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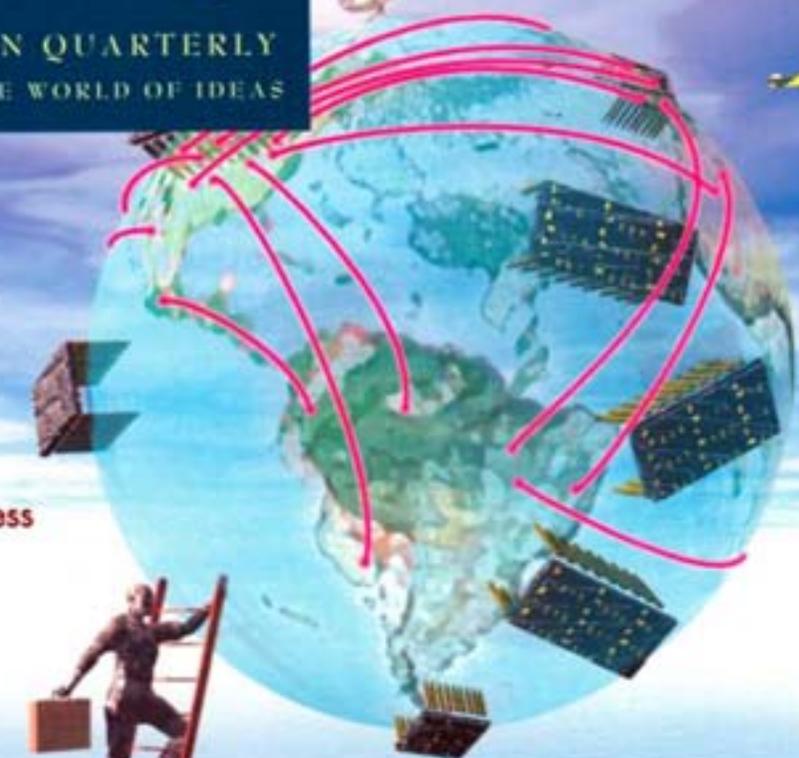
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EDITOR'S COMMENT

As the WQ goes to press, Wall Street is riding a roller coaster, alarmed by anxious talk of “global economic contagion” and worries about the prospects of U.S. companies. The economies of Japan, Russia, and Indonesia are only at the forefront of those teetering on the edge of disaster. Amid such alarms, this issue’s focus on the promise (and perils) of the emerging digital economy couldn’t be more timely.

Consider, for example, the fact that the global network of telecommunication-linked computers is already a big force, possibly the biggest, behind the rise of our interconnected global economy. Not only do networked technologies make new kinds of commerce across borders and oceans possible; these technologies, and the content they carry, are increasingly the object of such commerce. As the digital economy goes, to a large extent, so goes the global economy.

Consider, too, how networked technologies helped precipitate the turmoil. By linking national economies with others, the cybermarket has increasingly forced all players to play by common, or at least similar, rules—to some nations’ dismay and disadvantage. Customs, institutions, and practices that might have served their nations adequately in the relatively insular past—Japan’s elaborate protectionism, for example, or Indonesia’s crony capitalism—appear to be dysfunctional in today’s interconnected economy. Yet even where the problems are obvious, many national leaders are reluctant or unable to jettison traditional ways of doing business.

What makes the emerging digital economy even more pertinent to the current global mess is that both call for informed, decisive leadership. Decisions about a host of critical issues, ranging from laws and regulations to business practices and institution building, await action by leaders in government and industry. Neither technology nor the much vaunted magic of the marketplace will by itself assure a prosperous or productive future. For that, we need leaders—and informed citizens who choose those leaders—to address the kinds of challenges outlined in this issue.

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One God(dess) . . . or Many?

Thank you for Cullen Murphy's article ["Is the Bible Bad News for Women?" *WQ*, Summer '98]. Scholars such as Tikva Frymer-Kensky who are experts on gender in antiquity can help curb the effusions of goddess worship enthusiasts. In Frymer-Kensky's words, modern feminist depictions of the past "come right out of their psyches"—and it shows. Frankly, I've never met a goddess in either antiquity or the new age that I could live with. As a dedicated feminist, I see that the emphasis upon the goddess and great mother overrates the importance of sex and gender in human lives and ends up confining women to false feminine roles.

Like many feminists, I hold that gender is only one good thread in the tapestry, one happy theme in the symphony of life. A whole person is more than his or her gender, just as God is personal but transcends gender. Give me a monotheism that worships the one named "I am who I am," and creates human selves in God's own image.

Women who aspire to equality in both love and work will flourish more fully when they can call upon the living God using many, many different symbols: Friend, Lover, Creator, Mother, Father, Shepherd, Redeemer, Wisdom, and so on. When, as Frymer-Kensky writes "God plays all the roles," then so can women as God's creations.

How gratifying to find that the richness and variety of the Hebrew Bible texts can now be seen to include real women's powers and voices, even in the face of male oppression. With Eve, Miriam, Sara, Rachel, Judith, Esther, Deborah, and the other wise women, who needs a goddess?

Sidney Callahan
New York, N.Y.

Colleague Tikva Frymer-Kensky has long taught me much. I laughed when I read in her book that the God of Israel is never depicted "below the waist" or with sexual organs. I cried when I read some prayers of pain in her *Motherprayer* collection. But mostly I admire the enormous learning she brings to her research and

writing plus the sensibleness of her perspectives.

Cullen Murphy caught this well, and, following Frymer-Kensky, framed the issues memorably. I hope the two of them have wide influence. My only complaint was with the sudden end of the essay. There is so much more to be said on the complex issue of monotheism and women.

Neither writer engages much in polemics against the invention of goddesses. But reading this prompted me to think again of the limits of the search for goddesses who will satisfy all the passing desires of contemporary people. (Some men search for goddess-wisdom, too.)

To invent means two things. First, to find. There are old goddess myths around to be found. Second, to fabricate, to make up. There are new goddess myths being fashioned at this moment. They may well have some positive features; we are all supposed to go "to the church of our choice," and where others go is no business of mine. But culture and politics beyond the sanctuary are.

When today's invented goddesses are simply benign, they come across as too superficial and ephemeral to survive in the always tangled world of myth, which, if it is deep, deals with the dark side of things. When they are portrayed as free of hierarchy, one simply must go looking for different, unfamiliar styles of hierarchy in their worlds. As for nonviolence? The romanticizing of cultures in which goddesses receive worship always gets countered by demythologizing. These were not utopias and kingdoms of peace. Historical records of cultures we romanticize usually find them violent, and anything but places of liberation and egalitarianism.

Frymer-Kensky and Murphy stick to the positives in the complex monotheistic vision. Curious readers who pursue this further may well find more negatives—in all the alternatives. The assets of monotheism, in which one will believe if one cannot not believe, come through in the book and this article.

Martin E. Marty
Director, The Public Religion Project
University of Chicago
Chicago, Ill.

Out of Time

Steven Lagerfeld ["Who Knows Where the Time Goes?" *WQ*, Summer '98] interprets the growing body of evidence on trends in working hours as indicating that "nothing much has changed" and that Americans' perceptions of increased time pressure are just that—perceptions rather than reality. I disagree. I suspect that Lagerfeld's conclusion that my estimates of rising hours are overstated is due to the failure to distinguish between those who work full-time or part-time by choice, and those who cannot find enough work. Because the latter group has both gotten larger *and* seen its annual hours decrease dramatically, including it in labor force averages imparts a large and artificial bias to the numbers, a finding that figures centrally in my analysis. (My estimate of increase—163 hours between 1969 and 1987—excludes this underemployed group.) Regrettably, none of my critics has produced comparable estimates. When we compare like with like, as I have done with the Bluestone and Rose estimates (presumably the two left-of-center sympathizers Lagerfeld refers to but does not name), it turns out that they have a *larger* increase in hours than I. The 100-hour increase found by other unnamed researchers is virtually identical with my own all-labor-force estimates. And the 1997 *National Study of the Changing Work Force* found a weekly increase in hours since 1977 of 3.5, or 175 per year. (That study also flatly contradicts the 1989 findings on moonlighting Lagerfeld cites as evidence that we are "choosing" long hours.)

Furthermore, new research by Robert Drago disputes a central tenet of critic John Robinson's argument for the superiority of time diaries—busier people are in fact more likely to drop out of the demanding time diary surveys. What most of us probably do agree on is Lagerfeld's observation that this is a data smog. I think that's mainly because until recently there was little interest in what had been seen as a solved problem (time).

Stepping back from the technicalities of the data, we can pose the question in another way. Everyone agrees that Americans *feel* much more time pressure now than in the past. Is it just in our minds, or is it because we're working more? In my view, increased competitiveness, downsizing, and employers' relentless efforts to raise productivity render the latter explanation more plausible. Ditto women's ability to get into long-hour career jobs. More evidence comes from the fact that a larger number of

Americans (now nearly two-thirds) report that they would like to work fewer hours, with the average desired reduction 11 hours per week.

Sure, it would be easier if we were just making this problem up. A couple of well-placed essays, or, more likely, some prime-time documentaries, could then solve it. By contrast, if the problem is real, we might have to ask some hard questions about our market economy, the unpaid household economy, and the quality of life we are creating for ourselves.

Juliet Schor

*Author, The Overworked American
Cambridge, Mass.*

The consequences of an increasing scarcity of nonwork time are at least as interesting as the causes, and have much to say to us.

Technology has enhanced the attractiveness of some time uses, but not all equally. For example, fitness equipment has made the physical workout less gruesome, but no devices are available to make it easier to counsel our children or comfort our aging parents.

The technology that increases time's productivity has favored life's self-serving rather than other-serving activities. We prefer walking on an

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Leland S. Burns
Los Angeles, Calif.

Who Will Serve?

Andrew Bacevich's thoughtful and scholarly article ["Who Will Serve?" *WQ*, Summer '98] should give us all pause—though perhaps not for reasons the author intends.

Too sophisticated a thinker and student of history to be an uncritical proponent of conscription, Bacevich has scrupulously chosen his words. Regrettably, they are likely to be construed by many readers as a tocsin for reinstating the draft. Those quick to jump on this old bandwagon would do well to face up to the contradiction between their idealization of involuntary military servitude and the popular consent that arguably is a cornerstone of representative democracy.

If we're concerned that enough young people aren't volunteering for military service, we should ask why, rather than assume that they lack a proper sense of civic responsibility. Maybe they simply—even justifiably—don't see much sense or value in what the military today is doing. If so, the military should take note—not for the purpose of proselytizing, but as an impetus for much-needed, long-overdue soul-searching about its essence.

Ask military professionals whether the purpose of the military is to prepare for and conduct war, prevent war, provide for the common defense, provide for security, or secure and preserve peace, and you get a wide range of confused responses from people who should have thought through the question. In the main, most folks in uniform—even (perhaps especially) the many desk jockeys—think they're warriors whose job is to fight wars. That speaks volumes—about who the military attracts and rewards, about the very real "military mind" that pervades the institution and alienates most outsiders, and probably about why young people would see their calling elsewhere. A military that viewed itself as having a different (yet still legitimate) purpose besides warfare might well attract more, different, maybe even better volunteers. Would we then accuse those who chose not to serve in such a new military of shirking their civic responsibility?

We ought to be concerned about the pronounced degree of civic illiteracy among today's military professionals. In my experience, few of the officer elite who attend senior-level schooling, and from whom tomorrow's generals and admirals will come, are even minimally familiar with the Constitution they have sworn to support and defend. Moreover, ask them, as I do in classroom discussions, the following questions: Should the military be representative of society? Is the U.S. military today representative of American society? Should the military be subject to civilian control? Are civilians capable of making discerning judgments about the proper role and use of the military? Should the military be politically neutral? Should the military provide sound strategic (rather than just military) advice to civilian decision makers? Should the military be not only an operational institution but also a social institution? The answers I hear are all too predictable, and, in the sense that they reflect a misplaced air of moral superiority, ideological bias, ingrained parochialism, strategic shallowness, and democratic ignorance, also disturbing.

But as long as even the more discerning among us subscribe to the belief that military (read "combat") effectiveness—rather than strategic effectiveness—is the standard for judging our armed forces, maybe we shouldn't expect anything other than the growing alienation of the military from society. Conscription isn't the answer. Visionary iconoclasm is.

Gregory D. Foster
George C. Marshall Professor
National Defense University
Washington, D.C.

In his thoughtful essay, Bacevich missed one important aspect of President Nixon's 1970 decision to end the draft. While most military officers were dismayed by it, civilian foreign policy elites saw it as a blessing. By eliminating the draft and replacing it with (in Bacevich's words) "the dropouts, the untalented, the shiftless," they no longer had to worry about public opinion when military forces were put in harm's way, as had been the case in the draft era.

As far as they were concerned, this military of the "great unwashed" was expendable. But Beirut put an end to that arrogant notion. When 241 U.S. servicemen were killed in the terrorist bombings there in October 1983, no one asked if they were draftees or enlistees. All the American people saw was that they were fellow citizens who were killed in the service of

their country. Their outrage was so intense that President Reagan had to withdraw all U.S. military forces from Lebanon. Just over 10 years later, in Mogadishu, that incident was repeated, when the massacre of 16 U.S. soldiers there forced President Clinton to withdraw all U.S. forces from Somalia.

Gen. Fred C. Weyand, then U.S. Army Chief of Staff, observed in 1976 that "Vietnam was a reaffirmation of the peculiar relationship between the American Army and the American people. The American Army really is a people's army in the sense that it belongs to the American people who take a jealous and proprietary interest in its involvement." It does not matter whether it is a "draftee" army or a "volunteer" army. It is *their* army.

The answer to the question "Who Will Serve?" was provided more than 160 years ago by that great military philosopher, Carl von Clausewitz. "Since war . . . is controlled by its political object," he wrote, "the value of this object must determine the sacrifices to be made for it in magnitude and also in duration." If the political object is survival of the nation, as it was in World War II, then conscription will once again be mandated to meet the emergency.

Short of that, however, our national security will continue to depend, as it has for the last quarter century, on the men and women of our all-volunteer active duty forces, National Guard, and Reserves.

*Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., USA (Ret.)
Bowie, Md.*

Bacevich captures nicely our dilemma: the American people would not, at present, tolerate a return to a draft, even an equitable draft. The citizen-soldiers now on display in Steven Spielberg's much-heralded *Saving Private Ryan* are no more. This crew of dog-faces, Ernie Pyle's American kids who were "essentially civilians" who wanted to do the job they had been called upon to do and get back home to their moms, wives, and sweethearts, would now face a technologically sophisticated behemoth in which the "human factor" seems much more diminished. Today's youth are enticed to enlist by slick advertising promising various "perks" and benefits rather than service to one's country or civic obligation. Nobody is around to challenge us, so we feel safe and secure.

Bacevich does well to prick this particular balloon: neither our security nor our liberty can, or should, be taken for granted. We have an army that nobody wants to send into battle but that everybody wants to use as a vast social engineering experiment in "gender equity," among other things. Battle readiness takes a back seat, and it is nigh treasonous for those in command positions to raise questions about the wisdom of any of these politically and ideologically driven imperatives. Consider the horror and anger expressed by many reservists called up to fight in the Persian Gulf War of 1991: since when is that part of the deal? Since they signed on the dotted line, that's when.

This seems a less than robust way to structure the armed services. So we get lots of set-piece stories of female heroism and accomplishment, and the large spate of gulf war pregnancies, especially aboard warships, goes unreported. Don't take this as a brief against women soldiers. I am simply noting that war on the ground means what it has always meant: blood and bones and soft-shelled bodies. We don't like to talk about that. Nor are we any longer permitted political space within which to air the ambivalence that runs

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FINDINGS

Campaigning for Manners

“Everyone is now screaming for civility. Of course if everyone would stop screaming, we might have it. Civility is one social blessing that does not require funding.”

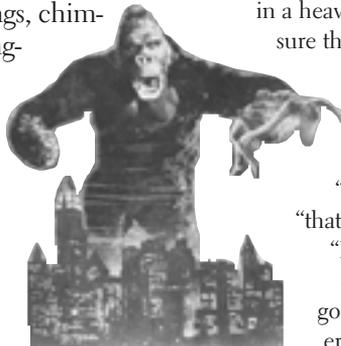
So writes Judith Martin (a.k.a. Miss Manners, the syndicated columnist), in her introduction to Stephen Hess’s hopeful *Little Book of Campaign Etiquette*, recently published by the Brookings Institution. There is nothing new about rudeness, she observes. “What is new in our time is that rudeness has been morally glamorized,” especially by politicians and journalists. “In politics, etiquette has been treated as such a sissy restraint on virtue that obeying it must be a sign of moral turpitude and defying it a sign of moral fervor.”

Miss Manners has little patience with the well-intentioned members of the current Congress who organized a retreat to build friendships among the members and their families. “The goal is not to become private friends who put their differences aside, but to be able to perform the public business that arises out of these differences.”

This makes us wish that journalists sizing up races in this year’s elections would quote etiquette minders such as Miss Manners and Mr. Hess along with the usual pollsters and handicappers. And what about an Institute of Campaign Conduct to keep an eye on future races?

Primate Parity

We must have missed the 1993 Declaration on Great Apes, a manifesto by 36 bipeds who demanded “the extension of the community of equals to include all great apes: human beings, chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutangs.” Drawing inspiration from the declaration—which they liken to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789—a trio of political scientists writing in *Political Theory* (Dec. 1997) argue that the time



is now ripe to create a sovereign homeland for our fellow apes. After all, they reason, everybody else is getting one.

Yes, admit the three (Robert E. Goodin of Australian National University and Carole Pateman and Roy Pateman of the University of California, Los Angeles), there are some problems. Such as the fact that apes can’t tell us if they’d prefer a homeland or, say, a year’s subscription to the Fruit of the Month Club. But a little postmodern theory can smooth over most of the difficulties. “The politics of difference,” they suavely point out, “highlights questions of why the other apes should learn our language rather than we theirs.”

And if a homeland for the apes, why not for slugs or ants? A good point, the authors say, “but the political argument has to have a starting point.”

Mr. Berlin, I Presume?

Working in Washington for the British Foreign Office during World War II, philosopher Isaiah Berlin penned such vivid dispatches that Prime Minister Winston Churchill, upon hearing in February 1944 that “Mr. Berlin” was in London, asked him to lunch. But the Mr. Berlin who happened to be in London was named Irving, not Isaiah. Michael Ignatief describes their meeting in *Isaiah Berlin: A Life*, newly published by Metropolitan Books:

At the end of lunch, Churchill turned and said, “Now, Mr. Berlin, tell us what in your opinion is the likelihood of my dear friend, the President, being re-elected for a fourth term.” Berlin, who spoke in a heavy Brooklyn accent, said he felt sure that Roosevelt’s great name would ensure him victory. He added for good measure, “But if he won’t stand again, I don’t think I’ll vote at all.”

“You mean,” asked Churchill, “that you think you’ll have a vote?” “I sincerely hope so.”

Churchill muttered that it was a good sign of Anglo-American cooperation if the Professor had a vote

in America. Churchill's subsequent questions about the state and volume of war production in the States elicited only vague and noncommittal replies.

Churchill, growing exasperated, asked Berlin when he thought the war would end. "Mr. Prime Minister, I shall tell my children and grandchildren that Mr. Churchill asked *me* that question." By now thoroughly confused, Churchill asked what was the most important thing that Mr. Berlin had written. He replied, "White Christmas."

Sensing social disaster, Clementine Churchill suggested gently that they should all be grateful to Mr. Berlin because he had been so generous. "Generous?" her husband growled, looking about him in consternation. By this time Jack Colville was gently kicking the Prime Minister under the table. "What are you kicking me for?" Churchill growled, and then turned his back on Berlin. Shortly thereafter the lunch broke up. Berlin returned to the hotel where he was staying with the producer Alexander Korda. He reported that it had been a puzzling lunch. He did not seem to exactly hit it off with the Prime Minister.

Net Depression?

"Sad, Lonely World Discovered in Cyberspace," declared a recent front-page headline in the *New York Times* (Aug. 30, 1998). The story, later echoed in other media reports, told of a study by six Carnegie Mellon University researchers showing that Internet use can be hazardous to your mental health and a threat to community life. After two years on the Net, the researchers found, their 169 subjects reported an increase in loneliness and a reduction in social contacts. The *Times* solicited grave commentary on the meaning of it all by the likes of Harvard University's Robert Putnam.

Not so fast, says Scott Rosenberg, senior editor of the on-line magazine *Salon* (www.salonmagazine.com). He points out that the study has many limitations, beginning with its small number of subjects and the small changes the researchers actually found, "like a one percent increase on the depression scale for people who spend an hour a week on-

line." Among Rosenberg's other points: "The researchers only tested people twice, at the start and the end of the two-year study—which doesn't provide a very wide set of data points to offset the impact of other factors (time of year, state of the economy, random personal crises). His article contains links to the *Times* report and to the Carnegie Mellon study.

The New Bipolar Conflict

With few exceptions, declares James Kurth, a political scientist at Swarthmore College, his fellow academics in international relations have little to say that is "interesting and relevant about the central realities of international relations in this decade." Instead, he writes in the *National Interest* (Fall 1998), they are entangled in a bipolar war of their own.

For the most part, the two academic sub-fields of ISS and IPE [international security studies and international political economy] loathe each other. . . . The realists revile the [IPE] liberals for being naive, even pusillanimous, about the realities of power. The liberals revile the [ISS] realists for being simplistic, even primitive, about the subtleties of cooperation.

Like other academic wars, the war between ISS and IPE will not end with a bang but with a whimper. More exactly, it will end with the denial of tenure. . . . Realists, who claim to understand power, and liberals, who claim to understand process, have lost power over the tenure process to two other sub-fields of international relations. We have not even mentioned these sub-fields up to this point because of their utter lack of interest and relevance to anyone outside of themselves. One is rational choice theory; the other is postmodern theory.

The first is hyper-rationalist; the second is anti-rationalist; they both are unreadable. But because they are in accord with the more general fads and fashions in the social sciences in the 1990s . . . they dominate the new tenured appointments in political science. This means that in most American universities in the future, the study of international relations will be even more uninteresting and irrelevant than it is now.

AT ISSUE

The Human Touch

We are still in the doorway of the grand new edifice computer technology is building for us, and already some of us want to complain about the layout. We can see just a bit of what's on the other side of a facing wall and nothing of what's up the stairs. But we are uneasy. Yes, there's lots of light, but it's differently refracted. There's warmth, but its source is obscure. The comforts are commensurate, to say the least, with those of the home we left, but rather than embrace the gain, we dwell on the loss. The small machines do wonders, and we hold the results against them: the mere arcing of an arrow on a screen brings instant order to a random list of a thousand names; lost forever, the honest human labor of alphabetizing, and the excuse we had for doing nothing else till we finished the tedious sorting.

To be sure, there are valid complaints to be lodged against the technology and its abilities. The practice of compiling digital dossiers on Web surfers, for example, so that each one can be made the precisely targeted object of advertising campaigns, is pernicious. The much-trumpeted educational power of the Web gets mangled in its vast commercial maw. For the true believer, the Internet is not just an encyclopedia but the library of libraries. To doubters, its evolution is toward a cosmic yard sale, the Mall of the Universe, with a wave pool that could slam you into Saturn.

We should be wary of ceding to these capacious machines—so knowing and so dumb—too much of the education of children. Nothing but a keyboard and a screen divides kids from the new realm of information (you have only to watch their faces to judge the power of the enticement), but perhaps something should. Or rather someone should. The teacher mediates, and we do not yet know what will be

changed when a machine sits atop the desk a teacher once sat behind, when there is mechanical exposure without the check of human discernment.

For better or for worse—but on balance, I think, for better—formal education is linked to human faces, voices, personalities, and to their characteristics, insufferable and endearing. Sometimes the most satisfying experiences are had in the presence of the most ineffectual teachers. We called one of my college professors “the great god Sopor.” His classes were, for him and us, a race to oblivion, and, astonishingly, he sometimes won. And yet I learned from him to tease out the charms of Spenser, and I hear him reading Shakespeare still.

“We loved the doctrine for the teacher's sake.” That's Daniel Defoe, 300 years ago. “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.” That's Henry Adams. “A teacher should have maximal authority and minimal power.” That's the psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, and his sober words suggest why we should be slow to hire computers to replace fallible humans. The machines' power is maximal, but their content lacks authority.

Our metaphors for describing encounters with the technology are mostly old-fashioned and drawn from our dealings with the physical world, and with one another. There's a charm to the transposition of experience—when we impute motive by speaking of a program that's malicious and brings corruption to others, or seek inoculation against a virus, or shake our heads for an orphaned Web site, abandoned and unkempt. But who could ever see a computer into retirement with the emotion worked up for an admired teacher?

Perhaps we should be more sympathetic, for the imperious technology is not so

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self-sufficient as it may seem. The very survival of electronic data will depend upon human intervention and human strategies. A three-year-old car or TV or camera or house (or child) is not necessarily yesterday's technology. But a three-year-old computer? Another matter entirely. The thing is a candidate for assisted-living arrangements. Hardware and software both mutate at a giddy pace and leave their forebears in the dust. But the new machines cannot read the old software. Theirs is not a cumulative literacy. We human beings forgot to teach computers to reckon the turn from the 20th century to the 21st, and their incapacity threatens catastrophe. We are faint with dread at the predictions, and half in love with the prospect of disaster. What if it all simply stopped for a bit, and we caught our breaths? Out of the question. A respite would risk everything.

The two principal strategies that have emerged for saving the digital data and keeping them in permanently archived order are "migration" and "emulation." Desperate times call for desperate measures, and the intransitive verb "migrate" has been called to transitive action. Henceforth, the technically adept will "migrate data." Migration is no longer just the movement of people or animals or plants but the conveyance of electronic data across computer systems so that the data can still be read when the machines on which they first were stored are obsolete. This migration is not a one-time phenomenon. It entails the kind of lingering responsibility assumed with parenthood. The data must be migrated repeatedly, to keep pace with technology's gallop. And emulation is no longer just the response children should have to saints but a process that will allow new machines to contain as a side capacity the skill to read old software by mimicking—impersonating?—machines of another time. This is challenging stuff, and it is by no means clear that institutions are up to the task, not because they lack the technical capacity but because they may not muster the human resolve.

The new technology was supposed to replace the book—an old but beloved technology—as a medium for storing information, and thereby spare us the burden of having to care for books. We now know that the nation's research libraries are full of books made brittle by the acid that manufacturers added to paper beginning in the mid-19th century, and continued to add till well past the midpoint of our own.

Books die for various reasons. They may have no life because they are not read, but that is suspended animation only, and from it they can be awakened. Acidic books, on the other hand, succumb not to indifference but to chemistry. They carry a bomb within that must inevitably ignite unless an external agent checks its detonation. How imposing their appearance on the shelves of our great libraries, and how fragile their true state. They are putting themselves inexorably beyond use, and what they know we shall forget—unless we intervene in their decline and save their contents in some other form. Which is what libraries here and abroad have been doing for a decade and more, through a coordinated effort to microfilm portions of the immense doomed store, to extract from the acid's soak the fading printed message.

For now, the sleek technology of the machine coexists with the quaint technology of the book. In our libraries, the staff shelves and dusts and mends millions of books, even as technicians lodge fiberoptic wires beneath every floor and behind every wall. Both technologies are living dangerously: the old carries its own ruin, the new is a prey to virus and neglect. Neither is beyond the need of a human touch. We sometimes forget that the technology has its source in human ingenuity and is meant to do us service. The cursor on the screen is guided by a human hand, and a human will in turn directs the hand. It's for us to insist that the technology adapt to our specifications and to our liking, to imagination's limit but to the mind's ease.

—James M. Morris

THE PROMISE AND PERILS OF THE NEW ECONOMY

Today's dazzling information technologies are often described as tsunamis or tectonic shifts, forces of nature driving us inevitably toward a glittering "new economy." Our contributors question the easy optimism. They point to many difficult political and business choices ahead—about the division of public- and private-sector responsibilities, about security and privacy, about international cooperation, standards, and regulation. And they wonder whether the "new economy" is even all that new.



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What 'New' Economy?

by J. Bradford De Long

As the 20th century ends, legions of the powerful—politicians, intellectuals, journalists, business leaders, and visionaries—are embarking on what can only be called pilgrimages. They are traveling to an arid promised land between San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean, some 40 miles south of San Francisco: Silicon Valley. They invariably return with visions of a technological and economic future full of endless promise. Their exuberance should give us pause.

There have been similar pilgrimages in the past. In the 1830s and 1840s, Alexis de Tocqueville, Benjamin Disraeli, and Friedrich Engels journeyed to Manchester, England, to see the shape of the future emerging from the factories (and the smog and the slums) of the rising British cotton textile industry. In the 1920s, another generation's seekers

traveled to Detroit to see Henry Ford's assembly lines, which had unleashed such an extraordinary surge in productivity that automobiles, once luxuries available only to the rich, had become commodities that most Americans could afford. The mass production revolution that began in Detroit may have sparked a bigger improvement in the material conditions of life than the original Industrial Revolution in Manchester. In *Brave New World* (1932), Aldous Huxley wrote of a future in which people dated years from the production of the first Model T Ford, and in which the major problem facing governments was how to brainwash people into consuming enough of the bounty created by the miracle of mass production to keep the economy growing.

Today's pilgrims are very much like those of the past, convinced that new technologies are creating a fundamentally different future—a new society, a new culture, and a new economy. But what, exactly, is new about the “new economy” rising today from Silicon Valley?

Each of today's pilgrims seems to bring back a slightly different report. Some, lacking historical perspective, see patterns of entrepreneurship and enterprise that are in fact quite old. Others fail to understand the most important fact about economic growth: that ever since the Industrial Revolution there have always been dazzling new industries, inventions, and commodities. Still others misinterpret what our economic statistics are telling us about the impact of information technology.

Nevertheless, there is something to the idea that we live in a “new economy.” What is new about it is not the rapid pace of invention and innovation nor the rise of living standards beneath the radar of official statistics. What is new is the potential of information goods to defy the very principles of scarcity and control over commodities that have convinced economists that the market is the one best system for guiding the production and distribution of goods. If that challenge materializes, we will indeed be confronted with a new economy, but one very different from the promised land of the pilgrims' dreams.

I

The first dimension of “newness” that the pilgrims hail—the one that strikes almost all observers immediately, and leads to breathless descriptions of technological revolution—is the sheer speed of technological progress in the semiconductor and semiconductor-derived industries. From his post at *Wired* magazine, executive editor Kevin Kelly writes of the new economy as a “tectonic upheaval . . . [driven by] two stellar bangs: the collapsing microcosm of chips and the exploding telecosm of connections. . . . tearing the old laws of wealth apart.” *Business Week* editor-in-chief Stephen Shepard declares that information technology and the computer- and network-driven international integration of business constitute “the magic bullet—a way to return to the high-growth, low-inflation conditions of the 1950s and 1960s. Forget 2 percent real growth. We're talking 3 percent, or even 4 percent.” Computers and telecommunications are “undermining . . . the old order” and triggering a “radical restructuring”

that leaves traditional analysts of the economy “unable to explain what’s going on . . . wedded to deeply flawed statistics and models.”

Since the invention of the transistor in the 1950s, the onrush of invention, innovation, and industrial expansion in information technology has been constant and rapid: transistors, integrated circuits, microprocessors, and now entire computers on a single chip and a high-speed worldwide network with the potential to link every computer within reach of a regular or cell phone. Year after year, Moore’s Law (named for Intel Corporation cofounder Gordon Moore) continues to prove itself: the density of silicon on a single chip doubles (and thus the cost of silicon circuits to consumers is halved) roughly every 18 months. Moore’s law has been at work since the early 1960s. It will continue until—at least—the middle of the next decade.

Observers note the enormous fortunes made on the stock market by founders of start-up corporations that have never turned a profit: how Internet bookseller Amazon.com is seen by Wall Street as worth as much as established bookseller Barnes and Noble. They see how last year’s high-end products become this year’s mass-market products and then are sold for scrap two years later.

Hence this vision of this “new economy”: a future of never-ending cost reductions driven by technological innovation, “learning curves,” “economies of scale,” “network externalities,” and “tipping points.” In the old economy, you made money by selling goods for more than they cost. In the new economy, you make money by selling goods for less than they cost—and relying on the learning curve to lower your costs next year. In the old economy, you boosted your company’s stock price by selling valuable goods to customers. In the new economy, you boost your company’s stock price by giving away your product (e.g., a Web browser) to customers—and relying on network externalities to boost the price you can charge for what you have to sell next year to people who are now committed to your product. In the old economy, the first entrant often made big mistakes that followers could learn from and avoid: it was dangerous to be first into a market. In the new economy, the first entrant to pass a “tipping point” of market share gains a nearly unassailable position in the market.

There are pieces of the world that fit this vision of the new economy very well. Think of the fortune Bill Gates made by beating Apple past the tipping point with Windows. Think of the rapid price declines of silicon chips. Think of the rocketlike Wall Street trajectory of new companies that did not exist a decade ago. Think of the rise of companies that did not exist three decades ago—such as Intel—to industrial prominence.

Yet, somewhat paradoxically, it is along this marveled-at dimension that our economy today is perhaps the least new. For what this particular set of returning pilgrims to the future are describing are the standard

> J. BRADFORD DE LONG, a professor of economics at the University of California, Berkeley, served as deputy assistant secretary of the U.S. Treasury Department during 1993–95. He is currently working on an economic history of the 20th century. Copyright © 1998 by J. Bradford De Long.



Silicon Valley—the promised land?

economic dynamics of a “leading sector,” of a relatively narrow set of industries that happen to be at the center of a particular decade’s or a particular generation’s technological advance. There have been such leading sectors for well over a hundred years. Manchester was the home of the leading sectors of the 1830s. It was the Silicon Valley of its day—and saw the same creation of large fortunes, the same plummeting product prices, and the same sudden growth of large enterprises. Every leading sector goes through a similar process. Consider the automobile. The average car purchased in 1906 cost perhaps \$52,640 in 1993 dollars. By 1910 the price had dropped to \$39,860, even as technical improvements had pushed the quality up by at least 31 percent. By the time the heroic, entrepreneurial age of the American automobile came to an end during World War I, an average car cost 53 percent less in inflation-adjusted dollars than a 1906-vintage vehicle, and its quality had doubled. Consumers were getting more than four times as much car for their (inflation-adjusted) dollar than a mere decade before.

The development of the automobile does not match the pace of innovation in semiconductors under Moore’s Law, which generates at least a 32-fold, not a fourfold, increase in value over a decade. But it is in the same ballpark, especially if one allows for the fact that the tremendous improvements in semiconductors have not been matched by changes in the other components used in making microelectronics products.

Thus, a citizen of the late 19th century would not have had to wait for the arrival of our age in order to see the “new economy.” A trip to

Detroit would have done the job. During the 1920s, authors writing articles in popular magazines such as the *Atlantic Monthly* confidently declared that mass production made not just for greater efficiency or higher productivity but “a better world,” and demanded the rapid creation of a “Fordized America.”

The automobile industry is not alone: other industries have had similar transformations during their times as leading sectors. In our dining room, my wife and I have a four-bulb chandelier. If we go to Monterey for the weekend and leave the light on, we will have consumed as much in the way of artificial illumination as an average pre-1850 American household consumed in a year. Such consumption would have cost that household about five percent of its income in candles, tapers, and matches. But because of the technological revolutions that made possible the cheap generation and transmission of electricity, it makes no perceptible difference in our Pacific Gas and Electric bill.

Some of the Silicon pilgrims make an elementary mistake. Seeing autos and other goods of the Industrial Revolution in much the same form today as they existed in their own childhood decades ago, they assume that such “industrial” goods must have emerged almost fully formed, that the pace at which they changed must have always been glacial. But we have had a succession of productivity revolutions in leading sectors since the start of the Industrial Revolution, sweeping through everything from textiles to medical care. That’s why we call it a *revolution*—it kicked off the process of staggered sector-by-sector economic transformation of which Silicon Valley is the most recent instance.

With a dose of realism and historical perspective, the pilgrims returning from Silicon Valley might change their vision in several ways.

First, they would recognize that in microelectronics, as in every leading sector, the “heroic” period of rapid technological progress will come to an end. Henry Ford perfects the Model T. Britain’s Cable and Wireless company figures out how to properly insulate submarine telegraph cables. The first easy-to-find antibiotics, such as penicillin, are all discovered. Moore’s Law exhausts itself. Thereafter, computers and communications will become a much more mature industry, with different focuses for research and development, different types of firms, and different types of competition.

Second, in every leading sector the true productivity revolution occurs before the heroic period has come to an end. The first railroads connected key points between which lots of bulky, heavy, expensive materials needed to move. Later railroads provided slightly cheaper substitutes for canals, or added redundant capacity to the system in the name of marginal economic advantages. The first three TV networks came amazingly close to sating Americans’ taste for audiovisual entertainment. The first uses of modern telecommunications and computers—telephone service, music and news via radio, the first TV networks, Blockbuster Video, scientific and financial calculations, and large database searches—had the highest value. Thus, it is unwise to extrapolate the economic value added by semiconductors, computers, and telecom-

munications far into the future. Later uses will have lower value: if they were the most fruitful uses, with big payoffs, someone would have applied technology to them already. This is a version of the standard economist's argument that the \$1,000 bill you think you see on the sidewalk can't really be a \$1,000 bill: if it were, someone would have already picked it up. But this economist's argument is rarely false: there aren't many \$1,000 bills to be found lying on sidewalks.

Third, after the heroic age, the form of competition changes. During the heroic age, technology alone is the driving force. After the heroic age, what matters is figuring out exactly what customers want and giving it to them. As long as automobile prices were falling and quality was rising rapidly, Henry Ford could do very, very well by making a leading-edge car and letting customers choose whatever color they wanted, in the famous phrase, as long as it was black. As long as computer prices

are falling and quality is rising rapidly, Bill Gates likewise can do very, very well even if his software programs crash and show their users the Blue Screen of Death twice a day.

After the 1920s, however, the Ford Motor Company was overwhelmed by Alfred P. Sloan's General Motors, which figured out how to retain most of Ford's economies of scale while offering consumers a wide variety of brands, models, styles, and colors—a worthwhile undertaking, but not the stuff of economic revolution.

Before GM, no one knew what kind of options car buyers really wanted. Today, no one knows what kind of options computer and Internet access purchasers



Americans in the 1930s thought they were experiencing a global telecommunications revolution, as this 1933 advertisement by AT&T suggests.

really want, but they know that there are fortunes to be made by the new GMs of the information age. The company that plays GM to Microsoft's Ford likely will succeed by providing access—to computing power, to research materials, to the yet-to-be-built high-bandwidth successor to the Internet, to *information* uniquely valuable to *you*. But no one yet knows exactly how to do this.

Finally, each leading sector does produce a technological revolution. It does leave us with previously unimagined capabilities. The railroad gave us the ability to cross the continent in a week instead of months. Electric power gave us the ability to light our houses and power appliances (and computers). Microelectronics has given us extraordinary intellectual vision. More than a generation ago, when econ-

omists William Sharpe, Merton Miller, and Harry Markowitz did the work on how a rational investor should diversify an asset portfolio that won them the 1990 Nobel Prize in economics, they assumed that their labors were of purely theoretical interest. The calculations required to implement their formulas were beyond the reach of humanity. Today, however, the computing power to carry out calculations many times more complicated resides on every desk on Wall Street.

But a technological revolution is not an economic revolution. Just because microelectronics revolutionizes our capability to process information doesn't mean that it will dominate our economy. The economy, after all, focuses its attention on what is expensive—not on what is cheap. In every leading sector, the story has been the same. Once the exciting new product is squeezed into a relatively inexpensive commodity, economic energy flows elsewhere. *Business Week* does not run cover stories hailing electric lighting and exulting in its vast superiority over whale-oil lamps. Thus, as our capability grows, the salience of our expanded capability to the economy—which is, after all, the realm of things that are scarce—does not.

II

A second group of pilgrims, overlapping somewhat with the first, returns from Silicon Valley proclaiming that the American economy is poised to grow much faster than it has in a generation. They believe that the revolutions in microelectronics and telecommunications are producing a surge of productivity growth that could dramatically lift the American standard of living—if only the Federal Reserve and other government economic authorities would recognize what is going on.

These pilgrims hearken back to the postwar golden era of 1945-73. The drastic productivity slowdown that began in 1973 was a shock to America. It caused a deep slump in the stock market in the mid-1970s. It meant that government promises of future benefits that had been based on assumptions of steadily rising tax revenues (without rising tax rates) could not be fulfilled. It made false the basic American assumption that each generation would live significantly better than its parents' generation, with bigger houses, better jobs, and markedly easier lives. But all of that is behind us now, today's advocates of the new economy announce, or will be if policymakers recognize the potential not yet reflected in productivity statistics and other data. *Business Week's* Stephen Shepard writes that information technology is a "transcendent technology" that affects everything: it "boosts productivity, reduces costs, cuts inventories, facilitates electronic commerce." The "statistics are simply not capturing what's going on" because "we don't know how to measure output in a high-tech service economy."

Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich opines that technological progress should give us an economy capable of measured annual economic growth of four or five percent without rising inflation, instead of the 2.5 percent deemed possible by the tightfisted central bankers at the Federal

The Chairman Speaks

No less a skeptic than Federal Reserve Board chairman Alan Greenspan allowed, in a speech on September 4, that there may be something to the idea of a new economy.

Some of those who advocate a “new economy” attribute it generally to technological innovations and breakthroughs in globalization that raise productivity and proffer new capacity on demand and that have, accordingly, removed pricing power from the world’s producers on a more lasting basis.

There is, clearly, an element of truth in this proposition. . . . But, although there doubtless have been profound changes in the way we organize our capital facilities, engage in just-in-time inventory regimes, and intertwine our newly sophisticated risk-sensitive financial system into this process, there is one important caveat to the notion that we live in a new economy, and that is human psychology.

The same enthusiasms and fears that gripped our forebears, are, in every way, visible in the generations now actively participating in the American economy. Human actions are always rooted in a forecast of the consequences of those actions. When the future becomes sufficiently clouded, people eschew actions and disengage from previous commitments. . . . The way we evaluate assets, and the way changes in those values affect our economy, do not appear to be coming out of a set of rules that is different from the one that governed the actions of our forebears.

Hence, as the first cut at the question “Is there a new economy?” the answer in a more profound sense is no. As in the past, our advanced economy is primarily driven by how human psychology molds the value system that drives a competitive market economy. And that process is inextricably linked to human nature, which appears essentially immutable and, thus, anchors the future to the past.

But . . . important technological changes have been emerging in recent years that are altering, in ways with few precedents, the manner in which we organize production, trade across countries, and deliver value to consumers. . . .

Thus, one key to the question of whether there is a new economy is whether current expectations of future stability, which are distinctly more positive than, say a decade ago, are justified by actual changes in the economy. For if expectations of greater stability are borne out, risk and equity premiums will remain low. In that case, the cost of capital will also remain low, leading, at least for a time, to higher investment and faster economic growth. . . .

The future of technology advance may be difficult to predict, but for the period ahead there is the possibility that already proven technologies may not as yet have been fully exploited. Company after company reports that, when confronted with cost increases in a competitive environment that precludes price increases, they are able to offset those costs, seemingly at will, by installing the newer technologies. . . .

Such stories seem odd. . . . But if cost-cutting at will is, in fact, currently available, it suggests that a backlog of unexploited capital projects has been built up in recent years, which, if true, implies the potential for continued gains in productivity close to the elevated rates of the last couple of years. . . .

We should not become complacent, however. To be sure, the sharp increases in the stock market have boosted household net worth. But while capital gains increase the value of existing assets, they do not directly create the resources needed for investment in new physical facilities. Only saving out of income can do that.

In summary, whether over the past five to seven years, what has been, without question, one of the best economic performances in our history is a harbinger of a new economy or just a hyped-up version of the old, will be answered only with the inexorable passage of time. And I suspect our grandchildren, and theirs, will be periodically debating whether they are in a new economy.



Reserve. Many good things will follow: real wages and living standards will rise rapidly, the Federal Reserve will be able to cut interest rates and expand the money supply more quickly without boosting inflation, and the stock market will boom unto eternity.

As best as I can tell, this group of returning pilgrims seems to have failed to recognize the importance of the word *measured* in the phrase “measured economic growth.” They insist that true economic growth is greater than measured economic growth. And they are right: thanks to a large number of statistical and measurement problems that are built into our official economic statistics, “measured” economic growth understates real growth by one percentage point per year or so.

But these pilgrims overlook a crucial fact: official data have *always* understated growth. For more than 50 years, the national-income accountants at the Commerce Department have known that their numbers don’t capture all the economic benefits flowing from inventions and innovations in the economy’s leading sectors. Yet they have continued to follow their established procedures, partly because they lack the information to do a better job and partly because they prefer to report numbers they can count reliably rather than numbers that are based on guesswork. The problems of measurement today are probably bigger than in the past, but not vastly bigger.

DICKENSBURY By GARY THORNTON



This means that the numbers we use in steering the economy have not suddenly developed huge distortions that require a change in navigation. The data have always been distorted, yet have supplied adequate guidance. How would we tell if they were not reasonably accurate? How would we tell if economic growth were too slow? One guide would be the rate of investment: are bad economic policies stealing capital that should be going to expand the productive capacity of the economy? While one can argue that the budget deficits of the 1980s hobbled economic growth by crowding out investment, the budget deficits of the Reagan and Bush administrations are now gone. But if, as the new economy enthusiasts insist, productive capacity were growing faster than production, businesses would be firing workers on a large scale: unemployment would be increasing as firms used technology to economize on labor. Yet nothing like that is happening. The unem-

ployment rate is low and steady—a good indicator that the economy, now expanding at a measured rate of about 2.5 percent annually, is growing at the sustainable rate of its productive potential.

III

Nevertheless, despite the hype, delusion, and misunderstandings that surround the “new economy,” it would be unwise to completely dismiss the concept. The pilgrims are not mad. They have seen something.

While it is true, for example, that the economic drama of the rising microelectronics and telecommunications industries resembles the stories of other leading sectors, the pace of productivity improvement today does appear to be faster than in most, if not all, cases in the past. And this productivity edge often does escape measurement.

For an example from telecommunications, look at the spread of network television throughout America, which began in the 1950s. In its heyday, network television dominated American culture—as, in some ways, it still does—occupying perhaps a fifth of the average American’s leisure hours. But nobody ever paid a cent to receive network television. So its product received—and still receives—a value of zero in the national income and product accounts used to calculate the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP).

The salaries and profits of the networks, of the production studios, of the actors, and of the advertising managers do appear—but they appear as a cost of the production of the goods being advertised, not as an increase in the economic value produced. In other words, the growth of broadcast television increased the size of the denominator in productivity calculations, but not the size of the numerator. Each worker who moved into the network television industry (broadly defined) thus decreased officially measured productivity.

For a contemporary example, look at the Internet: a source of entertainment and information that does not (or does not yet) rival network television, yet is assessed the same way. Consumers pay a toll to telephone companies and to Internet service providers in order to access the network. But then the overwhelming bulk of information is free (and is likely to remain so in the future). Once again the national income accountants at the Department of Commerce are, when they estimate real GDP, subtracting one-tenth of a percent from American productivity for each one-tenth of a percent of the labor force employed in creating and maintaining the World Wide Web.

The pilgrims are also right insofar as this particular leading sector may indeed have broader consequences for the economy, at least over the very long run, than other leading sectors of the past. Other leading sectors have revolutionized conditions for relatively small groups of people. In the 19th century, the automatic loom bankrupted handloom weavers, who wove cloth in their homes, and transformed the weaving business from one in which lone entrepreneurs rode from village to village dropping off yarn and collecting cloth to an industry dominated by

large factories and powered by steam engines. But it left the conditions of life of others largely unchanged, save for the significant fact that clothing became much cheaper. Today's leading sectors, however, might—but might not—radically change the conditions of life of nearly everyone: those who use information to direct enterprises (managers), who process information in their jobs (white-collar workers), and who use information to decide what to buy (consumers).

But why should the fact that today's leading sectors revolutionize the production and distribution of information make a difference? Why is information special? The new economy's advocates give a number of answers emphasizing the limitless possibilities of an economy dominated by goods that are almost impossibly cheap to produce and distribute. But there is one answer they don't give: it is special because the invisible hand of the market may do a much poorer job of arranging and controlling the economy when most of the value produced is in the form of information goods.

For the past 200 years, relying on competitive markets to produce economic growth and prosperity has, by and large, proven a good bet. But the invisible hand of the market does a good job only if the typical commodity meets three preconditions. The commodity must be *excludable*, so that its owner can easily and cheaply keep others from using or enjoying it without his or her permission. It must be *rival*, so that if I am using it now, you cannot be. And it must be *transparent*, so that purchasers know what they are buying.

Commodities that are not “information goods” take the form of a single physical object—hammers, cars, steaks—and are rival and excludable by nature. If I am using my hammer, you are not. Their transparency is straightforward: if I am buying this car at this showroom, I can see it, touch it, drive it, and kick it before writing a check.

But if a commodity is not excludable—if I, the owner, cannot block you from using it if you have not paid for it—then my relationship to you is not the relationship of seller to buyer, but much more that of a participant in a gift exchange: I give you something, and out of gratitude and reciprocity you give something back to me. Think of an economy run like a public radio pledge drive. It doesn't work very well—the revenue raised is a small fraction of the value gained by consumers—and the process of collecting the revenue is very annoying.

If a commodity is not rival, then the market will not set its price correctly. If my using it does not keep you from doing so, as is the case with software and other information goods, then there is a sense in which its price should be zero. But no producer can make a profit selling a commodity at a price of zero. Only a producer with substantial market power can keep the price up. So in a world of nonrival commodities, we could expect monopoly to become the rule rather than the exception.

The logic of nonrival goods provides a large part of the explanation for the rise of Microsoft. Only firms that establish a dominant position in their markets can charge enough to make even normal profits. Firms that don't do so plunge into a downward spiral: with low sales volume and costs of writing software code that remain the same no matter whether they sell

one copy or one million, their cost per program shipped is high.

If a commodity is not transparent, then markets may fail completely. If you don't know what's in that used car or health insurance policy you are considering, you don't know how much it is really worth. Sellers also need transparency. An insurer required to sell health insurance policies without knowing anything about its customers would face a nightmarish prospect. Worrying that all potential customers would already have costly illnesses, it would raise prices—

until in fact only those who had costly illnesses would want to try to buy insurance. The market would break down. Yet information goods are highly nontransparent: in the case of many or most information goods, the entire point of buying something is to learn or see something new—and so you cannot know exactly what you are buying or how much you will like it until after the fact.

All three of these conditions—goods must be excludable, rival, and transparent—must be met if the invisible hand is to work well, and there are many reasons to be concerned that the new economy won't meet them.

Words distributed in electronic form (and, with improvements in scanner technology, words distributed in books and magazines as well) are becoming nonexcludable. Information goods are by definition nontransparent: if you know what the piece of information is that you are buying, you don't need to buy it. Software is becoming non-transparent as well: when you purchased Microsoft Word or WordPerfect for the first time did you realize that you were committing yourself to a long-run path of upgrades and file-format revisions? Finally, computerized words, images, and programs are nonrival: a file doesn't know whether it is the second or the two-thousandth copy of itself.



The wave of the future? The U.S. Department of Justice filed a major antitrust lawsuit against Microsoft earlier this year when the company bundled Windows 98 with its own Web browser.

How far will the breakdown of these preconditions of viable profit-making markets extend? Will it be confined to a relatively small set of e-goods, or will it expand to embrace the rest of the economy as well? We do not really know. But it is possible that we are moving toward an information age economy in which the gap between what our technologies could deliver and what our market economy produces will grow increasingly large as companies devote themselves increasingly to securing monopolies. It is possible—although how likely we do not know—that in an information age economy the businesses that enjoy the most success will not be those that focus on making better products but those that strive to find ways to induce consumers to pay for what they use. Some may succeed through superior advertising campaigns, others by persuading consumers to enter into a gift-exchange relationship: the public radio syndrome. Recently, after downloading a demonstration version of a software maker's flagship product, I received an e-mail from the company's marketing department. It said that while the program was billed as a time-limited demonstration version that would stop working after 60 days, it was in fact a complete and unencumbered working program. The company hoped that I would find it valuable enough to pay for and register. But even if I didn't, the message said, the company would be pleased if I would tell my friends how wonderful its program was.

Other companies will follow a different strategy. Rather than giving their product away in hopes of receiving payment in return, they will try to make money by suing everybody in sight. They will seek to use the law to create stronger legal controls over intellectual property—everything from software to films—and spend freely to track down those who are using their products without paying for them. From society's point of view, this is a wasteful path—driving up profits, dampening demand, and reducing consumer welfare.

If the information age economy winds up looking much like the one sketched here, the role of government, far from shrinking into near irrelevance, as many of today's pilgrims airily assume, might grow in importance. In such a world, the tasks of government regulators would become infinitely more difficult. The very nature of the commodities produced would be constantly undermining the supports the market economy needs in order to function well. It would then be the job of government to shore up these supports: to do whatever it could to create a simulacrum of market competition and to restore the profitability of useful innovation. The Antitrust Division of the Justice Department might become the most important branch of the federal government.

This vision of the future information age economy—if it should become reality—would certainly qualify as a new economy. But it would be a dark mirror image of the new economy we hear so much about today.



Chronologically Incorrect

by Edward Tenner

Seventy years ago, W. I. Thomas and Dorothy Swaine Thomas proclaimed one of sociology's most influential ideas: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." Their case in point was a prisoner who attacked people he heard mumbling absent-mindedly to themselves. To the deranged inmate, these lip movements were curses or insults. No matter that they weren't; the results were the same.

The Thomas Theorem, as it is called, now has a corollary. In a micro-processor-controlled society, if machines register a disordered state, they are likely to create it. For example, if an automatic railroad switching system mistakenly detects another train stalled on the tracks ahead and halts the engine, there really will be a train stalled on the tracks.

Today, the corollary threatens billions of lines of computer code and millions of pieces of hardware. Because they were written with years encoded as two digits (treating 1998 as 98), many of world's software programs and microchips will treat January 1, 2000, as the first day of the year 1900. Like the insane convict, they will act on an absurd inference. For purposes of payment, a person with a negative age may cease

to exist. An elevator or an automobile engine judged by an embedded microprocessor to be overdue for inspection may be shut down. All of our vital technological and social systems are vulnerable to crippling errors. Correcting programs requires time-consuming close inspection by skilled programmers, custom-crafted solutions for virtually every computer system, and arduous testing—and time is running out.

Nobody denies the hazards. And as we will see, if only because of the original Thomas Theorem, the Year 2000 Problem is already upon us. The unsettling question is just how serious it will remain after more billions of dollars are spent between now and then correcting and testing affected systems—fully 1,898 in the U.S. Department of Defense alone, and hundreds of thousands of smaller computer networks if those of small businesses are included. Will the first days of the year 2000 be just a spike in the already substantial baseline of system failures recorded in professional forums such as the Risks site on the Internet? That might be called the fine mess scenario. Or will it be a chain reaction of self-amplifying failures—the deluge scenario?

Warning, diagnosing, correcting, testing, certifying, and testifying about the Year 2000 Problem, increasingly abbreviated as $\gamma 2k$, is the mission of a new computer specialty that might be called $\gamma 2k$ ology. Few of today's $\gamma 2k$ ologists were familiar to readers of the consumer computer press even five years ago, though Edward Yourdon had written influential books on programming and Capers Jones was a leading network management consultant. Few teach in the largest and oldest academic computer science departments or business schools. The hardware and software establishments regarded the problem as tedious housekeeping in the emerging frictionless networked economy. All that is changing as $\gamma 2k$ ologists begin to make headlines.

Because $\gamma 2k$ ology mixes evangelism, prophecy, and entrepreneurship, its message has not won easy acceptance. The financial news magnate Michael Bloomberg called the Year 2000 Problem “one of the greatest frauds of all time” at a meeting of securities traders last year. As late as last spring, the Bank of Montreal predicted only a “mild blip,” and a mid-1998 survey of chief financial officers of companies with more than 20 employees revealed that only 17 percent were very concerned, and 48 percent were unconcerned.

Read closely, $\gamma 2k$ ologists share no consensus on how severe the $\gamma 2k$ dislocations are likely to be. Edward Yardeni, chief economist of the Deutsche Morgan Grenfell investment bank, now estimates that the odds are strongly in favor of an economic recession as serious as the one triggered by the 1973–74 oil shock. But an acknowledged aim of alarming predictions, as in George Orwell's *1984*, is to galvanize people into action that will prevent the worst. As of mid-1998, many leading

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Fin de Siècle Man (1992), by Nam June Paik

Y2Kologists, including the Canadian consultant Peter de Jager and the American academic Leon Kappelman, were arguing that if organizations concentrated on their essential systems and deferred other work, massive failure could still be averted. Edward Yourdon and his daughter Jennifer Yourdon have written a guide for coping with a variety of plausible scenarios, which in their view range from a two-to-three-day disruption to a 10-year depression. And a few panicky Y2K programmers are retreating to the western deserts—the very area most dependent on electronically controlled federal water distribution systems.

One thing is certain: the apprehension is real, and will have real consequences. Just as the fear of nuclear war and terrorism has transformed the world over the last two generations, so the mere possibility of massive system failure will cast a shadow over its political, military, business, and scientific rulers for years to come. Year 2000 is less a crisis of technology than a crisis of authority.

For at least a century the West has expected, and received, orderly technological transitions. Our vital systems have grown faster, safer, and more flexible. Boiler explosions, for example, killed as many as 30,000 Americans a year around 1900; today, only a handful die in such accidents. The reduction was the result of cooperation among engineers, state legislators, and industries to establish uniform codes and inspection procedures in

place of patchwork regulations and spotty supervision. Well before the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912, national and international bodies had made transatlantic travel much safer than it had been in the age of sail. Railroads long ago arrived at standards for compatible air brake systems that allowed passenger and freight cars to be safely interchanged. And evolving engineering standards have helped reduce accident levels on the nation's interstate highways. But no comparable effort has been made to cope with the Y2K problem.

Most consumers pay little attention to the hundreds of national and international standards-setting bodies. Only when major commercial interests are at stake, as when specifications are established for high-definition television or for sound and video recording, do the news media report on debates. Laypeople are rarely present at standards-setting deliberations. Before the early 1980s, many conventions were handled mainly as internal corporate matters. AT&T established exchange numbers and area codes, and IBM and a handful of other manufacturers upgraded operating systems of their mainframe computers. And why should people worry? The record of these organizations was unmatched in the world. A Henry Dreyfuss-designed, Western Electric-manufactured rotary telephone could work for a generation without repair. The future seemed to be in good hands.

The breakup of AT&T, the explosion of utilities competition, the globalization of manufacturing, and the rise of personal computing have all helped diffuse authority over standards. And freedom from regulatory entanglement has brought immense benefits to manufacturers, consumers, and the economy. But it has had an unintended consequence. The diversity of systems and the fierceness of business rivalries discourage public and private technological authorities—from the Defense Department to Microsoft—from taking firm and early action to cope with emerging problems. (A fear of antitrust prosecutions has also inhibited Year 2000 cooperation among corporations, enough so that President Bill Clinton felt compelled in July to propose special legislation to clear the way.) Governments have avoided interference in commercial decisions, and businesses have succeeded more by following market shifts than by staking out ambitious new standards. As the Thomas Theorem implies, if people do not believe they can exert power or influence, then they cannot. Which brings us to “the millennium bug,” which is no bug at all.

Over the last four decades, the Year 2000 Problem has passed through three phases, each bringing its own challenges for authorities. The first age, the Time of Constraint, lasted from the origins of electronic computing to the early 1980s. The managers and programmers of the time knew that programs using only two-digit years had limits. Many must have been aware of the master programmer Robert Bemer's early-1970s article in the industry journal *Datamation*, describing the Year 2000 Problem in the COBOL programming language he had co-developed. These electronic pioneers could have used four-digit dates, but there was a strong economic case for two. In fact, the U.S. Air Force

used single-digit dates in some 1970s programs and had to have them rewritten in 1979.

Leon Kappelman and the consultant Phil Scott have pointed out that the high price of memory in the decades before personal computing made early compliance a poor choice. In the early days of computing, memory was luxury real estate. A megabyte of mainframe hard disk storage (usually rented) cost \$36 a month in 1972, as compared with 10 cents in 1996. For typical business applications, using four digits for dates would have raised storage costs by only one percent, but the cumulative costs would have been enormous. Kappelman and Scott calculate that the two-digit approach saved business at least \$16–\$24 million (in 1995 dollars) for every 1,000 megabytes of storage it used between 1973 and '92. The total savings are impossible to calculate, but they surely dwarf most estimated costs of correcting the Year 2000 problem. (One leading research group, the International Data Corporation, estimates a correction cost of \$122 billion out of more than \$2 trillion in total information technology spending in the six years from 1995 through 2000.)

Even where Year 2000 compliance was feasible and economical, it wasn't always in demand. In the 1980s, a number of applications programs were available with four-digit dates, such as the statistical programs and other software systems produced by the SAS Institute, one of computing's most respected corporations. SAS does not appear to have promoted it competitively as a major feature. The UNIX operating system, originally developed at Bell Laboratories, does not face a rollover problem until 2038, yet this too did not seem to be a selling point. Even Apple Computer did not promote its delayed rollover date of 2019. The year 2000 still seemed too far away.

By the mid-1980s, the Time of Choice was beginning. The economic balance—initially higher storage and processing costs versus long-term savings in possible century-end conversion costs—would have still been an open question, had it been openly raised. The great majority of



Sometimes linked to apocalyptic anxieties about the millennium, the Y2K problem is beginning to produce a crop of alarmist pop-culture products.

crucial government and business applications were still running on mainframe computers and facing memory shortages. But the trend to cheaper memory was unmistakable. The introduction of the IBM PC XT in 1983, with up to 640 kilobytes of random access memory (RAM) and its then-vast fixed hard drive of 10 megabytes, was already signaling a new age in information processing.

Yet the possibilities presented by the new age remained an abstraction to most computer systems managers and corporate and government executives. Then as now, most of their software expenses went not to create new code but to repair, enhance, and expand existing custom programs—what are now called “legacy systems.” A date change standard would initially increase errors, delay vital projects, and above all inflate budgets. And it was not a propitious time to face this kind of long-term problem. The American industrial and commercial landscape during the 1980s was in the midst of a painful transformation, and investors appeared to regard most management teams as only as good as their last quarter’s results. Only the mortgage industry, working as it did on 30-year cycles, had recognized the problem (in the 1970s) and begun to work on it.

In 1983, a Detroit COBOL programmer named William Schoen tried to market a Year 2000 conversion program he had created. A sympathetic column about his warnings in a leading trade weekly, *Computer World*, went unheeded. Schoen went out of business after selling two copies.

Not that government was much more prescient. The Federal Information Processing Standard of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) for interchange of information among units of the federal government specified a six-digit (YYMMDD) format in 1968 and did not fully change to an eight-digit (YYYYMMDD) format until 1996. The Social Security Administration was the first major agency to begin Year 2000 conversion, in 1990. Despite the impressive military budget increases of the 1980s and the Pentagon’s tradition of meticulous technical specifications for hardware, many vital Defense Department systems still require extensive work today.

The computing world of the 1990s recalls a multimedia trade show display decorated at great expense and stocked with the best equipment money can buy, yet still dependent on a hideous, half-concealed tangle of cables and power lines, with chunky transformer blocks jutting awkwardly from maxed-out surge protectors. Our apparently seamless electronic systems turn out to be patched together from old and new code in a variety of programming languages of different vintages. The original source code has not always survived. Year 2000 projects can turn into organizational archaeology.

The German philosopher Ernst Bloch popularized the phrase *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*, literally “simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous,” to express the coexistence of old and new values. Far from being dead, the past (in William Faulkner’s even more celebrated words) sometimes is not even past. Indeed, in Faulkner’s native South, much of the

cotton trade is said to rely on ancient IBM punch card systems now maintained by arcane specialty vendors. In the United Kingdom, the Royal Air Force's supersonic Tornado fighters, costing £20 million each, are still equipped with 256 kilobytes of core memory, with processing data recorded on standard audiocassettes. This seemingly obsolete system not only performed magnificently in the Persian Gulf War but is considered impervious to conventional electronic jamming techniques. Year 2000 repair confronts us with many such examples of coexistence.

The Time of Choice ended in the early 1990s, when leading computer industry publications prominently recognized Year 2000 conversion as a problem and warned of the consequences of neglecting it. Peter de Jager's September 1993 *Computerworld* article, "Doomsday 2000," may not have been the *Silent Spring* of y2kology, but it was fair warning. Writing in *Forbes* in July 1996, Caspar W. Weinberger, chairman of Forbes, was probably the first prominent business figure to underscore the seriousness of the problem (though, curiously, the former secretary of defense said nothing about the y2k dilemmas confronting the public sector).

The Time of Trial began in the mid-1990s, as conversion programs began in earnest and y2k issues were increasingly aired in the computer press. It will probably last until around 2005. A few annoyances are already apparent. Credit cards with 2000 expiration dates, for example, have been rejected by some authorization systems. Many critical points will arrive in 1999, with the need to reset some older Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment, for example, and especially with the beginning of fiscal year 2000 for many governments and private-sector organizations.

During the Time of Choice, the problem was recognized but deferred for two reasons. First, there was the chance that entire computer systems would be replaced before 2000. Second, future software tools might reduce conversion costs sharply. In 1988, a senior Defense Department computer systems official told the *Chicago Tribune*: "Our projections for the development of artificial intelligence systems suggest that by 1994 and 1995, they may be able to handle most of this relatively easily." Yet 10 years later, a congressional committee heard one expert give the Pentagon an "F" for its Year 2000 readiness. In the civilian sector, too, older hardware and software is far more pervasive than many experts anticipated. It may also be too late for most businesses to replace their vulnerable systems; programmers are scarce and expensive, and conversion can take years to complete.

Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R.-Ga.), publisher and likely Republican presidential contender Steve Forbes, and other prominent Republicans are exploiting the Clinton administration's failure to address the problem earlier. How could self-styled technology advocates such as Vice President Al Gore have turned a blind eye to a threat of such magnitude? Embarrassed as Gore might turn out to be by a series of government computer failures in early 2000, and shy of the Year 2000 issue as he has lately appeared, congressional Republicans have no better track record. For example, during hearings about the Internal Revenue Service's computer

system woes in 1996, Senator Ted Stevens (R.-Alaska) cited “advice from a very distinguished thinker” to the effect that problematic computer systems would be replaced by 2000. Only in early 1997 did the Republican-controlled Congress’s own auditing arm, the General Accounting Office, upgrade Year 2000 to its most serious category of issues. The other organization that might have dealt with the issue, the Office of Technology Assessment, was abolished by Congress in 1995. In fact, the legislators with an interest in the problem are a small group that includes members of both parties, among them senators Robert Bennett (R.-Utah) and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D.-New York).

Computer industry executives, from Microsoft’s William Gates on down, also missed opportunities. When Microsoft introduced Windows 95—a two-digit name—in the summer of that year, it required developers to meet a variety of compatibility standards before they could display the Win95 logo. (For example, the procedures for removing a program and its associated files from a hard drive had to be simplified.) Continued functionality after four and a half years was not one of these requirements. Even in mid-1998, some of Microsoft’s own software products may have at least minor problems associated with the date change. Microsoft has been at least as responsible as most other companies, probably more so. Yet Gates published his book *The Road Ahead* (1996) without a discussion of the Year 2000 Problem; in a July 1996 column, he appeared unaware that a number of popular current personal computer programs were affected. (Most problems with programs on non-networked personal computers can be solved relatively easily, often with a simple upgrade.)

If the coexistence of past, present, and future was the discovery of the Time of Choice, *triage* is becoming the watchword of the Time of Trial. Fortunately, information technologies are not created equal. Some organizations have hundreds or even thousands of computer systems, but only a minority are vital and only a few may be critical. In 1998 it is too late to fix everything, even with emergency budgets and the mobilization of computer-skilled employees from other departments. As the project management guru Frederick P. Brooks pointed out in his classic *Mythical Man Month* (1982), adding programmers to a late project can actually delay it further. In a complex interconnected system, more things can go wrong.

In the Time of Trial, triage will not be the only military metaphor. Many other information technology projects will be suspended or canceled as programmers are called up for the front. Careers will be damaged and entire organizations will be set back. Well-prepared companies will gain strategic advantages. Yet so far, financial markets have not been able to identify Year 2000 winners and losers. A study by Triaxys Research showed that as of June 1998 many companies had not completed Year 2000 assessments, much less undertaken efforts to correct their problems. Investors still do not have adequate information.

Despite these gaps, there is reason to hope for a fine mess rather than a deluge. Some banks and investment houses have reported mak-



Moon, Antares, Earth, Sun (1990), by Nam June Paik

ing good progress on their systems. A Wall Street dry run of Year 2000 trading last July seemed to go well. Improvements of Year 2000 software tools may shorten the time needed to make repairs. Indeed, the military metaphor provides a measure of reassurance. For all the shortcomings of British and American policy and planning during the years between the world wars, for example, Allied scientists and engineers performed miracles once war broke out.

Some dangers will persist despite the efforts of even the most resourceful managers. Realization of any one of the five most ominous threats could validate the doomsayers' predictions. These risks might be abbreviated as SMILE: second-order effects, malicious code, interdependencies, litigation, and embedded processors.

Thomas's Theorem suggests that the expectation of a Year 2000 crisis may be enough to create a real one no matter how effective the efforts to repair the underlying code. Our social and technological systems are more efficient than ever, but because, for example, information technologies now allow vendors and manufacturers to maintain lean warehouse inventories, slight disruptions can have more serious repercussions. Running the gamut from shifts of investment funds based on Internet-transmitted rumors about the Year 2000 readiness of particular companies, to depletion of bank and automatic teller machine currency supplies, to runs on bread and toilet paper, a late 1999 panic might be comical but also potentially deadly.

Add potential sabotage to the equation. The Pentagon already wor-

ries about information warfare and terrorism. Hostile states, criminal organizations, and domestic and foreign radical movements can already attack vital networks. The beginning of the year 2000 is a perfect cover. Do not forget embezzlers and vengeful staff. An apparently Year 2000-related incident could mask electronic robbery, and a continuing shortage of skilled personnel could delay diagnoses for priceless months. Computer security experts also fear fly-by-night y2k consultants who may collude with corrupt managers to offer bogus certification, or plant Trojan horse programs in the systems of honest but desperate ones.

Thanks to decades of global thinking, North America and Europe are also linked to nations whose Year 2000 readiness makes many Western nations look like paragons. The Asian financial crisis that began last year has surely delayed the compliance programs of some major trading partners of the United States and Europe. International interchange of data may send a failure in one country rippling through the most rigorously Year 2000-ready systems: the sociologist Charles Perrow calls this “tight coupling.” Major corporations are already pressing their trading partners for certification of their Year 2000 compliance. Domestically, this may make or break some firms, but it will not bring down the economy. Internationally, it may trigger local crises that might lead to mass migrations or insurrections.

The courts have only begun to consider legal liability for Year 2000 failures. The cases already on the docket will test one of the law’s principles: to decree retroactively but to create predictability. Because Year 2000 cases will raise new questions and provoke immense claims, the litigation will be prolonged and sometimes ruinous.

The most serious wild card of all, though, is a hardware issue. Most discussions of the Year 2000 Problem focus on the difficulty of repairing and testing software, but that is a cinch compared to dealing with the thousands of embedded microchips that control critical systems. The Gartner Group estimates that 50 million embedded devices may malfunction. Traffic signals and freeway entrance metering lights will fail. Elevators will shut down if their electronic hardware tells them they have not been inspected for nearly a hundred years. (The largest elevator manufacturers deny their products are vulnerable to y2k failure.) Electric power distribution switches and pipeline controls will interrupt energy flow. Medical x-ray machines will not turn on—or far worse, off—at the proper times.

(There is an alternative final E in SMILE: the euro, the new European currency scheduled for introduction in 1999. Conversion of existing financial programs and historical data for euro compatibility competes for scarce programming time with Year 2000 conversion projects, and bugs in new and revised financial software may compound Year 2000 errors.)

No matter what its outcome, the Year 2000 Problem will stamp a cohort of managers, private and public, as it will put some of their predecessors on trial. Generation X will become Generation YY. Like other powerful events, Year 2000 will alter culture. But we don’t know how, because it will have many surprises, positive and negative, for even today’s most informed analysts.

The Year 2000 Problem shows that neither military nor civilian authority, neither social democracies nor authoritarian regimes nor market economies, neither big business nor small business, took fully adequate steps in planning for the future. And now, those seeking to discredit all established elites are coming into their own. Gary North, a Ph.D. historian and founder of the Institute for Christian Economics, not long ago was a prolific but obscure lay theologian criticized by some mainstream evangelical conservatives for his mix of radical theocracy and financial doomsaying. Now enjoying the survivalist good life on an Arkansas property with a private natural-gas well, he runs the Internet's scariest Y2K Web site, deftly collating the most frightening speculation available from establishment sources.

The future prestige of technological leaders is as problematic as the fate of political elites. Bill Gates apparently has never responded publicly to Peter de Jager's impassioned plea in the August 1997 issue of *Data-mation* for a formal declaration of the urgency of action on Year 2000. A surprising number of nontechnical people still expect that Gates will find a way to fix the problem. Paradoxically, surveys of public opinion, independent of the millennium issue, have shown least public confidence in the insurance industry and greatest confidence in executives in the technology industries, yet insurers may well emerge less damaged in the early 2000s than some of the software producers. Prudential is often cited as an exemplary pioneer of conversion management.

Supposedly insulated from market pressures and encouraged to take the long view, universities seem to be as badly exposed to Year 2000 troubles as other organizations. Nor did any of the leading engineering, scientific, or business associations, or the best-funded think tanks, sound any early warning that I have been able to find. A few journalists did bring the issue to their readers' attention as early as the 1980s.

If centralized technological planning is discredited, if the discipline of markets (such as securities analysts' reports and insurance underwriters' risk assessments) has failed to give timely warning that cannot be ignored, what is left? Perhaps it is the realization that technology is not just a radiant future but a messy present, that the age of transition never ends, and that rapid novelty and massive legacy can interact to create lethal assumptions. The first of January 2000 will not be the first danger point, and it will be far from the last. Nobody can predict just what lessons will be learned, what concepts introduced, which individuals acclaimed. The outcome of Y2K will change everything, but if we already knew what will be changed, there would have been no Year 2000 crisis, only a problem.



Present at the Creation

by Leslie D. Simon

The new very broadband high capacity networks . . . ought to be built by the federal government and then transitioned into private industry.

—Vice President-elect Al Gore, at the December 1992 postelection economic summit in Little Rock

Private sector leadership accounts for the explosive growth of the Internet today, and the success of electronic commerce will depend on continued private sector leadership.

—“A Framework for Electronic Commerce” (July 1997), a White House policy paper written by Ira Magaziner with advice from Vice President Gore’s staff

It was an extraordinary turnabout. In the space of the four and a half years between these two statements, the most technology-literate administration in American history reversed itself on one of the century’s more important technological questions. It wasn’t a political change of heart that turned Bill Clinton and Al Gore around but a recognition that they were dealing with something vastly greater than

they had imagined only a few years earlier. And that “something greater” now urgently confronts the United States and other countries with important choices.

During his years in Congress, Vice President Gore had championed critical advanced research by the government in new information and communications technologies. He liked to remind people that his father, as a senator from Tennessee, had played a key role in the construction of the interstate highway system during the 1950s and '60s—a new national transportation infrastructure that transformed the American economic and physical landscape, creating millions of jobs in road and housing construction, shopping malls, and countless other enterprises. The vice president would go on to say that now the government needed to create an infrastructure for the next century—an information infrastructure built on the foundation of government programs such as the multibillion-dollar High Performance Computing and Communications Initiative.

Government efforts had played an enormous role in the birth of the Internet and its underlying technologies, from packet switching to integrated circuits. ARPANET, the original backbone of the Internet, and NSFNET, which later superseded it, were designed chiefly for the defense community and scientific researchers. Both were creatures of the federal government. But the logic of governmental leadership was overtaken by events. By 1994, in the digital equivalent of the Big Bang, cyberspace was exploding out of its original narrow confines. Suddenly, the Internet was alive with commerce, business, entertainment, education, art, and, yes, pornography.

The spark was provided by the creation of the World Wide Web, an Internet graphic tool that greatly simplified the task of retrieving and viewing information. Invented by Tim Berners-Lee at CERN, the European high-energy physics research laboratory, the Web came to life in 1993 when a University of Illinois student named Marc Andriessen released a software program called Mosaic, the parent of Netscape Navigator. Now,



The World Wide Web still lay over the horizon when Vice President-elect Al Gore spoke of a government-backed “information superhighway” at Little Rock in 1992.

instead of entering obscure instructions by keyboard and staring at screens full of monotone type, users were able to steer through a universe of words, images, and sounds with the click of a mouse button. Within an amazingly short time of perhaps eight “Web years” (Silicon Valley denizens measure time in Web years—there are four in each chronological year), office workers, high school students, retirees, physicians, and even a few politicians were sending e-mail, setting up Web sites, and surfing the Web. Suddenly, every television and magazine advertisement boasted a URL (universal record locator), or Web site address.

With efforts such as Gore’s Reinventing Government program, the Clinton administration moved quickly to capitalize on the new technology, launching Web sites, for example, that eased citizens’ access to government agencies. It also tried to keep government in the forefront of research. When a consortium of universities and high-technology companies in 1997 announced a joint effort to create Internet 2, a faster, advanced version of the Internet with enough bandwidth to carry the huge data files involved in scientific research, videoconferencing, and other specialized undertakings, the administration announced its Next Generation Internet program, offering researchers federal grants and underwriting research projects by government agencies.

But the Internet tsunami moved too quickly for the government to stay in front. In July 1997, the administration’s “Framework for Electronic Commerce” announced the new policy: the private sector would lead the development of electronic commerce.

At the time, few saw the document as remarkable. We live, after all, in a time when the virtues of market-led development seem increasingly self-evident in the United States and abroad. But imagine the reaction if Theodore Roosevelt had called for the oil or sugar industries to be self-regulating. Or even if Ronald Reagan had called for industry to regulate cyberspace.

What the administration (and others) correctly realized, however, is that creating cyberspace is an undertaking almost without precedent. We are in effect creating a new world, a world that is virtually unbounded by physical laws, legal jurisdictions, and international borders. To leave the shaping of that world primarily to government agencies would have been folly.

Cyberspace offers industry opportunities of a kind never seen before. The modern oil industry, for example, grew out of the aggressive entrepreneurship of industry titans such as John D. Rockefeller and the intervention of governments concerned about monopoly and national security. A wrong turn—say, government policies that drove the price of gasoline sky-high or created scarcity—would have given us a very different world from today’s highly mobile car culture, with its suburbs, interstates, shopping malls, and McDonald’s drive-throughs. Yet, physical

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The death of distance: videoconferencing allows doctors in Canada and India to consult. Bandwidth limitations and other barriers must be overcome before such technologies become widely available.

facts limited the power of industrialists and politicians alike to determine the oil industry's future: petroleum deposits exist only in certain places and in certain quantities, and crude oil can be refined into gasoline only through chemical processes that obey physical laws. The supply would never be endless.

Today, in creating cyberspace, the physical limitations are far fewer. Cyberspace is almost entirely a creation of the mind—a vast and still largely blank slate awaiting the spark of human ingenuity. That is not to say that there is no role for government. Indeed, the choices that governments and the private sector make will almost alone determine what gets written on the slate. Those choices must be made soon. The very freedom of cyberspace from physical laws, its borderless nature, and its frenetic growth all mean that profoundly important choices must be made over the next decade. If we fail to make them in time, they will be made for us, by default.

The physical constraints on cyberspace are shrinking all the time. True, one must still view the data, graphics, or video on a flat panel or cathode-ray tube; type on a keyboard or wield a mouse; and make contact with others through webs of copper wire, optical fiber, coaxial cable, satellite dishes, and electronic switches. Yet while these physical artifacts make cyberspace possible, they do not define it, and, increasingly, do not limit its potential. High-tech companies today are racing to reduce even further our physical connections to the digital world, using techniques such as voice recognition and hand signaling. The growing global network of computers and other hardware is opening up a vast array of uses. The Internet can take the place of a post office, a telephone, a broadcast

studio, an insurance agent, a sound recording, a movie theater, an automobile dealership—almost anything anybody can imagine.

As the physical infrastructure of cyberspace fades into the background, what is important is what you see and hear and how you use it. The medium is no longer the message. In cyberspace, media can take on any form—video, print, graphics, or sound—at the whim of the user. As media converge, they become fungible background elements. Their distinctiveness is rapidly disappearing. The sharp line that existed between television and print media when Marshall McLuhan examined them earlier this century is fading rapidly. Content is now king.

National boundaries also fade into near irrelevance in the digital universe. An image or article or video created in one country can be viewed elsewhere at any time or as many times as users wish. Banking, shopping, schooling—all can be performed across national boundaries. The only services that are not transnational—at least not yet—are government services. While a Malaysian can buy delicacies from a virtual French shop, or take college-level courses from a Canadian school, he or she cannot apply for French or Canadian social security benefits. In the future, growing demand for just such opportunities may change the very notion of citizenship.

Even the Internet's physical communications web is amorphous and mutable, creating itself without regard to national borders but according to the traffic patterns that packet-switched networks are designed to optimize. These virtual and ever-changing connections are proving too sublime for government regulation. Every frame viewed or service rendered in cyberspace raises questions no nation can deal with in isolation. What if an image is not considered pornographic in one country but is in another? What if a physician in one country diagnoses a patient in another where the physician is not licensed? What if the patient wants to sue the physician for malpractice? And what if the physician's services are taxable in both countries?

A final unique characteristic of cyberspace is the speed of its development. Traffic on the Internet doubles every 100 days. It is estimated that the number of people using the Internet worldwide will grow from 100 million today to more than one billion by 2005. In 1997, there were about 2.7 trillion e-mail messages—many times more than the amount of mail delivered by the world's post offices! The volume of electronic commerce is expected to grow from about \$2 billion in 1997 to more than \$300 billion in 2002, to more than \$1 trillion in 2010.

In the United States and other industrial countries, a good bipartisan start has been made in agreeing on some fundamental principles governing the future of cyberspace, but translating them into specific policies has been more difficult. Even after the Clinton administration announced its new emphasis on private-sector leadership last year, for example, government and industry at first were lost in mutual incom-

prehension. To industry, self-regulation and private-sector leadership initially meant only that it should continue to do what it does best—develop and sell innovative products. It would help Washington clear away policy obstacles to growth in areas such as taxation and commercial law. But that was about it.

To government, self-regulation meant that industry would take the initiative in areas such as protecting the privacy of Internet users and monitoring pornography and other objectionable content (e.g., bomb-manufacturing instructions). There are precedents for this. In the 1960s, when the nation was flooded with dubious advertising claims, the advertising industry, under pressure from the Federal Trade Commission, developed a code of self-regulation that has worked well. Now, the government, besieged by complaints about privacy violations and Internet pornography, was transferring the political heat to leading CEOs such as Intel’s Andy Grove, IBM’s Lou Gerstner, and Microsoft’s Bill Gates. A bit unsure how to proceed—and perhaps a bit reluctant to assume such responsibilities—industry hesitated. Since then, it has begun to step up to the challenge. On the agenda for both government and the private sector are six major issues, with a host of others waiting in the wings:

Privacy: All kinds of personal information, from school records to patient medical data to local real estate and tax records, is now being digitized and made available on the Web. And vast quantities of fresh data are being used and collected through “cookies” (data about your preferences stored in your browser by a Web site you visit), “data mining” by powerful computers that allow merchants to track the buying habits of individual shoppers, and other new technologies. Privacy is now the number one Internet issue. Will individuals have control over how data about them are collected, disseminated, and used? Or will all data be public?

While the United States already has a complex system of privacy laws and regulations, industry could provide more protection tailored to the digital world, and will need to do so to avoid inviting broader government regulation. Indeed, some see government itself as the greatest threat to privacy, and past abuses by the Internal Revenue Service, as well as the Social Security Administration’s handling of private information on its Web site recently, do not offer much encouragement to think otherwise.

Industry has begun to respond. The American Bankers Association, for example, has developed a privacy code for member banks, and the Information Technology Industry Council, a high-technology trade association that includes large corporations such as Xerox, Compaq, and IBM, has adopted a code for its members. These codes generally restrict what member companies can do with data they gather about their customers—such as information supplied when consumers fill out loan applications or warranty forms for their new computers—and spell out requirements for notifying the public about their policies. It is even more encouraging that an initial group of 39 companies and 12 trade associa-

tions has formed an umbrella group, the Online Privacy Alliance, to attempt to meld the activities of different industry groups. But these efforts, laudable as they are, just scratch the surface. A more comprehensive private-sector code, international in scope, together with an enforcement mechanism to punish malefactors, will certainly be needed.

Security: People will not make extensive use of the Internet to buy, sell, and borrow unless they can be assured that their credit card numbers and other details of the transaction are secure. Cryptography—coding all transmitted messages—is the principal answer, but it leads to a public-policy question: Cryptography under what terms? That question has stymied Congress and the administration. Business and civil liberties groups want no limits on cryptography, hoping to maximize the security and privacy of online communications. But the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other government agencies, legitimately worried about the uses criminals, terrorists, and others may make of encryption, favor various controls, such as limits on exports of encryption software, or even domestic controls, such as the use of a “back door” in all codes to allow government agencies to decode information under certain circumstances. Congress must end the uncertainty soon or risk greatly retarding the growth of electronic commerce.

Objectionable Content: In 1996, responding to parents alarmed by the ease with which children can find pornography on the Internet, Congress passed the Communications Decency Act, making it a crime to transmit “obscene or indecent” material over the Internet. But the Internet is a more complex place than the legislators realized. In some cases, it resembles television broadcasting, and thus is more susceptible to regulation, while chat rooms and other forms of Internet communication are more like private conversations and thus enjoy the strongest First Amendment protection. In 1997, after the American Civil Liberties Union, the Center for Democracy and Technology, and other organizations challenged the act, the Supreme Court struck it down as unconstitutional. Congress seems uncertain about what, if anything, to do next, and is currently considering laws that prohibit materials that are “harmful to minors,” and that require schools and libraries to block children’s access to “inappropriate materials.” The private sector may hold the solution to this problem. High-tech companies have already written software programs such as Net Nanny and SurfWatch that allow parents to bar access to pornography, and a consortium of companies working with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has created a standardized tool for achieving the same end, the Platform for Internet Content Selection. Now industry should make a bigger effort to educate parents about what their more technologically nimble children may be doing during all those hours of Web surfing and what they as parents can do to regulate it.

Access: How can we avoid becoming a nation of information haves and have-nots? Computers and Internet connections come with big price tags, and without help, inner-city and rural children, for example, may be shut out. With the advent of telephones earlier in the century, we used regula-

tion to achieve universal service. When television broadcasting arrived in midcentury, we let the market decide who got to watch. Both methods produced near-universal access. Which course should we follow now?

There seems to be agreement in Congress on the need for universal access, but not yet on the means to achieve it. This year, Congress has been trying to force the Federal Communications Commission to stop its program of subsidizing Internet hookups for schools, libraries, and hospitals, after hearing loud complaints from consumers who spotted on their long-distance phone bills a new charge to pay for the \$1.2 billion subsidy. Congress, of course, had created the program in the first place. While competition and market forces will play the main role in spreading access by driving prices down, industry and government should both experiment with new ways of opening doors to the Internet—for example, by setting up cyberkiosks in libraries, community centers, and post offices.

Taxation: As more economic activity migrates on-line, politicians and tax collectors are worrying about losing tax revenues—especially those from state sales taxes and, in Europe, national value-added taxes. Who collects the tax when an on-line buyer in Iowa orders a lamp from a computer server in California that is shipped from a warehouse in Holland? How is the tax collected? How do the authorities even know about the sale? The states are beginning to stir—Florida, Connecticut, Texas, and Nebraska are among those examining taxes on Internet service providers. The Clinton administration has called for a moratorium on new Internet taxes, but Congress and the states have yet to agree.

Infrastructure: If the Internet is to reach its full potential, telephone, cable TV, and other companies will need to invest vast sums in switch-



Peering into the future

ing equipment, cable, optical fiber, and satellite networks, along with their underlying software. But the archaic laws restricting competition among such companies has discouraged investment. The Communications Reform Act of 1996, which was meant to spur telecommunications competition and innovation in advanced high-bandwidth services, has so far resulted chiefly in a tangle of court cases and a series of high-profile mergers—among them Bell Atlantic and Nynex, and AT&T and TCI—that may or may not produce the desired results. Congress and the administration need to find new means to separate the advanced technologies of the Internet from the regulatory tangle of the old world of telephony.

Beyond these six key issues are numerous others of a more technical and legal nature: intellectual property, especially copyright, digital contracts and signatures, the future governance of the Internet, and the ownership and value of government information, to name a few. Abroad, uncertainty also reigns on these crucial issues. It was only in February 1995, at a Group of Seven ministerial meeting, that Europe officially accepted the notion that, on balance, cyberspace would create new jobs. Under the forceful leadership of Martin Bangemann, the European Union (EU) Commissioner for Industry, the Europeans, along with Japan and Canada, have also embraced the fundamental premise that Internet development should be driven by the market and the private sector. As in the United States, however, the effort to implement specific policies has been slow.

Elsewhere in the world, there is less cause for encouragement. Singapore, for example, has made an exemplary push to exploit the economic potential of cyberspace, attempting to wire every home in the country with broadband coaxial or fiber-optic cable by 2000. At the same time, however, Singapore censors on-line material and registers Singaporean Web site operators. Governments everywhere feel a strong temptation to closely regulate the on-line world. Some, notably Canada and France, fret about perils they perceive to their language and culture. Autocratic and totalitarian regimes see the borderless Internet as a threat, and some, such as China, would like to limit their citizens' participation to something like a giant private network, with all content and services filtered by government.

Because cyberspace is borderless, trying to draw up laws and regulations in a national vacuum is increasingly an exercise in futility. In 1995, for example, an EU directive required member nations to create national authorities to regulate private-sector privacy policies. But European companies and citizens do business on line in other countries that lack such broad national authorities. Were these international transactions to be prohibited? The EU offered to certify that other countries provide an "adequate level of protection." But who is to say what is adequate? Some countries have no privacy protection at all, including China and some of Europe's other important trading partners. Oddly, the Europeans have chosen to aim their sights at the United States, which has its own sophisticated but confusing

legal system to regulate privacy: a mix of federal, state, and private-sector protections, including the broad consumer protection powers of the Federal Trade Commission.

Ultimately, many emerging cyberspace issues will have to be resolved by international organizations, such as the new World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on International Trade Law. A good example of what such organizations can do is the 1997 WTO agreement on basic telecommunications, under which more than 60 countries committed themselves to deregulation and to increase international competition in the industry. This agreement should help strengthen the physical infrastructure needed to support the digital world. But the international road is a tortuous one. International organizations tend to move glacially, and toward the lowest common denominator. That is the bad news. The good news is that a number of them, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, have officially embraced the emerging digital universe, leaving behind the old Luddite arguments against progress.

Now the United States and its partners must push for a quick resolution of a few key issues. A broader international consensus on the potential economic and social benefits of cyberspace is one objective, along with agreement on the need to foster new skills and schooling better suited to an information economy. An emphasis on private-sector leadership in the development and use of cyberspace is another important goal. Business must also be encouraged to develop its own rules and enforcement systems for managing privacy, objectionable content, and other challenges. A final priority is a blueprint for approaching policy issues internationally, specifying what issues need to be tackled, in what order, and in what international forum. And public officials at all levels of government in every nation and international organization must take on the personal responsibility of educating themselves so that choices can be made quickly and intelligently.

Yet all of this would represent only a beginning of our efforts to shape the emerging world of cyberspace. More and more institutions are being drawn into the digital universe every day—banking and financial services, the retail industry, elementary education, state government, and many others. It will change all of them in ways so profound as to render totally useless their current statutory, regulatory, and historical underpinnings. Digital cash and other innovations lie before us, many of them not even imagined. So do challenges such as Internet crime and information warfare. We have the opportunity to make the most of the economic and social advantages that this revolution has to offer—or, by failing to act, to waste some of its potential and do ourselves harm. We have ample warning, but do we have the will and skill to act?



The Digital Rights War

by Pamela Samuelson

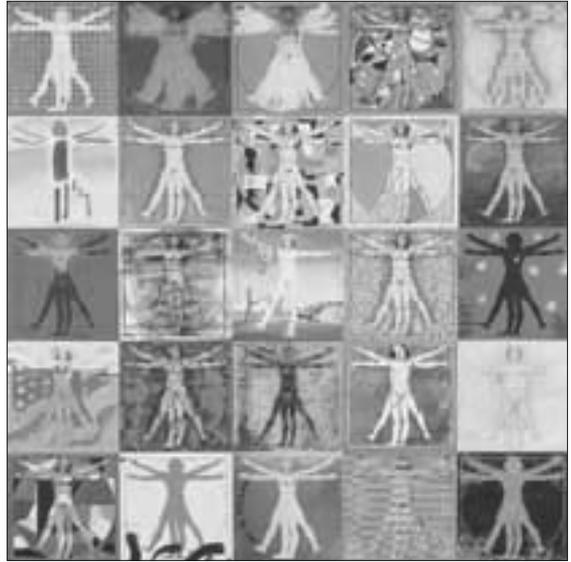
Digital technology is opening up new worlds of potential, few more enticing than the emerging global marketplace for information products and services. Imagine being able to call up news articles, short stories, photographs, motion pictures, sound recordings, and other information any time, day or night, almost anywhere in the world. This is the vision that until recently sent the stocks of obscure Internet enterprises soaring and propelled relatively new companies such as Microsoft to the front ranks of American industry.

The great advantage of digital information—and a key source of its potential—is that, once produced, it is easy and cheap to disseminate. There is, however, a threat as well as a promise in this unique quality. Digital information is the equivalent of what land, factories, and equipment are in the conventional economy: essential property. And the very same low costs of reproduction and dissemination that are its great virtue also make possible unauthorized uses—including everything from copying a page from a magazine to pirating thousands of copies of a Frank Sinatra CD—on an unparalleled scale. It is no longer just commercial pirates peddling mass-produced bootlegs that alarm the Hollywood movie studios and the publishing industries; it is also the ordinary Tom, Dick, or Harriet who may be inclined to share copies of

a favorite film or book with a thousand of his or her closest friends.

To guard against this possibility, some established copyright-based enterprises—including film studios, book and magazine publishers, software companies, and others that trade in intellectual property—have been spending hefty sums to create technological “locks” for their products. They are also seeking amendments to federal copyright law that would outlaw any tampering with these locks. But they are asking copyright law to perform tasks very different from those it has performed in the print world, tasks with alarming implications for our national life.

The new future of technically protected information is so far from the ordinary person’s experience that few of us have any clue about what is at stake. So comfortable are we with the way in which copyright law matches up with our everyday experience, practices, and expectations that we find it hard to imagine the dramatic changes the digital world may bring. If I buy a copy of *A Streetcar Named Desire* today, for example, I know I can read it, share it with a friend, and perform scenes in my home or in a



Universal Man III (1992), by Paul Giovanopoulos

classroom. I can also make a photocopy of a favorite passage to send to my sister. If I am short of cash, I can go to a library and borrow a copy, making the same uses of it as I would of a purchased copy. But I also know that I should not run off dozens of copies or stage a production unless I get the copyright owner’s permission.

In the familiar world we take for granted, principles and practice seem to form a seamless whole. Virtually all private and noncommercial uses of information are lawful. Yet the underlying law is somewhat more complicated. From the standpoint of copyright law, it is permissible to read a play not so much because one has paid for a copy, but because the law does not confer on owners a right to control the reading of protected, or copyrighted, works. It is okay to borrow a copy of the play from a library or share a personal copy with a friend because the law treats the first sale of a copy to the public as *exhausting* the copyright owner’s right to control further distribution of that copy. Photocopying a favorite passage from a play would generally be considered a “fair use.” Performing the play among friends or in a classroom also passes muster thanks to special “carve-outs” for these activities. The main concern of the law has been to stop people from becoming alternative publishers of a work (by, say, making many photocopies) or

undercutting other commercial exploitations (such as controlling the licensing of theatrical performances of *A Streetcar Named Desire*).

But the rules that have served the print world so admirably do not carry over very well to the digital world. For one thing, it is impossible to use any work that exists in digital form without also making a number of temporary copies of it. When you visit the CNN Web site, for example, or look at entries in a CD-ROM encyclopedia, your computer has to make temporary copies so that you can see the material. This simple fact has profound implications for copyright. After all, the principal right of authors and publishers (as the term *copy-right* implies) is to control reproduction of their works.

In 1995, the Clinton administration issued a policy white paper, *Intellectual Property and the National Information Infrastructure*, that spelled out just how profound it thought these implications were. The white paper made the controversial assertion that because temporary copies do get made, copyright owners are entitled to control all browsing and reading of their works in digital form. Never mind that Congress, in writing the laws in an earlier era, probably never contemplated that the rights of copyright owners would extend so far.

The white paper also endorsed a view shared by many copyright owners—including big companies such as Disney, Time-Warner, and Microsoft—that “fair use” is going to wither away in the digital world, and by analogy in the print world. Why? Because it is now technically possible (or soon will be) for consumers to get a license from the publisher whenever they want to use a copyrighted work. These copyright owners contend that the real reason certain uses of such works were formerly considered *fair* is that it was simply too expensive and cumbersome to require a license for each use. Now that technology is curing this “market failure,” they assert, fair use goes away. In the new order they envision, if a use can be licensed, it *must* be licensed, even a photocopied passage from *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

It is also contended in the white paper that the “first sale” principle is outmoded. The principle doesn’t apply, according to this argument, because lending a digital copy of a work to a friend requires making a copy, not just passing along your copy. In addition, digital copies of works tend to be offered on *licensed* terms, not by sales of copies. When you buy a copy of word processing software, for example, the publisher includes a so-called license agreement—that often includes a prohibition on retransfer of the copy and other restrictions on sharing the content. Increasingly, other digital works, such as encyclopedias and CD-ROMs of telephone listings, also come with such licenses. If these “shrinkwrap” licenses are legally enforceable—an issue on which the courts are currently split—there is no reason why they could

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not also be applied to the print world. Then it would be illegal to sell second-hand books, for example, or even to give them away—a prospect that must surely delight publishers of college textbooks. This is not just a theoretical prospect. The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws will soon complete a new model commercial law, designed to serve as a template for state law (which governs these matters), that validates all mass-market licenses of information, whether in digital or print form.

The abolition of the “first sale” principle would have a powerful effect on libraries. In the past, when a library stopped subscribing to a particular journal, for example, it still had back issues available for patrons. But in a world of licensed information, canceling a subscription may mean losing all access. So all information in a particular database would become unavailable. Owning a licensed physical copy of the information, such as a CD-ROM of reference materials, might not make a difference. Publishers would be entitled to demand their return, or to trigger embedded technological locks to keep users out.

Some publishers envision an information future ruled by a pay-per-use system. Users would license from the publisher each and every access to and use of protected works, even those for private, noncommercial purposes. If you want to read an article in *Time* but don't have a subscription, these publishers argue, why shouldn't you have to pay 50 cents or a dollar to read it—even at a library—and twice as much if you want a printout? The Clinton administration's white paper, with its assertion that copyright owners are entitled to control all uses of works in digital form, strongly endorsed this vision.

The white paper also foresaw the use of technological “locks” and self-destructing copies to help copyright owners protect their works against unauthorized uses. Try to make a copy of a movie on one of the new digital videodisks (DVDs) available today, for example, and you will quickly find your path blocked by such a lock. In fact, you probably won't be able to play your disk on a DVD player purchased in Tokyo or London because the players contain built-in technical locking systems coded by geographical location. (This gives the studios greater control over the distribution and marketing of their goods.) The DivX format for movies is an example of a self-destructing copy system already in the marketplace. If you purchase a DivX disk, you can play it on your own player for 48 hours, but after that, the data on the disk is inaccessible unless you pay another license fee. There is no technical reason why this can't happen with other kinds of information as well. Why shouldn't recording companies issue CDs that are coded to self-destruct or lock up after 15 plays, forcing those who want to hear more to pay more?

But some copyright owners worry that what one technology can do, another technology can often undo. They have lobbied Congress to make it illegal to circumvent or bypass technical protection systems and to outlaw the manufacture or sale of software that make circumvention possible.



Chinese police heap pirated music CDs and other contraband for burning. One trade group estimates that pirates cost film studios, software makers, and other U.S. firms up to \$20 billion annually.

Congress debated the issue earlier this year, pondering three options. One, pushed strongly by Hollywood, was a total ban on circumvention. The studios implausibly likened circumvention to burglary, insisting that it should never be allowed.* Libraries and educators were among those arguing for a second approach: banning circumvention only when the purpose is to infringe a copyright, which is, after all, the real evil that concerns the studios. Congress, however, chose a third option, a general ban on circumvention with specific exceptions in a number of cases, such as for law enforcement agencies.

What about the vitally important issue of circumvention to make fair use of a protected work? A friend of mine, for example, recently defeated the technical protection on a videocassette in order to get a film clip to demonstrate the negative connotation of the word *redskin* in a lawsuit. This seemed to him fair use. Alas, it might not be permitted under the new rules.

The Senate version of the bill makes no allowance for circumvention for fair use, a position that has won the legislation the backing of Hollywood and software giant Microsoft. The House bill, recognizing the stakes involved, calls for a two-year study of the fair use issue and carves out a temporary suspension of the ban for nonprofit institutions. (Delegates negotiating an international copyright treaty in Geneva in 1996 rejected a ban on circumvention sought by the Clinton administration for similar reasons, including concern about the implications for

*In practice, people frequently circumvent protection systems, and social custom often supports them. Some years ago, for example, when software publishers offered their products only on copy-protected disks, users frequently bypassed the protection in order to make backup copies. A federal court even upheld the legitimacy of selling a program that could bypass these systems, reasoning that making such backups is a legitimate, noninfringing use.

fair use.) A House-Senate conference committee should resolve the differences this year, but that will hardly end the debate. How the new provisions will be applied in the marketplace—where, for example, consumers may resist new controls—and how the new law will meld with existing law and constitutional principles, such as the right to free speech, will keep contention very much alive.

In this year's debate over the new law, as in others surrounding the seemingly less than scintillating subject of intellectual property, the general public has not had a strong voice. The American Library Association, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and a handful of other groups have sought to speak for the ordinary Americans whose lives will be profoundly influenced by what Congress decides, but without an aware and aroused public, these advocates' effectiveness will remain limited.

Americans need to have a broader public conversation about the kind of information future they want to create, a conversation that must include the role of copyright. The loudest answer to the copyright industries today comes from technological optimists such as Nicholas Negroponte, the director of the Media Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a columnist for *Wired*. The optimists stake out the opposite extreme of the argument, insisting that because the economics of bits is so different from that of atoms, copyright is, or soon will be, dead. Good riddance, they add. All information must ultimately be free.

But Negroponte and his allies do not explain how creators will be able to make a living if they have no right at all to charge for the use of their works. If they are to thrive, authors, moviemakers, painters, software creators, and others do need a way to control commercial uses of their work. Preserving copyright looks to be the best way to achieve this goal. But copyright works well in part because creators can also make fair uses of the work of others and because people have reasonable freedom to privately share information. These values, too, need to be preserved.

An “information society” in which all information is kept under high-tech lock and key, available only under terms and conditions dictated by a licensor, would not be worthy of the name. We need to work instead toward a new status quo that preserves the values that are already built into copyright law, allowing authors and publishers to thrive while also promoting the widest possible use of their creations.

A Note on the Banality of Evil

The Holocaust, the Soviet purges, and other enormities of the 20th century cry out for explanation. The only answer the century has yet produced now appears misbegotten.

by Stephen Miller

If Hannah Arendt (1906–75) leaves no other intellectual legacy, her notion of “the banality of evil” seems certain to ensure her a place in the history of Western thought. The idea, emblazoned in the subtitle of her controversial 1963 book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, impressed many people as a fundamental insight into a new and distinctly modern kind of evil. Adolf Eichmann had been a leading official in Nazi Germany’s SS, one of the key figures in the implementation of the Final Solution, and he had managed to remain in hiding in Argentina until Israeli agents captured him in 1960. In her critical account of his 1961 trial for crimes against the Jewish people and humanity, Arendt argued that Eichmann, far from being a “monster,” as the Israeli prosecutor insisted, was nothing more than a thoughtless bureaucrat, passionate only in his desire to please his superiors. Eichmann, the unthinking functionary capable of enormous evil, revealed the dark potential of modern bureaucratic man.

This idea of evil was almost entirely new. Before the Enlightenment, most theological and philosophical thinking about the nature of evil rested on the assumption that evil



Adolf Eichmann

deeds are the product of strong passions—pride, ambition, envy, hatred. During the Enlightenment and into the 19th century, many Western thinkers suggested that evil grew less out of man’s dark passions than from unjust social conditions, and many assumed that it would eventually be eradicated through social and political transfor-

mation. By Arendt's time, that confidence had been shattered by the terrors of Nazi-occupied Europe, Japanese-occupied China, and the Soviet Union. Secular intellectuals were left groping for new explanations, and to many it appeared that Arendt had found one. The killing fields of Cambodia, Rwanda, and Bosnia have kept the question—and Arendt's answer—very much alive. “We have a sense of evil,” Susan Sontag has said, but we no longer have “the religious or philosophical language to talk intelligently about evil.”

Arendt's thesis about Eichmann was attacked in the popular press and questioned by historians of the Nazi era, but many intellectuals have staunchly supported her. The novelist Leslie Epstein, writing in 1987, argued that “the outrage . . . that greeted Arendt's thesis when applied to Adolf Eichmann indicates the depth of our need to think of that bureaucrat as different from ourselves, to respond to him, indeed, as a typical character in Holocaust fiction—a beast, a pervert, a monster.” Epstein's point is that modern bureaucratic man, unthinkingly going about his daily routine, whatever it is, is always a potential Eichmann.

While the controversy over Arendt's idea has continued, the phrase *banality of evil* has slipped easily into the language, becoming a commonplace, almost a banality itself. Journalists and others freely apply it as an all-purpose explanation—for the racist treatment of African Americans, the terror of Saddam Hussein's rule in Iraq, and even, in the case of one theater critic, the betrayal of Sir Thomas More in *A Man for All Seasons*. In the intellectual world, it remains an idea of consequence. Bernard Williams, Britain's pre-eminent moral philosopher, cites Arendt in declaring that “the modern world . . . has made evil, like other things, a collective enterprise.” It is remarkable how much enthusiasm has been aroused by an idea that is so deeply flawed.



Hannah Arendt in 1963

Banal is not a word that one would normally associate with evil. Its modern meaning—commonplace, trivial, without originality—did not arise until the 19th century. In feudal times, *banal* referred to land or property held in common, or property that feudal tenants were required to use, such as a “bannal-mill.” By the 1830s, the neutral word signifying what was held in common had become a pejorative signifying ideas—often concerning scientific and commercial progress—that were popular with the rising middle class. In France, where the term had much the same career, the novelist Gustave Flaubert complained in 1862 that his country had become a place where “the banal, the facile, and the foolish are invariably applauded, adopted, and adored”—a development he blamed largely on the increasing popularity of that most modern creation, the newspaper. “The banality of life,” he declared in another letter, “must make one vomit with sadness when one considers it closely.” His *Madame Bovary* (1857) can be seen as a portrait of a woman with profound longings that she can express only in banal language.

It is a long way from Emma Bovary to Adolf Eichmann, but the Eichmann described by Arendt has one thing in common with Flaubert's protagonist: he was, she writes, “genuinely incapable of uttering a

single sentence that was not a cliché.” Even on the day he was to be hanged, Eichmann spoke in clichés. “It was as though in those last minutes he was summing up the lesson that this long course in human wickedness had taught us—the lesson of the fearsome, word-and-thought-defying *banality of evil* [emphasis in original].”

This startling conclusion is given without further explanation, but Arendt had been brooding about the nature of evil for at least two decades. In 1945, she wrote that “the problem of evil will be the fundamental question of postwar intellectual life in Europe.” She knew something of the “problem” from personal experience, having fled Germany for Paris when the Nazis came to power in 1933, then taking refuge in the United States in 1941. A student of the philosophers Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger during her years in Germany, she eventually made her way onto the faculty of the New School for Social Research in New York City.

Glimmerings of her banality thesis appeared in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), her first book, in which she argued that the rise of totalitarianism had pointed to the existence of a new kind of evil: “absolute evil,” which, she says “could no longer be understood and explained by the evil motives of self-interest, greed, covetousness, resentment, thirst for power, and cowardice.” She often said that traditional understandings of evil were of no help in coming to grips with this modern variant, and she may have wanted to attend the Eichmann trial, which she covered for the *New Yorker*, in order to confront it and clarify her ideas.

Arendt must have thought that the meaning of her phrase was obvious, since she did not explain it, but even some of her friends were puzzled. The novelist Mary McCarthy told her that their mutual friend Nicolo Chiaromonte “thinks he agrees with what you are saying but he is not sure he has understood you.” And Karl Jaspers suggested that she needed to make clear that she was referring to the evil acts com-

mitted by the Nazis: “The point is that this evil, not evil per se, is banal.”

Banal was a curious word choice. It is an aesthetic term, not a moral one. It applies more to ideas, as Flaubert used it, than to deeds. One could perhaps speak of the banality of an evil act if one were engaged in the dubious task of judging how inventive a particular evil deed was, as Thomas De Quincey jokingly pretends to do in his 1854 essay “Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts.” Were the murderous deeds committed by the Nazis banal? The question makes no sense. Evil acts, it seems clear, are neither banal nor not banal. The term *banality* does not apply to evil, just as it does not apply to goodness.

It makes sense to use the term *banal* when talking about ideas, but are the ideas that motivated the leading Nazis banal? The pseudoscientific categorization of millions of people as less than human and therefore worthy of extermination is a repulsive idea, but it is not a banal or “commonplace” idea. As historian Saul Friedlander says in *Nazi Germany and the Jews* (1997), “Nazi persecutions and exterminations were perpetrated by ordinary people who lived and acted within a modern society not unlike our own; the goals of these actions, however, were formulated by a regime, an ideology, and a political culture that were anything but commonplace.”

Angered by the attacks on *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt claimed that her book had nothing to do with ideas. “As I see it,” she said to McCarthy, “there are no ‘ideas’ in this Report, there are only facts with a few conclusions. . . . My point would be that what the whole furor is about are facts, and neither theories nor ideas.” In a postscript written for the paperback edition, she makes a similar point: “When I speak of the banality of evil, I do so only on the strictly factual level, pointing to a phenomenon which stared one in the face at the trial.” Indeed, the book’s subtitle is *A Report on the Banality of Evil*.

But the banality of evil cannot be regarded as a fact. Even Arendt implied as much

> STEPHEN MILLER's essays have appeared in many magazines, including *Commentary*, *The American Scholar*, and *Partisan Review*. Copyright © 1998 by Stephen Miller.



Banality of Evil/Struthof (1989), by Judy Chicago. In the background is the Natzweiler concentration camp, in the Alsace-Lorraine region of France.

in a letter to McCarthy: “The very phrase, ‘the banality of evil,’ stands in contrast to the phrase I used in the totalitarianism book [*The Origins of Totalitarianism*], ‘radical evil.’ This is too difficult a subject to be dealt with here, but it is important.” In another letter to McCarthy, she seems to admit that she has conflated two different questions: the nature of evil and the nature of the man who committed the evil. “My ‘basic notion’ of the ordinariness of Eichmann is much less a notion than a faithful description of a phenomenon. I am sure that there can be drawn many conclusions from this phenomenon and the most general I drew is indicated: ‘banality of evil.’ I may sometime want to write about this, and then I would write about the nature of evil.”

According to Arendt, then, she wasn’t writing about the nature of evil when she spoke of the banality of evil. She was only writing about the nature of Eichmann, whom she regarded as a banal man—banal insofar as he was an ordinary bureaucrat who “except for an extraordinary diligence in looking out for his personal advancement . . . had no motives at all.” Her point is that Eichmann, though a high-level Nazi official, was not strongly influenced by Nazi ideas. As she wrote to McCarthy, “One sees that Eichmann was

much less influenced by ideology than I assumed in the book on totalitarianism.”

Was Arendt right about Eichmann? She was right to say that it made no sense to call Eichmann, as the Israeli prosecutor would have it, “a perverted sadist.” And she was right to say that “with the best will in the world one cannot extract any diabolical or demonic profundity from Eichmann” (though no serious thinker has suggested that evil people are necessarily diabolic or demonic). But she was wrong to conclude that because Eichmann was not a fanatical anti-Semite he therefore wasn’t a fanatic. She herself admits that he was a fanatical believer in Hitler; she speaks of “his genuine, ‘boundless and immoderate admiration for Hitler’ (as one of the defense witnesses called it),” and she implies that he subscribed to the Nazi formulation of Kant’s categorical imperative: “Act in such a way that the Führer, if he knew your action, would approve it.” Eichmann’s fanatical devotion to Hitler led him to reject Heinrich Himmler’s orders in the last year of the war to stop the Final Solution. Eichmann was not a Nazi fanatic but a Hitler fanatic—a distinction without a difference, since Hitler was a fanatical anti-Semite. To be sure, if Hitler had changed his mind and

said that all Jews should be given apartments on the Riviera, Eichmann would have zealously carried out those orders as well.

Arendt was so preoccupied with proving that Eichmann was an unfanatical bureaucrat that she refused to take seriously the speech he gave before he went to the gallows, in which he made it clear that he still believed in the glories of Hitler's fallen Third Reich. Describing Eichmann's final speech, she says: "He began by stating emphatically that he was a *Gottgläubiger*, to express in common Nazi fashion that he was no Christian and did not believe in life after death." In other words, he was still a good Nazi who believed in the Germanic gods; he was not a Christian. Then she quotes Eichmann as saying: "After a short while, gentlemen, *we shall all meet again*. Such is the fate of all men. Long live Germany, long live Argentina, long live Austria. *I shall not forget them*." Arendt dismisses these remarks as so much "grotesque silliness." They are not completely coherent, but the main point is clear: Eichmann is paying homage to the "ideal" Germany of Hitler; he is looking back nostalgically to the glorious days when men like himself were in power.

Perhaps Arendt was so insistent that Eichmann was an ordinary bureaucrat because she thought the key to the evils of the modern world was the increasing power of bureaucracies. In *The Human Condition* (1958), she argued that bureaucracy, which she defined as "rule by nobody," is "not necessarily no-rule; it may indeed, under certain circumstances, even turn out to be one of its cruelest and most tyrannical versions." In this she was influenced by the great sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920), who spoke in despairing terms about the rise of bureaucratic man. "It is horrible to think," he declared, "that the world could one day be filled with nothing but those little cogs, little men clinging to their jobs and striving towards bigger ones." Arendt, in the post-script to *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, strongly echoes Weber: "The essence of totalitarian government, and perhaps the nature of every bureaucracy, is to make functionaries and mere cogs in the administrative

machinery out of men, and thus to dehumanize them." In her view, Eichmann was so much the bureaucratic man that he "*never realized what he was doing* [emphasis in original]."

Arendt strongly implies that the essence of totalitarianism is bureaucratization, or that there is a high degree of correlation between the two, even though in the 20th century the democracies have become increasingly bureaucratic states without embracing totalitarianism. Moreover, as many scholars have pointed out, the German state bureaucracy at times hindered the Nazi Party's effort to destroy the Jews. What distinguishes Nazi Germany from other regimes is not its bureaucratic nature but its racial ideas. These ideas were what led to the murder of millions, not only in concentration camps administered by impersonal bureaucracies but by wide-ranging special forces who rounded up Jews and shot them after forcing them to dig their own graves.

In her earlier writings, Arendt put more emphasis on the ideology of totalitarian regimes than on their bureaucratic nature. In 1963, however, she told McCarthy that she had overestimated the impact of ideology. What was most disturbing about totalitarian regimes, she often suggested in the last decade of her life, was their production of "ordinary" bureaucratic men who lead compartmentalized lives—dutifully and even eagerly obeying orders to kill and torture people during the day while remaining good family men at night. This notion of a motiveless, thoughtless bureaucratic man was what she meant by the "banality of evil."

Arendt never changed her view of Eichmann. In the introduction to *Thinking*, which she wrote in the early 1970s, she says: "The deeds [of Eichmann] were monstrous, but the doer . . . was quite ordinary, commonplace, and neither demonic nor monstrous. There was no sign in him of firm ideological convictions or of specific evil motives." And she repeats what she said in the earlier book's post-script: Eichmann's main characteristic was thoughtlessness, which is not—she says—the same thing as stupidity.

In *Thinking* she decides to make even greater claims for her thesis by saying that

she was not describing a modern kind of evil but attempting to clarify the nature of evil in general. “Is evil-doing . . . possible in default of not just ‘base motives’ . . . but of any motives whatever? . . . Is wickedness, however we may define it . . . not a necessary condition for evil-doing? Might the problem of good and evil, our faculty for telling right from wrong, be connected with our faculty of thought?”

Given the roll call of “thoughtful” people who have supported evil regimes, it seems odd to blame “thoughtlessness.” One of them—at least during the early days of Hitler’s triumph—was Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Arendt’s mentor (and one-time-lover), who declared in 1933 that “the Führer alone personifies German reality and German laws, now and in the future.” Heidegger can hardly be called “thoughtless,” unless we say that anyone who has a foolish political idea is thoughtless. Heidegger found in Nazism an antidote to the evils of modernity—bureaucratization, industrialism, materialism, scientism—which, in his view, deprived human beings of their authenticity, and cost them a loss of Being. Looking at Hitler from the mountain peaks of German philosophical thought, Heidegger may not have noticed that racial anti-Semitism was at the heart of his thinking—but this is giving Heidegger the benefit of the doubt.

Some critics have suggested that there is a connection between Arendt’s depiction of Eichmann as “thoughtless” and her defense of the “thoughtful” Heidegger, with whom she maintained a friendship until the end of her life, visiting him on numerous occasions even though his wife was intensely jealous of her. In the *Times Literary Supplement* recently, novelist and screenwriter Frederic Raphael suggested that “Arendt’s ‘understanding’ of Eichmann might have been a function of her unspoken desire to exempt her Nazi lover . . . from the damnation he deserved.” There is no question that Arendt tried to play down Heidegger’s connection with the Nazis, saying to the philosopher J. Glenn Gray that Heidegger’s pro-Hitler 1933 speech was “not Nazi . . . [but] a very

unpleasant product of nationalism.” But even though in the postwar years Arendt renewed her friendship with Heidegger, she grew increasingly critical of his ideas. Perhaps her treatment of Eichmann was influenced by her loyalty to Heidegger, but the main idea that shaped her thinking was Weber’s notion of bureaucratization.

From banality to thoughtlessness, there is a common denominator in Arendt’s attempts to clarify the nature of evil, which is that evil is less a choice than the outcome of certain circumstances. Arendt’s seeming embrace of determinism bothered McCarthy: “One cannot help feeling that this mental oblivion [of Eichmann’s] is *chosen*, by the heart or the moral will—an active preference.” She said that Arendt was creating a monster of her own. “Perhaps I’m dull-witted, but it seems to me that what you are saying is that Eichmann lacks an inherent human quality: the capacity for thought, consciousness—conscience. But then isn’t he a monster simply? If you allow him a wicked heart, then you leave him some freedom, which permits our condemnation.” Thus, even Arendt’s closest friend and strongest defender had grave doubts about her explanation of Eichmann.

While she grappled for decades with the question of evil, Arendt never seriously considered the objections of her critics. It seems not to have occurred to her that her own attempts to analyze evil were a muddle. No doubt she was fortified by the continuing support for her views in intellectual circles. Writing only recently in the *New York Review of Books*, the Israeli journalist Amos Elon rehearsed many of the old arguments again, suggesting that those who were unable to accept Arendt’s view of Eichmann as an evildoer devoid of evil qualities were led astray by their repugnance toward his crimes. Arendt, Elon said, “made many small errors . . . but she also got many of the big things right, and for this she deserves to be remembered.” Not so. She got two very big things wrong: the nature of Eichmann and the nature of evil.

Surrendering Wilderness

The idea of an untouched Arcadia is an illusion
we can no longer afford.

by Marilynne Robinson

Environmentalism poses stark issues of survival, for humankind and for all those other tribes of creatures over which we have exercised our onerous dominion. Even undiscovered species feel the effects of our stewardship. What a thing is man.

The oldest anecdotes from which we know ourselves as human, the stories of Genesis, make it clear that our defects are sufficient to bring the whole world down. An astonishing intuition, an astonishing fact.

One need not have an especially excitable or a particularly gloomy nature to be persuaded that we may be approaching the end of the day. For decades, environmentalists have concerned themselves with this spill and that encroachment, this depletion and that extinction, as if such phenomena were singular and exceptional. Our causes have even jostled for attention, each claiming a special urgency. This is, I think, like quarreling over which shadow brings evening. We are caught up in something much larger than its innumerable manifestations. Their variety and seriousness are proof of this.

I am an American of the kind whose family sought out wilderness generation after generation. My great-grandparents finally settled in Idaho, much of which is wilderness now, in terms of its legal status, and is therefore, theoretically, protected. In the heart of this beloved, empty, mag-

nificent state is the Idaho Nuclear Engineering Laboratory, among other things a vast repository for radioactive waste. Idaho, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, beautiful names for vast and melancholy places. Europeans from time to time remark that Americans have no myth of landscape. In fact we have many such myths. People who cherish New England may find it difficult to imagine that Utah is cherished also. In fact, I started writing fiction at an eastern college, partly in hopes of making my friends there understand how rich and powerful a presence a place can be which, to their eyes, is forbidding and marginal, without population or history, without culture in any form recognizable to them. All love is in great part affliction. My bond with my native landscape was an unnameable yearning, to be at home in it, to be chastened and acceptable, to be present in it as if I were not present at all.

Moses himself would have approved the reverence with which I regarded my elders, who were silent and severe and at their ease with solitude and difficulty. I meant to be like them. Americans from the interior West know what I am describing. For them it is, or is like, religious feeling, being so powerful a reference for all other experience.

Idaho, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico. These names are all notorious among those who know anything at all about



Feather River (1992), by Chuck Forsman

nuclear weapons. Wilderness is where things can be hidden, from foreign enemies, perhaps, but certainly from domestic critics. This effect is enhanced by the fact that wilderness dwellers everywhere are typically rather poor and scattered, not much in the public mind, not significant as voters. Wilderness is where things can be done that would be intolerable in a populous landscape. The relative absence of human populations obscures the nature and effect of programs which have no other object than to be capable of the most profound injury to human populations. Of course, even wilderness can only absorb such insult to the systems of life to a degree, for a while. Nature is very active—aquifers so vast, rivers so tireless, wind so pervading. I have omitted to mention the great Hanford Reservation in Washington State, with its ominous storage tanks, a whole vast landscape made an archaeological history of malign intent, and a great river nearby to spread the secret everywhere.

Russia is much more generously endowed with wilderness than America. Turn the globe, and there is an expanse

that puts our little vastness in perspective. It is my impression that depredations of the kind we have been guilty of have been carried further in Russia and its former territories, at least in proportion to the permission apparently implied by empty spaces. But wilderness can be borrowed, as the coast and interior of Australia and, of course, Nevada have been by the British for their larger nuclear weapons projects, and wilderness can be relative, like the English Lake District and the northwest coast of France. And then there is the sea. We have all behaved as if there were a place where actions would not have consequences.

Wilderness is not a single region, but a condition of being of the natural world. If it is no longer to be found in one place, we assume it exists in other places. So the loss of wilderness always seems only relative, and this somewhat mitigates any specific instance of abuse. Civilization has crept a little farther; humankind has still to learn certain obvious lessons about living in the world. We regret and we repent and we blame, and we assume that things can

be different elsewhere. Again, the very idea of wilderness permits us to evade in some degree a recognition of the real starkness of precisely the kind of abuse most liable to occur outside the reach of political and economic constraints, where those who have isolation at their disposal can do as they will.

Utah is holy land to a considerable number of American people. We all learn as schoolchildren how the Mormons, fleeing intolerance and seeking a place where they could live out their religion, walked into the wilderness, taking their possessions in handcarts, wearing a trail so marked that parts of it are visible to this day. We know they chose barren land by a salt lake, and flourished there.

It is a very pure replication of the national myth. So how did we make the mistake we made, and choose this place whose very emptiness and difficulty were a powerful proof to the Mormons of the tender providence of God—how could we make Utah the battleground in the most furious and terrified campaigns in our long dream of war? The choice kept casualties to a minimum, which means that if the bombs were dropped in populous places the harm would have been clearly intolerable. The small difference between our fantasies of war and war itself would be manifest. As it is, there are many real casualties, and no doubt there would be far more if all the varieties of injury were known and acknowledged.

This is a potent allegory. It has happened over and over again that promised land or holy land by one reckoning is wasteland by another, and we assert the sovereign privilege of destroying what we would go to any lengths to defend. The pattern repeats itself so insistently that I think it is embedded not merely in rational consciousness but also in human consciousness. Humankind has no enemy but itself, and it is broken and starved and poisoned and harried very nearly to death.

Look at England. They have put a plutonium factory and nuclear waste dump in the Lake District, a region so beautiful that it was set aside, spared most of the marring burdens of population. And what a misfortune that has been. Relatively small populations result in relatively small bases for interpreting public health effects, so emptiness ensures not safety so much as deniability. Wilderness and its analogues seem to invite denial in every form. In Utah and in Cumbria, it was the urgent business of years to produce weapons capable of inflicting every extreme of harm on enemy populations. Do they harm people who live where they are made and tested? If the answers “no,” or “not significantly,” or “it is too difficult to tell” were ever given in good faith, then clearly some mechanism of denial had come into play. The denial was participated in at a grand enough scale to make such answers sufficient for most of the public for a very long time, even though one effect was to permit methods of development and testing that assured widespread public contact with waste or fallout, and that will assure it into any imaginable future.

Denial is clearly a huge factor in history. It seems to me analogous to a fractal, or a virus, in the way it self-replicates, and in the way its varieties are the grand strategy of its persistence. It took, for instance, three decades of the most brilliant and persistent campaign of preachment and information to establish, in the land of liberty, the idea that slavery was intolerable. Strange enough. These antislavery agitators were understandably given to holding up Britain’s ending of slavery in her colonies as the example of enlightened Christian behavior. But at the same time, British slave ships used the old slave routes to transport British convicts to Australia. Every enormity was intact, still suffered by women and children as well as men. Of course the color of the sufferer had changed, and it is always considered more respectable in a government to ravage its

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own population than others'. To this objection, I will reply that the arrival of the British was an unspeakable disaster to the native people of Australia and Tasmania. Slavery and genocide were only rechanneled, translated into other terms, but for the American abolitionists, and for the British abolitionists as well, this was nothing to pause over. It is understandable that Americans should wish to retain all the moral leverage that could be had from the admirable side of the British example. Still, this is another potent allegory, something to unriddle, or at least to be chastened by. After our terrible war, the people who struggled out of bondage, and were won out of bondage, found themselves returned to a condition very much resembling bondage, with the work all before them of awakening public awareness, in the land of the free, to the fact that their situation was intolerable.

Reform-minded Americans still depend on the idea that other countries are in advance of us, and scold and shame us all with scathing comparison. Of course they have no tolerance for information that makes such comparison problematic. The strategy, however generous in impulse, accounts in part for the perdurable indifference of Americans to actual conditions in countries they choose to admire, and often claim to love.

I have begun to consider Edgar Allan Poe the great interpreter of Genesis, or perhaps of Romans. The whole human disaster resides in the fact that, as individuals, families, cities, nations, as a tribe of ingratiating, brilliant, momentarily numerous animals, we are perverse, divided against ourselves, deceiving and defeating ourselves. How many countries in this world have bombed or poisoned their own terrain in the name of protecting it from its enemies? How many more would do so if they could find the means? Do we know that this phenomenon is really different in kind from the Civil War, or from the bloodbaths by which certain regimes have been able to legitimate their power? For a long time we have used dichotomies, good people/bad people, good institutions/bad institutions, capitalist/communist. But the

universality of self-deceptive and self-destructive behavior is what must impress us finally.

Those who are concerned about the world environment are, in my view, the abolitionists of this era, struggling to make an unenlightened public aware that environmental depredation is an ax at the root of every culture, every freedom, every value. There is no group in history I admire more than the abolitionists, but from their example I conclude that there are two questions we must always ask ourselves—what do we choose not to know, and what do we fail to anticipate? The ultimate success of the abolitionists so very much resembled failure that it requires charity, even more than discernment, to discover the difference. We must do better. Much more is at stake.

I have heard well-meaning people advocate an environmental policing system, presided over by the member governments of the United Nations Security Council. I think we should pause to consider the environmental practices and histories of those same governments. Perhaps under the aegis of the United Nations they do ascend to a higher plane of selflessness and rationality and, in this instance, the cowl will make the monk. Then again, maybe it will not. Rich countries that dominate global media look very fine and civilized, but, after all, they have fairly ransacked the world for these ornaments and privileges and we all know it. This is not to say that they are worse than other nations, merely that they are more successful, for the moment, in sustaining wealth and prestige. This does not mean they are well suited for the role of missionary or schoolmaster. When we imagine they are, we put out of mind their own very grave problems—abandoning their populations, and the biosphere, in the very great degree it is damaged by them, to secure moral leverage against whomever they choose to designate an evildoer. I would myself be willing to give up the hope of minor local benefits in order to be spared the cant and hypocrisy, since I have no hope that the world will survive in any case if the countries represented on the Security Council

do not reform their own governments and industries very rigorously, and very soon.

I think it is an indulgence to emphasize to the extent we do the environmental issues that photograph well. I think the peril of the whole world is very extreme, and that the dolphins and koalas are finally threatened by the same potentialities that threaten everything that creeps on the face of the earth. At this time, we are seeing, in many, many places, a decline in the wealth, morale, and ethos whose persistence was assumed when certain features of modern society were put in place, for example, nuclear reactors and chemical plants. If these things are not maintained, or if they are put to cynical uses by their operators or by terrorists, we can look forward to disaster after disaster. The collapse of national communities and economies very much enhances the likelihood that such things will happen.

We have, increasingly, the unsystematic use of medicine in the face of growing populations of those who are malnourished and unsheltered and grossly vulnerable to disease. Consider the spread of tuberculosis in New York City. Under less than ideal circumstances, modern medicine will have produced an array of intractable illnesses. In the absence of stability and wealth, not to mention a modicum of social justice, medicine is liable to prove a curse and an affliction. There are those who think it might be a good thing if we let ourselves slip into extinction and left the world to less destructive species. Into any imaginable future, there must be people to maintain what we have made, for example, nuclear waste storage sites, and there must be human civilizations rich and sophisticated enough to know how this is done and to have the means to do it. Every day this seems less likely.

And only consider how weapons and weapons materials have spread under cover of this new desperation, and how

probable truly nihilistic warfare now appears. These are environmental problems, fully as much as any other kind.

Unless we can re-establish peace and order as values, and learn to see our own well-being in our neighbor's prosperity, we can do nothing at all for the rain forests and the koala bears. To pretend we can is only to turn our backs on more painful and more essential problems. It is deception and self-deception. It stirs a sad suspicion in me that we are of the Devil's party, without knowing it.

I think we are desperately in need of a new, chastened, self-distrusting vision of the world, an austere vision that can postpone the outdoor pleasures of cherishing exotica, and the first-world pleasures of assuming we exist to teach reasonableness to the less fortunate, and the debilitating pleasures of imagining that our own impulses are reliably good. I am bold enough to suggest this because, to this point, environmental successes quite exactly resemble failure. What have we done for the whale, if we lose the sea? If we lose the sea, how do we mend the atmosphere? What can we rescue out of this accelerating desperation to sell—forests and weapons, even children—and the profound deterioration of community all this indicates? Every environmental problem is a human problem. Civilization is the ecology being lost. We can do nothing that matters if we cannot encourage its rehabilitation. Wilderness has for a long time figured as an escape from civilization, and a judgment upon it. I think we must surrender the idea of wilderness, accept the fact that the consequences of human presence in the world are universal and ineluctable, and invest our care and hope in civilization, since to do otherwise risks repeating the terrible pattern of enmity against ourselves, which is truly the epitome and paradigm of all the living world's most grievous sorrows.

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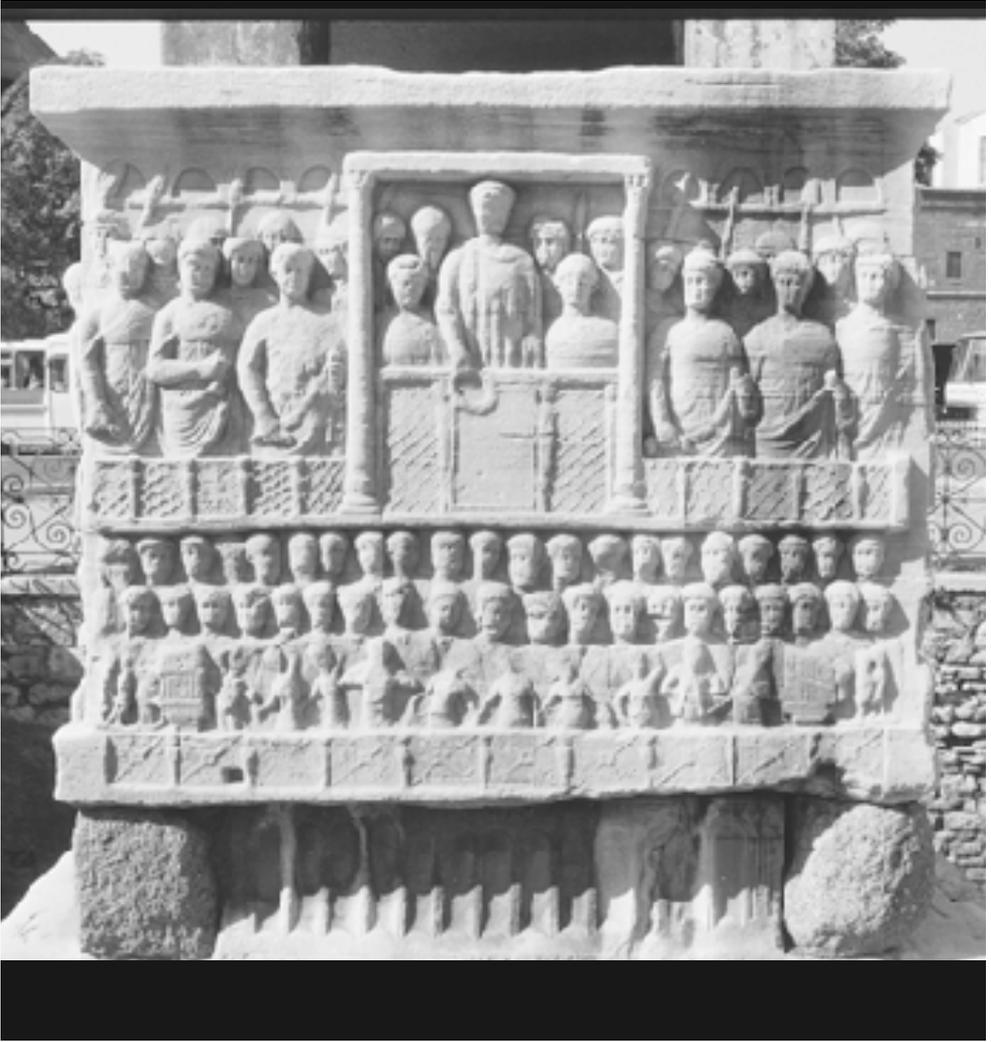
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The Persistence of Byzantium

Longevity alone makes Byzantium remarkable. Lasting almost 1,200 years, it outlived all of the other great empires. More impressive than mere age are the reach and influence of its civilization. Russians, Serbs, Bulgarians, and others owe to Byzantium, in varying degrees, their Christianity, their literacy, and the beginnings of their art, literature, and architecture. Yet for all that, the Byzantine Empire has been slighted or misconstrued, even by some notable historians. To see the Byzantine record clearly, our author argues, is to understand not only a once and great power but a civilizing force that continues to shape the contemporary world.

by Warren Treadgold

For a civilization so distant in time and place from our own, Byzantium interests a surprising number of Americans. The *Glory of Byzantium* exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in New York in the spring of 1997 enjoyed even greater critical and popular success than its predecessor on early Byzantine art, *The Age of Spirituality*. Reviewers have praised recent books on Byzantium by Viscount Norwich and Peter Brown, as well as the three-volume *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Some earlier histories of Byzantium remain both classics and best-sellers, from Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* to the many works of Sir Steven Runciman. Even some of the Byzantines themselves are being read, with six titles in the Penguin Classics series led by that perennial favorite, Procopius's *Secret History*. Beyond artistic and literary interest, many Americans are curious



Theodosius I (r. 379–95) stands amid his court in the imperial box of the Hippodrome in Constantinople. The relief honors the emperor who repelled the Goths and resisted religious heresy.

about the larger cultural influence of Byzantine civilization on a part of the world that extends from Russia to Ethiopia and includes much of the Balkan region and the eastern Mediterranean basin.

No doubt, as the popularity of the *Secret History* suggests, Byzantine plots, murders, luxury, decadence, and intrigue explain some of this interest. But the contemporary image of Byzantium is more positive than that. Besides its obvious beauty, Byzantine art combines the traditional with the abstract and the spiritual with the luxurious, implying a society that was at once stable and imaginative, religious and civilized. This art reflects the fact that Byzantine civilization joined a multiplicity of cultures into a harmonious and self-confident whole. Byzantium lives on, above all, in the Eastern Orthodox Church, whose devotion, rituals, and mysticism appeal to many Christians who find such things lacking in Protestantism and too hard-edged in Roman Catholicism.

None of the contemporary perceptions of Byzantine civilization is wholly wrong, and, except for those emphasizing scandal, most are mostly right. Yet, for us, Byzantine civilization remains a curious compound of the familiar and the alien. It was certainly a part of Western civilization, but very much its own part, and different from Western Europe and America. Spanning the ancient, medieval, and modern worlds, it was the successor of the Roman Empire and contributed to the rise of the Italian Renaissance, but its culture was distinct from the cultures of both.

Such differences continue to give rise to misconceptions about the Byzantine world. Norman Davies, in his recent *Europe: A History* (1996), provides a fairly typical nonspecialist's description:

The state and the church were fused into one indivisible whole. . . . This "Caesaropapism" had no equal in the West, where secular rule and papal authority had never been joined. The imperial court was the hub of a vast centralized administration run by an army of bureaucrats. . . . The despotic nature of the state machine was self-evident in its oriental ceremonies. "Byzantium" became a byword for total subservience, secretiveness, and intrigue. . . . The Byzantine state practiced unremitting paternalism in



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social and economic affairs. Trade was controlled by state officials, who exacted a straight 10 percent tax on all exports and imports.

Except for the 10 percent duty, which was less onerous and intrusive than most modern tariffs, almost all of this is greatly exaggerated.

In terms of basic material conditions, Byzantium was a typical pre-industrial society, like the earlier Roman Empire or today's Ethiopia. By our standards, it was rural, backward, and poor. Around nine-tenths of the Byzantines were illiterate peasants living in villages and engaged in subsistence farming. Again by our standards,

Byzantine cities (like all medieval cities) were small and squalid, with narrow, winding streets, ramshackle houses, and populations seldom exceeding 30,000. Probably the only cities ever to pass 100,000 were Alexandria and Antioch up to the sixth century A.D., and the capital, Constantinople, which might have approached 400,000 for brief periods in the sixth and 12th centuries but was usually less than half that size. Though it boasted a broad boulevard for parades and a few palaces and churches built as showpieces by the emperors, most of Constantinople resembled a collection of small towns separated by fields—an ensemble that would hardly count as a great metropolis today.

Nevertheless, by medieval standards, and in some respects by ancient ones as well, Byzantium was an advanced society. Its cities were larger, its literacy rates higher, and its economy more monetarized and diversified than those of medieval Western Europe, at least up to the 13th century. By comparison with most ancient empires, including Rome, Byzantium was well governed. Our ideas of “Byzantine bureaucracy” to the contrary, Byzantium was blessed with a cadre of officials that was generally efficient, well educated, well paid, and relatively small in number—perhaps 2,500 in the central bureaucracy toward the beginning of the empire’s history, and around 600 by the ninth century.

The notion of despotic rule is also a caricature. Although a Byzantine emperor had no formal checks on his power, he had to be acclaimed by the people and crowned by the patriarch of Constantinople at his accession, and he defied their wishes at his peril. The few emperors who showed signs of tyrannical behavior, such as Andronicus I Comnenus (r. 1183–85), were promptly overthrown. Byzantium never endured a Nero, a Hitler, or an Idi Amin. The closest thing it had to a Henry VIII was the emperor Constantine V (r. 741–75), who in an effort to impose the beliefs of the iconoclasts on a recalcitrant church and people not only destroyed religious images but purged the ecclesiastical hierarchy and confiscated monastic property. Although several attempts to overthrow him failed, a church council declared iconoclasm a heresy 12 years after his death, and Constantine went down in history with the epithet Copronymus, which we translate delicately as “Name of Dung.” The common modern view that Byzantine emperors had power over the Eastern Church comparable to that of popes in the West—“Caesaropapism”—is an exaggeration.

In fact, the church had profound reservations about almost every emperor and his courtiers. In contrast to the Western Church, which has traditionally accepted that sometimes a greater good can justify acts that would otherwise be sinful—including the waging of war—the Eastern Church has insisted that such acts can never be fully excused. Despite awkward attempts at accommodation, such as blinding political opponents instead of executing them, emperors were always falling short of the church’s moral standards. Among Byzantine emperors, the only one to be widely recognized as a saint was Constantine I, who, by delaying his baptism until he was on his

Portrait of a City

In *The Journey of Louis VII to the East*, Odo of Deuil, a French monk and chronicler, and Louis VII's chaplain for the Second Crusade, paints a vivid picture of the imperial city of Constantinople, where the Crusaders spent the winter of 1148 on their ill-fated journey to the Holy Land.

Constantinople, the glory of the Greeks, rich in renown and richer still in possessions, is laid out in a triangle shaped like a ship's sail. In its inner angle stand Santa Sophia and Constantinople's Palace, in which there is a chapel that is revered for its exceedingly holy relics. Moreover,

Constantinople is girt on two sides by the sea; when approaching the city we had the Arm of St. George on the right and on the left a certain estuary, which, after branching from the Arm, flows on for about four miles. In that place the Palace of Blachernae, although having foundations laid on low ground, achieves eminence through excellent construction and elegance and, because of its surroundings on three sides, affords its inhabitants



the triple pleasure of looking out upon sea, fields, and city. Its exterior is of almost matchless beauty, but its interior surpasses anything that I can say about it. Throughout it is decorated elaborately with gold and a great variety of colors, and the floor is marble, paved with cunning workmanship; and I do not know whether the exquisite art or the exceedingly valuable stuffs endows it with the more beauty or value. The third side of the city's triangle includes fields, but it is fortified by towers and a double wall which extends for about two miles from the sea to the palace. This wall is not strong, and it possesses no lofty towers; but the city puts its trust, I think, in the size of its population and the long period of peace which it has enjoyed. Below the walls lies open land, cultivated by plough and hoe, which contains gardens that furnish the citizens all kinds of vegetables. From the outside underground conduits flow in, bringing the city an abundance of sweet water.

The city itself is squalid and fetid and in many places harmed by permanent darkness, for the wealthy overshadow the streets with buildings and leave these dirty, dark places to the poor and to travelers; there murders and robberies and other crimes which love the darkness are committed. Moreover, since the people live lawlessly in this city, which has as many lords as rich men and almost as many thieves as poor men, a criminal knows neither fear nor shame, because crime is not punished by law and never entirely comes to light. In every respect she exceeds moderation; for, just as she surpasses other cities in wealth, so, too, does she surpass them in vice. Also, she possesses many churches unequal to Santa Sophia in size but equal to it in beauty, which are to be marveled at for their beauty and their many saintly relics. Those who had the opportunity entered these places, some to see the sights and others to worship faithfully.

deathbed, supposedly gained absolution from his sins. The only emperors in Byzantine scenes of the last judgment are those burning in hell. The modern idea that the Byzantines idolized their rulers is far from the truth.

Another widespread misconception about Byzantium is that anyone in Byzantine times ever called it “Byzantium.” Because it was simply the eastern part of the Roman Empire, separated from the western part through a peaceful administrative division in A.D. 285, the people we call “Byzantines” always called themselves Romans, and their empire the Roman Empire. Byzantium was the insignificant town Constantine I (r. 306–37) chose as the site of his greatly expanded city of Constantinople, after which only archaizing stylists referred to it as Byzantium. The name “Byzantine” was first used for the empire by Renaissance scholars, who hesitated to call it “Roman” because it had not



A Byzantine coin depicting Emperor Constantine

included Rome and found “Constantinopolitan” cumbersome. This modern habit of calling the Eastern Roman Empire by the obsolete name of its principal city is a bit like calling the United States “New Amsterdam.”

Odd though the choice of name may be, the empire did become different enough to warrant renaming it. Because the division between East and West roughly fit the dividing line in the Roman Empire between Greek and Latin cultures, the Eastern Empire on its own soon shed its Latin veneer, became a mainly

Greek state, grew overwhelmingly Christian, and long outlived the Western Empire.

Byzantium’s longevity was, in fact, unique. The historical rule for ancient empires had been that after a few centuries of prosperity they declined and disintegrated, usually soon after suffering their first major military defeats. This pattern held for the Assyrian Empire, the Neo-Babylonian Empire, the Achaemenid Persian Empire, the Parthian Empire, the Sassanid Persian Empire, the Arab Caliphate, and the Western Roman Empire. But the Byzantine Empire lasted almost 1,200 years.

Byzantium naturally had its ups and downs. As Gibbon saw, over the very long run the trend was down: the empire fell in the end. Yet the pattern was far more complex than a simple decline and fall. Because Byzantium suffered most of its losses during sudden catastrophes and made most of its gains during periods of steady expansion, it was more often expanding than contracting. Again and again it survived its defeats, usually outlasting the enemies who had defeated it.

The story begins in the third century A.D., a time of crisis for the Roman Empire. Various German tribes devastated the empire’s European provinces, the Sassanid Persians overran most of the Asian provinces, and the rebellious Roman ally, Palmyra, briefly took over the



Byzantines attack the Rus' at Preslav. The illustration is from the Madrid Chronicle of John Skylitzes, a Byzantine official who around 1070 wrote a history of the three previous centuries.

Asian lands and Egypt. The commanders of the armies that fought these invaders repeatedly seized the imperial throne for themselves. Between 211 and 284, the Germans killed one emperor, the Persians captured another, a third died in a disastrous epidemic, and the remaining 23 emperors were either certainly or probably killed by Romans, in most cases after reigning for less than two years. Diocletian, who seized the throne in 284 as the latest in a series of military strongmen, seemed to have no better chance than his predecessors of dying in bed or of righting the foundering Roman state.

But the half-educated Diocletian showed remarkable political insight. Realizing that the task of keeping invaders and rebels at bay was too big for one man, he chose a deputy, his friend Maximian, and gave him the title of emperor and the western half of the empire, with a separate army and administration. Diocletian's portion in the East consisted of the Balkans, Anatolia, Syria, and Egypt. Because he kept a separate government in the East and strengthened its army and expanded its bureaucracy, Diocletian can be considered the real founder of the Byzantine Empire, though his favorite residence was at Nicomedia, about 50 miles from the city of Byzantium, and his administration traveled so much that it really had no set capital. His enlarged government succeeded in stabilizing the empire, and he reigned for 21 years before retiring voluntarily.

A pagan of the traditional Greco-Roman kind, Diocletian had thousands of Christians killed or maimed in an effort to suppress their faith—ultimately to no avail. Christianity became the empire's favored religion under the charismatic Constantine I, who took power as a Western emperor in 306, a year after Diocletian's abdication, and finished conquering the domain of the



Mosaic of Emperor Justinian (r. 527–65) and his attendants, in the Church of San Vitale

Eastern emperor Licinius in 324. Though Constantine ruled both East and West, he administered them through different officials and through his sons, who were to inherit their portions at his death. His new city of Constantinople grew steadily, and by the end of the fourth century it was recognizably a capital, the usual seat of the emperor and his government. Constantine's new official religion also prospered, and within a century of his accession Christians had grown from a small minority to a large majority in both East and West.

Between them, Diocletian and Constantine set Byzantium on a promising course, even if they did so partly by accident. While Diocletian divided the empire mainly for military and administrative reasons, the Greek East happened to form a natural geographical, cultural, and economic unit. Although Constantine's conversion seems to have been the result of a somewhat confused religious conviction—at first he appears not to have realized that it required him to repudiate paganism entirely—Christianity gave the empire more cohesiveness than the ill-assorted cults we call paganism could ever have done. Constantine seems to have been inspired to refound Byzantium as Constantinople merely because he had defeated his rival Licinius nearby, but the site happened to be well located at a junction of trade routes, on a splendidly defensible peninsula on the straits dividing the Balkans from Anatolia.

During its first 300 years, Byzantium usually prospered. From the late fourth to the late fifth century it lost some territory to the Persians, Huns, and Germans, but by 500 Byzantium had driven out its invaders and held almost all the lands Diocletian had taken for his portion of the



Mosaic of Empress Theodora (c. 500–48) and her retinue, also in the Church of San Vitale

Roman Empire in 285. The empire was already thriving before the ambitious Justinian I (r. 527–65) showed what it could do if it tried. Justinian built an array of public structures in Constantinople, of which his great Church of the Holy Wisdom (Saint Sophia) is only the most famous and extraordinary. He deserves some credit for a flowering of art, much of which he paid for, and of scholarship, to which he contributed his great codification of Roman law. Most impressively, if not most lastingly, he dispatched expeditions that won back from the Germans the richest parts of the former Western Roman Empire in Italy, Dalmatia, northern Africa, and southern Spain.

Justinian's achievements were the more remarkable because he finished them in the teeth of the worst epidemic the Western world had known, a bubonic plague that reached the empire from Ethiopia in 541 and killed up to a third of its people. Yet because the plague kept returning at intervals of roughly 15 years right up to the mid-eighth century, Byzantium grew weaker and was thrown on the defensive.

After 602, when the first successful rebellion in three centuries of Byzantine history overthrew the emperor Maurice, the Persians were emboldened to invade Syria and Egypt and the Avars to overrun the Balkans. By 626, Constantinople was besieged and the empire was in mortal danger. The emperor Heraclius (r. 610–41) averted disaster by invading the Persian homeland, which forced the Persians to evacuate Egypt and Syria. But barely five years after Heraclius's victory, with the Balkans unreclaimed and Byzantium still exhausted, the Arabs invaded.

After seizing Syria and Egypt and conquering the Persian Empire outright, they seemed poised to deal a similar fate to Byzantium.

At this point, according to historical precedent, Byzantium should have been doomed. The younger, more vigorous Arab Caliphate held about 10 times as much land as the Byzantines, with at least five times as many people and an army to match. The newly Muslim Arabs embraced the doctrine of holy war (jihad), which held that those who died fighting for the faith went straight to heaven; by contrast, the Byzantine Church required a soldier who killed an enemy in battle to do penance for three years before receiving Communion again. Yet Byzantium stopped the Arabs and outlived their state by hundreds of years.

How did the Byzantines do this? Historians still disagree, but most think one answer was a change in military organization. Heraclius's grandson Constans II (r. 641–68) seems to have reorganized the army, previously a regularly paid professional force, into largely self-supporting divisions known as “themes” — army groups settled in districts (also called themes) where they held grants of farmland, probably taken from the vast imperial estates that disappeared around this time. Although some historians doubt that the



The Arabs capture Thessalonica (from Madrid Chronicle).

troops received lands this early (none of the scanty sources records the distribution at any date), the grants were evidently given when the empire could no longer afford to pay its troops a living wage, and that was very probably during Constans's reign.

While Constans's main motive was doubtless to save money, by the same sort of lucky accident that made Diocletian's and Constantine's reforms so beneficial, the themes turned out to put up a stiffer defense than the old army, once the soldiers were stationed all over the empire and were fighting to defend their own lands. The themes helped contain not only the Arabs but the rising new power of the Bulgars in the Balkans. Thus Byzantium held out until the middle of the eighth century, when the plague finally abated and the Arabs started to fight among themselves.

The Byzantines then made a remarkable recovery, again without precedent for so ancient a state. During the next 300 years the empire almost doubled in size, recapturing many of its lost lands to the east and all its lost lands to the north, where it annexed the Bulgarian Empire outright. The final push was the work of three great conquerors, the emperors Nicephorus II Phocas (r. 963–69), John I Tzimiskes (r. 969–76), and Basil II the Bulgar-Slayer (r. 976–1025). Byzantine power, wealth, and culture grew to such proportions that the pagan Bulgars, Serbs, and Russians spontaneously requested conversion to Byzantine Christianity. Similarly, the Bulgars and many Armenians and Georgians accepted direct Byzantine rule even though Basil II would have permitted them to become Byzantine clients.

The Byzantines themselves halted their expansion at Basil's death, though they showed every sign of being able to continue it. The weakened Arab states of southern Syria, through which John I had marched at will, could scarcely have prevented a Byzantine conquest. Even the Arabs of Egypt would have been hard put to resist the Byzantines. But the Byzantine reconquest in the east ended approximately where Christians ceased to be a majority. While southern Syria and Egypt had strong Christian minorities—much stronger than today—the Byzantines disliked ruling Muslims, whom in the lands already conquered they had given a choice between conversion and expulsion. Few Muslims chose conversion, and the Byzantines had no use for empty land.

Basking in the afterglow of Basil II's victories, the Bulgar-Slayer's successors misspent their revenues and let the army and navy decay. As a result, the Byzantines were unprepared for the arrival of the Seljuk Turks from Central Asia. At the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, the Turks scattered the atrophied Byzantine army, and within 10 years they had overrun Byzantine Anatolia. The Byzantines appealed to Pope Urban II, and received the unexpected response of the First Crusade.



Dignitaries visit the Imperial Regent Theophano and her sons Basil II and Constantine VIII.

With help from the Crusaders, Byzantium took back most of the plains along the Anatolian coast. This was much the richest part of the peninsula, but it was hard to defend while the Turks held the interior. Throughout the 12th century, as the emperors relied more on diplomacy than on rebuilding their army, Byzantium was rich but militarily weak, a dangerous combination. Though the Turks missed their chance, some opportunistic Westerners took it. The knights of the Fourth Crusade turned from attacking the Turks to backing the claim to the Byzantine throne of the pretender Alexius IV. The Crusaders captured Constantinople for Alexius, but when they failed to receive their promised payment they seized the city for themselves in 1204.

After the loss of Constantinople, unconquered Byzantines continued to hold more than half of what had been their empire, divided among several squabbling successor states. Gradually one of these, known to us as the Empire of Nicaea after its temporary capital, gained the upper hand, and recovered Constantinople in 1261. From that date we begin to call the empire Byzantium again, and for a time it seemed to recover much of its former power, though some Byzantine splinter principalities remained independent. But soon the restored empire repeated the mistake of the previous century by skimping on defense. This gave another chance to the Turks, who, led by the energetic Ottoman dynasty, occupied most Byzantine holdings in Anatolia by 1305.

Byzantium still seemed to have a future as a Balkan power. Even after crippling itself in a civil war between 1341 and 1347, it might have revived, if the next year the plague had not returned, after an absence of 600 years. Spread largely by ship, the disease hit the Byzantines on the coasts much harder than their Turkish and Slavic neighbors inland. This was one blow too many. Only the walls of Constantinople and occasional help from Western Europeans allowed the sad remnant of the empire to hold out for another century. Constantinople finally fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, and the Ottomans took the last tiny Byzantine splinter, the Empire of Trebizond, in 1461.

Almost up to the end, Byzantine history shows a pattern of sudden reverses followed by long recoveries, each of which brought Byzantium back a little short of where it had been before the preceding setback. The reason for the incompleteness of these recoveries was more often a lack of interest than a lack of strength. The Byzantines wanted to retake recently lost lands, which they believed were rightfully theirs. The church, for all its reservations about warfare, sometimes contributed ecclesiastical treasures to such efforts, on the ground that they were being used to rescue captured Christians. But the longer a country had been lost to Byzantium, the less the Byzantines wanted to reclaim it. They were not even strongly driven to convert others to Christianity, unless the others asked to be converted. With a high opinion of their empire and church, the Byzantines were usually content to keep both of them as they were, or had been not long before.

This attitude served the former subjects of Byzantium well under the Turks, and helped Byzantine civilization survive the fall of the Byzantine state. Even before the Fourth Crusade, many people who lived outside



Serbs, Croats, and other Slavs appeal to the Byzantine emperor for aid (from Madrid Chronicle).

Byzantine territory spoke Greek and acknowledged the primacy of the patriarch of Constantinople. After the fall of Constantinople, the Turkish sultans appointed patriarchs, as the emperor had done before them. The Russians never came under Ottoman rule, and considered themselves heirs of Byzantium. They, like the Bulgarians, the Serbs, and others, owed Byzantium their Christianity and literacy, and the beginnings of their literature, art, and architecture. Like the Greeks, the Russians dreamed of driving the Turks from Constantinople, which had a large Christian minority until the early 20th century. When the Ottoman Empire fell apart after World War I, the Greeks tried to reclaim something like the borders of Byzantium in 1203. But a Greek invasion of Anatolia ended with a Turkish victory in 1922.

Ever since a population exchange in 1923 removed most of the Greeks from Turkey, few people have spoken Greek outside Greece and Cyprus. Yet a patriarch of Constantinople remains in Turkish Istanbul as head of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Eastern Orthodoxy remains the majority faith not only in Greece and Cyprus but in Russia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and Belarus. Eastern Orthodox Christians remain significant minorities in Albania, Syria, and Lebanon—and in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Most Armenians and many Egyptians and Ethiopians remain Eastern Christians without formally belonging to Eastern Orthodoxy. All of these groups have inherited much of their culture from Byzantium. It is mainly people who are not Eastern Christians whom Byzantium still perplexes.

As it happens, some works on Byzantium have increased this perplexity by giving a confusing and misleading picture. The objects in the *Glory of Byzantium* exhibition speak for themselves, and a number of treatments of the subject are balanced and accurate, including those by Runciman and the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (1991). Although some historians, from Gibbon in the 18th century to Romilly Jenkins in the 20th, have disliked



A 12th-century icon illustrating the Heavenly Ladder, by the monk John Klimax. The text presents vices that might cause a monk to fall during his climb to spiritual perfection.

Byzantium, that dislike did not necessarily lead to errors in itself; usually what they disliked most was Byzantine Christianity, and they were right that Byzantium was profoundly Christian, like it or not. Probably the main reason for distortion in more recent work has been not bias against Byzantium but well-meant misconceptions of it.

Sometimes the aim has been to reach a wide audience by playing up the exotic and playing down its context. So Lord Norwich in his three-volume *Byzantium* (1989, 1992, 1996)—which some have taken for an academic history despite his frank disclaimers—has compiled a collection of partly legendary anecdotes about the Byzantine court while almost completely ignoring social, eco-

conomic, and cultural history. Accordingly, he leaves the impression that plots and intrigue were typical of Byzantine civilization, which they were not—certainly no more so than they were of other great imperial courts. The occasional ruthlessness of the Byzantine court mainly reflects the jaundiced view the Byzantine Church took toward politics, which led some politicians to despair of combining moral behavior with public life and to see a deathbed repentance as their only hope of salvation. When in political difficulty, such emperors and courtiers ventured to commit acts that would have been unthinkable for the mass of Byzantines whom Norwich neglects.

A more serious source of historical distortion is the attempt to connect Byzantium with modern (or postmodern) academic fashions, which are poorly suited to understanding a deeply religious and traditional society. Most notable is the insistence of Peter Brown, in such books as *The Body and Society* (1988) and *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity* (1992), that Byzantine religion was mostly about sexuality, anxiety, and power, a view that owes much less to Byzantine sources than to the poststructuralism of Michel Foucault. Particularly jarring is the view of Brown and other poststructuralists that the Byzantines' idealization of virginity showed an obsession with sexuality.

In another work, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* (1991), Averil Cameron explains the poststructuralist approach to Byzantine Christianity:

The sign system of Christianity . . . [formed] around the body itself, and especially the mechanics and avoidance of carnal knowledge and procreation. Paradoxically, in the context of the discourse of abstinence, the true knowledge at which the signs pointed was defined in terms of desire. . . . Now *eros*, desire, also occupies the center of poststructuralist poetics and is often seen as a key to theories of the subject. Whereas in modern intellectual circles Christian discourse is rarely acceptable as such, ironically *eros*, the discourse of desire, has filled the space left vacant.

Yet beyond a reasonable doubt, the Byzantines were guilty of the charge against which poststructuralists defend them: they were less interested in sex than we are, and more interested in God.

The Byzantines regarded sex much as we regard smoking or overeating: many did it, but nobody really approved of it. They agreed that virginity was better even than a faithful marriage, not because sex was important but because it was unimportant—a distraction from God, who was transcendentally important. Some Byzantine moralists advised the widowed that concubinage was better than remarriage, because asking God to bless serial monogamy was blasphemous, and blasphemy was worse than fornication. Contrasting real Byzantine attitudes with poststructuralist thinking shows (as Cameron hints) how sexuality has taken the place of religion for some of us. Those who think that sexual fulfillment is the greatest good and God is an illusion may well be baffled by people who

thought that God was the greatest good and sexual fulfillment an illusion.

Some of Brown's other ideas are similarly anachronistic. Brown sees Byzantine holy men as protopsychiatrists who treated patients for "moral hypochondria" by counseling them. What his sources rather show is monks who worked miracles, mostly to relieve physical or material distress, and treated people suffering from what we would call mental illness not by counseling but by exorcism. Today, however, many find psychiatry far easier to understand than a belief in miracles, exorcism, or God.

Byzantium is also a frustrating subject for those who adopt the modern view that all that matters, or has ever mattered, is race, class, and gender. Like other ancient and medieval peoples, the Byzantines had no idea of race in the modern sense, and to them black skin was like

red hair, merely an uncommon physical characteristic. Practically all Byzantines, including their few slaves, were what we would call white. They may be called multiethnic in the sense that, along with the ethnically mixed people we call Greeks, they included Armenians, Slavs, Syrians, Egyptians, Albanians, and others. Sometimes we



Saint John of Damascus (left) with his stepbrother Saint Cosmas. John wrote a powerful defense of the religious use of icons.

can find groups of Armenians or Syrians in Greek-speaking territory who helped each other in various ways. But we can also find groups of Greeks from the same town or region who helped each other. Moreover, in a generation or two, the Armenians, Syrians, and others who migrated to Greek-speaking areas forgot their own languages, intermarried with Greeks, and became indistinguishable from them. Byzantium was far less a multicultural society than it was a melting pot.

A few Byzantine theological disputes did correspond roughly to ethnic or linguistic divisions. The most obvious case is Monophysitism, the belief that Christ has a single nature rather than different divine and human natures, which became the majority faith in Egypt but not elsewhere. Yet it cannot properly be called an ethnic or linguistic movement, because Egyptian Monophysites included speakers of both Greek and Coptic (the native Egyptian language). It might be called a regional movement, except that the originator of Monophysitism had been a Greek monk in Constantinople, and at first Monophysites could be found all over the empire. They were common

in northern Syria but rare in southern Syria, though both parts of Syria had Syriac-speaking majorities and Greek-speaking minorities.

The apparent explanation for the geographical split in Syria over Monophysitism is that most Christians followed their religious leaders. The church in northern Syria was subject to the patriarch of Antioch, who, like the patriarch of Alexandria in Egypt, came to favor Monophysitism; the church in southern Syria was under the patriarch of Jerusalem, who, like the patriarch of Constantinople, came to oppose Monophysitism. At a certain point these views took root among the local Christian population, and even when the emperor appointed patriarchs of the opposite persuasion, the people refused to change. Because the ecclesiastical jurisdictions were regional, the theological dispute can be mistaken for a regional one—or, by further confusion, an ethnic one. In reality, even though many Byzantines spoke mutually incomprehensible languages, ethnic consciousness was very weak in the empire, as in most premodern societies.

Byzantine class consciousness was somewhat stronger. Although Byzantium never had any hereditary titles of nobility, most Byzantines had some idea of where they belonged in the social hierarchy, based on their wealth or profession. This was particularly true of the group at the top, whose members often held appointments in the army or civil service with clearly graded ranks and salaries. By the 11th century, Byzantium did develop a loosely defined aristocracy, though most of its families were not very old and it remained open to new members, including Turks and Western Europeans. What can confuse modern historians is that this class awareness almost never resulted in a sense of class solidarity.

For example, most historians have seen the late 11th century as the beginning of a period of rule by the landed aristocracy. At this time the dynasty of the Comneni seized power, and the Comneni were indeed landed aristocrats. But the Comneni took over just as the Byzantines were losing the region where aristocrats held most of their land—the interior of Anatolia—and the Comneni made no serious attempt to retake either the region or the estates. Moreover, under the Comneni the highest positions in the government and army were monopolized by members or relatives of the Comnenus family itself. Most of the aristocracy was excluded from political or military power, and aristocrats often joined rebellions against the Comneni. When one of these rebellions finally succeeded, the aristocracy was left even weaker and more divided than before.

The explanation of these seemingly paradoxical facts is that Byzantine aristocrats had almost no feeling that they shared common interests as a class. The Comneni saw other aristocrats as rivals to be kept down, while the other aristocrats saw the Comneni as a clique indifferent or hostile to their interests. Both perceptions were pretty much correct. The rebels who brought down the Comneni, moreover, came from all levels of society and had nothing in common but dislike of the reigning emperor, Andronicus I Comnenus. The aristocracy was riven by family

rivalries, and Byzantines cared far less about their class than about their family. The common modern assumption that aristocrats would favor each other out of class loyalty seems unsupported by any Byzantine source.

As for gender differences, in Byzantium, as in any traditional society, sex roles were more distinct than in today's America. Byzantine women had somewhat wider opportunities than women in most premodern societies, though, and no fewer than women in much of Africa and Asia today. Unlike classical Greece, where women were denied any independent role in politics or culture, Byzantium shared the more liberal attitudes of Rome and archaic or Hellenistic Greece. The emphasis that Byzantine Christianity put on morality and orthodoxy also allowed women to gain recognition as nuns, abbesses, and eventually saints. Two Byzantine empresses, Irene and Theodora, were revered as saints for their crucial parts in condemning iconoclasm, in 787 and 843 respectively. They and other empresses became the real rulers of the empire as regents for their underage sons, and three empresses—Irene (797–802), Zoe (1042), and another Theodora (1055–56)—reigned without sharing the throne with an emperor. Emperors often gave their wives considerable prominence; the most famous example is Justinian's consort, yet another Theodora. Byzantium also had a few notable women writers, including the poet Cassia and the historian Anna Comnena.

Like Byzantine aristocrats, however, Byzantine women showed scarcely any signs of solidarity as a group. Neither Irene (a determined and skillful politician of the type of Margaret Thatcher or Indira Gandhi) nor any other empress made a serious effort to promote other women. The attitude shared by almost all Byzantines of either sex seems to have been that women, though capable of taking part in public life, were poorly suited to it. If dynastic accidents put a woman in power, she was better than a civil war, but not as good as a legitimate male heir. Many Byzantines believed that women in their private roles were not inferior to men, and every Byzantine had to admit that female saints were spiritually and morally superior to ordinary males. (That Theodora—"gift of God"—was a favorite Byzantine name for girls is hardly a sign of misogyny.) But practically no Byzantines, male or female, seem to have felt that women as a group were being deprived of their due, or that their role in society ought to be expanded or changed in any way.

In Byzantium, as in nearly all premodern societies, not only were race, class, and gender not matters of ideology, but ideology itself barely existed in the modern sense. Byzantines occasionally showed patriotism, but it was emotional and not ideological—patriotism rather than nationalism. In part it was loyalty to the state, though most of the opinions the Byzantines expressed about their government were complaints about taxes and corruption. The Byzantines felt some loyalty to their emperors, though usually when an emperor was overthrown

that loyalty went automatically to his successor. Most of all, the Byzantines felt loyalty to their state religion, Christianity. Their army's victory cry was not a patriotic slogan but "The Cross has conquered!"

This lack of ideology has long been hard for modern scholars to grasp. For instance, most have looked for an ideological significance in the Byzantines' two factions, the Blues and the Greens, whose official function was to organize sports and theatrical events, mainly chariot races and performances in which women took off their clothes. The Blues and Greens also cheered on their own performers and teams, and sometimes fought each other in the stands or rioted in the streets. Persistent modern efforts to define the Blues and Greens as representatives of political, social, or religious groups have so conspicuously failed that they seem to have been abandoned. Now, however, without trying to distinguish Blues from Greens, Peter Brown has depicted their spectacles as solemn patriotic ceremonies. Yet such a generalization seems indefensible after Alan Cameron has shown in two meticulous and persuasive books, *Porphyrius the Charioteer* (1973) and *Circus Factions* (1976), that the Blues and Greens were interested primarily in sports and shows, secondarily in hooliganism, and not at all in ideology.



If the Byzantines were so unlike us Americans—or at least unlike the way modern scholars think we should be—why should we care about them today? One answer is that we should care even about people who are unlike us, including Russians, Greeks, Serbs, and others who continue the Byzantine tradition and with whom we still need to deal. Another answer is that in some ways the Byzantines did resemble some of us, and in a few ways were a bit like the most up-to-date of us. Let us take up these points in turn.

What difference has the Byzantine heritage made in the dozen or so countries where it remains strongest? At first glance, Russia, Greece, Yugoslavia, Armenia, and the rest look just as nationalistic as any other countries, indeed more so. Several of them have recently fought wars with their neighbors, inspired by rhetoric that seems to us ultranationalistic. On closer inspection, however, we should note that their sharpest conflicts have been not with other Eastern Orthodox nations but with countries or peoples that do not share their Eastern Orthodox background.

Thus, Orthodox Serbs have fought Muslim Bosniacs and Kosovars and Catholic Croats, Orthodox Russians have fought Muslim Chechens, Orthodox Georgians have fought Muslim Abkhazians, and eastern Christian Armenians have fought Muslim Azeris. Orthodox Greeks remain distrustful of Muslim Turks, as was made evident by the passion shown on both sides in a recent dispute over an uninhabited islet in the Aegean Sea. Since 1974 a cease-fire line has divided Cyprus between

an Orthodox Greek majority and a Muslim Turkish minority, and all attempts at reconciliation have failed. Also within national boundaries, tensions persist between Orthodox Bulgarians and a Muslim Turkish minority, between Orthodox Romanians and a Catholic or Protestant Hungarian minority, and between Orthodox Macedonians and a Muslim Albanian minority.

Although there have been some cases of Orthodox fighting Orthodox—Moldovans and Russians in Transnistria, and Balkan states on different sides in the Balkan Wars and the two World Wars—many more of the recent conflicts have been between different religious groups than between different ethnic groups. Most Bulgarian “Turks” speak Bulgarian, and Bosniacs and Croats speak the same language as Serbs, which used to be called Serbo-Croatian. Greeks, Russians, and Romanians have all shown obvious sympathy for their fellow Orthodox Serbs, whom most of the rest of the world, regardless of religion, has blamed for aggression against the Muslim Bosniacs and Catholic Croats.

By the same token, the heirs of Byzantium seem scarcely nationalistic at all. Romanians, for example, have only the most tepid interest in unification with Moldova, a Romanian-majority statelet that Romania lost in 1940 for no better legal or moral reason than the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The Bulgarians care even less about annexing Macedonia, which was part of medieval Bulgaria and whose residents still speak a language barely different from Bulgarian. Greek Cypriots, in their struggle with Turkish Cypriots, have largely forgotten the cause of unification of Cyprus with Greece.

Similarly, Russians have shown little enthusiasm for reincorporating Belarus, even though its president says he wants the reincorporation, or Ukraine, where a strong minority wants the same. Yet both Belarus and Ukraine were part of Russia through most of its history and speak languages quite close to Russian, and two of the three stripes of the Russian flag stand for Belarus and Ukraine. One would expect any true Russian nationalist to want both of them back more than anything else. But the people we call Russian nationalists care more about denouncing Catholics, Protestants, and Jews within Russia proper. In all of this, modern national boundaries seem to matter less than the transnational solidarity of the old Byzantine melting pot.

This bond is more complex than a shared devotion to the Eastern Orthodox faith, even though the fall of communism has brought a modest Orthodox revival in Eastern Europe. Though church practices had differed slightly in the eastern and western parts of the Roman Empire even before the third century, none of the differences was of obvious importance, and scarcely anyone made an issue of them until the 11th century. The usual date given for the schism between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism is 1054, but all that occurred then was the excommunication of Patriarch Michael Cerularius by three legates sent to Constantinople by Pope

Leo IX (who by that time was dead), and the patriarch's retaliatory excommunication of the legates.

Personal animosities aside, the main issue at the time was the patriarch's objection to western (and Armenian) Christians' long-standing use of unleavened bread in the eucharist. Yet the personal animosities really were the main issue, as each side defended its dignity jealously and took offense easily. That this petty quarrel was allowed to become a schism shows a growing xenophobia on both sides that led to still more hostility during the Crusades, culminating in the brutal conquest of Constantinople by the misdirected Fourth Crusade.

Once the schism had begun, theologians found reasons for it. The authority of the pope eventually became an issue, but in the 11th century it was a minor matter, since papal claims were no more extensive than they had long been, and the Eastern Church recognized most of them. True, some Eastern Christians objected that the original version of the Nicene Creed, still used by Easterners, says simply that the Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father, while the Western version adds "and the Son" (in Latin, *filioque*). But this difference had no real consequences for religious belief and had caused no schism for centuries. Even in medieval times, the main Orthodox criticism of the *filioque* was the reasonable one that the western part of the church had had no right to add to the creed without consulting the eastern part.

As this objection and the matter of the Fourth Crusade might suggest, much of the reason for Eastern Orthodox distrust of Muslims and Western Christians is a lingering and not wholly unjustified sense of grievance. To Eastern Christians, with their traditional reluctance to engage in aggressive warfare or vigorous evangelization, differing Western and Muslim attitudes toward Orthodoxy can look like unprovoked hostility. After all, no predominantly Eastern Orthodox armies have ever marched into Mecca, Baghdad, Paris, or London. But both Muslim and



Exchange of correspondence between the Byzantine emperor and the caliph (from the Madrid Chronicle)

Western Christian armies have conquered Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, and none of those great Byzantine cities is in Orthodox hands today. Except for the Russians, all the Orthodox peoples were under foreign rule until the 19th century, and even the Russians suffered severely from invasions by Western Christian powers in the Napoleonic and First and Second World Wars.

By comparison with almost all western Christian countries, almost all Eastern Christian countries are impoverished today, and not even Russia is a truly great power any longer. Only Greece has been accepted into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union, both of which regard it as something of a problem member. Americans and Western Europeans still harbor more serious reservations about Orthodox countries than about Western Christian countries with a communist past, such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Estonia. None of the formerly communist Orthodox countries has yet made as good an economic recovery as any of those, or has yet established quite as stable a democracy. In the Balkans and the Caucasus much can be blamed on the combined heritage of some five centuries of Turkish rule and communism, but the question remains whether Byzantium might also be to blame.

Probably a little, at least as far as democracy is concerned. Though

Byzantine emperors were no more absolute in their rule than Louis XIV, Frederick the Great, Mussolini, or Franco, Byzantium was a somewhat less pluralistic society than late medieval or modern France, Germany, Italy, or Spain. Church leaders were a bit less independent of the government in Byzantium than in Roman Catholic countries—though more so than in Protestant ones. The Byzantine aristocracy was more fractious than Western European aristocracies, and so more easily manipulated. Byzantium, with a Senate that was merely a group of officials appointed by the emperor, had no



Miniature of the scholar Nicetas Choniates from a 13th-century manuscript of his history.

representative body like the British Parliament or the French Estates-General, and no independent or nearly independent cities such as those in Italy or Germany. Probably most important, the general Byzantine disapproval of politics—the result of uncompromising Eastern Orthodox morality—kept many people from taking part in public life and discouraged some who did from trying to act responsibly.

Yet, as a hindrance to the development of democracy in Eastern Orthodox states, only the distrust of politics was nearly as important an influence as years of Turkish autocracy or communist dictatorship. Both of these periods reinforced the traditional Byzantine feeling that decent men should avoid political life. Both also deprived the Orthodox, who in Byzantine times had had at least as strong a legal tradition as Western Europeans, of the chance to develop in modern times a rule of law comparable to that of Western Europe.

Many of the character traits of the empire's modern successor states have little to do with Byzantium. Russian autocracy antedated Russia's conversion to Orthodoxy, and, if anything, was Scandinavian in origin. In any case, Greece and Cyprus, the only Orthodox countries to be spared communist dictatorship, have as good a democratic record since their independence as Spain or Germany. And Orthodox Romania and Bulgaria are currently more democratic than Catholic Slovakia or Croatia.

Byzantine influence may also have been slightly unfavorable to the growth of capitalism, which shows some correlation with democracy. Byzantine merchants, while probably richer than their Western counterparts until the Renaissance, were less independent than Italian or German merchants because the Byzantine government was stronger—though Byzantine emperors taxed and regulated trade scarcely more than French or English kings did. In Byzantium landholders were richer and more powerful than merchants, but the same was true in most of Western Europe until the French Revolution. The Byzantine Church was often suspicious that merchants might be exploiting the poor, but so was the Catholic Church in Western Europe. Ottoman and communist influences have surely harmed Eastern European business more than Byzantine influence has, and in the 20th century Greek and Armenian businessmen have been no less enterprising than Westerners. If the business climate is now worse in Romania or Bulgaria than in Hungary or Poland, the main reasons are probably that the old indiscriminate distrust of politicians has led to a resigned tolerance of government corruption, and that the lingering eastern distrust of Westerners applies to foreign investment.

How much, then, do the Byzantines and their heirs resemble some or all of us Americans? First and most obviously, around five million Americans belong to Eastern Orthodox churches that officially hold the same doctrines that the Byzantine Church did. Most other American Christians accept the dogmas defined by the first six ecumenical councils, which were held by Byzantine emperors on Byzantine territory, and use the Nicene Creed (though usually adding the *filioque*). Roman Catholics also accept the Byzantines' seventh ecumenical council,

which endorsed the use of religious images, and share the Orthodox prohibition of married bishops and of the ordination of women. The Orthodox resemble Protestants in ordaining married men (though the Orthodox prohibit marriage after ordination) and in permitting remarriage after divorce (though the Orthodox strongly disapprove of divorce and impose a lifetime limit of three marriages).

American pacifists would sympathize with the Byzantine argument that killing an enemy soldier in battle is a sin, but would be puzzled by the fact that Byzantine soldiers went ahead and killed and then did their penance. This is an instance of a more comprehensive Byzantine and Orthodox attitude alien to Catholic and Protestant thinking: that sinful actions are sometimes allowable or even necessary, but still sinful. Such a denial that ends could justify means was the main reason Byzantines judged politicians so harshly. Though compatible with the Christian doctrine of original sin, this idea may well go back to the ancient Greeks, who felt that Orestes had to kill Clytemnestra because she had murdered his father but still blamed him because she was his mother.

Although some of these attitudes may appear primitive, Byzantine culture can also seem strangely modern. One reason for the success of the *Glory of Byzantium* exhibition is doubtless that Byzantine art is often abstract, more concerned with emotions and ideas than with realism. Because much of it is formulaic, employing set religious images and repetitive patterns, it puts a high value on technique, just as modern artists do. Byzantine literature and scholarship are again more concerned with style than with mundane reality, and often attain a virtually postmodern level of incomprehensibility and self-indulgence.

All of these characteristics reflect the fact that most of Byzantine art and literature was produced for an elite—the small fraction of Byzantines who had the money to pay for art, or the education to read literature, even though most of the best artists and some of the best writers came from humble backgrounds. While some Byzantine art and literature of a more popular kind has survived, most of it religious, even lower-class Byzantines considered it inferior, meant for people lacking the education or wealth to enjoy the best. In its cultural divide Byzantium somewhat resembled our own society, where most serious art, literature, and scholarship is intended for an elite, and most of what the population at large watches or reads (some of it religious) makes no pretense to literary or artistic value. Yet many other places and times have shown no comparable divide between elite and popular culture. Ancient Greeks of every sort, including the illiterate, listened to the poems of Homer, the tragedies of Sophocles, and the comedies of Aristophanes. A cross section of English society flocked to Shakespeare's plays and, with the rise of mass literacy, read Dickens's novels. But today, American efforts to bring together elite and popular cultures are largely limited to some professors' offering courses on television shows and other products of the entertainment industry at the

expense of supposedly elitist works, including those from other countries. Like us, the Byzantines made few efforts to bridge their culture gap and were particularly indifferent to foreign cultures.

Byzantium, like the United States of today, was both a state and a world of its own, a great power with a diverse but largely self-contained economy and culture. Both Byzantium and America deserve comparison not to England, France, or Germany, but to all of Western Europe, or to all of today's Eastern Orthodox countries. Like the contemporary United States, Byzantium felt even more self-sufficient than it was. Such a feeling can lead a society to think that the diversity at home is all the diversity there could possibly be, and such thinking can lead that society either to ignore the outside world or—in the case of the better educated—to picture the outside world too much in one's own image.

Thus, educated Byzantines often saw Islam simply as a particularly aberrant Christian heresy, and thought of Western Europe as a poorer, weaker, and more ignorant version of Byzantium. So some educated Americans have believed in a democratic Soviet Union, a feminist Third World, a Bosnia ready to implement the Dayton accords, or a Byzantium more interested in sexuality than in spirituality. Such misunderstandings of outsiders can lead to unpleasant surprises, such as the Arab, Crusader, and Turkish invasions of Byzantium, or the Bosnian crisis so mishandled by the United States. Today's Eastern Orthodox countries remain at something of a political and economic disadvantage because they have inherited some of this myopia from the Byzantines.

Yet this weakness of Byzantium was in most respects a result of its strengths. If Byzantium had a strong sense of superiority over its neighbors, it usually did surpass them in wealth, political and military organization, literacy, and scientific and philosophical knowledge. Even in the 14th and 15th centuries, Byzantine scholars who arrived in Italy were greeted as the bearers of a superior culture, with more to teach the West than to learn from it. Even so, some Byzantines were already beginning to learn Latin and to translate Latin literature, and if the empire had survived, there is every reason to believe that it would have participated in the scientific discoveries of the Renaissance. While Byzantium's complacency and lack of aggressiveness may have contributed to its fall after 1,168 years, that was nonetheless more than five times as long as the United States has lasted so far.

CURRENT BOOKS

How Are We Doing?

THE GOOD CITIZEN:

A History of American Civic Life.

By Michael Schudson. Free Press. 390 pp. \$27.50

by Michael Barone

You don't have to look hard to find complaints about the decline of American civic life. Voter turnout is down; many voluntary organizations have lost members; people bowl alone rather than in leagues. But in *The Good Citizen*, sociologist Michael Schudson argues that things may not be all that bad. Drawing on a deep and wide-ranging knowledge of American history, he shows that there was never a golden age of civic participation. In his view, our current civic life is much healthier than the critics suggest.

Certainly it is much different. Adopting a historical division similar to that of Robert Wiebe in *Self-Rule* (1995) and Bruce Ackerman in *We the People: Foundations* (1991), Schudson describes a politics of deference in the colonial and federal periods, a politics of parties from the Jacksonian years until the turn of the century, a politics of progressive reforms from 1900 to about 1960, and a politics of rights in the years since. Each style of politics was transformed, fairly abruptly as such things go, by changes in the character of the country, by changes in the law, and (though Schudson does not emphasize this) by responses to developments in Europe.

Colonial Americans, though "renegade, individualistic, and distrustful of authority," practiced a politics of deference to local notables that was much like the politics of 18th-century Britain. Voters queued up at local courthouses and, with the higher born speaking first, declared their choices before one and all. American deference, however, had its limits. Members of local elites were not guaranteed election, for voters, judging on the basis of character, presumably rejected

the incompetent and the eccentric or deterred them from standing. Some were seen as more able than others; thus George Washington was selected as colonial commander in chief in 1775, though not distinguished by primogeniture (he was the second son of a second marriage) or wealth (many elite Virginians were richer) or seniority (he was 43).

The American Revolution, writes Schudson, marked "the beginning of the end of deference." The party as a mass organization got its start in the 1790s, a product of divisions over the French Revolution and the war between France and Britain. But the first party system withered as the Federalists faded from the scene. Change came in the 1820s and 1830s: extension of the vote from male property owners (already a large group) to all adult males, direct election of presidential electors, the organization of mass parties, an efflorescence of the voluntary associations Alexis de Tocqueville described in the 1830s, and the proliferation of elective offices and patronage jobs to the point that one in five voters in the late 19th century had an economic interest in election results. Parties staged torchlight parades, marched voters to the polls (often with a cash incentive), provided ballots (the government didn't print ballots at the time), and held quadrennial national conventions.

The Civil War years excepted, this was still an era of minimalist government, yet voter turnout as a percentage of eligibles—accepted by Schudson, as by so many others, as the prime indicator of citizen involvement—reached historic highs. But citizen involvement, as the author points out, was anything but an exercise of

thoughtful ratiocination. Politics was emotional; attachment to parties exceeded rational bounds; pecuniary interest was often a motivation for political activity. In an entr'acte chapter, Schudson looks at the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858, so often held up as an example of high citizen involvement. He concedes that the speakers were men of high intellect who at times presented serious moral and political arguments with great sophistication. But more often, he notes, they advanced or attempted to refute crude conspiracy theories, made coarse jokes (often racist, in Douglas's case), and attacked each other's character as bluntly as any 1990s negative ad. The seven debates (Lincoln had proposed 50!) attracted huge crowds, but most people probably came for entertainment or to cheer on their candidate and heckle the opposition.

By the 1890s, elites were increasingly troubled by this unruly and seemingly irrational politics. They were engaged in what Robert Wiebe called "the search for order," creating orderly bureaucratic government and corporations in place of patronage politics and buccaneer businesses. In the process, voters were disenfranchised—most notably blacks in the South, but also aliens in most states and illiterate people in many. States took over the task of printing ballots, and the secret ballot was instituted. The number of elective offices was reduced, and elections were made nonpartisan in many municipalities. Many patronage jobs were eliminated and civil service laws instituted. Voting was transformed "from a social duty to a private right."

All this was done in the name of making politics more rational and less emotional. Another motive, unmentioned by Schudson, may have been a fear that the American masses, augmented by recent immigrants from eastern and southern Europe, might do what the European masses seemed on the brink of doing: vote

for socialists or religious-ethnic parties. The gloomy elites, traumatized by the horrors of World War I and the seeming irrationality of the Versailles peace process, doubted that a mass electorate could ever make intelligent choices—this was the theme of Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922).

This new politics of "the informed citizen" had the effect of *reducing* citizen involvement as measured by voter turnout. After peaking in the 1890s, turnout as a percentage of eligibles fell through most of the 20th century. It increased in the 1940s and 1950s, as the New Deal gave more Americans a pecuniary interest in government decisions and as decisions on war



The County Election, mezzotint by John Sartain after the painting by George Caleb Bingham

and peace made government supremely important in many people's lives. The new peak was reached in 1960, though it was still below the turnout of 1908, much less 1896. Even in 1960, elites lamented that voters were behaving irrationally—basing their choices on the candidates' TV performances in the Kennedy-Nixon debates rather than their ability or stances. Schudson takes a sunnier view, pointing out that both candidates set out their positions in clear language. The author makes the refreshingly original argument that serious political ideas can be presented briefly and comprehensibly, citing the Gettysburg Address and *Federalist* 10. To that list I would add many (not all) political cartoons and 30-second TV spots.

Turnout has dropped since 1960, to the

consternation of many. Schudson is less troubled. He believes we live in an era of rights-oriented politics, in which judges and other unelected arbiters often wield more power than elected officials. He sees its beginning in Justice Harlan Stone's famous footnote 4 in *United States v. Carolene Products* (1937). The Supreme Court declined (and still declines) to say that all the guarantees of the Bill of Rights bind state governments as firmly as the federal government. But Stone set forth three situations in which courts should closely scrutinize laws passed by legislatures: when the laws seem to violate a constitutional provision, when they restrict the political process itself, and when they are directed at religious, national, or racial minorities.

The *Carolene Products* footnote was the seed whose fruit includes *Brown v. Board of Education* and other decisions outlawing racial segregation, as well as the one-person-one-vote redistricting decisions. These, Schudson argues, in turn helped inspire movements for women's rights, welfare rights, workplace rights (of much more importance today than unions, which represent only 10 percent of private-sector workers), abortion rights, and gay rights. To this list he adds the almost unanimously supported laws that marked the end of the baby boom and the "privileging" (as many would have it) of the two-parent family: the withdrawal of preferred treatment for married couples in the income tax law in 1969, and the early-1970s stampede to no-fault divorce (the first such law was signed by Governor Ronald Reagan). Much of this could have been written in the 1970s and 1980s, and indeed was written in Daniel Yankelevich's book *New Rules* (1981).

While conceding that rights consciousness "incurs real social costs" and "burdens institutional capacities," the author seems to pass lightly over some major shifts in American politics. Rights-based law is inherently elitist and undemocratic and centralized. It encourages political passivity and nonvoting, and it sets one rule for a diverse nation. But the great movement of American society over the last 30 years has been away from centralization and toward

decentralization. In many important ways, today's postindustrial America more closely resembles the preindustrial America that Tocqueville described—decentralized, individualistic, culturally varied—than the industrial America in which most of us grew up—dominated by big government, big business, and big labor; culturally (mostly) uniform.

Rights-based lawgivers have used the judiciary and the federal government to impose policies favored by university-trained elites. But that control has been fraying as ordinary people have begun to question the purported expertise of the elites. We can see the results today, as elite policies on welfare, education, crime, and gun control are being challenged, often clumsily but with increasing success, by local citizens.

"Has the rise of rights-based liberalism in America established a democratic home but failed to educate anyone fit to inhabit it?" Schudson asks. "My own sense is that the rise of the rights-regarding citizen has done more to enhance democracy than to endanger it." But much of that democratic action—more than he seems to realize—is devoted to destroying the rights-based policies of national liberal elites. One wonders whether an author who chides us for having only "a lagging welfare state" and criticizes our "absurd inequalities of wealth" entirely approves of the results.

Schudson is on firmer and less partisan ground when he tries to calm those alarmed by low voter turnout. He reminds us that turnout was low in the colonial and federal eras, highest in the emotion-ridden era of party politics, and then declined with the onset of progressive policies championed by most bemoaners of low turnout. The fact is that turnout has been relatively level since the sharp drops between the presidential elections of 1968 and 1972 and the off-year elections of 1970 and 1974. That period of abrupt decline coincided with enactment of a constitutional amendment entitling 18-year-olds to vote, which lowered turnout significantly (because relatively few people aged 18 to 20 vote) but which does not account for the total decline. It also coincided with the

end of the relatively egalitarian distribution of income that prevailed from 1947 to 1973, with the onset of inflation and the low economic growth of the years 1973–82, with the cultural revolution that produced no-fault divorce, and with the growing emphasis on abortion and other noneconomic issues. It coincided, in other words, with the change from an industrial America dominated by big government, big business, and big labor to a postindustrial America that is more decentralized, more culturally various, more Tocquevillian. And a Tocquevillian America without the strong parties of the Jackson era does not seem to produce the high turnouts of the 1830s.

Which may not be so bad. “Citizens can be monitorial rather than informed,” Schudson argues. In a time when war does not rage and economic survival is not threatened, sensible people can go about their business just keeping a weather eye out for political trouble. In-depth news about politics and government is available, and in increasingly diverse forms, but citizens are free to consult it only when they need it (television news ratings spiked upward with the onset of the Persian Gulf

War). It is easy to vote in America—far easier than it was 35 years ago, when states required up to two years’ residency for voters and almost half of all blacks were barred from the polling places. Registering to vote today is as simple as getting a driver’s license—indeed, one can register while getting a driver’s license. How many Americans sit at home unable to go anywhere because they haven’t had a chance to get to the motor vehicle bureau?

Yet as painless as voting is, half of all Americans don’t bother. Is there any reason to believe that the political process would be improved by the votes of people so little interested in civic life? Those decrying low turnout must assume there is. Not so Schudson. “Monitorial citizens,” he writes, “have no more virtue than citizens of the past—but not less, either.” Democracy will never be perfect and the citizenry can always stand improvement, but Schudson argues persuasively that we have less to bemoan than many think.

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Chronicler of a Dying World

ANTON CHEKHOV:
A Life.

By Donald Rayfield. Henry Holt. 674 pp. \$35

CHEKHOV:
The Hidden Ground.

By Philip Callow. Ivan R. Dee. 428 pp. \$30

by Clive Davis

At the end of the 1880s, after he had already enjoyed success with his short stories and his first full-length play, *Ivanov*, Anton Chekhov submitted a new work for the stage, *The Wood Demon*. Back came an abruptly frank rejection from the actor-manager Alexander Lensky: “I will say only one thing: write tales. You refer scornfully to the stage and to dramatic form. You esteem them too little to write a play.” Although the play was eventually

taken up by another company—Chekhov was too desperate for a 500-ruble advance to refuse the offer—the clumsy production was comprehensively ridiculed and closed after just three performances. Bruised by the entire experience, Chekhov refused to allow *The Wood Demon* to be published.

But this is not the usual tale of a strong-willed genius thwarted by hacks and philistines. As the English novelist and poet Philip Callow records in his thoughtful

biography, Chekhov was sufficiently self-critical to agree with Lensky about his lukewarm attitude toward the theater: "I haven't got the time, the talent, nor, probably, enough love of the craft for it." Eventually *The Wood Demon* was reworked and transformed—by a process of alchemy which, as both Callow and Donald Rayfield admit, remains mysterious—into the work we know as *Uncle Vanya*.

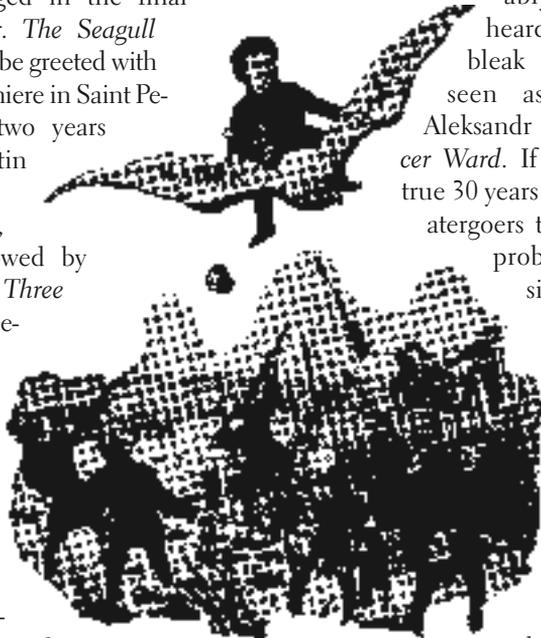
A century later, we acknowledge Chekhov as the father of modern theater. Yet one of the more fascinating aspects of his short life—he died of tuberculosis at 44 in 1904—is that the plays for which he is remembered emerged in the final phase of his career. *The Seagull* appeared in 1896, to be greeted with bafflement at its premiere in Saint Petersburg. Revived two years later by Konstantin Stanislavsky's new Moscow Art Theatre, it was swiftly followed by *Uncle Vanya* and *Three Sisters*. The most celebrated of all Chekhov's works, *The Cherry Orchard*, opened in January 1904; less than six months later its creator was dead. As in the case of Gustav Mahler, another figure who simultaneously looks to the old certainties of the 19th century and to the convulsions of our own age, Chekhov's journey was cut short.

Chekhov is, as Callow declares in the final line of his study, as modern as the new century before us. The knowledge that the playwright's widow, the actress Olga Knipper, survived him by more than 50 years prompts tantalizing thoughts of what might have been. Then again, we also know only too well what befell Chekhov's ineffectual squires and aristocrats in the first half of this century. If his admirer, the resourceful and tirelessly proletarian Maxim Gorky, could be ground down by the routine brutality of Lenin and Stalin, what hope would

there have been for Chekhov? Harrowing though it may be, his factual report on a tsarist penal colony, *The Island of Sakhalin* (the fruit of a heroic journey of discovery to the Far East in 1890), pales in comparison with almost any page taken at random from the recent accounts of the Soviet Revolution by the historians Richard Pipes and Orlando Figes.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of both new biographies is that they help bring Chekhov's short stories back into focus. One of Chekhov's translators and biographers, Ronald Hingley, once remarked that of every 20 English people who have seen *The Cherry Orchard*, probably 15 have never heard of "Ward No. 6," a bleak tale that has been seen as a precursor of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Cancer Ward*. If that comment was true 30 years ago, the ratio of theatergoers to prose readers has probably risen sharply since then. (One of the hottest tickets in London last year was for David Hare's adaptation of *Ivanov*—although no doubt the presence of Ralph Fiennes in the title role had something to do with the success.) Yet in "Ward No. 6" or "The Lady with the Dog," that beautifully chiseled, enigmatic tale of adultery, Chekhov bequeathed us images of his society as compelling as any to be found in the plays.

Part of Chekhov's attraction is that he was more than a man of letters. Born into a lowly family in the southern port of Taganrog, he studied medicine and qualified as a general practitioner. Since his father, Pavel, had shown little acumen as a shopkeeper, it had long been apparent that he and his brothers would have to rely on their own wits. Chekhov learned this lesson in his midteens, when his father decamped to Moscow (where his two eldest sons were studying) in the hope of



escaping his ruinous financial problems. Chekhov's mother joined him soon afterward. The young scholar was left to cope in Taganrog for the next three years. Decades later, Rayfield observes, the playwright channeled his memories of the family's travails into the plot of *The Cherry Orchard*, the inexorable dissolution of Mme. Ranevsky's household mirroring the indignities endured by Chekhov and his relations.

Years later, even after he had established himself first as a critic-journalist and then as an author, Chekhov remained ambivalent about his vocation as a writer. He could be as ruthless as any exponent of art for art's sake in subordinating his personal relations to his craft; marriage to Olga Knipper came only at the end of his life. At other times, all too aware of his duty to support his relations, he could find ample solace in practicing medicine.

At least in our imagination, the archetypal Russian writer is a noisy, domineering figure, as much evangelist as author. We tend to think of the all-embracing philosophizing of Tolstoy, the tormented mysticism of Dostoyevsky, or, in the present day, the tireless exhortations of Solzhenitsyn. Chekhov is a very different case. Callow describes how, during one of Chekhov's recurrent bouts of illness, the writer received a sickbed visit from Tolstoy. Ignoring the clinic's 10-minute time limit on visits, not to mention the patient's obvious exhaustion, the great man subjected him to a half-hour monologue ranging from immorality to aesthetics. Chekhov, too weak to offer much response and too diffident to ask the visitor to leave, suffered another hemorrhage early the next morning.

Chekhov's aversion to speechifying, his unerring ability to disappear behind his work, appeals to modern readers. That skill did not prevent him from wondering, in moments of intense self-doubt, whether he possessed the temperament of a true artist. Self-deprecation and self-mockery became a form of armor, writes Callow: "He was a perfect example of the kind of artist defined by Auden as an Alice, in a scheme the poet derived from *Alice in Won-*

derland. 'Alices never make a fuss. Like all human beings they suffer, but they are stoics who do not weep or lose their temper, or undress in public. Though they are generally people with stout moral standards, they are neither preachers nor reformers. They can be sharp, usually in an ironical manner, and tender, but the passionate outburst is not for them.' Auden's chiding of artistic pretensions—'Art is small beer'—would have pleased him, as would Auden's reason for writing, 'to try to organize my scattered thoughts of living into a whole, to relate everything to everything else.'"

If all this gives the impression that Chekhov is a candidate for sainthood, Rayfield sets out to present a fully rounded portrait. In the age of Kitty Kelley, that may lead us to expect revelations of all manner of debauchery, but Rayfield's accumulation of domestic detail—largely gleaned from Chekhov's sprawling correspondence—reveals nothing to interest the *National Enquirer*. Though no stranger to prostitutes, Chekhov seems to have had difficulty sustaining a full physical relationship with women who were close to him. As he himself explained, talking of the female sex in uncharacteristically coarse terms, "You screw her once, but the next time you can't get it in. I have all the equipment, but I don't function—my talent is buried in the ground." While there is certainly a self-centered streak to Chekhov's treatment of the women around him, particularly his loyal sister Mariya, this is not the stuff of grand juries. And we should not forget that his determination to preserve his inner peace was also the act of a man who knew that illness would claim him sooner rather than later.

There is no shortage of domestic color in Rayfield's narrative. Professor of Russian Literature at Queen Mary & Westfield College in London and the author of *Chekhov: The Evolution of His Art* (1975), Rayfield spent three years in the archives, and he possesses unassailable knowledge of his subject. Yet the book refuses to come to life, in part because Rayfield is determined to keep the man and the artist almost entirely separate.

"Biography is not criticism," he declares in his preface. Plays and stories alike are passed over at breathless speed. Rayfield prefers to lunge from phase to phase of Chekhov's domestic life, working his way forward in brief chapters based on almost a day-by-day chronology. Friends and relations wander in and out of the narrative, and we learn how many pounds of pork breast and candles were delivered to Chekhov's Melikhovo estate on April 15, 1893. It is not long before the reader is overwhelmed with data, some important, much trivial. Of course, there is plenty to mull over here at conferences and Russian lit seminars, but notwithstanding the generous praise from Arthur Miller on the dust jacket, the general reader is likely to fall by the wayside long before journey's end.

Callow, by contrast, brings a novelist's lighter touch to the proceedings. Though he has not studied Russian and has never visited Chekhov's homeland, he sketches vignettes that bear eloquent tribute to a

writer who bore "the stigma of genius." Callow openly acknowledges his debt to Rayfield's two studies, but makes a much more satisfactory job of sculpting the raw material. If his book is unlikely to displace V. S. Pritchett's earlier biography, it still offers an elegant introduction to an enigmatic chronicler of a dying world.

"Enigmatic" indeed seems an understatement where Chekhov is concerned. Both biographers address the perennial argument over the comic element in the plays. On the surface, Chekhov's own views appear explicit: *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Seagull* are both described in the text as comedies. Stanislavsky seems to have preferred to see all of the late dramas as essentially tragic. Subsequent generations have had their own views. Almost a hundred years later, we are still listening to the laughter in the dark.

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History

SECRECY: The American Experience.

By Daniel Patrick Moynihan.
Yale Univ. Press. 265 pp. \$22.50

Chairing a congressional commission on government secrecy in 1996, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) appended to its report one of the more brilliant historical essays to be found in the huge and generally lackluster archives of committee prints. Now he has expanded that essay into a book, providing a broader context for, and bringing new urgency to, the growing debate over how much secrecy the government needs.

Whatever may have been true in Asian despotisms or even in Europe, in the United States secrecy developed as a consequence of the great international conflicts of the 20th century, with that development most extensive during the administration of Woodrow Wilson. In 1915, Wilson called on Congress to pass laws to "crush out" those "born under other flags . . . who have poured the poison of disloyalty into the very arteries of our national life." "No president," Moynihan observes severely,

"had ever spoken like that before; none has since." Upon declaring war with Germany in 1917, Congress passed the Espionage Act. A clause granting extensive powers of censorship, for which Wilson lobbied passionately, was struck from the bill in the Senate by a single vote, but the penalties in the law remained harsh. A year later, Congress passed the even more severe Sedition Act, under which Eugene V. Debs, presidential candidate of the Socialist Party, was sentenced to 10 years in prison; a film producer was convicted because his movie, *The Spirit of '76*, was "anti-British"; and a minister got 15 years for suggesting that Jesus was a pacifist.

As well as pointing to such excesses of the past, Moynihan develops the housekeeping case for limiting government secrecy: far too many documents are classified and many are overclassified, practices that are expensive and wasteful. While the Clinton administration has reduced the number of officers and officials classifying documents, the number of documents classified has gone up. Higher productivity!

But the author is not principally concerned with housekeeping. He argues that secrecy is bad in itself. For one thing, it protects incompetence. He castigates the Central Intelligence Agency for its long string of blunders, from misjudging Fidel Castro's strength to failing to foresee the collapse of the Soviet Union. (Moynihan himself predicted that event as early as 1984.) He questions whether the Agency deserves to survive, and mocks President Clinton's suggestion that it mobilize against drug smugglers. To do that, Moynihan says acidly, it would have to compete with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

The author does not contend that all secrecy is bad. "We are not going to put an end to secrecy, nor should we. But a culture of secrecy . . . need not remain the norm." He agrees with George F. Kennan, who, after spending a lifetime at the heart of the secret relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, concluded that 95 percent of what we need to know about foreign countries could be obtained "by careful and competent study of perfectly legitimate sources" in American libraries.

Moynihan has forcefully initiated a debate on how much secrecy the government needs. And he has made a persuasive opening argument that the quantum should be minimal.

—Godfrey Hodgson

EXPLAINING HITLER.

By Ron Rosenbaum. Random House. 496 pp. \$30

Explaining Hitler tests the proposition that a book should not be judged by its cover. Rosenbaum's cover features a picture of a cuddly infant Adolf Hitler. The photograph is a distasteful provocation, but it is consistent with the author's attempt to jolt readers out of assumptions about the career of the Führer.

Rosenbaum seeks to show that the origins of Hitler's evil remain unclear. The author maintains that nothing about the development of Hitler's character should be assumed, that motives have been retroactively ascribed to Hitler that he may never have possessed, and that these ascriptions explain more about the would-be explainer than about Hitler himself. Was the man an idealist supremely convinced of his own rectitude, or a clever mountebank, an actor lusting for power who ruthlessly exploited both his camarilla and his nation for personal gratification?

In the hope of answering such questions,

Rosenbaum examines in minute detail an academic subfield that might be called Hitlerology. He has produced, you might say, a book about the books about Hitler. No theory seems too obscure, no notion too bizarre, no proposition too outlandish, for Rosenbaum to examine, ponder, and remark upon it with a kind of tender solicitude. The chapter subtitles give a taste of his method: "In which we meet two generations of Hitler family con artists." Or: "In which we unearth a lost classic of Hitler explanation by a murdered explainer." The wackiness of Rosenbaum's quest makes for a strangely engrossing book.

Rosenbaum, an author and *New York Observer* columnist devotes much of his energy to chapter-long conversations with Alan Bullock, Hugh Trevor-Roper, George Steiner, Berel Lang, and other Hitler scholars. He paints a less than flattering portrait of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, the author of *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (1996), who, when caught in a contradiction, ends the interview with a feeble excuse about contractual obligations to his publisher. And he contrasts Bullock, who wrote the classic biography of Hitler as adventurer, with Trevor-Roper, who continues to see Hitler as the dupe of his own beliefs. The peculiar paths many



of these sessions stray onto is perhaps exemplified by Steiner's outrageous remarks. "The horror of the thing [Auschwitz] is we have lowered the threshold of mankind," he said, adding: "We are that which has shown mankind to be ultimately bestial."

When Rosenbaum plunges into the murk of competing Freudian theorists, the longueurs arrive. Several of these theorists see the genesis of the Final Solution in Hitler's supposed coprophilic urges for his niece; others, in his rage at a Jewish doctor who diagnosed (misdiagnosed?) his mother, Klara. Some readers may find the extensive chart of the prices and weight of iodoform gauze bought in five-meter strips in Austria in 1907 more instructive than others.

Rosenbaum's most illuminating chapter—it

alone makes his book must-reading—centers on a newspaper, the *Munich Post*, that relentlessly attacked Hitler before he came to power. “The running battle between Hitler and the courageous reporters and editors of the *Post*,” writes Rosenbaum, “is one of the great unreported dramas in the history of journalism—and a long-erased chapter in the chronology of attempts to explain Adolf Hitler.” The editors knew full well that Hitler was not just an adventurer but a fanatical ideologue. Rosenbaum shows that the newspaper produced numerous exposés of sexual scandals in the Nazi Party, and even a dispatch, on December 9, 1931, about a plan for the extermination of German Jews: “For the final solution of the Jewish question it is proposed to use the Jews in Germany for slave labor or for cultivation of the German swamps administered by a special SS division.” There is a bracing clarity to the *Post*’s portrayal of Hitler that seems to have gotten lost in much of the of modern scholarship so carefully chronicled by Rosenbaum.

—Jacob Heilbrunn

MY GERMAN QUESTION:

Growing Up in Nazi Berlin.

By Peter Gay. Yale Univ. Press. 208 pp.

\$22.50

Historian Peter Gay introduces this memoir of his youth in Nazi Berlin and his family’s forced emigration with an epigraph from Christopher Marlowe’s *Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*: “Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it.” In adding to the sky-high stack of Holocaust-related memoirs of recent years, the eminent chronicler of the Victorian era seeks to create something more complex and subtle than merely another tale of suffering. Gay wants to sketch two essentially interior landscapes: first, the psychological and behavioral effects of what he experienced during those years of ceaseless Nazi propaganda and gathering threat; second, the terrifying pressures and obstacles that allowed so many German Jews to wait in seeming passivity for disaster to strike.

The image of lambs-to-the-slaughter paralysis still angers him—although his father in fact mustered his nerve and got the family out in 1939. “‘It was all in *Mein Kampf*’ has long been the litany of our detractors, who, without an inkling of what uprooting oneself meant and how hard it was to read the signals, reproached me or my parents for not having packed up on January 30, 1933, and left the

country the same day,” Gay writes. This is one of the few passages where we glimpse the abiding rage that the Nazi experience instilled in him, together with an arsenal of ways to repress it. When he first stepped on American soil, “Berlin seemed far away, but that was an illusion; for years I would pick fragments of it from my skin as though I had wallowed among shards of broken glass.”

The rage and repression are his true subject. In showing how it really was—not just the wounds to the psyche but the psyche’s self-protective, shrinking responses—he will rebut the simple-minded critique of those who behaved as his parents did. But the approach doesn’t quite work. The author dwells at length on the details of his defiantly normal daily life between 1933 and 1939, when his parents finally won passage on a boat to Havana. (They ultimately joined relatives in the United States.) We hear of his many “strategies” for hiding from the storm outside—his obsessive stamp collecting and sports watching; his early, entirely ordinary sexual fantasies. But without corresponding details of the storm outside, these details are just that: ordinary.

Gay remains oddly reticent about the storm itself, as if still partly in the grip of the insulating strategies that served him so well. Though there are flashes of horror, most descriptions are carefully general: “Sly and gross in turn, the anti-Semitic propaganda campaigns, calculated to drive us to despair, were so incessant, so repetitious, so all-embracing that it was nearly impossible to escape them.” Many key moments have escaped his memory entirely, from what he did in the evening after seeing the devastation of Kristallnacht to how he felt the day in April 1938 when he was forced to leave school. And the crucial matter of how his parents made the decision to emigrate—how they balanced the terrors of staying with the terrors ahead—is, to the reader’s surprise, never directly discussed. Is it because Gay does not know what his parents, now deceased, were thinking in those dark times? Or is it some deeper reluctance?

In the afterword, he writes that the memoir has been “the least exhilarating” of his many writing projects, and that, contrary to cliché, plumbing his traumas has brought no catharsis. For the reader, too, this otherwise graceful work of analysis lacks the vividness that could create true empathy.

—Amy E. Schwartz

FATHER INDIA:
How Encounters with an Ancient Culture Transformed the Modern West.

By Jeffery Paine. HarperCollins. 336 pp. \$25

“Desperate souls flee to India,” Paine observes in this engaging book about such desperation and flight, about escape euphemized, disguised, and in some cases realized as quest. *Father India* is a perceptive emotional audit of Western travelers “who quit more comfortable conditions to find somewhere, somehow, in India, an alternative track through modernity” that would help them fathom, if not transform, both themselves and the West.

Paine’s pilgrims—including statesmen, novelists, and psychologists—all shared the conviction that India, “conceived as something simultaneously geographical and intellectual, both an outward and inward location,” might provide powerful understandings of psychological, social, and transcendental realities. The dramatis personae of *Father India* are Lord Curzon, Annie Besant, E. M. Forster, V. S. Naipaul, Christopher Isherwood, and, clustered around Gandhi, other such Westerners as Mirabeau and Martin Luther King, Jr. A supporting cast includes Lord Kitchener, Madame Blavatsky, C. W. Leadbeater, Mirra Richard, Carl Jung, and William Butler Yeats.



There are also cameo appearances by Sri Aurobindo, Cesar Chavez, Krishnamurti, and many more.

These characters represent various modes of confrontation with India: “Forster in his Indian costume or Naipaul with his Indian heritage attempted an Indian-western fusion at the personal level of their own identity; Curzon and Besant attempted such a fusion politically through changing social institutions... [Isherwood and others] melded East-West religious ideas about the universe.” Forster and Naipaul are further typified as “unofficial ambassadors of European civilization on a safari in search of self.” Upon arrival in the distant land of sundry promises, all these seekers “started projecting onto India the unconscious assumptions of their religion, their society, or their own identity.” But if India was, for them, a kind of Rorschach test, it was also shock treatment: “Obstacles were in fact what most travelers encountered in India.”

While religion, politics, and psychology are the explicit themes around which the book is structured, the leitmotif, the unruly power underlying and connecting these thematic realms, is sex. To one degree or another, most of the characters in the book have a problem with pleasure. The essay on Isherwood at the Vedanta Society in Hollywood exposes the two sides of one desperate soul: “the holy monk and the gay libertine.” The Indian endeavors of Forster, Kitchener, Leadbeater, and others are understood in light of their homosexuality. Discussion of the sexual ambivalences of Gandhi, Besant, and practically everyone else uncovers the intimate impulses behind public postures.

Orphaned by their Western heritage and looking to “Father India” for guidance, authority, or even love, most of these travelers struggle with desire. In that tussle, they suffer a transformative ache and loneliness to which Paine is acutely sensitive. His portraits illuminate the folly inherent in the genius of his subjects and, at the same time, the genius that transforms their folly.

—Lee Siegel

Science & Technology

FRANKENSTEIN'S FOOTSTEPS:
Science, Genetics and Popular Culture.

By Jon Turney. Yale Univ. Press. 276 pp. \$30

When 18-year-old Mary Wollstonecraft

Shelley wrote a horror story for her companions one rainy summer day alongside Lake Geneva, none of them could have imagined what lay in store for her tale. Western thought had long

known Prometheus, Faust, the Golem. Shelley's story, and her expansion of it into a three-volume novel in 1818, warned of poisonous fruits in the garden of new scientific knowledge.

Just as the book *Frankenstein* marked a transition from gothic to science fiction genres, so its protagonist was an intermediate figure, an occultist turned science student putting new concepts in the service of ancient fantasies. As a dropout from the University of Ingolstadt, Victor Frankenstein was not a scientist in the later 19th-century sense but a wealthy gentleman-amateur who apparently had no intention of joint-stock monsterfarming. The historian of science James Secord has noted the period's flourishing country-house hobby of attempting to create living things with electricity. Only a decade after the novel appeared, Justus Liebig's laboratory at the University of Giessen began to show the industrial and agricultural potential of professionalized, organized science.

Shelley's creation might have receded to a paragraph or two in Romantic literature survey texts, like other paleo-thrillers. The daunting original strikes many 20th-century readers as a stretched-out short story adorned with implausibly eloquent declamations by the monster. Yet the same fictional monster, minus soliloquies, has astonished the world. To adapt biologist Richard Dawkins's much later concept, it has become a "memester," one of those cultural constructs spread so widely by word and picture that it has taken on a life of its own. While the story soon became a favorite of the London stage, it was, appropriately, new technology that gave the monster new life: James Whale's 1931 film (based on a modern London theatrical revival), in which Boris Karloff created one of the century's most persistent visual icons. The film also showed the money in monsters, earning the studio \$12 million on an investment of \$250,000.

Turney, who teaches in the University of London science studies program, fears that the pervasive image of the demented scientist or promoter who produces grotesque results (H. G. Wells and his Dr. Moreau, Michael Crichton and his sinister entrepreneur John Hammond) is far from benign alarmism. Turney traces the Frankenstein metaphor through generations of scientific research and imaginative literature on the future of genetics, including Karel Capek's *R.U.R.* 1921 drama (which introduced the word *robot* into non-Slavic dictionaries), and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New*

World (1932).

Turney argues convincingly that the monster metaphor impedes clear thinking and debate on issues of biotechnology. And he cites a study by Michael Mulkay suggesting that science's critics may no longer be the chief culprits. In the finest traditions of unintended consequences, scientists themselves now invoke the monster metaphor to chill discussion of risks by imputing vulgar fears to opponents and critics. The flesh-and-blood Creature is turning into a straw man.

Monsters are notoriously resilient, as viewers of horror film sequels will attest. Putting Mary Shelley and H. G. Wells out of mind is like the famous psychological experiment of not thinking about a white bear for 10 minutes. Only other vivid images can displace the unwanted one. Until they do, Turney's impressively researched, well-argued book will be essential reading.

—Edward Tenner

**ALIEN INVASION:
*America's Battle with Non-Native
Animals and Plants.***

By Robert Devine. National Geographic Books. 288 pp. \$24

The nation's least-known environmental problem is becoming one of the more menacing ones. Exotic species are running amok, driving native species to extinction, degrading natural ecosystems, threatening the public health with diseases that even Hollywood hasn't discovered. In a cross-country tour to survey the damage, Devine, a journalist, found plenty of evidence of this ecological crisis. He met embattled farmers, botanists, zoologists, scientists, and gardeners, as well as a Sonoma County vintner whose harvest was eaten by herds of wild pigs.



Zebra mussels, which came to America in ships' holds, clog filtration systems and kill clams, but they are also a favored food source of some species, including blue crabs.

Most non-native species—wheat, soybeans, oranges, tomatoes, rice, apples, and irises, for instance—cause no trouble. The danger comes from plants that are “invasive,” a term that is difficult to define because so many imponderables can turn nice plants nasty. For nearly 50 years, Floridians put Asian fig plants in their gardens without incident. A few years ago, the figs suddenly began spreading. It turned out that the plant’s natural pollinator, an Asian wasp, had followed its host to the United States.

Invasive non-native species in the United States date back to the 19th century and before. Ben Franklin brought in Chinese tallow for the production of candle wax; it now overruns bottomland forests and wet prairies in the South. In the 1880s the federal government imported carp; the so-called “wonder fish of Europe” turned out to be a worthless predator here. Ornithologists returned with European house sparrows that rapidly fattened on agricultural crops. Belatedly, restaurant owners put sparrows on the menu, a New York newspaper claimed they made excellent pot pie, and the state of Michigan offered a penny per dead bird. Still the sparrows flourished.

The prize for introducing the greatest number of non-native species goes to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. By 1923 it had introduced more than 50,000 exotic plants, among them crabgrass. Today, an agency within the Department of Agriculture is responsible for checking the millions of ships, plants, and packages that may be transporting larvae, bugs the size of a comma, seeds, even microscopic pathogens. Naturally, aliens sometimes slip through. Serrated tussock, a noxious weed, arrived in packages of seeds from Argentina via Wal-Mart. The Asian tiger mos-

quito, a carrier of several deadly diseases, came in a shipment of used tires.

After decades of ignoring or underestimating the invasion by non-native species, citizens have begun to take action. The Nature Conservancy, the Audubon Society, and even the Garden Club of America (a longtime hold-out) now support the crusade, and many gardeners are switching to native plants. Still, powerful forces stand in the way of change. Congress remains largely unaware of the problem. Animal activists protest whenever a creature, however harmful, is killed. For fun or profit, people still smuggle in dangerous species as pets: tarantulas, geckos, hissing cockroaches. Nurseries resist changing their inventory of invasive plants—such as purple loosestrife, now among the nation’s most destructive—because they’re easy to grow and thus easy to sell.

Devine believes that the menace can be contained. But how? “Biocontrol,” the deliberate introduction of the predators and parasites a species leaves at home, has not worked well so far, mostly because the agents end up attacking species other than their targets. Pesticides do the same; companies like Monsanto produce wide-spectrum chemicals to maximize profits. And global warming may exacerbate the problem, the author observes: species now confined to southern climes, such as fire ants and “killer” bees, will likely travel north as the temperature rises.

Calm but not blasé, amused by the attendant ironies but never flippant, Devine observes closely and writes with dramatic intensity. He makes such a compelling case for the problem that only his optimism about its solution seems unwarranted.

—A. J. Hewat

Arts & Letters

STEPHEN SONDHEIM: *A Life*.

By Meryle Secrest. Knopf. 480 pp. \$30

Sondheim is the pre-eminent musical dramatist of our time, and not merely because there are no competitors for the title; he would wear the crown even in a stadium of rivals. Now in his late sixties, he merits the tribute Secrest has paid him, a full-scale life in print.

Sondheim was born in 1930 in New York City, grew up on the West Side of Manhattan in upper-middle-class privilege, and went to private schools and Williams College. He was

the product of a troubled marriage—an infertile father who one day simply walked out on his difficult wife to live with another woman—and his childhood would send him into permanent analysis as an adult. He found encouragement for his musical talent from the lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II, a mentor and a second father.

By the time he was 25, Sondheim was working with Leonard Bernstein on the lyrics for *West Side Story*. He wrote the lyrics for other shows (*Gypsy*, to the music of Jule Styne, and

Do I Hear a Waltz?, to the music of Richard Rodgers), but he aspired to be composer as well as lyricist. From that ambition came three decades of marvelous scores for Broadway, as well as fame, riches, influence, and, quite late, love. Not all the shows were successful, but the recorded scores have a contained and absolute life apart from the fate of the productions that introduced them.

Art isn't easy, sings the cast of *Sunday in the Park with George*, and neither are artists. This is not exactly news (even Homer probably wanted better wine and a softer pillow from his hosts), but it is the largest truth delivered by Secrest's biography. In the creation of a Broadway musical, many of Sondheim's collaborators over the decades (Bernstein, Rodgers, Jerome Robbins,

Harold Prince, Ethel Merman) butt egos like billy goats. That such insecure, petty, jealous, backstabbing folks produce work that gives great pleasure to others is one of life's enduring mysteries.

Sondheim himself is, in the biographer's telling, closed,

demanding, arrogant, overly sensitive, mean, repressed, awkward—and brilliant, charming, and companionable too. The unattractive personal traits become the treasureable subjects of his art, as in *Sunday in the Park with George*, where he is clearly the model for Georges Seurat, the artist obsessed with “finishing the hat” in a painting at the cost of living a normal life.

There is no music in Secrest's book, of course, and the ingenious lyrics meant to sit upon the music—Sondheim once rhymed *raisins* with *liaisons* and made their conjunction poignant—look merely plain upon the page. What's interesting about Sondheim is his work, not his work habits, and an hour spent listening to any one of the scores, particularly *Company*, *Follies*, *Sweeney Todd*, or *Sunday in the Park with George*, will work more magic than all Secrest's dutiful chronology. The daily

Sondheim is here; the Sondheim who matters, and who will be remembered when everyone has forgotten that he did not get on with his mother, is elsewhere.

—James Morris

DIFFERENCES IN THE DARK.

By Michael Gilmore. Columbia Univ. Press. 192 pp. \$22.50

Imagine John Wayne under West End lights, and you begin to understand the vast divide between the English stage and the American movie set. Gilmore undertakes far more than a simple compare-and-contrast exercise in *Differences in the Dark*, his compact exploration of the theater and the movies as symbols of their respective national characters. These forms of entertainment didn't evolve as they did by accident, he argues. Rather, they reflect and even explain each country's history and politics.

Developing his case through 30 or so subdivisions bearing such titles as “Abundance and Scarcity,” “Climate,” and “Jews,” Gilmore first establishes the relationships between entertainment and nation. He aligns the movies with Americans' individualism, hunger to conquer new physical frontiers, and rapture for technological advance. British theater, by contrast, protects community and collective memory from the encroachments of a high-tech (and often Americanized) world.

Beyond these generalizations, well-supported and persuasive as they are, Gilmore plumbs the specific differences between the two media. In one essay, he suggests that despite their love of nature, Americans “wanted their wilderness ‘conquered,’ the frontier ‘tamed,’ and the physical world improved upon.” By appearing so realistic, “the cinema imports antinaturalism into mass culture under the cover of nature.” The English, by contrast, embrace nature through their love of gardens, grass tennis courts, and live rather than celluloid dramatic performances. While these miniarguments exhibit occasional weaknesses—isn't the British garden the ultimate symbol of “wilderness conquered”?—most display the author's insight and creativity.

Gilmore's larger ambition is to draw movies and drama into political spheres. He explores the influence of Britain's class hierarchy on its theater and the effects of racial discrimination on American cinema since D.



W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915). And he finds parallels between today's "American cultural imperialism" and the British theater of the late 19th century. Imperialism, he suggests, requires that the population at large be essentially passive, feeling neither involved in nor responsible for events on the world's stage. And, Gilmore triumphantly points out, British imperial theaters kept the audience far removed from the actors, a characteristic he finds in modern American cineplexes as well.

Always fair, Gilmore takes pains to point out that the United States, "using trade rather than takeover," built an empire more durable than Britain's. Without declaring a preference for either theater or movies ("both seem to me both admirable and indefensible"), he gives us a small, rich production that deserves applause from both sides of the Atlantic.

—Dillon Teachout

THE BAD DAUGHTER:
Betrayal and Confession.

By Julie Hilden. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill. 198 pp. \$18.95

Memoirs are the rage. Readers turn to them instead of fiction because, as life becomes more fragmented and isolated, people struggle ever harder to construct scales—hand held, jury-rigged, soldered from junkyard stuff—on which to weigh their lives. Good or bad, better or worse than others?

While the genre's range is broad, one popular subtype embraces those written by "bad" narrators—for example, Kathryn Harrison's *The Kiss*, or Caroline Knapp's *Drinking: A Love Story*. These confessional memoirists, test pilots of the psyche, break the taboo barrier at high speed and compete to tell the worst secret. Then, just when you think they're plummeting into something too alien, they pull out of the spin and redeem themselves by their undefended openness, their tenderness. They display a sudden uncanny and ultimately relieving resemblance to us. It's a conun-

drum of a genre, sometimes marvelous, sometimes bedeviling, whipped first one way and then the other by the apparently polarized (but, really, closely related) cultural values of "tell it all" versus "suck it up."

The Bad Daughter is a disturbing and disturbed addition to the genre. The only child of divorced parents, Hilden was left much too alone with an alcoholic mother who both badly neglected her and raged at her uncontrollably. She withdrew far into herself, turned to books and schoolwork, attended Harvard and Yale, and became a successful lawyer. Sometime during her adolescence, her mother developed Alzheimer's disease. In spite of many family pleas, Hilden refused to pause in schooling or career to care for her. This decision is the point on which the book turns. Hilden finds her act unbearable—and, like a scientist, she puts it on a slide and magnifies it for us to examine thoroughly.

She adds two subplots. One is her discovery that she may carry her mother's gene for the disease. The other is descriptions of her affairs with men. She equates her repetitive sexual betrayal of boyfriends with her betrayal of her mother. She may be right, but the equation seems too neat.

The Bad Daughter is well written, at times beautifully so, and very readable. Its accomplishment and its courage lie in the exactness of its depiction, and thus its ability to capture Hilden's terrible predicament. "It has come to define who I am," she writes: "the daughter who left her mother—the bad daughter, the one who did not stay." Sadly, though, the result is too narrowly unsettling. Once Hilden describes how her love for her mother died during adolescence, that loss—the real tragedy of her life—quietly dwarfs the rest of the text, making the book eerie. As you admire the exquisite detail, it dawns on you that the anatomy can be so fully rendered exactly because a heartbeat has been stilled.

—Janna Malamud Smith

Religion & Philosophy

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE SOUL:
A Study of the Origin, Conceptual Evolution, and Nature of the Soul.

By Otto Rank. Transl. by Gregory C. Richter and E. James Lieberman. Johns Hopkins Univ. Press. 176 pp. \$29.95

For 20 years, Otto Rank (1884-1939) was Sigmund Freud's pupil, colleague, and virtual foster son, until Rank did what sons always do and what Freud of all people should have expected: he rebelled against the father figure. Rank broke with Freud in the mid-1920s—in

part over Rank's insistence that all neurosis originates in the trauma of birth—and his subsequent work took Freud's ideas down paths the master could not walk.

Though it was antithetical to Freud's scientism and rejection of religion and philosophy, Rank insisted on the fundamental importance of the soul to any account of human psychology. *Psychology and the Soul* is Rank's idiosyncratic history of the evolution of humankind's relationship to the soul and to self-consciousness. He traces the generation of belief in the soul to the clash between the reality of the desire to live forever and the no-less-insistent reality of biological death. The painful collision of the two, and humankind's refusal to accept the finality of death, strikes in our consciousness a spark of "soul-belief." In varying forms, that belief has endured from the earliest stages of animism and the magic world-view of the primitive through the evolution of complex societies and complicated notions of consciousness.

Psychology is, in essence, the study of the soul. "The object of psychology is not facts," writes Rank, "but ideas created by soul-belief. . . . Psychology deals only with interpretations of soul phenomena." To be sure, this is not the traditional Christian or religious conception of soul. Indeed, Rank wrote, "the soul may not exist, and, like belief in immortality, may be mankind's greatest illusion." But illusion has its uses.

Psychology and the Soul is the first complete English translation of a work that Rank published in 1930 (as *Seelenglaube und Psychologie*). It draws on anthropology, sociology, mythology, religion, philosophy, history, and literature to chart the development of the human psyche. Figures such as Adam and Eve, Homer, Gilgamesh, Lohengrin, Shakespeare, and Faust pop up oddly in the course of the text. In due course, even physics bolsters the argument: the new physics of Rank's day rejected a rigidly deterministic causality, allowing him to claim for the psyche its dynamic shaping through the force of human will.

This is a short book, but there's no use pretending it's an easy one. For all the heroic labors and clarifying notation of the translators (Lieberman is clinical professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the George Washington University School of Medicine; Richter is a professor of foreign languages at Truman State University, Kirksville, Missouri), the argument often progresses over rocky ground. Still, the book's antimaterialis-

tic passion makes a compelling counterpoint to the stern biology of our age, and the bounds it sets to what psychoanalysis can claim are justly drawn: "Psychology can no more replace knowledge gained through thought than it can replace religion and morality." In that caution there is the good sense of the Rank who once told an admirer, "Read my books and put them away; read *Huckleberry Finn*, everything is there."

—James Morris

VIRTUAL FAITH: *The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X.*

By Tom Beaudoin. Jossey-Bass. 210 pp. \$22

Public brooding over the supposed anomie of Generation X—those born between 1965 and 1976—peaked in the early 1990s and seems, mercifully, to have waned. Movies (*Reality Bites*) and books (Douglas Coupland's *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*) chronicled the existentialist crises and unassuageable grievances of a new lost generation. Foremost among the themes was the desire to foist perfection upon an imperfect world while at the same time resisting individual discipline.

The secularized social activism of Gen X exemplifies that theme. Martin Luther defined the "freedom of a Christian" as manifest in one who is "a lord over all and a servant to all." In other words, as Harvard historian Steven Ozment has pointed out, knowledge of one's destiny and righteousness breeds the resolve, boldness, and self-mastery—hence the freedom—from which benevolence flows. In contemporary parlance, free people get their own act together before striving to right the world.

Many Gen X-ers, however, seem to lack the self-knowledge that is the prerequisite to effective charity, particularly any self-knowledge rooted in faith. For them, religious belief and commitment represent a betrayal of intellectual honesty, personal freedom, and chic cynicism. At the same time, the diversity of religious options induces in them a kind of spiritual vertigo, exacerbated by a watery respect for "tolerance." Many worship freedom of choice but have no basis on which to choose. The views of singer Sinéad O'Connor, a Generation X icon who ripped apart a photo of the pope on television, are illustrative: "I'm interested in all religions, and I don't believe in subscribing to one because I believe in order to subscribe to one, you've got to shut out all of the others." Two

paths diverge in a wood, and Generation X strives to follow both—to the detriment of coherent belief, or belief altogether.

In *Virtual Faith*, Beaudoin portrays Gen Xers as spiritual seekers on a quest for “theological clarity.” He argues that through little fault of their own, they have become creatures of evanescence, in thrall to videos, music, and fashion. Through his chilling description of identities in flux, of selves engulfed by the kaleidoscopic flood of pop culture, the author reminds us of the perils faced by a generation for whom so much is so precarious.

Oddly, though, Beaudoin depicts popular culture not as a flawed substitute for faith, but rather as a fount of religious significance. His characterization of Madonna as “a saint of liberation” on a par with Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena will strike many readers as a bit over the top. By attempting to discern a spiritual dimension in music videos, the author expands the concept of the religious so broadly as to lose all meaning. In this regard, Beaudoin offers the spiritually hungry not bread, but stone.

—Christopher Stump

Contemporary Affairs

FORTRESS AMERICA: The American Military and the Consequences of Peace.

By William Greider. Public Affairs Press.
208 pp. \$22

Greider, national editor of *Rolling Stone*, has seized on an important yet largely unexamined fact: despite the absence of any significant overt threat, the United States has chosen to remain the world’s dominant military power. A decade after winning the Cold War, in a departure from all previous American history, the nation has yet to demobilize. “What exactly is the purpose of Fortress America,” Greider asks, “now that our only serious adversary has evaporated into history?”

Seeking an answer, he calls on those who build and defend the ramparts of the American fortress. He visits the crew of a spanking-new U.S. Navy destroyer undergoing sea trials in the Atlantic. At Nellis Air Force Base in the Nevada desert, he watches fighter squadrons go through their paces in a highly competitive “Red Flag” exercise. At Fort Hood, Texas, he assesses the army’s efforts to adapt mechanized forces to the information age. Near Fort Worth, he walks the floor of Air Force Plant 4, birthplace of thousands of warplanes since World War II, now barely alive as it produces a dwindling number of F-16s.

Viewed from the inside, Fortress America has shrunk significantly over the past decade. The services have absorbed painful cuts. Through successive waves of consolidation, the defense industry has laid off 40 percent of its workers. Yet the author argues that this streamlining falls woefully short, leaving the nation with a defense establishment that “is too

large to sustain, too backward-looking in design, too ambitious in its preparations for the future war,” not to mention overburdened with duties in far-off places such as Bosnia and the Persian Gulf.

All sides of the “Iron Triangle”—the military officers, corporate executives, and politicians whose Cold War collaboration created Fortress America—are acutely aware of these contradictions. They know that present levels of defense spending will not suffice to train the existing force, support essential deployments, procure new equipment, and develop new weapons for the future. Greider takes it as a given that increasing the defense budget is out of the question. As he notes, though, money is not the only issue: “The larger and more troubling political questions are about purpose.”

When Greider describes what he sees and hears—especially when he allows commanders, crew members, engineers, and corporate executives to do the talking—the results are impressive. But when he ventures into the realm of lofty analysis and policy prescription, he is awful. In “the post-Cold War vacuum,” he reports with dismay, the United States has gradually assumed “the obligations of empire” through its role as “high-minded, vigilant enforcer of world order and global commerce.” He calls on Americans to “say ‘no’ to empire,” and instead ask themselves “what are we to do now that a general peace is upon us?” (Some readers may wonder how an era of ethnic cleansing, episodic genocide, nuclear proliferation, and terror qualifies as a “general peace.”) Surrendering to the ethers of utopianism, Greider declares that “the end of the Cold War is a great opportunity to re-imagine the world.”

The United States has the chance once and for all to put an end to injustice, inequality, and war, to “move to a higher ground and dreams of a common humanity.”

Loath to confront the reality of empire and its military implications, Greider opts instead for a Great Crusade. Americans will recognize the summons as a familiar one. It was, after all, previous crusades that created our empire and our fortress in the first place.

—Andrew J. Bacevich

MAYHEM:

Violence as Public Entertainment.

By Sissela Bok. Addison-Wesley.

195 pp. \$22

CHANNELING VIOLENCE:

The Economic Market for Violent Television Programming.

By James T. Hamilton. Princeton Univ. Press. 344 pp. \$35

The vice squad on media issues has gone bipartisan. Consumer advocate Ralph Nader has joined probusiness conservatives in the effort to ban gambling over the Internet. Bill Moyers and Bill Bennett alike decry ultraviolent movies and music. Republicans and Democrats in Congress unite behind such media cleanup laws as the Television Violence Act of 1990. But it isn't easy for liberals to put themselves on the side of wholesomeness. Some of the strains show through in these two books on media violence.

Bok, a professor of philosophy at Brandeis University and a fellow at Harvard University's Shorenstein Center, considers whether violent entertainment harms viewers and what steps might be taken to rescue the young from such stuff. Not fully a work of social science, though it has the proper trappings, *Mayhem* is not exactly a work of moral philosophy either, though observations by the Greeks and Romans, and by later poets and philosophers, are adduced to suggest what becomes of the human soul when we indulge our appetite for scenes of gore and cruelty. While there is a tepid quality to the exercise, one credits the author's instinct that summarizing the latest research on “the aggressor effect, the victim effect, the bystander effect, and the appetite effect” is somehow insufficient.

Not that the research is devoid of insight. Bok highlights some helpful points, such as

how children are both desensitized and frightened by the violence to which they are exposed from a young age. The statistics on depression and suicide among adolescents and preadolescents are grave. She considers the ultimate question—whether dramatized mayhem makes people, especially the impressionable young, commit violent acts—and acknowledges that there is no solid causal evidence, only a correlation.

Bursting with charts, graphs, and regression analyses, *Channeling Violence* would never have made it to 390 pages if the author were as careful about the relationship between violent entertainment and actual violence as Bok is. Hamilton, a Duke University economist, admits that correlation does not prove causation, then proceeds to crunch loads of numbers on the assumption that it does.

Resting his argument on an analogy between media violence and pollution, the author considers suing networks whose violent programs provoke copycat crimes, imposing “violence taxes” on broadcasters, and giving the Federal Communications Commission additional authority to regulate program content. But he pulls back from these ideas, saying that the courts would probably disallow them on First Amendment grounds. Better, in Hamilton's view, are “family hour” rules, program rating systems, and the “V-Chip”—the government-mandated device that will be put in television sets so that parents can filter their children's TV diet.

More libertarian than Hamilton, Bok rules out of bounds any interference with content, even moderate interference (such as “family hour” rules) exerted through laws devised by democratically elected lawmakers. Instead, she enjoins parents to regulate children's viewing habits. And she too supports the V-Chip, which thus emerges as the liberals' technological magic bullet.

“Technology,” Bok writes, “is increasingly coming to the help of those who want to avoid ambush by images and messages they find objectionable.” But technology only helps if adults are willing to purchase and use it, a problem that both authors acknowledge. Hamilton calls this a matter of “norm creation”—social science jargon for moral suasion, not a feature of even the handiest of gadgets.

—Lauren Weiner



POETRY

Jorge Luis Borges

Selected and introduced by Edward Hirsch

We tend to think of Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) exclusively in terms of fiction, as the author of luminous and mind-bending metaphysical parables that cross the boundaries between the short story and the essay. But Borges always identified himself first as a reader, then as a poet, finally as a prose writer. He found the borders between genres permeable and lived in the magic space, the imaginary world, created by books. “If I were asked to name the chief event in my life, I should say my father’s library,” he said in 1970. “In fact, sometimes I think I have never strayed outside that library.”

Borges was so incited, so inflamed by what he read, so beholden to what he encountered, that it demanded from him an answer in kind, a creative response. He was an Argentine polyglot who learned English even before he learned Spanish (in a sense he grew up in the dual world of his father’s library of unlimited English books and his mother’s sensuous Hispanic garden). As a teenager in Geneva during World War I he also learned Latin and German, which he considered the language of the philosophers, and in old age he devoted himself to studying old Germanic languages. One could say that reading others spurred him into writing poetry, which was for him something so intimate, so essential, it could not be defined without oversimplifying it. “It would be like attempting to define the color yellow, love, the fall of leaves in autumn,” he said. He loved Plato’s characterization of poetry as “that light substance, winged and sacred.”

One of the persistent motifs in Borges’s work is that our egos persist, but that selfhood is a passing illusion, that we are all in the end one, that in reading Shakespeare we somehow become Shakespeare. “For many years I believed that literature, which is almost infinite, is one man,” he said. “I want to give thanks,” he wrote in “Another Poem of Thanksgiving,”

For the fact that the poem is inexhaustible
And becomes one with the sum of all created things
And will never reach its last verse
And varies according to its writers. . . .

Borges never viewed poetry in the way the New Critics did, as an object, a thing unto itself, but rather as a collaborative act between the writer and the reader. Reading requires complicity. He wrote:

The taste of the apple (states Berkeley) lies in the contact of the fruit and the palate, not in the fruit itself; in a similar way (I would say), poetry lies in the meeting of poem and reader, not in the lines of symbols printed in the pages of a book. What is so essential is the aesthetic act, the thrill, the almost physical sensation that comes with each reading.

Borges’s first book of poems, *Fervor of Buenos Aires* (1921), was inspired by his native city and written under the sign of a vanguard imagist sect

called the *ultraists*, a group of Spanish poets who believed in the supreme power of metaphor and the liberating music of free verse. “I feel that all during my lifetime I have been rewriting that one book,” he said. He wrote poetry throughout the 1920s, but then it mysteriously deserted him as he went on to create a new kind of narrative prose, the astonishing work that registered his greatness: *Inquisitions* (1925), *Universal History of Infamy* (1935), *The Garden of Forking Paths* (1941), *Ficciones* (1944), and *A New Refutation of Time* (1987), among others. (The first English collections of Borges’s writing, *Labyrinths* and *Ficciones*, appeared in 1962.)

Borges suffered from hereditarily weak eyesight and eventually became the sixth generation of his family to go blind. This was an especially tragic fate for the reader and writer who was also the director of Argentina’s National Library. In “Poem of the Gifts,” written in the 1950s, he speaks of God’s splendid irony in granting him at one time 800,000 books and total darkness. The conclusion of the poem underscores the tragedy of a man who had been denied access to what he most loved:

Painfully probing the dark, I grope toward
The void of the twilight with the point of my faltering
Cane—I for whom Paradise was always a metaphor,
An image of libraries.

The fabulist returned to poetry in the 1950s with a more direct and straightforward style, a beguiling and deceptive simplicity. He dictated his poems to classical meters and chanted them aloud at readings. He wrote about the flow of rivers and the nature of time, his ardor for Buenos Aires, the cult of his ancestors, his study of Old Norse and Anglo-Saxon, the contradictions of temporal experience, the power of certain sunsets, certain dawns, the immanence of a revelation always about to arrive. His poems show how much he loved to read the narrative language of storytelling (of Rudyard Kipling, G. K. Chesterton, and Robert Louis Stevenson, of *Gilgamesh* and *Beowulf*), and the magical language of lyric poetry (of runes, riddles, and spells, of Walt Whitman at his most incantatory and Ralph Waldo Emerson at his most oracular), and the investigatory language of metaphysical speculation (from Spinoza to Kafka, from Schopenhauer to Berkeley, Swedenborg, and Unamuno). He was a rapturous writer, a literary alchemist who emerged as an explorer of labyrinths, an adventurer in the fantastic, a poet of mysterious intimacies who probed the infinite postponements and cycles of time, the shimmering mirrors of fiction and reality, the symbols of unreality, the illusions of identity, the disintegration of the self into the universe, into the realm of the Archetypes and the Splendors.

Limits

Of all the streets that blur into the sunset,
There must be one (which, I am not sure)
That I by now have walked for the last time
Without guessing it, the pawn of that Someone

Who fixes in advance omnipotent laws,
Sets up a secret and unwavering scale
For all the shadows, dreams, and forms
Woven into the texture of this life.

If there is a limit to all things and a measure
And a last time and nothing more and forgetfulness,
Who will tell us to whom in this house
We without knowing it have said farewell?

Through the dawning window night withdraws
And among the stacked books which throw
Irregular shadows on the dim table,
There must be one which I will never read.

There is in the South more than one worn gate,
With its cement urns and planted cactus,
Which is already forbidden to my entry,
Inaccessible, as in a lithograph.

There is a door you have closed forever
And some mirror is expecting you in vain;
To you the crossroads seem wide open,
Yet watching you, four-faced, is a Janus.

There is among all your memories one
Which has now been lost beyond recall.
You will not be seen going down to that fountain
Neither by white sun nor by yellow moon.

You will never recapture what the Persian
Said in his language woven with birds and roses,
When, in the sunset, before the light disperses,
You wish to give words to unforgettable things.

And the steadily flowing Rhone and the lake,
All that vast yesterday over which today I bend?
They will be as lost as Carthage,
Scourged by the Romans with fire and salt.

At dawn I seem to hear the turbulent
Murmur of crowds milling and fading away;
They are all I have been loved by, forgotten by;
Space, time, and Borges now are leaving me.

Translated by Alastair Reid

Poem of the Gifts

To María Esther Vázquez

Let no one impute to self-pity or censure
The power of the thing I affirm: that God
With magnificent irony has dealt me the gift
Of these books and the dark, with one stroke.

He has lifted these eyes, now made lightless,
To be lords of this city of books, though all that they read
In my dream of a library are insensible paragraphs
Disclosed to their longing

Each passing day. Vainly dawn multiplies book
After book to infinity, each one
Inaccessible, each lost to me now, like the manuscripts
Alexandria fed to the flame.

Greek anecdote tells of a king who lived among
Gardens and fountains, and died of thirst and starvation;
I toil in the breadth and the depth and the blindness
Of libraries, without strength or direction.

Encyclopedias, atlases, Orient,
Occident, dynasties, ages,
Symbols and cosmos, cosmogonies
Call to me from the walls—ineffectual images!

Painfully probing the dark, I grope toward
The void of the twilight with the point of my faltering
Cane—I for whom Paradise was always a metaphor,
An image of libraries.

Something—no need to prattle of chance
Or contingency—presides over these matters;
Long before me, some other man took these books and the dark
In a fading of dusk for his lot.

Astray in meandering galleries,
It comes to me now with a holy, impalpable
Dread, that I am that other, the dead man, and walk
With identical steps and identical days to the end.

Which of us two is writing this poem
In the I of the first person plural, in identical darkness?
What good is the word that speaks for me now in my name,
If the curse of the dark is implacably one and the same?

Groussac or Borges, I watch the delectable
World first disfigure then extinguish itself
In a pallor of ashes, until all that is gone
Seems at one with sleep and at one with oblivion.

Translated by Ben Belitt

The Other Tiger

And the craft that createth a semblance
MORRIS: *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876)

A tiger comes to mind. The twilight here
Exalts the vast and busy Library
And seems to set the bookshelves back in gloom;
Innocent, ruthless, bloodstained, sleek,
It wanders through its forest and its day
Printing a track along the muddy banks
Of sluggish streams whose names it does not know
(In its world there are no names or past
Or time to come, only the vivid now)
And makes its way across wild distances
Sniffing the braided labyrinth of smells
And in the wind picking the smell of dawn
And tantalizing scent of grazing deer;
Among the bamboo's slanting stripes I glimpse
The tiger's stripes and sense the bony frame
Under the splendid, quivering cover of skin.
Curving oceans and the planet's wastes keep us
Apart in vain; from here in a house far off
In South America I dream of you,
Track you, O tiger of the Ganges' banks.
It strikes me now as evening fills my soul
That the tiger addressed in my poem
Is a shadowy beast, a tiger of symbols
And scraps picked up at random out of books,
A string of labored tropes that have no life,
And not the fated tiger, the deadly jewel

That under sun or stars or changing moon
Goes on in Bengal or Sumatra fulfilling
Its rounds of love and indolence and death.
To the tiger of symbols I hold opposed
The one that's real, the one whose blood runs hot
As it cuts down a herd of buffaloes,
And that today, this August third, nineteen
Fifty-nine, throws its shadow on the grass;
But by the act of giving it a name,
By trying to fix the limits of its world,
It becomes a fiction, not a living beast,
Not a tiger out roaming the wilds of earth.

We'll hunt for a third tiger now, but like
The others this one too will be a form
Of what I dream, a structure of words, and not
The flesh and bone tiger that beyond all myths
Paces the earth. I know these things quite well,
Yet nonetheless some force keeps driving me
In this vague, unreasonable, and ancient quest,
And I go on pursuing through the hours
Another tiger, the beast not found in verse.

Translated by Norman Thomas di Giovanni

The Borges

I know little or nothing of the Borges,
My Portuguese forebears. They were a ghostly race,
Who still ply in my body their mysterious
Disciplines, habits, and anxieties.
Shadowy, as if they had never been,
And strangers to the processes of art,
Indecipherably they form a part
Of time, of earth, and of oblivion.
Better so. When everything is said,
They are Portugal, they are that famous people
Who forced the Great Wall of the East, and fell
To the sea, and to that other sea of sand.
They are that king lost on the mystic strand
And those at home who swear he is not dead.

Translated by Alastair Reid

Ars Poetica

To look at the river made of time and water
And remember that time is another river,
To know that we are lost like the river
And that faces dissolve like water.

To be aware that waking dreams it is not asleep
While it is another dream, and that the death
That our flesh goes in fear of is that death
Which comes every night and is called sleep.

To see in the day or in the year a symbol
Of the days of man and of his years,
To transmute the outrage of the years
Into a music, a murmur of voices, and a symbol,

To see in death sleep, and in the sunset
A sad gold—such is poetry,

Which is immortal and poor. Poetry
Returns like the dawn and the sunset.

At times in the evenings a face
Looks at us out of the depths of a mirror;
Art should be like that mirror
Which reveals to us our own face.

They say that Ulysses, sated with marvels,
Wept tears of love at the sight of his Ithaca,
Green and humble. Art is that Ithaca
Of green eternity, not of marvels.

It is also like the river with no end
That flows and remains and is the mirror of one same
Inconstant Heraclitus, who is the same
And is another, like the river with no end.

Translated by W. S. Merwin

Camden 1892

The fragrance of coffee and newspapers.
Sunday and its tedium. This morning,
On the uninvestigated page, that vain
Column of allegorical verses
By a happy colleague. The old man lies
Prostrate, pale, even white in his decent
Room, the room of a poor man. Needlessly
He glances at his face in the exhausted
Mirror. He thinks, without surprise now,
That face is me. One fumbling hand touches
The tangled beard, the devastated mouth.
The end is not far off. His voice declares:
I am almost gone. But my verses scan
Life and its splendor. I was Walt Whitman.

Translated by Richard Howard and César Rennert

The Enigmas

I who am singing these lines today
Will be tomorrow the enigmatic corpse
Who dwells in a realm, magical and barren,
Without a before or an after or a when.
So say the mystics. I say I believe
Myself undeserving of Heaven or of Hell,
But make no predictions. Each man's tale
Shifts like the watery forms of Proteus.
What errant labyrinth, what blinding flash
Of splendor and glory shall become my fate
When the end of this adventure presents me with
The curious experience of death?
I want to drink its crystal-pure oblivion,
To be forever; but never to have been.

Translated by John Updike

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THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

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The Battle over Child Care

A Survey of Recent Articles

Is there a child-care crisis in America? A speaker at a White House conference on the subject a year ago said, to much applause, that there is a crisis “so acute that child care workers in many areas of the country are unable to find adequate day care for their own children.”

Though this image of mothers stymied in their desire to rush off to care for other people’s children by their inability to hand off their own seemed to put the situation in a slightly absurd light, there is little doubt that many youngsters are not being given the good care they need. Six out of seven day-care centers are “mediocre to poor” in quality, according to a 1995 study cited by Michelle Cottle, an editor at the *Washington Monthly* (July–Aug. 1998).

Last January, a few months after that White House conference, President Bill Clinton unveiled a \$21.7 billion daycare proposal, involving block grants to the states and tax credits for low- and middle-income families and businesses. But what is the essential problem? That the federal government has been laggard in subsidizing high-quality daycare, as Cottle and other liberals maintain—or that the children are not in the arms of their mothers, as conservatives insist? Each side has a spin on the facts.

Ben Wildavsky, a staff correspondent for the *National Journal* (Jan. 24, 1998), provides some unambiguous statistical background. In 1997, nearly 42 percent of women with children under six were working full-time, five percent were looking for work, 18 percent had part-time jobs, and 35 percent were not working outside the home. Liberals like to combine the part-timers with the other mothers who are working or want

to be, to show that most mothers with small children—65 percent—are in the work force (compared with only 12 percent a half-century earlier). Subtext: *this is the wave of the future*. Conservatives lump the part-timers in with the stay-at-homes, to show that most moms with small children—53 percent—are at home with them at least part of the day. Subtext: *the traditional family is still the norm, and it’s not too late for wayward working mothers to repent*.

According to the Census Bureau, 10.3 million preschoolers—or slightly more than half of the nation’s 20 million children under five—had mothers in the work force in 1994. Six percent of the youngsters were cared for by the mothers themselves, either at their workplaces or while working at home, and 43 percent were cared for by other relatives, including fathers (18 percent) and grandparents (16 percent). The rest—a slight majority—of the preschoolers with working moms were in the care of non-relatives. Only 29 percent—three million toddlers and infants—were in formal daycare centers (21 percent) or nursery schools (eight percent).

A recent study of 1,675 federal employees with preschoolers being cared for by others found the (mostly middle- or upper-income) parents satisfied with the arrangements. But Carol J. Erdwins, Wendy J. Cooper, and Louis C. Buffardi, psychologists at George Mason University, report in *Child & Youth Care Forum* (Apr. 1998) that the parents whose toddlers or infants were being cared for in their own homes by relatives or au pairs were significantly more satisfied than those whose children were in day-

care centers or in the homes of baby sitters or child-care providers. Interestingly, “the more education parents had, the less satisfaction they reported,” the authors observe. They speculate that “better educated parents would have more knowledge of child development and environmental influences on children and might, therefore, view their child care with a more critical eye.”

The first three years of a child’s life, according to several studies, are critical for brain development. A 1997 report from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), which is conducting a study of early child care in 3,100 families around the country, said that while maternal stimulation and the home environment were much more important for a child’s cognitive and language development, a young child in “high quality” daycare, with “positive caregiving and language stimulation,” was not at a disadvantage. “There’s a growing consensus among child development experts,” Cottle writes, “that what matters most in day care for infants and toddlers is the children’s relationships with caregivers.”

But daycare workers generally are poorly paid, making on average only \$6.89 an hour, notes Margaret Talbot, a senior editor of the *New Republic* (Nov. 17, 1997). Competition from the “informal” part of the market—that “great reserve army of (mostly) women” willing for modest wages to take children into their homes and tend to them along with their own—depresses the wages of workers in the formal daycare centers. Turnover among these workers is high, Talbot points out, “which can be harmful to young kids, who need to form secure attachments to their parental stand-ins.”

“While child care experts and advocates talk about the importance of good caregivers and high program standards,” says Cottle, “they all stress that more money must be made available to extend these benefits to more families.” Clinton’s proposal would be “a fine place to start.”

Diane Fisher, a clinical psychologist and mother of three, is skeptical. “There is simply no evading the vast difference between parents and providers, between even the highest-quality care and a real home,” she writes in the *Women’s Quarterly* (Spring 1998). The problems with daycare, she says, “go beyond the matter of ‘quality.’ It is simply unethical

of day-care advocates to dismiss serious concerns such as the reasonable age for children to begin full-time day-care or the importance of a mother staying with babies as much as possible during those critical first three years, or the risks of 10-hour day-care days for any child under five.” (When very young children spend many hours in daycare, the researchers in the NICHD study found, there seems to be some adverse effect on the mother-child relationship.)

Another critic, Allan Carlson, editor of the *Family in America* (July 1998), concedes that daycare may be necessary for some families, but he sees no justification for giving it “preferred political status.” Like many conservatives, he favors ending income tax preferences for commercial child care. That might mean, for example, replacing the Dependent Care Tax Credit with “a universal early childhood tax credit” of \$700 per child for “all tax-paying parents with children through age five.” He also would loosen local zoning laws and federal labor regulations, so as to encourage part-time work, flextime, telecommuting, and at-home businesses.

Interviewed in *New Perspectives Quarterly* (Special Issue, 1998), Betty Friedan, author of *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), a founding text of the modern feminist movement, is asked whether parents can “have it all without damaging the kids,” and whether it is a good thing for both parents to be working 80 hours a week while their children “are shunted off to child care.” In reply, she says she favors more flexible work hours, shorter work hours—and “better, more affordable child care. Whatever criticism of child care there may be, the fact is that without child care there can be no equality for women.”

But in an interview reprinted in the same issue, the late historian Christopher Lasch calls the feminist demand for expanded child-care facilities “positively harmful.” He does not maintain that women should devote themselves exclusively to raising children and not work. Lasch contends that “the more time parents spend working outside the home, the weaker the family, already in critical condition, will get.” In his view, a “radical restructuring” of the workplace is needed to let parents “raise their own children, instead of turning them over to the care of others. Caring for their own children, after all, is what most parents would like to do.”

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

The Liberal Moment

“Neither Machiavellian Moment nor Possessive Individualism: Commercial Society and the Defenders of the English Commonwealth” by Steve Pincus, in *American Historical Review* (June 1998), 914 Atwater, Indiana Univ., Bloomington, Ind. 47405.

Many historians believe that a fateful “republican moment” (or “Machiavellian moment,” as the title of J. G. A. Pocock’s 1975 work has it) occurred in England in the 1650s, a moment that had a formative impact on the creation of the American republic more than a century later. The moment occurred when John Milton, James Harrington, and others adopted the language of classical republicanism to criticize England’s Stuart monarchy. Reading Machiavelli, these thinkers celebrated the achievements of ancient Sparta, republican Rome, and Renaissance Venice. They had little use for the rising commercial spirit of their day. Later, according to the historians, their republican ideas of liberty and civic virtue helped inspire the American Revolution. Adding his voice to the scholarly din surrounding this assertion, Pincus, a historian at the University of Chicago, argues that if there was a purely republican moment, it didn’t last long. Pocock and others, he maintains, have lost sight of the nascent liberalism in mid-17th-century England.

Classical republicans such as Milton and Harrington wanted to resurrect an agrarian past, Pincus notes. They believed that political power depended on virtuous citizen armies, not on national wealth. Indeed, they feared the corrupting effect of wealth on the citizen. And so they had little use for the emerging commercial society of 17th-century England. But most of their fellow defenders of the English Commonwealth did not share their antagonism toward commerce, Pincus maintains.

“There can be neither peace nor security without armies, nor armies without pay, nor pay without taxes,” declared Marchamont Nedham, the chief journalist and apologist for the Rump Parliament and then Oliver Cromwell’s Protectorate. Many polemicists “assumed that wealth, not civic virtue, was the basis of political power,” Pincus notes. These writers “celebrated merchants as the most useful members of society,” favored creation of a national bank to make sure England would always have the financial wherewithal to wage war, and contended that human labor, not natural endowment, was the basis of prosperity. “These were men and women who had embraced commercial society.”

Abandoning “the possibility of establishing a government based exclusively on civic virtue,” Pincus writes, they “began to espouse a politics based on recognizing, deploying, and taming interest—a politics appropriate to a commercial society.” These same problems preoccupied the Framers of the U.S. Constitution more than a century later.

The incipient liberalism of the 17th-century thinkers—later expressed in more elegant and sophisticated form by Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill—“should not be seen as antagonistic to republicanism,” Pincus insists. Rather, they took elements of the republican tradition, especially the conception of liberty and the commitment to the common good, and combined them with a defense of commercial society. Only in this way, Pincus says, was classical republicanism able to survive.

Woodrow Wilson’s Retreat

“Woodrow Wilson and Administrative Reform” by Kendrick A. Clements, in *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (Spring 1998), 208 E. 75th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

During his career as a political scientist at Bryn Mawr, Wesleyan, and Princeton, Woodrow Wilson emerged as one of the more important progressive figures urging a dramatic expansion of the federal government’s administrative powers. Presiding over such an expansion from the White House after 1912,

however, he had second thoughts.

Like other progressives, Wilson (1856–1924) hoped to overcome what he saw as the paralysis of American government caused by the constitutional separation of powers, notes Clements, a historian at the University of South Carolina. Usually credited with having



In 1918, Wilson was on the minds of 21,000 army officers and enlisted men at Camp Sherman, Ohio.

pioneered the academic study of public administration in the United States, Wilson argued in an 1887 article for adoption of the administrative methods of European monarchies. In *The State* (1889), he warned that industrialization was allowing “the rich and the strong to combine against the poor and the weak.” A stronger state, he believed, would be a less dangerous remedy for America’s problems than more direct popular rule. He believed in the people, “in their *honesty* and *sincerity* and *sagacity*,” Wilson stated in 1891, “but I do not believe in them *as my governors*.” He feared “tyranny of the majority [more] than dictatorship,” Clements says.

Yet while professing to believe that the government regulators of labor and industry would be apolitical, Wilson knew better, Clements says. Administrators, Wilson admitted in 1891, did not merely execute public law,

they, in effect, made it—and sometimes acted in their own selfish interests. “He was not entirely comfortable with his own proposals,” Clements writes.

That may have been why Wilson then turned his thoughts to a different cure: enlarging presidential power, an expansion already begun with the Spanish-American War (1898). By 1908, he said he was convinced that the Constitution was “thoroughly workable” and that the president had become “the unifying force in our complex system, the leader both of his party and the nation.” Wilson’s experience as governor of New Jersey (1911–12) further dampened his enthusiasm for administrative reform when the state legislature—realizing it would be surrendering power to his administrators—refused to go along with his ambitious proposals.

By the time he became president, in 1913, Wilson was more convinced than ever of the importance of vigorous presidential leadership. Yet, Clements notes, virtually all the major Wilsonian reforms, such as creation of the Federal Trade Commission, relied on professional administrators, with wide discretion, for their implementation. “As Wilson had pointed out many years before, the more government was asked to do, the more it must depend on an active administration.”

This proved even truer after America’s entry into World War I in 1917, when the War Industries Board and other special agencies were set up. The danger of an expanded state now seemed much more serious to Wilson than it had when he was an academic. He feared that the government would not be “returned to the people” when the war ended: “Big Business will be in the saddle.” In part to prevent that, he abolished the wartime agencies when the conflict ended, even though, Clements says, he favored “many of the things [the agencies] wanted to do in the postwar world.”

Mob Rule?

“The Rising Hegemony of Mass Opinion” by Paul J. Quirk and Joseph Hinchliffe, in *Journal of Policy History* (1998, No. 1), 221 N. Grand Blvd., Saint Louis University, St. Louis, Mo. 63103.

The Founding Fathers were given to dark worries about an “excess of democracy”—and now their worst fear has been realized. Mass public opinion has become “the dominant force in American politics,” claim Quirk and Hinchliffe, a political scientist and a graduate student, respectively, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Only occasionally in American history did the mass public influence the making of national policy to the extent it does today, Quirk and Hinchliffe assert. Usually, “elites” of one sort or another were in charge, even if responding at times to popular opinion. The big problem was seen as the undue influence of organized interest

groups, business, and the wealthy.

Now, however, political scientists fret about the recent rise of a “plebiscitary presidency,” in which the chief executive leads largely by making direct appeals to the public and needs immediate public approval to sustain his influence. Other political scientists worry that Congress, now more open and responsive than ever, can no longer legislate effectively.

Since the 1960s, Quirk and Hinchliffe argue, American political leaders have increasingly pandered to the “uninformed prejudices of the mass public” and slighted the counsel of “disinterested” policy experts. The authors’ long list of examples includes the failure to increase taxes or cut middle-class entitlement programs in order to reduce the large budget deficits of the 1980s and ’90s, and Washington’s high-profile but futile “war” against illegal drug traffic, waged despite evidence that efforts to prevent and treat drug abuse would be more effective.

In the 1950s, the authors explain, most citizens had little awareness of issues or ideologies, and voted largely on the basis of candidates’ personal qualities or party labels. By the late 1960s and early ’70s, however, voters

had become more educated, more ideological, and more issue oriented. Citizens with well-defined liberal or conservative views in 1973 made up 44 percent of the populace, compared with only 25 percent in 1956. But the new voters were not necessarily better informed, the authors observe. “The proportion of people who can, for example, give the name of the vice president or identify the purpose of a major domestic program has hardly changed” from what it was 50 years ago. Today’s voters may know where candidates stand on a particular issue, but they still often don’t understand the issue itself.

Politicians have become more solicitous of voters’ policy prejudices than ever, using polls to determine what those views are, the authors say. “Issue-oriented appeals, although often negative and almost always highly superficial, have become the principal currency of campaign politics.”

One plus to public opinion’s rising importance, the authors note, is that narrow special interests have lost clout. But the “downside,” they warn, is that policymaking is now “more vulnerable to popular leaders advancing dubious claims of entitlement, offering emotional release, or promoting fantasy.”

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Declaring War

“The War Powers Resolution: Time to Say Goodbye” by Louis Fisher and David Gray Adler, in *Political Science Quarterly* (Spring 1998), 475 Riverside Dr., Ste. 1274, New York, N.Y. 10115–1274.

Twenty-five years ago, as the conflict in Vietnam dragged on, Congress moved to reassert its constitutional authority to declare war with the War Powers Resolution. Enacted on November 7, 1973, over President Richard M. Nixon’s veto, it was ill-conceived from the start, contend Fisher, author of *Presidential War Power* (1995), and Adler, a political scientist at Idaho State University. Instead of restricting the chief executive’s power, it broadened his legal authority, giving him “unbridled discretion to go to war as he deems necessary against anyone, anytime, anywhere, for at least 90 days.”

Senator Thomas Eagleton (D.-Mo.), one of the resolution’s original sponsors, was so appalled by the watered-down version that emerged from a House-Senate conference that he voted against it. The resolution

“has been horribly bastardized to the point of being a menace,” he warned. The original Senate bill had allowed the president to initiate the use of military force only to repel or retaliate against an armed attack, or to rescue endangered Americans abroad. It required him to end the military action after 30 days if he did not have specific congressional authorization. The emasculated War Powers Resolution merely requires the president “in every possible instance” to consult with Congress before putting U.S. troops into “hostile” situations, and lets the deployment go on for up to 90 days.

Ever since, Fisher and Adler say, presidents have routinely taken unilateral military action, usually treating “consultation” as meaning “notification after the fact.” President Ronald Reagan, without seeking

congressional authorization beforehand, “introduced U.S. troops to Lebanon, invaded Grenada, carried out air strikes against Libya, and maintained naval operations in the Persian Gulf.” President George Bush acted in the same way in invading Panama in 1989, “and only at the last minute did he come to Congress for support in acting offensively against Iraq” in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. President Bill Clinton has repeatedly used, or threatened to use, military force without congressional authority, in Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, as well as recently in Afghanistan and Sudan.

The Constitution vests in Congress “the sole and exclusive authority to initiate mil-

itary hostilities,” Fisher and Adler maintain, and the War Powers Resolution “unconstitutionally delegates the power to make war to the president.” It should be repealed, they assert. They acknowledge that situations are bound to arise, as they have in the past, in which a president considers it necessary to use military force without prior authorization from Congress. “But he cannot be the judge of his own actions,” they maintain. Instead, the president should afterward go to Congress, plead necessity, and seek retroactive authorization. If a presidential “usurpation” should be unwarranted, Fisher and Adler say, impeachment would be “a legitimate response.”

If Women Ran the World

“Women, Biology, and World Politics” by Francis Fukuyama, in *Foreign Affairs* (Sept.–Oct. 1998), 58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

If women ran the world, many feminists say, it would be a very different place, with much less aggression and violence. Fukuyama, author of *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) and a professor of public policy at George Mason University, not only agrees but believes that “all postindustrial or Western societies are moving” in that direction. But there’s a catch, he says.

The male propensities to compete for power and status and to engage in violence, he writes, are not just the products of a patriarchal culture—they are rooted in biology, according to “virtually all reputable evolutionary biologists today.” That, of course, makes those inclinations harder to change, both in men and in societies. Nevertheless, Fukuyama declares, they must be controlled, in international affairs as well as domestic societies, “through a web of norms, laws, agreements, contracts, and the like.” In addition, women need to become more involved, he says. “Only by participating fully in global politics can women both defend their own interests and shift the underlying male agenda.”

Over the last century, Fukuyama notes, world politics has been gradually becoming

feminized, “with very positive effects. Women have won the right to vote and participate in politics in all developed countries, as well as in many developing countries, and have exercised that right with increasing energy.”

Though he expects men to continue to play “a major, if not dominant, part in the governance” of the United States and other democracies, Fukuyama predicts that as women do get more politically involved, these countries are likely to become less willing “to use power around the world as freely as they have in the past.” American women (like their sisters in other rich countries) have been less disposed than men to favor defense spending and the use of force abroad.

“Will this shift toward a less status- and military-power-oriented world be a good thing?” Fukuyama asks. For relations among advanced democracies, it will be, he thinks, because it will strengthen their tendency to remain at peace with one another. However, in dealing with other nations, “feminized policies could be a liability. . . .

“[E]ven if the democratic, feminized, postindustrial world has evolved into a zone of



Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, indomitable after a failed IRA assassination attempt in 1984

peace where struggles are more economic than military,” he observes, “it will still have to deal with those parts of the world run by young, ambitious, unconstrained men,” such as, say, a future Saddam Hussein armed with nuclear weapons. That doesn’t mean that men must rule the world, Fukuyama adds. “Masculine

policies will still be required, though not necessarily masculine leaders.” Tough female leaders like former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, rather than more stereotypically feminine ones like Gro Harlem Brundtland, the former prime minister of Norway, may be the wave of the future.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Virtue in the Marketplace

“Bourgeois Virtue and the History of P and S” by Deirdre N. McCloskey, in *The Journal of Economic History* (June 1998), Dept. of Economics, Northwestern Univ., 2003 Sheridan Rd., Evanston, Ill. 60208–2600.

A Marxist might say that since the mid-19th century, the cultural superstructure of the industrialized West has contradicted the material base. Ever since the rise of capitalism, the businessman has been scorned, held up by novelists, intellectuals, and the enlightened in general as a greedy, manipulative miscreant, a thief, a scoundrel, a Philistine, a fool, a Babbitt.

As a result of all this abuse, the phrase *bourgeois virtue* has come to seem an oxymoron, even to economists. Ever since Jeremy Bentham propounded his theory of utilitarianism in the late 18th century, they have insisted that virtue is beside the point, which is prudent calculation. McCloskey, an economist at the University of Iowa, contends that prudence alone does not suffice to explain economic behavior or history. “We need a discourse of the bourgeois virtues: integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, enterprise, humor, respect, modesty, consideration, responsibility, prudence, thrift, affection, self-possession.”

Some economic behavior depends on such virtues, McCloskey points out. Commercial undertakings, for instance, cannot succeed without trust. “What is remarkable about modern economic life . . . is the extension of such trust to comparative strangers. . . . If foreign trade was to expand in the 18th century it needed a large expansion of what might be

called commercial speech—the trading of reputations and market information, the persuading of Mr. Jones in the far off Chesapeake to undertake a certain novelty in tobacco supplied that would be advantageous to his partner in Glasgow. In other words, commerce depended on virtues of conversation, the keeping of promises, speech acts.” McCloskey calculates that about a fourth of national income in wealthy countries today is earned from “persuasion”—not just advertising, but sales talk, sweet talk, and even veiled threats by lawyers, executives, administrators, teachers, and others.

But if business depends on culture, McCloskey suggests, so, too, does culture depend on business. “Who we are depends on what we do, our ethics depend on our business. Commerce is a teacher of ethics. The growth of the market promotes virtue, sometimes.” The market spreads habits of cooperation. The experience of uncertainty in trade encourages skepticism about dogmatic certitude. The bourgeois standard of reciprocity leads to philanthropy.

“Capitalism,” McCloskey argues, “needs encouragement, being the hope for the poor of the world and being in any case the practice of what we were and who we are. . . . We encourage it by taking seriously the bourgeois virtues.”

How Inflation Whipped Us

“Arthur Burns and Inflation” by Robert L. Hetzel, in *Economic Quarterly* (Winter 1998), Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, P.O. Box 27622, Richmond, Va. 23261.

During the early 1970s, Federal Reserve Board chairman Arthur Burns was the very symbol of opposition to inflation. But the

approach he favored to fight it boomeranged, writes Hetzel, vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, and that failure

led to today's very different consensus on how to keep the dollar sound.

Burns, a distinguished economist who began his term as Fed chairman in 1970 and had previously chaired President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Council of Economic Advisers, did not believe that the Federal Reserve, by regulating the supply of money, could do very much to control inflation. Monetary policy influenced interest rates, and that might well affect the confidence of businessmen and their willingness to invest. But otherwise, monetary policy was of scant value, in his view, which was also the conventional wisdom of the day. Monetarist economists such as Milton Friedman, who believed that controlling inflation *meant* regulating the money supply, were then in a minority. Keynesian economists, who wanted to use the federal taxing and spending powers to keep the jobless rate down and the economy booming, represented the mainstream.

Although not a Keynesian, Burns accepted the general view that it was government's responsibility to keep the unemployment rate down to four percent or less, Hetzel says. As for inflation, Burns believed that it has many different causes, and that the most important in the early 1970s was excessive wage gains, stemming from the monopoly power of labor unions. When the jobless rate climbed to six percent in 1970, Hetzel says, Burns believed that the government had to act to "simultaneously restore price stability and full employment." Burns cheered when

President Richard M. Nixon imposed wage and price controls on August 15, 1971.

"Controls did everything they were supposed to do," writes Hetzel, "except prevent a rise in inflation." When inflation registered in the double digits in 1973, Burns blamed a variety of special factors, especially a combination of a strong economy and shortages of oil, farm products, and other commodities. As these factors changed, he believed, inflation would decline.

Instead, inflation stayed in double-digit territory. Burns then lobbied hard for a continuation of wage and price controls, but Congress had had enough, and key figures in the new Ford administration—Alan Greenspan, chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, and William Simon, secretary of the treasury—were opposed. Burns, who continued as Federal Reserve chairman through 1977, "then blamed inflation on government deficits," Hetzel notes, but the fact was that those deficits were very small in the high-inflation years of 1973 and 1974.

"For Burns, the source of inflation changed regularly," Hetzel writes. Because he had no economic model to be tested by experience, he could not, in a sense, learn from experience. But others did learn. The consensus today is that inflation is a monetary phenomenon, Hetzel notes. "The central bank is *the* cause of inflation"—and controlling it is the Federal Reserve's paramount responsibility.

The Lowdown on Wealth

"Who Owns What: The Things We Know That Are Not So" by John C. Weicher, in *American Outlook* (Spring 1998), 5395 Emerson Way, Indianapolis, Ind. 46226.

"The rich get richer and the poor get poorer," says the old Depression-era song, and it's a theme that's been heard a lot in recent years. Supposedly, wealth in America has been becoming more concentrated, with the rich claiming a fatter and fatter share, especially during the 1980s, that terrible "decade of greed." It's a nice, scary story, but Weicher, a Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute, says it's not true.

The "rich" (i.e. the wealthiest one percent of U.S. households) since 1983 have generally owned between 30 and 35 percent of total U.S. wealth, Weicher says, and there is no clear trend. The percentage was 31 in 1983,

36 in 1989, 30 in 1992, and 35 in 1995, the last year for which data are available. These fluctuations could be just statistical variations, but Weicher thinks they correspond to the business cycle, with the rich suffering a greater decline in the value of their assets during recessions.

"The rich did get richer during the Reagan boom," he writes, "but so did the poor, and at about the same rate. Both rich and poor enjoyed an increase in wealth of approximately 20 percent between 1983 and 1992." (Income, however, is another story, he points out: "Income inequality has been increasing steadily since approximately 1967." Just why

that hasn't resulted in more inequality of wealth is a mystery.)

The rise of the stock market since 1983 might have been expected to increase inequality of wealth, since stocks are owned mainly by the affluent. However, the rise has been offset by growth in home equity. Housing values have been rising since the early 1980s, and for most Americans, their home (some 65 percent of all households own their own) is their biggest asset.

As a matter of fact, the rich don't park much of their money (only 10 percent in 1992) on Wall Street. And less than 15 percent of wealthy households (many of them elderly) have stocks as their most important asset. "Surprisingly few among the rich have received any significant inheritance," Weicher observes. Most have gained their wealth the old-fashioned way—by earning it in small businesses, as retailers, small manufacturers, independent professionals such as doctors and lawyers, owners of rental or com-



Like this car dealer in Washington state, most of America's rich have earned their money.

mercial real estate, and farmers. Their most important asset is an unincorporated or closely held business. In a sense, then, it seems, Scott Fitzgerald was wrong: the rich are *not* very different, after all. Except, of course, for all their money.

SOCIETY

Reconsidering Affirmative Action

A Survey of Recent Articles

Progress is the largely suppressed story of race and race relations over the past half-century," assert Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom, co-authors of last year's controversial *America in Black and White*, writing in a special *Brookings Review* (Spring 1998) issue on black America. More than 40 percent of African Americans now consider themselves middle class. But the Thernstroms also note that close to 30 percent of black families still live in poverty, inequality in employment persists, and there is "a glaring racial gap" in levels of educational attainment. Only 22 percent of African-American high school seniors, for example, can do math problems at the ninth-grade level, compared with 58 percent of their white classmates, according to a 1992 study.

What is to be done?

This question has acquired new urgency lately, as liberals and conservatives have been forced to contemplate a world, particularly an academic world, without affirmative action. In 1996, California voters approved Proposition 209, outlawing racial preferences in public education, employment, and contracting. In Texas

that same year, an appeals court struck down the University of Texas Law School's affirmative action admissions policy.

"To judge from the experience of [California's] elite law schools, the San Francisco Fire Department, and the Los Angeles Police Department," writes Jeffrey Rosen, a staff writer for the *New Yorker* (Feb. 23 & Mar. 2, 1998), it appears that the alternative to affirmative action "may be far worse": a stark choice between effectively excluding blacks from the most selective public institutions, or redefining merit at those institutions so as to lower the standards for everyone.

The new situation is prompting some liberals to drop the pretense that affirmative action does not mean lowering standards and confront the unpleasant fact that there is a persistent racial disparity in educational performance. At the same time, it is awakening some conservatives to the virtues of affirmative action.

Harvard University sociologist Nathan Glazer, coeditor of the neoconservative *Public Interest* and a leading critic of affirmative

action for more than two decades, has changed his mind. The author of *Affirmative Discrimination* (1975) now reluctantly favors affirmative action for blacks (though not for other minorities or for women). “We cannot be quite so cavalier about the impact on public opinion—black and white—of a radical reduction in the number of black students at the Harvards, the Berkeleys, and the Amhersts,” he writes in the *New Republic* (Apr. 6, 1998). “These institutions have become, for better or worse, the gateways to prominence, privilege, wealth, and power in American society.” To abolish affirmative action, he now believes, “would undermine the legitimacy of American democracy.”

Nonsense, retorts Jim Sleeper, author of *Liberal Racism* (1997), writing in the on-line magazine *Salon* (www.salonmagazine.com). “The public can and should be cavalier about the vision of Harvard as an arbiter of American destiny.” Outside the clubby universe of some Ivy Leaguers, he says, “a more astringent meritocracy lets countless individuals rise.”

“Elite” liberals who favor racial preferences, Sleeper charges, are “deeply fatalistic . . . about blacks’ capacities and prospects—and dismayingly fainthearted about undertaking any social and moral initiatives that might really reduce blacks’ measured deficiencies.” The best way to refute the notions—privately held, Sleeper asserts, by “more and more elite liberals”—that these deficiencies are genetic in origin, or so culturally embedded as to be virtually impossible to overcome, is “to couple stricter, race-transcendent standards . . . with clearer cultural messages (about families and work).”

Much has been made, Sleeper notes, of the fact that after Proposition 209, black and Hispanic admissions plummeted at the highly competitive University of California campuses in Berkeley (by 57 and 40 percent, respectively) and Los Angeles (by 43 and 33 percent). But such minority admissions “are down only mar-

ginally at the University of California’s eight campuses overall.” In other words, many minority candidates have still qualified “for campuses, like Riverside or Irvine, where they’re far more likely to succeed.”

That’s not the way matters appear to Terry Jones, a sociologist at California State University, Hayward. “For some people of color,” he writes in *Academe* (July–Aug. 1998), “Proposition 209 looks suspiciously like legislative vigilantism or an attempt to impose ethnic cleansing in higher education. . . . Is it in society’s interest to have a state-supported institution that excludes people of color based on grades and aptitude tests? . . . [U]sing such a limited definition of merit can only perpetuate white privilege.”

Americans do not want to do away with affirmative action entirely, writes Christopher H. Foreman, Jr., a Senior Fellow in the Brookings Institution’s Governmental Studies Program and guest editor of the special issue of *Brookings Review*. “Aggressive outreach and job training” are clearly acceptable, for example. But “race-normed tests and further breaks for the already conspicuously advantaged” are not.

Foreman worries that affirmative action, “a boon to middle-class blacks like me,” diverts attention from the needs of low-income blacks. James Traub, a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, agrees. “Affirmative action is, at bottom, a dodge,” he writes in a companion piece to Glazer’s in the *New Republic*. “It allows us to put off the far harder work: ending the isolation of young black people and closing the academic gap that separates black students—even middle-class black students—from whites. When we commit ourselves to that, we can do without affirmative action, but not before.” The Thernstroms may not share Traub’s timetable, but like other affirmative action critics, they agree that closing the black gap in cognitive skills is paramount. How to accomplish that may now become the next subject of debate.

Voting for the New South

“Black Migration to the South Reaches Record Highs in 1990s” by William H. Frey, in *Population Today* (Feb. 1998), Population Reference Bureau, 1875 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Ste. 520, Washington, D.C. 20009–5728.

Voting with their feet (in the famous phrase), African Americans from all parts of the country have now made it unanimous: the once benighted South is no

longer a region to be shunned.

Between 1990 and 1995, the South had a net influx of 368,800 blacks, and, for the first time in any comparable period, saw net gains of

black migrants from the West, as well as from the Northeast and Midwest, reports Frey, a demographer with the University of Michigan's Population Studies Center.

The historic black exodus from the South between 1910 and the late 1960s began to be reversed in the 1970s, Frey notes, as the result of "industrial downsizing in the North and an improving racial and economic climate in the South." Between 1975 and 1980, and between 1985 and 1990, the South gained black migrants, largely from the Northeast and Midwest, while still losing them to the West. Then, between 1990 and 1995, net black migration from the Northeast and the Midwest rose, and began from the West. California's dismal economy in the early 1990s and Texas's economic resurgence explain some of the West-to-South movement.

Most of the recent black migrants to the South are of working age; only seven percent are retirees. About 20 percent of the migrants are college graduates.

"The South's booming metropolitan areas—Atlanta, Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, and Miami—are responsible for some, but not all, of the South's black population gains," Frey says. Of the 10 metropolitan areas in the country that gained the most black residents between 1990 and 1996, seven were in the South, and Atlanta was the national leader, with an increase of 159,830 black residents. Smaller metropolitan areas and rural areas in the South also showed gains.

More than half (53 percent) of the nation's African Americans now live in the South, Frey notes, and the Census Bureau expects high rates of black migration there to continue.

The Breakup Conundrum

"Transitions in Family Structure and Adolescent Well-Being" by Ed Spruijt and Martijn de Goede, in *Adolescence* (Winter 1997), Libra Publishers, Inc., 3089C Clairemont Dr., Ste. 383, San Diego, Calif. 92117.

Should parents who are always at each other's throats stay together for the sake of the children? The traditional answer is yes; the modern one is no. A study of 2,517 Dutch youths (ages 15–24) suggests there may be something to the older view.

The overwhelming majority (2,177) of the youths studied were in families with both natural parents present, and 139 of them were in homes with serious marital discord. The parents of the remaining 340 youths had divorced (10 years before the 1991 interviews, on average), with 91 of the offspring subsequently acquiring a stepparent.

Spruijt and de Goede, social scientists at Utrecht University, found that the youths in single-parent households were worst off—in terms of physical and psychological health, success in relationships with the opposite sex, and ability

to hold down a job. The youngsters in harmonious families with both natural parents present were best off. No surprises there. Nor, perhaps, in the finding that the youths whose parents were perpetually at odds "are somewhat comparable to single-parent youngsters in their psychological well-being." (On that score, the youths in stepfamilies did better.)

But the authors also found that when it came to relationships and holding down a job, the youths from troubled intact families, as well as the youths in stepfamilies, did better than their counterparts in single-parent homes. Indeed, they did almost as well as those in stable intact families. The researchers' conclusion: parental conflict can hurt children, but "the effects clearly become stronger when the parents are in fact divorced."

Stadium Scam

"Rooting the Home Team" by David Morris and Daniel Kraker, in *The American Prospect* (Sept.–Oct. 1998), P.O. Box 383080, Cambridge, Mass. 02238; "Sports Stadium Boondoggle" by Mark F. Bernstein, in *The Public Interest* (Summer 1998), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Folks in Denver were jubilant last January when the Broncos won the Super Bowl. Only months later, however, they were handed a blunt message from the team's owners: *Cough*

up \$250 million for a new stadium—or else. The *or else* was that the Broncos might move to another city.

This sort of extortion by professional sports

Imprisoned by Childhood

Requiem, an exhibition of Vietnam War photographs by photographers who were themselves killed in the war, sets Theodore Dalrymple, an English physician and contributing editor of *City Journal* (Summer 1998), to reflecting.

I learned early in my life that, if people are offered the opportunity of tranquility, they often reject it and choose torment instead. My own parents chose to live in the most abject conflictual misery and created for themselves a kind of hell on a small domestic scale, as if acting in an unscripted play by Strindberg. There was no reason external to themselves why they should not have been happy; reasonably prosperous, they lived under as benign a government as they could have wished for. Though they lived together, they addressed not a single word to one another in my presence during the 18 years I spent in their house, though we ate at least one meal a day together. . . .

It was the time of the Vietnam War. Pictures such as those displayed in Requiem seemed to uncritical and arrogant youth to unmask the falseness, the hypocrisy, the hidden but always underlying violence of Western civilization. It was the time of the Glaswegian psychiatrist R. D. Laing, according to whom only the insane were sane in an insane world, while the sane were truly insane. The family was the means by which society passed on and perpetuated its collective madness. . . .

For obvious reasons, I was not entirely well-disposed to family life or to the supposed joys of bourgeois existence, and therefore swallowed some of the nonsense whole. Like the photographers, I was only too desirous of escaping what I supposed to be the source of my personal dissatisfactions. But not for very long: for I soon came to realize that the peculiarities of my personal upbringing were not a reliable prism through which to judge the world. The only thing worse than having a family, I discovered, is not having a family. My rejection of bourgeois virtues as mean-spirited and antithetical to real human development could not long survive contact with situations in which those virtues were entirely absent; and a rejection of everything associated with one's childhood is not so much an escape from that childhood as an imprisonment by it.

teams has become increasingly common, note Morris and Kraker, both of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, and Bernstein, a Philadelphia writer. In the last half-dozen years, pro football and hockey teams have pulled out of Cleveland, Los Angeles, Hartford, and four other American and Canadian cities. "During the same period," say Morris and Kraker, "an additional 20 cities paid the extortion that team owners demanded, building a new facility or remodeling an existing one." Some 40 other pro sports teams are planning or lobbying for new facilities—and demanding city subsidies. The tab for these 40 stadiums and arenas may reach \$7 billion, with taxpayers footing most of it. According to *USA Today*, an estimated \$4 of every \$5 in stadium construction now comes from public sources.

Cities began underwriting stadiums in the 1950s, Bernstein observes, though the teams paid substantial rent and split parking and concession revenues with the city. In the 1970s,

after Congress eliminated a lucrative tax loophole, and players (first in baseball, then in other sports) won the right to be free agents, driving up their salaries, team owners went after revenue more aggressively. New, bigger, better facilities were appealing because money from luxury boxes (which rent for as much as \$250,000 a year in Boston's Fleet Center), ads, parking, and concessions—unlike revenue from tickets and TV broadcasts of the games—generally does not have to be shared with the league.

Teams have leverage over cities because professional sports leagues are cartels, which "make money by ensuring that supply—in this case the number of teams—is less than demand," Bernstein notes.

What can be done? Baseball writer Bill James and others contend that Congress should break up the cartels. If that were done, predicts Bernstein, the number of teams would increase, player salaries and ticket prices would drop, and teams would no longer have such powerful

leverage over their host cities. *But*, he adds, something vital would be lost: “the stability and tradition fans cherish. A truly competitive sports world would be as chaotic as the computer and entertainment markets.” The quality of play might be affected, too, as the number of players multiplied. Bernstein thinks some sort of change may be in order, but nothing so radical.

Morris and Kraker have a different idea: community ownership of teams, à la the Green Bay Packers. (They also favor revenue sharing among teams, to make them all “equal,” as now required in the National Football League, and would oblige leagues to grant expansion fran-

chises to cities abandoned by their teams.) “Professional teams have become an integral part of our community fabric and our emotional and civic lives,” they maintain. “This may justify stadium subsidies in certain communities, but common sense dictates that when an owner demands a subsidy two to three times the value of the team itself, fans would be much better off purchasing the team themselves” (assuming the owner will sell it).

Maybe so. But the Packers “are not a model likely to be copied soon,” Bernstein notes. “All the major professional leagues [now] prohibit public ownership.”

A Bright Side to Public Housing

“Are Public Housing Projects Good for Kids?” by Janet Currie and Aaron Yelowitz, *NBER Working Paper No. 6305* (Dec. 1997), National Bureau of Economic Research, 1050 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

The disastrous failures of Chicago’s infamous Robert Taylor Homes and other massive urban high-rise “projects” have given public housing a bad name. Currie and Yelowitz, economists at the University of California, Los Angeles, suggest that it may be undeserved.

The focus on the worst projects, they say, obscures the fact that projects differ. Of the 3,300 local public housing authorities in the country, 70 percent operate relatively small, more human-scale projects of fewer than 300 units. Moreover, not all the high-rise projects are as bad as the worst. The very fact that New York and other large cities have long lists of poor families waiting to get into public housing indicates it may be the best alternative available to them.

But, the authors ask, is it

best for their children?

Combining data from the Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and taking into account such factors as the family head’s age, marital status, race, and educational status, Currie and Yelowitz find that children in the projects fare better than children of similar background who do not live in public housing. The project families are less likely to suffer from overcrowding, and the boys, at least, are less likely to be held back in school.

Though the children living in projects might be better served by a housing voucher program that would provide subsidies for private-sector apartments, the authors conclude, it appears that public housing has gotten a bum rap.



A public housing project in St. Louis, Missouri: A better life?

PRESS & MEDIA

No News at the Statehouse?

“Missing the Story at the Statehouse” by Charles Layton and Mary Walton, in *American Journalism Review* (July–Aug. 1998), 8701 Adelphi Rd., Adelphi, Md. 20783–1716.

“You can vote any way you want to up here,” Carolyn Russell, a state representative from Goldsboro, North Carolina, was told when she

first arrived in Raleigh in 1991, “because the folks back home will never know.” Even as power and money have been devolving from

Washington to the states, newspapers have been paying *less* attention to state government, report freelance writers Layton and Walton.

“In capital press rooms around the country,” they write, “there are more and more empty desks and silent phones. Bureaus are shrinking, reporters are younger and less experienced, stories get less space and poorer play, and all too frequently editors just don’t care.” Nationwide, only 513 newspaper reporters and 113 wire service colleagues now cover state government full-time. The number of newspaper reporters has fallen in 27 states since the early 1990s (while rising in 14 states and staying the same in nine). Much of the decline is due to cost cutting by major chains, such as Gannett and Knight-Ridder.

“Fewer reporters means fewer stories,” note Layton and Walton. “In the daily crush, state news loses out to crime stories, lighthearted features and lifestyle reporting—all of which editors insist readers prefer, even though [scientific opinion] research shows otherwise.”

An influential research program conducted two decades ago by the Newspaper Advertising Bureau and the American

Newspaper Publishers Association had an especially unfortunate impact. On the one hand, their telephone survey of 3,000 newspaper readers showed that they read newspapers mainly for hard news; on the other hand, a companion series of focus groups in 12 cities indicated that people wanted “personally helpful” stories. Editors chose to believe the unrepresentative focus groups, with their lively quotes, rather than the scientific phone survey, with its daunting array of statistics. In succeeding years, many editors altered their papers accordingly, giving readers *less* of what they said in surveys they wanted. In a 1991 survey of reader preferences, not only did hard news triumph over features, but state news did very well, ranking ahead of 28 other categories, including crime news, health news, and “news that’s helpful with everyday living.” But “the flight from government coverage and hard news” continued, note Layton and Walton.

The picture is not entirely bleak, they observe. “Thanks to computers and to campaign finance disclosure laws in all 50 states, journalists have the power to explore the secret

In the Mencken Tradition

The *New Republic* writer and two *Boston Globe* columnists who were fired this year for passing off fiction as non-fiction were following in the footsteps of some of journalism’s most illustrious names, observes Burt Solomon, a staff correspondent for the *National Journal* (Aug. 22, 1998).

Two of American journalism’s most gifted and respected practitioners, A.J. Liebling and Joseph Mitchell, both formerly of The New Yorker, used the generous incorporation of fictitious characters and scenes to raise their narrative reporting to a literary level. . . .

The truth is, if anything, journalistic standards have been on the rise in recent years. Reporters are better-educated than ever, and the doctored quotes and composite characters that have so appalled onlookers of today’s journalism were actually far more common—and more commonly accept-



ed—in the past. The Hearst papers are credited, through their relentlessly sensationalist and, at least partially, fictive reporting, with instigating the Spanish-American War. H. L. Mencken, the creator of journalism’s 20th century voice, bragged in his memoirs of making up stories to scoop a rival and of inventing from his desk in Baltimore eyewitness accounts of naval battles taking place half a world away in the Russo-Japanese war.

world of money in state politics, something previous generations could only dream of.” *The Indianapolis Star and News*, owned by former vice president Dan Quayle’s family, have led the way, showing in hard-hitting series how the Indiana legislature had been “hijacked” and “plundered” by “an extraordinary coalition

of about 40 big-business interests, led by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce.” “As editors seek alternatives to ‘boring’ governmental process stories,” say Layton and Walton, “database journalism (despite a name that suggests geeks-at-work) has the power to rivet readers with accounts of how democracy operates.”

Consider the Alternatives

“Chaining the Alternatives” by Eric Bates, in *The Nation* (June 29, 1998),
33 Irving Pl., New York, N.Y. 10003.

In the good old antiwar days, “underground” weeklies such as the *Phoenix New Times* were the proud “alternative” to the tame “establishment” press, and their mission was clear: not just to write about the world, but to change it. No longer, observes Bates, a staff writer for *The Independent*, a locally owned alternative weekly in Durham, North Carolina. Grown so prosperous that corporate chains now compete fiercely to buy them, many alternative papers have put their radicalism behind them. Instead of fighting capitalism, they are embracing it.

Founded by college students and dropouts in 1970 as a vehicle of antiwar protest, *New Times* has evolved into a national chain, *New Times Inc.* It owns eight alternative weeklies, from Miami to San Francisco, as well as an advertising group that represents six other papers. In the early years, *New Times* was put out by a nonhierarchical collective, whose members each made \$55 a week. Today, writers for the chain’s papers get annual salaries of \$35,000 or more, while in 1995 cofounders Michael Lacey and Jim Larkin, according to an internal memo, each pulled down \$300,000.

New Times Inc. “still takes on everyone from corporate polluters to corrupt politicians,” Bates reports, “but it also takes pains to distance itself from its radical past.” Not all alternative papers had any radical past to shed, Bates notes. “Many evolved from free shoppers, campus entertainment listings and record store promotions, devoted to cashing in on the young, hip,

urban demographic that movement papers had helped forge.”

In the last four years, *New Times*, *Stern Publishing* (which owns seven papers, including New York’s *Village Voice*), and other corporate chains “have snapped up alternative weeklies in major markets like Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Minneapolis and Montreal, and have begun expanding into mid-size cities,” Bates says. Of the 17 million “alternative” readers, more than half are now served by chain-owned weeklies.

The trend, Bates says, “is being driven largely” by the prospect of advertising revenues, which since 1992 have nearly doubled, to \$345 million. With publications in multiple markets, chains are able to attract national advertisers, notably cigarette and alcohol advertisers. “They understand how to reach 18- to 34-year-olds efficiently,” notes Richard Karpel, executive director of the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies (AAN). Over the last two years, national ad revenues for the 109 AAN members have almost tripled, with nearly 70 percent of the money coming from the tobacco industry. (Another major source of revenue for alternative papers is graphic sex ads.)

In *Advertising Age* two years ago, AAN assured potential advertisers that the alternatives’ “primary mission is journalistic, not political, and they are all in business to make a profit.” If that is so, asks Bates, “then what makes them alternative?”

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Kantian Christianity

“The Christian Democracy of Glenn Tinder and Jacques Maritain,” by Robert P. Kraynak, in *Perspectives on Political Science* (Spring 1998), 1319 18th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-1802.

For much of its 2,000-year history, Christianity was indifferent or hostile to democ-

racy. Today, however, virtually all churches and Christian theologians are its champi-

ons. Christianity's central moral teaching, according to the modern view, is the dignity of the individual person, and a commitment to democratic government necessarily follows. Kraynak, a political scientist at Colgate University, begs to differ.

The modern view, he says, has been expressed by Glenn Tinder, a Lutheran, in *The Political Meaning of Christianity* (1989), and by French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain (1882–1973), in *Christianity and Democracy* (1945) and other works. Tinder claims that the conception of “the exalted individual” underlies Christian social and political thinking, while Maritain defends the “dignity of the human person” and a political theory of “personalist democracy.” The outlook of the two philosophers, argues Kraynak, amounts to “Kantian Christianity,” in which Immanuel Kant's theory of human dignity is imported into Christian theology. (Maritain was an avowed opponent of Kantianism, Kraynak allows, but his Thomistic thought “ends with a Kantian or liberal notion of freedom.”)

Kant's moral ideas, Kraynak notes, have many aspects that strongly appeal to Christian thinkers: “the universalism of the categorical imperative and the lofty notion of duty pitted against selfish inclinations, the emphasis on individual free will, and the idealism of striving for perpetual peace based on a just world order. Underlying these ideas is Kant's notion of the duty to treat everyone as a ‘person’ rather than a

thing—to see the infinite worth and dignity of all persons and to respect their autonomy.” The political imperative then becomes to create democratic government that promotes human rights and individual autonomy.

There is a nobility in this modern view, Kraynak admits, especially when it is used to defend liberal democracy against totalitarianism. But, he maintains, exalting the individual “often encourages a debased democracy of self-expression rather than a more noble or more spiritual society.”

The traditional Christian view, Kraynak believes, had a less exaggerated notion of human dignity and a more realistic appraisal of human depravity. The view of Saint Augustine and the other great theologians of the past, he says, rested on the traditional Christian doctrine of the “Two Cities,” the City of God and the Earthly City. “All regimes of the Earthly City are tainted by original sin and are more or less corrupt,” Kraynak explains. “Accordingly, the goal of politics in the fallen world should be lowered: ‘the tranquillity of order’ rather than justice.”

Such an approach need not rule out democratic government, Kraynak points out. Indeed, it enables the case for democracy to be made on firmer, more realistic grounds. As the Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr once wrote, “Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.”

The Future of Zion

“At Last, Zion: Israel and the Fate of the Jews,” by Charles Krauthammer, in *The Weekly Standard* (May 11, 1998), 1150 17th St., Washington, D.C. 20036–4617; “Jews against Israel,” by Susan Greenberg, in *Prospect* (June 1998), 4 Bedford Sq., London, WC1B 3RA, England.

For more than 2,000 years, the Jews have survived persecution, defeat, and exile. They succeeded in returning to their homeland after the fall of the first temple and Babylonian exile in 586 B.C., and again after the fall of the second temple and Roman exile in A.D. 135. The latter return occurred only 50 years ago, with the founding of Israel. Yet, argues Krauthammer, a political commentator, that second return has put the Jews in greater jeopardy than ever before.

Israel is the cultural center of world Jewry and it is quickly on its way to becoming its

demographic center as the Diaspora declines. This loss of dispersion, Krauthammer fears, will leave the Jews without the “demographic insurance” that permitted them to survive numerous onslaughts in the past. “To destroy the Jewish people,” Krauthammer writes, “Hitler needed to conquer the world. All that is needed today is to conquer a territory smaller than Vermont.”

The Diaspora's decline began in Europe, long the main refuge of world Jewry. On the eve of World War II, Europe was home to nine million Jews; two-thirds of them perished in

the Holocaust. The European Jewish population has continued to decline, to little more than one million, the smallest it has been since the late Middle Ages. The world Jewish population has “yet to recover” from Hitler’s genocide, hovering at some 13 million, compared with 16 million in 1939.

The United States replaced Europe as the center of the Diaspora after World War II, but the population of American Jews, who constitute about 40 percent of world Jewry, “is now headed for catastrophic decline,” Krauthammer says. The Jewish population has decreased from three percent to two percent of the U.S. population in the last half-century. The biological replacement rate among American Jews is only 80 percent, so that there is a 20 percent population loss with each passing generation. Assimilation also takes a toll. In a poll conducted by the *Los Angeles Times*, only 70 percent of Jews said they were raising their children as Jews. Clearly, Krauthammer notes, “a population in which the biological replacement rate is 80 percent and the cultural replacement rate is 70 percent is headed for extinction.”

Greenberg, the editor of *MindField* (a

series of books on current issues), also fears that Israel has increased the vulnerability of the Jews, but for very different reasons. Before the founding of Israel, she says, the need to maintain an identity apart in various host countries fostered flexibility and a sense of openness in the Jewish culture. Greenberg argues that the equation of Jewish identity with the state of Israel, which increasingly emphasizes conformity and a uniform definition of Jewish identity, is sapping the culture of some traditional strengths. “Jewishness cannot be reduced to Israeli-ness,” Greenberg insists. Jewish identity must be severed from Israel if the Jewish people are to survive.

Krauthammer, however, sees a strong Jewish state as the only hope for the future of the Jews. Much is made of the Jews’ two returns, but those only “defied the norm.” There would be no third return. Modern Jews are descended from Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel. They should not forget what happened to the Jews of the northern kingdom of Israel, the legendary 10 “lost tribes” who were overrun by the Assyrians in 772 B.C., exiled, and lost forever.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

When Sciences Converge

“History and the Scientific Worldview” by William H. McNeill, in *History and Theory* (Feb. 1998), Blackwell Publishers, 350 Main St., Malden, Mass. 02148.

Craving universal and unchanging truth, historians and social scientists have long looked wistfully at the natural sciences, with their imposingly objective, quantitative character. But the revolutionary transformation of physics and cosmology over the last half-century has made the natural and social sciences much more alike, contends historian McNeill, author of *The Rise of the West* (1963).

At the beginning of the century, physics and astronomy, being exact, cumulative, and predictive, were the ideal toward which not only social scientists but even scientists in other fields, such as biology and geology, aspired. But then, in the 1920s, the old, Newtonian certainties began “to crumble with the emergence of quantum mechanics,” McNeill notes. Three decades later, “the universe as a whole became open-ended and unstable . . . when a coalition of

cosmologists and small-particle physicists began to compose a new and very surprising story of how it all got started and proceeded to evolve across the past 10 to 15 billion years.” Instead of the predictable cosmos, obeying universal mathematical laws, that scientists between the 17th and 19th centuries had seen, there was now an expanding universe that had begun with a Big Bang and in which “the ultimate limits of our familiar matter, energy, space, and time are sporadically approached, or perhaps even crossed, in the neighborhood of Black Holes, quasars, and the like.”

This very different cosmos, McNeill observes, “begins to resemble the chaotic and changeable world that biologists and social scientists have always struggled to understand.” In their effort to obtain eternal, objective truths, historians and social scientists have always been hampered by “the role of

the observer in creating what is observed.” Now, physicists are haunted by the same dilemma. “Einstein’s relativity and the oddities of quantum mechanics both drew attention to the inescapable involvement of the act of measurement with what is measured,” McNeill notes.

Cosmologists, he continues, now debate whether the universe of their surmise may be forced “to conform to what human minds and humanly created instruments are capable of observing. The resulting epistemological dilemma is acute, even though practicing scientists usually prefer to disregard it. But the notion, propagated in the 17th century, that physical science,

relying on the certainties of mathematics, could achieve accurate predictability and an unambiguous description of external reality is no longer very plausible.”

At every level of intellectual organization—whether physical, chemical, or biological, or at the level of humanly invented verbal and mathematical symbols—complexity is giving rise to new and surprising sorts of behavior, McNeill points out. The natural and social sciences, he concludes, have begun to converge around a “grand evolutionary worldview.” He predicts that this congruence of the sciences will prove to be “the primary intellectual achievement of the 20th century.”

Why Rest?

“The Quest for the Essence of Sleep” by Alexander A. Borbély and Giulio Tononi, in *Daedalus* (Spring 1998), 136 Irving St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

Sleep is as necessary to human beings as food and drink, and most people spend one-third of their lives in this unconscious state. Yet, despite decades of research, the purpose of sleep remains obscure, notes Borbély, a professor of pharmacology at the University of Zurich, and Tononi, a Senior Fellow at the Neurosciences Institute in La Jolla, California.

Scientists have been studying sleep by measuring brain waves since the 1920s, but it was only in 1953 that researchers discovered that there are two kinds of sleep: the traditional “quiet” sort and an “active” type in which the eyes move rapidly beneath their closed lids while the body’s heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing fluctuate. Sleep, Borbély and Tononi say, seems to be not a unitary state but “a complex dynamic process” in which “active” and “quiet” slumber cyclically alternate. Active (or “rapid eye movement”) sleep typically accounts for 20 to 25 percent of adult rest.

Not everyone needs the same amount of rest, the authors observe. Some people, like Albert Einstein, spend up to 10 hours at a time in bed, while others, like Thomas Edison, need only four to six hours. One 70-

year-old retired nurse found by English researchers needed only one hour of sleep a night.

Most people believe that sleep serves to renew the whole human being, body and brain. However, it is clear to scientists that people sleep for the benefit of the brain, say Borbély and Tononi. If a person lies awake but motionless overnight, in the morning the body’s muscles are relaxed but the mind is not—and the “sense of well-being is lost.” But exactly what function sleep serves for the

brain is unknown. Some scientists speculate that sleep has a restorative function; others theorize that it offers stimulation, much as, in the womb, a fetus’s “active” sleep helps the brain to mature. Still other researchers suggest that during sleep a person may replay and thus “consolidate” memories

of activities that occurred during the day—or else erase memories, so as to prepare the brain circuitry for a new day.

Understanding how sleep works could have practical benefits. In the United States alone, sleep loss leads to 25,000 deaths and 2.5 million injuries on the road and elsewhere every year, at an estimated cost of \$56 billion.



For My Lottie: Femme Endormie, by
Lovis Corinth

Evolution's Day Off

"Does Evolutionary History Take Million-Year Breaks?" by Richard A. Kerr, in *Science* (Oct. 24, 1997), 1200 New York Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Does evolution ever take a holiday? Strict Darwinists maintain that life is always in a state of change, with species continually coming and going. But some paleontologists, reports Kerr, a *Science* staff writer, are suggesting that hundreds of millions of years ago, entire communities of marine animals of various species remained virtually unchanged for millions of years, then plunged into brief frenzies of extinction and new species formation.

In putting forward this idea of "coordinated stasis," paleontologists Carlton Brett of the University of Rochester and Gordon Baird of the State University of New York, Fredonia, have built upon the concept of "punctuated equilibrium." This revolutionary concept was advanced in 1972 by Stephen Jay Gould of Harvard University and Niles Eldredge of the American Museum of Natural History, in New York, who argued that species tend to persist unchanged for millions of years before

abruptly giving way to new species. Coordinated stasis, explains Douglas Erwin of the National Museum of Natural History, in Washington, "is punctuated equilibrium at a higher level," involving not just individual species but entire ecological communities.

Examining the fossils of marine animals that lived in ocean-bottom muds some 380 million to 440 million years ago, Brett and Baird identified 14 periods, each running from three million to seven million years, during which at least 60 percent of the species persisted with little change. Each period ended with a drastic turnover of species, lasting a few hundred thousand years.

"Most studies of similar fossil records have found little evidence for prolonged periods of evolutionary stasis," Kerr notes. But if even occasional episodes of coordinated stasis took place, he observes, that could have a major impact on the way in which evolution is understood.

Recycling Is Virtuous

"In Defense of Recycling" by Allen Hershkowitz, in *Social Research* (Spring 1998), New School for Social Research, 66 W. 12th St., New York, N.Y. 10011.

Recycling, which many regard as environmental virtue incarnate, has come under attack in recent years as itself a waste of human and natural resources, not to mention time and money. "Recycling Is Garbage," shouted a *New York Times Magazine* broadside in 1996. Hershkowitz, a senior scientist with the Natural Resources Defense Council, rises to the defense.

"It is virtually beyond dispute," he says, "that manufacturing products from recyclables instead of from virgin raw materials . . . causes less pollution and imposes fewer burdens on the earth's natural habitat and biodiversity." Modern paper recycling mills, for instance, produce no air or water pollution and no hazardous wastes, while the virgin pulp and paper industry is among "the world's largest generators of toxic air pollutants, surface water pollution, sludge, and solid wastes."

The 1996 *New York Times Magazine* writer, John Tierney, defied environmental correctness by asserting that a disposable polystyrene

cup makes more ecological sense than a reusable ceramic mug, since making and continually cleaning the mug consumes large amounts of energy (and water). But Hershkowitz points out that "oil refineries and plastics production facilities that process crude petroleum into plastic cups and other consumer goods produce some of the most substantial public health threats—including lethal gases like phosgene—posed by any manufacturing process."

Critics have pointed out that the trucks used to collect aluminum cans and old newspapers spew pollutants into the air. Hershkowitz says recycling trucks and facilities generate no more pollution than garbage trucks and facilities, and probably less. Recycling trucks spend less time idling (because recyclables are lighter than garbage and thus easier for workers to carry), and they don't have to travel to distant landfills.

Some recycling critics have also argued that curbside recycling is not economical when compared with garbage collection and landfill

disposal. But the costs involved vary so much, both over time and from place to place, Hershkowitz says, that it is impossible to substantiate that claim. Sometimes recycling has the economic edge at the local level; sometimes it doesn't. But any full accounting, he says, should include the hard-to-measure consequences for the environment, health, and society.

One of the biggest advantages of recycling, Hershkowitz writes, is that it reduces the need for landfills. During the last 15 years, more than 10,000 landfills have been closed in the United States, chiefly because of environmental problems. Critics of recycling tout the environmental safety of modern landfills, but Hershkowitz is not persuaded. "Landfills generate hazardous and uncontrolled air emis-

sions and also threaten surface and groundwater supplies." Of the nearly 3,000 currently operating landfills, less than half even attempt to control dangerous air pollutants, and only one-third have synthetic liners to keep groundwater from being fouled.

With 7,500 recycling programs in operation (compared with only 1,000 a decade ago), almost 24 percent of the nation's municipal solid waste is being recovered. "Of course, as a raw-material commodities business, recycling markets can't guarantee profits," Hershkowitz concedes. "No market does." But the financial risks "in no way negate" recycling's environmental benefits. And, he points out, while "some recycling programs lose money under adverse market conditions, dumping at a landfill or an incinerator *always* 'loses money.'"

ARTS & LETTERS

The Curious Madonnas of India

"The Indian Conquest of Catholic Art" by Gauvin Alexander Bailey, in *Art Journal* (Spring 1998),
College Art Assn., 275 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001.

It was by conquest, not choice, that the art of the Amerindians of early colonial Latin America became more European. But in 16th- and early 17th-century India, the story was different. There, writes Bailey, a profes-

sor of Renaissance and Baroque art at Clark University, the Mughal emperor elected, on his own initiative, to serve as a patron of Catholic religious art. "The result was the most visually potent figural iconography ever devised by an Islamic power."

Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605), a descendant of Ghengis Khan and ruler of the most powerful Muslim state on earth, had "a passion for world religions and late Renaissance art," Bailey says. In 1580, he invited a Jesuit mission to live at the royal palace in Fatehpur Sikki and take charge of his art projects. "In open defiance of Islam's traditional abjuration of figural art, the Mughal royal family evinced an active interest in—and even open worship of—Catholic devotional images."

Akbar directed his artists to paint hundreds of iconic portraits of Jesus, Mary, and various Christian saints to decorate books, albums, and jewelry. The images also were used in court rituals and at coronations and other major royal festivities. "The dramatic culmination," Bailey says, "came when imperial throne rooms, harems, tombs, and gardens were prominently adorned with mural paintings of Christian figures." European visitors took this to mean that the Muslim regime



Crucifixion (c. 1585–90) was among the works of Catholic art prized by the Mughal emperors.

was on the verge of conversion, but, in fact, the Mughals were using the Christian art for their own purposes.

As Muslims presiding over a predominantly Hindu people, Akbar and his son Jahangir (r. 1605–27), who succeeded him, encouraged religious tolerance and “forged a syncretic ideology of kingship that would reflect the multicultural makeup of their growing empire, while promoting their own unifying image as divinely chosen rulers” for the new Muslim millennium that began during 1591–92. They used the Catholic art to provide a visual manifestation of this ideology.

Jesus and Mary figure prominently in the Koran and are revered in traditional Islam,

Bailey notes. “It is quite possible that the Mughals chose Catholic imagery because Islam itself did not provide an iconographic tradition capable of combating the visually potent pantheon of Hindu deities.”

Whether in official settings or more intimate ones, the Catholic-inspired murals were meant for only a limited audience, Bailey observes. “Christian devotional pictures were painted on a small scale and never appeared on the exteriors of buildings, perhaps so as not to offend the religious sensibilities of the general public.” The Mughals’ murals, he says, were intended only for those “sufficiently immersed in palace culture” to understand their syncretic message.

Big Brother Architecture

Metropolis (Aug.–Sept. 1998) contributing editor Michael Sorkin sees little reason to celebrate such acclaimed New Urbanist developments as Celebration, near Disney World in Orlando, Florida.

Like Modernism, New Urbanism overestimates architecture’s power to influence behavior. The idea is that replicating the forms of the New England town green will move citizens in the direction of the good, democratic conduct that presumably arose from such arrangements in the past. (Never mind the witches being tortured just out of the frame.) But in the same way that Disneyland’s miniaturized, ersatz nostalgia relies on a huge apparatus of manipulation and control, New Urbanist towns are underpinned by a labyrinth of restrictive covenants, building regulations, homeowners association codes of behavior, and engineered demographic sterility. Restrictions range from bans on children and stipulated house colors to limits on what can be grown in the front yard, as well as other exclusions that cannot be placed so explicitly in writing. Robert A. M. Stern, Celebration’s planner, elevates such rigid controls to the status of democratic principle; quoted in a recent New York Times article, he makes the Orwellian claim, “Regimentation can release you.” The reality, though, reminds me of the great Patrick McGooohan TV series, The Prisoner. Behind the delightful facades of that glorious folly, Portmeirion, lay a sinister apparatus of imprisonment.

Nashville’s New Tune

“In Defense of Music Row” by Bruce Feiler, in the *Oxford American* (1998: No.21–22), P.O. Box 1156, Oxford, Miss. 38655.

Most country music critics condemn the sounds coming out of Nashville these days as watered-down, commercially driven, country pop-rock drivel. Country music, they complain, has lost touch with its roots—with hardscrabble places such as southern Appalachia and the Texas flatlands, and the folks who live there. But the critics, argues Feiler, author of *Dreaming Out Loud* (1998),

miss the big picture: country music today simply reflects changes in the South—changes that, for the most part, have made the region a better place to live.

Today, even the people of southern Appalachia and the Texas flatlands have lost touch with their roots, Feiler says. “Regional identity is less important than ever. In an era when computers, chain stores, and cable

television dominate American life, the sense of isolation and disenfranchisement that was once central to the South has all but disappeared.” The old stereotypes of “barefoot, pregnant women and toothless, racist men” have receded, and other Americans are finding the warm and prosperous South an attractive place to live: more than 20 million have moved to the region since 1970.

“Country music has never had as its mandate the preservation of rural life,” Feiler points out, and Nashville has always had its eye on the bottom line. Consumers—not critics, artists, or recording executives—determine what constitutes country music, he says. And the definition has changed over the decades, from bluegrass in the 1940s, to

honky-tonk, the Nashville Sound, New Traditionalism, and today’s sound.

And the latest music is not all bad, Feiler says. “To be sure, much of what’s heard on country radio is the worst representation of Music Row—and the South. It’s bland, homogenized, and unadventurous.” But the good news, he says, is the sophistication of the works of many contemporary artists, including Mary Chapin Carpenter, the Mavericks, and superstars such as Garth Brooks and Shania Twain. Twenty years from now, he predicts, future critics will be complaining that their contemporary country music cannot hold a candle to the music of those artists—“that is, to the Nashville of the ’90s.”

A Walker in the ‘Ashcan’ City

The late distinguished critic Alfred Kazin (1915–98) recalls in *The American Scholar* (Spring 1998) when artists discovered his city—and he discovered *them*.



Sunday, Women Drying Their Hair (1912), by John Sloan

For American artists in the first half of the century, New York itself was the great new subject. New York painters seemed to love the city more than New York writers did; the painters were tuned in to the passing show, where Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, and later embittered leftwing realists like Michael Gold saw only victims and oppressors. I had no positive city images until I discovered them in art museums. At the old Whitney on Eighth Street, I found Reginald Marsh’s paintings of Fourteenth Street shoppers; at the

Met, I found John Sloan’s neighborly Greenwich Village backyards with prowling cats and laundry drying on the line, and his full-figured secretaries in red hats just released from the office and rollicking under the curve that the Sixth Avenue El made at Thirtieth Street.

There was a certain haste to the painters whom the officially approved artists at the National Academy of Design derogatively called the Ashcan School. This reflected the timely discovery of New York as a subject. Many of the Ashcan paintings were humanly generous but broad in conception, too easy to take. George Bellows’s 1924 painting of Dempsey knocking Firpo out of the ring was as pleasant in its way as the Raphael Soyer paintings of meltingly lovable girls sitting around an employment agency. New York realists were more at home with sweating muscles than with the puzzle of existence. But I was glad that Henri, Glackens, Bellows, Luks, and Sloan were around—they gave color, the vibrant smack of life, to a New York that needed the recognition through art that writers and painters both withheld until the new century burst upon them.

Art without Audiences

“Simple Hearts: An Address regarding the Consequences of Supply-Side Aesthetics” by Dave Hickey, in *Art Issues* (Summer 1998), 8721 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste. 6, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

The art world has grown to massive proportions in recent decades, thanks to the largesse of the federal government, major universities, and public and private foundations. But something vital is missing: an actively engaged public, contends Hickey, a columnist for *Art Issues* and a professor of art at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The museums and other institutions exhibiting contemporary art have become indifferent to what their audience thinks. Since the works of art “are presumed to be valuable by governmental fiat, by executive decision,” he says, the public’s opinion of them has been rendered superfluous.

This is a profoundly mistaken approach, Hickey argues. It is the beholders, not the artist, who give value and meaning to works of art, who see that the works are remembered, because they *want* them to be remembered. By disenfranchising the beholders, the National Endowment for the Arts, the universities, and the rest of today’s artistic “support systems” have isolated artists from the broader culture. As a result, Hickey asserts, the practice of art is dying. “Art stops mattering to the individual citizens of the republic and begins to fade from public consciousness, where it *must* live. And it is fading today, as a consequence of . . . an obsession with origins, intentions, and production—an obsession with the people who make the work, their personal egos and identities, and at the expense of those citizens who might invest it with value.”

The art world, Hickey maintains, was led astray in 1972, when President Richard

M. Nixon took what had been the modest National Endowment for the Arts created four years earlier and initiated its “substantial, ongoing expansion,” transforming public art institutions into “the arbiters and primary providers of contemporary visual culture to the nation.” Simultaneously, the government phased out tax credits for donations of art to public institutions, making it less attractive for patrons to buy works of art.

“By expanding government largesse to artists and art institutions while reducing governmental incentives for commerce in art,” Hickey writes, “Nixon effectively shifted the focus of art discourse from its consequences to its causes—creating a situation in which art was much more likely to be made and much less likely to be sold.” By funding museums and other institutions, Nixon “made possible government-regulated venues in which this art (which wasn’t going to be bought) could be exhibited.” Before long, this “publicly funded art world began to conceive itself in opposition to the world in which secular commerce in art took place.” Contemporary artists became increasingly isolated and irrelevant.

But the situation is changing, he believes. “The government is tiring of funding art about which no one cares.”

In the meantime, Hickey has a suggestion for the artists, critics, and educators who are supposed to be above commerce: “If we are really as selfless and public-spirited and committed to art as we say we are, let’s just give it away, as a public service.”

OTHER NATIONS

Poland’s Shocking Success

“Miracle on the Vistula” by Elizabeth Pond, in *The Washington Quarterly* (Summer 1998), CSIS, 1800 K St. N.W., Ste. 400, Washington, D.C. 20006.

In 1992, after two years of “shock therapy,” Poland was reeling. Real wages had declined 20 percent, gross domestic product had fallen 35 percent, exports to the imploded Soviet Union had dropped 90 per-

cent, and unemployment had climbed to 12 percent. When ex-Communists emerged victorious in the 1993 general election, the message seemed clear: the radical plan to shift rapidly from a command economy to a

market one had failed. But in fact, writes Pond, co-author of *The German Question and Other German Questions* (1996), the shock therapy was just starting to work.

Despite its campaign demands for higher wages, pensions, and agricultural doles, the new government formed by the ex-Communist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and the Polish Peasant Party, she says, “basically carried on” the shock therapy plan devised in late 1989 by the Solidarity government finance minister, Leszek Balcerowicz. While fudging on mass privatization of state-held enterprises, the new SLD-dominated government “kept its hands off the new small- and medium-sized private firms that were becoming the engine of the economy.”

In retrospect, Pond says, 1993 was when the economy turned around, growing by

almost four percent. Then, despite an official 16 percent jobless rate, consumption took off. “Auto purchases soared. Families and firms acquired computers at a rate that would soon exceed per capita ownership in Germany. The subterranean kiosks in the passageways under Jerozolimskie Street in Warsaw got glassed in and gentrified (and began paying taxes). . . . Thirty-five-year-olds put to work the trading skills they had acquired in a decade of dodging Communist customs inspectors with cars full of sausages and shoes. Twenty-five-year-olds began snaring well-paid junior management jobs in Western companies. . . . Poles began thinking, in a sea change, that individual talents and drive were more important than personal connections for success.”

By 1995, industrial production had

In the North Korean Gulag

In the North Korean communist regime’s “far-reaching system of terror, degradation, and slave labor,” an estimated 200,000 people are now being held in more than 10 different prison camps for such “crimes” as reading a foreign newspaper or complaining about the food situation, report the editors of *Journal of Democracy* (July 1998). Sun Ok Lee, who served a five-year prison term and later defected to South Korea, tells of her experience in the “North Korean gulag”:

On 26 October 1986, I was arrested on the false charge of “government property embezzlement,” and was subjected to all kinds of severe tortures and cruel treatment during the period of preliminary investigation for 14 months. I was so badly beaten, kicked, and suffocated that I could hardly walk from the cell to the interrogation office. They had to drag me all the way. My lip was torn half way to my ear. They frequently poured cold water on my body and left me outside in freezing winter nights for one hour each time. They called this “fish freezing.” Once I was left on the floor unconscious for many hours and woke up to find worms in my wounds. . . .

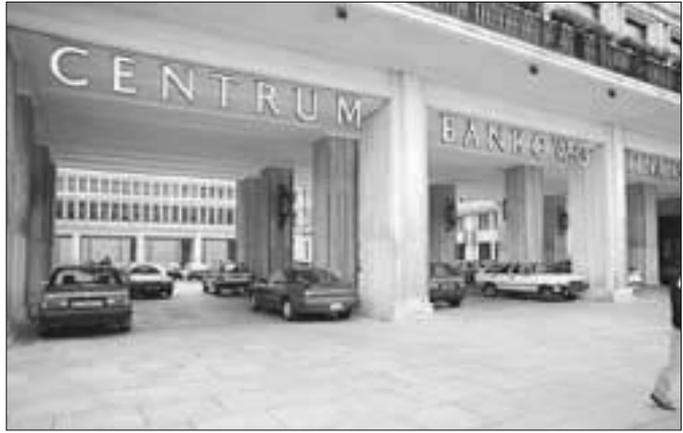
My days in North Korea’s Kaechon Prison began in November 1987, 14 months after my arrest. . . . Eighty percent of the prisoners were ordinary housewives who had committed a minor offense, such as attempting to buy a blanket in the market for her daughter’s wedding. . . .

A 52-year-old housewife failed to detect a small needle in a huge pile of used cotton for army winter uniforms. She was sent to the punishment cell, a small space with a ceiling so low that the prisoner cannot stand. The walls have sharp spikes so that the prisoner cannot lean against them and a toilet hole at the bottom so that the prisoner cannot sit. A prisoner must stay there for a week. When she was released after a week, she could not walk and had to crawl on her hands and knees. However, she tried to work hard to accomplish her work quota and get a full ration. The guards kicked her many times when she could not move fast. One day she died on a cold floor. The senior guard in charge complained: “Are we going to waste another straw mat to get rid of this corpse?” Thus a dear housewife perished without the knowledge of her family. This was only the beginning, and I was to see many similar incidents in the years to come.

recovered to its 1989 levels. Some 62 percent of the labor force was employed in the private sector. Trade was reoriented toward the West. Polish voters had enough confidence in the new democracy to vote a national icon—President Lech Walesa, the former Solidarity leader—out of office.

The economic boom continued, as output grew by more than six percent annually between 1994 and 1997. By 1997, “up to 65 percent or even 70 percent of the economy” was in the hands of the private sector. Unemployment was down to 12 percent, inflation to 14 percent. In the 1997 election, Balcerowicz, the architect of the shock therapy, was vindicated. His Freedom Union party won 13 percent of the vote and joined in a coalition government headed by the new Solidarity Election Action (AWS).

In less than a decade, writes Pond, the



Sign of the times: Poland's central bank in Warsaw now occupies the former headquarters of the Polish Communist Party.

Poles “have invented instant governments, parties, civil society, watchdog media, parliaments with the wit and integrity to pass responsible budgets and legislate for an unfamiliar world, judiciaries independent of politics, subordination of security services to elected officials, ombudsmen, functioning civil servants, local self-government, civilian control of the military, and the habits of individual initiative and risk. . . . Their initial faith that democracy brings affluence has been requited.”

Asia's Other Giant

“Taking India Seriously” by James Manor and Gerald Segal, in *Survival* (Summer 1998), International Institute for Strategic Studies, 23 Tavistock St., London WC2E 7NQ England.

Foreign investors rushing to take advantage of economic opportunity in China in recent years have barely paused to notice Asia's other population giant, India. That neglect is not likely to last, contend Manor, a Professorial Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, and Segal, director of studies at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London.

With a population (900 million) three-fourths the size of China's, India has an economy that is still only a little more than half as large: \$225 billion in gross domestic product in 1993, compared with China's \$425 billion. In 1996, India received slightly more than \$2 billion in foreign direct investment—while China raked in \$38 billion. Eighty-five percent of the money poured into China from abroad comes from ethnic Chinese, and India has no equiva-

lent diaspora.

However, India's foreign investment total is roughly what China's was in the early-to-mid-1980s. After China launched its economic reforms in 1979, the authors point out, it took five to seven years of sustained economic growth before the outside world saw “that China was serious about reforming its domestic economy and opening to the rest of the world.” Much the same, they say, may prove true of India, which—after decades of socialism and of shunning foreign trade and investment—embarked in 1991, under then-prime minister P. V. Narasimha Rao, on a path of economic reform.

Liberalization has not gone as far as free-market enthusiasts would like, the authors say, but their modesty has made the reforms politically sustainable. “Major progress has been made in industrial deregulation, in

removing impediments to domestic and foreign private investment, in liberalizing trade, in reforming the exchange-rate system, in raising energy prices, and in promoting partnerships between private firms (Indian and foreign) and Indian state-owned enterprises in certain key sectors.” Over the last three years, India’s economy has grown about seven percent annually.

“When the West views India in proper perspective,” Manor and Segal write, “it will focus on a wider range of reasons for the country’s long-term success.” Unlike China, India “already has a working democracy and a federal system for govern-

ing the decentralized system necessary in large market economies. India has a well-established system of law—not least commercial and contract law—and (albeit slow-moving) judicial institutions.” When McDonald’s in Beijing ran into problems with local authorities in 1996, it had no recourse to a court of law; but when Kentucky Fried Chicken had similar difficulties in Bangalore that year, it eventually was able to get legal satisfaction. If India can keep up the economic reform and manage the political fallout, conclude the authors, the world before long will be beating a path to its door.

Where All Politics Is Local

“Somalia: Political Order in a Stateless Society” by Ken Menkhaus, and “Somaliland Goes It Alone” by Gerard Prunier, in *Current History* (May 1998), 4225 Main St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19127.

Ever since the outside world gave up its efforts to re-establish a central government in Somalia three years ago, it has been widely assumed that this country in the Horn of Africa fell back into chaos and violence. This is not the case, writes Menkhaus, a political scientist at Davidson College. “While Somalia today is stateless, it is not anarchic.”

Local communities have moved to take up the slack. In most of Somalia today, he says, the basic political functions “are carried out at the village, town, or (in Mogadishu, the only large city) neighborhood level. Law and order is ensured either by clan elders, by sharia [Islamic law] courts springing up in urban neighborhoods, or in a few instances, by local police forces.”

Somalia’s northwest—which seceded in 1991 but has failed to gain international recognition—“is at peace,” notes Prunier, of the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris. Since the end of fighting there in 1995, the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland has created a written constitution and a two-chamber assembly and other viable institutions of government. It has combined traditional Somali culture with Western democracy—and without foreign help of any sort. Somaliland’s modest progress, he believes, deserves something better than “the international cold shoulder it has received so far.”

Somaliland president Mohammed Ibrahim Egal, notes Menkhaus, has overseen “a revitalization of the commercial economy.”

Somaliland’s Red Sea port of Berbera has become “a booming entrepôt for regional livestock exports. Profits from this commercial renaissance have brought a prosperity to the northwest region that exceeds prewar levels.”

Less spectacular but still impressive progress, Menkhaus says, has been made in Somalia’s northeastern region—a stronghold of the Mijerteen clan and the only part of the country spared the destruction of civil war. Another active seaport, Bosaso, has fueled an economic recovery.

In southern Somalia, from Mogadishu to the Kenyan border, however, most areas remain in political and economic crisis, Menkhaus says. “Political authority is fragmented and contested and lawlessness—most often manifested in looting, kidnapping for ransom, and vehicle theft—continues to plague residents and the few remaining international organizations.”

Fighting in the area remains “localized and sporadic,” Menkhaus says, mostly the product of intraclan conflicts. General Mohammed Farah Aidid’s Somali National Alliance, “once the largest and most powerful faction in the country, has been shattered by rivalries in the Habr-Gedr clan,” and by the death of Aidid himself from gunshot wounds in August 1996.

For the near future, Menkhaus concludes, “Somalia is likely to remain a mosaic of localized polities that collectively add up to something less than a conventional state”—and far more than anarchy.

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions

“Gambling: Socioeconomic Impacts and Public Policy”

The Annals (Mar. 1998) of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, c/o Sage Publications, Inc., 2455 Teller Rd., Thousand Oaks, Calif. 91320. 242 pp. \$29; paper, \$19

Editor: *James H. Frey*

America now is a nation of gamblers. Until a decade ago, Las Vegas-style casino gambling was confined to Nevada and New Jersey, though most states had lotteries. In 1988, South Dakota voters authorized the once-notorious town of Deadwood to begin limited-stakes casino gambling. That same year, Congress effectively authorized casino gambling on Native American lands in some 31 states. The next year, Iowa legalized riverboat casinos on navigable waters; in 1990, Illinois followed suit. And so, as one of the contributors to this volume notes, “the dam was broken.” In 1993, a survey found that, for the first time, more than half of American adults had gambled in casinos. Today, 48 states have some sort of legalized gambling (the holdouts are Utah and Hawaii); 37 states and the District of Columbia operate lotteries, and 25 states have riverboat casinos, Las Vegas-style casinos, Indian gambling, or video poker.

Scholars have lagged behind these dramatic developments, leaving research on the socio-economic impact of gambling rather thin. But that may be changing. This volume, edited by James H. Frey, a sociologist at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, contains a baker's dozen of essays on various aspects of the subject. In addition, the \$4.5 million National Gambling Impact Study Commission, created by Congress two years ago, is due to make its report by mid-1999.

Americans in 1996 wagered a record \$47.6 billion, including \$19.1 billion at casinos, \$16.2 billion on lotteries, \$5.4 billion at Indian reservations, and \$3.2 billion on horse racing. The gambling industry (or “gaming” or “gaming entertainment” industry, as it prefers to be called) touts the yield to the states from the lotteries (\$13.8 billion in 1996) and other tangible benefits, including the roughly 460,000 jobs provided by the casino and pari-mutuel horse racing and breeding businesses. Not to mention the intangible enjoyment given to millions of customers. But there is a negative side.

Casinos seem to increase the number of compulsive gamblers, who squander sums they and their families can ill afford to lose and sometimes turn to crime to sustain their habit. Among Americans “exposed to commercial games,” writes Eugene Martin Christiansen, a private consultant, the proportion who become compulsive gamblers appears to range from 1.7 percent (in Iowa in 1989) to 7.3 percent (in New York in 1995). Though relatively few in number, compulsive gamblers “account for anywhere from 23 to 41 percent of gaming revenues,” says Henry R. Lesieur, president of the Institute for Problem Gambling, citing surveys done in four states and three Canadian provinces.

Many analysts have linked legalized gambling, particularly casino gambling, with increased street crime. Ohio University sociologists William J. Miller and Martin D. Schwartz challenge the logic of these studies, pointing out that they often cite per capita crime rates based on the size of the local population, ignoring the fact that the population is swollen by an influx of visitors. Yes, gambling increases “the raw amount of crime, which will mean more work for police, more court sessions, and more filled jail cells.” But “casino gambling may not increase crime more than tourism does,” they say.

Another contributor, John Warren Kindt, of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, worries about the growing clout of the gambling industry in many state legislatures. “In Illinois, for example, one casino company offered \$20 million to two political insiders to help secure a casino license.” Kindt also says that industry lobbyists succeeded in getting Congress to limit the power of the National Gambling Impact Study Commission. It can subpoena only documents, not people. “Even so,” he expects, the commission “may still reveal some unflattering problems with U.S. legalized gambling, such as increased crime and corruption.”

“Getting Ahead: Economic and Social Mobility in America”

Urban Institute Press, 2100 M St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037. 100 pp. \$49.50; paper, \$18.95

Authors: Daniel P. McMurrer and Isabel V. Sawhill

Even as racial bias and other barriers to equal economic opportunity have fallen away in recent decades, an important part of the proverbial American Dream—which promises individuals that they will be able to live better than their parents did—has been receding from view for many Americans. So report McMurrer, a senior researcher at the American Society for Training and Development, in Alexandria, Virginia, and Sawhill, a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, in Washington.

The “good news” is that the economic and social status of one’s parents, while still important, is now less of a determining factor in one’s fortunes than it was in the past. Its importance diminished by one-third in less than a generation, according to one study. By 1988, the son of a blue-collar worker had a nearly 40 percent chance of reaching white-collar status. More meritocratic hiring practices, reduced self-employment, and increased access to higher education are responsible for the trend, the authors say.

But stalled economic growth has almost offset the effects of increased intergenerational upward mobility, producing fewer “good” jobs and stagnant income growth rates for workers who fail to rise. Lagging productivity keeps

their wages down. Though the college educated have seen their pay rise sharply, entry-level wages for a male high school graduate working full-time were less than \$16,000 in 1995—more than \$6,000 (in constant dollars) lower than entry-level wages in 1973.

There is substantial movement up and down the economic ladder during people’s working years, the authors note. Some move up as they acquire skills and experience or find better jobs; some move down because of a lay-off, divorce, or business failure. If the population is segmented into fifths by income, an estimated 25 to 40 percent shift to a new quintile each year. The mobility rate has hardly changed in a quarter-century, but in recent years, college graduates have been more likely than others to be upwardly mobile.

The edge enjoyed by the college educated has become a major source of inequality, the authors maintain, and family background very strongly influences whether youths go to college, where they go, and whether they stay on to graduate. Although many employers now insist on a college degree, they often are really only looking for strong basic skills, the authors believe. The best available way to fight inequality, they argue, is to restore the value of a high school diploma.

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Continued from page 8

deep when it comes to women in combat. As it stands, women in the all-volunteer force view the risks of combat as outweighing by far any potential benefits. Undoubtedly, this has been the case for the overwhelming majority of young men historically, too. The difference, of course, is that they have had little or no choice in the matter. Despite all the hoopla about “our men and women” in the armed services, this lopsided inequity remains. And what any of it has to do with citizenship is lost pretty much altogether so far as I can tell. But, then, citizenship is something else we don’t talk about anymore.

Jean Bethke Elshtain
Professor of Social and Political Ethics
University of Chicago
Chicago, Ill.

The Lonely Crowd Revisited

In “Fifty Years of *The Lonely Crowd*” [WQ, Summer ’98], Wilfred McClay correctly identifies the mission of sociology as evaluating “the irrational binding forces of society” that sustain and nourish human beings. He includes “community, authority, kinship, status, class, religion” as examples of these forces. What mystifies me is the omission of the concept of age from this list. This is striking, since no other element of sociology helps to describe the societal transition that so captivated Riesman.

The premise of *The Lonely Crowd* is that by the end of World War II, America had undergone a dramatic shift in societal personality—away from the “inner-directed” personality of the 19th century to the “outer-directed” personality that dominated postwar suburbia. These personality types correspond precisely to the opposing periods of American history identified by the generational historians William Strauss and Neil Howe. In *Generations*, Strauss and Howe locate Riesman’s American “bourgeoisie” as the Gilded Generation, those arrogant, freewheeling captains of industry who perpetuated speculative investing, railroad swindles, and economic cycles of boom and bust. They are opposed in time by Riesman’s own GI Generation, whose conformity, team orientation, and collective spirit vanquished the Great Depression, triumphed against Hitler and put a man on the moon. The GIs created what the authors called the greatest “outer-driven period” in American history. The similarity to Riesman’s work is uncanny.

This points to the importance of comprehending a towering yet elusive axiom of American sociology. As global champions of cultural, economic, and political mobility, Americans have an unrivaled capacity to change nearly all aspects of their social life. With remarkable ease, they can move to new communities, switch political affiliations, abandon their families, climb the ladder of economic wellbeing, and adopt new systems of belief. They cannot, however, change when they were born, the prevailing nurturing style of their childhoods, or the age at which they live through history’s watershed events. In short, they are slaves to the generational personality that fate bequeaths them. This is the key to understanding Riesman’s genius.

John F. Whalen
Bath, Maine

Euroskeptics?

As a nearly lifelong subscriber to WQ, I was once more dismayed with your “survey” of recent articles on European integration.

From your editorial in the Winter 1997 issue we know that you belong to what one usually calls Euroskeptics. You have every right to express that opinion and to limit your personal reading to those who will strengthen your established ideas. It is up to your readers to judge and to the Europeans eventually to show that you were right or wrong. But for a journal that aims at “surveying the world of ideas” it seems to me that some effort to transcend one’s personal persuasion is to be recommended.

For the Autumn 1997 issue the WQ’s editors had on the same subject read only one article (in *Commentary*), which you approvingly reviewed under the title “Europe’s March of Folly.” In the Summer 1998 issue you manage to select under the heading “The Perils of Europe’s Promised Union” a number of articles expressing similar skeptical views from different journals, carefully avoiding any mention of at least as many articles published recently, and expressing different views, in the same journals and others, by equally knowledgeable authors.

I very much hope that on this subject, and on others I am less familiar with, WQ will try to extend its reading, and that of its subscribers, beyond familiar and intellectually comfortable like-minded authors.

Hugo Paemen, Ambassador
Delegation of the European Commission
Washington, D.C.

FROM THE CENTER



While many Americans were vacationing last August, the Woodrow Wilson Center was moving into its new home at One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue. As if that were not a sufficiently emphatic announcement of change, even as we settle into our new quarters we eagerly await the arrival, in January, of the Center's newly appointed director, retiring Representative Lee H. Hamilton (D-Ind.), whose 34-year tenure in Congress is distinguished by his leadership in foreign affairs, economic policy, and government reform. The Center is truly poised on the brink of a new era.

Our new home allows the Center to reunite under one roof after more than a decade of living a divided existence, split between two buildings. It includes not only offices for Fellows and staff, new meeting places, an auditorium, and other modern facilities, but a memorial hall devoted to Woodrow Wilson's ideas and a theater where visitors will be able to view a film biography of the great scholar-statesman—all located on a spacious urban plaza opening onto Pennsylvania Avenue and bearing the name of Woodrow Wilson.

The new building fulfills the intention of Congress when it created the Center 30

years ago to locate this “living memorial” to our 28th president on the nation's Main Street. It is a masterful creation of architect James Ingo Freed, part of the larger Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center complex. Crafted from Indiana limestone in a lucidly modernized neoclassical style, with spare but elegant façades and soaring interior public spaces, it is surely one of the outstandingly successful public buildings of recent history. It is also the capstone of a decades-long effort by the local and national governments, working with the private sector, to revive the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor between the Capitol and the White House and make it once again a place that fills Americans with pride.

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*Dean W. Anderson
Acting Director*

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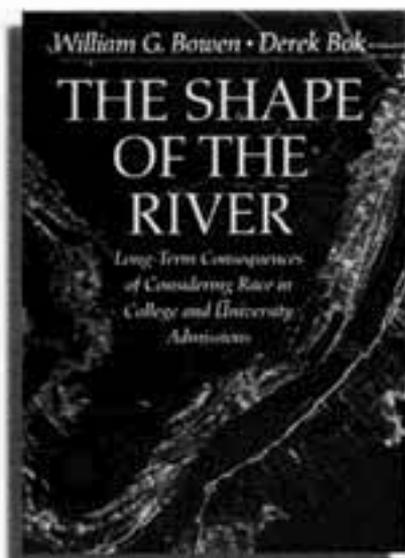
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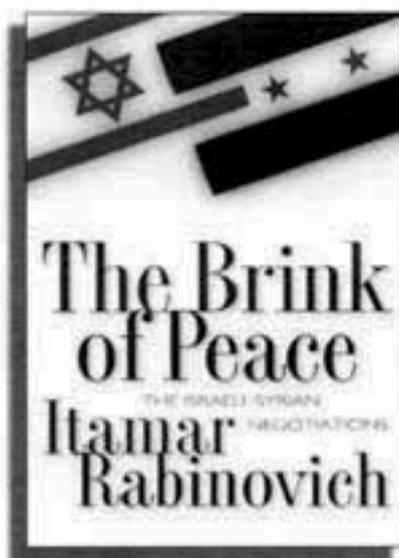
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