Thus the lack of later-born support for Einstein's theories (as opposed to, say, Copernicus's) is attributed to Einstein's having not been "ideologically" radical. Instead, argues Sulloway, Einstein's was a "technical" revolution. But this is tendentious, given the ways in which Einsteinian relativity fundamentally transformed our understandings of space, time, matter, and energy. Similarly, it is misleading to call germ theory, which revolutionized Western medicine and transformed countless aspects of social life (often against great resistance), a "conservative theory" simply because Pasteur was a political conservative.

Will these faults prevent historians from dropping what they are doing in order to follow Sulloway? The question is moot, because the greater reason why historians are unlikely to emulate him is the sheer difficulty of mastering statistical methods the way he has and (perhaps most important) building databases like his. More likely, *Born to Rebel* will serve as a warning about standard categories of explanation, such as social class. Sulloway consistently found that social class did not correlate with social attitudes, such as liberalism; with political actions, such as voting to execute Louis XVI; or with stances toward ideologically charged ideas, such as natural selection or heliocentrism. This is news that historians (and politicians) cannot ignore, whatever they may think about birth order.

It will be interesting to see whether *Born to Rebel* spurs a rethinking of several generations of sociological and historical analysis based on the idea of "interest." Here the seemingly self-evident assumption is that individuals are motivated primarily by their interests, whether these are professional, economic, or social. Drawing attention to the patent but often ignored fact that people frequently act contrary to their obvious interests, Sulloway gives us a possible key to

understanding why. For instance, why did Charles Darwin, an upper-class gentleman whose wealth was inherited from his landed family and whose mind was molded at Cambridge University, that bastion of natural theology, conceive the theory of evolution? The key, says Sulloway, is development. Patterns of behavior developed in childhood, and more particularly within the family, may override the apparent dictates of professional, economic, and political interest in adulthood. One need not buy the whole argument about birth order to appreciate the value of a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between interests and other human attributes and experiences.

Yet there remains a problem. When Sulloway focuses on individuals, he is masterful and subtle on the many factors that reinforce, interact with, or counteract birth-order effects in the shaping of personality. But when he shifts his focus to history, he seldom considers any factors apart from individuals—that is, first-born conservatives and later-born rebels. Is he suggesting that there are revolutions simply because there are revolutionaries? Ironically, he himself provides the best evidence against this implausible suggestion: because of sibling rivalry, revolutionary personalities are being shaped all the time. There is a continuous supply. Yet actual revolutions are few and far between. This weakness lies at the heart of the book. Sulloway has identified a constant. And while historians are interested in constants, history is ultimately about change.

It would be unfair to say that Sulloway does not ask why one particular revolution occurs and not another. Undaunted by the irrelevance of family dynamics to the question, Sulloway ventures to suggest that modernity itself—beginning with the Reformation and continuing through the Enlightenment, democracy, and modern science—is one gigantic birth-order effect, the triumph of liberal, innovative laterborns over the ancien régime of the firstborns. Rather than spin such fancies, Sulloway would have done better to stick with the solid revelations of his database.

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Lessons of the Brillo Box

AFTER THE END OF ART:

Contemporary Art and the Pale of History.

By Arthur C. Danto. Princeton University Press. 256 pp. \$24.95

by Roger Copeland

The publishing industry's millennial bandwagon continues to roll. In recent years Bill McKibben, Francis Fukuyama, and John Horgan have, respectively, proclaimed the End of Nature, the End of History, and the End of Science. Now Danto, professor of philosophy, emeritus, at Columbia University and art critic for the *Nation*, declares "the end of art."

In truth, Danto has been playing with the phrase (running it into the ground, a less charitable reader might say) since 1984, when he published an essay with that apocalyptic-sounding title. That same year Danto began writing art criticism for the *Nation*. While there is obviously some irony in a critic's announcing the end of art and then hurrying off to catch the latest installation in SoHo, Danto recognizes the irony and attempts to address it in the book at hand: "I had in no sense claimed that art was going to *stop being made*. A great deal of art has been made since the end of art."

This is more than playful paradox. What Danto means by "the end of art" is the end of "master narratives" about art, such as Giorgio Vasari's chronicle of the evolution of Italian Renaissance painting from Giotto to Michelangelo, or, in our own century, Clement Greenberg's no-less-influential account of modernist painting between (roughly) Edouard Manet and Jackson Pollock. Both of these "master narratives" are linear, evolutionary, and progressive. In Vasari's account, the holy grail is steadily increasing verisimilitude, made possible by the gradual mastery of the rules of single-point perspective, vanishing points, foreshortening, and chiaroscuro. In Greenberg's, the brass ring is greater "purity" of medium, defined as the painter's ability to acknowledge and reveal the under-

lying nature of the medium itself: the two-dimensional canvas, the shape of the frame, the materiality of the brushstroke. Everything else—everything extraneous—has to be gradually jettisoned. Or else.

For Danto's purposes, the most important feature of both narratives is this exclusionary tendency: their willingness—perhaps eagerness—to excommunicate artists whose work lies outside the purview of their theories. For example, Vasari's narrative must inevitably exclude brilliant oddballs such as Carlo Crivelli, arguably the most idiosyncratic of all 15th-century Venetian painters. Greenberg similarly must consign the entire surrealist movement to aesthetic Siberia: "Surrealism in plastic art is a reactionary tendency," he wrote in 1939. "The chief concern of a painter like Dali is to represent the processes and concepts of his consciousness, not the processes of his medium."

Here Danto, otherwise so eager to compare and contrast Vasari and Greenberg, misses a marvelous opportunity to explore the qualities that a neo-Gothic artist such as Crivelli has in common with a surrealist such as Salvador Dali. But alas, *The End of Art* pays scant attention to what works of art actually look like. Indeed, one of Danto's salient themes is that the visual arts have been freed from traditional demands of visual connoisseurship and formal analysis: "There is no a priori constraint on how works of art must look—they can look like anything at all." Readers familiar with Danto's study of pop art, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (1981), will recognize the genesis of this argument and also will recall that one of the epiphanies in Danto's life (both in

philosophy and art criticism) was his 1964 encounter with Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box*. "Few works," Danto writes in his new book, "have meant as much to me as Warhol's 'Brillo Box,' and I have spent a fair portion of my waking time in working out the implications of my experience of it."

It's no coincidence that Greenberg's narrative account of modernism cannot accommodate the emergence of works such as Warhol's, which not only transgress the boundaries of the medium of painting but also blur the distinction between art and "real" objects. After Warhol (indeed, one could say, after Marcel Duchamp), art can, in Danto's words, "look exactly like real things which have no claim to the status of art at all."

Is Danto gloomy about the end of art? Not in the slightest. Reminding us that "master narratives inevitably excluded certain artistic traditions and practices as 'outside the pale of history,'" he offers this sanguine assessment: "It is one of the many things which characterize the contemporary moment of art—or what I term the 'post-historical moment'—that there is no longer a pale of history. Nothing is closed off. Ours is a moment . . . of deep pluralism and total tolerance."

The term "pale of history" is of course borrowed from Hegel, as is the concept of "post-history." As adopted by Marx, "the end of history" meant the end of class conflict and the beginning of true freedom. Danto draws a parallel between Marx's utopian vision of life under communism and the sheer number of options available to the contemporary artist. First he quotes Marx (in the *German Ideology*) on communist man's ability "to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the even-

ing, criticize after dinner . . . without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd, or critic." Then he quotes a 1963 interview in which Warhol makes a similar "marvelous forecast": "You [the artist] ought to be able to be an Abstract Expressionist next week, or a Pop artist, or a realist, without feeling that you have given up something."

Danto is nothing if not cheered by the prospect of an art world in which "everything is permitted." But is this really an accurate description of the present moment? How, one wonders, can a critic who spends so much time visiting today's galleries and museums (and who is intimately familiar with phenomena such as the dreary *Dislocations* show at

New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1991, or the notorious Whitney Museum *Biennial* of 1993) assert that "No art is any longer historically mandated"? Try telling that to any artist who abstains from chanting the Great Collective Race/Class/Gender Mantra, or who works in a style that is primarily abstract or formalist. The American art world of the 1990s is held in the vise grip of an

ideological orthodoxy that is every bit as restrictive (to my mind, considerably more restrictive) than the mandates of Greenbergian modernism. Not only does the "pale of history" still exist; it is the exact inverse of everything Greenberg advocated: impurity instead of purity, representational agitprop instead of formalist abstraction, and so on.

Moreover, Danto's utterly unqualified celebration of creative "freedom" would prove dumbfounding to a great many 20th-century masters—Igor Stravinsky and George Balanchine come immediately to mind—who believed that the unlimited freedom claimed by artists in the first decades of the 20th century was part of the prob-



Brillo Box (1964) by Andy Warhol

lem, not the solution.

But Danto is determined to celebrate the here and now. His satisfaction with the present moment comes through most clearly toward the end of the book (which brings together the 1995 A. W. Mellon Lectures). He extols a work featured in a 1993 Chicago exhibition of “community-based art” called *Culture in Action*. The piece that caught his eye—or rather, his sweet tooth—was “a candy bar called ‘We Got It!’ produced by the Bakery, Confectionery, and Tobacco Workers’ International Union of Amer-

ica, Local No. 552, and described . . . as “The Candy of their Dreams.” So much for the philosopher as art critic. The medieval debate over the number of angels who can dance on the head of a pin has given way, it seems, to a more pressing, contemporary, and no doubt “post-historical” controversy: how many works of art can melt in the mouth of Arthur Danto?

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Mind Matters

THE EMOTIONAL BRAIN:

The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life.

By Joseph LeDoux. Simon & Schuster. 384 pp. \$25

GOODBYE, DESCARTES:

The End of Logic and the Search for a New Cosmology of the Mind.

By Keith Devlin. Wiley. 320 pp. \$27.95

by Paul R. Gross

Science books for the general reader, on substance rather than exploits and personalities, have never been abundant. Books on frontier science have been even rarer—with reason. Scientists in the forefront of research are too busy keeping track of the work of others to toil at writing trade books, which win few scientific honors, and professional science writers tend (sensibly) to avoid areas where the only possible conclusion is “This looks right, but it may be wrong.” Yet in recent years, perhaps due to the aura of celebrity and commerce associated with such best-sellers as Stephen Hawking’s *Brief History of Time*, every biblio-supermarket now has, near the espresso bar and the CD-ROMs, a rack of new volumes of contemporary science made comprehensible. Amid the gloom of semiliteracy and the postmodern denial of special truth-value to science, this is a bright spot.

An outstanding specimen of the accessible science book is *The Emotional Brain* by Joseph LeDoux. A neuroscientist at

New York University, LeDoux writes about new understandings of emotion—especially of fear, the object of his own researches. The account is unabashedly biological: “The proper level of analysis of a psychological function is the level at which that function is represented in the brain.” It is also unapologetically evolutionary: “Brain systems that generate emotional behaviors are highly conserved through many levels of evolutionary history. . . . And within the animal groups that have a backbone and a brain . . . the neural organization of particular emotional behavioral systems—like the systems underlying fearful, sexual, or feeding behaviors—is pretty similar across species.”

This fact, and it is a fact, drives LeDoux’s history of research on emotion, which he insists has come to proper focus in neurobiology. Technical material that would obscure the argument for lay readers is omitted. But the history is accurate and fair, an estimable achievement in light of the key roles played by neuroanatomy,

the molecular biology of neurotransmission, and neural pathway tracing.

So LeDoux explains, and traces the origins of, the discovery that a small region of the brain, the amygdala, is the “hub of the wheel of fear.” He avoids anatomy lessons in describing this ancient (in evolutionary terms) structure lying beneath the cortex in the temporal lobe. And he avoids the detail of controls and statistics in clarifying what behavioral experiments on rats reveal about the trains of electrical impulses that connect the sensed features of the external world, and memories and contexts thereof, to physiological actions of the whole animal. There is no watering down. Technical evidence, indispensable to practitioners, is left out. But the conclusions, even some of their uncertainties, are there to be understood.

What about consciousness? Do these pathways and signal processings, well defined in neuroscience, explain the awareness, the *feeling* of emotion? Do snakes feel fear as we do? LeDoux’s answer is firm: “Consciousness is something that happened after the [cerebral] cortex expanded in mammals. It requires the capacity to relate several things at once. . . . To the extent that other animals have the capacity to hold and manipulate information in a generalized mental workspace, they probably also have the potential capacity to be conscious. However, in humans, the presence of natural language alters the brain significantly. . . . Whatever consciousness exists outside of humans is likely to be very different from the kind of consciousness that we have.”

This sounds like an evasion but isn’t: LeDoux is stating what we know about the biology of emotion, distinguishing

between what we can be sure of and what we must still guess about. He is not explaining consciousness; he is separating the essential, neurophysiological substratum of what is meant by “emotion” from what humans feel when that substratum of processes is operative. The re-definition of emotion in terms of neural pathways does away with older (and unjustified) psychological and philosophical distinctions, such as that between “perception” and “emotion.” These are not distinguishable conceptually because they are not distinguishable in neurophysiology. To perceive certain stimuli is to activate the machinery of emotion, whether or not conscious awareness follows. It is not that “hardwiring” is everything, but rather that some circuits function universally in giving rise to what we recognize as fear, sexual arousal, anger. This knowledge has significance beyond experiments on rats.

At the very least, it offers insight into various emotional disorders—which consist, after all, of intense feelings in the absence of any appropriate stimuli.

Conveying all this is a challenge that LeDoux meets with honor. Of course, the outcome is not perfect. Because technical detail has been excluded—for example, the full evidence that specific neural pathways exist and work

in the brain—LeDoux’s summary can seem more ad hoc and speculative than it is. What is truly speculative can appear more certain than it should. Crucial terms and acronyms (such as “NMDA” for n-methyl D-aspartate) are not spelled out. Still, I have not seen a more readable and compelling account of ongoing brain science and its implications for what it means to be human. The emotions that



mean so much to us are connected to an ancient machinery, up and running when dinosaurs bestrode the earth. To be human is to be different from all other animals, but it is also to be similar.

Scientists being human (a fact that tends to get rediscovered every few academic years), LeDoux cannot resist hinting that, however clever his predecessors, they were often misled. Neither can Keith Devlin, a Stanford mathematician-linguist of the band who have moved energetically, via cognitive science, into what used to be called “philosophy of mind.” In his new book, *Goodbye, Descartes*, Devlin is even more prone than LeDoux to suggest that those who have gone before—Aristotle to Descartes, George Boole to Alan Turing, Noam Chomsky to Marvin Minsky—approached mysteries only now being illuminated. For a book that does not go beyond reporting research-in-progress, this is quite a build-up.

If LeDoux is biological and reductionist, then Devlin is aggressively nonbiological and holistic. The best part of *Goodbye, Descartes* is its superb historical analysis of how “mind” and natural language came to be understood as products of a logic machine. It is a rare volume of this length and purpose that can deal soundly—as Devlin’s does—with the Eleatic philosophers, Descartes, Chomsky, and the post-World War II flowering of “artificial intelligence.”

Less impressive is the support Devlin musters for the book’s real claim: that two and a half millennia of logic, formal and otherwise, have yielded little of consequence in explaining how we communicate through language and, more broadly, how we think. Announcing the failure of artificial intelligence, Devlin judges the whole effort misconceived: “Of course, it could be that people have simply not tried long or hard enough. . . . But there is another explanation: that the original goal of machine [logic-based] intelligence is not possible, at least in terms of a program running on a digital computer, because human intelligence involves *knowing how*, and *knowing how* cannot be reduced to *knowing that*.” Readers will applaud or deride this

proposition, depending upon their enthusiasms. But Devlin does not prove it. Instead, he offers some striking observations, especially on conversation and the extent to which it can and cannot be captured in rules of logic.

The problem, as Devlin and his companions in argument explain, is that the abstractions of logic, adequate though they may be to syntax (grammatical rules), do not come to grips with meaning (semantics). It is fine to recognize the existence of a brain-centered Universal Grammar and a “language of thought” common to us all, whatever words and syllables happen to comprise the local language. But the logic of that grammar does not, Devlin insists, represent meaning: “There is considerable evidence to suggest that logical form, or any variation of logical form, provides at best a very poor picture of mental activity, and at worst is both misleading and a completely inappropriate way to think about mental and linguistic activity.”

On this point Devlin is more certain than most experts, who are divided. He insists that there is no algebra of conversation and (more to the point) no conceivable method of devising one. Therefore, he would substitute a sort of ethnomethodological catalogue of conversational structures, in which mathematical logic is used as a tool but not given pride of place. Yet it is a long stretch from showing that existing formulas for communication are too simple to concluding that the entire analytic tradition of language and reasoning is a failure. It’s not that easy to bid Descartes goodbye.

Never mind: this is frontier science, conveyed by a practitioner who cares about and knows how to enliven the relevant history—which happens to include the work of some of humanity’s commanding intellects. Like LeDoux, Devlin avoids technicalities without Disneyfying the issues. If these two books foreshadow more of their kind, then those who despair of the public understanding of science can take heart.

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Contemporary Affairs

DARWIN'S ATHLETES: How Sport Has Damaged Black America and Preserved the Myth of Race.

By John Hoberman. Houghton Mifflin.
326 pp. \$22.95

USA Today recently carried a front-page story about Dexter Manley, the former Washington Redskins All-Pro defensive end, who was about to be released from prison and was trying again, after numerous failures, to recover from the cocaine addiction that was ruining his life. At first glance, this could have been a white athlete's story. After all, many notable white athletes, such as Detroit Tigers pitching star Denny McLain, San Diego Padres pitcher Eric Show, golfer John Daly, and boxer Tommy Morrison, have been compromised, even (in the cases of Show and McLain) destroyed by gambling, drugs, alcohol, or promiscuity. Such are the dubious privileges of the successful athlete—since the days of naked competition in Greece and gladiatorial combat in Rome. What is striking about Manley's story, though, and peculiar to his downfall as a black athlete, is that he managed to get through both high school and college without learning to read.

The unique tragedy of the black athlete is brought into bolder relief by the recent appearance of boxing champion Muhammad Ali at the opening of the 1996 Summer Olympics. So severe is the brain damage Ali suffered in the ring that his palsied hand could barely hold the torch to ignite the Olympic flame. Again, many white fighters, from Jerry Quarry to Billy Conn and Rocky Graziano, have met similar or worse fates. But Ali is different. In his prime, he symbolized a new kind of athlete, one with a sense, however inchoate, of his political and social significance. Ali made the world see that he was not simply a brute but a man with convictions, a man who refused to accept the injustice of his society. Therefore, it is especially cruel to see him end up like any other pitiable bruiser.

The cases of Manley and Ali illustrate the

need for a book on the impact of sports on the American idea of race. Hoberman, a professor of Germanic languages at the University of Texas at Austin, has a clear thesis: African Americans, foreclosed from many other pursuits, have entered certain sports in disproportionate numbers and, having tasted limited but real success in those areas, distorted the meaning of that success and, more important, failed to see how it is used by whites to keep them in a degraded condition.

During the last century, Hoberman recalls, sports were thoroughly racialized as proof of white superiority and justification for European colonial dominance. But Hoberman does not believe, as many do, that the rise of the black athlete has deracialized sports or made sports into a kind of egalitarian social utopia. What has happened, he says, is that the racial meaning of sports has been transformed. Now, instead of being a sign of white superiority, athletic prowess has become a sign of black inferiority—of blacks' inability to do anything mental or intellectual. Whites are willing to grant to blacks the ability



Jack Johnson (1996) by
Jessica Gandolf

to run faster and jump higher because such a concession does not in any way affect whites' status as the superior group. These specialized physical skills have no real function in the modern world, apart from entertainment, and no power apart from charisma. And whites have long cast blacks in the role of charismatic entertainers. For Hoberman, therefore, there is nothing liberating about black athletic achievement—not for African Americans generally, and certainly not for the athletes, regardless of how much money they make. The old racial myth—of blacks depoliticized, trivialized, reduced to the Freudian primitive in the white mind—remains intact.

There is a great deal of talk about "the black body" here (academics who work in this area have all read their Foucault, if not their Heidegger and Derrida), some of it frankly unconvincing. After all, the most eroticized presences in American culture

remain the bodies of white women (and men—try selling pornography without a significant number of white people in it to anyone of any race, and see how far you get). Moreover, Hoberman does not deal with the curious fact that black men are far more eroticized than black women, especially among athletes.

More trenchant is Hoberman's discussion of the meaning of black athletic achievement within the black community. Beyond the clichéd search for heroes, he finds a troubling core of anti-intellectualism, which he links to the terrible restrictions historically imposed upon black intellectual aspirations. A complete and honest understanding of black anti-intellectualism—how it differs from its white counterpart, and what its impact has been on blacks and race relations—is badly needed. By suggesting that black athletic achievement is something that black (and white) Americans should scrutinize instead of regard with unabashed pride, Hoberman has taken a good first step.

—Gerald Early

ASSIMILATION, AMERICAN STYLE.

By Peter D. Salins. Basic Books.
272 pp. \$26

"Three cheers for ethnicity, but no concessions to ethnocentricity or ethnic federalism." With this unwieldy slogan, Salins, a professor of urban affairs at Hunter College, seeks a middle way between radical multiculturalism and resurgent nativism. That middle way is the "immigration contract" that has long existed between American society and its newcomers. Its terms are a commitment to English as the national language, an acceptance of American values and ideals, and a dedication to the Protestant work ethic. Immigrants who accept these terms are welcomed and allowed to maintain certain elements of their culture, such as food, dress, and holidays. This arrangement, Salins argues, promotes a vibrant ethnicity while protecting against balkanizing ethnocentrism.

The trouble with America today, Salins claims, is that the contract is being broken. The trouble with this book is that it fails to prove the case. On one hand, Salins sounds the alarm about "opinion elites" who, lacking confidence in traditional American values, encourage ethnocentric education and

divisive group-based politics. On the other, he offers evidence that these elites are not having much impact: immigrants continue to have a stronger work ethic than natives, demands for English as a Second Language (ESL) courses are replacing calls for bilingual education, and radical multiculturalism has already proven vulnerable to a backlash.

Nonetheless, Salins proposes strengthening the immigration contract. Here he recalls sociologist Milton Gordon's useful distinction between assimilation, which results in devotion to American values, and acculturation, or mere participation in cultural trends (such as rollerblading to rock music on the way to the mall). Salins warns that acculturated individuals have not necessarily internalized the sense of national unity that protects America from ethnic conflict. Assimilation is a more demanding and complex process.

Unfortunately, Salins ignores this complexity when he suggests that immigrants and natives have avoided conflict in the past. This seriously underestimates the public tensions and political dilemmas that accompanied the last great wave of immigration. Indeed, harsh nativism and violent episodes had much to do with the termination of large-scale immigration in the 1920s.

Salins's view of the immigrant experience is similarly rosy. To meet the terms of the contract, immigrants must often subvert deeply held beliefs. Yet in a telling passage comparing assimilation to religious conversion, Salins oversimplifies the process: "Converts do not have to change their behavior in any respects other than those that relate to the new religion. They are expected only to believe in its theological principles, observe its rituals and holidays, and live by its moral precepts." By implying that one's "theological principles" and "moral precepts" are as easily changed as one's brand of after-shave, Salins sidesteps the deeper challenge of promoting Americanism while respecting ethnicity.

—Stephen J. Rockwell

WOMEN AND THE COMMON LIFE:

Love, Marriage, and Feminism.

By Christopher Lasch. Edited by
Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn. Norton.
223 pp. \$23

When American historian Christopher

Lasch died in 1994, America lost one of its true iconoclasts. The author of such provocative works as *The Culture of Narcissism* (1978) and *The Revolt of the Elites* (1994), he could always be counted on to challenge conventional wisdom. This collection of essays, edited and introduced by Lasch's daughter, is no exception.

Written between 1974 and 1993 and organized topically rather than chronologically, the essays are only loosely connected. Still, there are common threads. One is Lasch's preoccupation with the rise and fall of "bourgeois domesticity," and along with it a change in attitudes about marriage. Until the 1700s, marriages were more a matter of business than love. Lasch cites one notable exception in "The Suppression of Clandestine Marriage in England: The Marriage Act of 1753." He relates how Parliament outlawed the medieval practice of "clandestine marriage," whereby a couple's verbal agreement to marry was, if consummated, as binding as an official marriage ceremony. In ruling against the custom, Parliament helped to suppress the emerging idea of marriage as a relationship between equals, entered into freely.

Bourgeois domesticity blossomed in the late 18th century, Lasch argues, when middle-class women began to imitate the leisurely lives of their upper-class counterparts. A greater focus on the comforts of the home and the challenge of childrearing fostered a "cult of domesticity" in which women were glorified as the "guardians of the moral

order." As women gained respect in this realm, marriage began to be seen as an arrangement based on mutual affection. This ideal was extended into civic life, and throughout the first half of the 20th century women became increasingly involved in the community, only to see that involvement diminish with the rise of the suburbs. When middle-class families left the cities, women became isolated in the home—the source, Lasch believes, of the dissatisfaction that in the early 1970s gave rise to contemporary feminism.

Underlying these historical essays is Lasch's evident belief that there is more to women's history than a long dark night of patriarchal oppression—that, to the contrary, women have actively shaped their own social roles. Lasch also rejects the notion, articulated by the psychologist Carol Gilligan, that women are more nurturing, and less egoistic, than men. In a scathing essay titled "Gilligan's Island," he calls this idea "insidious." The sexes are alike, he insists, in needing to test themselves against adversity. Whether achieved through work or through caring for others, the ideal of human life is selflessness. Hence Lasch's long-standing conviction (stated in the final essay, "Life in the Therapeutic State") that as doctors and other specialists become the fount of wisdom on family life, women are the losers. Instead of gaining self-respect by tackling some of life's hardest problems, they become passive consumers of "expert" advice.

—Robyn Gearey

History

THE MILITARY AND THE MEDIA, 1968–1973.

By William M. Hammond. Army Center for Military History, Government Printing Office. 659 pp. \$43 cloth, \$33 paper

"Our worst enemy is the press!" exclaimed Richard Nixon during the controversial U.S.-backed incursion into Laos in 1971. Such sentiments came easily to the beleaguered president who inherited the bloody stalemate in Vietnam from Lyndon Johnson. But were his sentiments justified? Did the news media contribute significantly to America's defeat in Vietnam?

Not according to this unusual official history commissioned by the U.S. Army. In the present volume (his second), civilian histori-



an Hammond finds that President Nixon's tortuous effort to achieve "peace with honor" was marked by so many contradictions that widespread skepticism among journalists was almost guaranteed.

Attempting to placate the "doves" in Congress and the clamorous middle-class peace movement, Nixon began in 1969 to withdraw American troops and "Vietnamize" the war. At the same time, he sought to pressure Hanoi into a settlement by ordering secret B-52 bomber raids and (in 1970) the invasion of communist bases in Cambodia. Many newspeople, who expected the troop withdrawals to lead soon to a U.S. disengagement, were outraged. The credibility of Nixon and his top advisers further declined among journalists just as the White House began to treat reporters as implacable foes, rebutting their coverage and seeking to control information. When the 1972 "Christmas bombing" occurred, the media were ready to believe the worst—including unwarranted enemy claims of massive civilian losses.

Given access to hitherto classified Nixon papers, Hammond dwells overmuch on the White House's machinations. The strengths of his chronicle are clarity, detail, and balance. While granting the accuracy of much reporting—on Cambodia, on drug abuse and racial clashes among U.S. soldiers, on the enemy's abortive 1972 Easter offensive—he also traces the media's shift of focus from combat reporting in Vietnam to feeding frenzies at home over horror stories such as the Mylai massacre.

Hammond concludes that adversary journalism as such did not undermine domestic support for Nixon's war. As the casualty list grew, the public's patience slowly ran out. Nevertheless, he adds that by "remaining in Vietnam to retrieve the nation's honor," many in the military "fixed their anger on the most visible element of the society that appeared to have rejected them, the press, rather than on the failed policies that had brought them to that point. When reporters took up the challenge, anger and recrimination on all sides were the inevitable result."

—Peter Braestrup

AMERICAN FRONTIERS:
*Cultural Encounters and
Continental Conquest.*

By Gregory H. Nobles. Hill & Wang.
286 pp. \$25

Long before Huck Finn vowed to "light

out for the territory" and escape the "civilizing" influence of Aunt Sally, the frontier was a potent symbol in American life. In works ranging from Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) to James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* (1823–41), from Louis L'Amour's popular novels to Hollywood Westerns, the frontier has been depicted as the essence of America. So argued the historian Frederick Jackson Turner in his famous address of 1893, when, in bold defiance of the historical establishment that had trained him, he located the genius of American civilization not in the "seeds" planted by Europe but in the transformation that American soil had wrought upon European transplants. American history, Turner declared, was "the history of the colonization of the Great West." The existence of "an area of free land" continually receding before the march of settlement "explained" America. Period.

As the single most influential interpretation ever offered by an American historian, Turner's "frontier thesis" has been an inexhaustible source of research ideas—and a perpetually inviting target. In recent decades, the latter use has predominated, as many younger historians, reacting against the unconscious arrogance of Turner's Euro-American triumphalism and its implicit dismissal of Indians, have conjured his shade only to riddle it with ideological bullets.

Still, in the hands of a skilled and sensible historian, this new approach to the American frontier can greatly enhance understanding. While Nobles, professor of history at the Georgia Institute of Technology, is properly critical of Turner's frontier thesis (which has many grievous faults), his book also pays tribute to the enduring validity of Turner's great theme.

Rather than caricature the frontier story as a melodrama starring heroic (or villainous) Euro-Americans and villainous (or heroic) Native Americans, Nobles stages an immensely complicated drama featuring a crazy-quilt cast of characters and cultures, each altering and being altered by the others. For example, in outlining the great imperial rivalries of the 17th and 18th centuries, he includes the Indians not as passive or romanticized victims but as active, resourceful players in their own right, subject to their own political rivalries.

Yet this emphasis upon "intercultural con-

tact” as the defining characteristic of the American frontier does not lead Nobles to neglect the old story of “how the West was won.” That saga is also told, from the opening gambits of colonial times through the tragic endgame on the windswept Great Plains. By the time the frontier was consolidated into the American nation-state, every group—the Sioux, the Dakota, the French, the Spanish, the British, the Mexicans—had lost something. As indicated in its double-sided subtitle, this book would acknowledge the fact of Euro-American triumph without falling into the trap of Euro-American triumphalism.

The only lapses in the book are Nobles’s occasional preaching about Euro-American sins—as if the grim events, fairly related, did not speak for themselves—and his occasional genuflections before contemporary pieties. One example: after describing the tendency of Indian men to treat their women as beasts of burden, he adds, a bit nervously, that “after all, Europeans were themselves hardly in the vanguard of gender equality.” (If they were not, then one wonders who was?) Fortunately, such lapses—the stigmata of our era’s anxiously revisionist historiography—are rare. Not only does Nobles synthesize the fruits of an enormous body of scholarship, he writes graceful, even elegant prose that occasionally sparkles with wit, as when he refers to the relationship between the United States and the post-revolutionary Lone Star Republic as a state of “suspended annexation.”

—Wilfred M. McClay

**THE DENG XIAOPING ERA:
An Inquiry into the Fate of Chinese
Socialism, 1978–1994.**

By Maurice Meisner. Hill & Wang.
544 pp. \$30

The current faith that market economies inevitably foster democracy comes in for hard scrutiny in this study of China under Deng Xiaoping. Meisner, a professor of history at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, grants that China has made spectacular economic gains since Deng came to power in 1978. But the social effects of this particular “great leap” have been calamitous.

Meisner argues that Deng’s dismantling of the centrally controlled economy has

failed to create a bourgeois class that is independent of the state and therefore potentially capable of building a new civic culture. Instead, economic liberalization has benefited chiefly “officials or the relatives and friends of officials.” Reformed China, he writes, is not a “socialist market economy” but “bureaucratic capitalism.” While he does not dispute the dramatically improved standard of living of vast numbers of ordinary Chinese, Meisner also notes mushrooming inequalities and injustices: millions of workers deprived of their “iron rice bowls” (job security), hundreds of millions of uprooted peasants converging on cities in search of work, frightful levels of workplace regimentation and exploitation, and rampant corruption.

Meisner’s hope, dashed by Mao and Deng alike, was that China would become a socialist democracy stripped of any Leninist overlay, and this preference frequently colors his analysis. For instance, when he claims that the new Chinese “capitalist class” is “perhaps unique in world history” because it is not “firmly rooted in private property,” the reader is left to wonder whether such a class can truly be called capitalist. Meisner’s description of the Democracy Movement of 1989 is vivid and accurate. But when he quotes the demonstrators calling themselves *shimin*, or “city people,” he assumes that most belonged to the urban working class. Many demonstrators, though, were government employees, and some were members of the Communist Party. *Shimin* was an all-embracing term, “we” the people against “them” the government.

Meisner rightly admires the political awakening and moral courage of the ordinary citizens of Beijing. He notes that, to many, “democracy” meant less a particular form of government than freedom from the bureaucratic tentacles of the state. (“Democracy,” one participant told me at the time, “simply means fair.”) Can China ever build the institutions and political culture capable of supporting democracy? Meisner makes no predictions. But this excellent book makes the sobering case that if democracy ever does arise, it will not be from China’s new class of bureaucratic capitalists but from the ranks of the discontented and disenfranchised.

—Anne F. Thurston

Religion & Philosophy

DECONSTRUCTION IN A NUTSHELL:

A Conversation with Jacques Derrida.

Edited by John D. Caputo. Fordham University Press. 200 pp. \$25 cloth, \$17.95 paper

Though now on the wane, deconstruction raged like wildfire through departments of literature and philosophy a few years ago. It injected a racy spirit of rebellion into otherwise settled academic pursuits. Practitioners of this often murky critical method were clear enough when it came to saying what deconstruction did. They relished terms such as “transgression,” “disruption,” “undermining,” “dangerous rereading,” and “risky undertakings.” Poems, plays, novels, philosophical works—now called “texts”—were scrutinized for fault lines and self-destructing forces lurking within them. It became common to claim that what was absent in a text carried more weight than what was present.

Nor was deconstruction mere literary exotica. In the campus culture wars, deconstruction seemed uniformly to take aim at the “West” while promoting a variety of causes: radical feminism, gay rights, *tercermundismo*, and the generic appeal of anyone (or anything) construed as the Other. Because these causes were seen as inverting traditional categories of thought, they themselves remained (temporarily, at least) out of the line of fire. Deconstruction’s rhetoric, when not opaque, urged revolution, melodramatic aggression, even terrorism.

This volume suggests that deconstruction has been misunderstood. It records a conversation with Jacques Derrida held at Villanova University in 1994 at the inauguration of a doctoral program in philosophy. A long commentary by philosopher Caputo follows. Derrida declares his admiration for Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and the institutions that teach about them. He adds, however, that deconstruction does not merely seek to reproduce the past but to open up the new

even as it remains in contact with the old. If so, then why all the fuss? Philosophers have always reread and reconceptualized their predecessors in search of other truths. In this new mode, Derrida sounds like a politician practicing spin control.

The intemperate tone of Caputo’s commentary belies—one is tempted to say deconstructs—Derrida’s effort. At one point, he repents of the “violence” he himself inflicted on Derrida at Villanova—meaning not that he assaulted the philosopher but that he asked him to speak in English for a limited time. It is typical of deconstruction to characterize the constraints of ordinary social events as “violence.”

Deconstruction has been misunderstood by many critics as mere nihilism. In theory, it claims a perpetual openness to greater understanding and new perspectives. In practice, though, it has had all the effects of nihilism. The rhetoric of its advocates, by turns impenetrable and reckless, and their refusal of “premature closure” (meaning acknowledgment of truth), have often been wielded as weapons of intimidation. After such fireworks, it will take more than one conversation or commentary to clear the air.

—Robert Royal

INSIDE THE VATICAN:

The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church.

By Thomas J. Reese. Harvard University Press. 317 pp. \$24.95

As you walk from Saint Peter’s Square along the Via di Porta Angelica toward the entrance to the Vatican Museum several blocks away, the massive Vatican City wall on your left rises higher and higher, until it is no longer possible to see over the top. In this, his third book on the government and politics of the Roman Catholic Church, Reese, the author of *Archbishop* (1989) and *A Flock of Shepherds* (1992), takes us behind that wall. Combining historical research, on-site observation, and interviews with more than 100 key



players, Reese does a remarkable job of mapping the baffling, venerable, multilayered bureaucracy that serves the pope.

On the larger questions of church governance in the 21st century, Reese is less penetrating. For instance, he correctly points out that the Vatican has, like other large bureaucracies, developed a life of its own. But he does not explore whether the curia's growing power has begun to eclipse that of the college of bishops—or whether the Vatican will allow local churches and episcopates greater control over their own affairs, including the appointment of bishops. The reluctance to address these thorny issues is regrettable, not least because of their relevance to the

Vatican's current troubled relationship with the Catholic Church in America.

On the prospects for change, Reese offers little in the way of realistic prediction. In passages studded with phrases such as “there is a need” and “it might be better,” he makes his own wishes clear: more collegiality, more lay involvement, more openness in the Vatican's way of proceeding (not to mention larger doses of faith, hope, and love). But despite his careful reportage, he does not give a sense of how many in the Vatican share his sentiments, and how many continue to regard the church as a fortress against a threatening world.

—Thomas M. Gannon, S.J.

Arts & Letters

GENESIS:

Translation and Commentary.

By Robert Alter. Norton. 324 pp. \$25

GENESIS:

A New Translation of the Classic Biblical Stories.

By Stephen Mitchell. Harper Collins.

161 pp. \$20

We credit episodes from the Book of Genesis with a vivid and irreducible simplicity, so etched are they into the minds of countless Bible readers. Yet biblical scholarship reveals the text itself to be full of knots and snares. The more attentively it is inspected, the more elusive it becomes, like a Seurat painting that dissolves into dots when approached.

The stories in Genesis are the work of at least four different writers—probably more. These authors are distinguishable by style and narrative practices, including the various names they give to God (Yahweh, Elohim). Perhaps five centuries, the interval between the tenth century B.C. and the fifth, separate the earliest portions of Genesis from the latest, and it was only in the fifth century B.C. that an editor, sometimes known as “the redactor,” wove together the various strands of received narrative. Those who believe in the divinely inspired character of the Bible would have God directing the redactor's choices. To nonbelievers, the redactor is more akin to Homer, who also gave a final masterful shape to

materials that had existed independently for centuries.

These two new translations of Genesis, each with its own individual eloquence, seem directed to different audiences. Alter, professor of literature at the University of California at Berkeley, includes a running commentary on his translation. At times, those comments—philological, literary, historical—leave room on the page for no more than half a dozen lines of translation. This is a Genesis for patient readers at ease with ambiguity and irresolution.

Alter is especially good at conveying the feel of a language that routinely juxtaposes phrases or sentences without the use of subordinating conjunctions (the practice is called “parataxis”). The insistent “there-ness” of Genesis (as of Homer) derives in good measure from the power of parataxis. In a world described by language that lacks the habit of grammatical subordination, every event is a defining event.

Mitchell, an accomplished translator of poetry and religious texts, offers “a new translation of the classic Bible stories” intended for readers who want a swift, uncluttered narrative. The whole of each elegantly designed page is translation; notes and comments are saved for the back of the book.

More significantly, Mitchell omits some parts of the biblical text and rearranges others, because he wants to strip from every

story the later accretions that, for him, mar its original form. He unwinds the various strands of Genesis and labels them—this is original, this an addition, this a repetition, this a stylistic lapse, and so forth. (Much the same thing went on in Homeric scholarship a hundred years ago, when editors who thought they knew best sought a proto-*Iliad* and a proto-*Odyssey* buried beneath layers of later narrative embellishment.) The result is a compact and vigorous narrative but not quite the Book of Genesis, which is less tidy than Mitchell would like it to be.

Alter, conversely, wants to understand *why* the redactor included the various passages that Mitchell relegates to the back. The two diverge over the very shape of the biblical text. Traditionally, Genesis ends with the death of Joseph, who is buried in a coffin in Egypt (no doubt mummified). For Alter, the book traces an intended, and literarily astute, arc from the boundless chaos of its opening to the mortal confines of its close. Mitchell, by contrast, ends his Genesis several paragraphs sooner, with the death of Jacob. For him, the portion that includes Joseph's death is among the "dull or awkward" accretions best dispatched to an appendix. There may be a sound scholarly argument for doing so, but (to judge by Alter's version) it is not a winning argument.

—James Morris

LUSH LIFE:

A Biography of Billy Strayhorn.

By David Hajdu. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 306 pp. \$27.50

Bookish, penetratingly original, and obsessively cultured, composer Billy Strayhorn (1915–67) was once described by a friend as "a miniature, black Noel Coward." This sensitive and nuanced biography relates how Strayhorn grew up in a working-class neighborhood of Pittsburgh, enduring the cruelty of an embittered father and dreaming of becoming a concert pianist. Although devoted to European classical music, Strayhorn suffered from a growing isolation (compounded by his homosexuality) that made such high-art aspirations elusive. A chance introduction to Duke Ellington in 1938 gave the young Strayhorn the opportunity to realize his musical ambitions and to lead the urbane, sybaritic life he yearned for. Relocating to Manhattan, he took a privileged place in the Ellington organization as the bandleader's

silent composing partner.

The question of Strayhorn's contribution to American music is vexed by the general failure of the academic music establishment to come to terms with Ellington. But even if Ellington's legacy were well understood and appreciated, there would still be uncertainty about Strayhorn's role. The two men's working relationship was so close that their music is often inseparable. But not always: Ellington's melodic, rhythmic, and timbral inventions were intimately connected to the varied musical personalities of his band members. To that palimpsest Strayhorn added his own distinctive layer—dark, rich instrumentations and astringent dissonances that remain startlingly unique even when folded into the Ellington musical persona.

Hajdu, an editor at *Entertainment Weekly*, does not attempt to isolate Strayhorn's contribution. Apart from a thoughtful exegesis of Strayhorn's signature song "Lush Life," his comments about music are confined to the occasional evocative adjective. But the narrative contains intriguing clues. After one recording session, for instance, Strayhorn asked the trumpeter Clark Terry, "Did you enjoy your part?" "Big band" arranging is not thought of as polyphonic. But as this remark suggests, Strayhorn's distinctive sound is partly due to the uncommon melodic independence of each inner voice.

If Strayhorn's name is little known outside jazz circles, it is partly because he sacrificed fame for the freedom that comes with relative obscurity. As one close friend recalls, "He liked somebody to hide behind." Life under Ellington's protective wing was not without cost, however. Ellington's serene, aristocratic image was part bluff: like many creatures of show business, he was superstitious and sketchily educated. But Ellington also took his responsibilities as a public figure seriously. As Hajdu writes, the bandleader devoted "vast resources of ingenuity and will to project an image that promoted pride in and respect for black identity." Ellington could be manipulative, and Strayhorn could not always find the proper mix of anonymity and autonomy. But the resignation and sadness that haunted Strayhorn's later years (and that pervade the conclusion of this book) have less to do with this imperfect relationship than with the inability of the larger culture to find a place for an artist who refused to be anything other than himself.

—Scott DeVeaux

ROBERT SCHUMANN:
Herald of a 'New Poetic Age.'

By John Daverio. Oxford University Press.
624 pp. \$45

Although he gave us such indisputably great works as his *Piano Quintet* (1842) and *Cello Concerto* (1850), few composers have been subject to as many unfounded charges as has Robert Schumann (1810–56). Scholars claim that he was unable to orchestrate, that he couldn't handle larger musical forms, and that his later pieces, composed when he was suffering from mental illness, are gloomy failures devoid of the freshness and lyricism found in his earlier work.

The shade of the German romanticist may now rest more easily, thanks to this authoritative new biography. To defend Schumann's skill in orchestration, Daverio, a musicologist at Boston University, shows how the rich programmatic content of such works as *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* (1844–53) is conveyed through inventive instrumental combinations. And to demonstrate that the composer could handle longer forms, Daverio points to the highly logical architecture of *Paradise and the Peri* (1843).

By far, though, Daverio is best at reevaluating Schumann's final works. To be sure, Schumann did descend into psychosis. On February 26, 1854, after several years of depression and two weeks of hearing voices (angelic and demonic), he plunged from a bridge into the icy waters of the Rhine. Rescued by fishermen and carried home amid a crowd of jeering Carnival revelers, he was

taken that same day to an asylum, where he died two years later. Eccentric, dark, and often repetitive, the compositions dating from this period have been dismissed as the products of a decaying intelligence. But Daverio finds in them “a heightened intensity of expression” and an inventiveness presaging the music of Anton Bruckner, Max Reger, and Arnold Schönberg. Daverio insists that the economical use of thematic material and masterful handling of form in pieces such as the *Fourth Symphony* (1851), the *Faust* overture, and the *Violin Concerto* (1853) could have come only from an artist “in full command of his or her rational powers.”

What Daverio fails to note is that performers, too, have misread these later works. Take the underplayed *Violin Concerto*. From its first interpreter, Georg Kulenkampff, violinists have disfigured the polonaise finale by speeding it up, reaching for the sort of pyrotechnic display associated with concerto finales. A recent recording by Latvian violinist Gidon Kremer is a more faithful account. Perhaps Daverio's inspired scholarship will encourage other more authentic interpretations. If so, Schumann's neglected gems will receive the performances they deserve.

—Sudip K. Bose



Science & Technology

MONAD TO MAN:
*The Concept of Progress in
Evolutionary Biology.*

By Michael Ruse. Harvard University
Press. 640 pp. \$49.95

Evolutionary biology is seductively metaphorical. Its evidence points in so many suggestive directions that its practitioners are naturally tempted to make global speculations. Charles Darwin understood this very well, and knew moreover that it could lead to unfounded ideas as well as innovative ones. Concerned to establish his new theory as serious science, Darwin laid out a rigorous formula for evolutionary discourse, explicitly rejecting—for him-

self and his followers—the more speculative style of early evolutionists such as Jean Lamarck and Darwin's own grandfather Erasmus.

Over the long term, however, such restraint was a lot to ask. Beginning with T. H. Huxley, evolutionary biologists arrived at a two-track solution to the problem: they published one set of books and articles to establish professional credentials, and a distinct but parallel set to appeal to popular audiences and to serve as an outlet for speculation. This strategy has not been lost on mainstream biologists, many of whom see evolutionary biology as a field tainted by the imposition of cultural values. They pay lip service to it but in practice regard it as a

less-than-orthodox subject for research.

Rightly so, says Ruse, professor of philosophy and zoology at the University of Guelph in Ontario. He argues that evolutionary studies have been shaped from the beginning by an overarching “concept of progress” that does not, despite its secular nature, fit comfortably into the scientific enterprise. In this methodical study, he tries to show how notions of social and moral betterment—and their perceived connection to biological progression from microorganism to man—have influenced the scientific thought of major Anglo-American figures from Herbert Russell Wallace to George Gaylord Simpson and Geoffrey Parker.

The case is not always convincing. Consider Ronald A. Fisher (1890–1962), whose achievement was to add nuance and mathematical structure to evolutionism by combining Darwin’s theory of natural selection with Gregor Mendel’s principles of genetics. Fisher was passionately interested in eugenics and believed, erroneously, that almost all human abilities are innate. Ruse asserts, but does not really prove, that Fisher’s enthusiasm for human progress through breeding distorted his actual scientific work.

More compelling is Ruse’s examination of the contemporary debate over Edward O. Wilson’s theory of sociobiology, which posits that human social behavior can be understood in terms of evolutionary origins. Ruse makes the cogent point that while Wilson’s enthusiasm for cultural progress has led to an explicitly stated belief in biological progress, the same enthusiasm in Stephen Jay Gould has led to a career built on energetic denial of biological progress. In this modern context, it does seem that evolutionary biology has become infused, indeed polarized and defined, by an underlying cultural value.

—David Reich

ABSTRACTING CRAFT:
The Practiced Digital Hand.

By Malcolm McCullough. M.I.T. Press.
250 pp. \$25

“Between the morning news and your bedtime reading there will be road signs, billboards, computer screens, junk mail, posters, photo prints, presentation slides, pictures on people’s shirts, snippets of television shows, maybe a movie, a computer game, maybe a couple of downloads from the Internet, a videotape. . . .” As described by McCullough, a professor of architecture at Harvard

University, the visual explosion ignited by the computer age is both sinister and inspiring.

McCullough is concerned about the computer’s ability not only to multiply images but (with advances in digital technology) to alter them as well. “Bits replace atoms,” he writes, “and digital signal processing undermines the very physicality of reproduction.” Armed with keyboard, mouse, and staggeringly sophisticated graphics software, the computer artisan can experiment endlessly on a single base image, the untouched original on a disk. Were he alive today, Leonardo da Vinci could spawn a myriad of Mona Lisas, each with her own enigmatic smile.

Yet what about creating the Mona Lisa in the first place? Admitting that “computers’ incontestable practicality gives rise to an astonishing amount of banal and cheaply executed work,” McCullough makes the seemingly commonplace observation that the computer is a *tool*, not a substitute for the vision of the artist or the thinker. In effect, he denies the claims of most software marketers. Buying a copy of Adobe Illustrator will not magically transform someone into, say, Maurice Sendak.



Such conclusions may not be astounding, but they do illuminate matters that can be overlooked or misunderstood in today’s workplace. Too often, writes McCullough, “left-over industrial-era attitudes about technology” lead

managers to employ armies of workers with only modest computer skills to perform simple drafting and other applications, rather than hire highly skilled people capable of a variety of functions. Such “task automation” overlooks that “the computer is not a tool so much as hundreds of tools.”

Further, McCullough urges people with artistic ability not to turn their backs on computers. In his brave new world, the digital artisan will use a computer just as a stone carver wields a pneumatic drill to sculpt, or a skilled potter operates a motorized wheel to create an exquisite vase: as an aid, not an adversary.

—James Carman

POETRY

May Swenson

Selected and introduced by Anthony Hecht

In his introduction to the October 1947 issue of the English literary magazine *Horizon*, Cyril Connolly remarked on the evanescence of literary celebrity in America, the fleetingness of reputations, commenting that “the crucial factor is the high cost of book production which renders the printing of small editions (under 10,000) uneconomic; the tendency is therefore to go all out for the best sellers and, with a constant eye on Hollywood, to spend immense sums on publicity to bring about one of those jack-pots. . . . The American public are cajoled into reading the book of the month, and only the book of the month—and for that month only. Last year’s book is as unfashionable as last year’s car. . . . Last year’s authors are pushed aside.” If that was true in 1947, it is even truer today, and if it was (and is) true of fiction, what must it mean for the comparatively marginal authorship and readership of poetry? The poetic giants (Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens) excepted, as well as those such as T. S. Eliot, who have retained a curiously scandalous claim upon continuing attention, most poets upon their deaths disappear into fogbanks of oblivion, occasionally to be rediscovered as novelties (like H. D. or Mina Loy) by some enterprising historian. Who now reads Mary Aldis, Walter Conrad Arensberg, Skipwith Cannell, Arthur Davison Ficke? Or Charles Mackey, William Mickle, or even Samuel Rogers, the richest poet of his day, who the *Encyclopædia Britannica* asserts “played the part of literary dictator in England over a long period”?

Must the same be said of May Swenson (1913–89)? She is one of America’s finest modernist poets. She can be perfectly traditional when she chooses, but she delights in writing experimental poetry, aiming for the unexpected and the surprising, not infrequently with an eye to securing important visual effects. In this she belongs to an elect coterie of writers that would include e. e. cummings and Guillaume Apollinaire, though it can boast an ancestry tracing itself as far back as the Hellenistic poets Simias and Dosiadas, and would include such 17th-century-style poems as George Herbert’s “Easter Wings.” As for Apollinaire, he wrote a poem in the shape of the Eiffel Tower, and another in which the letters and words stream downward in irregular lines in a work called “*Il Pleut*.” This typographical dexterity can be found as well in the work of John Hollander (see his volume called *Types of Shape*) and in some of the surrealists, as well as in poems by Kenneth Patchen. Yet it should not be surprising to find poets with an active interest in the immediate visual aspect of writing and typefaces. William Blake was a printer and etcher as well as a publisher and poet; William Morris was a poet as well as a publisher and designer of texts, fabrics, tiles, and wallpaper.

May Swenson was born in Logan, Utah, into a Mormon family. After graduating from the Utah State University, she moved to New York City

and worked with the Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration. She served as an editor of the avant-garde New Directions Press for 10 years beginning in 1956, after which she held a series of visiting professorships at various colleges and universities throughout the country, including Bryn Mawr, the University of North Carolina, the University of California (Riverside), Purdue, and Utah State. Her many honors include membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and fellowships from the Guggenheim, Ford, and Rockefeller foundations. In the course of time she managed, between teaching appointments, to travel widely and imaginatively, as the titles of some of her poems suggest: "Above the Arno," "Notes Made in the Piazza San Marco," "The Pantheon, Rome," "Italian Sampler," "Camping in Madera Canyon," and "'So Long' to the Moon from the Men of Apollo." She was a student and friend of Elizabeth Bishop, from whose example she developed a singularly accurate eye and a gently modulated sense of humor, along with an appreciation of what may be thought of as (to vary a Freudian locution) the surrealism of everyday life. Viewed in retrospect, her work seems more and more original and richly rewarding.

The Engagement

When snow	cross
a wing	to where
is folded	I flow
over everything	in the rainbow
when night	seek me
a net	in the rock
dips us	break
in forget	that lock
when blue	meet me
my eye	in the wheel
leaks into	your thread
a sky	I'll feel
and floss	I'll come
your skin	to where you sink
is what the	in the tiger's
spiders spin	blink
when stone	and catch you
our veins	in the fish
are parted	with my strenuous
chains	wish
when prism	Find me
sun	in the flake
bends us	I will
one from one	wake

The Lightning

The lightning waked me. It slid under
my eyelid. A black book flipped open
to an illuminated page. Then instantly
shut. Words of destiny were being ut-
tered in the distance. If only I could
make them out! . . . Next day, as I lay
in the sun, a symbol for conceiving the
universe was scratched on my eyeball.
But quickly its point eclipsed, and
softened, in the scabbard of my brain.

My cat speaks one word: Four vowels
and a consonant. He receives with the
hairs of his body the whispers of the
stars. The kinglet speaks by flashing
into view a ruby feather on his head.
He is held by a thread to the eye of
the sun and cannot fall into error.
Any flower is a perfect ear, or else it
is a thousand lips . . . When will I grope
clear of the entrails of intellect?




Stone Gullets

Stone gullets among Inrush Feed Backsuck and
The boulders swallow Outburst Huge engorgements Swallow
In gulps the sea Tide crams jagged Smacks snorts chuckups Follow
In urgent thirst Jaws the hollow Insurge Hollow
Gushing evacuations follow Jetty it must Outpush Greed

Of Rounds

MOON
round
goes around while going around a
round
EARTH
EARTH
round
with MOON
round
going around while going around
goes around while going around a
round
SUN
SUN
round
with EARTH
round
with MOON
round
going around while going
around, and MERCURY
round
and VENUS
round
going around while
going around, and MARS
round
with two MOONS
round
round
going around
while going around, and JUPITER
round
with fourteen MOONS
round
round
round
round
round
round
round
round
round
round
round
round
round
round
round

going around while going around, and SATURN
 round
 with ten
 MOONS
 round
 round
 round
 round
 round
 round
 round
 round
 round
 round
 going around while going around, and URANUS
 round
 with five MOONS
 round
 round
 round
 round
 round
 going around while going around, and NEPTUNE
 round
 with two MOONS
 round
 round
 going around while going around, and
 PLUTO
 round
 going around while going around, goes around while
 going around
 A  OF ROUNDS
 Round

Out of the Sea, Early

A bloody
egg yolk. A burnt hole
spreading in a sheet. An en-
raged rose threatening to bloom.
A furnace hatchway opening, roaring.
A globular bladder filling with immense
juice. I start to scream. A red hydroceph-
alic head is born, teetering on the stump of
its neck. When it separates, it leaks rasp-
berry from the horizon down the wide esca-
lator. The cold blue boiling waves cannot
scour out that band, that broadens, slid-
ing toward me up the wet sand slope. The
fox-hair grows, grows thicker on the
upfloating head. By six o'clock,
diffused to ordinary gold,
it exposes each silk thread and rumple in the carpet.



Night Practice

I
will
remember
with my breath
to make a mountain,
with my sucked-in breath
a valley, with my pushed-out
breath a mountain. I will make
a valley wider than the whisper, I
will make a higher mountain than the cry;
will with my will breathe a mountain, I will
with my will breathe a valley. I will push out
a mountain, suck in a valley, deeper than the shout
YOU MUST DIE, harder, heavier, sharper a mountain than
the truth YOU MUST DIE. I will remember. My breath will
make a mountain. My will will remember to will. I, suck-
ing, pushing, I will breathe a valley, I will breathe a mountain.

F
I
R
E
ISLAND

The Milky Way
above, the milky
waves beside,
when the sand is night
the sea is galaxy.
The unseparate stars
mark a twining coast
with phosphorescent
surf
in the black sky's trough.
Perhaps we walk on black
star ash, and watch
the milks of light foam forward, swish and spill
while other watchers, out
walking in their white
great
swerve,
gather
our
low
spark,
our little Way
the dark
glitter
in
their
s
i
g
h
t
.



Geometrid

Writhes, rides down
on his own spit,
lets breeze twist

him so he chins,
humps, reels up it,
munching back

the vomit string.
Some drools
round his neck.

Arched into a staple
now, high on green
oak leaf he punctures

for food, what
was the point
of his act? Not

to spangle the air,
or show me his trick.
Breeze broke

his suck,
so he spit
a fraction of self's

length forth, bled
colorless from within,
to catch a balance,

glide to a knot
made with his own mouth.
Ruminant

while climbing, got
back better than bitten
leaf. Breeze

that threw
him snagged him
to a new.

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THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

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Shotgun Solutions for the Family Crisis

A Survey of Recent Articles

Roughly a quarter-century ago, many states liberalized their laws on abortion and made it easier for unmarried people to obtain contraceptives. Instead of declining, however, the rate of out-of-wedlock births increased sharply—from less than 11 percent of live births in 1970 to nearly 33 percent in 1994. This veritable explosion of illegitimacy, adding to the fallout of children separated from their fathers by divorce, has prompted much alarm in recent years, and with good reason, since children who don't live with two parents are more likely to get caught up in crime, drug use, promiscuity, and other ills. (See WQ, "The Vanishing Father," Spring '96.) Often overlooked in all the hue and cry, though, is one of the chief culprits in the dramatic rise in illegitimacy: the virtual demise of that storied institution, the "shotgun wedding."

Writing in the *Brookings Review* (Fall 1996), George A. Akerlof, an economist at the University of California, Berkeley, and Janet L. Yellen, a member of the Federal Reserve System's Board of Governors, calculate that about 75 percent of the increase in births out of wedlock among previously childless white women between 1965 and 1990 is directly due to the decline in shotgun marriages. About 60 percent of the increase among comparable black women can be explained in the same way. If the rate of shotgun unions—in which conscience and social pressure may often have been as compelling as any firearm—had remained steady over that period, the authors say, white out-of-wedlock births would have risen only one-fourth as much as they have, and black ones, only two-fifths.

What made the shotgun wedding a thing

of the past? Akerlof and Yellen argue that it was the increased availability of contraception and abortion, which enabled women to safely engage in sexual relations without an implicit promise of marriage from the man in the event of pregnancy. When some women took advantage of this new freedom, it put pressure on all single women to have sex before marriage. If they refused, they risked losing their partners to more willing women. Since the technology made pregnancy, or carrying it to term, a woman's choice, it made the prospective fathers less willing to take responsibility for unplanned pregnancies. "By making the birth of the child the physical choice of the mother, the sexual revolution has made marriage and child support a social choice of the father," the authors observe.

This "reproductive technology shock" may have opened the door to social disaster, but Akerlof and Yellen believe there is no going back. Their prescription: stronger efforts to make the fathers pay child support. But that is not enough, contends John J. DiIulio, Jr., director of the Brookings Institution's Center for Public Management. "Bring back the shotgun wedding," he writes in the *Weekly Standard* (Oct. 21, 1996).

How can that be done? There are various direct and indirect means of influencing behavior, DiIulio points out. Teenage single mothers on welfare should be obliged to live under adult supervision. (No such requirement is included in Washington's recent welfare reform.) Society should insist not merely on monetary child support but on the "positive, permanent presence [of biological fathers] where women and children need them and their entire earnings." He

would have churches put pressure on absent fathers, have police “crack down hard” on domestic abuse of women and children, and have “the statutory rape of poor black girls [treated] with the same moral seriousness that liberal elites now lavish on ‘date rape’ on college campuses.”

The worst consequences of the illegitimacy outbreak are yet to come, DiIulio warns: “The 68.1 percent of blacks and 22.6 percent of whites born out of wedlock in 1992 will not reach the all-hell-breaks-loose age of 14 until the year 2006.” Already, he pointed out in an earlier issue of the *Weekly Standard* (Nov. 27, 1995), the youth crime wave “has reached horrific proportions from coast to coast.” Between 1985 and 1992, the rate at which males ages 14 to 17 committed murder increased by about 50 percent for whites and more than 300 percent for blacks. And just around the corner is “a sharp increase in the number of super crime-prone young males.”

Some scholars argue that the problem is not single-parent families per se but incompetent child rearing in general. Jack C. Westman, a psychiatrist at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, goes so far in *Society* (Nov.–Dec. 1996) as to suggest that parents be licensed. Parenthood should be viewed as “a privilege, as it is now for adoptive and foster parents, rather than a biological right,” he maintains. To get a license, a parent would have to be an adult, pledge to care for the child, and have “basic knowledge of child-rearing,” as evidenced by completion of a course in the subject. Parents under 18 would be placed, along with the child, in the care of licensed foster parents. A parent denied a license would be required to give up the child, who would be “placed for adoption in accordance with existing child-abuse and neglect laws.”

David T. Lykken, a psychologist at the University of Minnesota, endorses Westman’s proposal. But other contributors to *Society’s* symposium on the subject are aghast. “Can it be that crime has pushed Americans to the end of their democratic tethers?” asks Howard G. Schneiderman, a sociologist at Lafayette College. To give the state the power to license parents, he says, “is only a short step away from giving the state control over all aspects of family life.” Efforts “to raise the educational and income levels

of all Americans,” he believes, “may ultimately do more to reverse our present patterns of family disorganization and, by association, crime than will moral crusades.”

Byron M. Roth, a psychologist at Dowling College in Oakdale, New York, contends that the whole child-rearing issue is largely irrelevant. Recent studies of identical twins, involving thousands of cases in Europe, America, and Australia, he says, support the “long despised [idea] that criminals are born rather than made; genes appear to count far more than upbringing.” However, there is one environmental factor that concerns Roth. Over the long term, he argues, the logic of evolutionary psychology suggests that women who do not count on men for stability and financial support may find males with less socially desirable traits more attractive, thus passing along the genetic bases of those traits to more children.

Roth and others may have interesting theories, says William M. Epstein, author of *The Dilemma of American Social Welfare* (1993), but social scientists have failed to demonstrate what the causes or cures of sociopathy are. “The issue of whether dysfunctional parents and their children are the products of dysfunctional environments, bad seeds, or perverse, antisocial, psychopathic wills has not been resolved,” he writes in *Society*. In his view, sociopathy “may be the result of broad cultural failure.”

Since the late 1960s, Howard Schneiderman observes, “the authority of American social institutions has come undone,” with the explosion of illegitimate births, high divorce rates, and other social ills among the results. Yet, turning to the state to restore the family to health, as in proposals to license parents, is not the answer, he insists: “State interference in the family can do little in the long run but to destroy the family altogether.”

Amid the gloomy analyses and prognostications, some rare good news has recently surfaced: for the first time in a quarter-century, the rate of live births out of wedlock has fallen—from 32.6 percent of all births in 1994 to 32.0 percent in 1995. The rate declined a tenth of a point among whites, to 25.3 percent; among blacks, it dropped from 70.4 percent to 69.5 percent. These numbers hardly represent a dramatic transformation. But they at least allow one to hope that a change in cultural course is beginning.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Politics Out of Focus

"The Focus-Group Fraud" by Andrew Ferguson, in *The Weekly Standard* (Oct. 14, 1996), 1150 17th St. N.W., Ste. 505, Washington, D.C. 20036-4617.

Take 10 or so people with some important characteristic in common—all Democrats who vote Republican, say, or all middle-aged working women who dislike House Speaker Newt Gingrich—promise them \$50 apiece, put them in a room together with a moderator for up to two hours, and what do you have, besides a possible headache?

A "focus group."

"They're the hottest research mechanism going right now," one political consultant told Ferguson, a senior editor at the *Weekly Standard*. Once used only in the world of retail marketing, focus groups have become ubiquitous in American politics. It was a focus group, for instance, that led Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole to suggest that parents would choose him rather than Bill Clinton as a foster father if their children were orphaned. This was a gaffe. A *Washington Post* poll soon showed that 52 percent of Americans would pick Clinton to rear their children.

Whereas polls are conducted among a large group of randomly selected people, who are in theory representative of the public as a whole, Ferguson notes, focus groups are not randomly selected and have too few participants to be representative of anything. Yet focus groups have two advantages over polls: they are cheaper (\$5,000-6,000, as opposed to at least \$12,000 for a poll), and they have a personal element. After the focus groupies have spoken, the candidate receives from the political consultant "easy-to-read reports" with a lot of

poll-like data, "peppered with illustrative quotes and anecdotes from real human beings." For similar reasons, some political reporters like to use focus groups, too.

The sad reality, Ferguson adds, is that all this "in-depth" research merely reveals the visceral responses of people who don't spend much time thinking about politics. Or, as critics of focus groups often observe, Ferguson writes, "It is difficult to grasp what people are thinking when they aren't."

Because focus group results tend to be addictive as well as misleading, they are harmful to political life. "If a candidate flits from issue to issue . . . he is probably taking his cues from focus groups," Ferguson writes. A slavish search for good ratings from "instant response" groups—in which people give moment-by-moment responses to speeches by manipulating dials wired to a computer—deforms political rhetoric and leads politicians to use buzzwords to curry favor with constituents rather than lead them.

Ironically, Ferguson observes, focus groups "have come to full flower just at the moment when conventional wisdom tells us that the system resists as never before the hopes and needs and desires of the average voter. And the average voter heartily concurs. In making the complaint, he ignores the groveling figure of every politician and political operative in the country hunched around his feet, their eager and upturned faces smeared with the polish from his boots."

The Bright Side of Negative Campaigning

"In Defense of Negative Campaigning" by William G. Mayer, in *Political Science Quarterly* (Fall 1996), Academy of Political Science, 475 Riverside Dr., Ste. 1274, New York, N.Y. 10115-1274.

One thing about recent American political contests on which all high-minded academics, journalists, and other right-thinking sorts seem to agree is that there has been far too much mudslinging. Candidates should somehow be made to clean up their campaigns. Perhaps, some critics have gone so far as to suggest, the United States should take a cue from Venezuela and bar politicians from even mentioning their opponents in political

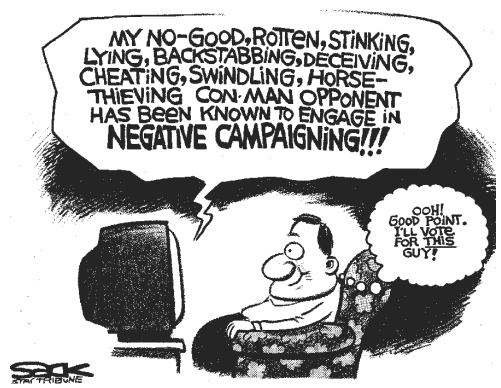
advertisements. Not so fast, says Mayer, a political scientist at Northeastern University. "Negative campaigning certainly sounds bad; it's so, well, you know, negative." But it really isn't. In fact, he argues, it is "a necessary and legitimate part of any election."

No serious discussion of what a candidate (especially one who is not an incumbent) intends to do in office can be conducted without talking about "the flaws and short-

comings of current policies,” Mayer points out. “If a candidate is arguing for a major change in government policy, his first responsibility is to show that current policies are in some way deficient.”

The information and analysis provided in “negative” speeches or ads can also be valuable in themselves, he contends. The electorate needs to know about “the abilities and virtues [candidates] don’t have; the mistakes they have made; the problems they haven’t dealt with; the issues they would prefer not to talk about; the bad or unrealistic policies they have proposed.” Only their opponents will air those issues.

And the candidate’s character and behavior “are entirely relevant issues, more important than many policy questions,” Mayer argues. People may disagree about which particular character traits are most significant, but especially in elections for executive offices such as president, governor, or mayor, “where character flaws can have such important repercussions, I think we are well advised to cast the net widely. Certainly there is no reason to preclude a priori any discussion of a candidate’s sexual behavior or intellectual honesty.”



Finally, the threat of negative campaigning, Mayer points out, acts as a beneficial restraint on candidates. If they “always knew that their opponents would never say anything critical about them, campaigns would quickly turn into a procession of lies, exaggerations, and unrealistic promises.”

Not *all* mudslinging is good, Mayer admits. The bad sort, he says, is bad because it’s misleading (taking votes or actions out of context, for example), or deals with matters of dubious relevance, or is uncivil in tone. But being negative is not bad in itself.

The Communitarian Fallacy

“Communitarian Dreams” by Roger Scruton, in *City Journal* (Autumn 1996), Manhattan Institute, 52 Vanderbilt Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017; “Belonging in the Past” by Michael Ignatieff, in *Prospect* (Nov. 1996), 4 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3RA.

Communitarianism is the latest star in the political-intellectual firmament, attracting the rapt attention of the White House and the mainstream national media. The communitarians are unconservative critics of liberalism who denounce the ethos of rights without responsibilities and commend the virtues of community as a corrective to unrestrained individualism. That is all well and good, argues Scruton, editor of Britain’s *Salisbury Review*, but when push comes to shove, communitarian thinkers such as Charles Taylor, Michael Walzer, and Michael Sandel show themselves to be, beneath their sentimental “rhetoric of fellow feeling,” liberals in disguise.

In *Sources of the Self* (1989), for instance, Taylor attacks the contemporary cult of self, but then urges a community with “a decidedly liberal aspect,” Scruton writes. “He defends ‘multiculturalism’ against the tyran-

ny of majority values, the welfare state against the ‘selfishness’ of unbridled capitalism, and ‘participatory democracy’ against the shadowy machinations of institutional power.” Similarly, Walzer and Sandel make the welfare state “the very symbol of ‘community.’” Missing from that equation, Scruton claims, is “any appreciation of the real communities that give meaning to our lives, the associations and attachments that go today by the name of civil society.”

In *The Spirit of Community* (1991), Amitai Etzioni, chief movement publicist, contends that the liberal emphasis on rights “encourages people to ask but not to give,” Scruton notes, and that America must “wake up to the duties of citizenship, if it is not to degenerate into an anarchic crowd of welfare dependents, tax dodgers, and disloyal egoists.” Though conservatives would agree, Scruton writes,

they also “would point out that much of the damage to the sense of community in America has issued from liberal reforms that Etzioni and his followers seem to endorse. Communitarians regard sexual conduct as a private matter and liberal legislation on such matters as essential. They are ‘caring’ people who do not wish to disturb or interfere with anybody’s chosen life-style or to take an ‘authoritarian’ attitude toward the problems that freedom creates.” And they are wary of “the spirit of community as it tends to show itself in ordinary people,” for that spirit “seeks to impose a common morality, a common culture, and a common respect for basic social norms.”

In this internal division, however, communitarians may be like most people today. “Modernity’s core value is freedom, especially the freedom to fashion one’s identity and one’s life as one will,” argues Ignatieff, author of *A Just Measure of Pain* (1989). Yet most continue to long for community. Finding a balance between these two desires is difficult, Ignatieff argues, but to seek a restoration of community through politics is a fool’s errand—and one that can only feed the modern disillusion with politics. Through politics, society can be made fairer, more just, and more efficient. That, Ignatieff believes, ought to be quite enough.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Dangerous Images

“The Satellite Revolution” by Charles Lane, in *The New Republic* (Aug. 12, 1996), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; “The Art and Science of Photoreconnaissance” by Dino Brugioni, in *Scientific American* (Mar. 1996), 415 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017–1111.

At the height of the Cold War, notes Brugioni, a retired Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) official, reconnaissance photographs taken from high-flying U-2 airplanes and satellites in space “repeatedly provided timely intelligence, sometimes even helping to bring the superpowers back from the brink of conflict.” Now, writes Lane, a senior editor at the *New Republic*, high-resolution photos taken by ultra-sensitive U.S. imaging satellites are about to become “available to anyone in the world who can afford to pay for them.” It is unclear whether this will make the world safer—or less safe.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton, over the protests of the Pentagon and the CIA, authorized American aerospace firms to market satellite photos with a resolution of up to one meter. The first American satellite for this commercial purpose is scheduled to be rocketed into orbit next December by Space Imaging, a spin-off of Lockheed-Martin. Though the most advanced photoreconnaissance technology, “capable of telling a small cluster bomb from a soccer ball,” remains a monopoly of the intelligence agencies, Lane says, the one-meter-resolution photos are 10 times more precise than anything now commercially available.

By the first decade of the 21st century, he points out, news media and human rights organizations using the satellite-imaging firms’ services will be making it much harder for dictators and violent movements to hide their crimes

from the world at large. “No human rights monitor has ever been allowed into North Korean territory; now the rumored North Korean gulag can be documented from space. Ditto for China’s prison camps, or Cuba’s.” Brugioni told Lane that he has been retained by an unnamed human rights organization to interpret the new photos.

But the satellite imagery can also be used for military ends. “In theory,” Lane notes, “Islamic Jihad could get its hands on a one-meter resolution picture, of, say, a U.S. Air Force general’s headquarters in Turkey, convert the shot to a precise three-dimensional image, combine it with data from a Global Positioning System device you can buy at Radio Shack and transmit it to Baghdad, where a primitive cruise missile purchased secretly from China could await its targeting coordinates.” Critics say that the satellite-imaging companies’ biggest customers are likely to be foreign governments.

Despite the dangers, Lane argues that Clinton had little choice in his decision, because Russian and French satellite companies were reportedly planning to enter the market themselves. “America’s economic and national security interests lie in having the maximum number of satellite photo customers dependent on U.S. companies before foreigners catch up with U.S. technology. At least this way most of the market will be subject to U.S. law and regulations.”

A Small World?

"The West: Unique, Not Universal" by Samuel P. Huntington, in *Foreign Affairs* (Nov.–Dec. 1996), 58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

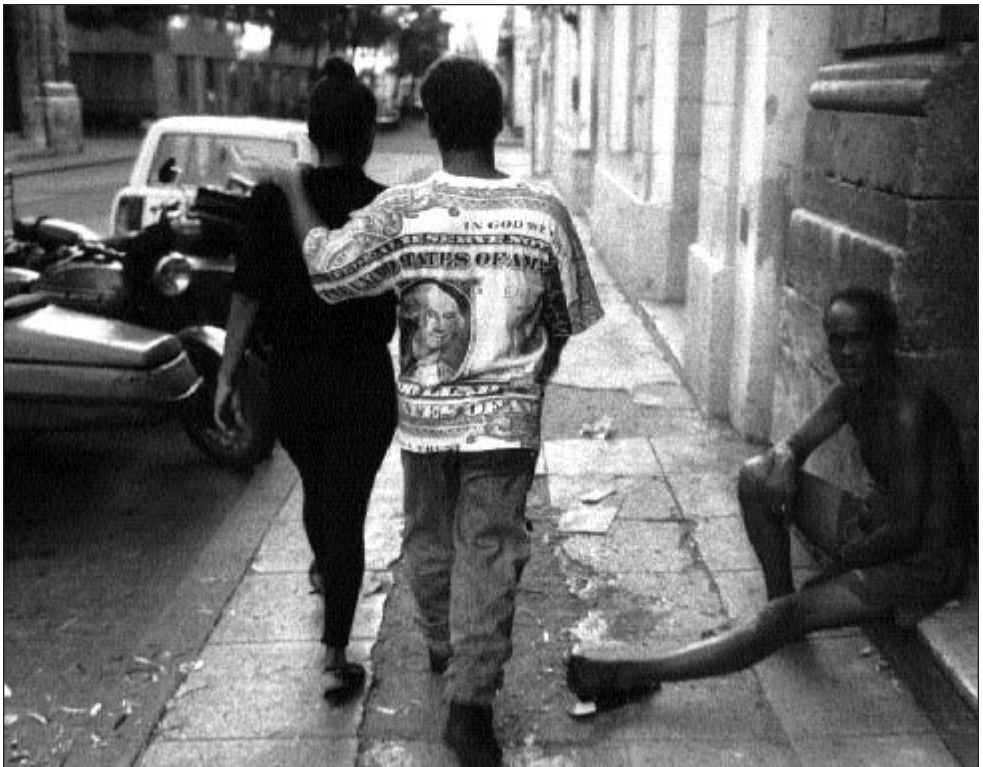
As Coca-Cola, Big Macs, Hollywood action-adventure movies, and Western-style elections have spread to the most remote corners of the earth, some observers have concluded that the world is moving toward a single, universal, basically Western culture. This is a dangerous illusion, argues Huntington, a political scientist at Harvard University and the author of *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996).

Though the West was the first civilization to "modernize," the process (which involves industrialization, urbanization, and the spread of literacy, education, and wealth) need not imply Westernization, he points out. Indeed, many of the West's most distinctive characteristics are premodern. "Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, and, to a lesser degree, Iran have become modern societies without becoming Western societies. China is clearly modernizing, but certainly not westernizing." Civilizations have always borrowed from one another, in ways that enhance their own culture, he observes. China's absorption of Buddhism from India,

for example, resulted not in the "Indianization" of China but in the Sinification of Buddhism. Something similar, he maintains, is happening in Japan and other non-Western societies today, with regard to selected aspects of Western culture.

In the past, Huntington points out, many leaders of non-Western societies invoked Western values such as self-determination, freedom, and democracy in their efforts to ward off domination by the West. Today, their successors denounce attempts to promote those same values as Western "human rights imperialism."

Much of the world is now becoming, in fundamental ways, "more modern and less Western," Huntington says. With respect to the central cultural features of religion and language, "the West is in retreat." As a proportion of the world's population, Western Christians, who now make up about 30 percent, are steadily losing ground, and before long will be surpassed by Muslims. Similarly, although English has become the lingua franca of international commerce, the English-speaking part of the world's popula-



The trappings of Western life are easily worn—and can be easily discarded.

The Armed Forces' New Clout

The American military's influence over U.S. foreign policy is growing, writes Robert D. Kaplan, a contributing editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* (Sept. 1996).

The acceleration of technology is driving a wedge between military and civilian societies and bringing about, for the first time, a professional-caste elite. Thus today's volunteer Army is different from all others in our history. Soldiers are becoming like doctors and lawyers—another professional group we'd like to need less of but upon which we rely more. And just as health reform requires the consent of the medical community, because doctors own a complex body of knowledge, foreign policy will over the decades be increasingly influenced by the military, because war, peacekeeping, famine relief, and the like are becoming too complex for civilian managers. . . .

The technological revolution that has increased the military's clout in Washington has decreased the State Department's: advances in global communications deprive diplomats of privileged firsthand knowledge, and businesspeople, with their own growing array of resources, require less help from embassies. In fact, embassies may not survive beyond a few more decades.

tion has shrunk (to less than eight percent in 1992).

"The time has come," Huntington declares, "for the West to abandon the illusion of universality and to promote the strength, coherence, and vitality of its civilization in a world of civilizations." The West should pursue its own interests, rather than advance those of other peoples, and the Western nations should avoid intervening in conflicts in which they have no direct stake.

Western leaders, Huntington writes, should attempt not "to reshape other civilizations in the image of the West—which is increasingly beyond their ability—but to preserve and renew the unique qualities of Western civilization." Greater Western unity is essential. The United States must abandon dreams of a Pacific Century and adopt "an Atlanticist policy of close cooperation with its European partners, one that will protect and promote . . . the precious and unique civilization they share."

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Why Doesn't America Save?

"Understanding the Postwar Decline in U.S. Saving: A Cohort Analysis" by Jagadeesh Gokhale, Laurence J. Kotlikoff, and John Sabelhaus, in *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* (1996: No. 1), The Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; "The Saving Mystery, or Where Did the Money Go?" by Lynn Elaine Browne with Joshua Gleason, in *The New England Economic Review* (Sept.–Oct. 1996), Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, P.O. Box 2076, Boston, Mass. 02106–2076.

Are the baby boomers a generation of self-absorbed spendthrifts who must bear the blame for the alarming decline in national saving? No, argue these two studies. The authors look elsewhere for an explanation.

The U.S. net national saving rate averaged more than nine percent of net national product in the 1950s and '60s, but less than three percent in the first five years of the 1990s. Net domestic investment also dropped—from an average of about eight percent in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s to less than four percent per year in the 1990s.

This, economists say, has limited growth in productivity and thus, real wages.

Gokhale, Kotlikoff, and Sabelhaus, of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, Boston University, and the Congressional Budget Office, respectively, find two forces chiefly responsible for the postwar decline in saving. One is government redistribution of resources from young and future generations to older ones through transfer programs such as Social Security and Medicare. The second is "a sharp increase in the propensity of older Americans" to spend money.

Were it not for these factors, the authors calculate, national saving would be three-and-a-half times what it is. “Today, 70-year-olds are consuming, on average, roughly one-fifth more than 30-year-olds; in the early 1960s, they were consuming [only] slightly more than two-thirds as much.” Social Security puts more money in older Americans’ pockets, and the certainty of receiving that monthly check encourages spending. The fact that Medicare provides “in-kind” benefits, rather than cash that could be saved to bequeath to one’s heirs, also boosts consumption.

Browne, senior vice president and director of research, and Gleason, senior research assistant, respectively, of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, agree that the federal government is an important culprit. In 1960, for example, a federal budget surplus increased saving by 2.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP); in 1995, federal “dissaving” amounted to 1.2 percent of GDP. Increased transfer payments—for Social Security, Medicare, public assistance—account for the change.

But the real puzzle for researchers is why personal saving dropped so sharply, from about seven percent of personal income in 1960 to four percent recently. It’s not that people are buying more “stuff,” the authors point out. Outlays for durable goods such as cars and washing machines amount to about 10 percent of income today, a bit *less* than 35 years ago. Americans instead are consuming more services, chiefly medical services but also education, business services, and the like.

“Thus, the saving problem is not about thrift versus profligacy, good versus bad,” Browne and Gleason comment. “Rather, it is a competition between two ‘goods’—more and better medical care, on the one hand, and more investment, on the other.”

Gokhale and colleagues believe that investment will continue to be the loser in the coming years: “Anemic rates of saving will spell anemic rates of domestic investment, labor productivity growth, and real wage growth. This is the legacy of the uncontrolled intergenerational redistribution from young savers to old spenders.”

Pension Fund Socialism

“The Social Ownership of Capital” by Richard Minns, in *New Left Review* (Sept.–Oct. 1996), 6 Meard St., London W1V 3HR.

Communism may have proved a resounding failure, but socialism—of a sort—has, almost unnoticed, won the day. In the United States, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere, employees have become, through their pension funds, owners of “the means of production.” In 1994, pension funds worldwide held accumulated assets worth \$10 trillion, an amount equal to the market value of all the companies listed on the world’s three largest stock exchanges.

The one thing the new worker-owners lack is control, complains Minns, a former financial officer of the Greater London Enterprise Board who now works for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. “Instead, they and their savings are hostages to a financial regime which systematically searches for the highest rate of return regardless of the consequences for employment, the environment, or the state of the social infrastructure.” Of the \$7.5 trillion in pension fund assets in the United States and United

Kingdom, he points out, about 80 percent are managed by professional investment firms.

Doesn’t it make sense for workers to leave investment decisions to those financial experts? Not in Minns’s view: they “are notorious for their short-term investment practices, spurring unproductive and costly take-over battles, and prioritizing short-term dividend payments at the expense of broader economic and welfare considerations.” In the end, “high profits from investment at the cost of reduced jobs do not create better pensions or more secure pension funds.”

But shifting control of corporate capital to labor, Minns observes, is no easy matter. In the mid-1970s, Rudolf Meidner of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation proposed requiring large companies to issue new shares equal to about 20 percent of profits, with the shares to be owned by wage-earner funds controlled by trade unions. But even worker-friendly Sweden could enact

only a watered-down version of the plan.

Minns sees “no need to be dogmatic” about how to give workers more say over their equity capital. But he favors “a Meidner-type

plan” for Britain that would award 51 percent of all seats on pension fund management and investment committees to employees or their representatives.

The Forgotten Economic Crisis of '68

“The Economic Crisis of 1968 and the Waning of the ‘American Century’” by Robert M. Collins, in *American Historical Review* (Apr. 1996), 914 Atwater, Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

There have been many accounts of the 1960s, and of the tumultuous year 1968 in particular, but strangely missing from most of them, writes Collins, a historian at the University of Missouri at Columbia, is “the most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression.” The crisis of 1968 “marked the beginning of the end of America’s postwar economic boom,” he argues, and helped persuade President Lyndon B. Johnson to cap escalation of the Vietnam War and curtail the Great Society.

The crisis—which culminated in March in a speculative run on gold (“the largest gold rush in history,” *Time* called it in a cover story)—was brought on by a combination of factors, Collins says. The “most deeply rooted” one was chronic U.S. balance-of-payments deficits. The causes: increased spending overseas, both by American tourists and a U.S. government vigorously prosecuting the Cold War, as well as increased imports from an economically resurgent Europe. The deficits produced a glut of dollars abroad, weakening other nations’ confidence in the dollar. (The dollar was then tied to the gold standard, while other nations’ currencies were tied to the dollar.)

The Johnson administration’s massive expenditures on the Vietnam War seriously aggravated the balance-of-payments problem and also fueled inflation. LBJ received advice as early as December 1965 from Gardner Ackley, chairman of his Council of Economic Advisers, to increase individual and corporate income taxes in order to cool down the economy. But Johnson—fearing this would play into the

hands of war critics and spell the end of his Great Society—resisted for a year and a half. Finally, in August 1967, he called for a major tax hike, only to see the bill held hostage in Congress by fiscal conservatives who wanted to trim domestic spending. Inflation worsened.

Amid rising international concern about America’s problems early in 1968, foreigners sold dollars and bought gold. In response, the United States and other nations made certain changes to return the international monetary system to working order, and LBJ and Congress finally agreed on a tax increase—together with a \$6 billion spending cut. But the gold crisis weighed on U.S. policymakers. “These monetary and budgetary problems were constantly before us as we considered whether we should or could do more in Vietnam,” Johnson later wrote. “It was clear that calling up a large number of troops, sending additional men overseas, and increasing military expenditures would complicate our problems and put greater pressure on the dollar.” That helped him to decide on a different course: expanding South Vietnam’s role in its own defense.

In any event, the makeshift solution of 1968 ultimately could not conceal the weakness of an international system based on a gold-backed dollar. The U.S. economy could no longer support the burden. After another global monetary crisis, in 1971, Collins notes, President Richard M. Nixon “closed the gold window.” No longer would the dollar be convertible to gold. By 1973, a new system based on floating exchange rates was in place, and the dollar was reduced to the role of first among equals in the world.

SOCIETY

It Takes a Village

A Survey of Recent Articles

A majority of Americans now live in suburbia, but if a recent Gallup Poll is any indication, most of them would prefer to be

elsewhere. Only 25 percent of Americans, according to the survey, look upon suburban living as ideal. Not that there is any great yearn-

ing for city life: only 13 percent favor urban existence. Nearly twice as many—25 percent—become misty-eyed as they imagine life on a farm. But these days, the most ideal place to live—embraced by 37 percent—is that other traditional, if oft-derided, wellspring of American virtue: the small town.

Ordinary Americans are not the only ones reconsidering suburbia. Long the *bête noire* of intellectuals, the 'burbs are now the subject of much new thinking. Some conservatives are questioning their commitment to these "bourgeois utopias," while liberals are belatedly taking them seriously as an object of study.

Thus Karl Zinsmeister, editor in chief of the moderately conservative *American Enterprise* (Nov.-Dec. 1996), writes, "People accept suburbs, but they aren't particularly enthusiastic about them." The suburbs have their virtues, especially for families rearing children, he acknowledges. But they still "are much less conservative, traditional, and family-friendly than we sometimes imagine." Suburbia, he claims, "is actually a fairly radical social experiment," and he blames it for encouraging a multitude of (alleged) modern woes, from "the weakening of generational links" to "the decline of civic action." Suburbs don't provide much in the way of neighborliness, he says. "You pick your mall, your office park, your residential street, your child's daycare and school. There are the secondary choices of exercise club, video store, medical clinic, car repair station, and favorite ethnic restaurants. You assemble all these into a daily travel package, and that is your 'community.'"

This is a far cry from the "natural" community of the village, in which humans have resided for most of their history, Zinsmeister writes—even if that sometimes has meant an urban village.

More of a champion of suburbia than most these days is Allan Carlson, president of the Rockford Institute. Writing in the same issue of the *American Enterprise*—which offers a gaggle of essays, interviews, and symposia on urbs and 'burbs—he musters "two cheers" for the suburbs. Although suburbanites live in "less complete" communities, they fare better in com-

parison with city dwellers, being "more family-oriented, more home-centered, more neighborly, and more inclined to take part in community affairs." As a "response to modernity," he avers, the American suburb is at least more successful than other models, whether in socialist Sweden, where "all the children are effectively wards of the state," or in still-vital cities such as Rome and Paris, which are, in effect, "child-free zones."

In the United States, the New Urbanism movement pioneered by architects Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk (see their essay, "The Second Coming of the American Small Town," in *WQ*, Winter '92) aims to revive the principles of a neglected model, the traditional small town. Its "key precepts," Philip Langdon, author of *A Better Place to Live* (1994), writes in *American Enterprise*, include "a belief in the importance of the public realm—streets, sidewalks, parks, and gathering places. . . . Almost always, a traditional neighborhood is a walking neighborhood; houses are close enough together and near enough to the street so that neighbors cease to be strangers."

Notable New Urbanist projects include Kentlands, in Gaithersburg, Maryland, near Washington, D.C., and Harbor Town, near Memphis, Tennessee. The Walt Disney Company is building such a town, called Celebration, near Orlando, Florida. It should be completed in eight to 10 years. Duany expects it—and Disney's massive promotion of the New Urbanist idea—to have a huge impact, as developers "see that it's replicable."

The taste for small-town living is so strong, observes Alan Ehrenhalt, executive editor of *Governing* (May 1996), that more people are opting for the real thing. For example, in Duncan, Oklahoma, a town of 23,000 near the Texas border, the downtown has undergone a startling revival. Ten years ago, 45 percent of the buildings in the four-block Main Street corridor were vacant; today, 93 percent are occupied. On Main Streets everywhere, he concludes, "there is finally a little reason to be optimistic."

It is striking that all this talk of thinking



Disney's Celebration

small is occurring even as many urban visionaries speak of sprawling “megacities.” Introducing a potpourri on the “Post Urban Planet” (including contributions by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas and Massachusetts Institute of Technology dean William Mitchell), the editors of *New Perspectives Quarterly* (Summer 1996) declare that “the future promises to make ruins of the past as the old cities prove too small to inhabit.” Global industry and instantaneous communications are said to be among the forces driving the change.

In planning circles, Joel Kotkin, a Fellow at the Pepperdine Institute for Public Policy, writes in *American Enterprise*, metropolitan government is seen as an antidote to today’s urban problems. In metropolitan gov-

ernment, one unified authority assumes control over a multitude of urban and suburban jurisdictions. But look at Los Angeles, whose city government presides over a huge area, he says. Nearly all of the smaller cities nearby are prospering, and there are movements afoot among communities inside Los Angeles to break away and form their own, smaller political units. What gives smaller cities an edge, Kotkin believes, is “stronger community participation and shorter feedback loops.”

So, at the close of the 20th century, Americans are being pulled in two seemingly opposite directions: toward large-scale cultural and economic institutions *and* toward smaller and more intimate communities. It’s a conflict that is bound to be felt in every cul de sac and city street in the land.

Welfare Reform That Works?

“New Jersey’s Experiment in Welfare Reform” by Ted G. Goertzel and Gary S. Young, in *The Public Interest* (Fall 1996), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

New Jersey’s controversial welfare reform plan—enacted in 1992 over strenuous protests—has worked, contend sociologists Goertzel, of Rutgers University, and Young, of the Community College of Philadelphia. The “message” it sent to people in the state’s inner cities was received, the “culture” there has changed—and declining birthrates, as well as reduced welfare dependency, are the proof.

The plan’s most controversial part was its

“family cap” provision, which denies an additional cash benefit to an unmarried woman who has another child while receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payments. The National Organization for Women called it “an impermissible attempt to intrude on the private lifestyle choices of poor women.” But Assemblyman (now Senator) Wayne Bryant, an African-American liberal Democrat from Camden and the architect of

Heterophobia

Daphne Patai, co-author of *Professing Feminism* (1994), writing in *Partisan Review* (Fall 1996), assays the radical feminist intolerance of men and the women “who insist on associating with them.”

It seems that much of the present passionate rejection of men is explained, only apparently paradoxically, by feminism’s embrace of “difference.” This embrace has led to such a splintering of identity that the category “woman” can hardly be used without embarrassment. There are so many newly emergent identities to which any one group of feminists need feel inferior: white women vis-à-vis women of color; heterosexual women vis-à-vis lesbians; women of privilege vis-à-vis poor women (though, characteristically in American society, this theme seems to be of less importance than the others). The fact is that feminism is fragmented by all these divisions, which have created . . . the “oppression sweepstakes.” I believe this jostling for place creates so much tension within feminism that it is barely able to sustain itself as a movement in which separate identity groups keep speaking to one another. But there is one thing that, apparently, can save the day for them all, and that is hostility to men.

the reform plan, wanted, the authors say, “to send welfare recipients the message that welfare must be temporary, not a way of life.” Other elements of the plan included a requirement that recipients meet with social workers to formulate a “family plan” to improve their situation through education, work experience, or marriage, and an increase in the amount of schooling and child care offered to the women.

Bryant’s message got through, Goertzel and Young contend. Between 1992 and ’94, births to AFDC mothers in the state fell by four percent—twice the rate of decline among all New Jersey women. In 10 New Jersey cities where the “welfare culture” is strongest, births to women receiving AFDC dropped much more, by an average of about nine percent. In the largest city, Newark, where half of the children belong to families receiving AFDC benefits,

births to AFDC mothers fell 10 percent; in Camden, such births plummeted by 21 percent. State officials, meanwhile, have found no increase in abortions.

Ironically, the authors point out, the welfare advocates’ attacks apparently helped to get the message of change across even before the reforms were fully implemented. Many inner-city women probably saw the reform package as more punitive than it really was. Governor Christine Todd Whitman’s subsequent proposal for a strict five-year lifetime limit on AFDC benefits, as well as the recent federal action ending AFDC as an entitlement, have also undoubtedly had an impact. “Women are no longer certain that AFDC will be there to support them,” conclude the authors, and this has been affecting their decisions.

Risky Abortions

“Legal but Not Safe” by Candace C. Crandall, in *The Women’s Quarterly* (Summer 1996), 2111 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 550, Arlington, Va. 22201–3057.

With the 1973 Supreme Court ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, abortion became legal throughout the nation, and that, many believed, also meant that it would be safe. Women would no longer have to venture down back alleys to obtain an abortion; now, abortion would be safe and cheap. Unfortunately, argues Crandall, a free-lance writer who says she sympathizes with the abortion rights movement, *Roe v. Wade* did not put an end to unsafe abortions.

Some 550,000 deaths that might have been abortion-related—out of 27 million legal abortions induced between 1972 and 1990—were reported to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). But officials there, Crandall says, suspect that the actual number of such deaths is much higher. Serious infection and other potentially life-threatening complications have occurred in some 250,000 women undergoing legal abortions since 1972, according to the CDC.

The clinics responsible for most of these deaths and complications “are not the pristine establishments where Radcliffe girls might go for a weekend abortion,” Crandall notes, but operations “that advertise in Spanish-language newspapers and neighborhood weeklies, pay kickbacks to sleazy phone referral services, and lure women through

the doorway with names that echo the political lingua franca—‘choice,’ and ‘reproductive health.’” These “abortion mills,” she says, prey upon poor and uneducated women, disproportionately black and Hispanic, who do not know how to find a good clinic or how to take legal action against medical malpractice.

Most abortion providers are reasonably competent, Crandall believes, but that was true even before *Roe v. Wade*, “when Planned Parenthood estimated that nine out of 10 illegal abortions were being performed by qualified physicians.” The fact that they were often breaking the law kept the number of abortions low (as few as 200,000 annually by some estimates), she points out, and also “effectively discouraged most [physicians] from taking unnecessary risks with their patients. Legalization removed these constraints.”

To keep abortion costs low today, Crandall says, “abortion providers and abortion rights activists resist health regulation that would require emergency care equipment and better trained clinic personnel.” Federal and state governments, she believes, need to crack down on abortion malpractice. Data on abortion-related deaths and injuries must be systematically gathered, and medical care standards to ensure “a reasonably safe outcome” must be established and enforced.

The Other Royal Scandals

“The Royal Family and Family Values in Late Eighteenth-Century England”
by Marilyn Morris, in *Journal of Family History* (Oct. 1996),
Sage Publications, 2455 Teller Rd., Thousand Oaks, Calif. 91320.

Charles, Diana, Fergie, and the rest of the royals may seem to be the last word in blue-blood scandal, but the Royal Family has seen worse. In fact, according to Morris, a historian at the University of North Texas, in Denton, the monarchy established its image as a bastion of propriety against a backdrop of scandals some 200 years ago, during the reign of King George III (1760–1820).

In 1785, the king's rowdy son, George, Prince of Wales, secretly and illegally wed Maria Fitzherbert, a Roman Catholic widow. A man with a well-known fondness for the bottle, the prince ran up such huge gambling debts (£630,000 by the end of 1794) that unpaid tradesmen importuned him in the streets. The troubled royal sought solace in the arms of Frances, Countess of Jersey. In 1795, having abandoned Maria, and hoping to force Parliament to raise his annual income and help pay off his debts, he married his cousin, Princess Caroline of Brunswick, “whom he despised at first sight,” Morris notes. The prince then coolly appointed Frances as Princess Caroline's first lady of the bedchamber. After the princess gave birth to a daughter in 1796, the press, ceasing to pretend that all was well in the Wales household,

titillated England with the “sordid details,” and made much of the infant daughter's plight.

Then there was the prince's brother, Frederick, Duke of York, who married Princess Frederica of Prussia in 1791 in the hope of getting a large dowry to cover his gambling debts. The marriage was a sham, but Frederica kept up appearances, and the press left them alone. Not so the king's third son, William, Duke of Clarence, who shared 20 years of unwedded bliss with Dorothy Jordan, a well-known actress. “The Duke of CLARENCE was seen arm in arm with Mrs. *Jordan* last week at Greenwich,” the *Times* reported in 1792, “but they were not noticed by any one. Indeed, there would be an impropriety in addressing his ROYAL HIGHNESS in such company, as it is to be supposed he would not wish to be known.”

“Above all this marital mayhem,” writes Morris, stood George III and Queen Charlotte, “the picture of conjugal probity.” The first British king since Charles I (1625–49) to be faithful to his wife, George III “held firm to his role as dedicated father in spite of the misbehavior of his sons.” And as the monarchy's political power waned with the century, Morris observes, its role as moral exemplar grew in importance.



In James Gillray's 1795 satirical print, the sleeping Prince of Wales dreams of Princess Caroline and the bigger royal allowance their marriage will bring him.

PRESS & MEDIA

The Fires This Time

"Who Was Burning the Black Churches?" by Joe Holley, in *Columbia Journalism Review* (Sept.–Oct. 1996), 101 Journalism Bldg., 2950 Broadway, Columbia Univ., New York, N.Y. 10027;
"Politics and Church Burnings" by Michael Fumento, in *Commentary* (Oct. 1996),
165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022; "Playing with Fire" by Michael Kelly, in
The New Yorker (July 15, 1996), 20 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

The story raged out of control in the nation's news media last year. Black churches in the South were burning in an epidemic of racist-inspired arson. "Flames of Hate: Racism Blamed in Shock Wave of Church Burnings," screamed a *New York Daily News* headline. Many accounts hinted that a conspiracy might be at work. President Bill Clinton and other politicians expressed alarm at this supposed resurgence of American racism. And then the story largely turned to dust. How did the news media get taken for this wild ride?

Fumento, a columnist for *Reason* magazine, charges that the Atlanta-based Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR), a left-wing group that tracks right-wing extremism, perpetrated "a deliberate hoax." In conjunction with the National Council of Churches, he says, the CDR early last year fed the media "a steady diet of 'news' about black-church burnings in the South." Whatever the organizations "had in mind when they started their mendacious campaign," it filled their coffers with millions of dollars in contributions from appalled Americans. In June, after a black church in Charlotte, North Carolina, burned to the ground (in a fire that, it later turned out, had been set by a disturbed 13-year-old), the CDR claimed that

since 1990 "there had been 90 arson attacks against black churches in nine Southern states; the number had been rising every year; and each and every culprit 'arrested and/or detained' was white," Fumento writes. This gave a false picture of the situation, he says. The CDR blamed arson for fires that authorities attributed to other causes, for example. And fires at churches in the nation had actually *decreased* since 1980, and an upsurge in attacks on black churches in 1995 and the first half of '96 "could be largely ascribed to a combination of more reliable statistics and copycat behavior," Fumento says.

Holley, a free-lance writer based in Austin, Texas, does not pin all the blame on the CDR. Reporters made faulty interpretations of what was happening. "The black-church-burning story," he writes, "is a textbook example of what can happen, both good and bad, when journalists are tempted to connect the dots. It's an example of how the media can be distracted, even misled for a while, but, given time, are able to right themselves, regain their balance, and tease out the complex truth."

Surprisingly, *USA Today*, though not noted for investigative reporting, led the way in getting at the truth of the matter. (Close

The Helpful War Correspondent

"Once upon a time, war correspondents were accorded some support and privileges by the armies they covered," writes veteran CNN correspondent Peter Arnett in *Media Studies Journal* (Fall 1996). "Now it's the other way around." Arnett covered the war in Chechnya last summer.

Forget much of what you learned about journalistic impartiality when you enter the blackened debris of [the Chechen capital of] Grozny: You play by local rules. That means lending your satellite phones to the vodka-swigging Russian soldiers at the checkpoints so they can call their wives or their distant headquarters. So far, no journalist with a satellite phone has been shot in the back after being waved through the checkpoint—more than can be said for some local reporters. And you give lifts to the armed Chechen rebels materializing from the underbrush along country roads. No point in trying to outrun a B-40 rocket, even in an armored car.

behind were the Associated Press's Fred Bayles and the *New Yorker's* Kelly.) *USA Today* reporter Gary Fields and a dozen colleagues, notes Holley, "conducted more than 500 interviews, examined fire records in every southern state, and visited the sites of 45 church arsons." They found that while there had been a "surge" of arsons during 1995 and '96 at black churches in two areas in the South, there was no "epidemic of racially-driven arsons" sweeping the region. Of the 64 fires at black churches the *USA Today* team examined, only four could be conclusively shown to be racially motivated.

The nation (and the news media), Fields and a fellow reporter observed, had stumbled upon an old phenomenon and mistaken it



The burning last June of Pleasant Ridge United Church of Christ, in North Carolina, fed the media's "fire."

for something new. "The phenomenon: churches of every color are a traditional favorite of arsonists. Although the pace has been declining in recent years, arsonists still torch an average of 520 churches and church-owned buildings a year."

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

America's Foolish Romance with God

"The Last Taboo" by Wendy Kaminer, in *The New Republic* (Oct. 14, 1996), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Many sermons are preached these days about America's moral decline and loss of religious faith. Nearly everybody seems to agree that the spirit of secularism has seized the nation. Kaminer, a Public Policy Fellow at Radcliffe College, begs to differ. Americans, she says, give too much respect to religion—and too little to the rational alternative: atheism.

"If I were to mock religious belief as childish, if I were to suggest that worshipping a supernatural deity, convinced that it cares about your welfare, is like worrying about monsters in the closet who find you tasty enough to eat, if I were to describe God as our creation. . . . I'd violate the norms of civility and religious correctness, I'd be excoriated as an example of the cynical, liberal elite responsible for America's moral decline. I'd be pitied for my spiritual blindness; some people would try to enlighten and convert me. I'd receive hate mail. Atheists generate about as much sympathy as pedophiles. But,

while pedophilia may at least be characterized as a disease, atheism is a choice, a willful rejection of beliefs to which vast majorities of people cling."

She cites a 1994 survey showing that 95 percent of Americans believe in God or some other universal spirit, and that 76 percent "imagine God as a heavenly father who actually pays attention to their prayers." Many also entertain more exotic beliefs. According to a 1991 survey, 53 percent of Catholics and 40 percent of Protestants believe in UFOs (unidentified flying objects). Nearly one-third of the nation's teenagers believe in reincarnation.

"In this climate—with belief in guardian angels and creationism becoming commonplace—making fun of religion is as risky as burning a flag in an American Legion hall," Kaminer asserts. "But, by admitting that they're fighting a winning battle, advocates of renewed religiosity would lose the benefits of appearing besieged. Like liberal rights orga-

nizations that attract more money when conservative authoritarians are in power, religious groups inspire more believers when secularism is said to hold sway.”

H. L. Mencken and other thinkers once scorned religion as akin to imbecility. Today’s intellectuals, Kaminer complains, have “abandoned the tradition of caustic secularism that once provided refuge for the faithless.”

The supposedly liberal, mainstream press is no better, she maintains. It “offers unprecedented coverage of religion, taking pains not to offend the faithful.” In an op-ed piece on popular spirituality that she wrote for the *New York Times* last summer, she was not allowed by the editors to say “that, while

Hillary Clinton was criticized for conversing with Eleanor Roosevelt, millions of Americans regularly talk to Jesus, long deceased, and that many people believe that God talks to them, unbidden. Nor was I permitted to point out that, to an atheist, the sacraments are as silly as a séance. These remarks and others were excised because they were deemed ‘offensive.’”

A little more offensiveness is precisely what’s needed, in Kaminer’s view: “A resurgence of skepticism and rationality . . . would balance supernaturalism and the habit of belief with respect for empirical realities, which should influence the formulation of public policy more than faith.”

In Name Only

“Not So Christian America” by Thomas C. Reeves, in *First Things* (Oct. 1996), Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Ave., Ste. 400, New York, N.Y. 10010.

For decades, survey after survey has seemed to show that Americans are a highly religious people. Less than eight percent in a 1990 survey said they had no religion, while nearly 87 percent described themselves as Christians. On closer inspection, argues Reeves, a historian at the University of Wisconsin at Parkside, and author of *The Empty Church: The Suicide of Liberal Christianity* (1996), the faith practiced by most of these people barely deserves the name Christian.

A 1989 Gallup poll found that only four out of 10 Americans knew that Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount, only a minority of adults could name the four Gospels of the New Testament, and only three out of 10 teenagers knew why Easter is celebrated. An in-depth survey by John C. Green of the University of Akron and other political scientists suggests that religious faith actually plays little or no role in most Americans’ lives. Judging by such things as church attendance

and membership, personal prayer, belief in life after death, and how “important” respondents said religion was to them, the researchers concluded that 30 percent of Americans are totally secular in their outlook, 29 percent are barely or nominally religious, and 22 percent are modestly religious. Only 19 percent regularly practice their religion. But this lack of religious commitment, Reeves says, should come as no surprise to anybody who is aware of the violence and vulgarity that pollute American life.

“Authentic Christianity and the world are by definition at odds,” he maintains, but for most Americans, Christianity has been watered down and rendered innocuous, like so much fast food. It has become “easy, upbeat, convenient, and compatible. It does not require self-sacrifice, discipline, humility, an otherworldly outlook, a zeal for souls, a fear as well as love of God. There is little guilt and no punishment, and the payoff in heaven is virtually certain.”

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

On Fire for Fusion

“The Fire Next Time” by William J. Hogan, Roger O. Bangerter, and Charles P. Verdon, in *The Sciences* (Sept.–Oct. 1996), New York Academy of Sciences, 2 E. 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Critics of nuclear fusion research joke that fusion power is only 20 years away—and *always will be*. But fusion research scientists

Hogan, Bangerter, and Verdon—of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory,

and the Laboratory for Laser Energetics at the University of Rochester, respectively—think they will be able, with the aid of a \$1.1 billion National Ignition Facility that is in the works, to prove the skeptics wrong.

For fusion researchers, they write, “this is a time of high drama,” and morale is high. “The traditional reasons for optimism are as compelling as ever. For one thing, fusion works. An operational fusion reactor, the sun, illuminates the sky every day.” A fusion reactor scaled down for earthly use would provide a source of energy that, in contrast with nuclear fission, would be safe (no possibility of a sustained chain reaction), clean (no eternally radioactive by-products), and virtually inexhaustible. But the physics involved in confining and heating two rarified gases (deuterium and tritium, both hydrogen isotopes) to the temperature of the sun is a daunting obstacle to scientists.

There are two main approaches. One is magnetic fusion, in which the challenge is to use magnetic fields to keep the fuel confined. International teams in Europe, Japan, the United States, and Russia are currently designing the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor, which will be the largest facility of its kind. Hogan and his col-

leagues are working on inertial confinement fusion, in which a laser or particle beam is used to heat and compress a fuel capsule until it detonates, with the fuel’s own inertia keeping it confined long enough for the reaction to take place. “The long-standing hurdle has been ignition,” the authors say.

Just a few decades ago, estimates of the energy needed to achieve ignition varied widely—from 10 kilojoules to 10 megajoules. Now it appears that between one and two megajoules will be needed. This refinement, say the authors, “has made it possible, for the first time, to design equipment and set realistic budgets for achieving fusion ignition.”

Major programs are under way in the United States and eight other countries. A French inertial confinement research facility, Mégajoule, is scheduled to be completed between 2005 and 2010 in Bordeaux. Construction of the U.S. National Ignition Facility, at a site not yet selected, could begin this spring, with late 2002 the target for completion. If that schedule is kept, the authors are confident that “experiments would then lead to ignition by 2005.” Two decades after that, they say, commercial fusion power could become a reality.

Alternative Medicine Arrives

“Europe’s Strong Herbal Brew” by Rebecca Rawls, in *Chemical & Engineering News* (Sept. 23, 1996), 1155 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; “Trends in the Education and Practice of Alternative Medicine Clinicians” by Richard A. Cooper and Sandi J. Stoflet, in *Health Affairs* (Fall 1996), Ste. 600, 7600 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, Md. 20814–6133.

Herbal medicines have long seemed a fringe interest. No more. In the eyes of both middle-class consumers and physicians, reports Rawls, a senior correspondent for *Chemical & Engineering News*, such medicines have become increasingly respectable, and may now be on the verge of widespread acceptance and use.

Europe some time ago embraced herbal remedies, such as extract from *Ginkgo biloba*, used to improve the flow of blood in capillaries and arteries. In Germany and France, many herbs and herbal extracts are sold as prescription drugs, and their use is covered by national health insurance. Regularly prescribed by 80 percent of German physicians, herbal medicines are always among the best-selling prescription drugs in the country.



Echinacea purpurea

Most of the research on herbal medicines has been done by companies in Europe (particularly Germany). The reason, Rawls explains, is that it is far less costly to get a drug approved for use there than in the United States. "Because herbal medicines are usually not patentable, the profit margin on them is often much lower than for synthetic drugs," she notes.

In the United States, herbal remedies are generally sold in so-called natural food stores rather than drugstores. Extracts from the echinacea plant, used to prevent or treat colds and influenza by stimulating the immune system, are the best-selling herbal medicines here. Garlic is also widely used for medical purposes, such as the reduction of cholesterol levels and blood pressure. Many clinical studies indicate that garlic does cut cholesterol, Rawls notes, though just how it works is unclear.

Many other "alternative" therapies, from folk remedies to bioelectromagnetics, have

been getting increased attention in recent years. Cooper, director of the Health Policy Institute at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, and Stoflet, a research assistant, report that in 1990 Americans spent \$13.5 billion on alternative therapies—equivalent to about half the out-of-pocket sum spent on physician services. Interest in such therapies is growing rapidly. The authors project that the number of chiropractors, now about 50,000, will double by 2010. Also on the horizon: a tripling in the ranks of today's 1,800 naturopaths and 7,200 practitioners of acupuncture and "oriental" medicine.

There are still plenty of skeptics, but Cooper and Stoflet say that "many physicians" now use acupuncture, herbal medicine, and other alternative measures. It no longer makes sense, the authors conclude, to discuss the future of America's health care system without giving consideration to medicine beyond the mainstream.

Sperm Shortage?

"Toxic Shock," in *The Economist* (Aug. 3, 1996), 27 St. James's St., London SW1A 1HG.

In the Great Lakes, female gulls have been found nesting with other females, having apparently given up on the males. In a Florida lake contaminated by pesticides, alligators have abnormally small penises. These and other strange incidents—along with studies claiming to show dramatic declines in human sperm counts and increases in testicular cancer—have given rise, the *Economist* reports, to a new scare: the fear that artificial chemicals are wreaking havoc with the reproductive systems of man and other animals.

"Many studies do indeed show sperm counts to be falling," the British news-magazine says. A 1992 review in the *British Medical Journal* of 61 such studies, involving a total of 15,000 men from around the world, concluded that the average sperm count had dropped by 42 percent since 1940—from 113 million sperm per milliliter of semen to 66 million. Suspicion has been cast on a number of synthetic chemicals—including the insecticide DDT (which is now banned in many developed countries) and phthalates (widely used to make plastics softer)—that are believed to mimic estrogens, the female hormones.

"But the evidence looks messier on closer inspection," the *Economist* observes. One recent study showed slight *rises* in the sperm counts of men in various American cities since 1970. The fact that sperm counts, for reasons unknown, often vary hugely from region to region may explain the decline found in the *British Medical Journal* survey, since a large proportion of its early samples were taken from New York City, where men in the recent study had by far the highest sperm counts, while later samples were from outside the United States.

Even if "gender-bending" is going on, man-made chemicals may not be responsible. Many naturally occurring chemicals also can act as hormone mimics. In a study published this year, the skeptical scientists of the European Science and Environment Forum say the estrogenic effects in the human diet from naturally occurring chemicals far outweigh those of artificial chemicals, and no solid evidence exists that either sort poses any risk to human health. Other than chemicals, some possible "gender-bending" suspects are stress, global warming, and even, according to one recent study, tight underwear.

An Intelligible Universe

A particle physicist and ordained Anglican priest, John Polkinghorne, president of Queens' College, University of Cambridge, writes in *Commonweal* (Aug. 16, 1996) about a very curious coincidence.

When we use mathematics as a key to unlock the secrets of the universe, something very peculiar is happening. Mathematics is the free exploration of the human mind. Our mathematical friends sit in their studies, and out of their heads they dream up the beautiful patterns of mathematics. Inexplicably, some of the most beautiful patterns thought up by the mathematicians are found actually to occur in the structure of the physical world. In other words, there is some deep-seated relationship between the reason within (the rationality of our minds—in this case mathematics) and the reason without (the rational order and structure of the physical world around us). The two fit together like a pair of gloves. That is a rather significant fact about the world, or so thought Einstein. Einstein once said, "The only incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible." Why, we should ask, are our minds so perfectly shaped to understand the deep patterns of the world around us? . . .

Why do the reason within and the reason without fit together at a deep level? Religious belief provides an entirely rational and entirely satisfying explanation of that fact. It says that the reason within and the reason without have a common origin in that deeper rationality which is the reason of the Creator, whose will is the ground of both my mental and my physical experience. Theology has the power to answer a question, namely the intelligibility of the world, that arises from science but goes beyond science's ability to answer. Remember, science simply assumes the intelligibility of the world. Theology can take that striking fact and make it profoundly comprehensible.

Taking the Measure of Deep Ecology

"There's No Going Back to Nature" by Walter Truett Anderson, in *Mother Jones* (Sept.–Oct. 1996), 731 Market St., Ste. 600, San Francisco, Calif. 94103.

Deep ecology, bioregionalism, ecofeminism, neo-Luddism, and other forms of "back-to-nature" environmentalism are all the rage in some precincts of the Left today. Passionately opposed to "anthropocentric" (human-centered) thought and action, thinkers such as Kirkpatrick Sale hate technology, love the primitive, and dream of a world in which people stay put in their own bioregions, living and working alongside native plants and animals. A former editor of *Earth First! Journal* wrote that he would like "to see human beings live much more the way they did 15,000 years ago" (i.e. hunting and gathering).

Popular as such notions may be on college campuses, writes Anderson, author of *Evolution Isn't What It Used to Be* (1996), they are almost completely irrelevant to "most of the valuable environmental work that is being done now and will be done in

the future." The earth, he points out, "is becoming more densely populated, not less; more urbanized, not less; more technological, not less. Most important of all, human beings are exerting ever more—not less—power in nature, having a greater impact on ecosystems."

Even the most benign human interventions reshape nature, Anderson argues. "People are rebuilding rivers and streams and ponds and beaches, reconstructing forests and prairies and deserts, sometimes coaxing populations of near-extinct species back to a sustainable size." But restorations can never be perfect replicas of past ecosystems. Inevitably, the restored ecosystem lacks certain species that have become extinct and includes some bird, insect, or plant that has moved in and made itself at home.

Technology, the nemesis of radical envi-

ronmentalists, is vital to environmental protection, Anderson asserts. It takes sophisticated equipment, for instance, to detect and monitor a hole in the ozone layer. Even biotechnology—"the Great Satan for the back-to-nature ideologists"—can be used to

protect the environment, he points out. Its products include "bioremediation (microbes that take chemical pollutants out of water; plants that take up mercury from the soil), and new kinds of materials including genuinely biodegradable plastics."

ARTS & LETTERS

Monumental Time

"Maya Lin and the 1960s: Monuments, Time Lines, and Minimalism" by Daniel Abramson, in *Critical Inquiry* (Summer 1996), Univ. of Chicago, 202 Wieboldt Hall, 1050 E. 59th St., Chicago, Ill. 60637.

Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial, in Washington, D.C., has captured America's heart with its two black granite walls rising from the earth and meeting at an obtuse angle, their surfaces etched with the names of the 58,156 American war dead. The early controversy over the minimalist, unheroic design soon subsided as "the wall" became a poignant shrine. But few realize the true nature of Lin's contribution to the memorial, or how revolutionary it really was, argues Abramson, a professor of art history and architecture at Connecticut College.

"The complete listing of names as well as the design's subdued horizontality, reflectivity and unheroic tone were all more or less mandated" by the memorial's sponsors, Abramson notes. Lin's one genuine innovation, he contends, was to put the names in chronological—rather than alphabetical—order, with the name of the first casualty (in 1959) on the right-hand wall next to the vertex, where it seems to follow the name of the final casualty (in 1975) at the bottom of the rightmost column on the left wall. This, Lin has explained, symbolizes the closure of the Vietnam War.

Abramson maintains that Lin's use of a time line "is altogether new in the history of monument design." Lin has since used it in two other works. The Civil Rights Memorial, in Montgomery, Alabama, lists 61 deaths and other events in chronological order along the circumference of a flat granite table. But there is a noticeable gap between the last and first events: the struggle is not yet over.

A third Lin monument, the 32-ton, granite Women's Table at Yale, marks that university's progress in coeducation. Women were first admitted as undergraduates in 1969. The granite "table" top, tilted at a 69° angle, lists the number of women enrolled (as undergraduates or graduate students) for each year from the school's founding in 1701 to 1993, when the sculpture was dedicated. Lin shaped this time line in an outward spiral, symbolizing, in



Maya Lin's Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama: monument to an unfinished story.

her words, "women emerging in society."

Though unconventional in form, Lin's "simple and beautiful" works are very popular, Abramson notes. They represent "a fun-

damentally conservative position . . . toward the political, social, and artistic movements of the 1960s," he argues, acknowledging

them in such a way as to place them in time and history and lay them—prematurely, he believes—to rest.

Mr. Lowell's Universe

"Robert Lowell's Poems and Other People's Prose" by Michael Milburn, in *New England Review* (Fall 1995), Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vt. 05753.

The poet Robert Lowell (1917–77) disdained the earnest critics "sleuthing down my plagiarisms," but the fact is that, to a very unusual extent, he persistently appropriated the prose of others for his own purposes. Throughout his career, writes Milburn, a poet who teaches in Connecticut, Lowell "would incorporate not only his own prose and that of his friends and family, but the words of writers as diverse as [Jonathan] Edwards, Herman Melville, Henry David Thoreau, William Cobbett, and Lord Kenneth Clark, into original poems by Robert Lowell."

In "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket" (published in *Lord Weary's Castle* [1947])—Lowell's "first fully realized and perhaps most enduring achievement as an artist"—the poet not only drew his setting and much of his imagery from Melville's *Moby Dick* but freely incorporated a shipwreck scene from Thoreau's 1865 travel book, *Cape Cod*. Thoreau wrote:

The brig St. John, from Galway, Ireland, laden with emigrants, was wrecked on Sunday morning; it was now Tuesday morning and the sea was still breaking violently on the rocks. . . . I saw many marble feet and matted heads . . . [and] the coiled up wreck of a human hulk, gashed by the rocks or fishes, so that the bone and muscle were exposed, but quite bloodless—merely red and white—with wide-open and staring eyes, yet lusterless, deadlights; or like the cabin windows of a stranded vessel, filled with sand.

Lowell wrote:

A brackish reach of shoal off Madaket,—
The sea was still breaking violently and night
Had steamed into our North Atlantic Fleet,
When the drowned sailor clutched the drag-net. Light
Flashed from his matted head and marble feet,
He grappled at the net
With the coiled, hurdling muscles of his thighs:
The corpse was bloodless, a botch of reds and whites,
Its open, staring eyes
Were lusterless dead-lights
Or cabin windows on a stranded hulk
Heavy with sand.

"No poet since [T. S.] Eliot has so successfully turned a taste for literature into literature," Milburn says. "For Lowell, reading, particularly the reading of history and the classics, was experience"—and as such, just "as worthy of mining for poetry as his own life." Lowell, whose mental health was precarious, seemed to need prose "to enable him to give full expression to his temperament. Prose released the visionary in him."

His prose appropriations "invigorated both the story and structure of Lowell's early poems." Alas, Milburn says, the technique crippled his later poetry, in such works as *For the Union Dead* (1964) and *Day by Day* (1977), "with inappropriate subjects, unmusical language, and an overabundance of factual data."

Deifying the Duke

"(Over)praising Duke Ellington" by Terry Teachout, in *Commentary* (Sept. 1996), 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

No one questions the greatness of Duke Ellington (1899–1974), but the nature of his greatness is now at the center of a debate that also touches on issues of race and culture in America.

On one side is a small band of critics, including essayist Stanley Crouch, who have challenged the critical consensus on the

composer and bandleader. The standard view is that Ellington's post-World War II output was much less successful than the music he produced during the late 1930s and early '40s, and that he was not at his best in extended compositions. Crouch argues that Ellington and his orchestra were at their peak in the 1950s and '60s, when he was chiefly

'Dirty Harry' Surrenders

Frank Lentricchia, who teaches literature at Duke University and was once called the “Dirty Harry of literary theory” because of his assaults on convention, tells in *Lingua Franca* (Sept.–Oct. 1996) why he’s turned in his gun.

I once managed to live for a long time, and with no apparent stress, a secret life with literature. Publicly, in the books I’d written and in the classroom, I worked as an historian and polemicist of literary theory, who could speak with passion, and without noticeable impediment, about literature as a political instrument. I once wrote that the literary word was like a knife, a hammer, a gun. I became a known and somewhat colorfully controversial figure, regularly excoriated in neo-conservative laments about the academy.

The secret me was me-the-reader, in the act of reading; an experience in which the words of someone else filled me up and made it irrelevant to talk about my reading; an experience that I’d had for as long as I can remember being a reader. . . .

Over the last 10 years, I’ve pretty much stopped reading literary criticism, because most of it isn’t literary. But criticism it is of a sort—the sort that stems from the sense that one is morally superior to the writers that one is supposedly describing. This posture of superiority is assumed when those writers represent the major islands of Western literary tradition, the central cultural engine—so it goes—of racism, poverty, sexism, homophobia, and imperialism: a cesspool that literary critics would expose for mankind’s benefit. Just what it would avail us to learn that Flaubert was a sexist is not clear. It is impossible, this much is clear, to exaggerate the heroic self-inflation of academic literary criticism.

To be certified as an academic literary critic, you need to believe, and be willing to assert, that Ezra Pound’s Cantos, a work twice the length of Paradise Lost, and which 99 percent of all serious students of literature find too difficult to read, actually forwards the cause of worldwide anti-Semitism. You need to tell your students that, despite what almost a century’s worth of smart readers have concluded, Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness is a subtle celebration of the desolations of imperialism. My objection is not that literary study has been politicized, but that it proceeds in happy indifference to, often in unconscionable innocence of, the protocols of literary competence.

occupied with the multimovement suites critics deemed inferior. (See WQ, Summer ’96, pp. 134–135.) On the other side are those, such as Teachout, *Commentary*’s music critic and a former professional jazz musician, who defend the consensus view. He believes that Crouch and his allies are exaggerating Ellington’s greatness, in part out of a misguided impulse toward racial mythologizing and in part out of musical ignorance.

Aside from piano lessons for a few months when he was seven years old, Ellington had no formal schooling in music, Teachout says. But within a few years of his emergence as a bandleader in the 1920s, the full extent of his talent became strikingly evident. Composing directly “on” his band, using it as a laboratory in which he taught himself to orchestrate, Ellington produced and recorded many scores of remarkable originality, including “Black

and Tan Fantasy” (1927) and “The Mooche” (1928). “By the mid-’30s, the Ellington band was consistently producing some of the finest music in jazz, and from 1940 to 1942, Ellington turned out a steady stream of compositions, among them ‘Ko-Ko,’ ‘Concerto for Cootie,’ ‘Harlem Air Shaft,’ and ‘Warm Valley’ (all from 1940), which were justly hailed as masterpieces,” Teachout notes.

By then, however, he argues, Ellington’s “fertile musical imagination had in certain ways outstripped his homemade technique” of orchestration. As his scores became more complex, he started to use assistants who “‘extracted’ instrumental parts from his rough sketches. This practice continued in varying degrees throughout Ellington’s life . . . as did his reliance on collaborators, both acknowledged and anonymous.”

Billy Strayhorn, with whom Ellington

worked closely starting in 1939, had extensive formal training in music. Strayhorn got full composing credit for some of the Ellington band's best-known recordings, including "Take the 'A' Train" and "Chelsea Bridge" (both 1941), and collaborated on many other works—"a fact Ellington himself admitted far more readily than did many of his admirers," says Teachout. Crouch, he adds, has given Ellington sole credit for several joint Ellington-Strayhorn compositions.

"Part of what led Ellington to employ better-trained musical collaborators," Teachout says, "was his own lack of technical assurance—the same thing that led him, in gen-

eral, to shun longer forms." Most of Ellington's so-called extended works, the author maintains, "are actually suites whose purported structural unity is more a matter of clever titling (*The Perfume Suite*, *A Drum Is a Woman*) than anything else, and which are extremely uneven in musical quality."

While all of Ellington's long pieces "contain passages of great beauty and originality, none—with the possible exceptions of *Reminiscing in Tempo* and *The Tattooed Bride*—can be said to 'work' structurally," Teachout argues. To refuse to acknowledge Ellington's limitations, he concludes, is only to diminish his true achievements.

OTHER NATIONS

Is Pakistan Coming Apart?

A Survey of Recent Articles

Nearly a half-century after it emerged from the Partition of 1947 as a new nation, Pakistan may be in danger of becoming another Bosnia. The government in Islamabad, writes Christopher O. Hurst, a researcher at California State University at San Bernardino, "must now contend with peoples who feel far greater allegiance to their ethnic homeland than to the concept of a greater Pakistan."

When the Indian subcontinent was partitioned, and the Muslim-majority areas were combined to form Pakistan, the hope of M. A. Jinnah (1876–1948) and the other founding fathers was that, though the government was not to be a theocracy, the common Muslim identity would hold the country together. "Islam is a powerful force in Pakistan," Hurst writes in *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (Apr.–June 1996), "but pleas for Islamic unity have done little to prevent . . . ethnic and sectarian conflict." Such pleas certainly didn't prevent East Pakistan, geographically separated by India from the rest of Pakistan, from breaking away in 1971 to become Bangladesh. Indeed, that successful secession inspired other separatist movements in Pakistan—and steeled Islamabad's resolve to suppress them.

Pakistan's population of 128 million includes five major ethnic groups: the Punjabis (62 million) in the northeast, the Pashtuns (17

million) in the northwest, the Baluchs (three million) in the southwest, the Sindhis (17 million) in the southeast, and the Muhajirs, an "umbrella" group made up primarily of immigrants from India and their descendants, most of whom live in the Sindh region.

Ironically, in light of some Western observers' fears of Islamic "fundamentalism," religious political parties have never had much success with the Pakistani electorate. In the October 1993 election, the religious parties obtained only three seats in the 237-member National Assembly.

That same 1993 election returned Benazir Bhutto and her Pakistan People's Party to power after three years in opposition. Last November, however, President Farooq Leghari dismissed Prime Minister Bhutto and dissolved the National Assembly, accusing her government of corruption, financial mismanagement, and involvement in political violence. New elections are to be held in February.

Ethnic conflict, though not the cause of Bhutto's downfall, is at the root of many of Pakistan's political troubles today, and the worst trouble spot is the southeast industrial city of Karachi and the surrounding Sindh region. There, reports Ahmed Rashid, a correspondent for the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and London's *Daily Telegraph*, writing in *Current History* (Apr. 1996), Muhajirs

and Sindhis have been locked in a long struggle. Radical elements in the Muhajir Quami Movement (MQM), an organization founded by Altaf Hussain (now in exile in London), agitate for an independent state of Karachi. "Since Bhutto's return to power in 1993, the MQM has been waging an urban guerrilla war of increasing ferocity against her government," notes Saeed Shafqat, director of Pakistan studies at the Civil Service Academy, in Lahore, writing in *Asian Survey* (July 1996). Nearly 2,000 people died in 1995 alone. Massive strikes called by Hussain have disrupted the whole country's economy.

The conflict dates back to 1971, when Bhutto's Sindh-born father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, came to power. He and his moderate socialist Pakistan People's Party openly favored the Sindhis, winning, for example, legislation making Sindhi the official language of the Sindh province. This, Hurst notes, infuriated the Muhajirs, touching off large-scale riots. In 1979, Bhutto was overthrown by General Zia ul-Haq, a Muhajir, and later executed. Zia, no more evenhanded than his predecessor, stoked Sindh antagonism. In the mid-1980s, Islamabad quashed a Sindh insurgency, but that only strengthened Sindh nationalism.

In the southwest, meanwhile, Baluch nationalism flourishes, Hurst reports. Secessionist sentiment there has its roots in the 1970s, when the Punjabi-dominated federal government crushed a Baluch insurgency. As a result, public opinion swung heavily toward full-fledged secession. Today, thanks to discrimination and continued repression, the Baluchs are politicized "as

never before." At least one section of Pakistan (besides the Punjab) has largely been spared massive ethnic violence. In the North-West Frontier Province, Pashtun nationalists have been relatively quiet. But "a vigorous Pashtun secessionist movement," Hurst says, "is a distinct possibility."

Bhutto responded to these pressures the same way her predecessors did. "During periods of ethnic upheaval," Hurst observes, "Pakistani governments have often raised the emotional topic of Kashmiri autonomy in order to divert attention away from domestic problems." That is what Bhutto repeatedly did. Since 1947, Pakistan and India have fought three wars over Kashmir, which each partly controls and to which both lay claim. But Hurst and others doubt that Pakistan's basic problems can any longer be evaded this way.

Bold measures are needed, these analysts agree. Bhutto, Radcliffe-educated and well liked by Washington, failed to provide them. "By most accounts," writes Peter Beinart, managing editor of the *New Republic* (Dec. 9, 1996), she "accomplished almost nothing during her two stints as Pakistan's prime minister."

Islamabad's next government must forge a new relationship with the ethnic leaders of the provinces. "Pakistan's survival into the next century depends on a greater devolution of political and economic power from the center to the provinces and cities," Ahmed Rashid writes. Unless that happens, the ethnic conflicts tormenting Pakistan cannot be resolved.

Why the English Love Tea

"Accounting for Taste: British Coffee Consumption in Historical Perspective" by S. D. Smith, in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (Autumn 1996), 26 Linnaean St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138-1611.

Tea drinking, like roast beef and cricket, has long seemed an essential part of the British way of life. But it wasn't always so, observes Smith, a lecturer in economic history at the University of York. Until the early 1700s, coffee was king: the English consumed 10 times as much java as tea. By the mid-1780s, however, tea was on top.

Tea had several advantages over coffee. It was easier to prepare, since no special grinding equipment was needed. It lacked coffee's unsavory association with London's "deca-

dent" coffeehouses, where patrons often spiked their drinks with alcohol. Tea, by contrast, was thought to have the "virtues of sobriety and morning alertness." Yet while Britain embraced the honey-colored brew, coffee remained the favorite on the Continent.

Why were British taste buds so different?

They weren't, Smith argues. The hallowed British taste for tea is in reality nothing more than a product of the law of supply and demand.

In the early 18th century, when coffee was

still the British favorite, British duties on coffee and tea were comparable, and, consequently, so were retail prices, Smith explains. But as the century progressed, the powerful British East India Company, which supplied tea from the Orient, pressured London to cut import duties on its product, tea. The private traders who brought coffee from Britain's West Indian colonies did not wield as much political clout. So tea prices dropped, and consumption increased.

Coffee held its own until the War of Jenkins's Ear (1739–45) with Spain disrupted supplies. After the war, another cut in the duty on tea trimmed the ranks of coffee drinkers again. With tariff reform in the early



In London's coffeehouses, the java was sometimes spiked with something stronger.

19th century, coffee briefly regained some customers. But coffee prices in England shot up after 1834, as slaves on coffee plantations in the British West Indies won their freedom. The price of Jamaican coffee, for example, rose by almost 40 percent during the 1830s. Tea's triumph was complete.

Russia on the Couch

"Geotherapy: Russia's Neuroses, and Ours" by Stephen Sestanovich, in *The National Interest* (Fall 1996), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 540, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Pundits such as former secretary of state Henry Kissinger have been sounding the alarm about the dangers of a Russia tormented by its loss of superpower status. Seeking relief from its national pain, these observers fear, Russia will be drawn to an expansionist foreign policy, and they warn against "coddling" the Russian bear. But these "geotherapists" are speaking nonsense, contends Sestanovich, vice president for Russian and Eurasian affairs at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

In last year's election, President Boris Yeltsin used foreign policy "as a tool to demonstrate the differences between himself and the Communists, and to remind voters of what they *don't* want to retrieve from their 'glorious' past," Sestanovich writes. When the Russian parliament in March passed two communist-sponsored resolutions annulling the acts under which the Soviet Union was dissolved in 1991, Yeltsin, denouncing the action as "scandalous," instructed Russian diplomats to tell foreign governments that it would have no effect. Russian public opinion sided with Yeltsin.

A 1996 report by the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, an "establishment" organization in Russia, asked: *Will a Union Be Reborn?* The conclusion: "However humiliated the national consciousness of the Russians may be, today Russian society is absolutely unprepared to pay the price of a lot of blood to make up for geopolitical losses." The council proposed to boost Russia's international standing and influence by increasing its economic strength. Russia should aim to achieve "economic domination" in the other former Soviet republics, the council said, through "the successful development of Russia itself, the continuation of democratic and market reforms, and the beginning of an active policy of economic growth."

Another Western "geotherapist," Zbigniew Brzezinski, who served as U.S. national security adviser under President Carter, frets that today's Russian leaders have "a self-deluding obsession" with their country's international status. Plenty of Russian rhetoric seems to support this view. But Sestanovich says the leadership's loud talk is no more than a "pol-

icy of bluff” to discourage other nations from taking advantage of Russia’s weakness while the country proceeds with democratization. In the war in Chechnya, Sestanovich says, the Russians “called their own bluff.”

After the Soviet Union collapsed five years ago, he points out, many analysts said that Russia might well seek to recover Crimea from Ukraine, to detach and absorb Russian territories from northern Kazakhstan or eastern Ukraine, or to acquire “some sort of protectorate over Russian communities in Estonia.”

None of these things have happened, however, and they are not likely to. Russian passions on these matters have cooled.

“Nations do have neuroses,” Sestanovich admits, and Russia no doubt has its share. “But for all its pseudo-historical depth, the current psychiatric school of analyzing Russia’s politics and policies tells us very little about what is going on there.” In the end, Sestanovich suggests, wise policy makers need to recognize that national interests are more important than national neuroses.

The Triumphant Chinese Family

“The Chinese Family and Economic Development: Obstacle or Engine?” by Martin King Whyte, in *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (Oct. 1996), 1130 E. 59th St., Chicago, Ill. 60637.

Only a few decades ago, Western and Chinese scholars saw the close-knit extended family as a serious obstacle to China’s economic development. But in recent decades, notes Whyte, a sociologist at George Washington University, the experts have made an extraordinary, 180-degree shift: they now portray the family as the engine of economic growth.

During the 1950s and ’60s, “modernization” theorists such as sociologists Talcott Parsons and Marion Levy, Jr., and historian Albert Feuerwerker argued that family obligations interfered with efficient economic operations. Nepotism prevented family-run enterprises from hiring and rewarding the best employees. Distrust of impersonal business relationships led them to cultivate *guanxi*—extensive networks of personal connections with nonrelatives. In the scholars’ view, this wasted time and energy while generating graft and corruption. Moreover, Chinese “family loyalty, filial piety, and reverence for ancestors,” Whyte says, seemed to inhibit entrepreneurship. And family-based organizations tended “to remain small and undercapitalized.”

When the Chinese Communists, who were ideologically hostile to the family, sought to eliminate it as a production unit in the mid-1950s, many modernization theorists saw this in at least a somewhat positive light.

Since then, however, the economic success stories written by the Chinese populations in Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong—and since 1978, in China itself—have turned the scholarly consensus around.

Loyalty to family is seen today as “a very

strong source of motivation and performance,” Whyte reports. For the sake of family, young Chinese study diligently and, once on the job, work hard, put in long hours, accept lower pay, and stay with the firm, analysts now point out. Scholars such as Susan Greenhalgh, an anthropologist at the University of California at Irvine, argue that the Chinese family can provide unusually large material incentives to the adult sons who manage its enterprises. Diversified family firms can easily shift funds from one subsidiary to another if one runs into trouble.

These strengths, Greenhalgh says, encourage “the emergence of highly motivated, risk-taking entrepreneurs.” The small size of family firms now seems an advantage to many observers, keeping start-up costs low and allowing “rapid and flexible responses to changing market conditions,” Whyte notes. Even the *guanxi* networks now look like a net plus, permitting family firms to overcome the disadvantage of their limited size.

These new perspectives are not merely the product of experts’ fickleness. In certain respects, Whyte points out, the Chinese family itself has changed. “Traits such as high fertility, extreme subjugation of women, and the autocratic power of the senior generation” are things of the past. The weakening of the elders’ power, in particular, “means that founders of family-run firms need to provide more incentives and autonomy” for their grown sons. The “anachronistic” Chinese family firm, he concludes, may well continue “to pose a major competitive challenge to modern corporations in the West.”

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions

"The New American Voter."

Harvard Univ. Press, 79 Garden St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138. 640 pp. \$39.95; paper, \$19.95

Authors: Warren E. Miller and J. Merrill Shanks

Less than half of all eligible Americans bothered to vote in the presidential election last year, a fact that deepens the gloom of those who have been worrying for decades about the low levels of voter turnout in the United States. Nearly 63 percent of the voting-age populace went to the polls in 1960, when John F. Kennedy was elected president, but thereafter that figure steadily declined (except for a half-point uptick in 1984), reaching a low of 50.3 percent in 1988. Turnout bounced up to 55.1 percent in 1992, when Bill Clinton was first elected, and then resumed its downward trend last November. Is this long decline an alarming sign of civic decay? Miller and Shanks, political scientists at Arizona State University and the University of California at Berkeley, respectively, have a more hopeful explanation: the decline is a generational phenomenon.

The composition of the American electorate (as well as its size) has changed over the decades. The large "post-New Deal" generation that came of voting age in 1968 or after gradually replaced the habitual voters of the "pre-New Deal" generation that had come of voting age in 1928 or earlier. About 84 percent of these older Americans identified with a political party, and 82 percent were very "socially connected" (home-owning, married, etc.), according to their analysis of election survey data collected at the University of Michigan. The "post-New Deal" generation—whose formative political experience was the turmoil of the 1960s and '70s, or the political disillusion that followed—was different: only 41 percent identified with a party during the 1980s, and only 65 percent were very "socially connected."

While this dramatic generational replacement took place, a middle political generation—the "New Deal" generation that had come of voting age between 1932 and 1964—provided continuity. The turnout of these voters held steady or even slightly increased, thus keeping the nation's overall turnout decline from being worse

than it was. (The increased education level of the electorate and the maturing of the early "post-New Deal" Americans also increased turnout, since education and age strengthen the likelihood of voting.)

As the "post-New Deal" generation entered the electorate during the 1970s, it favored the Democrats. But that preference soon changed. Between 1980 and 1992, Republicans gained, particularly among those just coming of voting age. In the North, this shift came at the expense of independents. In the South, a shift of voters from the Democratic to the Republican ranks, especially among the better-educated, began about 1960.

In fact, the authors point out, the "gender gap" that first appeared during the Reagan years resulted mainly from the failure of white women in the South to move into the GOP at the same rate as white males in the region did. "The Republicans did not have a new problem with women so much as the Democrats have had a continuing problem among men."

The Democrats also seem to have a problem with married voters of both sexes. In 1980, married voters favored Ronald Reagan over Jimmy Carter by 20 percentage points, while never-married, divorced, and widowed ones gave Carter a very slight edge. In 1992 (leaving aside independent candidate Ross Perot), married citizens gave Democrat Bill Clinton a very slight advantage, whereas other adults went much more heavily Democratic.

Perhaps surprisingly, Miller and Shanks believe that the long decline in voter turnout will soon be reversed. The younger members of the "post-New Deal" generation have all along been more inclined to identify with a party and to be more "socially connected" than their older brothers and sisters. These more recent additions to the electorate look more like those who came of voting age during the 1950s and early '60s, and that suggests—despite the drop last November—that turnout will rise again in the years ahead.

"In the Lion's Den: A Primer on Mounting Christian Persecution around the World and How American Christians Can Respond."

Freedom House, 1319 18th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. 56 pp. Free.

Editor: *Nina Shea*

Millions of Christians are being persecuted around the world today, according to Freedom House, a secular human-rights organization, yet their plight has received little attention in the West.

Surveying the situation in China, Sudan, Pakistan, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Egypt, and Nigeria, the report by Shea, a program director at Freedom House, and her colleagues details widespread discrimination as well as the torture, imprisonment, and killing of Christians.

The Chinese government, the report says, systematically oppresses Christians, who number between 15 million (according to official data) and 100 million. "In China today, there are more Christians in prison because of religious activities than in any other nation in the world. Protestants are arrested and tortured for holding prayer meetings, preaching, and distributing Bibles without state approval, and Roman Catholic priests and bishops are imprisoned for celebrating Mass and administering the sacra-

ments without official authorization." In a government crackdown during the first half of last year, police destroyed at least 15,000 unregistered churches and other religious buildings.

In Sudan, Christians have been locked in civil war for more than a decade with the National Islamic Front regime. Christian children are often kidnapped by government agents, beaten, and sent to Islamic re-education camps or sold as slaves. Christian Solidarity International estimates that more than 25,000 Christian children from the Nuba Mountains region alone have been abducted and sold into slavery.

In part because they fear losing access for their missionaries abroad, Christian churches in the West have largely been silent about such persecution. U.S. political leaders "barely mention human rights at all," Shea and her colleagues say. Recently, however, the U.S. State Department named a new Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad, with Shea among its 20 members.

"Does Money Matter?: The Effect of School Resources on Student Achievement and Adult Success."

Brookings Institution Press, 1775 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

296 pp. \$39.95; paper, \$18.95

Editor: *Gary Burtless*

Would simply throwing more money at public schools improve the dismal academic performance of U.S. youngsters?

"If better performance automatically followed higher spending," notes Burtless, a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, "the deterioration in average achievement would not have occurred in the first place." Between 1966 and 1980, when most of the decline in scores on standardized tests took place, average spending per student, adjusted for inflation, rose more than 60 percent. Since 1960, not only has spending per pupil tripled (in constant dollars), but the student-teacher ratio has fallen more than a third, and teachers' salaries have risen by half.

Eric Hanushek, an economist at the University of Rochester, summarizing findings from 377 studies, says that researchers "have found no systematic relationship" between stu-

dent achievement and per-pupil spending, teacher-student ratios, teacher pay, or the other things "that reformers (and researchers) always assumed matter." Added resources *can* improve achievement, but most schools do not use them effectively, he believes. One reason may be that teachers and other school personnel lack material incentives to improve student achievement.

Princeton University economists David Card and Alan B. Krueger, however, argue that pumping more money into schools boosts students' earnings after graduation. But that finding holds true, Julian R. Betts, an economist at the University of California at San Diego, replies, only when one looks at statewide averages; with data on individual schools and their graduates, it collapses.

Burtless's conclusion: management, not money, is the key to better schools.

Continued from page 6

James Clad's essay delivers more than it promises. Far from being merely an analysis of short-term political trends, it is a useful, comprehensive introduction to Indonesia.

The essay's brief description of economic progress missed only one important feature: the government's intense effort to provide basic services in the rural areas. I had the opportunity to review those achievements while in Jakarta last September: elementary schools in all villages, medical clinics in all districts, and a national family-planning program that has reduced population growth to about 1.64 percent.

Having followed Indonesian affairs for over 40 years, I agree with Clad's impression that Suharto has "lost his touch." Yet I am puzzled that Clad reports uncritically the argument that Suharto staged the September 30, 1965, events, a version of history invented some 20 years ago by the brilliant but strongly left-leaning Dutch scholar W. F. Wertheim.

May I share with your readers a hypothesis that has a much stronger factual scaffolding? Between 1960 and 1965, with the support of President Sukarno, the Communist Party had become the only truly strong party in the country. The sole obstacle to Sukarno's intention to bring it to power was the strong opposition of the leadership of the Indonesian army. But in the army, and even more so in the air force and the navy, there were also increasing numbers of Communist sympathizers. To obtain power, the Communists did not have to plan an armed rebellion. If the opposition of the ranking generals could be eliminated, Sukarno could name a Communist cabinet at his pleasure. Therefore, a plot was hatched, according to which lower-ranking military men, instructed by the Communists, would murder the top obstructionist generals, accusing them of treason or other crimes.

Suharto, who was apparently not part of the inner circle of political generals but commanded troops stationed in Jakarta, acted decisively, thus winning the allegiance of the rest of the military. Sukarno got cold feet and also misjudged his political strength at that moment, and the Communists, who had not prepared armed action, were defenseless.

Sukarno was later interrogated at length, in secret, by military intelligence. Records exist but have been very closely held—because Suharto decided to conserve an unsullied

image of the founding father of independent Indonesia, military historians have abandoned efforts to produce a full account of the event. Probably the men who were kept in prison without trial and those who were executed after decades were considered likely to reveal Sukarno's involvement.

Guy Pauker
Topanga, Calif.

Translating 'Rights'

Although Alex Gibney writes movingly [in "Six Days to Reinvent Japan," *WQ*, Autumn '96] about the 25 Americans who drafted the Japanese peace constitution, he fails to mention the Japanese officials saddled with the task of translating the constitution from English to Japanese. They had their problems, too.

For example, the American drafters gave over 30 articles to the description of personal freedoms. In some articles they speak of rights; in other articles, they speak of human rights; in still other articles, they speak of fundamental human rights. What's the difference?

Some rights are inviolate (One is inviolable). Others are inalienable. Many are guaranteed. The right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (a single right in the American draft, not three) is a “supreme consideration . . . to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare.” Do all these words mean the same thing? Or do they differ?

In two articles, the American drafters enjoin the emperor to act only with “the advice and approval of the Cabinet.” Just what must the Cabinet do?

Concerned with the secrecy of the ballot, the American drafters wrote that the voter shall not be “answerable” for his choice. The Japanese officials translated that to mean that the voter shall not be taken to task for his choice. Nowadays, this interpretation allows exit polling.

It’s not hard to tell that Americans wrote the first draft of the constitution. They included quotations from the American Declaration of Independence, the preamble to the American Constitution, President Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, and the Atlantic Charter. In English, such quotations may soar. In Japanese, they don’t get off the ground.

So why haven’t the Japanese written themselves a new constitution? The conservatives have tried. The progressives have rebuffed them. *Yomiuri*, the nation’s largest daily newspaper, summoned scholars, who produced a draft that tempered American solipsism and corrected Japanese misunderstanding—all without much changing the basic ideas imbedded in the original document. As Alex Gibney correctly concludes, “Most Japanese believe deeply in the [Constitution’s] principles.”

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Learning from George

The article on Washington’s Farewell Address was quite surprising. I was literally shocked by his warning that “excessive party spirit . . . opened the door to foreign influence and corruption.” What could be more timely, considering the recent presidential campaign! In another of Washington’s (as paraphrased by the author) prescient admonitions, “Bad government generated licentious appetites and corrupted morals.” It

does appear that we still have things to learn from old George!

Bill Kamin
Menlo Park Calif.

Hair Triggers

I would like to comment on “How to Settle the Character Question” [“The Periodical Observer,” *WQ*, Summer ’96,], your review of Joanne Freeman’s article “Duelling as Politics: Reinterpreting the Burr-Hamilton Duel.” Freeman offered a very imaginative social/political interpretation of Hamilton’s supposedly gallant behavior, but sometimes scholars overlook simple facts in pursuit of elaborate theories. If she had examined the dueling pistols used or even studied detailed pictures of those pistols, Freeman would have noticed a very obvious but essential detail that explains why Hamilton fired prematurely. Hamilton’s actions had nothing to do with acts of magnanimity or conciliation, as Freeman would have us believe.

These pistols were equipped with single-set triggers. This type of trigger is common among dueling pistols and sporting rifles of the period. It consists of a combination of countersprings which, when the trigger is pushed forward and set, changes the mechanism to a “hair trigger.”

During the conduct of a duel, the principals were not allowed to handle or load their own pistols; rather, the pistols were loaded by their seconds and subsequently handed to the principals at the appropriate moment. Hamilton was not a duelist, as Freeman notes, and the pistols were not his but Burr’s. When the pistol was handed to Hamilton by the second, he was in all probability unaware that the pistol had been set as a “hair trigger.” The only way to know would be to pull the trigger, which would be impossible under the circumstances. In his nervousness, he apparently started to take up the slack in the trigger as though it were pulled normally, and caused the pistol to fire prematurely.

The dueling code of the period was very explicit about conduct on the field of honor. Once the process moved to the dueling grounds, the dueling codes of the period set strict prohibitions against histrionic gestures and acts of magnanimity, since there was adequate time and provision for reconsidering matters of umbrage and reconciliation before the duel could take place.

Leonard Henry
Atlanta, Ga.

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Kathy Read, Publisher

FROM THE CENTER

For nearly 30 years, the Woodrow Wilson Center has been an institution without a home, an unfortunate situation that we now have reason to believe will be remedied in the near future.

When Congress passed the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Act of 1968, it explicitly contemplated that the Center would be housed in a distinctive and identifiable building on Pennsylvania Avenue. When President Lyndon Johnson appointed the Center's first Board of Trustees, some of them literally as he waited on Inauguration Day in 1969 to ride up to the Capitol to see Richard Nixon take the oath of office, the Center actually came into being, but without an appropriation and without any place in which to conduct its business.

Because the Smithsonian Institution had played a large role in the Center's creation, and because the Center's first chairman, Hubert H. Humphrey, had been vice chancellor of the Smithsonian's Board of Regents, it was only natural that the Smithsonian should offer the Center a few rooms in its "Castle" on the Mall. Having been employed by the Smithsonian at the time and having been very much involved in the establishment of the Wilson Center, I can attest that this was viewed by all as a temporary arrangement while the Center set about to acquire its permanent home.

For reasons that are not fully clear to me, rather than seek that home, the Center gradually took over the third and fourth floors of the Castle, and when they proved inadequate, it rented space in nearby commercial buildings.

When I came to the Center in 1988, one of my highest priorities was to see if it still might be possible to acquire an appropriate home. My motive was less to comply with an all-but-forgotten piece of legislation than to achieve the underlying purpose of that legislation: a memorial to our 28th president that would be visible to Washington's many visitors, that would inform those visitors about President Wilson, and that would adequately serve the needs of the Center's many activities.

The next eight years brought prolonged consultations and negotiations with a bewildering variety of governmental and quasi-governmental agencies, the inevitable changes in view that accompanied three different administrations and both Democratic and Republican Congresses, and innumerable hours working with three architectural firms.

In 1994, President Clinton signed a law des-

ignating the promenade outside our proposed new building Woodrow Wilson Plaza. And last November, after a climactic year of intense negotiation, the commissioner of the Public Buildings Service, Bob Peck, and I signed a memorandum of agreement and a 30-year lease at a ceremony in what will be the dining room of the new building. Spurred on by a magnanimous \$1 million challenge grant from our chairman, Joe Flom, and his wife, Claire, we must still in the next few months raise an additional \$2 million for interior finishing and furniture. But I am now for the first time more than guardedly confident that the move will occur sometime in 1998, just in time for our 30th anniversary.



Among the many people who have my deepest gratitude for making this possible, I would single out Senators Mark O. Hatfield (R-Ore.) and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), former director of the Office of Management and Budget Alice Rivlin, Public Buildings Commissioner Bob Peck, Acting General Services Administrator David Barram, my colleague Dean Anderson, and Mr. and Mrs. Flom.

Having worked in the Castle for more than 25 years, I cannot help but share with others the premature sense of nostalgia for its charm and quaintness. But this feeling is far outweighed by the knowledge that we will finally cease to be an oxymoronic Center in two locations. At last we will have, among other things, adequate and suitable space for our Fellows and Guest Scholars and for other distinguished scholars and practitioners who would gladly come to the Center at no cost to us, but whom we must now reject. For the first time we will have adequate meeting rooms and a proper library to house the books and journals that are now scattered in various rooms and dim corridors.

When the British were debating the restoration of the Houses of Parliament after World War II, Winston Churchill said, "First we shape our buildings and then they shape us." I have every reason to hope that our new building will shape a Woodrow Wilson Center that is truly a presidential memorial in fact as well as in law, and that will finally bring together all of our staff, Fellows, and activities in a setting conducive to unity and community.

Charles Blitzer
Director

American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War

An Insider's Account of U.S. Policy in Europe, 1989-1992

ROBERT L. HUTCHINGS

As director for European affairs at the National Security Council in 1989-92, Robert Hutchings was at the heart of U.S. policymaking toward Europe and the Soviet Union during the dizzyingly fast dissolution of the Soviet bloc.

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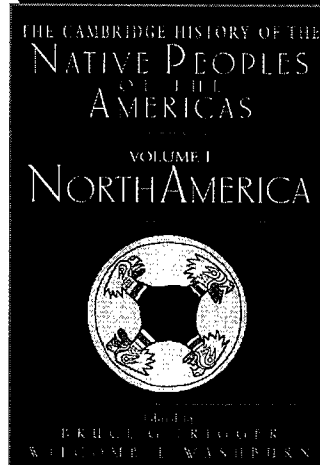
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