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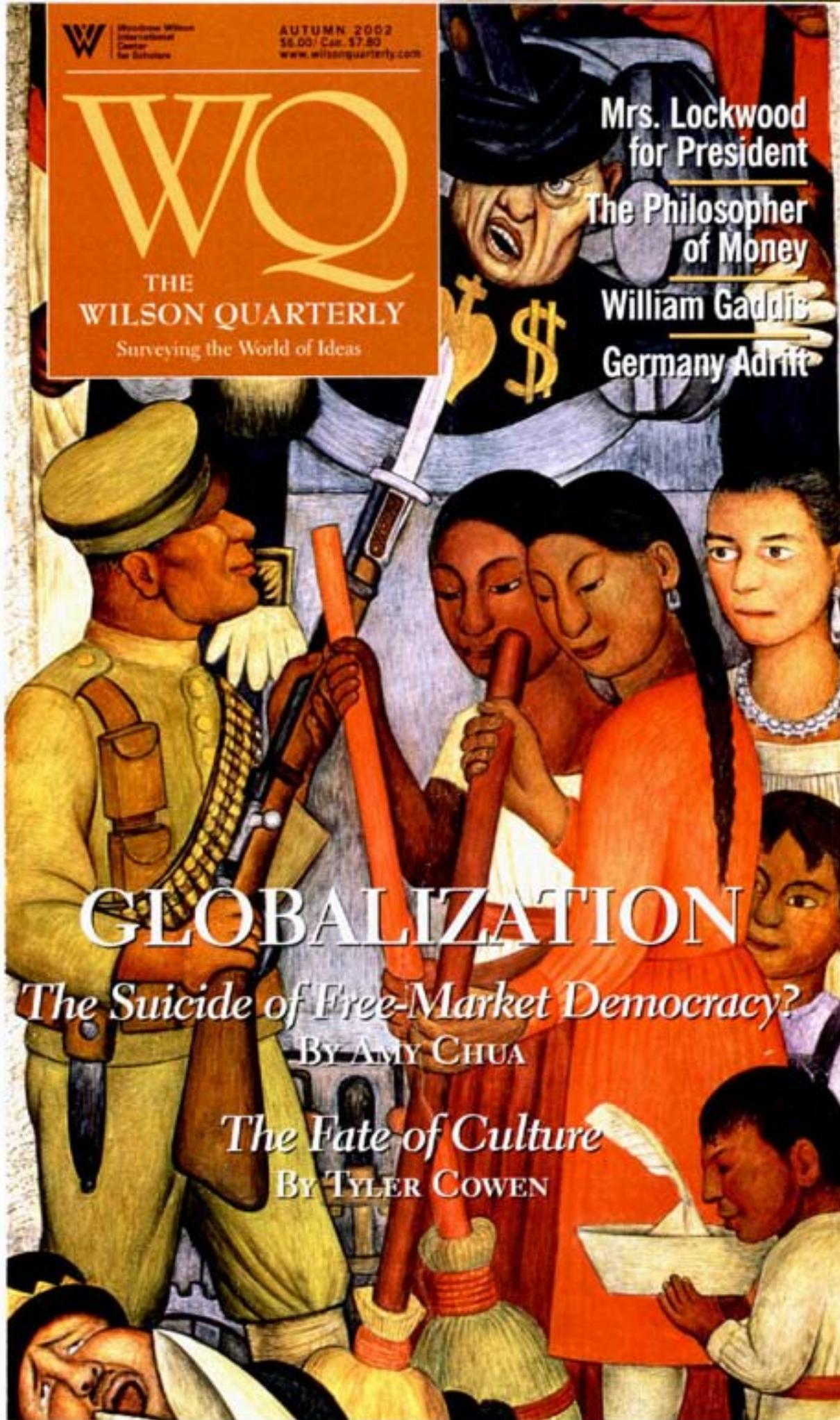
## GLOBALIZATION

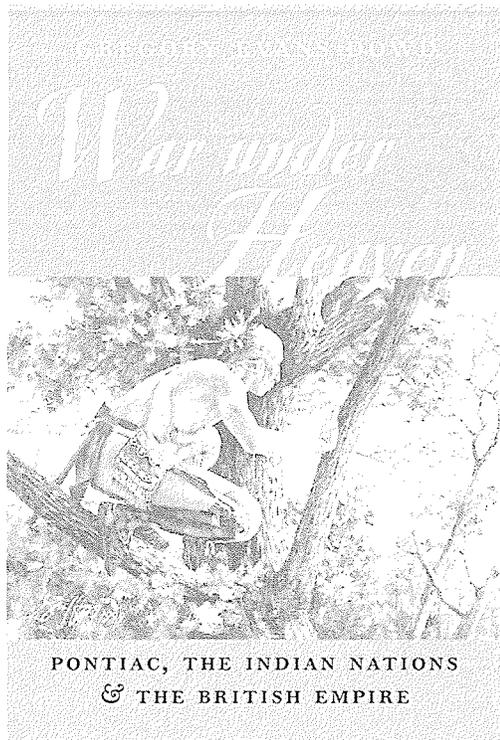
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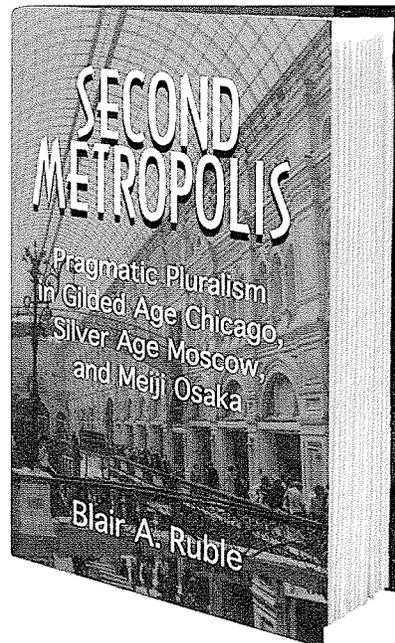
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COVER: Detail from Diego Rivera's *Garantías (Guarantees—Debris of Capitalism)*, a mural at the Secretaría de la Educación Pública, Mexico City. Reproduced by permission of the Banco de México Diego Rivera & Frida Kahlo Museums Trust. Design by David Herbick.

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## Editor's Comment

**F**or an intellectual, there's an advantage in being something of an outsider. A degree of alienation may even be a requirement for the profession. Without standing in some way outside the society one is examining, it's almost impossible to gain a unique angle of vision.

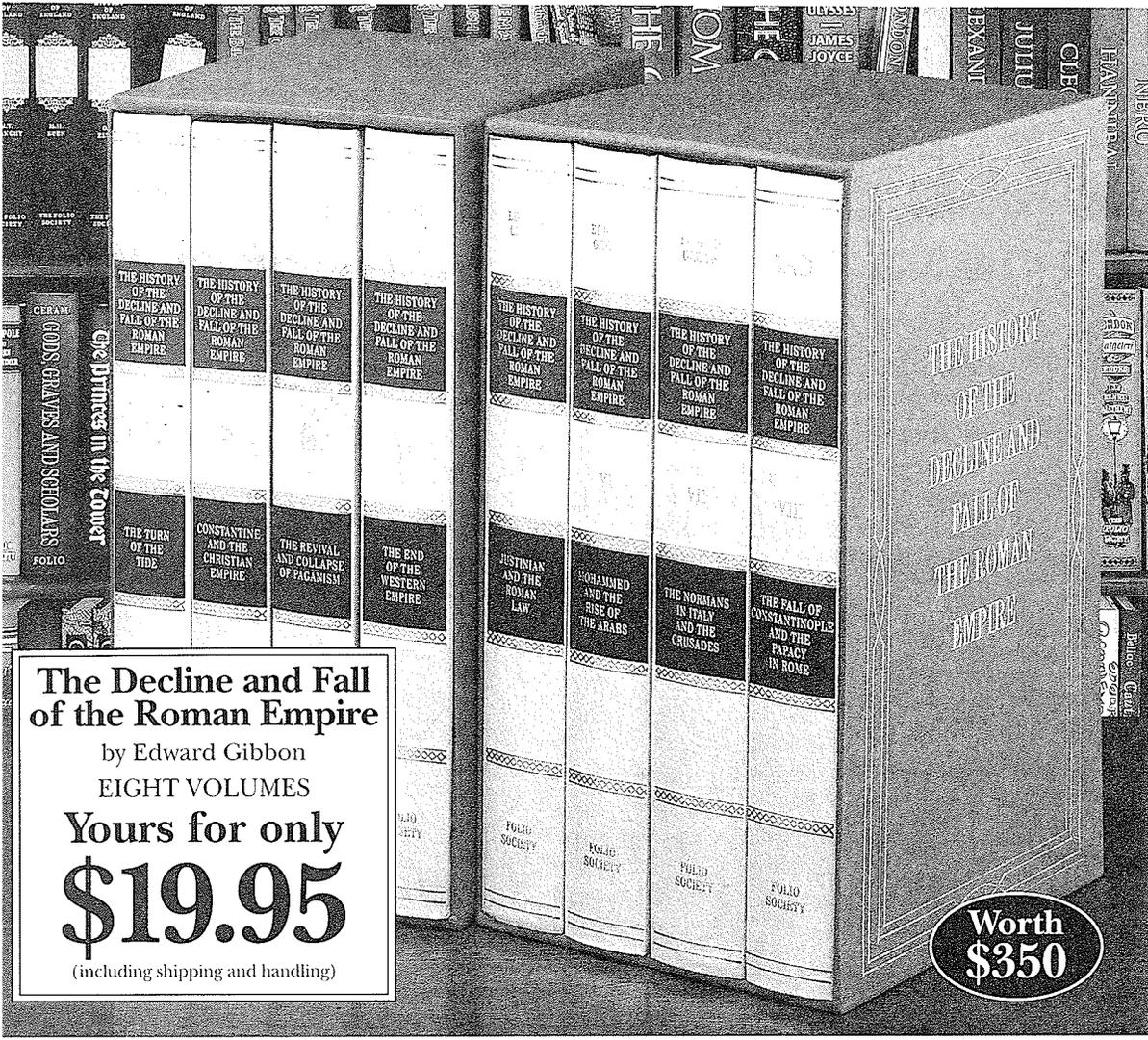
This small truth threads through several pieces in this issue. In *The Periodical Observer*, it colors the Chinese writer Gao Xingjian's reflections on the unexpected benefits of exile. In Jerry Z. Muller's profile of German thinker Georg Simmel, it emerges as a defining characteristic of Simmel the man and his intellectual legacy. Wealthy and well known throughout Europe at the turn of the 20th century, Simmel nonetheless stood apart because of his Jewish ancestry. In his penetrating analysis of capitalist society, Simmel also showed that it's possible to combine sympathy and critical distance.

Amy Chua brings those same qualities to her cautionary essay on globalization, which is drawn from her forthcoming book *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability*. Chua's is a more modern story than most. She was born in America to immigrant parents, but her take on globalization is strongly informed by her being the child of other regions of the world. As a young girl visiting her parents' native Philippines, and later as an American student studying in China, her family's ancestral home, she says she had an acute sense of being both an insider and an outsider. Seeing the world in this way has helped Chua to spot something that seems to have escaped other observers of globalization: the crucial but potentially explosive role of economically successful ethnic minorities and their antagonists. Her views are those of a critic and a friend, and they are likely to spark lively debate.

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## *The Empire Debate*

"An American Empire?" [WQ, Summer '02] presented viewpoints about America's role in the external world, but said very little about what impact an American empire might have on the American republic. The Founding Fathers were both impressed by the achievements of the Roman republic and deeply fearful that foreign wars and entanglements could replicate Rome's loss of republican liberty in the pursuit of imperial greatness.

During the Cold War, many compromises of American civil liberties were justified in the name of "national security," while vast government entities and their activities were shielded from public scrutiny, with only occasional scandals revealing a glimpse of the "national security state." Now, we are told, fundamental constitutional protections must be put aside so that we might combat terrorists who, while vicious and murderous, do not command a percent of a percent of the destructive power of our Cold War antagonists. Today, a China only partially emerged from economic backwardness is portrayed as a new competitor for global hegemony to replace the Russia now unfit to play the role of strategic adversary.

In all your essays, there is little mentioned about how empire might affect the quality of American civic life or our liberties. Imperial Washington, unfortunately, attracts many talented and ambitious people only too ready to assume proconsular roles on a global stage and to thrust American power into areas where angels fear to tread. Far too many of these people have only a rhetorical commitment to this country's constitutional limits on governmental power, while they regard its citizens as little more than the raw material for a presumed "benign global hegemony." Far too often, official Washington even forgets that we conduct a foreign policy in order that Americans may lead the lives they choose, and not to impose American values or influence on other countries.

After more than a quarter-century in the

State and Defense Departments, where complaints about congressional "intrusions" into foreign and security affairs are daily fare, I conclude that Congress should play a much larger and more active role in our external policies, if only because officials subject to periodic election must at least consider the welfare and opinions of the citizenry, among whom there is precious little taste for empire.

E. Wayne Merry  
Senior Associate

American Foreign Policy Council  
Washington, D.C.

Three decades ago, the radical Left used the term *American imperialism* as an epithet. Now, argues Andrew Bacevich, the notion of an American empire is approaching mainstream respectability, and he urges us not to worry about semantics.

In *Through the Looking-Glass*, Humpty-Dumpty tells Alice that he can make words mean whatever he wants. So can Bacevich, but he ought to take care. If Bacevich is correct that America is like no other empire in history, then in what sense is it an empire? And while the use of the term may point up some similarities, it may also mislead us by obscuring important differences.

I agree with Martin Walker that primacy should not be confused with empire. The United States is more powerful compared with other countries than Britain was at its imperial peak, but it has less control over what occurs inside other countries than Britain did. For example, Kenya's schools, taxes, laws, and elections—not to mention external relations—were controlled by British officials. The United States has no comparable power.

Devotees of the new imperialism say not to be so literal. "Empire" is merely a metaphor. But the metaphor implies a control from Washington that is unrealistic, and reinforces the prevailing strong temptations toward unilateralism. The paradox of American power in the 21st century is that the strongest country

since Rome cannot achieve many of its goals by acting alone. America's success will depend not just on its military and economic might but on the soft power of its culture and values, and on pursuing policies that make others feel that they have been consulted and their interests taken into account. Talk of empire undermines soft power and misleads America's leaders about the real tasks confronting us.

*Joseph S. Nye, Jr.*

*Dean, Kennedy School of Government  
Author, The Paradox of American Power  
Cambridge, Mass.*

Rather than simply conjure up examples from Western history to support the application of familiar labels such as "empire," "imperialism," and "hegemony" to American power, let us try looking beyond the United States and political jargon to all the planet's resources and peoples.

Resources are not merely natural or economic, but intellectual, scientific, technological, and educational. Since the 1940s the U.S. has led in the global diffusion of knowledge in all these fields, from how to harness the power

of the stars (nuclear energy) to how to feed, cure, and inform individuals on a global scale. Americans have been guided not by the imperatives of power but by Yankee virtue, altruism, and efficiency. To search for "empire" in this is to blind oneself to the bold new world the United States happens (for no blueprint exists) to be fashioning.

Even the most cynical among us must now consider the possibility that a new global consciousness is painfully but inexorably emerging. It may have an American imprimatur, but it is not an American imposition. Pre-World War II (or pre-1990) conceptions of "empire," "hegemony," even "exceptionalism," may already be obsolete. Our understanding of history needs to be adapted to these emerging realities, and one path is to subsume Western history into a new world history in our thinking and in our curricula.

*Clark G. Reynolds*

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Martin Walker is right that in many ways there were two British Empires, not one. But in a real way, I think there have been two American empires in my lifetime, too.

The first one ran from 1945 to 1968. But the disastrous battles in Vietnam, Hue in 1968 and Ban Me Thuot in 1975, broke it. I remember the mood of the country at the 1976 bicentennial; mellow, believing that its imperial years were behind it, and content with that fact. A Brit in 1786 might well have drawn the same conclusion. But it was not so. In 1976 the Soviet Union, it seems to me, however rotten internally, was seen as the world's paramount power, and the United States as slightly decadent. Our second empire came as something of a surprise. Ronald Reagan seemed more interested in bringing down the "evil empire" by whatever coalitions he could, rather than setting up a second American empire in its place. As it turned out, the Soviet Union shattered utterly, and once again, by default—even though America was in many ways weaker than in the period 1945-68—the United States became more paramount than ever before. This is a good thing, I suppose, in that it's better than most of the likely alternatives. But it would have been a surprise to most Americans in 1976 to be told that a quarter-century later their country would be the "hyperpower."

Howard Ahmanson  
Irvine, Calif.

The boldest thread running through these articles is an artful obfuscation of the question posed by your cover: American empire—should we or shouldn't we? These writers contrast America with ancient Rome and various other empires, implying that laissez-faire democracies such as ours can never also be authoritarian empires. Michael J. Glennon goes so far as to say, "The United States is not an empire, nor could it conceivably become one." The kindest thing I can say about this assertion is that it betrays a sad poverty of imagination.

America has been a synthesis of republic and empire for virtually all of its history.

Residents of Alaska feel no kinship with the people of Puerto Rico, just as Hawaiians couldn't care less about the citizens of Maine, and God knows the antipathy between North and South is still very real. This vast domain has been amassed and held together, occasionally against its will, by a central government with emphatic imperial ambitions underwritten by popular mandate.

Alone among these authors, Robert S. Litwak acknowledges America's republican/imperial "twin identities," but then fails to relate this duality's full history. Long before we emerged as a "hyperpower," we aggressively colonized one of the world's great territorial empires, exceeded in scale only by the immensity of Russia. Our historically brutal disregard for America's indigenous cultures destroys every particular of these claims that America is just too good to be an empire.

This duality has grown easier for us over the years. Technology has revolutionized our ability to exercise empire's fundamental prerogative: delivering a swift death to anyone who defies us in any way and for any reason. Simultaneously, it has vastly expanded our ability to communicate widely, precisely, comprehensively, and instantly, and so has similarly enlarged the theoretical limits of centralization and bureaucratic collusion.

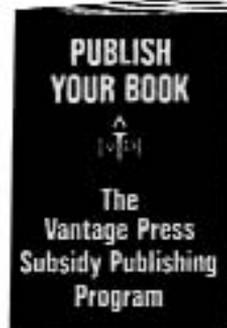
Americans exhibit a "deep antagonism toward imperialism"? Tell that to the Cubans, the Cambodians, and the Chileans, just to name three "C" countries. Repeat it for the benefit of Iran, Indonesia, Iraq, and all the other nations whose citizens have been trampled for decades by puppet dictators we violently installed, so that our money-driven interests would take priority over their own.

Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower were alarmed by the lurking monster of the U.S. espionage and counterespionage services. John F. Kennedy was also alarmed by the Central Intelligence Agency's power and amoral culture, which he moved to restrain. As the CIA matured during the 1950s and '60s, America's involvement in foreign intrigues expanded beyond the hemisphere into every corner of the world. Why do your authors fail to reflect on this phenomenon? Michael Lind, for example, evades this point with an iconic portrayal of Franklin D. Roosevelt's enlightened anti-

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imperialism, as if this were still the reality of presidential politics. It's not. All hope of such highmindedness seems to have died with the Kennedys, while our present ruling dynasty bears witness to the CIA's triumph.

Peering beneath all this erudite dross, I'm very disappointed by what I see. For globalization advocates in a post-9/11 world, an overt American imperium has become the obvious vehicle by which to propel their pragmatic vision. To grease the wheels and get this strategy bumbling forward, they must now build popular support for it. To forestall public perception of their argument's basic invalidity, these partisans can be expected to deny any suggestion that American foreign policy is already a ruthless imperium, one that may have sorely provoked the perpetrators of the September 11 attack.

As we observe these antics, we should ask ourselves a question: Do these people view imperialism in strictly utilitarian terms, as a means to a noble cause, or is it actually the

## Correspondence

other way around? Dreams of empire are so seductive to national populations, and popular ideals can disguise and defend even the most squalid underlying motives.

Another important question: If American domination should degenerate into a fascist nightmare—which it is eminently capable of doing—just who will liberate the world as we liberated Europe? Given the established linkage between power and corruption, perhaps a global empire under any one sovereign, no matter how ostensibly noble, *is a really bad idea*.

While none of these authors are overtly pro-globalist, their language ranges from carefully neutral to implicitly favorable. All of their arguments seem to build consensus for globalism. Then there's the question of their national allegiance. Wouldn't it have been better to include some foreigners in this lineup? Even Martin Walker has lived here and seems aligned with mainstream American thought.

Until recently, the *Wilson Quarterly's* editorial position was more inclusive. Since September 11, it has reflected a broad and weak-minded flight to the right. In joining this awesome display of cowardice, you have failed to acknowledge gigantic holes in the official 9/11 account, holes that generate imperative questions regarding the nature and legitimacy of our international response. Al Qaeda's guilt has not been conclusively demonstrated. Why do your authors accept and propagate the assumption that it has? Al Qaeda and the Taliban are two separate entities, yet there is an apparent PR effort to present them as one and the same. Your authors could deconstruct this bogus equation. Similarly, they could examine the fairly obvious ulterior motives behind America's conquest of Afghanistan.

As I read this issue and remember what the *WQ* was only a year ago, I feel I must be witnessing a plague of intellectual corruption, borne on a wave of blind, stupid fear. If you want to salvage any remnant of this country's greatness, you need to start telling the truth.

Jon Phalen  
Comer, Ga.

I applaud the editors for their timely and provocative forum on "An American Empire?" I am struck by the broad agree-

ment among your contributors that America's political culture and national identity are likely to dampen the country's enthusiasm for an imperial foreign policy. Martin Walker notes that "America may not be able to maintain the political will . . . to sustain its lonely eminence indefinitely." Andrew J. Bacevich recognizes "the questionable willingness of the American people to foot the imperial bill." Michael Lind notes America's "deep antagonism toward imperialism," and Robert Litwak suggests that the country's identity as a republic will check its embrace of imperial aspiration.

These are wise words of caution. The most potent constraint on America's conduct abroad may well prove to be not the objections of other countries but a U.S. electorate that shuns the principles and the costs of global dominion. The events of September 11 have for now shored up America's appetite for a robust internationalism. But over the long run, the threat of terror may do just the opposite, inducing Americans to raise protective barriers in defense of the homeland. Although hardly Wilsonian in its approach, the Bush administration should keep in mind what happened to Woodrow Wilson when he overreached. The Senate rejected the ambitious brand of internationalism he put before the American people, triggering America's precipitous retreat from the global stage and setting the stage for the dark decade of the 1930s.

I take issue with your contributors as to the durability of U.S. primacy. Although America's military superiority will remain unchallenged for decades, the European Union is emerging as an economic rival of the United States. The EU is also acting as a political counterweight, parting ways with Washington on the International Criminal Court, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Middle East. If America's leaders recognize that America is less omnipotent than they presume, they may succeed in backing away from imperial temptation.

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# Findings

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## Wedding Bell Blues?

Thirty-five years after the Summer of Love came the Summer of Cohabitation, or rather the Summer of Analyzing Cohabitation. In mid-2002, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Gallup Organization, and the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University all weighed in.

The American marriage rate has fallen by about two-fifths since 1970, but the cohabitation rate has risen to offset most of the decrease. Gallup finds that more than half of married couples under age 50 lived together before the wedding, and three-fifths of those who cohabited believe it makes them less likely to divorce. The CDC, however, reports that premarital cohabitation seems to make divorce *more* likely. Roughly a quarter of first marriages preceded by cohabitation end by the fifth anniversary and half by the 15th anniversary. Divorce rates for couples who didn't cohabit are about one-quarter lower at each point.

Cohabiting or not, many single American women say they would like to get married, but men just won't commit. The Rutgers researchers asked single American males, aged 25 to 33, why they haven't married. Among the findings:

- Men can enjoy the benefits of marriage through dating or cohabiting, and they feel little personal or social pressure to wed. The biggest pressure comes from girlfriends who ask, "Where is this relationship going?"

- These men fear divorce, particularly its economic impact. Dating and cohabiting protect their assets; marriage threatens them.

Policies promoting more equitable alimony and property division, it seems, have had the unintended consequence of driving men away from the altar.

- Single men want to be parents, but not until they are older, more mature, and better established financially. As a character in British author Mike Gayle's wry novel *Mr. Commitment* (2000) tells his girlfriend: "It's

not like I don't want kids. It's just that I'm sure they'd be a good idea one day, but not right now."

Count on merchandisers to follow mores. Some jewelry stores now sell "promise rings," according to Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, coauthor of the Rutgers study. Whereas engagement rings mark a pledge to get married, promise rings mark a pledge to get engaged. Some stores let the couple trade up to an engagement ring when the moment is right.

The promise ring is news to Gayle, a former advice columnist for a teen magazine. "That sounds like an idea invented by a man," he tells us. "I promise to promise? Any woman who's taken in by that has only herself to blame."



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## Grim Tales

Sexual assault, mutilation, cannibalism—the latest antics of Hannibal Lecter? No, early tellings of popular children's stories, according to Maria Tatar's *Annotated Classic Fairy Tales* (Norton). In Giambattista Basile's "Sun, Moon, and Talia" (1636), a precursor of "Sleeping Beauty," a king is so taken with the unconscious Talia that he "plucks from her the fruits of love"; nine months later, she gives birth. The happy ending of the Grimm

## Findings

Brothers' 1812 "Cinderella" features an extra twist: At Cinderella's wedding, doves peck out the stepsisters' eyes. And in Louis and François Briffault's "Story of Grandmother" (1885), a variation on "Little Red Riding Hood," the wolf serves up dead grandmother while a cat mutters: "You're a slut if you eat the flesh and drink the blood of Granny."

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### Calibrating Regret

**D**o it or do not do it—you will regret both," observed Søren Kierkegaard. In a chapter in the forthcoming book *Resistance and Persuasion* (Erlbaum), psychologists Steven Sherman and Matthew Crawford of Indiana University, Bloomington, along with Allen McConnell of Ohio's Miami University, examine the field of regret studies.

Experiments indicate that we prefer "choices where the outcomes of alternative selections will never be learned," as a way of avoiding regret. In one study, each participant received a lottery ticket, and then was offered the chance to exchange it for another ticket. Though both tickets had the same odds of winning, the participant knew the number of only the ticket in hand. Someone who held on to his ticket, consequently, would never know if he made a mistake, but someone who traded would run the risk of realizing he blew it. Most people declined to make the exchange. We avoid those agonizing might-have-beens, it seems, by cultivating not just wisdom but ignorance.

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### Hiss, Chambers, and Charisma

**T**he new book *Alger Hiss, Whittaker Chambers, and the Schism in the American Soul* (ISI Books) samples a half-century's commentary on the controversy that refuses to die. It's no surprise that some evaluations are polar opposites—Granville Hicks compares Chambers's memoir *Witness* (1952) to St. Augustine's *Confessions*, while Kingsley Martin likens it to *Mein Kampf*—but common ground also emerges, particularly in the descriptions of the two antagonists.

Alger Hiss had star quality, nearly everyone

agrees; Whittaker Chambers did not. "One instinctively liked Hiss for the boyish charm we think of as peculiarly American," writes Leslie Fiedler. By contrast, Chambers came across as "the butterball who could not even learn to play marbles," "the uncomfortable spirit that either blasphemous or is too religious for respectability," a man who "seems ill at ease in our daylight world."

Arthur Koestler remarks that "Chambers should have got the part of Hiss and Hiss the part of Chambers," a sentiment that Chambers himself shared. "We're cast wrong," he once remarked, according to Hilton Kramer's essay in the book. "I look like a slob, so I should be the villain. Hiss, the handsome man who knows all the society people, is the born hero. It's bad casting."

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### I Am: A Novel

**I** haven't done any statistical analysis," David Lodge writes in *Consciousness and the Novel* (Harvard Univ. Press), "but my impression is that a majority of literary novels published in the last couple of decades have been written in the first person." What's behind first-person chic? "In a world where nothing is certain, in which transcendental belief has been undermined by scientific materialism, and even the objectivity of science is qualified by relativity and uncertainty, the single human voice, telling its own story, can seem the only authentic way of rendering consciousness," Lodge writes. "Of course in fiction this is just as artful, or artificial, a method as writing about a character in the third person; but it creates an illusion of reality."

In *The Writer's Chronicle* (March–April 2002), David Jauss, an English professor at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, analyzes another trend in fiction: the use of present tense. Dickens, Joyce, and Faulkner all composed present-tense narratives, "but it was the publication in 1960 of John Updike's *Rabbit, Run* that was most immediately responsible for the contemporary vogue." Updike's model, Jauss continues, was the screenplay: "Originally subtitled *A Movie*, the novel was Updike's attempt to 'make a movie' on the page by capturing what he called 'cin-

ematic instantaneity.’ “The present tense was in part meant to be an equivalent of the cinematic mode of narration,” he told an interviewer in 1967. “The opening bit of the boys playing basketball was visualized to be taking place under the titles and credits.”

In 1970 the Updike novel did become a film, starring James Caan, but it sank with nary a trace. “*Rabbit, Run* wasn’t released,” Caan said at the time. “It escaped.”

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## Furry Art

In their lavishly illustrated *Why Paint Cats: The Ethics of Feline Aesthetics* (Ten Speed Press), New Zealanders Burton Silver and Heather Busch celebrate the art of adorning cats with nontoxic paints. It’s an obscure but bustling subculture, complete with professional standards (works must not demean or objectify the animals), scholarly journals, prizes, galleries, and international appeal. Some artists slyly comment on issues of the day—Bridget Brückner’s *New Man*, a cat whose flank is adorned with a backward-facing naked man, symbolizes “male assertiveness in the context of post-reunification Germany”—while others accept commissions from well-heeled cat lovers. Chantal Charlier will paint a cat to match the owner’s decor, a task that involves “not only an intimate understanding of how each cat likes to ‘be’ in the home, but also an in-depth knowledge of Feline Feng Shui.”

That *Why Paint Cats* is a spoof should go without saying, but it probably doesn’t, in light of Silver and Busch’s experience with a 1994 book honoring paintings by cats. “I had erroneously thought that *Why Cats Paint* would be seen by almost everyone as the art parody it was intended to be,” Silver tells us. Instead, *The Washington Post* and other newspapers soberly reported on the cat-painting fad, while the art journal *Parkett*



Cat canvas?

praised the book’s “phenomenological research devoid of preconceptions.” And, reports Silver, “the publisher was inundated with calls from paint shops that had customers requesting the special ‘scented acrylics’ mentioned in the book.”

How will *Why Paint Cats* be received? “Given the reaction to the first book and the fact that people don’t bother to read the text,” says Silver, “I suppose we should be prepared for anything.”

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## Traumatized, Then and Now

The National Opinion Research Center compared Americans’ responses to the assassination of President Kennedy and to the September 11 terrorist attacks. According to *Public Perspective* (Sept.–Oct. 2002), people were more likely to smoke to excess in 1963, and more likely to feel like drinking to excess in 2001. There were more lost appetites in 1963, and more upset stomachs in 2001. More Americans reported clammy hands in 1963; more reported crying in 2001. “Special prayers” were uttered by 75 percent of people in 1963, and—perhaps surprisingly, in this putatively secular age—by 84 percent in 2001.

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## Unturned Stones

In *JFK, Nixon, Oliver Stone and Me* (PublicAffairs), Eric Hamburg lists some Oliver Stone projects that didn’t make it to the screen. *Cancer Conspiracy* would have exposed how the drug companies plot to keep cancer cures from the public. Another film would have revealed how the Central Intelligence Agency tricked the Soviet Union into invading Afghanistan. A project initially intended as a vehicle for Tom Cruise would have outed Alexander the Great as gay (Cruise proved unenthusiastic about this angle). Still another film was to depict a skirt-chasing Martin Luther King, Jr., in what a Stone colleague termed “the Guns N’ Roses-on-tour version of the civil rights movement.”

Stone’s films, Hamburg writes admiringly, “come from one man’s vision.” Indeed.

# Lockwood in '84

In 1884, a woman couldn't vote for the president of the United States, but that didn't stop activist lawyer Belva Lockwood from conducting a full-scale campaign for the office. She was the first woman ever to do so, and she tried again for the presidency in 1888. It's time we recognized her name.

*by Jill Norgren*

In 1884, Washington, D.C., attorney Belva Lockwood, candidate of the Equal Rights Party, became the first woman to run a full campaign for the presidency of the United States. She had no illusion that a woman could be elected, but there were policy issues on which she wished to speak, and, truth be told, she welcomed the notoriety. When challenged as to whether a woman was eligible to become president, she said that there was “not a thing in the Constitution” to prohibit it. She did not hesitate to confront the male establishment that barred women from voting and from professional advancement. With the spunk born of a lifelong refusal to be a passive victim of discrimination, Lockwood told a campaign reporter, “I cannot vote, but I can be voted for.” Her bid for the presidency startled the country and infuriated other suffrage leaders, many of whom mistakenly clung to the idea that the Republican Party would soon sponsor a constitutional amendment in support of woman suffrage.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, Lockwood commanded attention, and not just from the columnists and satirists whom she led a merry chase. Today she is virtually unknown, lost in the shadows of the iconic suffrage leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. That's an injustice, for Belva Lockwood was a model of courageous activism and an admirable symbol of a woman's movement that increasingly invested its energies in party politics.

Lockwood was born Belva Ann Bennett in the Niagara County town of Royalton, New York,

on October 24, 1830, the second daughter, and second of five children, of Lewis J. Bennett, a farmer, and Hannah Green Bennett. Belva was educated in rural schoolhouses, where she herself began to teach at the age of 14. In her first profession she found her first cause. As a female instructor, she received less than half the salary paid to the young men. The Bennetts' teenage daughter thought this treatment “odious, an indignity not to be tamely borne.” She complained to the wife of a local minister, who counseled her that such was the way of the world. But bright, opinionated, ambitious Belva Bennett would not accept that world.

From her avid reading of history, Belva imagined for herself a life different from that of her mother and her aunts—the life, in fact, of a great man. She asked her father's permission to continue her education, but he said no. She then did what she was expected to do: On November 8, 1848, she married Uriah McNall, a promising young farmer. She threw herself into running their small farm and sawmill, wrote poetry and essays, and determined not to let marriage be the end of her individuality. She wanted to chart her own course, and tragedy gave her an opportunity to do so. In April 1853, when she was 22 and her daughter, Lura, three, Uriah McNall died.

The young widow had a second chance to go out into the world. She resumed her teaching and her education. In September 1854, she left Lura with her mother and traveled 60 miles east to study at the Genesee Wesleyan Seminary in Lima. The seminary shared a



A fluttery Lockwood shares the stage in this campaign cartoon with Benjamin Butler, candidate of the Greenback-Labor and Anti-Monopoly parties in 1884, who polled less than 2 percent of the popular vote.

building with the newly coeducational Genesee College, which offered a more rigorous program. Belva transferred to the college (becoming its third woman student), where she took courses in science and politics. She graduated with a bachelor's degree (with honors) on June 27, 1857, and soon found a position teaching high school in the prosperous

Erie Canal town of Lockport. Four years later, she took over a small school in the south-central New York town of Owego. In 1866, Belva McNall traveled to Washington and began to reinvent herself as an urban professional. She was neither flamboyant nor eccentric. Indeed, had she been a man, it would have been apparent that her life was following a conventional

## Belva Lockwood

19th-century course: Talented chap walks off the farm, educates himself, seeks opportunities, and makes a name. But because Belva strove to be that ambitious son of ordinary people who rises in the world on the basis of his wits and his work, she was thought a radical.

In Washington, Belva taught school and worked as a leasing agent, renting halls to lodges and organizations. She tutored herself in the workings of government and the art of lobbying by making frequent visits to Congress. In 1868 she married Ezekiel Lockwood, an elderly dentist and lay preacher who shared her reformist views. We do not know precisely when she fell in love with the law. In antebellum America the profession belonged to men, who passed on their skill by training their sons and nephews and neighbors' boys. After the Civil War a handful of women, Lockwood among them, set out to change all that. She believed from her reading of the lives of great men that "in almost every instance law has been the stepping-stone to greatness." She attended the law program of Washington's National University, graduated in 1872 (but only after she lobbied for the diploma male administrators had been pressured to withhold), and was admitted to the bar of the District of Columbia in 1873 (again, only after a struggle against sex discrimination). When the Supreme Court of the United States refused to admit her to its bar in 1876, she single-handedly lobbied Congress until, in 1879, it passed, reluctantly, "An act to relieve the legal disabilities of women." On March 3, 1879, Lockwood became the first woman admitted to the high Court bar, and, in 1880, the first woman lawyer to argue a case before the Court.

From her earliest years in Washington, Lockwood coveted a government position. She applied to be a consul officer in Ghent during the administration of Andrew Johnson, but her application was never acknowledged. In later years, she sought government posts—for women in general and for herself in particular—from other presidents. Without success. When Grover Cleveland passed over Lockwood and appointed as minister to Turkey a man thought to be a womanizer, she wrote to compliment the

president on his choice: "The only danger is, that he will attempt to suppress polygamy in that country by marrying all of the women himself." A year later, in 1886, in another communication to Cleveland, she laid claim to the position of district recorder of deeds and let the president know in no uncertain terms that she had a "lien" on the job. She did not give up: In 1911 she had her name included on a list sent to President William Howard Taft of women attorneys who could fill the Supreme Court vacancy caused by the death of Justice John Marshall Harlan.

What persuaded Lockwood that she should run for the highest office in the land? Certainly, she seized the opportunity to shake a fist at conservatives who would hold women back. And she was displeased with the enthusiasm for the Republican Party shown by suffrage leaders Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. More than that, however, campaigning would provide an opportunity for her to speak her mind, to travel, and to establish herself on the paid lecture circuit. She was not the first woman to run for president. In 1872, New York City newspaper publisher Victoria Woodhull had declared herself a presidential candidate, against Ulysses Grant and Horace Greeley. But Woodhull, cast as Mrs. Satan by the influential cartoonist Thomas Nast, had to abandon her campaign barely a month after its start: Her radical "free love" views were too much baggage for the nascent women's movement to bear, and financial misfortune forced her to suspend publication of *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly* at the very moment she most needed a public platform.

Years later, Lockwood—and the California women who drafted her—spoke of the circumstances surrounding her August 1884 nomination, their accounts colored by ego and age. Lockwood received the nod from Marietta Stow, a San Francisco reformer who spoke for the newly formed, California-based Equal Rights Party, and from Stow's colleague, attorney Clara Foltz. Foltz later insisted that Lockwood's nomination amounted to nothing more than a lighthearted joke on her and Stow's part. But Stow's biographer, Sherilyn

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Bennion, has made a strong case that the nomination was, in fact, part of a serious political strategy devised by Stow to deflect attention from the rebuff given suffrage leaders that year at the Republican and Democratic conventions, and to demonstrate that “the fair sex” could create its own terms of engagement in American party politics. Women were becoming stump speakers, participants in political clubs, candidates for local office, and, in a handful of places, voters. (By 1884 the Wyoming, Utah, and Washington Territories had fully enfranchised women, who in 14 states were permitted to vote in elections dealing with schools). Marietta Stow began the Equal Rights Party because she had long been interested in matters of public policy and because readers of her newspaper, *The Women’s Herald of Industry*, had expressed an interest in a “new, clean, uncorruptible party.”

In July 1884 Stow urged Abigail Scott Duniway, an Oregon rights activist and newspaper editor, to accept the Equal Rights Party’s nomination. But Duniway declined, believing, as Bennion writes, that “flaunting the names of women for official positions” would weaken the case for equal rights and provide “unscrupulous opponents with new pretexts and excuses for lying about them.” Undiscouraged, Stow continued her search for a candidate. In August, she hit her mark.

Belva Lockwood, *Women’s Herald* reader, had already begun to think of herself as a standard-bearer. On August 10 she wrote to Stow in San Francisco and asked rhetorically, and perhaps disingenuously, “Why not nominate women for important places? Is not Victoria Empress of India? Have we not among our country-women persons of as much talent and ability? Is not history full of precedents of women rulers?” The Republicans, she commented, claimed to be the party of progress yet had “little else but insult for women when [we] appear before its conventions.” (She had been among those rebuffed that summer by the Republicans.) She was exasperated with the party of Lincoln and mad-

dened by Stanton and Anthony’s continuing faith in major-party politics: “It is quite time that we had our own party, our own platform, and our own nominees. We shall never have equal rights until we take them, nor respect until we command it.”

Stow had her candidate! She called a party convention on August 23, read Lockwood’s letter to the small group, and proposed her as the party’s nominee for president of the United States, along with Clemence S. Lozier, a New



*Belva Lockwood in a photo probably taken in the early 1880s.*

York City physician, as the vice presidential nominee. Acclamation followed, and letters were sent to the two women. The dispatch to Lockwood read as follows: “Madam: We have the honor to inform you that you were nominated, at the Woman’s National Equal-Rights Convention, for President of the United States. We await your letter of acceptance with breathless interest.”

Lockwood later said that the letter took her “utterly by surprise,” and she kept it secret for

several days. On September 3, she wrote to accept the nomination for “Chief Magistrate of the United States” from the only party that “really and truly represent the interests of our whole people North, South, East, and West. . . . With your unanimous and cordial support . . . we shall not only be able to carry the election, but to guide the Ship of State safely into port.” Lockwood went on to outline a dozen platform points, and her promptness in formulating policy signaled that she (and the party) intended to be taken seriously about matters of political substance.

**F**orecasters in '84 were predicting another close presidential race. Four years earlier, James Garfield had defeated Winfield Hancock by just 40,000 votes (out of nine million cast), and people were again watching the critical states of New York and Indiana. The nearly even division of registered voters between the two major parties caused Democratic candidate Grover Cleveland and Republican candidate James G. Blaine to shy away from innovative platforms. Instead, the two men spent much of their time trading taunts and insults. That left the business of serious reform to the minor parties and their candidates: Benjamin Butler (National Greenback/Anti-Monopoly), John St. John (Prohibition), and Samuel Clarke Pomeroy (American Prohibition). Butler, St. John, and Pomeroy variously supported workers' rights, the abolition of child and prison labor, a graduated income tax, senatorial term limits, direct election of the president, and, of course, prohibition of the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol. Lockwood joined this group of nothing-to-lose candidates, who intended to promote the public discussion of issues about which Blaine and Cleveland dared not speak.

The design of Lockwood's platform reflected her practical savvy. The platform, she said, should “take up every one of the issues of the day” but be “so brief that the newspapers would publish it and the people read it.” (She understood the art of the sound bite.) Her “grand platform of principles” expressed bold positions and comfortable compromise. She promised to promote and maintain equal political privileges for “every class of our citizens irrespective of sex, color or nationality” in order to make America “in truth what it has so long

been in name, ‘the land of the free and home of the brave.’” She pledged herself to the fair distribution of public offices to women as well as men, “with a scrupulous regard to civil service reform after the women are duly installed in office.” She opposed the “wholesale monopoly of the judiciary” by men and said that, if elected, she would appoint a reasonable number of women as district attorneys, marshals, and federal judges, including a “competent woman to any vacancy that might occur on the United States Supreme Bench.”

Lockwood's views extended well beyond women's issues. She adopted a moderate position on the contentious question of tariffs. In her statement of September 3, she placed the Equal Rights Party in the political camp that wanted to “protect and foster American industries,” in sympathy with the working men and women of the country who were organized against free trade. But in the official platform statement reprinted on campaign literature, her position was modified so that the party might be identified as middle-of-the-road, supporting neither high tariffs nor free trade. Lockwood urged the extension of commercial relations with foreign countries and advocated the establishment of a “high Court of Arbitration” to which commercial and political differences could be referred. She supported citizenship for Native Americans and the allotment of tribal land. As was to be expected from an attorney who earned a substantial part of her livelihood doing pension claims work, she adopted a safe position on Civil War veterans' pensions: She argued that tariff revenues should be applied to benefits for former soldiers and their dependents; at the same time, she urged the abolition of the Pension Office, “with its complicated and technical machinery,” and recommended that it be replaced with a board of three commissioners. She vowed full sympathy with temperance advocates and, in a position unique to the platform of the Equal Rights Party, called for the reform of family law: “If elected, I shall recommend in my Inaugural speech, a uniform system of laws as far as practicable for all of the States, and especially for marriage, divorce, and the limitation of contracts, and such a regulation of the laws of descent and distribution of estates as will make the wife equal with the

husband in authority and right, and an equal partner in the common business.”

Lockwood’s position paper of September 3 was revised into the platform statement that appeared below her portrait on campaign flyers. The new version expanded on certain points, adopted some sharper rhetoric, and added several planks, including a commitment that the remaining public lands of the nation would go to the “honest yeomanry,” not the railroads. Lockwood stuck to her radical positions of support for women’s suffrage and the reform of domestic law, but, in a stunning retreat, her earlier promises of an equitable allotment of public positions by sex and any mention of the need for women in the judiciary were absent from the platform.

**A**rmed with candidate and platform, the leaders and supporters of the Equal Rights Party waited to see what would happen. A great deal depended on the posture adopted by the press. Fortunately for Lockwood and the party, many of the daily newspapers controlled by men, and a number of weeklies owned by women, took an interest in the newest contender in the election of ’84. A day after she accepted the nomination, *The Washington Evening Star* made her candidacy front-page news and reprinted the entire text of her acceptance letter and platform of September 3. The candidate told a *Star* reporter that she would not necessarily receive the endorsement of activist women. Indeed, leaders of the nation’s two top woman suffrage associations had endorsed Blaine, and Frances Willard had united temperance women with the Prohibition Party. “You must remember,” Lockwood said, “that the women are divided up into as many factions and parties as the men.”

On September 5, an editorial in the *Star* praised Lockwood’s letter of acceptance: “In all soberness, it can be said [it] is the best of the lot. It is short, sharp, and decisive. . . . It is evident that Mrs. Lockwood, if elected, will have a policy [that] commends itself to all people of common sense.” Editor Crosby Noyes rued the letter’s late appearance: Had it existed sooner, “the other candidates might have had the benefit of perusing it and framing their several epistles in accord with its pith and candor.” Newspaper reporting elsewhere was similarly respectful.

Abigail Duniway’s warning that women candidates would meet with “unpleasant prominence” and be held up “to ridicule and scorn” proved correct, but Lockwood actually encountered no greater mockery than the men in the election. She had to endure silly lies about hairpieces and sham allegations that she was divorced, but Cleveland was taunted with cries of “Ma, Ma Where’s My Pa” (a reference to his out-of-wedlock child). Cartoonists for *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated* and *Puck*, mass-circulation papers, made fun of all the candidates, including Lockwood. This was a rite of passage and badge of acceptance. *Leslie’s* also ran an article on Lockwood’s campaign and contemplated the entrance of women into party politics with earnest good wishes: “Woman in politics. Why not? . . . Twenty years ago woman’s suffrage was a mere opinion. To-day, it is another matter.”

After establishing campaign headquarters at her Washington home on F Street, Lockwood wrote to friends and acquaintances in a dozen states asking that they arrange ratification meetings and get up ballots containing the names of electors (as required by the Constitution) pledged to her candidacy. This letter to a male friend in Philadelphia was a typical appeal: “That an opportunity may not be lost for the dissemination of Equal Rights principles, cannot, and will not the Equal Rights Party of Philadelphia hold a ratification meeting for the nominee, put in nomination a Presidential Elector, and get up an Equal Rights ticket? Not that we shall succeed in the election, but we can demonstrate that a woman may under the Constitution, not only be nominated but elected. Think of it.”

**C**loser to home, party supporters organized a ratification meeting in mid-September at Wilson’s Station, Maryland. (They bypassed the District to make the point that, under federal law, neither men nor women could vote in the nation’s capital.) Lockwood delivered her first speech as a candidate at this gathering of about 75 supporters and journalists, and two Lockwood-for-president electors were chosen. She did not disclose at the rally that Clemence Lozier had declined the nomination for vice president—and not until September 29 did Marietta Stow decide to run in the second spot and complete the ticket.

## *Belva Lockwood*

Throughout September the national press spread the story of the Equal Rights Party and its candidate, and letters poured in to the house on F Street. They contained “earnest inquiries” about the platform, nasty bits of character assassination, and, from one male admirer, the following poem, which so amused Lockwood that she gave it to a reporter for publication:

O, Belva Ann!  
Fair Belva Ann!  
I know that thou art not a man;  
But I shall vote,  
Pull off my coat,  
And work for thee, fair Belva Ann.  
For I have read  
What thou hast said,  
And long I've thought upon thy plan.  
Oh no, there's none  
Beneath the sun  
Who'd rule like thee, my Belva Ann!

The letters also brought invitations to speak in cities across the East and the Midwest. In late September, Lockwood prepared to go on the stump, her expenses covered by sponsors. Many of the lectures she gave were paid appearances; indeed, she claimed to be the only candidate whose speeches the public paid to hear. She was a widowed middle-class woman (her second husband, who was more than 30 years her senior, had died in 1877), and her livelihood depended on the earnings of her legal practice. So the time she devoted to politics had to pay. When the election was over, she told reporters that she had a satisfaction denied the other candidates: She had come out of the campaign with her expenses paid and “\$125 ahead.”

Lockwood took to the field in October. She made at least one full circuit in October, beginning in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. Mid-month she delivered speeches in Louisville and in Cleveland, where she appeared at the Opera House before 500 people. In a loud and nasal voice, she attacked the high-tariff position of the Republicans on the grounds that it would injure American commerce. But she also assailed the free-trade policy of the Democrats, arguing that they were “willing to risk our manufacturing interests in the

face of the starving hordes of pauper labor in other countries.” She applauded the good that capital had done and said that “capital and labor did not, by nature, antagonize, and should not by custom.”

If the people who came to hear Lockwood expected nothing but women's rights talk, they were disappointed. She and her party colleagues believed that the Equal Rights Party should not run a single-issue campaign. Of course, the platform introduced “feminist” ideas. But it also allowed Lockwood to address many other issues that preoccupied Americans. So she directed only a small part of her talk to describing how women had helped to make the country “blossom as a rose.” She intended her candidacy to make history in the largest sense—by demonstrating that the Constitution did not bar women from running in elections or serving in federal elective office.

People who saw her for the first time said that her campaign photographs did not do her justice: The lady candidate had fine blue eyes, an aquiline nose, and a firm mouth, and she favored fashionable clothes. The cartoonists naturally focused on her sex, and the public had its own fun by creating dozens of Belva Lockwood Clubs, in which men meaning to disparage Lockwood paraded on city streets wearing Mother Hubbard dresses, a new cut of female clothing with an unconstructed design that freed movement and was considered improper to wear out of doors.

On November 3, the day before the election, Lockwood returned from a campaign tour of the Northwest. She had stayed “at the best hotels; had the best sleeping berths.” Her last stop was Flint, Michigan, and she told a Washington reporter that 1,000 people had attended her (paid) talk there, a larger number than Ohio congressman Frank Hurd drew the following night. When asked on November 4 where she would await the election news, she replied that her house would be open throughout the evening, “the gas will be lighted,” and reporters were welcome to visit. The historic first campaign by a woman for the presidency of the United States had ended, though in politics, of course, nothing is ever over.



*The boisterous mustachioed members of the Belva Lockwood Club of Rahway, New Jersey, enlivened the 1884 campaign when they took mockingly to the streets in their poke bonnets and Mother Hubbards.*

When the ballots were tallied, Cleveland was declared the winner, with an Electoral College vote of 219 to 182. In the popular vote, he squeaked by with a margin of 23,000.

In 1884 the United States had yet to adopt the “Australian” ballot, which has the names of all candidates for office printed on a single form. The system then in effect, dating from the beginning of the Republic, required that each political party in a state issue ballots that contained the names of that party’s slate and the electors pledged to them. A supporter cast his vote by depositing the ballot of his chosen party in a box. Some states required that voters sign the back of their ballot, but the overall allocation of ballots was not controlled by polling place officials, and stuffing the box was not impossible. It was also possible for officials in charge of the ballot boxes to discount or destroy ballots. And that, Lockwood claimed, is precisely what happened.

In a petition sent to Congress in January 1885, she wrote that she had run a campaign, gotten up electoral tickets in several states, and received votes in at least nine of the states, only to determine that “a large vote in Pennsylvania [was] not counted, sim-

ply dumped into the waste basket as false votes.” In addition, she charged that many of the votes cast for her—totalling at least 4,711—in eight other states (“New Hampshire, 379 popular votes; New York, 1336; Michigan, 374; Illinois, 1008; Iowa, 562; Maryland, 318; California, 734 and the entire Electoral vote of the State of Indiana”) had been “fraudulently and illegally counted for the alleged majority candidate.”

She asked that the members of Congress “refuse to receive the Electoral returns of the State of New York, or count them for the alleged majority candidate, for had the 1336 votes which were polled in said state for your petitioner been counted for her, and not for the one Grover Cleveland, he would not have been awarded a majority of all the votes cast at said election in said state.” (Cleveland’s margin of votes in New York was 1,149). Lockwood also petitioned Congress for the electoral vote of Indiana, saying that at the last moment the electors there had switched their votes from Cleveland to her. In fact, they had not; it was all a prank by the good ol’ boys of Indiana, but either she did not know this or, in the spirit of political theater, she played along with the mischief and used it to her advantage.

The electoral votes of New York (36) and Indiana (15) had been pivotal in the 1880 presidential race. With her petition and credible evidence, Lockwood—perhaps working behind the scenes with congressional Republicans—hoped to derail Cleveland’s victory and keep him from becoming the first Democratic president since James Buchanan in 1856. She failed when the legislators ignored her petition, which had been referred to their Committee on Woman Suffrage. On February 11, Congress certified the election of New York governor Grover Cleveland as the 22nd president of the United States.

Subsequent interviews suggest that Lockwood was satisfied with the campaign, if not with the vote counting. The U.S. Constitution had betrayed women in the matter of suffrage, but it did not, as she said, prohibit women’s speech and women’s candidacies. As a celebration of the First Amendment, Lockwood’s campaign was a great success. It served the interests of women (though it angered Susan B. Anthony), the candidate, and the country. Lockwood ran as an acknowledged contender and was allowed to speak her mind. American democracy was tested, and its performance did not disappoint her.

After the election, while maintaining her law practice, Lockwood embarked on the life of travel that she had long sought—and that she continued until her early eighties. Not unlike 21st-century politicians, she capitalized on the campaign by increasing her presence on the national lecture circuit; she even made at least one product endorsement (for a health tonic). She had long worked as a pension claims attorney, and, while traveling as a lecturer, she used the publicity surrounding her appearances to attract clients who needed help with applications and appeals. In 1888, the Equal Rights Party again nominated her as its presidential candidate. She ran a more modest campaign the second time around, but she still offered a broad domestic and foreign policy platform and argued that “equality of rights and privileges is but simple justice.”

Lockwood always spoke proudly of her campaigns, which were important but not singular events in a life that would last 87 years. She was a woman of many talents and interests. Blocked from political office or a high-level government position because of her sex, she sought new realms after the campaigns of 1884 and 1888 where she might raise questions of public policy and advance the rights of women. Representing the Philadelphia-based Universal Peace Union, she increased her work on behalf of international peace and arbitration at meetings in the United States and Europe. She participated in an often-interlocking network of women’s clubs and professional organizations. And she maintained a high profile in the women’s suffrage movement, which struggled throughout the 1890s and the first two decades of the 20th century to create a winning strategy. In the spring of 1919, the House of Representatives and the Senate acted favorably on legislation to amend the Constitution to give women the right to vote; the proposed Nineteenth Amendment went out to the states in a ratification process that would not be completed until August 1920. But Belva Lockwood never got the right to vote. She died in May 1917.

Lockwood remains the only woman to have campaigned for the presidency right up to Election Day. (In 1964, Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine entered several Republican primaries and received 27 delegate votes; in 1972, Representative Shirley Chisholm of New York ran in a number of Democratic primaries and won 151 delegates.) In 1914 Lockwood, then 84 years old, was asked whether a woman would one day be president. The former candidate answered with levelheaded precision and the merest echo of her former thunder: “I look to see women in the United States senate and the house of representatives. If [a woman] demonstrates that she is fitted to be president she will some day occupy the White House. It will be entirely on her own merits, however. No movement can place her there simply because she is a woman. It will come if she proves herself mentally fit for the position.” □

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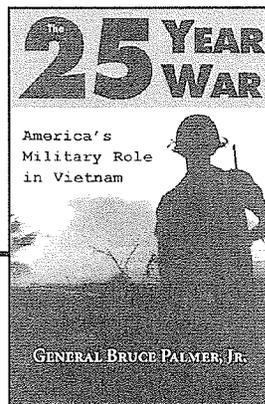
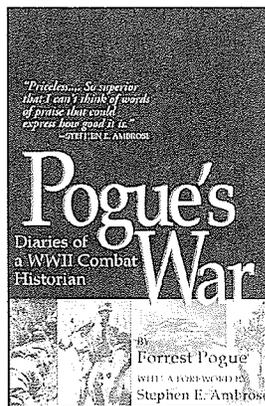
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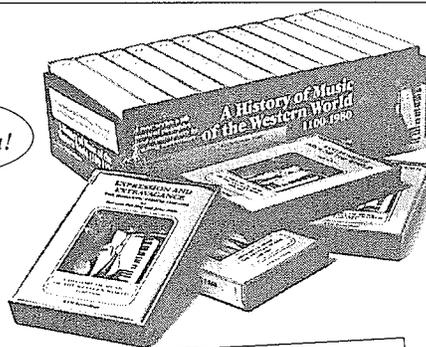
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# Last Words of William Gaddis

William Gaddis, a great American novelist, never found the wide readership that his satiric, socially astute, and, ultimately, humane books deserve. Before he died in 1998, Gaddis wrote his fifth novel, *Agapē Agape*, which has just been published.

The narrator of the book, an author on his deathbed, asks the reader more than once, “Can you hear me?” It’s a question Gaddis might well have asked his own readers.

*by Paul Maliszewski*

Jack Gibbs, a character in William Gaddis’s second novel, *J R* (1975), is trying to finish writing a history of the player piano. Gibbs works on his manuscript in a cluttered fire hazard of an apartment, a disorderly place always on the verge of slipping into chaos. The rooms are stacked high with boxes and littered with mops, cookie tins, an inoperable stove, and the unopened mail of previous tenants. There’s a radio somewhere, perhaps in one of the boxes, from which bursts of music and talk erupt. Nobody can find the radio, though many try. The frustrated author shares this cramped space with Thomas Eigen, “who wrote an important novel once” and who now works in business, and Edward Bast, a junior high school music teacher with ambitions to compose an opera, ambitions that, over the course of the novel, he gradually and grimly downsizes, until, by the end, he’s writing a piece for an unaccompanied cello. In this overcast climate of artistic frustration, deferred dreams, and life’s innumerable small compromises, and against the maddening background of advertising patter coming from the buried radio, Gibbs sporadically writes and revises his book, works and

reworks it. He writes without discipline, in spurts, when the will seizes him, and his emotions, in particular his anger at the mechanical player piano’s eclipse of the human piano player, run high. When asked what he’s working on, he describes his book in a halting manner familiar to anyone who has not yet completed something creative but still risks talking about it. “It’s more of a book about order and disorder,” he says, “more of a, sort of a social history of mechanization and the arts, the destructive element. . . .” As his words trail off, his description of the book, like so many sentences in *J R*, is left incomplete. His thought, like so many characters’ thoughts in the novel, is a fragment spoken hurriedly between another’s words and occupying a space too small for its full expression.

The woman listening to Gibbs picks up the thread of conversation, which is more than most of the cross-talking characters in *J R* manage to do, and asks, “It sounds a little difficult, is it?” Gibbs answers, “Difficult as I can make it.” Meanwhile, the phone in the apartment rings, people drop by, someone arrives to deliver 10,000 plastic flowers (a shipment for a witless, penny-stock business



Bill Gaddis (1987), by Julian Schnabel

empire captained by J R Vansant, age 11, that's spinning out of control). And yet somehow Gibbs lays out his argument as best he can, sentence by painfully wrought sentence: that the effects of automation on the arts have been deleterious; that technology, over the years, has removed the artist from the art and eliminated the elements of labor, revision, and failure (necessary elements, Gibbs and Gaddis would say); and that the player piano is a perfect case in point. The interruptions are finally too many and too distracting for Gibbs to persevere. The pressures of life and the material demands it makes overwhelm him, and *J R* concludes before Gibbs comes close to completing his manuscript.

**B**efore he died in 1998, William Gaddis accomplished what Jack Gibbs could not: He completed a book about mechanization and the arts. That book, called *Agapē Agape*, has just been published, 27

years after Gaddis left Gibbs to his sprawling undertaking—a project that seems in *J R* less a book-to-be than an assortment of paper, notes, and undigested research, with some rhetorical flourishes in the margins. In some ways, *Agapē Agape* is not unlike the book Gibbs struggles with, though it's really more of a highly condensed novel, on 96 generously spaced pages, than it is any sort of social history. Its themes, as Joseph Tabbi, a professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, explains in the afterword, occupied, fascinated, and bedeviled Gaddis his entire writing life.

Gaddis was routinely compared with Thomas Mann, James Joyce, Marcel Proust, and Samuel Butler, and although such comparisons with other writers are arguably made too often and too carelessly in book blurbs, Gaddis richly earned every one of them. He was those writers' peer. He sought in all his books to capture the ener-

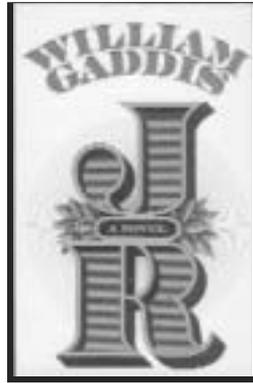
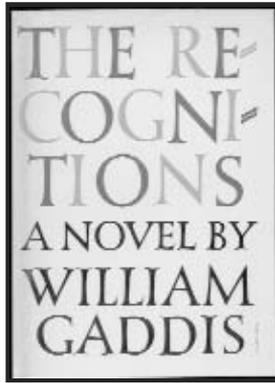
## William Gaddis

gy of American speech, the sweep of New York City out across Long Island, the ceaseless moving and restless shaking of the city's people, and the fundamental contradictions and competing desires in Americans' hearts. He wrote with sharp wit (for example, about the myriad lawsuits that arise from a dog's being trapped inside a piece of public sculpture) and an eye for the perfect detail (in the cardboard buttons on a pair of pants he sees "all of false economy's drear deception"). A painter in his first novel, *The Recognitions*, published in 1955, says that what distinguishes Flemish masterpieces from other work is that "every detail reflects . . . God's concern with the most insignificant objects in life, with everything, because God did not relax for an instant." On every page of his books, Gaddis reflects a similarly relentless concern for his characters and for life's least objects.

Characters such as the man in *The Recognitions* who asks his wife why she so urgently wants to meet a certain new poet. "What is it they want from a man that they didn't get from his work?" he asks. "What is there left of him when he's done his work? What's any artist, but the dregs of his work? The human shambles that follows it around. What's left of the man when the work's done but a shambles of apology." Gaddis himself gave everything to his work. Details of his various remunerative but mind-numbing ways of making ends meet, descriptions of places and homes where he lived, and the experience, at times harsh, at times sobering, of being an uncompromising writer living in the 20th century all found their way into his books. But however much his life informed his work, the books never became advertisements for himself (as the books of

another, better-known author who was his contemporary became for him). In an age of publicity, reading tours, and book signings, Gaddis politely declined them all, and he expected, or at least hoped, that readers would follow his example and focus on the work, not the man. Although he received many awards, including two National Book Awards and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim, MacArthur, and Lannan foundations, Gaddis never won the wide recognition, readership, and appreciation his books deserve. He remains, in the words of one of his obituaries, "America's unknown great writer."

Gaddis frequently quoted with approval Gustave Flaubert's view that the artist should "appear in his work no more than God in nature." It's a trick, the ultimate trick, for an artist to make posterity believe he never existed, but it's a tragedy for the artist's work to vanish along with him. In the final scene of *The*



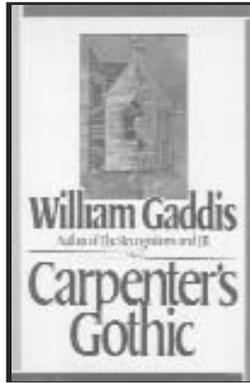
*Recognitions*, Stanley, a composer, organist, and true believer (in a world that mistakes belief for naiveté), enters a cathedral in Italy to practice the piece he'll play for Easter Mass. He begins to pull out the stops on the instrument, but a priest who has escorted him to the organ bench pushes them back. The priest says something in Italian—Stanley doesn't understand Italian—and walks away. Stanley, now alone, pulls out the stops, one by one, and begins to play. "The music," Gaddis writes, "soared around him." And the cathedral, set vibrating by the music, comes crashing down atop him. The novel memorializes Stanley this way: "He was the only person caught in the collapse, and afterward, most of his work was recovered too, and it is still spoken of, when it is noted, with high regard, though seldom played."

>PAUL MALISZEWSKI's writing has appeared recently in Harper's, The Paris Review, the Pushcart Prize anthology, and The Wilson Quarterly, and he edited McSweeney's 8, a collection of writing that explores the border between fact and fiction. Copyright © 2002 by Paul Maliszewski.

Gaddis's novels should be not merely spoken of but played—and often.

Gaddis picked up and put down his book about the player piano many times, finding the project as endlessly interesting, and ultimately frustrating, in real life as Gibbs does in fiction. Steven Moore, a Gaddis scholar and tireless annotator of the novels, suggests that Gaddis first became interested in player pianos around 1945, after leaving Harvard and taking a job as a fact checker at *The New Yorker*. *The Rush for Second Place*, a collection of Gaddis's essays and occasional writings, edited by Joseph Tabbi and published this year to coincide with the appearance of *Agapē Agape*, preserves several early forms of the player piano project, including “Stop Player. Joke No. 4,” an essay as learned and witty as it is compressed. Imagining the United States at the dawn of the player piano era, Gaddis writes, “There was a place for everyone in this brave new world, where the player offered an answer to some of America's most persistent wants: the opportunity to participate in something which asked little understanding; the pleasures of creating without work, or the taking of time; and the manifestation of talent where there was none.”

Originally published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, “Stop Player. Joke No. 4” was Gaddis's first national appearance in print. But by the time the essay appeared, in July 1951, he was already at work on *The Recognitions* and no longer thinking about writing the impossible book about the player piano any time soon. *The Recognitions* is a globe-spanning comic novel about all manner of fake things, deceptive people, fabricated emotions, cheapened values, and false gods, including a fine-art restorer; a faker of paintings by Flemish masters, and the businessman and art critics who profit from him; a proud counterfeiter of American money and



Antiguan stamps who's disappointed, like most any father, that his son, a heroin addict, hasn't taken an interest in his vocation; Hieronymus Bosch's tabletop *Seven Deadly Sins* and its careful imitation; a plagiarized Rilke poem; a play everyone swears must be plagiarized but is just cobbled together from the chatter overheard at the parties the characters attend; a playwright so swollen with vanity and dragged down by insecurity that he affects an injury and wears a sling around his arm for the sake of conversation; and much else. The publisher did very little for the book, and Gaddis later remarked, “They didn't publish it, they ‘privated’ it.” Journalists reviewed the book as if its author, a relative unknown, were arrogant for expecting that they'd skim even half its nearly 1,000 pages, and the book, read and loved by the few who could find it, passed quietly out of print. The novel's actual reception was rather different from what Gaddis, in “the grand intoxication of youth,” had expected. In an interview with *The Paris Review* in 1987 (interviews with Gaddis were rare), he said, “Well, I almost think that if I'd gotten the Nobel Prize when *The Recognitions* was published I wouldn't have been terribly surprised.”

And so, after writing an important novel once, Gaddis went to work, looking for a job that paid a bit more than he earned being the author of a book that some felt was the equal of *Ulysses* (and a few believed was its better). He married and started a family, living in the New York area. He worked for Pfizer, Eastman Kodak, and the U.S. Army. He did public relations. He wrote speeches for executives. He crafted corporate reports and film scripts for educational movies (one such script, about computer software, written for IBM, is included in *The Rush for Second Place*). In the early 1960s, Gaddis

## "Make Some Money Just Like Anybody"

In *J R*, William Gaddis's second novel, Edward Bast, a junior high school music teacher who'd rather be a composer, is walking home from school with J R Vansant, an 11-year-old student who'd rather control a business empire. On a field trip that morning, J R and his classmates participated in the country's free-enterprise economy, purchasing one share of a company. Flush with importance and inspiration, J R has a number of business ideas to present to his teacher.

—Mister Bast? Could you wait up a second? I just have to fix this here shoelace . . . he'd crouched jackknifed over his armload, a sneaker mounting the curb that checked the rampant advance of grassgrown cracks stemming from the empty concrete shell of the Marine Memorial Plaza where a disabled French machinegun and a vacant flagpole held off the sky. —Boy it looks like we both need shoes, right? he finished with an urgent tug—holy, shit . . .

—And look will you please stop . . .

—No but it broke again, you know what I was thinking on the train hey? he came on righting his load, hurrying alongside—like I have this thing which what it is is it's this selling outfit where what you do is you send in and

they send you all these different shoes which you get to wear them around so people can see them, you know? See that's how you sell them, see? I mean not the ones you're wearing right off your feet but like you take their order and then you make this commission, you know? Like it says you can make a hundred dollars a week in your spare time and you get to wear these shoes around too, you want me to find it?

—No.

—Okay but I have this other thing about have your own import export business right from your own home, you know? Maybe you could do that . . . they crossed a rutted bog opening on a dirt road. —Would you want to do that? Mister Bast?

—Do what.

—This import export business right from your own home.

—Import and export what.

—How do I know but I mean that's not the thing anyway, you know? he kicked a can up the highway's unkempt shoulder kicking the weeds for some remnant of sidewalk, —I mean the thing is just where you get to sell something like, wait a second . . .

—Look I want to get home before it rains, I can't . . .

—No but anyway it's just this other selling

completed an introduction for a book he had by then started calling *Agapē Agape*. (The title combines the Greek noun for spiritual love with an uncommon English adjective that describes a mouth hanging open in awe and wonder. Together, the words convey Gaddis's sense that the noble concept has degenerated into merely a dumb expression.) That introduction, which appears in the new essay collection and is subtitled "A Secret History of the Player Piano," describes a book that will be satiric in mode, rigorous in its historical investigation, and, Gaddis figured, about 50,000 words in length. He had on hand at least 100 pages of assorted drafts and notes; the project and his predicament would come to resemble Jack Gibbs's in *J R* years later, as if Gaddis want-

ed nothing more than to fob his troubles off on a character. Gaddis wrote a summary of the work in progress for his agent to shop around to publishers. The agent failed to sell the book, and Gaddis went on to other things, namely the writing of three wonderful novels: *J R*, *Carpenter's Gothic* (1985), and *A Frolic of His Own* (1994).

In the vicious shorthand that can reduce entire books to the two or three things that they're "about," writers and reviewers frequently say that Gaddis's novels are satires and that *J R* is about money, *Carpenter's Gothic* about religion, and *A Frolic of His Own* about the law. But satires, Gaddis knew, are not about what people devise or possess, their *things*.

thing I got where it says you'll never have to clean your toilet bowl again, see they send you this here . . .

—What makes you think I want to go around selling things! I don't even. . .

—To make some money just like anybody I mean that's what you wait up, I mean you're taking such long steps hey? Mister Bast? Did you ever hear that one about if you need any money just ask my father he's got piles?

—No.

—No but wait up hey, do you get it? Just ask my . . .

—I get it yes, look does your father know about all this sending away you're doing?

—What?

—I said does your father . . .

—No but that's just suppose to be this here joke see, where . . .

—I know it's supposed to be this here joke! it's the, it's one of the worst I ever heard, I said does your fa . . .

—No but hey Mister Bast . . . ? he came pushing shoulder high through Queen Anne's laces hemming him in behind,—like what business is your father in.

—Music.

—What he writes it? like you?

—He writes it and he's a prominent con-

ductor look, music's not a business like shoes or . . .

—No I know, I mean that's why he's this here prominent conductor right . . . ? he came hurrying alongside for the brief stretch of sidewalk,—I mean where he makes some money being this conductor so he can go write this here music in his spare time he doesn't make much off, right?

—I suppose yes now look I'm in a hurry . . .

—No that's okay I can take bigger steps it's just all this here stuff I can't hardly . . .

—Well where are you going, where . . .

—No I'm just walking you home, see I . . .

—Well you don't have to it's practically dark, doesn't your mother expect you to . . .

—Her . . . ? the sidewalk ended abruptly —no she comes in all different ow! Holy, boy I almost lost my . . .

—Different what.

—All these different times see she's like this here nurse could you wait up a second hey? My sneaker . . . he'd gone down to one knee where a pole of rust bore Doges Promenade in barely discernible letters over the rutted opening in the weeds. —Boy hey did you hear that? that thunder? □



William Gaddis, around 1970

They're about human nature and the people themselves. Thus, *A Frolic of His Own* recounts how people appeal futilely to the law to redress what it cannot possibly fix: hurt feelings, flagging self-esteem, a sense of diminished self-worth. (Gaddis trivializes none of those conditions, for genuine affection warms his most merciless satire.) *J R* observes the frenzied activity on the floor of our vast human stock market, where people buy and sell, trade, barter, and bargain their selves, talents, and abilities for money. If they acquire enough money, it will free them to pursue happiness and develop their abilities, and that will make them better people—or so the promise goes. Artists of every stripe, most of them failed, populate all of Gaddis's books, and

*J R* in particular. But the books are not about how good artists are crushed by evil commerce, an oft-told story, simple in its design and attractive for the clarity of its conflict, but far too simplistic for Gaddis. In a Gaddis novel, the composer speaks of stocks and net worth, while the businessman waxes eloquent about the grace and dignity of music, and each of them manages to find a way to use the other. What drew Gaddis to his failed characters, he said, was "the evidence of *their own* appetite for destruction, their frequently eager embrace of the forces to be blamed for their failure to pursue the difficult task for which their talents have equipped them."

In 1997, a new agent sold Gaddis's on-again-off-again player piano book, and the

word went out: The published work would be nonfiction, it would still be titled *Agapē Agape*, and it would still divulge the secret history of the player piano. But, in fact, Gaddis, like Gibbs, did not write that sort of book, which is likely to have been a long, wide-ranging, scholarly treatment of the challenges technology raises for the arts and artists. *That* book exists today only in bits and pieces—in the notes and drafts Gaddis left, along with the rest of his archive, to Washington University in St. Louis, in the assorted pieces published in the new essay collection, and in the hints and suggestions of a larger work that can be gleaned from the several dense passages that Jack Gibbs reads to Edward Bast, who makes the mistake, the cardinal mistake really, of saying that Gibbs's book seems, to him, a bit, well, difficult:

. . . he slapped pages over in a heap.  
—here. The music of the world is free to all.  
Is that hard?

—Well no but . . .

—The Pianola is the universal means of playing the piano. Universal, because there is no one in all the world, having the use of hands and feet, who could not learn to use it that so God damned hard? Use of hands and feet . . . he got one of each on 12-38 Oz Btls Won't Burn, Smoke or Smell coming down.

*The Rush for Second Place* concludes with a chronology of the player piano that Gaddis assembled while working in fits and starts on the book. The chronology is the work of an avid, intellectually adventurous mind and covers the player piano's invention, development, spectacular popularity (260,000 pianos were manufactured in 1904, of which only 1,000 were player pianos; by 1919, player pianos outnumbered all other pianos made), and, with the spread of the radio, sudden irrelevance. Gaddis explored the development of automation in other industries and, like a conspiracy theorist attentive to subtle patterns and connections others miss, cross-referenced his chronology with political events, the births and deaths of notable people, and the publication of

seminal literary works. All the various extant states of *Agapē Agape*, from pithy essay to polished introduction to well-developed agent's pitch to the rough and fragmentary notes for the chronology, make clear that Gaddis's primary challenge was to devise a narrative that could accommodate his wealth of evidence (everything from Frederick Taylor's time-motion studies to the primitive robots constructed for the entertainment of nobility to Jacquard punch-card looms, early IBM computers, and so much else). He needed a way to tell the story.

**A**fter so difficult a birth, *Agapē Agape* might well have arrived stunted or blue in the face, with the signs of its long and fitful gestation all too evident. Or, worse, it might appear plainly unfinished. But that's not the case. It's not like Ralph Ellison's *Juneteenth*, Robert Musil's *The Man without Qualities*, or Marguerite Young's *Harpson for a Radical*. All those works were lifetimes in the making, and the end of the lifetimes left them not completely made. But *Agapē Agape* is not a book that was finished only arbitrarily, by Gaddis's death. Which is not to say that it was completed in ease. Indeed, the pressures of life and of fighting to stay alive, pressures Gaddis shared with his narrator according to Tabbi, are apparent from the novel's opening lines:

No but you see I've got to explain all this because I don't, we don't know how much time there is left and I have to work on the, to finish this work of mine while I, why I've brought in this whole pile of books notes pages clippings and God knows what, get it all sorted and organized when I get this property divided up and the business and worries that go with it while they keep me here to be cut up and scraped and stapled and cut up again.[. . .]

What follows this opening is a loosely punctuated, single-paragraph, monologue delivered by an author recovering in bed from an operation and trying to put his financial and literary affairs in order. Before he dies, he wants—no, needs—to get

something down on paper that he's been trying in various ways to write his entire life: "that's what I have to go into before all my work is misunderstood and distorted and, and turned into a cartoon." Like Joseph Heller's *Portrait of an Artist, as an Old Man* (2000) and David Markson's *This Is Not a Novel* (2001), two books about writer-narrators completed under the duress of poor health by authors (and Gaddis contemporaries) determined to finish the work at hand—Heller died before his book was published; Markson is still alive—*Agapē Agape* was written by Gaddis with the understanding that it would be his last published act as an author. That crushing awareness of his own end nearing is palpable on every page. As a consequence, the writing is as deeply melancholic as it is direct. Thoughts are expressed without frills and with the utmost urgency. On more than one occasion, the narrator of *Agapē Agape* asks the reader, simply, "Can you hear me?"

The narrator proceeds associatively, and his monologue moves fluidly from idea to idea, skipping, for example, from a Leo Tolstoy quotation to remarks on the state of contemporary movies and rap music to a reference to Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and, from there, to a discussion of the Pulitzer Prize, a quotation from a letter by Flaubert to George Sand, and back to the Pulitzer Prize, then on to the sad state of book reviewing at *The New York Times*, then back once more to the Pulitzer Prize. And that's in just over two pages.

**T**he story the narrator tells is, as promised, a kind of history of mechanization and the arts. But between the allusions and quotations a smaller, more personal story unfolds, as the narrator attempts to summon enough life and sufficient health to complete the project before him. He feels his body, and, frankly, it does not feel good. His skin, he says, is like parchment, dry and brittle. Here, plainly, is "the human shambles" still following the work around. As the monologue carries the argument to some high and heated rhetorical pitches, painful and glancing references to stress and soreness, to aches and

bruising, to blood from an unknown wound spotting pages of notes, cut the argument short and interrupt its development. The narrator moves, or tries to move, mostly to shift his position, but he never leaves the room, or even the bed. The overt drama is minimal at best—a stack of books topples over; the narrator is unable to find the source, quotation, or statistic he needs in the materials with which he's surrounded himself. All the activity in the novel is mental activity, and as the narrator's thoughts speed ahead, they sometimes outstrip his ability to relate them: "I'm, no, get my breath can't get my breath," he says.

When the narrator catches his breath and feels comfortable enough to continue, when his body frees his mind to think about something other than the sorry state of his body, two key ideas animate his thoughts. The first is his frustration, and even anger, at people who want to participate in the making of culture without expending any effort, who seek, as Gaddis wrote in 1951, "the pleasures of creating without work." As if continuing the same thought more than 50 years later, he writes in *Agapē Agape*, "it's everything we've been talking about from the start," and then riffs on an advertisement from a manufacturer of player pianos:

[...] discover your unsuspected talent, you can play better by roll than many who play by hand, the biggest thrill in music is playing it yourself even untrained persons can do it, it's your participation that rouses your emotions most, those phantom hands.

Against this frustration Gaddis balances an acute despair and a belief that people who discover their talents without effort and make culture without work are capable of doing better and much more, but that they surrender, sometimes willingly and sometimes unknowingly, the parts of themselves that might do so—surrender them, for example, to technology, with its promises to do things for them—and make a thousand other compromises besides. This idea is by no means new to Gaddis. According to Tabbi, the phrase "the self

who could do more” appears in each of the novels. It originates in a poem by Michelangelo, which the narrator of *Agapē Agape* translates, “Who nearer to me Or more mighty yes, more mighty than I Tore me away from myself. Tore me away!” In his last book’s moment of blackest despair, Gaddis writes, “it’s madness it’s all madness thank God I’m not living now [. . .] yes thank God I’m not living today.” Shortly after completing *Agapē Agape*, Gaddis died, at the age of 75, of prostate cancer and the complications of emphysema.

All too frequently the books Gaddis left us are described as difficult, but like the falsely reported death of another great American writer, their difficulty is greatly exaggerated. What distinguishes his novels from most other fiction is the degree to which Gaddis asks readers to participate, collaborate, be active and involved in each book. The novels after *The Recognitions* consist almost entirely of dialogue, and narrators have gone the way of God in a philosophy class after Nietzsche: They are absent. There are few indications of who’s speaking, few descriptions of clothing, landscape, or weather, and almost no omniscient glimpses into a person’s thoughts. “He said” and “she said” are endangered species, descriptions of manner—“quietly,” “urgently,” “with a curt nod”—are extinct. So it’s true that readers need to concentrate. But Gaddis’s characters tend to use each other’s names more frequently than most writers’ characters do, and their voices are as distinctive as birds’. Through their speech they reveal their character.

Gaddis expressed deep ambivalence over the supposed difficulty of his books. When asked by an interviewer whether he wanted readers to like what he did, he replied, “Heavens yes.” In *J R* he countered Jack Gibbs’s apparent bluster about making his player piano book as difficult as he possibly could with the novelist Thomas Eigen’s clear dismay at an admirer who suggests that “you must have known when you were writing it, you must have known you were writing it for a very

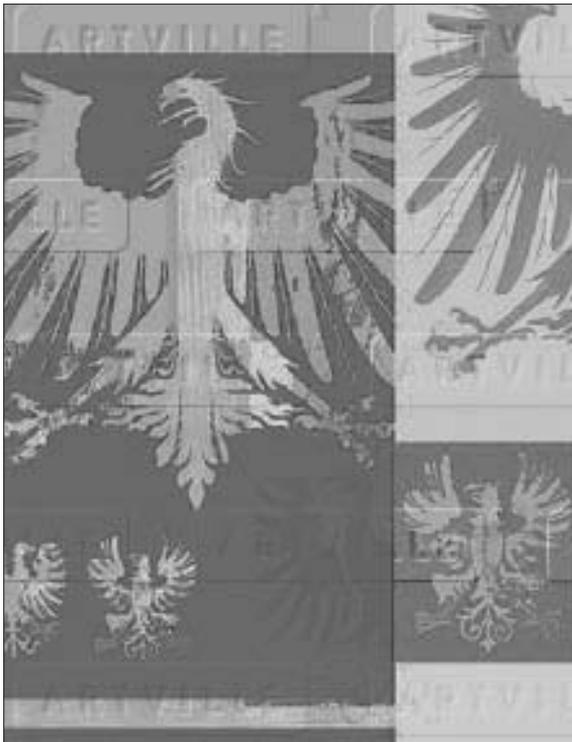
small audience.” “—Small audience! His feet dropped, —do you think I would have worked on it for seven years [. . .]” Elsewhere, though, when Willie, a character in *The Recognitions* and the closest of many surrogates for Gaddis, describes the book he’s writing, his friend says, “—Good lord, Willie, you are drunk. Either that or you’re writing for a very small audience.” Ever undeterred, Willie answers, “So . . . ? how many people were there in Plato’s Republic?”

There’s no point in trying to reconcile the various views Gaddis expressed about “difficulty,” as if we might then determine what, in the end, the man behind the work really believed. Better to remark on what sets Gaddis’s writing apart: his willingness to inhabit so many points of view, his determination to keep them distinct, his sense that dialogue in a novel can represent sides of vital social arguments, and his faith that readers are more than capable of following and evaluating all the various lines of thought—capable, in other words, of doing more. It’s worth remarking, too, on what sets Gaddis’s final novel apart from his other work, at least at first glance: the absence of any dialogue. Aside from wholly fantastic conversations between two authors whom the narrator cites, *Agapē Agape* is a monologue, in the course of which the narrator poses a number of direct questions to the reader. “Can you hear me?” he asks, and later, quoting the Michelangelo poem and echoing a question that haunts many of Gaddis’s frustrated characters, “Who more mighty tore me away from myself?”

The questions hang there on the page, suspended and, for now, unanswered. But if books are conversations carried out across time and cultures, as Gaddis believed they were (with the optimism required to produce any good writing, really), then his final book, like all his previous work, poses one elegant side of a long-running discussion that will surely be continued by others, dedicated readers and writers alike, in numbers that, however small, will never allow Gaddis’s work to go unrecognized. □

# GERMANY ADRIFT

Germans went to the polls in September at a strange time in their nation's history. The sudden reunification that caused so much joy only a few years ago now seems a costly burden. The prosperity that once made Germany the envy of its neighbors has given way to talk that the country is "the sick man of Europe." Our authors reflect on Germany's prospects, and on the past it seems unable to escape.



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# The New Germany

by *Martin Walker*

On September 22, in Germany's closest election in more than 50 years, a divided and uncertain electorate gave a narrow victory to the governing coalition of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's Social Democrats and their Green Party allies. But the voters declined to give the new government a clear mandate, and the prospect of four years of weak government and political deadlock now looms. Schröder's coalition held just enough seats in parliament to avoid dismissal and must now try to govern with a majority of only nine seats in the Bundestag. The conservatives won a three percent greater share of the national vote than they did in the previous election four years ago, but they and the Free Democrats, their likely partners in a coalition, fell short of a governing majority. The ex-Communists of the former East Germany, running as the Party of Democratic Socialism, won only four percent of the vote and two seats. Various extreme right-wing parties fared even worse, winning barely three percent of the vote in all—and no seats.

It's some consolation that Germany chose between moderates of the center-Left and center-Right, and that extremist parties of the Right and Left did poorly. But the closeness of the election result has left the new German government looking fragile. The conservative leader, Bavarian premier Edmund Stoiber, has predicted that the majority is too small to work and too unstable to last: "Should the result not allow us to form a government, I predict that this Schröder government will rule for only a very short time." And he returned to a campaign theme: "This coalition will not heal our country's economy, and there will be no release from the isolation from Europe and the United States."

The new government faces two immediate challenges: a damaging rift with its American allies over Iraq, and an economic and political crisis with its European partners. Despite the efforts of the conservatives to focus on the stagnant economy and Germany's four million unemployed, the main drama of the election campaign stemmed from foreign policy. Schröder's blunt refusal to support an American-led assault on Iraq, even if it were to have a United Nations mandate, helped him claw back from an eight-point deficit in the opinion polls. The task of repairing relations with Washington has been made no easier by the heatedly anti-American campaign rhetoric, including an episode that outraged the White House: a bizarre comparison of George W. Bush to Adolf Hitler by Schröder's justice minister, Herta Däubler-Gmelin.

The international focus of the campaign was all the more surprising in view of the grave domestic conditions in Germany. For the past seven years, German has recorded the worst economic performance in Europe. Further, the main political parties all agree that the constitution needs amending: The powers of the second chamber in parliament, the Bundesrat, must be weak-



AP Photo/Christof Stache

*In the recent election campaign, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder played the anti-American card and used opposition to U.S. plans for a war against Saddam Hussein to appeal for votes.*

ened so that the elected government can govern without being blocked. But that change requires the agreement of the Bundesrat, and of a majority of the powerful *Länder*, the 16 individual states that make up the Federal Republic of Germany. No wonder Josef Joffe, editor of *Die Zeit*, calls Germany “a blocked society, incapable of reform.” And yet the election hinged on foreign policy. Germans found to their surprise that the celebrated mantra of Bill Clinton’s 1992 campaign — “It’s the economy, stupid!” — did not work. The headlines and the public imagination were caught by the country’s aversion to war with Iraq, by its suspicion of the United States, and by controversy over Germany’s attitudes toward Israel, still strongly colored by guilt and bitter memories of World War II and the Holocaust.

The composition of the new German government was decided not by the two main political parties, which finished almost neck and neck, but by the smaller parties, which were able to furnish the votes needed for a majority coalition. The Greens, scoring their best-ever result, campaigned as pacifists, deeply opposed to war and wary of military operations, even peacekeeping missions with a UN mandate. The Free Democrats, liberal centrists who now advocate far-reaching economic reform, have traditionally held the balance of power. But this time they faltered and, after highly critical remarks about Israel by their deputy leader, Jürgen Möllemann, won only 7.4 percent of the vote. The prominent coverage given Möllemann’s outbursts and Däubler-Gmelin’s clumsy references to Bush and Hitler was a reflection of how the campaign skirted the serious issues of economic and social stagnation. Neither the voters nor the politicians seemed to know what to do about those issues, so they chose to talk about other things, and held an election that decided little — except that Germany is a country in denial.

In what she described as the one “unambiguous failure” of her foreign policy, British prime minister Margaret Thatcher tried without success to block the unification of Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall. “A reunited Germany is simply too big and too powerful to be just another player within Europe,” she concluded in her memoirs. Germany, she said, is “by its very nature a destabilizing rather than a stabilizing force in Europe.” The perception that a united Germany would be uncomfortably powerful for its European neighbors was widespread at the time. Lady Thatcher even claimed subsequently that French president François Mitterrand and Dutch premier Ruud Lubbers agreed with her in private but believed that German unification could not be stopped and should there-

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fore be tamed within an ever closer European Union (EU), with the mighty deutsche mark absorbed into a single European currency.

The defining fact about post-Cold War Germany is that successive governments, political parties, and the broad public were all happy to make the accommodation to Europe.

Indeed, since the 1950s a national consensus had developed behind a phrase coined by the novelist Thomas Mann: “a Europeanized Germany, rather than a Germanized Europe.” One of the central issues now, for Germany and Europe both, is how far the process of accommodation will go. And like so much else that will affect Germany’s future, from the global economy to prospects for the Atlantic Alliance, the matter is not entirely in German hands. The British and French—and other partners in the European Union—stand firmly against German proposals for a federal Europe, in part because they still fear that Germany could dominate it.

Before unification, West Germany had the strongest economy in Europe. Its population of just over 60 million was roughly equal to that of France, Britain, or Italy, but its gross domestic product (GDP) was half again as large as Britain’s. Unification brought an additional 18 million new citizens from the former East Germany, which was perceived to be the most advanced and efficient of the Warsaw Pact economies. With both the largest population in Europe (and thus the largest voting block in the European Parliament) and the largest economy, Germany in the 1990s seemed destined to achieve by peaceful means what two world wars had failed to secure for it by force of arms.

It is one of the major surprises of the post-Cold War era that the united Germany has lived up neither to its own hopes nor to the fears and expectations of its neighbors. In 1999, Otmar Issing, chief economist of the European Central Bank, warned that Germany could become “the sick man of Europe unless it drastically reformed its costly welfare state.” In July 2002, the research group of

>MARTIN WALKER, a former Wilson Center public policy scholar, is a journalist and author. His books include *America Reborn: A Twentieth-Century Narrative in Twenty-Six Lives* (2000) and the recently published novel *The Caves of Périgord*.

Deutsche Bank issued a thoughtful report, “Is Germany Heading the Same Way as Japan?” that was intended to set the tone for the German general election in September. The report stressed that Germany’s growth had lagged behind that of its EU partners for almost a decade: “Gloomy prospects and chronically weak growth in the 1990s . . . have raised the question, now being asked publicly, whether Germany is following Japan to become a second potential trouble spot among the large industrial nations—an area with weak economic momentum, reliant on other countries for most of its growth impetus.”

The nation’s plight is worrying its partners in the EU, who are accustomed to Germany’s paying \$10-12 billion more annually into the EU budget (which falls just short of \$100 billion) than it receives. An EU without this German contribution would be a far more cantankerous body. Daniel Gros, director of the Center for European Policy Studies in Brussels, calls the situation “the new German problem.” “Until recently,” he has said, “the ‘German problem’ in European affairs was how to deal with a country that was stronger than its neighbors and thus a menace to equilibrium on the continent. It now seems that the problem is the opposite—how to deal with a country that constantly underperforms.”

In addition to economic disappointments, other factors have contributed to the German mood of malaise. The German education system, once a source of pride, is faltering badly. The media sounded a note of panic this spring when German high school students performed poorly in an international comparative test of 15-year-olds. Of the 32 participating countries, Germany ranked 25th in overall reading, mathematics, and science literacy. The outcome compounded an already present concern about recurrent spasms of skinhead violence and isolated neo-Nazism among the young, particularly in the former East Germany, where youth unemployment in some regions is as high as 30 percent. The sense of crisis in Germany’s crowded and underfunded universities is best caught by the titles of two recent best-selling books, *Im Kern verrottet?* (Rotten to the core?) and *Ist die Uni noch zu retten?* (Can the university still be saved?).

**S**o Germans are feeling a deep concern about the future. Sobering demographic trends suggest that a low birth rate and ever-longer life expectancy are making the current German social system unsustainable; there are too few Germans of working age to finance the pensions of the increasing numbers of old people. In 1990 German women had an average of 1.45 children each, a figure already well below the replacement rate of 2.1. (American women in 2001 had, on average, 2.1 children.) By 2000, according to Eurostat, the European Union’s official statistics body, the average number of children had dropped to 1.34 for each woman.

But there’s a paradox here. Despite the economic statistics, modern Germany is not just a rich and prosperous democracy but one of the most agreeable societies on earth, with a high quality of life. It has less crime than France, Britain, or the United States, recycles more of its waste, and enjoys cleaner and safer streets. There are salmon again in the cleansed Rhone and Elbe rivers, once two of the most polluted waterways in Europe. The cities of Berlin and Hamburg alone spend more on culture than the whole of Britain does. Germans spend more on books than the British, French, and Dutch combined, and more on tourism than the

British, French, and Swedish combined. Wages are high. It takes a German autoworker 35 hours to earn enough to buy a color TV, as against 51 hours for a French autoworker and 78 hours for a Belgian.

There's a further paradox. Germany has become, as Chancellor Gerhard Schröder promised in the 1998 election campaign, "a normal nation." By this he meant a country that could, at last, play a full role on the world stage. The traditional self-constraints on German foreign policy have almost disappeared. German warplanes took part in the 1999 Kosovo campaign, which also saw German troops sent to combat outside their own borders for the first time since 1945. Since Kosovo, German special forces have fought alongside their British and American counterparts in the Afghanistan campaigns against Al Qaeda. And yet there is not the slightest sign of militarism in the country. Indeed, Germany's allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in particular the United States, complain that the country spends only 1.5 percent of its GDP on defense, roughly half the proportion of America, Britain, or France. But veteran officials such as Horst Teltschik, national security adviser to former chancellor Helmut Kohl, warn that Germany's small defense budget, along with Chancellor Schröder's outspoken attacks on the Bush administration's pledge of "regime change" in Iraq, "seriously undermine our alliance with America, the bedrock of our foreign policy for 50 years."

Which leads to the cruelest paradox of all. So long as it was divided, and in a fundamental way subordinate to the grand strategies of the Cold War, Germany boomed. As noted above, West Germany became the most powerful economy in Europe, and East Germany was, by a considerable margin, the most prosperous of the Warsaw Pact states. Once the division ended, Germany languished under high unemployment, economic sluggishness, and social unease. Having lost the excuse of the Cold War to explain its problems, it appeared to lose its way and to become less than the sum of its reunited parts.

**A**ny analysis of modern Germany must begin with the unfinished business of unification. Thirteen years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the absorption of the former East Germany has been immensely expensive and far from successful. With 20 percent of the country's population, the former German Democratic Republic produces just 10 percent of the new Germany's GDP. Unemployment is twice as high as in the West, and productivity barely 70 percent of Western levels, despite almost a trillion dollars in state subsidies since 1990. (That's 10 times more money, allowing for inflation, than the Marshall Plan pumped into West Germany after 1949.) The government has resignedly announced that federal aid to the East will have to be extended for another 20 years, along with the income tax surcharges to pay for it.

The problem, it seems widely accepted, stems from the decision of then-chancellor Kohl to speed up unification by exchanging West German and East German marks at near parity. In real purchasing power, a more appropriate exchange rate would have been three or four East marks to one West mark. This strain on the federal budget forced up interest rates in Germany and across Europe. Though the measure brought most East Germans appreciably closer to West German living standards, it also left East German

industry massively overpriced and unable to use its one structural asset, cheap skilled labor, at the very time the East Germans were losing their traditional markets in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Thus, the East Germans had the worst of both worlds: Their goods were too crude and ill packaged for Western markets and too costly for Eastern ones.

There are, of course, a few bright spots. Volkswagen built a \$187 million plant in Dresden to assemble its new Phaeton car, creating more than 500 new jobs earlier this year. BMW announced this year that it would build a new plant in Leipzig instead of shifting production abroad; it was persuaded to remain in Germany by tax breaks and subsidies that will pay more than a third of the plant's construction costs. There have even been some local successes—erstwhile East German industrial concerns that have restructured and prospered. The most commonly

cited example is Jena-Optik, an optical engineering group that employed more than 20,000 people when it made the cameras, binoculars, and gun sights for many of the Warsaw Pact armies. It was turned into a thriving company by Lothar Späth, a popular, hard-driving former chief minister of his native Baden-Württemberg state. As a result, Späth is something of a hero in the East and was recruited for this year's election campaign to be the economics czar of a future conservative government. But Späth's success at JenaOptik came at high cost: \$2 billion in state subsidies and the elimination of some 16,000 jobs. The firm, which suffered a small loss this year after a period of impressive growth, now employs some 7,000 people worldwide, but only 1,100 of them are in the former East Germany.

Politicians, desperate to proclaim light at the end of the unification tunnel, hail these occasional successes. The Social Democratic Party's position paper insists that the overall picture is "not as dire as is portrayed in public." Actually, it may be even worse. The tax base of the old East is declining, as young people continue to leave. Between the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the formal declaration of unification the following year, some 800,000 East Germans—mainly the young—moved to the West. Since then, more than a million others have followed,



*In Alas (1999), Neo Rauch's 1950s-style image of a man futilely beckoning a woman toward an ultramodern future offers a dispiriting comment on the fate of East Germany.*

while fewer than 100,000 Westerners have made the journey the other way. The region has lost a quarter-million jobs in the past four years, mainly because the construction industry has shrunk now that the state's main infrastructure investments in roads, rail, and telecommunications have been completed. And the \$2.6 billion a year that the East receives from EU Structural Funds, which are meant to help lower-income regions, is about to be shifted to the even more deserving cases of Poland, Hungary, the Baltic states, and other new EU members. (Some EU aid to the East will continue because its more rural regions are so poor.) To the anger of Germans living in the East, German corporations have beaten the EU to investment in those other countries. Volkswagen, for example, has pumped more money into the old Czech Skoda car works than it has put into East

Germany. Indeed, Germans are by far the leading foreign investors in Eastern Europe.

Eastern Germans also complain of being patronized by their compatriots in the West, and they've indulged in a nostalgia boom for the old communist-era brands of East German beer, biscuits, confectionery, and washing powder. A similar kind of nostalgia helps explain the

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importance in the East of the Party of Democratic Socialism, the reformed Communists of the past, who have shared power in Berlin with the Social Democrats. But the success of the reformed Communists undermines the power of the Eastern bloc voting to help the main political parties win or lose national elections. In 1990, in response to Chancellor Kohl's unification drive, Easterners gave most of their votes to the Christian Democrats, securing Kohl's landslide. In 1998, feeling disillusioned with Kohl, they switched to give the bulk of their votes to the Social Democrats, and thereby delivered the chancellorship to Gerhard Schröder. Their recent disappointment with Schröder, because of his unfulfilled promise to cut unemployment, and their enthusiasm for Lothar Späth as the Christian Democrats' new economics chief, were a real concern for the Social Democrats during the 2002 campaign.

**T**he difficulties of absorbing the East would have been less worrisome had the traditional vigor of German industry been maintained, but the German economic miracle of the 1950s and 1960s has faltered. In the seven years since 1995, Germany has shared with Italy the bottom rung on the European growth ladder. To an American observer, the wonder is that the German economy works as well as it does, given the extraordinary constraints upon it. First, labor costs are high, and labor unions are so strong that it's difficult to fire workers. Second, the generous welfare system imposes a huge cost on employer and employee alike. Norbert Walter, chief economist of Deutsche Bank, argues that the focus of Germany's leaders on unification derailed prospects of social reform: "I thought unification would have provided a turning point. For those who had looked into the German welfare system and its instability before the Wall came

down, it was obvious it could no longer be sustained. The need for a complete overhaul of the German socioeconomic system is even more urgent now.”

The German skilled worker is the third highest paid in the world, after the Swiss and the Danish. But of a gross income of \$34,400 a year, the average German takes home just \$20,100. Moreover, that worker costs an employer almost exactly \$50,000, when social security and insurance provisions are factored in. It's cheaper, complain officials from the state of Hesse, for a German bank to post executives to London and fly them back twice a week for meetings than to keep them in their native Frankfurt. “We are risk-averse as a society. Germans do not want to give up the social safety nets,” says Walter. “The problem is not the politicians, but the electorate itself, which fears change. And there's another problem, the dominant mindset of the generation of 1968, who are just not gifted with the entrepreneurial and fighting spirit.”

The software giant SAP remains a relatively rare “new economy” success. Germany's best-known companies are still rooted in the traditional technologies of engineering, automobiles, and chemicals, industries where labor unions are particularly strong. The three sectors account for two-thirds of German exports. A breakthrough seemed to have occurred in 1996, when the massive Deutsche Telekom monopoly began selling its shares to the public as the first step in the country's most ambitious privatization drive. Although fewer than one German in 10 owned stocks at the time, millions flocked to buy the Deutsche Telekom shares at an initial-offer price of \$25. The price swiftly soared to \$100—and then fell to \$18. The hesitant German conversion to the Anglo-Saxon entrepreneurial model has been further battered by the collapse of the Neuer Markt, the German equivalent of the NASDAQ, which has lost 90 percent of its value in the past two years—a period in which the main Frankfurt stock exchange has lost 52 percent of its value.

The fall in stock prices undermined Schröder's attempt to tackle the looming demographic threat to pensions by putting a modest two percent of the work force's national insurance payments into individual savings accounts. The idea was attractive while stock prices were rising, but it became far more controversial when prices plunged. Schröder's promised tax cuts ran into two additional problems: the estimated \$20 billion cost of this year's catastrophic floods in central Europe, and what is known as the Stability Pact of the new euro currency. Inspired by a former German government that feared fiscal profligacy in Italy and other EU members, the Stability Pact requires EU states to keep their budget deficits below three percent of their GDP—and imposes fines of one-half percent of GDP if the target is breached. Because recession drove Germany dangerously close to the three percent limit, the pact threatened an annual fine of \$10 billion just as the country faced the flood emergency.

In 2002 the German commitment to Europe began to appear, for the first time, a problem rather than a solution. The fiscal straitjacket of the Stability Pact limited the government's options in dealing with the floods. At the same time, EU rules against state aid to industry, in the name of fair competition, constrained Germany's strategic determination to lift the East to the West's economic standards. The EU's competition watchdogs also challenged the privileges long granted to Germany's powerful regional banks, which have benefited from state-backed finan-

cial guarantees. The Stability Pact posed a subtle threat to Germany's admirably decentralized constitutional system, which grants unusually wide powers to the *Länder*, or state governments. The *Länder* account for roughly half of government spending, and they've helped swell the deficit.

**T**hese difficulties with the EU are throwing into sharper relief the costs, as well as the advantages, of the international structure into which Germany has chosen to fit. The issue first emerged publicly in the 1998 campaign, when candidate Schröder warned that the EU should “not rely forever on the German wallet.” They emerged again in the 2002 campaign, with Christian Democratic candidate Edmund Stoiber warning, in a blunt speech this past May, that EU enlargement must have its limits—and should not include Turkey. “I believe there must be geographical borders for the EU,” he said. “Europe cannot end on the Iraqi-Turkish border. Whoever wants that endangers the cohesion of Europe.”

Stoiber also raised the delicate issue of German nationalism during the 2002 campaign, in a way that jolted the EU enlargement process. He demanded that the Czech Republic retract the Benes Decrees of 1945, under which some three million Czechs of German descent were deported from their homes in the border region of the Sudetenland on the grounds that they were Hitler's fifth column in the 1930s. Stoiber, married to a former Sudeten German, outraged the Czech government and alarmed other Eastern Europeans, particularly the Poles, who wondered whether the issue would put at risk the whole 1945 settlement of Europe's borders.

Because of Germany's history, such issues are intensely sensitive. Margaret Thatcher is not the only European who continued to see modern Germany through the perspective of World War II and the Holocaust. Her prejudices were reinforced by an unusual seminar she conducted at her country residence, Chequers, in March 1990, when she was fighting her doomed delaying action against unification. Six academic experts on Germany and Europe were summoned to join her. A memorandum on the session, subsequently leaked to the British press, listed what were seen as the negative aspects of the German character: “angst, aggressiveness, assertiveness, bullying, egotism, inferiority complex, and sentimentality.”

The list is a caricature. Nearly 60 years after the end of World War II, it should be possible to consider modern Germany apart from Hitler's shadow. But Germans themselves make it difficult to do so, because an official anti-Nazism practically defines the identity of modern Germany. In this election year, which saw the banning of a small but unpleasant neo-Nazi group, the issue of Germany's Nazi past arose repeatedly. The first such occasion was when Stoiber demanded the retraction of the Benes Decrees. The second was when outspoken criticism of Israel greeted its response to the Palestinian suicide bombings. The deputy leader of the Free Democratic Party was driven to stand down for suggesting that, in the Palestinians' place, he too would be provoked into fighting back. It was left to Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, of the Green Party, to say in an op-ed piece that Germany would have to consider whether it would ever be legitimate to criticize Israeli policies without plunging into the troubled waters of anti-Semitism.



*Skinhead political activists get media attention, but the popularity of skinhead attitudes among eastern Germany's young may be a greater concern.*

And then there was the cultural drama over a novel that topped the German bestseller lists throughout the summer, *Death of a Critic*, by the acclaimed writer Martin Walser. The novel, which seems to blur the line between fictional and real characters, deals with the murder by an outraged writer of a well-known Jewish literary critic. The book was condemned by the country's leading newspaper—in whose pages Germany's leading critic, who is Jewish, had made his reputation—as a kind of intellectual Nazism. Walser is perhaps best known outside Germany for a forthright speech, in the context of Schröder's ambition that Germany become “a normal nation,” in which he said that it was time to stop battering Germany with “the bludgeon of Auschwitz.”

**A**nd yet, the recurrent echoes of the past and the reminders of the old Germany no longer seem to fit. The face of modern Germany is to be found less in the dwindling numbers of its beer halls than in its stylish new restaurants, a thriving art scene, the splendid new modern art museum

in Munich, and events such as this July's 14th annual Love Parade in Berlin, which saw half a million young people dance to a deafening techno beat from monumental loudspeakers as 45 floats snaked toward the Tiergarten's Victory Column. The new Germany is a country of immigrants and refugees and not, as in the past, of nationality based purely on German blood. More than 480,000 immigrants have become naturalized citizens since the reform in 1999 of the law restricting citizenship to those of German blood.

**T**he new Germany can be seen as well in a host of experiments that, like Schröder's economic reforms, may seem tentative to non-Germans but are actually changing the habits of the country. Private universities are springing up to cope with the overcrowded mess of the free public institutions. Rather than start early and close at lunchtime, some experimental schools are staying open all day (a change that might increase the relatively modest numbers of women in the work force). Shops are open a little longer, increasing numbers of Germans are working part-time, and the country is catching up with Scandinavia and America in Internet connections. Thanks to mortgages, a nation of apartment dwellers is becoming a nation of homeowners, and the traditionally thrifty Germans now have a higher level of debt than free-spending Americans. With political and media consultants serving all parties, and the novelty of TV debates between the candidates, this year's election felt less German (about sober party platforms) than British or American (about personalities).

In education, the media, and the service sector, and in Germany's image abroad, a cultural revolution is struggling to be born, even as the political system appears deeply resistant to change or reform. The leading contenders in this year's election made clear that neither of the main parties wanted drastic change. In a long interview, Stoiber stressed that "discontinuity is best avoided in a society that faces far-reaching changes like globalization, September 11, enlargement of the EU, and the population trend. If we fail to safeguard prosperity and the welfare network, there will be serious protests." His was a strikingly modest agenda for a candidate campaigning on the dire plight of the German economy and taking as his central issue "that Germany must move up from last place in Europe."

The aftermath of this year's devastating floods in the Eastern city of Dresden suggests that unification is indeed working. Rudi Völler, coach of Germany's national soccer team, was stunned when he asked the players for donations to flood relief and the World Cup finalists raised \$500,000 in three minutes. Public appeals have raised more than \$100 million. "The wave of donations has been overpowering—there's never been anything on this scale before," said Lübke Roewer of the Red Cross. Tens of thousands of volunteers trekked to Dresden. At the city's famed opera house, reported Volker Butzmann, the opera's technical director, "everyone from cloakroom ladies to singers came to help with the clean-up."

The heartwarming response to the floods of Dresden may say more about the new united Germany than do the giant building projects of Berlin, the presence of German troops on international missions, and complaints about the Benes Decrees. Germany may think it's the sick man of Europe, in dire need of reforms it shrinks from making. But Germany feels like one nation again. And that, friends and critics alike might agree, is a genuine transformation. □

# The Puzzle of Leni Riefenstahl

by Steven Bach

Leni Riefenstahl — “Hitler’s filmmaker” — must have hoped that her 100th birthday this past August would bring that final rehabilitation of reputation for which she has worked with awe-inspiring tenacity since the Thousand-Year Reich collapsed and took her career with it. But the birthday changed nothing: Riefenstahl remains the most important female film director in history, and the most controversial. In Germany, she’s a reminder of the unrepentant bad old days — not those of the Reich, for which a simple mea culpa might earn her some measure of the rehabilitation she craves, but of the postwar period, in which confronting issues of guilt and complicity, however imperfectly or painfully, became for Germans a process that was genuinely searching rather than merely defensive.

Riefenstahl’s admirers and detractors alike offer as evidence for their views the two works on which her reputation largely rests: *Triumph of the Will* (1935), her film of the 1934 Nazi Party Congress, and *Olympia* (1938), her two-part film of the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games. Even American writer Susan Sontag, one of Riefenstahl’s harshest critics, allows that the films “may be the two greatest documentaries ever made.” But they are branded with the stigma of Riefenstahl’s sponsor, Adolf Hitler. To her admirers, *Olympia* and *Triumph of the Will* are works of auteurist power, innovation, and beauty; to her critics, they are propaganda for a murderous regime. That they might be both seems self-evident, but no such summary evaluation of them has ever taken hold because Riefenstahl has so successfully shifted the focus of the debate to herself — as a seeker of beauty and a political naif.

Anxious that Riefenstahl might not make it alive to August, opinion makers in the German press began scorning or saluting her in January. They need not have worried. Her energy and lucidity remain phenomenal, and she has now added “oldest active film director ever” to her credits. A week before her birthday, the French-German television channel Arte broadcast the world premiere of her latest film, *Underwater Impressions*, a 45-minute documentary about deep-sea creatures. German critics dismissed it as “a home movie” or “an exquisite slideshow,” but at least it was apolitical.

Riefenstahl is frail but loquacious, and as ready as any starlet to pose for the local TV news team or German *Vogue*, which ran a 23-page spread on her in August. She changes focus as nimbly as any cameraman and defines herself as a woman with five lives. (*Five Lives* just happens to be the title of a recent (2000) coffee-table book in which Riefenstahl celebrates herself as dancer, film star, film director, photographer, and deep-sea diver.) The newsweekly *Die Zeit*

lamented the “broken record” of Riefenstahl’s claims to political naiveté and postwar victimization, even as it contributed to the inches of space her claims receive in print. Broken record it may be, but it helps her sell books, calendars, postcards, and videos, including *Triumph of the Will* (though not in Germany, where the film is legally forbidden). To celebrate her centennial, she’s selling deluxe editions of photographs from her work, personally autographed, for \$20,000 each. Some of the images are, in fact, not hers; the Olympic photographs, long available in book form and exhibited and sold in galleries under her name, are actually the work of her camera crew on *Olympia*. Some are stills from the film, and some are photos they took separately.

Riefenstahl vehemently maintains that *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia* are not propaganda, as any good propagandist would. She assiduously cultivates her image as an artist on the high road to beauty, and she fields even hostile questions with ease, her manner ranging from faux-naive to diva-imperious. On her side she has age — no one wants to be rude to an old lady — and the law. She has brought, and mostly won, some 50 libel suits since postwar courts officially labeled her a mere “Mitläuferin” (sympathizer). She was so labeled despite her Nazi films (*Triumph of the Will* is one of three she made for the party) and her proximity to the center of Third Reich power, most notably to the Führer himself.

Riefenstahl deals shrewdly with this aspect of her résumé. She denies that she was Hitler’s mistress or, as one old canard has it, that she ever danced nude for him at Berchtesgaden. In fact, no one but Riefenstahl raises those concerns anymore, as if she’s aware that, without her ties to the Führer, she might be just another forgotten filmmaker. To younger Germans, who have never seen the mostly silent films about mountain climbing in which she appeared as an actress, and for whom *Triumph of the Will* is still officially prohibited, she’s a relic from an era that still leaves them feeling bewildered or defensive. For them, her connection to Hitler is the only thing that gives her currency and — the young are not alone in this — a measure of glamour.

*Die Welt*, one of Germany’s soberest papers, initiated her centenary year in January by offering a sympathetic forum for the all-too-familiar claims and complaints that inspired *Die Zeit*’s “broken record” headline months later. As August approached, the tabloid press lured readers with racy headlines such as “In Love I Had Bad Luck” and “Her Time with Hitler,” while the militantly feminist magazine *Emma* renewed its charges that she was the victim of “a witch-hunt.” German-speaking television checked in almost nightly from mid-July on. The questions were soft, the challenges perfunctory. Riefenstahl predictably observed that her early enthusiasm for Hitler was shared by millions of her compatriots, and then dismissed the topic so as “not to spoil my birthday.”

**T**he closest any television pundit got to a hard-hitting question was during an hour chat following the broadcast of the new underwater film. Sandra Maischberger, whose usual subjects are politicians and

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*Leni Riefenstahl, shown here on the set of *Triumph of the Will*, resists charges that she was “Hitler’s filmmaker.” She released a new film to mark her 100th birthday in August.*

policymakers, wondered aloud about the claims of political unawareness. If Riefenstahl were really that unaware, she asked, might it not be that she was so egocentric that she didn’t know or care about *anything* outside herself? Riefenstahl eagerly agreed: The trait validated her as the obsessed artist searching for beauty. She then announced her intention to make a film about Vincent van Gogh, whose self-mutilation, she suggested, was part of the same search.

Print journalists, safe from her alert and contentious presence, had an easier time focusing on the Third Reich and themes of ambition, opportunism, and narcissism. Berlin’s liberal *Tageszeitung* declared her “obsessed with herself.” The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* referred to “the autism in which [she] lives.” *Die Zeit* suggested that questions about Hitler annoy her “not because they hint at associations with Nazi fanaticism, but because they interrupt the flow of her limitless narcissism.”

## Germany

The most serious damper on the celebration came in mid-August, a week before Riefenstahl's birthday, when an organization representing European Gypsies charged at a press conference in Cologne that she was guilty of Holocaust denial. The charge is a grave one in Germany and mandates court proceedings. The suit accused Riefenstahl of having lied about the fate of Gypsies she had used as slave-labor extras on *Tiefland* (Lowlands), one of two features she made during the war. (She was writer, producer, and director of *Tiefland*, and she played a Spanish dancer in the film. Production was halted in 1944, and the film, completed in 1953, had its German premiere in 1954.) Riefenstahl had publicly claimed to have seen "all the Gypsies who worked on *Tiefland* after the war. Nothing happened to a single one of them." But the truth is that, of 48 Gypsies who can be documented, 20 died in Nazi extermination camps, most of them in Auschwitz—to which they were transported almost directly from the film set. A spokesman announced that Riefenstahl "regretted that Gypsies had to suffer under National Socialism."

**I**t wasn't much of an apology, and it was accompanied by claims of faulty memory from a woman with seemingly total recall about every lens and film stock she used in every film she ever made. The tepid expression of regret, which distanced Riefenstahl from events, was no surprise, but it got attention and it raised the issue that most of the news media were skirting without ever confronting: Why do Germans still care about Riefenstahl? What is it about her that unsettles them at this late date and arouses such intense partisanship?

The newsweekly *Der Spiegel* sought an answer in art: "The German resistance and anger toward Riefenstahl are explicable, perhaps, in that she discovered and conquered a new and popular art form, perfecting and perverting it at the same time. . . . Through Riefenstahl we have seen how a monument can be made from a body . . . how from a madman with a moustache you can make a charismatic hero. . . . Thanks to her [work] we mistrust ourselves."

A simpler answer, I think, is that Riefenstahl disturbs because she remains the adamant, fierce, glib voice of the "how could we have known?" defense, an argument fewer and fewer Germans, and almost none of the current generation, still feel comfortable making. Perhaps the most intriguing, if bitter, note in the centenary press was *Die Zeit's* suggestion that Riefenstahl might be, in and of herself, the "best conceivable Holocaust memorial. Not some smooth stone you turn to when you feel like it, but this decaying, ungainly monument, forever spewing out the same old reminiscences in unending variations—the monument we really deserve."

At 100, Riefenstahl is indeed her own monument, the diva who won't go away, eternally ready for her close-up. She preceded her underwater film with a "dear viewer" speech on camera, in which she announced that she was a member of Greenpeace and made a plea in behalf of all those fish that, as captives for distant aquariums, die in transport. Her eyes were moist with sincerity, and it was impossible not to wonder, the Gypsies' lawsuit having been announced the same day, whether she ever thought about other transports and other captives.

She didn't say. □



*The German Reichstag and other glamorous buildings reflect only one side of the new Berlin.*

# Still Divided

*by John Hooper*

**T**his past summer, a gallery around the corner from my office in Berlin held an exhibition organized on an unusual theme: how to shrink the city to match the size of its diminished population. One scheme proposed the demolition of all the interior buildings in Berlin's unique wafflelike city blocks, composed of buildings and inter-communicating courtyards, or *Höfe*. Each block would literally be hollowed out, the interior planted with huge gardens. Tongue-in-cheek though it was, the exhibition marked the first time I'd seen a response from Berliners to a question that almost every visitor to the city sooner or later asks: "Where are the people?"

Ever since the Germans made Berlin their capital again, and particularly since the parliament and much of the government moved here three years ago, there has been talk of its being the new "capital of Europe." But Berlin lacks something we Europeans regard as essential to our great capitals: bustle. London and Paris have it. Rome can have too much of it. But Berlin? There is an area of boutiques, cafés, and restaurants round the Hackescher Markt where the sidewalks can get a little congested. And, at night, there is some movement on nearby Oranienburgerstrasse. But on many a weekday you can walk down the famed Unter den Linden, which has the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag at one end and Humboldt

University and the Staatsoper at the other, without once having to step out of anyone's way.

Since the Berlin Wall tumbled in 1989, resurgent Berlin has equipped itself with some wonderful new buildings that express its grand aspirations. Sir Norman Foster put a cap on its somber martial history with the transparent dome he placed over the Reichstag. Daniel Liebeskind's lightning bolt of a Jewish Museum is there to remind everyone where that martial tradition eventually led. In what is intended as the new center of Berlin, the Cold War wasteland of Potsdamer Platz, the Chicago architect Helmut Jahn has created the Mount Fuji-like Sony Center, which rears up as a symbol of emergence and a promise of exciting—maybe explosive—things to come.

What Berlin lacks is not buildings, but people. The population is smaller now than it was in 1920. The city's division during the Cold War stripped it of its industries. Siemens, its biggest employer, fled south to Bavaria after World War II. West Berlin in particular was kept going largely on subsidies, and those dwindled after the collapse of communism. A half-million jobs that depended in one way or another on government handouts have since been lost. At the same time, tens of thousands of West Berliners, deprived of access to the countryside when their part of the city was encircled by a hostile East Germany, moved out to the surrounding region of Brandenburg. Every time my wife and I go away, we leave our dog with a couple who were part of that exodus. For the price of their apartment in the city, they bought a house with some land on the outskirts of a village with a medieval church, cobbled streets, and half-timbered houses.

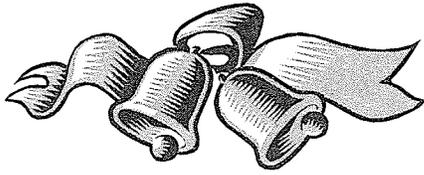
**L**ooked at through a cultural prism, Berlin is the coolest venue in Europe. Looked at another way, it's a depressed postindustrial town. That's why it has racked up an enormous public debt that would shame a Third World dictatorship—some \$40 billion at last count. Its municipal tax revenues have not been sufficient to pay for the cost of building new infrastructure.

It's tempting to see in Berlin's post-reunification predicament a paradigm for the country as a whole. In both cases, the ambition is out of balance with the available resources. Germany, too, aspires to a more prominent role on the international stage, but its economic growth rate since the mid-1990s has been dismal.

Despite—or maybe because of—its warped recent history, Berlin is an unusual and stimulating place to live. One way in which the old West German government tried to keep the city populated was by granting its residents exemption from military service. The result was to make the place catnip for counterculturalists. Left to itself, alternative Berlin might well have dissolved into irrelevance, but then down came the Wall, creating a wholly extraordinary situation, a unique chapter in the history of real estate whose effects can still be read on the face of the city today.

To stop its citizens from fleeing to the West, the communist German Democratic Republic had emptied buildings and cleared land in a vast

>JOHN HOOPER is the Berlin bureau chief of Britain's *Guardian* and *Observer* newspapers. Copyright © 2002 by John Hooper.



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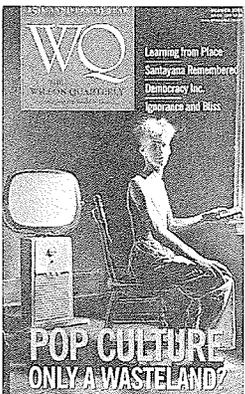
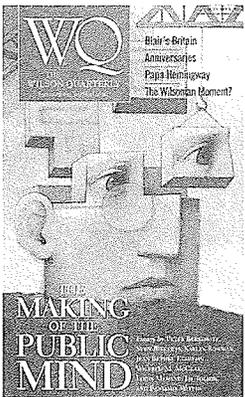
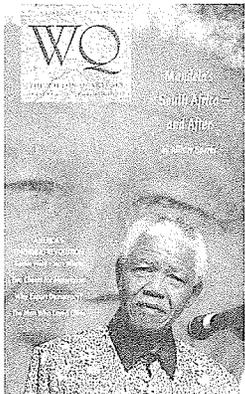
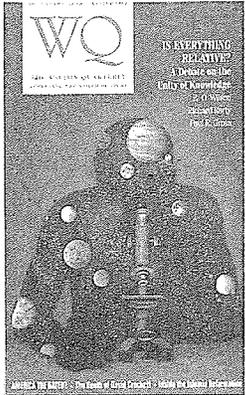
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swath on the eastern side of the Wall. Suddenly, the regime imploded, and while the planners were still busy working out their vision of Berlin as the new capital of Europe, a lot of inventive and enterprising, if unconventional, people occupied the buildings and land the planners were earmarking for more orthodox purposes.

Probably the best-known venture by these latter-day counterculturalists is the Tacheles arts cooperative, which was set up in a huge building on Oranienburgerstrasse that was once a department store. One of the artists told me how for months—if not years—after they occupied the building they were getting free electricity. Such was the chaos that followed the fall of communism that no one could work out where the electricity was coming from or who should be paid.

Access to so much space allowed people to experiment in ways that would never otherwise have been possible. At Tacheles, the basement was used for rehearsals by a performer who works with military flamethrowers. The yard at the back once held a “liberated” MiG jet.

**I**t has taken more than a decade for a measure of normality to return to Berlin. Increasingly, unlicensed clubs, galleries, and arts centers are being asked to come up with health certificates and put in fire doors. Warehouse by disused warehouse, courtyard by derelict courtyard, the alternative community is being driven out of the city center. Even the spectacularly trashed Tacheles has been given some much-needed supporting beams, and the ground floor is now home to a bar that verges on being chic.

Yet Berlin is still a very long way from being a typical, staid, prosperous German city. As long as more people leave than move into the city, rents will remain low and young people in particular will be able to launch experiments that would be impossible in London or Paris. Just one example: Berlin, alone in Germany and, so far as I am aware, alone in Europe, has a thriving subculture of unlicensed restaurants. They operate from crumbling premises with short—sometimes, one suspects, nonexistent—leases, and every few months the proprietors have to pack up their pots and pans and move on. There is—or was—one such eatery in Kreuzberg that kept itself so secret you could only get in by climbing through a window. Payment is usually voluntary and discretionary, probably so that the management can claim they were just entertaining friends if the cops ever drop in.

There's a battle going on for the soul of the city—between shiny new “official” Berlin and shabby old “alternative” Berlin. A lot of people in high places would prefer to wish away the conflict. An informal capital with a cutting-edge feel to it would do more than any number of statesmanlike speeches to allay the fears that inevitably surround reunified Germany. When Bill Clinton came to Berlin during his presidency, the chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, took him out to eat at a noisy restaurant in Prenzlauer Berg, which at that time was the center of countercultural Berlin. It was a remarkable event: the world's most powerful man dining in a building daubed with graffiti while Secret Service agents stood outside among the gleaming black limos watching kids with nose rings munch “space cake” at sidewalk cafes.

It may just be coincidence, but shortly after that singular meal, Prenzlauer Berg began rapidly to be displaced as the focus of alternative Berlin. As a friend once said, the counterculture is like a soap bubble: “Touch it and it’s gone.”

Nothing could illustrate that better than Berlin’s annual Love Parade, the world’s biggest celebration of dance culture and techno music. It began in 1989, the year the Wall fell. A Berlin DJ, Mathias Roingh, aka “Dr. Motte” (Dr. Moth), drove up the Kurfürstendamm with a couple of ill-synchronized cassette players blasting out house music. About 150 of his friends and fans followed, turning the event into an impromptu rave. Ten years later, the turnout for the Love Parade had risen to a million and a half. It had outgrown its original venue and was being staged along the wide boulevard that slices through the Tiergarten park in the center of Berlin. The two cars in the original parade had been replaced by giant floats loaded with solid walls of sound equipment. And Dr. Motte had been joined by some of the world’s best DJs. But the thrust of the original project had already been lost. Big corporations were starting to offer big money to get their names on the floats. Turnout for the parade peaked in 2000 and has declined steeply in the last two years. This summer, some of the dancers on the floats were wearing commercial logos.

THERE’S A BATTLE GOING ON  
FOR THE SOUL OF THE CITY—  
BETWEEN SHINY NEW “OFFICIAL”  
BERLIN AND SHABBY OLD  
“ALTERNATIVE” BERLIN.

**I**n the long run, I suspect, something similar will happen to Berlin: The official city will gradually submerge the alternative one. People did not start talking about Berlin as a future capital of Europe because it had become the capital of Europe’s biggest state, or because it was particularly big or busy or beautiful, but because the continent’s center of gravity was expected to shift eastward. This, it was argued, would have two effects: It would give Germany even greater clout by providing it with a huge new sphere of influence in the formerly communist East and it would mean Berlin was the biggest city in the new geographical middle of Europe. Those processes have not even begun. But they will soon, when the first batch of ex-communist states joins the European Union. And already you can begin to glimpse what that could mean for Berlin.

In the new Kanzleramt (Chancellor’s Office), a startlingly grandiose building shaped rather like a gigantic washing machine, the air still carries a whiff of newly laid carpet. Among the first people to tread upon the carpet this summer were the leaders of Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. There had been appalling floods in central Europe, and Chancellor Schröder called an emergency “summit” to which he also summoned the president of the European Union, Romano Prodi. Nobody questioned Schröder’s right to call the meeting, let alone his right to chair it—and nobody stayed away. □

# The Philosopher of Money

A century ago, the German thinker Georg Simmel (1858–1918) wrote a brilliant and nuanced book on the tradeoffs of life in a market society. If he had called it *Capitalism and Its Discontents*, Simmel might be famous today. As it is, *The Philosophy of Money* sharply illuminates many of the perplexities of capitalist life at the dawn of the 21st century.

by Jerry Z. Muller

Capitalism has rarely been the subject of as much sustained intellectual examination as it was in Germany toward the end of the 19th century. It was a time, unsurprisingly, of rapid economic transformation. Between its unification in 1871 and the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Germany experienced a second industrial revolution, fueled by the rise of the new chemical and electrical industries. Germany's cities expanded; its people left farms for the burgeoning factories and offices; and the first large corporations—including now-familiar names such as Bayer, BASF, and Siemens—arose. In Great Britain, the leading power of the era, industrial production doubled during those years; in Germany it increased six times over.

As the market economy flourished, so too did a debate about its effects on society. What kind of social life does capitalism create? What kinds of human beings does it produce? The debate brought forth many of the thinkers who are now recognized as the founders of modern social science, including the sociologist Max Weber, the historians Gustav Schmoller and Werner Sombart, and the political scientist Robert Michels. Their concerns also animated Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* (1901), the great German novel of the era, and had been anticipated by writers and artists in earlier decades.

The tone of the debate was largely set by the sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies in his book, *Community and Society* (1887). In terms that still resonate today, Tönnies argued that capitalism destroyed “community” and replaced it with “society.” Like the market, society is based on soulless self-interest, the exchange of commodities, and sterile legal contractual relations. “In community people remain essentially united in spite of all separating factors,” Tönnies declared, “whereas in society they are essentially separated in spite of all uniting factors.”



*Blessing or bane? The stupendous array of choices created by capitalism, Simmel recognized, isn't limited to material goods but includes values, beliefs, and relationships.*

Of all the thinkers who wrestled with the changes wrought by capitalism, the one who now seems in many ways the most modern is also one of the least known outside the academic world: the philosopher, sociologist, and cultural analyst Georg Simmel. While Tönnies and others were fixated on the decline of community, Simmel, in *The Philosophy of Money* (1900) and other works, explored the possibilities that capitalism created for the development of individuality. While Marxists were categorizing individuals as bourgeois or proletarian, Simmel called attention to their roles as consumers. While Weber and the French sociologist Émile Durkheim regarded human beings in modern societies chiefly in terms of their membership in a class or occupational group, Simmel saw them as individuals whose identities and morals were shaped by the multiple cultural and social circles to which they belonged. Yet even as he cautiously embraced the promise and complexity of life in capitalist society, Simmel felt a certain ambivalence—an ambivalence that only makes his ideas seem all the more modern.

Simmel was born into a family of Jewish merchants and manufacturers in Berlin in 1858, a time when the city was embarking on its rapid growth into a European metropolis. Little more than a decade later it would become the capital of a newly unified Germany; within four decades its population would swell from half a million to four million. Yet if Simmel was at the center of the whirlwind, he also acquired something of the classic outsider's perspective. Though raised as a Protestant by parents who had converted to Christianity, he was still seen by others—and to some degree saw himself—as Jewish, a status that was uncomfort-

able at best in 19th-century Europe. And both of Simmel's parents died, a few years apart, while he was still a boy.

Simmel attended the University of Berlin, where he earned a doctorate in philosophy in 1881, and after the death of his wealthy guardian left him financially independent, he was able to stay on to write and teach at the university without a regular salary. For all his acknowledged brilliance, and despite the efforts of Weber and other prominent friends, Simmel was not able to win a full professorship until he was 56 years old, and then only at the provincial University

of Strasbourg. Anti-Semitism is undoubtedly part of the explanation. ("I don't know whether Simmel is baptized . . . but he is an Israelite through and through, in his external appearance, his bearing, and his manner of thinking," wrote one Berlin scholar in a confidential assess-

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ment intended to torpedo his chances for a professorship.)

Yet Georg Simmel was hardly an isolated, brooding figure. With some 15 books to his credit by the end of his career, as well as innumerable shorter works, and a reputation as a scintillating lecturer, he was known throughout Europe. Among his friends he numbered academics, poets (including Rilke), artists (including Rodin), and the religious thinker Martin Buber. His wife, Gertrud Kinel, was an artist and novelist, and their home a cultural hub. Through his students, he came into contact with the social and political movements of the day: socialism, feminism, vegetarianism, the youth movement (which rejected bourgeois propriety in a quest for authenticity), and Protestant, Jewish, and pagan movements of religious renewal. It's not surprising that the theme of multiple, and sometimes conflicting, options was to be central to his writing.

Simmel's subjects were multiple as well, which further explains his inability to secure a regular faculty post. He was an unorthodox academic, with little respect for the boundaries of disciplines. He wrote on an extraordinary range of subjects, including Rembrandt and Nietzsche, the psychology of fashion, the aesthetics of ruins, the psychology of the sexes, and the nature of religion. Weber declared that nearly every one of his friend's works "abounds in important new theoretical ideas and the most subtle observations. . . . Not only the valid findings, but even the false ones, contain a wealth of stimulation for one's own further thought."

*The Philosophy of Money* began as an 1889 lecture and evolved into a volume of more than 500 pages, an amalgam of history, economics, sociology, social psychology, and cultural commentary. Simmel set out to explore the effects on the mind and the spirit of living in a capitalist economy, an economy in which more and more areas of life could be measured in money.

>JERRY Z. MULLER is a professor of history at the Catholic University of America. This essay is drawn from his new book, *The Mind and the Market: Capitalism in Modern European Thought*. Copyright © 2002 by Jerry Z. Muller. Published by arrangement with Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.

A money economy creates a mindset that is increasingly abstract, Simmel argued, because the means of exchange become ever more abstract. Exchange begins as barter, the giving of one tangible thing for another. Then, in an early stage of the money economy, the means of exchange themselves—gold, silver, or other precious metals—have intrinsic value. In an advanced stage, money consists of pieces of metal or paper, the value of which is ultimately guaranteed by the power of the state. A mark is worth a mark, or a dollar a dollar, because the issuing government says so. With the development of credit, money becomes still more abstract—a bookkeeping notation. Today money can be as intangible as the flickering symbols on a computer screen. Through constant exposure to an abstract means of exchange, Simmel believed, individuals become habituated to thinking about the world itself in increasingly abstract terms.

They also become more calculating and more accustomed to weighing

*“I know that I shall die without spiritual heirs (and this is good). The estate I leave is like cash distributed among many heirs, each of whom puts his share to use in some trade that is compatible with his nature but which can no longer be recognized as coming from that estate.”*  
—Georg Simmel



a variety of factors in making decisions. When one is dependent on the market for almost everything—from food to entertainment to medicine—decisions about how to live become decisions about what to buy and how much of one thing to trade for another. Because each of these choices requires calculations and tradeoffs—“If I pay more for item  $x$ , I’ll have less left over for item  $y$ ”—people get used to thinking in numerical terms, and this manner of thought spills over into a growing number of personal decisions. Life becomes more calculated, less impulsive and emotional.

For Simmel, life in a modern money economy is characterized by ever greater distances between means and ends. In primitive conditions, we eat by picking the fruit from a tree or by bartering. In a modern capitalist economy, we buy food. For that we need money, which we acquire by working in an occupation. To become established in an occupation requires many steps, beginning with an education, which itself involves years of planning and calculation. So between the desire to eat and the satisfaction of that desire

we find interposed a longer and longer series of means. Intellect, which weighs the means, comes to play an ever larger role in the life of a money-based society. Minds ever more focused on the weighing of means, Simmel believed, become generally more tolerant and conciliatory precisely because their concern with means makes them indifferent to the ultimate ends others may set for themselves.

At times, Simmel echoed the complaints of the cultural pessimists and critics of capitalism. But at his most creative he upended their assumptions. While many decried the competition that is central to capitalism, for example, Simmel pointed out its integrative effects. He observed that capitalist competition doesn't just involve those who compete; it's a struggle for the affection (or money) of a third party. In order to succeed, the competitor must discover the wishes of that third party. "Antagonistic tension with his competitor sharpens the businessman's sensitivity to the tendencies of the public, even to the point of clairvoyance, regarding future changes in the public's tastes, fashions, interests—not only the businessman's, but also the journalist's, artist's, bookseller's, parliamentarian's." Often, competition "achieves what usually only love can do: the divination of the innermost wishes of the other, even before he himself becomes aware of them."

The competition for customers and consumers has a highly democratic aspect as well: "Modern competition is often described as the fight of all against all, but at the same time it is the fight of all for all." Competition forms "a web of a thousand social threads: through concentrating the consciousness on the will and feeling and thinking of fellowmen, through the adaptation of producers to consumers, through the discovery of ever more refined possibilities of gaining their favor and patronage."

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Whereas Thomas Carlyle—and, after him, Marx and Engels—had scorned the "cash nexus" linking men under capitalism, Simmel believed that there are positive consequences to the links established by money in modern society. He reminded his readers that money allows individuals to cooperate who would otherwise have nothing to do

with one another. The shareholders of a modern corporation have no common goal other than the making of profit; they work together without sharing all-encompassing goals. So too, Simmel argued, do people who contribute to charities that attract contributors from different religious denominations; donating money for a limited but shared purpose, such as helping the poor, makes it possible to bypass theological differences.

He saw the limited liability corporation as a model for many characteristic forms of association in an advanced capitalist society, where individu-

als cooperate for common but limited purposes. Unlike older social forms such as the medieval guild—an all-encompassing “living community”—modern life is based upon loose, temporary associations, established to pursue specific economic, cultural, or political interests. In contrast to these older groupings, modern associations allow one to participate without being absorbed. They demand only a small part of the individual, sometimes nothing more than the payment of annual dues. They allow people to become involved in a greater range of activities than would otherwise be possible, and to do so without surrendering all their time, income, or identity to any one community. Money, Simmel argued, “establishes incomparably more connections among people than ever existed in the days of the feudal associations so beloved by romantics.” The eclipse of “community” was no cause for nostalgic lament.

**S**immel was particularly interested in how a developed money economy can create both new forms of individuality and conflicts *within* the individual. He took as an example the emerging feminist movement and argued that the cultural dynamics of capitalist development best explained the rise of demands for women’s rights to property, higher education, professional equality, and political participation. Market developments, such as the introduction of new technologies that made housework less time-consuming, left middle-class women with time

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and energy they could no longer fruitfully use in the home. But even as the traditionally female domestic realm was being diminished, the public arena remained closed to women. The resultant sense of frustration and wasted potential accounted for the women’s movement, as women demanded entry into fields once reserved for men. Although women would be forced in the short run to compete according to a set of rules made by and for men, Simmel predicted their entry into the workplace, commerce, and culture would eventually transform each of these realms.

Paradoxically, Simmel noted, women were developing a greater consciousness of themselves as women at precisely the time they were becoming more like men. In traditional societies, the social roles of middle-class women and men were very distinct. Because women had little opportunity to associate with other women outside the home, they identified most strongly with the family. The very notion of identifying *as women* was a product of capitalist affluence. With fewer responsibilities at home, middle-class women had much more opportunity to meet, to develop an awareness of themselves as women, and to shape collective goals of female emancipation.

Simmel was intrigued by the strained relations between the women's movement and the labor movement in Germany, and he believed the problem could be explained by the different positions in which middle-class and working-class women now found themselves. Both classes shared a common experience: "The sociological isolation of the woman, the consequence of her absorption

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in the home, is being superseded in both classes by her separation from the home." But it was economic need that drove working-class women out of the home and into the factory, and the exhausting work took a physical and psychological toll. Many longed for more time to devote to their roles as wives and mothers. For middle-class women, by contrast, the

move into the workplace promised greater personal fulfillment.

More significantly, both classes of women experienced a tension born of their having two identities: They were, at once, members of the traditional family and "women" with new common interests in the public realm. Simmel viewed that sort of tension—the internal conflict of moral demands that arises from the complexity of social membership—as an essential characteristic of modern society. It was a mistake, he thought, to assume that individuals face a clear hierarchy of moral demands at any given time. Because they belong to a number of social circles, each with its own demands, they live in a state of continual internal conflict. Indeed, that conflict is intrinsic to the modern personality.

It is the multiplicity of each person's social and cultural circles that fosters individuality, Simmel asserted. Instead of having a single identity defined by membership in a guild, for example, individuals in a modern capitalist economy have many sources of belonging—familial roles, jobs, recreational roles, political and religious affiliations—no single one of which determines personality:

Compared to earlier circumstances, the modern, more independent personality . . . is prone to a certain solitariness, increasingly doing without those all-encompassing and familiar attachments which offer both limitation and support. But it is compensated for this by the creation of ever more circles and associations that provide support for every interest and inclination. Though the individual is more isolated than ever, and the totality of his being lacks the support provided by more primitive forms of society, he finds support for the various elements of his life in more specialized groups. . . . Someone may belong to various professional associations at the same time as he belongs to a scientific society, is a reserve officer, plays a role in a civic association, and in addition has a social life which brings him into contact with a diverse social strata.

Simmel viewed money's effects on human life as an example—perhaps the quintessential example—of a larger truth about the relationship between human beings and the things they create. Objects and practices created to fulfill immediate human needs become institutionalized and take on a life of their own, both enriching and constraining those who come after. The creations that express the human sense of transcendence become religion; those devised to control nature become technology. Over time, efforts are made to develop and perfect these cultural creations. Each becomes more ramified, a separate cultural “world,” the understanding and mastery of which may require a human lifetime. Science is such a world. In fact, biology, physics, chemistry, and other sciences have each become worlds of their own, and these, in turn, have been broken into subworlds. Mastering any one of them, or just keeping up, can absorb all of one's time. Alongside the worlds of science are worlds of religion, of the various arts, of sports, of the military, and so forth. Each has only the most tenuous connection to the others. Researchers on the cutting edge of two fields of medicine (or aficionados of two different sports, or devotees of two genres of music) may each have knowledge so specialized that they can barely explain themselves to each other. The notion that we all partake in some unified culture becomes absurd.

**O**n the positive side, Simmel pointed out, having a variety of cultural worlds allows for the flowering of individuality. By assimilating some portion of each world, we develop and enrich ourselves. But these possibilities are not without cost. For Simmel, “the tragedy of culture” was the frustration that comes of recognizing how much there is that we would like to know but will never have the time or mental energy to master. The intellectually sensitive are frustrated by the dawning recognition that they will never have enough time and energy to read all the books, hear all the concerts, acquire all the knowledge, or learn the various skills that might enhance their lives.

On the one hand, then, capitalism increases frustration. On the other hand, its multitude of cultural realms develops individuality by allowing us to select the pursuits that best suit us. The diverse culture that accompanies the growth of capitalism thus encourages distinctiveness and personal refinement.

Although capitalism promises to foster individuality, as Simmel recognized, a specter haunts the promise: The number of possibilities is forever increasing, and yet there may be no compelling reason for choosing one over another. That may lead to paralysis, or a desperate attempt to put other pos-

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sibilities out of mind. The proliferation of things to buy drives some to worship commodities and surrender their lives to the pursuit of an “unprecedented practical materialism.”

Simmel recognized that the freedom of the liberal capitalist state is not a good in and of itself. Freedom without a sense of direction and purpose breeds boredom and restlessness. Those who define themselves only by freedom from restraint often fall victim to the illusion that vigor, stability, and purpose can be obtained through material goods. What they find instead is a never-ending round of joyless consumption.

**M**oney may have no purpose of its own, but Simmel noted that it does have uses we tend not to appreciate. It's a commonplace that there are some things money can't buy. Simmel had a more striking insight: Having money can actually be more satisfying than having the things money can buy. That's because, in addition to possessing the value of objects for which it can be exchanged, money has a “surplus value.” A person with money enjoys the added satisfaction of having a *choice* of things to buy: “The value of a given amount of money is equal to the value of any object for which it might be exchanged plus the value of free choice between innumerable other objects.”

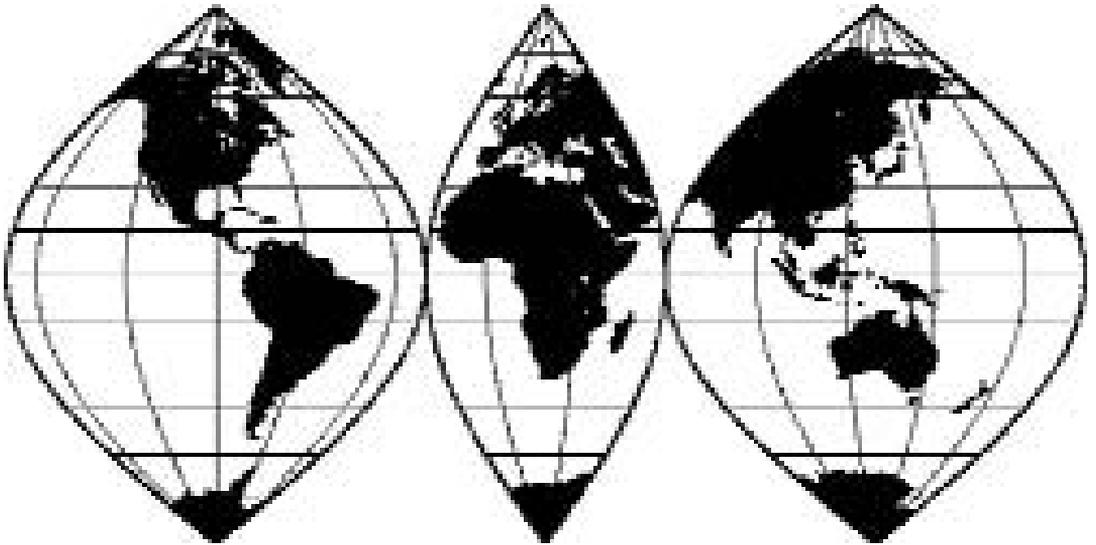
Simmel had another interesting insight: Money may be only a tool, but a tool may do more than satisfy an existing end. It may also conjure new purposes for which it can be used. As Simmel put it, “Once a purpose has engendered the idea of means, the means may produce the conception of a purpose.”

Human psychology is such that what begins as a means may also become an end in itself, since time and again the emotional value we place on a goal is transferred to the means we use to obtain it. We buy a car in order to travel. But some of us become so fascinated by cars that we devote endless hours to scouting out new cars, or polishing and accessorizing the one in the driveway, instead of going to our original destination. Or we feel a religious urge, but get so caught up in the dogma, rituals, or inner controversies of our church that we rarely have occasion for religious action. This transformation of means into ends occurs to some extent in every realm of human life. But since money is the ultimate means in a market economy, it is all too easy for people to get caught up in its pursuit and lose sight of other purposes.

Simmel himself was ambivalent about capitalist society. He could never quite shake off the assumption that society should cohere and provide individuals with an ultimate purpose. Like many other European intellectuals, he mistakenly welcomed the coming of the war in 1914, believing that it would provide a common purpose and relief from a world of un compelling choices. His great accomplishment was to identify one of the hallmarks of an advanced capitalist economy: its creation of new cultural and social spheres that offer unprecedented opportunities for the development of individuality. Those of us who now take for granted a life of manifold possibility in a market economy might well profit from reflecting as Simmel did on its preconditions—and its inherent perils. □

# TWO FACES OF GLOBALIZATION

It was said at the time that the era of globalization came to an end on September 11, 2001. But the process seems only to have quickened its pace, as last year's events spurred a renewed emphasis on the need to promote free markets and democracy around the world. Now, Amy Chua warns here, it's time to ask whether the current formula for free-market democracy is too volatile for many countries. She sees a worldwide pattern of backlash and ethnic conflict touched off by the simultaneous introduction of "pure" markets and democracy. Yet on the cultural front, Tyler Cowen contends, globalization is yielding unrecognized benefits. Far from homogenizing the world's cultures, it is energizing and diversifying them.



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# A World on the Edge

by Amy Chua

One beautiful blue morning in September 1994, I received a call from my mother in California. In a hushed voice, she told me that my Aunt Leona, my father's twin sister, had been murdered in her home in the Philippines, her throat slit by her chauffeur. My mother broke the news to me in our native Hokkien Chinese dialect. But "murder" she said in English, as if to wall off the act from the family through language.

The murder of a relative is horrible for anyone, anywhere. My father's grief was impenetrable; to this day, he has not broken his silence on the subject. For the rest of the family, though, there was an added element of disgrace. For the Chinese, luck is a moral attribute, and a lucky person would never be murdered. Like having a birth defect, or marrying a Filipino, being murdered is shameful.

My three younger sisters and I were very fond of my Aunt Leona, who was petite and quirky and had never married. Like many wealthy Filipino Chinese, she had all kinds of bank accounts in Honolulu, San Francisco, and Chicago. She visited us in the United States regularly. She and my father—Leona and Leon—were close, as only twins can be. Having no children of her own, she doted on her nieces and showered us with trinkets. As we grew older, the trinkets became treasures. On my 10th birthday she gave me 10 small diamonds, wrapped up in toilet paper. My aunt loved diamonds and bought them up by the dozen, concealing them in empty Elizabeth Arden face moisturizer jars, some right on her bathroom shelf. She liked accumulating things. When we ate at McDonald's, she stuffed her Gucci purse with free ketchups.

According to the police report, my Aunt Leona, "a 58-year-old single woman," was killed in her living room with "a butcher's knife" at approximately 8 P.M. on September 12, 1994. Two of her maids were questioned, and they confessed that Nilo Abique, my aunt's chauffeur, had planned and executed the murder with their knowledge and assistance. "A few hours before the actual killing, respondent [Abique] was seen sharpening the knife allegedly used in the crime." After the killing, "respondent joined the two witnesses and told them that their employer was dead. At that time, he was wearing a pair of bloodied white gloves and was still holding a knife, also with traces of blood." But Abique, the report went on to say, had "disappeared," with the warrant for his arrest outstanding. The two maids were released.

Meanwhile, my relatives arranged a private funeral for my aunt in the prestigious Chinese cemetery in Manila where many of my ancestors are buried



*Looting was the least of the injuries suffered by Indonesia's ethnic Chinese minority in the riots that followed the 1998 collapse of the Suharto regime. Nominally democratic Indonesia is still reeling from the subsequent capital flight of \$40-to-\$100 billion.*

in a great, white-marble family tomb. According to the feng shui monks who were consulted, my aunt could not be buried with the rest of the family because of the violent nature of her death, lest more bad luck strike her surviving kin. So she was placed in her own smaller vault, next to—but not touching—the main family tomb.

After the funeral, I asked one of my uncles whether there had been any further developments in the murder investigation. He replied tersely that the killer had not been found. His wife explained that the Manila police had essentially closed the case.

I could not understand my relatives' almost indifferent attitude. Why were they not more shocked that my aunt had been killed in cold blood, by people who worked for her, lived with her, saw her every day? Why were they not outraged that the maids had been released? When I pressed my uncle, he was short with me. "That's the way things are here," he said. "This is the Philippines—not America."

My uncle was not simply being callous. As it turns out, my aunt's death was part of a common pattern. Hundreds of Chinese in the Philippines are kidnapped every year, almost invariably by ethnic Filipinos. Many victims, often children, are brutally murdered, even after ransom is paid. Other Chinese, like my aunt, are killed without a kidnapping, usually in connection with a robbery. Nor is it unusual that my aunt's killer was never apprehended. The police in the Philippines, all poor ethnic Filipinos themselves, are notoriously unmotivated in these cases. When asked by a Western journalist why it is so frequently the Chinese who are targeted, one grinning Filipino policeman explained that it was because "they have more money."

My family is part of the Philippines' tiny but entrepreneurial and economically powerful Chinese minority. Although they constitute just one percent of the population, Chinese Filipinos control as much as 60 percent of the private economy, including the country's four major airlines and almost all of the country's banks, hotels, shopping malls, and big conglomerates. My own family in Manila runs a plastics conglomerate. Unlike taipans Lucio Tan, Henry Sy, or John Gokongwei, my relatives are only "third-tier" Chinese tycoons. Still, they own swaths of prime real estate and several vacation homes. They also have safe deposit boxes full of gold bars, each one roughly the size of a Snickers bar, but strangely heavy. I myself have such a gold bar. My Aunt Leona express-mailed it to me as a law school graduation present a few years before she died.

Since my aunt's murder, one childhood memory keeps haunting me. I was eight, staying at my family's splendid hacienda-style house in Manila. It was before dawn, still dark. Wide awake, I decided to get a drink from the kitchen. I must have gone down an extra flight of stairs, because I literally stumbled onto six male bodies. I had found the male servants' quarters, where my family's houseboys, gardeners, and chauffeurs—I sometimes imagine that Nilo Abique was among them—were sleeping on mats on a dirt floor. The place stank of sweat and urine. I was horrified.

Later that day I mentioned the incident to my Aunt Leona, who laughed affectionately and explained that the servants—there were perhaps 20 living on the premises, all ethnic Filipinos—were fortunate to be working for our family. If not for their positions, they would be living among rats and open sewers, without a roof over their heads. A Filipino maid then walked in; I remember that she had a bowl of food for my aunt's Pekingese. My aunt took the bowl but kept talking as if the maid were not there. The Filipinos, she continued—in Chinese, but plainly not caring whether the maid understood or not—were lazy and unintelligent and didn't really want to do much. If they didn't like working for us, they were free to leave at any time. After all, my aunt said, they were employees, not slaves.

Nearly two-thirds of the roughly 80 million ethnic Filipinos in the Philippines live on less than \$2 a day. Forty percent spend their entire lives in temporary shelters. Seventy percent of all rural Filipinos own no land. Almost a third have no access to sanitation. But that's not the worst of it. Poverty alone never is. Poverty by itself does not make people kill. To poverty must be added indignity, hopelessness, and grievance. In the Philippines, millions of Filipinos work for Chinese; almost no Chinese work for Filipinos. The Chinese dominate industry and commerce at every level of society. Global markets intensify this dominance: When foreign investors do business in the Philippines, they deal almost exclusively with Chinese. Apart from a handful of corrupt politicians and a few aristocratic Spanish mestizo families, all of the Philippines' billionaires are of Chinese descent. By contrast, all menial jobs in the Philippines are filled by Filipinos. All peasants are

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Filipinos. All domestic servants and squatters are Filipinos. My relatives live literally walled off from the Filipino masses, in a posh, all-Chinese residential enclave, on streets named Harvard, Yale, Stanford, and Princeton. The entry points are guarded by armed private-security forces.

Each time I think of Nilo Abique—he was six-feet-two and my aunt was four-feet-eleven—I find myself welling up with a hatred and revulsion so intense it is actually consoling. But over time I have also had glimpses of how the vast majority of Filipinos, especially someone like Abique, must see the Chinese: as exploiters, foreign intruders, their wealth inexplicable, their superiority intolerable. I will never forget the entry in the police report for Abique’s “motive for murder.” The motive given was not robbery, despite the jewels and money the chauffeur was said to have taken. Instead, for motive, there was just one word—“revenge.”

My aunt’s killing was just a pinprick in a world more violent than most of us have ever imagined. In America, we read about acts of mass slaughter and savagery—at first in faraway places, now coming closer home. We do not understand what connects these acts. Nor do we understand the role we have played in bringing them about.

**I**n the Serbian concentration camps of the early 1990s, the women prisoners were raped over and over, many times a day, often with broken bottles, often together with their daughters. The men, if they were lucky, were beaten to death as their Serbian guards sang national anthems; if they were not so fortunate, they were castrated or, at gunpoint, forced to castrate their fellow prisoners, sometimes with their own teeth. In all, thousands were tortured and executed.

In Rwanda in 1994, ordinary Hutus killed 800,000 Tutsis over a period of three months, typically hacking them to death with machetes. Bill Berkeley writes in *The Graves Are Not Yet Full* (2001) that young children would come home to find their mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers on the living room floor, in piles of severed heads and limbs.

In Jakarta in 1998, screaming Indonesian mobs torched, smashed, and looted hundreds of Chinese shops and homes, leaving more than 2,000 dead. One who survived—a 14-year-old Chinese girl—later committed suicide by taking rat poison. She had been gang-raped and genitally mutilated in front of her parents.

In Israel in 1998, a suicide bomber driving a car packed with explosives rammed into a school bus filled with 34 Jewish children between the ages of six and eight. Over the next few years such incidents intensified, becoming daily occurrences and a powerful collective expression of Palestinian hatred. “We hate you,” a senior aide to Yasir Arafat elaborated in April 2002. “The air hates you, the land hates you, the trees hate you, there is no purpose in your staying on this land.”

On September 11, 2001, Middle Eastern terrorists hijacked four American airliners, intent on using them as piloted missiles. They destroyed the World Trade Center and the southwest side of the Pentagon, crushing or incinerating more than 3,000 people. “Americans, think! Why you are hated

all over the world,” proclaimed a banner held by Arab demonstrators.

There is a connection among these episodes apart from their violence. It lies in the relationship—increasingly, the explosive collision—among the three most powerful forces operating in the world today: markets, democracy, and ethnic hatred. There exists today a phenomenon—pervasive outside the West yet rarely acknowledged, indeed often viewed as taboo—that turns free-market democracy into an engine of ethnic conflagration. I’m speaking of the phenomenon of market-dominant minorities: ethnic minorities who, for widely varying reasons, tend under market conditions to dominate economically, often to a startling extent, the “indigenous” majorities around them.

Market-dominant minorities can be found in every corner of the world. The Chinese are a market-dominant minority not just in the Philippines but throughout Southeast Asia. In 1998 Chinese Indonesians, only three percent of the population, controlled roughly 70 percent of Indonesia’s private economy, including all of the country’s largest conglomerates. In Myanmar (formerly

Burma), entrepreneurial Chinese recently have taken over the economies of Mandalay and Yangon. Whites are a market-dominant minority in South Africa—and, in a more complicated sense, in Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, and much of Latin America. Lebanese are a market-dominant minority in West Africa, as are the Ibo in Nigeria.

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Croats were a market-dominant minority in the former Yugoslavia, as Jews almost certainly are in postcommunist Russia.

Market-dominant minorities are the Achilles’ heel of free-market democracy. In societies with such a minority, markets and democracy favor not just different people or different classes but different ethnic groups. Markets concentrate wealth, often spectacular wealth, in the hands of the market-dominant minority, while democracy increases the political power of the impoverished majority. In these circumstances, the pursuit of free-market democracy becomes an engine of potentially catastrophic ethnonationalism, pitting a frustrated “indigenous” majority, easily aroused by opportunistic, vote-seeking politicians, against a resented, wealthy ethnic minority. This conflict is playing out in country after country today, from Indonesia to Sierra Leone, from Zimbabwe to Venezuela, from Russia to the Middle East.

Since September 11, the conflict has been brought home to the United States. Americans are not an ethnic minority (although we are a national-origin minority, a close cousin). Nor is there democracy at the global level. Nevertheless, Americans today are everywhere perceived as the world’s market-dominant minority, wielding outrageously disproportionate economic power relative to our numbers. As a result, we have become the object of the same kind of mass popular resentment that afflicts the Chinese of Southeast Asia, the whites of Zimbabwe, and other groups.



*Open ethnic conflict is rare in “mixed blood” Latin America. But light-skinned minorities dominate many economies, and new leaders are rallying the discontented around their Indian roots.*

Global anti-Americanism has many causes. One of them, ironically, is the global spread of free markets and democracy. Throughout the world, global markets are bitterly perceived as reinforcing American wealth and dominance. At the same time, global populist and democratic movements give strength, legitimacy, and voice to the impoverished, frustrated, excluded masses of the world—in other words, precisely the people most susceptible to anti-American demagoguery. In more non-Western countries than Americans would care to admit, free and fair elections would bring to power antimarket, anti-American leaders. For the past 20 years, Americans have been grandly promoting both marketization and democratization throughout the world. In the process, we have directed at ourselves what the Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk calls “the anger of the damned.”

**T**he relationship between free-market democracy and ethnic violence around the world is inextricably bound up with globalization. But the phenomenon of market-dominant minorities introduces complications that have escaped the view of both globalization’s enthusiasts and its critics.

To a great extent, globalization consists of, and is fueled by, the unprecedented worldwide spread of markets and democracy. For more than two decades now, the American government, along with American consultants and business interests, has been vigorously promoting free-market democracy throughout the developing and postcommunist worlds. Both directly and through powerful international institutions such as the World Bank,

International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization (WTO), it has helped bring capitalism and democratic elections to literally billions of people. At the same time, American multinationals, foundations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have touched every corner of the world, bringing with them ballot boxes and Burger Kings, hip-hop and Hollywood, banking codes and American-drafted constitutions.

**T**he prevailing view among globalization's supporters is that markets and democracy are a kind of universal elixir for the multiple ills of underdevelopment. Market capitalism is the most efficient economic system the world has ever known. Democracy is the fairest political system the world has ever known, and the one most respectful of individual liberty. Together, markets and democracy will gradually transform the world into a community of prosperous, war-shunning nations, and individuals into liberal, civic-minded citizens and consumers. Ethnic hatred, religious zealotry, and other "backward" aspects of underdevelopment will be swept away.

Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times* has been a brilliant proponent of this dominant view. In his best-selling book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (1999), he reproduced a Merrill Lynch ad that said "the spread of free markets and democracy around the world is permitting more people everywhere to turn their aspirations into achievements," erasing "not just geographical borders but also human ones." Globalization, Friedman elaborated, "tends to turn all friends and enemies into 'competitors.'" Friedman also proposed his "Golden Arches Theory of Conflict Prevention," which claims that "no two countries that both have McDonald's have ever fought a war against each other."

(Unfortunately, notes Yale University historian John Lewis Gaddis, "the United States and its NATO allies chose just that inauspicious moment to begin bombing Belgrade, where there was an embarrassing number of golden arches.")

For globalization's enthusiasts, the cure for group hatred and ethnic violence around the world is straightforward: more markets and more democracy.

Thus, after the September 11 attacks, Friedman published an op-ed piece pointing to India and Bangladesh as good "role models" for the Middle East and citing their experience as a solution to the challenges of terrorism and militant Islam: "Hello? Hello? There's a message here. It's democracy, stupid!" — ". . . multiethnic, pluralistic, free-market democracy."

I believe, rather, that the global spread of markets and democracy is a principal aggravating cause of group hatred and ethnic violence throughout

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the non-Western world. In the numerous societies around the world that have a market-dominant minority, markets and democracy are not mutually reinforcing. Because markets and democracy benefit different ethnic groups in such societies, the pursuit of free-market democracy produces highly unstable and combustible conditions. Markets concentrate enormous wealth in the hands of an “outsider” minority, thereby fomenting ethnic envy and hatred among often chronically poor majorities. In absolute terms, the majority may or may not be better off—a dispute that much of the globalization debate revolves around—but any sense of improvement is overwhelmed by its continuing poverty and the hated minority’s extraordinary economic success. More humiliating still, market-dominant minorities, along with

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their foreign-investor partners, invariably come to control the crown jewels of the economy, often symbolic of the nation’s patrimony and identity—oil in Russia and Venezuela, diamonds in South Africa, silver and tin in Bolivia, jade, teak, and rubies in Myanmar.

Introducing democracy under such circumstances does not transform voters into open-minded co-citizens in a national community. Rather, the competition for votes fosters the emergence of demagogues who scapegoat the resented minority and foment active ethnonationalist movements demanding that the country’s wealth and identity be reclaimed by the “true owners of the nation.” Even as America celebrated the global spread of democracy in the 1990s, the world’s new political slogans told of more ominous developments: “Georgia for the Georgians,” “Eritreans out of Ethiopia,” “Kenya for Kenyans,” “Venezuela for Pardos,” “Kazakhstan for Kazakhs,” “Serbia for Serbs,” “Hutu Power,” “Jews out of Russia.” Vadim Tudor, a candidate in Romania’s 2001 presidential election, was not quite so pithy. “I’m Vlad the Impaler,” he declared, and referring to the historically dominant Hungarian minority, he promised, “We will hang them directly by their Hungarian tongue!”

**W**hen free-market democracy is pursued in the presence of a market-dominant minority, the result, almost invariably, is backlash. Typically, it takes one of three forms. The first is a backlash against markets that targets the market-dominant minority’s wealth. The second is an attack against democracy by forces favorable to the market-dominant minority. And the third is violence, sometimes genocidal, directed against the market-dominant minority itself.

Zimbabwe today is a vivid illustration of the first kind of backlash—an ethnically targeted antimarket reaction. For several years now, President Robert Mugabe has encouraged the violent seizure of 10 million acres of white-

owned commercial farmland. As one Zimbabwean explained, “The land belongs to us. The foreigners should not own land here. There is no black Zimbabwean who owns land in England. Why should any European own land here?” Mugabe has been more explicit: “Strike fear in the heart of the white man, our real enemy.” Most of the country’s white “foreigners” are third-generation Zimbabweans. They are just one percent of the population, but they have for generations controlled 70 percent of the country’s best land, largely in the form of highly productive 3,000-acre tobacco and sugar farms.

Watching Zimbabwe’s economy take a free fall as a result of the mass land grab, the United States and United Kingdom, together with dozens of human rights groups, urged President Mugabe to step down and called resoundingly for “free and fair elections.” But the idea that democracy is the answer to Zimbabwe’s problems is breathtakingly naive. Perhaps Mugabe would have lost the 2002 elections in the absence of foul play. But even if that’s so, it’s important to remember that Mugabe himself is a product of democracy. The hero of Zimbabwe’s black liberation movement and a master manipulator of the masses, he swept to victory in the closely monitored elections of 1980 by promising to expropriate “stolen” white land. Repeating that promise has helped him win every election since. Moreover, Mugabe’s land-seizure campaign was another product of the democratic process. It was deftly timed in anticipation of the 2000 and 2002 elections, and deliberately calculated to mobilize popular support for Mugabe’s teetering regime. According to *The Economist*, 95 percent of Zimbabwe’s largely white-owned commercial farms are now earmarked for confiscation without compensation, and many farmers have been ordered off the land.

**I**n the contest between an economically powerful ethnic minority and a numerically powerful impoverished majority, the majority does not always prevail. Rather than a backlash against the market, another possible outcome is a backlash against democracy that favors the market-dominant minority. Examples of this dynamic are extremely common. The world’s most notorious cases of “crony capitalism” have all involved partnerships between a market-dominant ethnic minority and a cooperative autocrat. Ferdinand Marcos’s dictatorship in the Philippines, for example, sheltered and profited from the country’s wealthy Chinese before he was driven from office in 1986. In Kenya, President Daniel arap Moi, who had once warned Africans to “beware of bad Asians,” is sustained by a series of “business arrangements” with a handful of local Indian tycoons. And the bloody tragedy of Sierra Leone’s recent history can be traced in significant part to the regime of President Siaka Stevens, who converted his elective office into a dictatorship during the early 1970s and promptly formed a shadow alliance with five of the country’s Lebanese diamond dealers.

In Sierra Leone, as in many other countries, independence (which came in 1961) had been followed by a series of antimarket measures and policies that took direct aim at market-dominant minorities. People of “European or Asiatic origin,” including the Lebanese, were denied citizenship. Stevens’s approach thus represented a complete about-face—a pattern that’s been repeated in coun-



*Hutu refugees plead for the protection of UN peacekeepers in 1995. Tens of thousands of majority Hutus died in Rwanda's 16-month ethnic conflagration; some 800,000 minority Tutsi were killed.*

try after country. Stevens protected the economically powerful Lebanese, and in exchange, they—with their business networks in Europe, the Soviet Union, and the United States—worked economic wonders, generating enormous profits and kicking back handsome portions to Stevens and other officials. (It is just such webs of preexisting relationships with the outside world that have given economically dominant minorities their extraordinary advantages in the current era of globalization.) Stevens was succeeded by other autocrats, who struck essentially the same deal while also successfully courting foreign investment and aid. In 1989 and 1990, the International Monetary Fund championed a “bold and decisive” free-market reform package that included a phase-out of public subsidies for rice and other commodities. Already living in indescribable poverty, Sierra Leoneans watched the cost of rice nearly double, and many blamed the Lebanese. In any event, the rebel leader Foday Sankoh had little trouble finding recruits for his insurgency. Some 75,000 died in the ensuing chaos.

The third and most ferocious kind of backlash is majority-supported violence aimed at eliminating a market-dominant minority. Two recent examples are the “ethnic cleansing” of Croats in the former Yugoslavia and the mass slaughter of Tutsi in Rwanda. In both cases, sudden, unmediated democratization encouraged the rise of megalomaniacal ethnic demagogues and released long-suppressed hatreds against a disproportionately prosperous ethnic minority.

Of course, markets and democracy were not the only causes of these acts of genocide, but they were neglected factors. In the former Yugoslavia, for example, the Croats, along with the Slovenes, have long enjoyed a strikingly

higher standard of living than the Serbs and other ethnic groups. Croatia and Slovenia are largely Catholic, with geographical proximity and historical links to Western Europe, while the Eastern Orthodox Serbs inhabit the rugged south and lived for centuries under the thumb of the Ottoman Empire. By the 1990s, per capita income in northern Yugoslavia had risen to three times that in the south. The sudden coming of Balkan electoral democracy helped stir ancient enmities and resentments. In Serbia, the demagogue and future “ethnic cleanser” Slobodan Milosevic swept to power in 1990 as supporters declared to hysterical crowds, “We will kill Croats with rusty spoons because it will hurt more!” (In the same year, Franjo Tudjman won a landslide victory in Croatia preaching anti-Serb hatred; the subsequent mass killing of Croatia’s Serbs shows that market-dominant minorities aren’t always the *victims* of persecution.) In a now-famous speech delivered in March 1991—which contains a telling allusion to Croat and Slovene market dominance—Milosevic declared: “If we must fight, then my God we will fight. And I hope they will not be so crazy as to fight against us. Because *if we don’t know how to work well or to do business*, at least we know how to fight well!” (Emphasis added.)

**T**o their credit, critics of globalization have called attention to the grotesque imbalances that free markets produce. In the 1990s, writes Thomas Frank in *One Market under God* (2000), global markets made “the corporation the most powerful institution on earth,” transformed “CEOs as a class into one of the wealthiest elites of all time,” and, from America to Indonesia, “forgot about the poor with a decisiveness we hadn’t seen since the 1920s.” A host of strange bedfellows have joined Frank in his criticism of “the almighty market”: American farmers and factory workers opposed to the North American Free Trade Agreement, environmentalists, the American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Organizations, human rights activists, Third World advocates, and sundry other groups that protested in Seattle, Davos, Genoa, and New York City. Defenders of globalization respond, with some justification, that the world’s poor would be even worse off without global marketization, and recent World Bank studies show that, with some important exceptions, including most of Africa, globalization’s “trickle down” has benefited the poor as well as the rich in developing countries.

More fundamentally, however, Western critics of globalization, like their pro-globalization counterparts, have overlooked the ethnic dimension of market disparities. They tend to see wealth and poverty in terms of class conflict, not ethnic conflict. This perspective might make sense in the advanced Western societies, but the ethnic realities of the developing world are completely different from those of the West. Essentially, the anti-globalization movement asks for one thing: more democracy. At the 2002 World Social Forum in Brazil, Lori Wallach of Public Citizen rejected the label “anti-globalization” and explained that “our movement, really, is globally for democracy, equality, diversity, justice and quality of life.” Wallach has also warned that the WTO must “either bend to the will of the people worldwide or it will break.” Echoing these voices are literally

dozens of NGOs that call for “democratically empowering the poor majorities of the world.” But unless democratization means something more than unrestrained majority rule, calling for democracy in the developing world can be shortsighted and even dangerous. Empowering the Hutu majority in Rwanda did not produce desirable consequences. Nor did empowering the Serbian majority in Serbia.

Critics of globalization are right to demand that more attention be paid to the enormous disparities of wealth created by global markets. But just as it is dangerous to view markets as the panacea for the world’s poverty and strife, so too it is dangerous to see democracy as a panacea. Markets and democracy may well offer the best long-run economic and political hope for developing and postcommunist societies. In the short run, however, they’re part of the problem.

**I**n the West, terms such as “market economy” and “market system” refer to a broad spectrum of economic systems based primarily on private property and competition, with government regulation and redistribution ranging from substantial (as in the United States) to extensive (as in the Scandinavian countries). Yet for the past 20 years the United States has been promoting throughout the non-Western world raw, laissez-faire capitalism—a form of markets that the West abandoned long ago. The procapitalism measures being implemented today outside the West include privatization, the elimination of state subsidies and controls, and free-trade and foreign investment initiatives. As a practical matter they rarely, if ever, include any substantial redistribution measures.

“Democracy,” too, can take many forms. I use the term “democratization” to refer to the political reforms that are actually being promoted in the non-Western world today—the concerted efforts, for example, largely driven by the United States, to implement immediate elections with universal suffrage. It’s striking to note that at no point in history did any Western nation ever implement laissez-faire capitalism and overnight universal suffrage simultaneously—though that’s the precise formula for free-market democracy currently being pressed on developing countries around the world. In the United States, the poor were totally disenfranchised by formal property qualifications in virtually every state for many decades after the Constitution was ratified, and economic barriers to participation remained well into the 20th century.

It is ethnicity, however, that gives the combination of markets and democracy its special combustibility. Ethnic identity is not a static, scientifically determinable status but shifting and highly malleable. In Rwanda, for example, the 14 percent Tutsi minority dominated the Hutu majority economically and politically for four centuries, as a kind of cattle-owning aristocracy. But for most of this period, the lines between Hutus and Tutsi were permeable. The two groups spoke the same language, intermarriage occurred, and successful Hutus could “become Tutsi.” That was no longer true after the Belgians arrived and, steeped in specious theories of racial superiority, issued ethnic identity cards on the basis of nose length and cranial circumference. The resulting sharp ethnic divisions were later exploited by the leaders of Hutu Power.

Along similar lines, all over Latin America today—where it is often said that there are no “ethnic divisions” because everyone has “mixed” blood—large numbers of impoverished Bolivians, Chileans, and Peruvians are suddenly being told that they are Aymaras, Incas, or just *indios*, whatever identity best resonates and mobilizes. These indigenization movements are not necessarily good or bad, but they are potent and contagious.

At the same time, ethnic identity is rarely constructed out of thin air. Subjective perceptions of identity often depend on more “objective” traits assigned to individuals based on, for example, perceived morphological characteristics, language differences, or ancestry. Try telling black and white Zimbabweans that they are only imagining their ethnic differences—that “ethnicity is a social construct”—and they’ll at least agree on one thing: You’re not being helpful. Much more concretely relevant is the reality that there is roughly zero intermarriage between blacks and whites in Zimbabwe, just as there is virtually no intermarriage between Chinese and Malays in Malaysia or between Arabs and Israelis in the Middle East. That ethnicity can be at once an artifact of human imagination and rooted in the darkest recesses of history—fluid and manipulable, yet important enough to kill for—is what makes ethnic conflict so terrifyingly difficult to understand and contain.

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The argument I am making is frequently misunderstood. I do not propose a universal theory applicable to every developing country. There are certainly developing countries without market-dominant minorities: China and Argentina are two major examples. Nor do I argue that ethnic conflict arises only in the presence of a market-dominant minority.

There are countless instances of ethnic hatred directed at economically oppressed groups. And, last, I emphatically do not mean to pin the blame for any particular case of ethnic violence—whether the mass killings perpetuated by all sides in the former Yugoslavia or the attack on America—on economic resentment, on markets, on democracy, on globalization, or on any other single cause. Many overlapping factors and complex dynamics—religion, historical enmities, territorial disputes, or a particular nation’s foreign policy—are always in play.

The point, rather, is this: In the numerous countries around the world that have pervasive poverty and a market-dominant minority, democracy and markets—at least in the raw, unrestrained forms in which they are currently being promoted—can proceed only in deep tension with each other. In such conditions, the combined pursuit of free markets and democratization has repeatedly catalyzed ethnic conflict in highly predictable ways, with catastrophic con-

sequences, including genocidal violence and the subversion of markets and democracy themselves. That has been the sobering lesson of globalization over the past 20 years.

**W**here does this leave us? What are the implications of market-dominant minorities for national and international policy-making? Influential commentator Robert D. Kaplan offers one answer: Hold off on democracy until free markets produce enough economic and social development to make democracy sustainable. In *The Coming Anarchy* (2000), Kaplan argues that a middle class and civil institutions—both of which he implicitly assumes would be generated by market capitalism—are preconditions for democracy. Contrasting Lee Kuan Yew’s prosperous authoritarian Singapore with the murderous, “bloodletting” democratic states of Colombia, Rwanda, and South Africa, Kaplan roundly condemns America’s post-Cold War campaign to export democracy to “places where it can’t succeed.”

This is a refreshingly unromantic view, but ultimately unsatisfactory. As one writer has observed, “If authoritarianism were the key to prosperity, then Africa would be the richest continent in the world.” Ask (as some do) for an Augusto Pinochet or an Alberto Fujimori, and you may get an Idi Amin or a Papa Doc Duvalier. More fundamentally, Kaplan overlooks the global problem of market-dominant minorities. He stresses the ethnic biases of elections but neglects the ethnic biases of capitalism. He is overly optimistic about the ability of markets alone to lift the great indigenous masses out of poverty, and he fails to see that markets favor not just some people over others but, often, hated ethnic minorities over indigenous majorities. Overlooking this reality, Kaplan blames too much of the world’s violence and anarchy on democracy.

The best economic hope for developing and postcommunist countries does lie in some form of market-generated growth. Their best political hope lies in some form of democracy, with constitutional constraints, tailored to local realities. But if global free-market democracy is to succeed, the problem of market-dominant minorities must be confronted head-on. If we stop peddling unrestrained markets and overnight elections as cure-alls—both to ourselves and others—and instead candidly address the perils inherent in both markets and democracy, there is in many cases room for optimism.

The first and most obvious step is to isolate, where possible, and address, where appropriate, the causes of the market dominance of certain groups. In South Africa, expanding educational opportunities for the black majority—restricted for more than 70 years to inferior Bantu schooling—is properly a national priority and should be vigorously supported by the international community. Throughout Latin America, educational reform and equalization of opportunities for the region’s poor indigenous-blooded majorities are imperative if global markets are to benefit more than just a handful of cosmopolitan elites.

Yet we must be realistic. The underlying causes of market dominance are poorly understood, difficult to reduce to tangible factors, and in any event highly intractable. Research suggests, for example, that additional spending on education, if not accompanied by major socioeconomic reforms, produces depressingly few benefits. Political favoritism, though often a sore point with

the majority in many societies with a market-dominant minority, tends to be more the consequence than the cause of market dominance. Most market-dominant minorities, whether the Bamiléké in Cameroon or Indians in Fiji, enjoy disproportionate economic success at every level of society down to the smallest shopkeepers, who can rarely boast of useful political connections. Indeed, many of these minorities succeed despite official discrimination against them. Any explanation of their success will likely include a host of intangibles such as the influence of religion and culture.

To “level the playing field” in developing societies will thus be a painfully slow process, taking generations if it is possible at all. More immediate measures will be needed to address the potentially explosive problems of ethnic resentment and ethnonationalist hatred that threaten these countries.

A crucial challenge is to find ways to spread the benefits of global markets beyond a handful of market-dominant minorities and their foreign investor partners. Western-style redistributive programs—progressive taxation, social security, unemployment insurance—should be encouraged, but, at least in the short run, they have limited potential. There simply is not enough to tax, and nearly no one who can be trusted to transfer revenues. Other possibilities are somewhat more encouraging. The Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto makes a powerful case in *The Mystery of Capital* (2000) for the benefits of giving the poor in the developing world formal, legally defensible property rights to the land they occupy but to which, because of underdeveloped legal systems and the tangles of history, they very often lack legal title.

**A** more controversial strategy consists of direct government intervention in the market designed to “correct” ethnic wealth imbalances. The leading example of such an effort is Malaysia’s New Economic Policy (NEP), a program established after violent riots in 1969 by indigenous Malays angry over the economic dominance of foreign investors and the country’s ethnic Chinese minority. The Malaysian government adopted sweeping ethnic quotas on corporate equity ownership, university admissions, government licensing, and commercial employment. It also initiated large-scale purchases of corporate assets on behalf of the *bumiputra* (Malay) majority.

In many respects, the results have been impressive. While the NEP has not lifted the great majority of Malays (particularly in the rural areas) out of poverty, it has helped to create a substantial Malay middle class. Prime minister Mahathir Mohamad, who frankly concedes that the NEP has tended to favor elite, well-connected Malays, nevertheless contends that it serves an important symbolic function: “With the existence of the few rich Malays at least the poor can say their fate is not entirely to serve rich non-Malays. From the point of view of racial ego, and this ego is still strong, the unseemly existence of Malay tycoons is essential.”

Efforts like the NEP, however, are far from a universal solution. Few countries enjoy the degree of prosperity that makes them feasible, and even Malaysia has not achieved its goal of eradicating poverty. Moreover, such programs may well exacerbate ethnic tensions rather than relieve them, especially when government leaders are themselves ethnic partisans. In his own mind,

Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic was conducting a form of affirmative action on behalf of long-exploited majorities, as Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe doubtless feels he is doing now.

For better or worse, the best hope for global free-market democracy lies with market-dominant minorities themselves. This is adamantly not to blame these groups for the ethnonationalist eruptions against them. But it is to suggest that they may be in the best position to address today's most pressing challenges. To begin with, it must be recognized that market-dominant minorities often engage in objectionable practices—bribery, discriminatory lending, labor exploitation—that reinforce ethnic stereotypes and besmirch the image of free-market democracy. In Indonesia, the notorious “crony capitalism” of President Suharto depended on a handful of Chinese magnates and fueled massive resentment of the Chinese community generally.

More affirmatively, if free-market democracy is to prosper, the world's market-dominant minorities must begin making significant and visible contributions to the local economies in which they are thriving. Although such efforts have been relatively few and by no means always successful in promoting goodwill, some valuable models can be found. The University of Nairobi, for example, owes its existence to wealthy Indians in Kenya. The Madhvani family, owners of the largest industrial, commercial, and agricultural complex in East Africa, not only provide educational, health, housing, and recreational opportunities for their African employees, but also employ Africans in top management and offer a number of wealth-sharing schemes. In Russia, there is the unusual case of the Jewish billionaire Roman Abramovich, whose generous philanthropy and ambitious proposals won him election as governor of the poverty-stricken Chukotka region in the Russian Far East. More typically, however, building ethnic goodwill would require collective action. Fortunately, most economically successful minorities do have the resources for such action, in the form of local ethnic chambers of commerce, clan associations, and other organizations.

**W**hat of the world's largest economically dominant minority? What are Americans to do? It's obviously true that anti-Americanism, including the virulent Islamicist strain, doesn't stem from economic deprivation alone. As others have pointed out, the Islamicists themselves rarely even speak of a desire for prosperity. And it is fantasy to think that U.S. economic aid can do anything more than make a small dent in world poverty, at least in the near future. Yet those who call for increases in U.S. aid to the world's poor do seem to have wisdom on their side. The United States now devotes only 0.1 percent of its gross domestic product to foreign aid, a smaller share than any other advanced country. Rightly or wrongly, for millions around the world the World Trade Center symbolized greed, exploitation, indifference, and cultural humiliation. By extending themselves to the world's poor, Americans could begin to send a different sort of message. Retreating into isolationism or glorifying American chauvinism holds no long-term promise. It is difficult to see, in any event, how a little generosity and humility could possibly hurt. □

# The Fate of Culture

by Tyler Cowen

On one thing the whole world seems to agree: Globalization is homogenizing cultures. At least a lot of countries are acting as if that's the case. In the name of containing what the Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood calls "the Great Star-Spangled Them," the Canadian government subsidizes the nation's film industry and requires radio stations to devote a percentage of their airtime to home-grown music, carving out extra airplay for stars such as Celine Dion and Barenaked Ladies. Ottawa also discouraged Borders, the American book superstore, from entering the Canadian market out of fear that it would not carry enough Canadian literature. The French government spends some \$3 billion annually on culture and employs 12,000 cultural bureaucrats in an effort to preserve its vision of a uniquely French culture. Spain, South Korea, and Brazil place binding domestic-content requirements on their cinemas; France and Spain do the same for television. Until recently, India barred the sale of Coca-Cola.

The argument that markets destroy culture and diversity comes from people across the political spectrum. Liberal political scientist Benjamin Barber claims that the world is poised between Jihad, a "bloody politics of identity," and McWorld, "a bloodless economics of profit," represented by the spread of McDonald's and American popular culture. In *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism* (1998), the English conservative John Gray denounces globalization as a dangerous delusion, a product of the hopelessly utopian Enlightenment dream of "a single worldwide civilization in which the varied traditions and cultures of the past were superseded by a new, universal community founded in reason." Duke University's Fredric Jameson sums up the common view: "The standardization of world culture, with local popular or traditional forms driven out or dumbed down to make way for American television, American music, food, clothes, and films, has been seen by many as the very heart of globalization."

Does the growing global trade in films, music, literature, and other cultural products destroy cultural and artistic diversity or actually encourage it? Does it promise a nightmarishly homogenized McWorld or a future of artistic innovation? What will happen to cultural creativity as freedom of economic choice extends across the globe?

Critics of globalization rally around the banner of "cultural diversity," but much of the contemporary skepticism about the value of cross-cultural exchange has very little to do with diversity. Many critics simply dislike particular trends and use "diversity" as a code word for another agenda, which is often merely anti-commercial or anti-American in nature. In reality, the global exchange of cultural products is increasing diversity in ways that are seldom appreciated.



*Corrupting influence or fruitful encounter? These villagers in West Papua, New Guinea, came to town to learn from TV news whether rumors they had achieved independence from Indonesia were true.*

The critics tend to focus on globalization's effects on diversity across societies. Gauging diversity then becomes a matter of whether each society offers the same cultural menu, and whether societies are becoming more alike. But the concept of cultural diversity has multiple and sometimes divergent meanings. It can also refer to the variety of choices within a particular society. By that standard, globalization has brought one of the most significant increases in freedom and diversity in human history: It has liberated individuals from the tyranny of place. Growing up on an isolated farm or in a remote village, whether in the Canadian Rockies or Bangladesh, is less a limit than ever before on an individual's access to the world's cultural treasures and opportunities. No longer are one's choices completely defined by local culture. There is more cultural diversity among Canadians and Bangladeshis than ever before.

These two kinds of diversity—the *across* variety and the *within* variety—often move in opposite directions. When one society trades a new artwork to another, diversity *within* the receiving society increases (because individuals have greater choice), but diversity *across* the two societies diminishes (the two societies become more alike). The issue is not so much whether there is more or less diversity but rather *what kind* of diversity globalization brings.

In the McWorld view of things, differentiation should be visible to the naked eye—a change in the landscape, for example, as soon as we cross the border

between the United States and Mexico. It's bad enough that we have Starbucks and MTV in Cleveland; we certainly don't want to see them in Mexico City. By comparing collectives (national cultures) and by emphasizing the dimension of geographic space, this standard begs the question of which kind of diversity matters. The United States and Mexico may look more similar than they once did, but the individuals in the two countries will have greater leeway to pursue different paths and to make their own cultural choices. Mexicans have the opportunity to drink frappuccinos and contemplate pop art, while Americans can enjoy burritos and read the novels of Carlos Fuentes.

Many critics of globalization are also blind to the importance of diversity *over time*. If we value cultural diversity, then surely we also ought to value diversity over time, or cultural change. Yet for many of diversity's self-appointed defenders, change is precisely the problem. They decry the passing of cultures and implicitly hope to freeze them at particular times—as if to say that Bali reached a state of perfection in, say, 1968, and should never change.

Finally, we need to distinguish objective diversity (how much diversity there is in the world) from what we might call operative diversity (how effectively we can enjoy that diversity). In some ways the world was very diverse in 1450, but not in a way that was of any benefit to the vast majority of the world's people. Without markets that promote cross-cultural contacts, the practical value of diversity is limited.

The critics are quite right, however, to point out that the creation of a global marketplace in entertainment and culture poses another kind of threat: the rise of mass culture and entertainment pitched to the least common denominator—the pop globalism of 'N Sync and Hollywood action films—a “dumbing down” of culture. But this is only part of the story. What these critics don't recognize is that cultural homogenization and increasing heterogeneity are not mutually exclusive alternatives. In fact, the growth of markets tends to cause the two processes to operate in tandem.

“To have great poets, there must be great audiences too,” Walt Whitman once observed, and great audiences are precisely what large markets provide. It's true that they support the likes of *Survivor*, but they also supply hitherto unreachable patrons for such exotica as Navajo textiles and Cuban dance music. Instead of dying out, many local art forms are flourishing as never before in the new global marketplace, because they've been able to find so many new patrons. Although the mass audience may be “dumbed down,” over time consumers in the new niche markets sharpen their tastes and perceptions. Why does New York City have a lively, varied theater scene while the sedate small town upstate does not? For two reasons: because New York can provide an audience large and affluent enough to sustain the playhouses, and because, through long exposure, those audiences have developed sufficient discernment and taste to patronize quirky off-off Broadway productions as well as blockbuster musicals and revivals. In sim-

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ilar fashion, consumers in the global marketplace come to support all manner of once-obscure art forms.

Around the world, growing numbers of niche consumers are pursuing a fantastic variety of cultural interests and passions, from Indonesian gamelan music to African cinema to the postcolonial fiction of Third World writers. The array of cultural choices available to a person in a single book or CD superstore would have been beyond the imagining of anybody living a century ago. The world has more experts who know more about a greater number of cultural phenomena than ever before. Even the most obscure corners of global culture have their partisans, who study and appreciate them with great fervor, often aided by the Internet and other new technologies.

CULTURAL GROWTH, LIKE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, RARELY COMES AS A STEADY ADVANCE ON ALL FRONTS AT ONCE.

To celebrate the largely unacknowledged cultural benefits of globalization, however, is not to deny its considerable costs. Globalized culture is another example of what the great political economist Joseph Schumpeter had in mind when he envisioned capitalist production as a gale of “creative destruction.” Cultural growth, like economic development, rarely comes as a steady advance on all fronts at once: While some sectors expand rapidly, others may wither away. In the gale of cultural globalization, some poor, relatively isolated non-Western societies lose out. What they lose is the peculiar *ethos* that animates their culture and makes it distinctive—the special feel or flavor of a culture, often rooted in religious belief or in shared suppositions about the nature and importance of beauty. An ethos is what provides a culture its self-confidence, its magic. These cultures depend for their survival on the absence of the very thing that globalization promotes: internal diversity.

**A**n ethos can help relatively small groups achieve cultural miracles. The population of Renaissance Florence, for example, did not typically exceed 80,000. But a cultural ethos can be fragile. In an attempt to keep outside influences at bay, the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan charges tourists \$200 a day for the right to visit. It has no traffic lights and no city with more than 10,000 inhabitants, and the countryside is rife with poverty and malnutrition. So far, Bhutan has been able to maintain its distinctive forms of Buddhist art and belief. The list of cultural casualties, however, is quite long. It’s difficult to argue, for example, that Polynesian culture is more vital today than it was before Europeans arrived, even though the Polynesians are now much better off in material terms. Materialism, alcohol, Western technologies, and (according to some) Christianity have all taken a toll. In Tahiti many traditional arts, such as the making of fine *tapa*, a kind of bark cloth used in clothing and textiles, have been neglected or abandoned because they proved uneconomical or lost status to Western goods.

## Globalization

Is such cultural loss worth the gains? There is no simple answer to this question. Because of widespread cross-cultural exchanges, the world as a whole has a broader menu of choices, but older cultures are forced to give way to newer ones. Some regions, in return for access to the world's cultural treasures and the ability to market their products abroad, will lose their distinctiveness. *Tragedy*, that overworked and often misused word, certainly has a place in describing their fate.

Yet most Third World cultures (like Western cultures) are fundamentally hybrids to begin with—synthetic products of multiple global influences, Western and otherwise. For them, creative destruction is nothing new, and it's misleading to describe their cultures as “indigenous.” The metal knife proved a boon to many Third World sculpting and carving traditions, including those that produced the splendid totem poles of the Pacific Northwest and Papua New Guinea. South African Ndebele art uses beads as an essential material in the adornment of aprons, clothing, and textiles, but the beads are not indigenous to Africa. They were first imported, from what is now the Czech Republic, in the early 19th century. Mirrors, coral, cotton cloth, and paper—key materials in “traditional” African arts—were also acquired through contact with Europeans.

**T**he art of cultural synthesis has a long and honorable history, so to describe today's Third World culture makers as synthesizers is hardly to denigrate them. It is, rather, the contrary emphasis on monoculture that's offensive in its implicit portrayal of non-Western artists as static, tradition-bound craftworkers, unable to embrace new influences. The ability to incorporate alien influences has long been recognized as one of the keys to creativity. The historian Herodotus ascribed the cultural vitality of the Greeks to their genius for synthesis. To varying degrees, Western cultures draw their philosophical heritage from the Greeks, their religions from the Middle East, their scientific base from the Chinese and Islamic worlds, and their core populations and languages from Europe. In other words, the foundations of the West (and of other civilizations throughout history) are also multicultural, resulting from the international exchange of goods, services, and ideas.

In historical terms, periods of cross-cultural exchange have been exciting, fruitful times. The years between 1800 and World War I, for example,





*Without global markets, folk artists such as the Haitian naive painter Rousseau Denis would find many fewer patrons for their work. The painting is called Marche (Market).*

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saw an unprecedented increase in internationalization. The West adopted the steamship, the railroad, and the automobile to replace travel by sail or coach, and international trade, investment, and migration grew rapidly. The exchange of cultural ideas between Europe and the Americas promoted diversity and quality; it did not turn everything into homogenized pap.

The worst period of cultural decline in Western history coincided with a radical shrinking of trade frontiers. The so-called Dark Ages, which date roughly from the collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century A.D. to early medieval times, around 1100, saw a massive contraction of interregional trade and investment. The Roman Empire had fostered regular contact among peoples spread over a great stretch of the ancient world. After the empire fell, these contacts all but disappeared with the withering of trade and urban life. Architecture, painting, sculpture, literature, and philosophy—reading itself—all went into decline. Medieval society and the Renaissance were, in large part, the consequence of a process of reglobalization. The West increased its contacts with the Chinese and Islamic worlds; trade fairs expanded; shipping lanes became more active; scientific ideas spread; and overland trade routes, many dormant since the time of the Romans, were re-established. This was the crucible in which modern Western culture was formed.

Cultural exchange rarely takes place on equal terms. Yet uneven as the playing field of the global economy may be, Third World arts have blossomed. The flowering of various folk arts—from Haitian naive painting to Tuvan throat singing in Mongolia—during the past few decades has been driven largely by Western demand, materials, and technologies of production. The Inuit of Canada, for example, did not practice sculpture on a large scale until an outsider introduced them to soapstone carving in 1948. Since then, sculpture has flourished among the Inuit, and they have developed other arts, enjoying an artistic and commercial success that has allowed them to maintain many of their traditional ways of life.

Despite the American pop juggernaut, music around the world is healthier and more diverse today than ever before. Hardly swamped by output from the

multinational conglomerates, local musicians have adapted international influences to their own ends. Most world music styles are of more recent origin than is commonly believed, even in supposedly “traditional” genres: The 20th century brought waves of musical innovation to most cultures, especially the large, open ones. The musical centers of the Third World—Cairo, Lagos, Rio de Janeiro—are heterogeneous and cosmopolitan cities that have welcomed new ideas and new technologies from abroad. Nonetheless, most domestic musical forms have no trouble commanding loyal audiences at home. In India, domestically produced music claims 96 percent of the market; in Egypt, 81 percent; and in Brazil, 73 percent.

Cinema offers perhaps the clearest grounds for an indictment of globalized culture because Hollywood has had so much success exporting its products. Even so, in the past 20 years Hong Kong, India, China, Denmark, Iran, and Taiwan have all produced many notable or award-winning movies. The riches of African cinema remain undiscovered treasure for most viewers, and European cinema shows signs of commercial revitalization. One reason for the domestic success of overseas filmmakers is that movies often do not translate well from culture to culture: Action, adventure, and heroism are universal languages that Hollywood speaks with great skill, but comedy, drama, and other genres usually require local accents and inflections.

For similar reasons, American books do not dominate fiction bestseller lists abroad. Even the Netherlands, with fewer than 10 million people, produces most of its own bestsellers. Yet globalization often provides local writers with an international stage, and the new era has given us notable writers who practice synthesis by wedding Western literary forms to their local traditions and concerns: Salman Rushdie of India, Gabriel García Márquez of Colombia, Naguib Mahfouz of Egypt, Pramoedya Toer of Indonesia, and many others. It’s not surprising that Third World writers have been among the strongest proponents of a cosmopolitan multiculturalism. Rushdie describes his work as celebrating hybridity, impurity, and mongrelization. Ghana-born Kwame Anthony Appiah believes that cosmopolitanism complements rather than destroys “rootedness,” and that new and innovative forms are maintaining the diversity of world culture.

**I**t’s impossible to deny that globalization will bring the demise of some precious and irreplaceable small cultures, and for that reason we should hope that the new global cosmopolitanism does not enjoy total triumph—that places such as Bhutan will succeed not just in preserving their cultures but in sustaining cultures that continue to live and breathe.

Yet one could not hope for a world in which we all inhabited a Bhutan, or in which Bhutan was preserved merely for our own edification and amusement. One could not hope, in other words, for a world in which we lacked the chance to experience the world’s diversity, or in which another people were kept isolated and poor simply to enhance the diversity available to us. Culture is, and has always been, a process of creative destruction. We might wish for the creativity without the destruction, but in this world we don’t have that choice. □

# THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

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## One Year Later

A Survey of Recent Articles

For all the solemn remembrances one year later, the historic meaning of September 11, 2001, is yet unknown. Did the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon bring about a lasting change in the way Americans see themselves and conduct themselves in the world? Or were they just another tragic incident, destined to be long remembered, but ultimately to have no larger historical significance? The nation's journals of opinion have been full of speculation.

A spirited response to the notion that "everything changed" comes from *The New Republic* (Sept. 9 & 16, 2002), with 10 pieces on "What Hasn't Changed": Americans' interest in foreign news (down after a brief upsurge), Afghanistan (still mired in chaos and poverty), and homeland security (still a bureaucratic mess). Senior editor Gregg Easterbrook notes that Americans continue to tool around in SUVs even though they spend \$6 billion or more annually on oil from Iraq. There's been virtually no change in energy policy. Foreign policy, however, is a different matter.

"It goes against the American grain to admit that the United States is now an imperial power," observes James Chace, former editor of the liberal *World Policy Journal*, writing in a symposium in *The National Interest* (Fall 2002), "but the magnitude of the American economy, its military budget, and its new will-

ingness to intervene unilaterally and massively across the globe all mark a decisive turning point in American history."

To avoid having other great powers coalesce against it, cautions Chace, who now teaches political science at Bard College, the United States needs to exercise its hegemony in a reassuring, "nonthreatening" way—adhering to the rules of the International Criminal Court, for instance, and embracing multilateral agreements. Or it might even "lead the world into a new internationalism," helping, for example, to form a new international police force.

Charles A. Kupchan, a professor of international affairs at Georgetown University, sees mainly peril in such views. It is "premature to announce the opening of a new era and the consequent emergence of new geopolitical fault lines," he declares in *The National Interest*. New tactics are evident, but "Washington still needs to focus on managing relations among major states, integrating rising powers into global markets and councils, and using multilateral institutions to promote cooperation, peace, and development." If it fails to do that, elimination of the Qaeda network may come "at the expense of the alliances and institutions that remain the bedrock of international peace and prosperity."

G. John Ikenberry, a political scientist at

Georgetown University, agrees. “America’s nascent neoimperial grand strategy threatens to rend the fabric of the international community and political partnerships precisely at a time when that community and those partnerships are urgently needed,” he writes in a *Foreign Affairs* symposium (Sept.-Oct. 2002). Another warning comes from a noted foreign intellectual friend of the United States. America’s leaders need to turn down “their bellicose rhetoric and think in terms not of apocalyptic crusades against evil, but of humdrum global policing against crime,” argues Sir Michael Howard, an emeritus professor of modern history at Oxford University, in *The National Interest*. Virtually every European state has been living with terrorism for decades, he points out. “Outside the United States, [9/11] has been seen as provoking the need not for a ‘war,’ but for better intelligence, better police work, and closer international cooperation in dealing with the problem.”

“Unilateralism and isolationism are ideological twins,” observes Michael Hirsh, a former foreign editor of *Newsweek*, writing in *Foreign Affairs*. “They both spring from the same exceptionalist impulse, a deep well of American mistrust about the rest of the world, especially Europe.” What many Americans seem to have forgotten, he says, is that “during America’s periods of intense (if reluctant) engagement overseas, the world that they had wanted to keep at ocean’s length became largely their world. Every major international institution—the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, NATO, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade—was made in America.”

That may be, but the rising costs of global engagement could well revive American isolationism, says Kupchan. “In the long run, America’s leaders may well find the country’s security better served by reducing its overseas commitments and raising protective barriers.” Americans will tire of worldwide engagement. “The popular comparison [of 9/11] to Pearl Harbor may well prove erroneous, for the difficult struggle against terrorism is ill suited to engendering public attention and sacrifice over the long term.”

**T**hough perhaps “only for a moment,” 9/11 did prompt Americans to rediscov-

er “the significance of citizenship,” notes Paul A. Rahe, a historian at the University of Tulsa, writing in a symposium in *The Journal of the Historical Society* (Spring 2002). The assaults “brought home to Americans in the most brutal way possible that, as Americans, [we] have enemies.” No “international community” will defend us, he says, because despite “wishful thinking,” none exists.

Spiritual exhaustion is what historian James Hitchcock, of Saint Louis University, discerns in the events of the past year. Writing in the same journal, he declares, “More Americans attended church services to mourn the dead and to pray for the safety of the country. But while religious leaders and public displays of religious feeling offered some comfort, they did little to prove their relevance to the national crisis.”

While radical Muslims see their conflict with America in religious terms, observes Hitchcock, most Americans do not. They “prefer to believe in individual error [rather] than in evil.” The aversion to being “judgmental” has become so prevalent that religion in America has lost “the spiritual resources even to recognize evil, much less combat it.”

The attacks of September 11 “brought to life the perennial villains in our master political narrative: religious fanatics, sectarian violence, zealots with bombs,” says Gerard V. Bradley, a law professor at the University of Notre Dame, also in the *Journal of the Historical Society’s* symposium. “The leading historical effect of that infamous date may be to confirm what we already took for granted: Secularism is safe.” That’s a mistake, he thinks: “The last century certainly records the dangers of secular ideologies.”

No other act of terrorism has done as much damage as the attacks of that September day last year did. But instead of being a portent of equally awful horrors to come, they may well remain singular events, just as the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979–81 did, suggests John Mueller, a political scientist at Ohio State University, in *The National Interest*. Terrorists “will find it difficult to match or top” what Al Qaeda’s 19 hijackers accomplished that day. Like crime, terrorism will never end, he says, but the spectacular destruction of 9/11 may never be repeated.

## *Madison's Third Way*

"The Madisonian Madison and the Question of Consistency: The Significance and Challenge of Recent Research" by Alan Gibson, in *The Review of Politics* (Spring 2002), Univ. of Notre Dame, P.O. Box B, Notre Dame, Ind. 46556.

James Madison (1751–1836), the cerebral father of the Constitution and coauthor of *The Federalist*, emerges from many scholarly accounts as a disappointing political chameleon: a Hamiltonian nationalist in one decade (the 1780s), a Jeffersonian defender of states' rights in the next. But recent studies show that he was not so inconsistent, according to Gibson, a political scientist at California State University, Chico. Neither Hamiltonian nor Jeffersonian, Madison forged or represented "a third way."

Historian Lance Banning argued in *The Sacred Fire of Liberty* (1995) that Madison shared his fellow *Federalist* author Alexander Hamilton's "contempt for the weaknesses of the government under the Articles of Confederation and his fear of majority tyranny," Gibson writes. But he was "no less repelled than Patrick Henry and other Anti-Federalists by Hamilton's vision of national splendor and consolidated government."

Instead of Hamilton's vision of a manufacturing America, historian Drew McCoy showed in *The Elusive Republic* (1980), Madison clung through the 1780s and 1790s to the ideal of an agrarian republic, albeit one that required land and commercial expansion.

Yet, says Gibson, political theorist Gary Rosen made the case in *American Compact*

(1999) that Madison was "a better defender of the fragile achievement of the American Founding" than his lifelong friend and political ally Thomas Jefferson. "In particular, Rosen observes that Madison opposed Jefferson's proposition that 'the earth belongs to the living' and the specific proposal that constitutions be rewritten every 19 years to reflect the aspirations of the living generation." Such practices would "rob the government of the veneration" it needed, Madison believed, and possibly prevent the present generation from assuming obligations to future ones.

McCoy argued that similar concerns animated Madison's approach to constitutional interpretation. His doctrine of "originalism" led him to oppose creation of a national bank in the 1790s, but his belief that precedent and practice could confer constitutional legitimacy led him as president in 1816 to sign into law a bill rechartering the Bank of the United States.

Taken together, Gibson concludes, the recent studies show that in his political thinking, Madison was relatively consistent, coherent—and independent. He carved out "a third way, between Federalists and Anti-Federalists, strict and broad constructionists, Hamilton and Jefferson, and ultimately nationalists and nullifiers."

## *No Politics, Please*

"How to Make Congress Popular" by John R. Hibbing, in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* (May 2002), Comparative Legislative Research Center, Univ. of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242.

Why is Congress so unpopular with the American public? Because legislators don't carry out the wishes of their constituents, is the usual response. If ordinary people had more access to the democratic process, they would clasp the institution to their bosom. Poppycock, says Hibbing, a political scientist at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

Basing his analysis on data from surveys and focus groups, Hibbing contends that Americans don't feel "shut out" of the legislative process but have happily opted out. The "American populist spirit" is a myth; few people are involved even in local politics. Almost nobody in America trusts the public at large to conduct national



*Congressional reform activists make clear their opinion of legislators at a 1996 Capitol Hill rally.*

affairs—and this includes the public itself. As one focus group participant put it: “We have avenues to contact our representatives; we just choose not to.”

Americans, Hibbing believes, desire a managerial Congress that will look after the public welfare so the public doesn’t have to. Many seem to think that every political problem has a commonsense solution, blocked only by the influence of special interests.

That is the key to the public’s discontent. Many Americans are convinced that legislators act primarily for their own benefit, perhaps to line their own pockets and certainly to ensure their reelection. Surveys demonstrate that Americans “are too cynical to believe that any individual who is granted

decision-making power will be able to resist the occasional self-serving act.” The Supreme Court, on the other hand, consistently ranks as the most respected branch of the federal government because people believe that “the justices do not benefit materially from the decisions they make.”

If Hibbing is correct, restoring faith in Congress may prove more difficult than previously imagined. He favors campaign finance reform, term limits, lower congressional salaries, and a “firewall” between legislators and special-interest lobbies, but he is not optimistic that such measures will help much. As long as Americans interpret even honest political disagreements on Capitol Hill in the worst possible light, the public’s faith will be perpetually undermined.

## *Bureaucratic Deaths*

“The Politics of Agency Termination: Confronting the Myth of Agency Immortality” by David E. Lewis, in *The Journal of Politics* (Feb. 2002), Blackwell Publishers, 350 Main St., Malden, Mass. 02148.

Even partisans of activist government tend to assume that once created, a federal agency is forever. Witness the departments of education and energy, still standing despite countless Republican vows to abolish them. But Lewis, a political scientist at Virginia’s College of William and Mary, says a careful

look at the post-World War II record disproves the common belief.

Of the 426 administrative agencies established since 1946, he found, 251—or 59 percent—had ceased to exist by 1997. Among the dead: the Office of Technology Assessment and the National Biological Service, both

killed off in 1995 after Republicans took control of Congress. It's true that many agencies simply saw their functions transferred to other organizations. The Council on Economic Policy, born in 1973, was absorbed by something called the Economic Policy Board only a year later. Even so, Lewis says, it appears that "bureaucratic structure may be more malleable" than hitherto supposed. Smaller agencies and ones created by

executive order rather than by statute were more likely to vanish. The death toll more than doubles during wartime.

Public servants in a targeted agency have good reason to worry when the White House or Congress passes into unfriendly hands, says Lewis. "Agencies that encounter a president from the opposite party of the president that presided over their creation have a lower survival probability."

## FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

# *The Transatlantic Divide*

"Power and Weakness" by Robert Kagan, in *Policy Review* (June–July 2002), 818 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Ste. 601, Washington, D.C. 20006; "Has History Restarted since September 11?" by Francis Fukuyama, at [www.cis.org.au/Events/JBL/JBL.02.htm](http://www.cis.org.au/Events/JBL/JBL.02.htm), forthcoming as CIS Occasional Paper 81, Centre for Independent Studies, P.O. Box 92, St. Leonards, NSW, Australia 1590.

Many Europeans are aghast these days at Washington's apparent penchant for going it alone, whether on global warming, criminal justice, or Iraq. Americans, they charge, have a "cowboy" mentality, none more so than the conservative primitive now in the White House. In truth, however, argues Kagan, a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Europeans and Americans have come to look upon power—its efficacy, morality, and desirability—very differently. And the reasons for this gulf in strategic perspectives "are deep . . . and likely to endure."

"Europe is turning away from power," Kagan contends, to reside in "a self-contained world of laws and rules and transnational negotiation and cooperation. It is entering a posthistorical paradise of peace and relative prosperity, the realization of Kant's 'Perpetual Peace.' The United States, meanwhile, remains mired in history, exercising power in the anarchic Hobbesian world where international laws and rules are unreliable and where true security and the defense and promotion of a liberal order still depend on the possession and use of military might."

The different strategic perspectives are not outgrowths of Americans' and Europeans' different national characters, he maintains. "When the United States was weak, it practiced the strategies of indirection, the strategies of weakness; now that the United States is powerful, it behaves as pow-

erful nations do. When the European great powers were strong, they believed in strength and martial glory. Now, they see the world through the eyes of weaker powers." (Though European nations ceased to be global powers with World War II, he says, their military weakness was long masked by Europe's geopolitical importance in the Cold War.) Europe's new strategic outlook, with its emphasis on diplomacy, commerce, international law, and multilateralism, Kagan notes, also reflects "a conscious rejection of the European past, a rejection of the evils of European *machtspolitik*."

Having achieved in its postwar integration the "miracle" of getting the German "lion" to lie down with the French "lamb," Europe now wishes to export its "perpetual peace" to the rest of the world, Kagan says. But "America's power, and its willingness to exercise that power—unilaterally if necessary"—stand in the way. Ironically, he points out, it is American power that has made Europe's "new Kantian order" possible, and now sustains it.

While Kagan adds that America should show a "'decent respect for the opinion of mankind,'" Fukuyama, the Johns Hopkins University scholar known for his "end of history" thesis, says that Kagan doesn't seem to really mean it, in the sense of letting others help to define America's foreign policy objectives. In Fukuyama's view, a stronger dose of moderation is needed.

## An Obsolescent Army?

“A Different War” by Peter J. Boyer, in *The New Yorker* (July 1, 2002), 4 Times Sq., New York, N.Y. 10036–6592.

What was the key military lesson of the overwhelming U.S. victory in the 1991 Persian Gulf War? That the U.S. Army is in urgent need of radical reform.

The army was “a magnificent Cold War force, perfectly suited” for set-piece battles in Europe, notes Boyer, a staff writer at *The New Yorker*. But the desert war showed how needs had changed, and it “revealed two potentially disastrous flaws: the army’s light forces weren’t lethal enough to stop Saddam Hussein by themselves, and the armored units were so heavy that it took them months to reach the battlefield.” Immediately after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the lightly armed 82nd Airborne Division was dispatched to Saudi Arabia to establish a defensive line. The Pentagon knew it was no match for Iraqi armor. If the Iraqis had attacked, there would have been “a slaughter,” one general told Boyer.

It took five months to move what the army calls “the iron mountain” and assemble the victorious U.S. force. At 70 tons, the prized Abrams tank, for instance, was too heavy to be transported to the battlefield by air. Later missions in Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo made the army’s flaws even more apparent. On a limited mission in Kosovo in 1999, “armored American units, mired in mud, watched helplessly from the other side of bridges they couldn’t get across,” as the Serb army “maneuvered at will.”

General Eric K. Shinseki, named army

chief of staff in mid-1999, promised drastic change. “He said that he wanted an army that was nimble, light, and lethal,” according to Boyer. Heavy tanks and armored vehicles would be replaced with “systems so advanced that they couldn’t be detected by the enemy, using technology not yet invented.”

As a first step, Shinseki ordered the creation of a new type of brigade—a medium-weight unit, organized around lightly armored vehicles. “The Stryker Brigades will depend heavily upon information technology, and enhanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities,” Boyer explains, “to compensate for their lack of armored protection.”

Predictably, Shinseki’s reforms ran into resistance from the army. The surprise is that the chief of staff has also gotten the cold shoulder from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his circle. They envision even more radical change, says Boyer, with “conflicts in the information age being fought and won mostly from the air and from space, with satellites, sensors, and precision weapons. Implicit in this thinking (though rarely expressed) is a diminished role in future wars for ground forces.” Shinseki’s eventual successor has already been named.

Looking beyond a possible war with Iraq, in which ground forces would be critical, wrenching change of some sort seems to be in the army’s future. “If you don’t like change,” Shinseki warned his officers, “you’re going to like irrelevance a lot less.”

## The Foreign Aid Cartel

“The Cartel of Good Intentions” by William Easterly, in *Foreign Policy* (July–Aug. 2002), 1779 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

If the goal of foreign aid organizations is to raise the living standards of the world’s poor, why do they make life so difficult for those they are supposed to be helping? Not only do aid organizations require mountains of paperwork—Niger recently spent 15 months preparing a 187-page poverty reduction plan—but

they often fail to direct assistance to the areas where it’s needed most.

The problem, argues Easterly, a former World Bank official who is now at the Center for Global Development, is that aid groups such as the World Bank and U.S. Agency for International Development operate like a car-

tel. Because they collectively possess a monopoly on the “commodity” of aid, they avoid competition for “customers”—poor citizens in developing countries. Like the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other cartels, aid organizations place a higher priority on mutual “cooperation” (which barely papers over their fierce bureaucratic rivalries) than on providing the kinds of help developing countries want.

The results defy common sense, says Easterly. Despite all the talk of coordination, bureaucratic jostling ensures that aid organizations “mindlessly duplicate services for the world’s poor. . . . The Tanzanian government churns out more than 2,400 reports annually for its various donors, who send the poor country some 1,000 missions each year.” Aid groups often favor showy development projects that please the public and politicians back home but waste precious aid money: health clinics rather than medicines or building maintenance, schools rather than textbooks and paper. (“A recent study . . . estimated that the return on

spending on educational instructional materials was up to 14 times higher than the return on spending on physical facilities,” Easterly reports.)

Most people in the aid business are hard working and well intentioned, and foreign aid has produced some important advances. In Africa, it has helped reduce infant mortality and increase literacy since 1970. The rate of economic growth, however, has dropped virtually to zero, despite significant infusions of aid. Easterly is critical of the cartel’s perpetual arguments for more money, which are full of sloppy thinking. The World Bank trumpets the claim that a \$1 billion boost in aid could lift 284,000 people in the developing world above the poverty level, which is defined as a per capita income of \$365 annually. Easterly did the math: If the numbers are correct, the bank actually would be spending \$3,521 per person annually.

Easterly suggests several cartel-busting reforms. Aid agencies could set aside money in a common pool, for example, allowing

EXCERPT

## *Europe and the End of War*

*The indetermination of the Europe under construction, or its indefinite territorial extension, is in part the result of a very powerful disposition in us: an indifference to frontiers or borders, even a disdain for them. Now borders most often result from wars, or peace treaties that end wars, when there are peace treaties. The indifference to borders thus manifests our attitude toward war, not only, to be sure, the conviction that war is inhuman or immoral but also that it no longer has any political meaning or validity. Territory and war—war for territory, territory defined as the result of war—appear to us as aspects of the old politics, which henceforth have no political meaning except as political nonsense, that is, as anachronisms, as residues from the past, something to be definitely overcome. Present among us for a long time, these sentiments found a striking confirmation in the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989: The Wall, and more generally the border dividing Germany and separating West and East Germany, simultaneously symbolized and materialized the line of separation established by the encounter between American and Soviet troops at the end of World War II. The peaceful collapse of the Wall made visible to all the following fact: The greatest war in history had lost its power; its most visible, most important, and also its most inhuman political result, as it were, evaporated in a few days, not only without violence but with a celebration. The phenomenon assuredly is extraordinary, and it is both natural and legitimate to be very impressed by it.*

—Pierre Manent, a political philosopher at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, in *Perspectives on Political Science* (Summer 2002)

poor nations to draw from it to work on projects (and with aid organizations) of their choosing. Or, poor individuals and communities could be given vouchers to use as

they saw fit. That would promote more competition among aid groups and give the poor nations a bigger voice in how aid dollars are spent.

## *Two Koreas Forever?*

“Our Other Korea Problem” by Nicholas Eberstadt, in *The National Interest* (Fall 2002), 1615 L St., N.W., Ste. 1230, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Wouldn't it be great if North and South Korea could end their long, tense standoff, allowing the 38,000 U.S. troops stationed in the South finally to come home? Not according to Eberstadt, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

To begin with, he argues, South Korean president Kim Dae-Jung's determined “sunshine policy” toward the totalitarian North Korean regime might lead to a less-than-genuine reconciliation. If North Korea's Kim Jong-il then tried to reunify the peninsula under his own rule, the stage could be set for “a potentially devastating conflict in Korea,” which might also involve the United States and other regional powers.

“But even presuming genuine rapprochement between North and South and some measure of stability in Korea,” Eberstadt says, a U.S. pullout “would still create a security vacuum and invite a latter-day version of the Great Game of realpolitik the Pacific powers played so roughly in the region a century ago.” Particularly worrisome to many of those powers is the possibility of a more assertive Japan.

If the U.S. forces in South Korea were withdrawn, or even transformed into a neutral peacekeeping force while the two Koreas moved toward unification, only one U.S. fighting force would remain on East Asian soil:

the 40,000 troops in Japan. That would greatly increase pressure in Japan—where the U.S. base in Okinawa is already a sore point—for a reduced American presence.

In public, China and Russia favor a reduced U.S. presence in East Asia, but according to Eberstadt they are privately ambivalent about an American withdrawal from South Korea and an end to “the U.S.-dominated security order in East Asia.” It's hard for Eberstadt to see who would benefit, except for North Korea.

South Koreans, however, seem to see both the military threat from the North and the need for a U.S. garrison as diminishing. Forty-two percent of South Koreans surveyed in 2000 wanted the U.S. presence reduced; 15 percent wanted it ended.

Much may depend on what happens this December, when South Koreans go to the polls to choose a new president. Roh Moo-hyun, the candidate of Kim's ruling party, called as recently as 1990 for the ouster of U.S. forces. His opponent, Lee Hoi-chang, favors a tougher stance toward North Korea. In parliamentary by-elections held this August, Lee's party won 11 of 13 seats in the National Assembly, gaining control of the 273-member body—a major defeat for the lame duck Kim and a possible sign of what's to come for his “sunshine policy.”

### ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

## *Seeds of Scandal*

“Perverse Incentives” by Edward Chancellor, in *Prospect* (June 2002), 4 Bedford Sq., London WC1B SRD, England.

Plain old greed may go a long way toward explaining the past year's rash of spectacular corporate meltdowns and accounting scandals, but they also have

their genesis in a flawed idea.

That idea is shareholder value, a product of the early 1980s, when American investors finally lost patience with a long

period of underperformance by U.S. corporations, writes Chancellor, assistant editor of Britain's *Breakingviews* financial commentary service.

After the Great Depression, "the priorities of leading businessmen shifted away from maximizing the profit of their companies, or their own fortunes; other goals, such as stability, continuity, and responsibility toward employees predominated." In 1984, Texas oil tycoon T. Boone Pickens upended the old order when he launched a takeover attempt of giant Gulf Oil, backed by innovative high-yield bonds floated by financial wizard Michael Milken. Pickens and later raiders promised to unlock the hidden values neglected by complacent "corpocrats."

Big business responded with the concept of shareholder value. The idea was to make managers more responsive to the interests of shareholders (who are, after all, the corporation's owners). Chancellor sees several consequences: "a focus on the core business; the use of financial engineering to reduce the corporate cost of capital; an emphasis on the business's ability to generate cash; the linking of managers' interests to those of outside shareholders through the use of executive stock options."

While there were benefits to the new approach, Chancellor believes many of them have been exaggerated. Did the reformed corporations invest capital more efficiently? Return on equity rose from 17 percent to 22 percent during the 1990s, suggesting that they did. But corporations took on piles of new debt in the 1990s

(partly to buy back shares and boost stock prices). Add debt to equity, and the returns shrink to 13 percent. In this category, as in others, Chancellor argues, corporations actually did better in the 1960s.

As we now realize, moreover, "the generous compensation of top executives with stock options has created an overwhelming incentive to manipulate earnings." It has had other effects: Unlike shareholders, options owners don't benefit from rising dividends, but they do benefit from rising share prices. "In 1995, the amount of money spent on [stock] buybacks exceeded outlays on dividends for the first time in history," Chancellor notes. On top of that, corporations with their eyes on short-term changes in the stock market made many bad long-term investments. The markets cheered as European telecommunications companies paid billions for licenses to operate new 3G mobile phone networks—never mind that demand was unknown and the technology untried. Today, many of those companies are basket cases. "Markets are constantly testing and discarding new ideas," Chancellor says. "The corporate world moves, or should move, at a much slower pace."

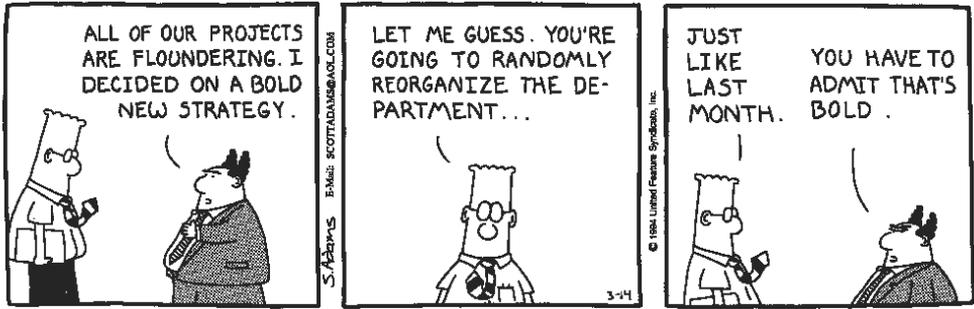
How to get corporations moving slowly again? Less emphasis on profits and shareholder value would help. "Great managers are motivated by the pride they take in their work" rather than by money, Chancellor thinks. Paraphrasing management expert Peter Drucker, he concludes that profit "is not the rationale of a business, just the test of its validity."

## *Strategic Dithering*

"Tired of Strategic Planning?" by Eric D. Beinhocker and Sarah Kaplan, in *The McKinsey Quarterly* (2002, No. 2), available online at [www.mckinseyquarterly.com](http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com).

In most big corporations plotting corporate strategy is a major production. Most have a top "strategy" executive with the usual bureaucratic accouterments, and put themselves through that elaborate and time-consuming annual ritual, the company-wide "strategic planning process." Yet in this respect, private-sector bureaucracies appear no more effective

than that oft-derided administrative colossus, the federal government. Even CEOs and other high-level executives are cynical about the process. In reality, strategy is still made around the water cooler. "There is a lot of dancing, waving of feathers, and beating of drums" during the reviews, one executive told Beinhocker and Kaplan. "No one is exactly sure why we do



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it, but there is an almost mystical hope that something good will come of it.”

Based on their study of 30 companies, the authors (he’s a principal at McKinsey & Co.’s London office, she’s a former McKinsey staffer who is now a graduate student at MIT’s Sloan School of Management) argue that the process can pay off in companies that manage it well. The trick is to avoid mounting empty “dog and pony shows” or hoping for brilliant ideas to strike like lightning. The best companies strive to create “prepared minds” rather than formulate concrete plans. “Success is more modestly measured by how well the review helps manage-

ment forge a common understanding of its environment, challenges, opportunities, and economics, thus laying the groundwork for better real-time strategic decision making going forward,” the authors write.

They have a number of other suggestions. For example, strategy sessions should be separated from talk about short-term financial issues, which almost always dominate such discussions. And “those who carry out strategy must also make it.” A strategy concocted by the corporate strategy bureaucracy and outside consultants rather than by business unit heads and other frontline executives is doomed to irrelevance.

## The Economics of Imperfection

“Behavioral Macroeconomics and Macroeconomic Behavior” by George A. Akerlof and “Information and the Change in the Paradigm in Economics” by Joseph E. Stiglitz, in *The American Economic Review* (June 2002), 2014 Broadway, Ste. 305, Nashville, Tenn. 37203.

If you were an undergraduate between the 1960s and 1980s, chances are that the name Paul Samuelson rings a bell. An economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Samuelson was the author of *Economics*, long the most widely used textbook in introductory college economics courses. *Economics* embodied something called “the neoclassical synthesis,” the mainstream doctrine that arose out of the post-World War II effort to reconcile the ideas of John Maynard Keynes and those descended from Adam Smith. The fact that *Economics* is no longer the field’s dominant textbook suggests what has become of the synthesis.

Akerlof and Stiglitz, of the University of California, Berkeley, and Columbia

University’s Graduate School of Business, respectively, shared the Nobel Prize in economics last year (along with Michael Spence) for work that has turned a good part of the economics discipline in a new direction. In their acceptance speeches, reprinted in *The American Economic Review*, they explain what happened.

The neoclassical synthesis—along with its updated successor, the New Classical economics—holds that markets always tend toward “general equilibrium.” Whether the market is for factory workers or candy bars, in other words, supply and demand will eventually reach a perfect, albeit temporary, balance if left to their own devices.

In the real world, of course, that doesn’t

seem to happen, as the theory's proponents themselves have recognized and tried to explain (the Nobel Prize committee has also rewarded their work, as it did Paul Samuelson's before). Akerlof and Stiglitz, however, proposed a more sweeping explanation than these defenders of the synthesis, under the unsexy rubric "asymmetric information." It suggests that economic transactions are powerfully affected by the fact that buyers and sellers—in, for example, the used car market—don't all have the same information. "Information economics" is concerned with teasing out the implications of this fact in a variety of different realms.

One puzzle in the standard theory, for example, is why unemployment exists in the real world. In theory, if workers can't find jobs at, say, a steel plant, they will simply reduce the level of pay they demand until the steelmaker hires them. But in a series of papers during the 1980s, Stiglitz and several collaborators argued that many firms *aren't willing* to hire workers for less. Among the reasons: Lower-paid workers have a higher rate of turnover, which is costly. In such an environment, where wages are artificially high, employers have

only one sanction to apply against workers who perform badly: They can fire them, in effect branding them with information about their performance that makes it difficult for them to get jobs elsewhere. Writes Stiglitz: "We showed that *in equilibrium* there *had* to be unemployment: Unemployment was the discipline device that forced workers to work hard."

Akerlof and Stiglitz believe that information economics can explain many other real-world puzzles: Why do people save too little for their retirement? Why are stock markets so volatile? Why do developing countries experience sudden, severe credit crunches? In a broader sense, Akerlof notes, information economics restores to economics the consideration of psychological and sociological factors that the neoclassical synthesis had driven out.

Yet, as Stiglitz observes, he and his colleagues are still stuck with an equilibrium model of the economy—their work just tries to explain why markets don't reach the perfect balance that theory predicts. He thinks the future lies in a completely different "evolutionary" theory of the economy. Information as to what such a model will look like, however, remains imperfect.

## SOCIETY

# *A Tale of Two Cities*

"Murder Mystery" by John Buntin, in *Governing* (June 2002), 1100 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Ste. 1300, Washington, D.C. 20036.

During the 1990s, only two cities—New York and Boston—saw their once-soaring homicide rates fall by double-digit figures year after year. Each city credited its innovative approach to police work, and municipalities elsewhere took note. But the strategies of the two cities were very different, and now they're producing very different results.

"In the past two years," notes Buntin, a *Governing* staff correspondent, "Boston's homicide rate has increased by more than 100 percent," while New York's has continued to fall. "I don't know," boasted Gotham's mayor Rudolph Guliani in his farewell address to the city last December.

"Which policing theory would you want to follow?"

New York's strategy is based on the "broken windows" thesis that disorder begets crime, so aggressively going after "squeegee men," loiterers, and other minor offenders will reduce the number of more serious crimes. New York also began to track crime trends closely at the precinct level and to press precinct commanders for results. The number of homicides fell from 1,777 in 1995 to 770 in 1997 and 664 in 1999. But the more aggressive policing had a cost: growing tension between police and African American and other minority activists.

Boston opted for a more “liberal” strategy, based, writes Buntin, “on social service and neighborhood relations.” The number of homicides went down—from 152 in 1990 (on a per capita basis, about the same rate as New York’s) to 96 in 1995. In mid-1996, Boston added “focused deterrence” against gun violence by the “relatively small number of hard-core gang members . . . responsible for most of the carnage.” For example, “one notorious gangster found with a single bullet in his possession was sent to federal prison for 10 years,” Buntin notes. Murders dropped to 31 in 1999.

But the effects of “focused deterrence” seemed to tail off. By the spring of 2000, gunplay was increasing in the gang strongholds of Roxbury and Dorchester. The number of homicides that year increased to 40, and the next year to 66. “Rather than reinvigorating its efforts at ‘focused deterrence,’” says Buntin, “the Boston police department seems to be redoubling its efforts at building partnerships, expanding social services and involving the community in the fight against crime. . . . Meanwhile, in the first quarter of 2002, the homicide rate in New York City was down another 29 percent.”

## *Nursing’s Identity Crisis*

“Where Have All the Nurses Gone?” by Ronald W. Dworkin, in *The Public Interest* (Summer 2002), 1112 16th St., N.W., Ste. 140, Washington, D.C. 20036; “Diagnosis: Shortage” by Carrie Conaway, in *Regional Review* (2001: 3rd quarter), Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, P.O. Box 2076, Boston, Mass. 02106–2076.

The nation’s registered nurses have been increasing in number every year but not fast enough to keep up with demand. Hospitals, which employ more than half of the nation’s 2.7 million RNs, have 11 percent of their positions vacant. Nursing homes, visiting nurse associations, and other employers of RNs are also hard-pressed.

What accounts for the nurse shortage? “The culprits,” writes Conaway, an associate editor at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston’s *Regional Review*, “are both long-term trends, such as expanded opportunities for working women and the aging of the population, and new factors like the effects of the cost-cutting imperatives of managed care.” Dworkin, an anesthesiologist at the Greater Baltimore Medical Center, acknowledges that there is “some truth” in such explanations, but finds more in the frustrations nurses now face because their profession has been “swept up in a cultural avalanche.”

From the time of Florence Nightingale, he argues, nursing “stood on two pillars”—feminine virtue (compassion and empathy) and medical science. But starting in the late 1970s, progressives, particularly feminists, sought to rid the nursing ideal of virtue and base it instead solely on its own distinct body

of scientific knowledge. In truth, contends Dworkin, nursing has no such independent body of knowledge. “Nurses are taught the same material as physicians, only less of it. When nursing tries to distinguish itself on the basis of scientific knowledge alone, nursing loses status among doctors and paraprofessionals.” And “bright young people,” he claims, now “see a nursing career as relatively undistinguished.” (Be that as it may, Conaway notes that nursing schools had to turn away 5,000 qualified applicants last year because of insufficient faculty and facilities.)

The change in the professional ideal of nursing also has meant frustration for husband-hunting nurses, Dworkin observes, as male doctors have come to pair off instead with female MDs. And nursing’s traditional appeal as a part-time job has meant little to the many single mothers in need of the income from a full-time job, who must work nights and weekends for that income. For various reasons, Dworkin says, nursing has become more difficult than ever, with “long hours, inadequate resources, demanding patients, and mediocre pay.” The frequent result is “burnout,” he asserts. Many frustrated, emotionally exhausted nurses quit.

One answer to the nurse shortage might be to offer nurses better pay. But, says Dworkin,

“tight health-care budgets prevent” hospitals from doing that. Conaway, however, reports a little progress along that line: “RN wages are starting to escalate after years of stagnation.”

Average inflation-adjusted weekly wages for full-time RNs, she notes, declined from \$819 in 1993 to \$762 in 1997, but then climbed to \$790 in 2000.

EXCERPT

## *A Monument in the Sky*

*The present wrangling between those who want the whole [World Trade Center] site to be a garden, and those who want commercial development, is itself miserable, and is reflected in the misery of the designs that have been proposed. In actual fact, there is a desperate futility in the project as presently conceived, because even if the whole site were turned into a memorial garden it would be in the wrong place. For most of the dead did not die there at all, but a thousand feet away, a sixth of a mile, directly above. Ancient epics and dramas—the Odyssey, the Aeneid, Antigone—tell of the unease and pollution of an improperly buried or unburied corpse; the present quarrel reflects that unease in 20th-century terms: our loss of courage in the marketplace, our baseless guilt at our prosperity, our secret qualms that maybe we deserved to be attacked. The rebuilding of Ground Zero must be a monument that will begin to heal those deep spiritual wounds and illnesses.*

*To be such a monument it must embody the future hopes of the nation, its resilience, its pride, and the peculiarly American technique for achieving its goals.*

*What is that “American technique”? There is an ancient saying, that you cannot serve God and Mammon. The Old World always took this saying as a simple command or prohibition, an injunction to make the right choice. The genius of the framers of the American Constitution is that they took it as a “koan,” so to speak. A koan in the Buddhist tradition is a paradoxical utterance whose form is that of a puzzle but whose solution is not an answer but a change in the answerer and thus a change in the conditions in which the puzzle itself exists.*

*If it is a simple and absolute choice, between the spiritual and the economic, then of course we should choose the spiritual. But if we do, rejecting any temptation to improve our economic lot, we should not be too surprised—as the national sponsors of radical Islamic terrorism have found—when it turns out that our economic decline into hideous squalor ends up compromising any possible spiritual goal of our society. In another saying Jesus hinted at something that did not imply that terrible choice, between the world and one’s soul: render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s, he said of the coin of money he was shown, and unto God that which is God’s.*

*The solution to the problem that the American Framers found was simple and radical: Make Mammon serve God, and then to serve Mammon is to serve God. The free-market democratic republic that resulted has spent 200 years of fine-tuning the market so that it has become almost impossible to get rich without in the process enriching everyone else. . . .*

*The World Trade Center was a huge tool of that American solution. But its architecture in the context of its site said no more than that. It served Mammon, but did not express by its form that the Mammon it served served God. Its replacement must say triumphantly that the terrorists have been defeated not only in terms of wealth and power, but in terms of spiritual goodness and moral beauty as well.*

—Frederick Turner, Founders Professor of Arts and Humanities at the University of Texas at Dallas, on the website *TechCentralStation.com* (Aug. 1, 2002)

## Sprawl: Urban Legend?

“Measuring Sprawl” by Witold Rybczynski, in *Zell/Lurie Real Estate Review* (Spring 2002), The Wharton School, Univ. of Pennsylvania, 256 S. 37th St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104.

To many critics, urban sprawl is like landscape pornography: They know it when they see it, and they know where to look for it. Or do they? According to Rybczynski, a professor of architecture and urbanism at the University of Pennsylvania, those who decry sprawl as irresponsible growth and liken its haphazard and aggressive patterns to cancer may be guilty of misdiagnosis.

Conventional measures of population density—the number of inhabitants per square mile—largely confirm conventional notions of sprawl: Older metropolitan areas such as New York and Chicago sprawl the least, while cities in the South and West sprawl the most. But the picture changes when one takes into account how land is actually used. Metropolitan areas contain surprising amounts of acreage that is devoted to parkland or can’t be developed, such as mountain slopes and wetlands. Using a 1997 U.S. Department of Agriculture study of urbanized land (land used commercially, residentially, or recreationally), Rybczynski draws a “radically different” portrait of sprawl. Los Angeles, with 5,318 people per urbanized square mile, is the most densely populated city in the United States, followed closely by New York, Miami, and Phoenix. Philadelphia ranks a surprising tenth, not far ahead of Dallas,

Houston, and least-dense Atlanta, which, with 1,818 people per urbanized square mile, remains the “poster child” for sprawl.

Moreover, U.S. Census Bureau data tracking changes in the population density of urbanized land from 1982 to 1997 yielded unexpected results: In the old industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest, land urbanization occurred at twice the rate of population growth. Even though droves of Americans flocked to western and southern cities, land urbanization in those regions actually proceeded at a slower pace than population growth. New development was actually more sprawl-like in the older metropolitan areas.

So what’s behind sprawl? Disparities in land costs and the rate of population growth, argues Rybczynski. The localities consuming the most land are in the slow-growing Northeast and Midwest, possibly because the existing compact city centers there stimulate a greater demand for less-dense development. Conversely, geographical and water-resource constraints in the South and West have tended to restrict the amount of land available for development, and thus contributed to higher land costs. What really may be bothering the public, Rybczynski suspects, is not sprawl but rapid growth.

### PRESS & MEDIA

## Bias in the Middle East

“Days of Rage” by Sharyn Vane, in *American Journalism Review* (July–Aug. 2002), Univ. of Maryland, 1117 Journalism Bldg., College Park, Md. 20742–7111.

A tidal wave of indignation hit news organizations last spring—angry e-mails, phone calls, letters, even boycotts. The complaint: bias against Israel (or, in the minority view, in favor of Israel) in coverage of the latest violence in the Middle East. “It’s more continuous and more intense than I’ve ever seen it,” said beleaguered National Public Radio ombudsman Jeffrey Dvorkin, who received some 9,000 furious e-mails between March and May.

“People have bristled at everything from word choices to story play,” with failure to cover rallies (pro-Israel, usually) an especial sore point, notes Vane, books editor of *The Austin American-Statesman*. In Minneapolis, some 350 readers of the *Star Tribune*, including the state’s highest elected officials, objected to the paper’s refusal to describe Palestinian “suicide bombers” as “terrorists.” A letter writer from an editor of B’nai B’rith’s *International Jewish Monthly* complained that

while a front-page *Washington Post* feature vividly portrayed the suffering of a Palestinian family, no comparable attention was paid that month to Israeli victims of Palestinian attacks. Meanwhile, writes Vane, the online Palestine Media Watch urges readers to protest news accounts that use the words “retaliation” or “response” in describing Israeli actions, or that fail to refer to the Gaza Strip or the West Bank as “occupied” territories.

“Across the country,” reports Vane, “editors acknowledge they have made mistakes, but to a one maintain that there’s simply no bias shaping coverage. Yet the sheer volume of

complaints raises the question: Can so many readers be wrong?”

Yes, they can, insist the editors. They maintain that much of the criticism is generated by the Internet, which speeds information and misinformation around the world with dizzying speed. Also upping the volume, notes John Schidlovsky, director of the Pew International Journalism Program, are the innumerable pundits now holding forth on the Internet and cable TV. A lot of the critics aren’t really interested in fairness and accuracy. They just want to see their views reflected in news coverage.

## RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

# *Postmodernism after 9/11*

*A Survey of Recent Articles*

**A**fter terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center, some cultural commentators suggested that the attacks might at least do some salutary collateral damage to the doctrine of postmodernism. That voguish academic outlook’s disdain for universal abstractions such as justice, its denial that any objective warrant exists for moral judgment or truth, suddenly appeared terribly hollow. “This destruction seems to cry out for a transcendent ethical perspective,” columnist Edward Rothstein wrote in *The New York Times* (Sept. 22, 2001). “And even mild relativism seems troubling in contrast.”

Postmodernist superstar Stanley Fish, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago, has been eager to take up the challenge, speaking out in an assortment of venues: the *Times* op-ed page (Oct. 15, 2001), *Harper’s Magazine* (July 2002), and *The Responsive Community* (Summer 2002), where he is the main participant in a symposium that asks, “Can Postmodernists Condemn Terrorism?”

Though he deems the word *terrorism* “unhelpful,” Fish answers that question in the affirmative. The Fishian postmodernist—who may or may not be typical of the breed—appears like nothing so much as the quintessential Humphrey Bogart character:

a cynic on the outside, impatient with high-sounding abstractions and causes, and an idealist underneath, ready in the actual event to do battle for truth and justice. “I in fact do” support the U.S. war in Afghanistan, Fish avows.

**I**t turns out that there *are* universals, after all, according to this prominent postmodernist. “I am not saying that there are no universal values or no truths independent of particular perspectives. I affirm both.” It’s just that they can’t be independently proved to everyone’s satisfaction, Fish explains. So the postmodernist must fall back on his own convictions, about which, by definition, he can hardly be a relativist.

“The basis for condemning what was done on September 11 is not some abstract vocabulary of justice, truth, and virtue—attributes claimed by everyone, including our enemies, and disdained by no one—but the historical reality of the way of life, our way of life, that was the target of a massive assault.”

Simon Blackburn, a professor of philosophy at Cambridge University, one of the dozen participants in the *Responsive Community* symposium, hails Fish’s postmodernist as “a mature, imaginative, and open-minded individual. His large human sympathies make him impatient with facile

rhetoric” and doubtful that “justice is entirely on our side. But Fish’s postmodernist is no wimp: He can vigorously defend our way of life and oppose that of our enemies.”

It’s the two relativist “siblings” of the Fishian postmodernist—the empty-minded “freshman relativist,” who thinks all opinions equally valuable, and the destructive relativist, who sneeringly debunks others’ lofty claims, oblivious to his own intellectual limitations—that “have brought the relativist family into disrepute.” They shrink from convictions and causes, and from “politically incorrect” expressions of opinion. “Fish is right to disown them,” Blackburn says, “but wrong to pretend that they are figments of right-wing imagination.”

**F**ish is guilty of “rank sophistry,” charges Peter Berkowitz, a professor of law at George Mason University, writing in *The New Republic* (June 28, 2002). “Either Fish is confused about exactly what postmodernism means, or he is willing to say anything—no matter how internally inconsistent—to win an argument. Or maybe both.” As Fish now presents it, Berkowitz says, postmodernism stands for “the sensible though

innocuous proposition that not everybody will always grasp what universal standards require. Now, if this is what postmodernism teaches, it is hard to understand what all the fuss has been about.” But “the guiding theme of postmodernism is that objectivity, especially in morals, is a sham—in other words, precisely the definition Fish was disavowing.”

Benjamin R. Barber, author of *A Passion for Democracy* (1998) and a participant in the *Responsive Community* symposium, agrees. “We can’t have it both ways: the courage of skepticism, the boldness of anti-foundationalist reasoning, the novelty of irony—but all without consequences. Yet Fish has it both ways.”

“A commitment to the very abstractions that Fish wants us to drop is, for some of us, the most appealing element of ‘our way of life,’” observes another symposium participant, Joshua Cohen, a professor of philosophy and political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. “The country, Lincoln said, was conceived in an idea, and dedicated to a proposition. Drop those (contested) abstractions, and you lose what is arguably best in the American tradition.”

## *Revisiting the Crusades*

“The Real History of the Crusades” by Thomas F. Madden, in *Crisis Magazine* (Apr. 2002),  
1814 ½ N St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Thanks to Osama bin Laden, the Crusades have been getting a lot of bad press lately. The terrorist warlord has often alluded to them—denouncing the U.S. war on terrorism as a new Crusade against Islam, for example—and some Westerners seem to accept his notion that the West committed a grievous injustice.

All this talk leaves Madden, a Saint Louis University historian, dumbfounded. The notion that the Crusades were “brutal and unprovoked attacks against a sophisticated and tolerant Muslim world” smacks of historical revisionism. Yes, the Crusades were bloody and the Crusaders at times merciless, but far from being wars of aggression, the Crusades were defensive measures taken to

protect the Christian world from overthrow by warmongering Muslim rulers.

Following the death of Muhammad in the seventh century, Muslim conquerors rapidly spread their faith with the sword, toppling Christian regimes in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. By the 11th century, Islam had replaced Christianity as the dominant world religion, spreading across most of the Middle East, as well as North Africa and Spain. After Muslims conquered Asia Minor (modern Turkey), vastly reducing the extent of the Byzantine Empire, Pope Urban II convened the Council of Clermont in 1095 to rally “the knights of Christendom.” Their mission was to liberate Jerusalem and other holy

places, and to rescue the Christians of the East from Islamic rule. The First Crusade was an ad hoc and ill-funded affair, yet it ended in victory in 1099 when the Crusaders took Jerusalem and began to establish Christian states in the region. Few would last more than a century.

Although it's been said that the Crusaders were little better than pirates "who took advantage of an opportunity to rob and pillage in a faraway land," Madden observes, recent scholarship suggests otherwise. Crusaders were generally wealthy landholders who sacrificed their lives and material possessions

in the name of God and their fellow Christians in the Holy Land. Crusading was considered "an errand of mercy to right a terrible wrong." While a few Crusaders returned rich, most went home with nothing.

It's true that there was brutality on both sides. In 1204, Crusaders even sacked the Byzantine capital of Constantinople after a dispute with a claimant to the throne, closing an "iron door between Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox" that has never been reopened, Madden notes. (Pope Innocent III excommunicated all those who participated in that Crusade.) But Muslims in the



*French illustrator Gustave Doré created this engraving of "Priests Exhorting the Crusaders"—an event from the First Crusade (1096–99)—for a history of the Crusades published in 1877.*

conquered lands were never required to surrender their property—or their faith.

Each successive Crusade was better funded and organized, yet each was less effective than the one before it. By the 15th and 16th centuries, “the Ottoman Turks [had] conquered not only their fellow Muslims, thus further unifying Islam, but also continued to press westward, capturing Constantinople and plunging deep into Europe itself.”

Only happenstance prevented Islam from moving farther west: Sultan Mehmed II had

gained a foothold in Italy when he died in the late 15th century; Suleiman the Magnificent failed to take Vienna in 1529 only because freak rainstorms forced him to abandon much of his artillery.

The real field of battle, meanwhile, was shifting from the military realm to industry, science, and trade. With the Renaissance and then the Protestant Reformation, European civilization entered a new era of dynamism, and the balance of power shifted decisively to the West.

## *Twelve Tribes under God*

“The Jewish Roots of Western Freedom” by Fania Oz-Salzberger, in *Azure* (Summer 2002),  
22A Hatzfira St., Jerusalem, Israel.

Ask a political theorist to name the historical foundations of Western liberalism, and the reply will be predictable: the polis of Athens, the Roman Republic, the Magna Carta, etc. Few are likely to mention the Torah—the first five books of the Hebrew Bible—or the Talmud. Yet during the birth of liberalism in 17th-century Europe, intellectuals of all kinds found political inspiration in the Old Testament, and many used the Bible in surprisingly inventive and critical ways.

Oz-Salzberger, a historian at the University of Haifa in Israel, argues that many influential “Hebraist” thinkers of this crucial period recognized the Old Testament as a political document—in essence, as the Israelites’ constitution. The English jurist John Selden, for example, argued that national sovereignty was derived from biblical concepts of fixed borders and the division of peoples. Selden helped destroy the last remnants of feudalism and pave the way for nation-states: “Total borders made total sovereignty, and fostered the modern system of international relations.” Petrus Cunaeus, another prominent Hebraist, found in the Bible “what Aristotle, Cicero, and the Stoics all lacked: a clear notion of social responsibility and communal justice.” The godfather of liberalism himself, John Locke, was a noted Old Testament scholar who based his *Two Treatises of Government* in part on an interpretation of the Book of Genesis. Locke’s

famous commitment to the “pursuit of life, liberty, and property,” Oz-Salzberger asserts, was grounded in a theory of responsibility and charity drawn from the Bible.

These philosophers tended to find in the ancient “Hebrew Republic” an example that could correct for deficiencies in the Athenian and Roman models. Three features of the Hebrew Bible held particular interest: its emphasis on national borders, its concern for social equity, and the unique federal structure it prescribed for the Israelites, decentralized into 12 tribes and yet unified in one people. If the West now views liberty as more than the freedom from government intrusion—in other words, if we strive for a free community, governed under a just system of law—then, Oz-Salzberger writes, we owe a great deal to the Bible and its 17th-century readers.

With the notable exception of Locke, however, few Hebraist thinkers are widely remembered, and even Locke’s thought was largely purged of its religious themes in subsequent interpretations, especially during the 18th-century Enlightenment. Under the cultural reign of rabid anti-traditionalists such as Voltaire, and with liberalism acquiring a focus on political institutions, the Bible’s role shrank markedly. The “book of books had been removed from the desk of the political philosopher. It is back in its late-Renaissance place, on the preacher’s pulpit or under the philol-

ogist's lamp," Oz-Salzberger observes. Yet the biblical tales of Saul and David and Gideon and Deborah remain the paradig-

matic stories of political actors. The Bible, she concludes, still has something to teach us about politics and human liberty.

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

### *Catching the Wind*

"Wind Power for Pennies" by Peter Fairley, in *Technology Review* (July–Aug. 2002), One Main St., 7th fl., Cambridge, Mass. 02142.

Wind power's potential has long been praised by dreamy environmentalists and derided by hardheaded energy experts. Wind-driven generators today produce less than one percent of U.S. electricity. But a new lightweight wind turbine with a radically different design "just may change the fate of wind power," reports Fairley, a writer based in Victoria, British Columbia.

Like "giant fans run in reverse," wind turbines "use airfoils that catch the wind and crank a generator that pumps out electricity," he explains. Many now in use have three-bladed rotors that span 87 yards—almost the length of a football field. "Power production rises exponentially with blade length," but the huge structures must be able "to endure gales and extreme turbulence."

During the 1980s and early 1990s, American companies and the U.S. Department of Energy poured hundreds of millions of dollars into a fruitless quest for lightweight turbines that could withstand those forces. Danish researchers, meanwhile, perfected a "heavy-duty version . . . and it has become the Microsoft Windows of the wind power industry," says Fairley. An 80-turbine, \$245 million "wind farm" is being built off the Danish coast.

To construct a wind farm costs about

\$1 million per megawatt, compared with \$600,000 for a conventional gas-fired power plant. Denmark, which gets 20 percent of its power from wind, has been willing to pay the price, in part because fossil fuels are so costly in Europe. The United States is a different story.

Enter the new lightweight prototype, designed by Wind Turbine of Bellevue, Washington, and erected two years ago at Rocky Flats in Colorado, the Energy Department's proving ground. The turbine has two blades (not three) stretching about 44 yards. There's a radical departure in design: The blades are flexible and hinged, and the rotor is positioned downwind, so the blades don't slam into the tower. (In the Danish design, the blades face the wind, and must be heavy to avoid bending back and hitting the tower.) The result: turbines that will be 40 percent lighter and up to 25 percent cheaper to make. A second prototype, being erected near Lancaster, California, should have blades that span 66 yards—"full commercial size"—by the end of the year.

Staffers at the National Wind Technology Center at Rocky Flats have been skeptical. They've seen a lot of failures, Fairley notes. But "today, despite some minor setbacks, those doubts are fading."

### *Heartfelt Thanks*

"Leland C. Clark and Frank Gollan: Bubble Oxygenators and Perfusion Hypothermia" by Robert S. Litwak, in *Annals of American Thoracic Surgery* (Aug. 2002), Elsevier Science, P.O. Box 945, New York, N.Y. 10159-0945.

Hundreds of thousands of people around the world have a special anniversary to mark next year: the debut in 1953 of the basic heart-lung machine used in open-heart surgery. Every

year, some 750,000 Americans undergo such surgery, from relatively routine bypasses to more complex procedures; without it, virtually all would die. (Even so, heart disease

remains the number one cause of death in the United States.)

Litwak, a professor of cardiothoracic surgery at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York, is careful to note that the machine's makers stood on the shoulders of others. Still, the efforts of Leland C. Clark, head of the biochemistry department at Antioch College's Fels research institute, and physician-investigator Frank Gollan were seminal: Much of their "technical and conceptual" work "is being used today."

The basic task of a heart-lung machine is to oxygenate and circulate the patient's blood while the heart is stopped during surgery. The design that Clark and Gollan pioneered, the "bubble oxygenator," called for exposing the patient's venous blood to oxygen forced under pressure through a porous disk. But the process created bubbles that had to be eliminated before the blood could be returned to the patient's body, a problem that defied solution. A key to Clark and Gollan's success was their decision to pass the oxygenated blood through a chamber containing glass beads coated with a new "defoaming" resin created by Dow Corning Laboratories. The first use of such a

machine came in 1953. Only 14 years later, Christiaan Barnard, a U.S.-trained physician in South Africa, performed the first human heart transplant.

A second feature of heart-lung machines is their ability to cool the body and reduce its need (especially the brain's need) for oxygen. Normal body temperature is 37.5° C; most ordinary bypass operations are conducted at a body temperature of 30–32° C, but more serious procedures, such as the replacement of the aortic arch, can require temperatures down to 12° C. Surgeons had resorted, without much success, to ice packs and other techniques; Clark helped pioneer methods that allowed heart-lung machines to pass the blood through a heat exchanger, similar in concept to a car radiator (the first one actually was built by a manufacturer of auto radiators).

For all the tedious labor of research, great passions were at work. Addressing a new generation of heart researchers, Gollan once quoted the 1859 words of Antioch College president Horace Mann: "Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity."

## ARTS & LETTERS

### *The All-American Con Man*

"Being Claude Dukenfield: W. C. Fields and the American Dream" by  
Paul A. Cantor, in *Perspectives on Political Science* (Spring 2002),  
1319 18th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-1802.

Some people consider William Claude Dukenfield Hollywood's all-time greatest con man. But the man we know as W. C. Fields (1880–1946) would have taken that as a compliment. "He loved to cast a spell over an audience," says Cantor, an English professor at the University of Virginia, but he "took equal delight in exposing his own magic as a fraud." It was this peculiar mix of illusion and disillusion that allowed Fields to make the often difficult transition from his early days as a vaudeville juggler and comedian, through a successful middle period with the Ziegfeld Follies, and, finally, to modest success in the movie business with a string of hits in the 1930s and '40s.

He was, in a sense, the first postmodernist. In Cantor's view, "the construction of identi-

ty is the principle that unites Fields the man and Fields the artist." His onscreen persona was "basically the all-American con man, part carnival barker, part patent medicine salesman, part circus showman, part cardsharp, and part stockbroker." This gave his comedy "a distinctly dark side," says Cantor, and may also explain why he never matched the success of Buster Keaton or Charlie Chaplin. Unlike those other comedians, Fields "never developed a truly cinematic imagination," and many of his movies "feel as if they are merely filmed versions of stage plays" — though, to be fair, he never had the creative control that, for instance, Chaplin enjoyed.

Films such as *The Fatal Glass of Beer* (1932) and *The Bank Dick* (1940) still afforded the comedian delicious opportunities to

lampoon America's absurdities. In *The Fatal Glass of Beer*, Fields—whose reputation as a notorious drinker was exaggerated—struck back at the Prohibition-era “demonizing of rum, beer, and other alcoholic beverages.” The wild plot of *The Bank Dick* at one point lands Fields's character in the director's chair on a movie set, where he deadpans: “We've got a 36-hour schedule and a stinko script . . . and it opens in this very town the day after tomorrow.”

The wisecrack reveals how Fields never fully embraced the movie medium. Already in his fifties when he moved to Hollywood, he remained suspicious of its rags-to-riches promises, and his films “debunked a variety of incarnations of the American Dream” even as he lived it. That wasn't his only paradox, Cantor concludes: It was “ironically the very medium whose reality he questioned—the motion picture,” that “allowed him to create images of himself that have fixed him in the public eye forever.”



W. C. Fields spent his entire show business career, from stage to screen, perfecting his role of consummate con man.

#### EXCERPT

### *The Bearable Lightness of Exile*

*Being overseas isn't only nonrestricting, it's actually stimulating. Maybe stimulation comes from restrictions. It's possible. [But] when I look back now on the pieces I wrote in China, I find so much that could be changed, such as an impure use of language, or an awareness of language that just isn't strong enough. . . .*

*When other factors no longer exist, you're left facing only your language. I'd say a writer has a responsibility only to his language; he is not responsible for the “motherland” or the “people.” A writer not only becomes removed from the social environment of his original language, he is also removed from his readers and essentially ends up in a state of “absolute separation.” When you're only responsible for language, your demands on language are far more rigorous. . . .*

*Leaving a society and readers makes writing lose all its practical significance. If you still want to write, it has to be purely for yourself. It's extremely valuable to maintain that pleasure and luxury for yourself, and that, naturally, places great importance on it. So your approach towards language becomes an ever more onerous burden. That's the positive side of “exile”; I'd even say it doesn't have much of a negative side.*

—Gao Xingjian, the Nobel laureate for literature in 2000, who was exiled from China in the late 1980s, in an interview in *Index on Censorship* (No.3, 2002)

## The Real Dickens

“Why Dickens Wrote *A Christmas Carol*” by Michael Timko, in *Current* (March–April 2002), 1319 18th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-1802.

Almost as familiar as Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* is the received tale behind its creation, how the cash-strapped author cobbled together the redemptive morality play of miserly Ebenezer Scrooge with the Victorian sentimentality of the Cratchit family to create his classic Christmas confection. Timko, professor emeritus of English at the City University of New York, detects a deeper design. His attention is drawn to the disparity between the “evocative scenes of goodwill and peace on earth in the Christmas fiction” and the facts that are now known about Dickens, “the acquisitive author and heartless husband.” As Dickens’s own daughter once remarked, “Nothing could surpass the misery and unhappiness of our own home.”

It’s true that when the 31-year-old Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* in late 1843, he hoped it would be a big moneymaker. Smarting from the disappointing response to his gloomy novel *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843), Dickens dreamed of reaping “a Thousand clear” on his holiday tale. The initial sales in England brought in just £230, however, and the author’s impolitic remarks while on a tour in America hurt sales there as well. Dickens then

turned to giving public readings, which launched *A Christmas Carol*’s enduring popularity.

Dickens, says Timko, often remarked that he wrote “not merely to entertain readers and make himself rich, but to promote individual ‘salvation’ and bring about social reform.” He may well have had his own salvation and reform in mind. He was no prince. His father landed in a debtors’ prison when Dickens was 12, and he was forced into miserable labor at a boot-blackening factory. This trauma forever colored his attitude toward money; “like Scrooge, he seemed to put it ahead of everything,” says Timko. Early trauma neither explains nor excuses his treatment of his wife, Catherine, mother of his 10 children. His infatuation with a young actress led Dickens to banish his wife to a walled-off section of their own home; eventually she moved out.

Through Scrooge’s transformation, Dickens shows “that anyone can be converted from a harsh, complacent, selfish worldview to one in which love, hope, and charity are possible.” Maybe even Charles Dickens. That he failed to achieve such a transformation, says Timko, does nothing to lessen the genius of his art.

## Reading or Learning?

“Men of Letters: The Decline of ‘Amateur Journalism’” by Benjamin Schwarz, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (July–Aug. 2002), 77 North Washington St., Boston, Mass. 02114.

In the United States, the phrase “literary journalism” seems almost a contradiction in terms, yet Britain can point to a long tradition in the field. Schwarz, a senior editor at *The Atlantic Monthly*, explains that in the early 19th century, British literary journalism seized upon the book review as its primary medium. These reviews dominated the cultural scene, “largely defining the terms of debate on and discussion of political, religious, economic, scientific, historical, and biographical subjects as well as literature.”

As Schwarz notes in this book review of his own—the book being *Critical Times: The History of the Times Literary Supplement*, by Derwent May—review-essays were strange

creatures: “The book under review often served merely as a peg on which to hang a scintillating essay, and the reviewer was often far more intellectually distinguished than the book’s author.” Leading periodicals such as *The Edinburgh Review*, *The Fortnightly Review*, *The Spectator*, and *The Economist* were filled almost entirely with review-essays.

Reviews served a crucial function, for readers often lacked the time for scholarship yet needed a way of staying informed. John Morely, editor of *The Fortnightly Review*, described the reviewer as a “writer by profession, who, without being an expert, will take trouble to work up his subject, to learn what is said and thought about it, to penetrate to the real

points.” The great 19th-century writer Walter Bagehot compared the review-essay to a sandwich for its ease of consumption and the satisfaction it provided. Reviews were in many ways an antidote to pedantry, and they were not simply watered-down academic pieces. Rather, they enabled a certain worldly engagement on the part of readers. The “true reader,” as Virginia Woolf put it, was “a man of intense curiosity; of ideas; open-minded and communicative, to whom reading is more of the

nature of brisk exercise in the open air than of sheltered study.”

Founded during the last wave of literary journals, *The Times Literary Supplement* slowly grew to prominence in the early 20th century. By the 1930s, however, most British men and women of letters had taken up residence in academia. Paraphrasing Woolf, Schwarz writes that the *TLS* increasingly became the province of “those who loved learning rather than those who loved reading.”

## OTHER NATIONS

### *Le Nouveau Anti-Semitism*

“Liberté, Égalité, Judeophobie” and “Allah Mode” by Christopher Caldwell, in *The Weekly Standard* (May 6, 2002, and July 15, 2002), 1150 17th St., N.W., Ste. 505, Washington, D.C. 20036-4617.

Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of France’s xenophobic National Front, set off worldwide alarms when he gained a place in a runoff election last May with conservative president Jacques Chirac. One reason: Le Pen’s rise has coincided with an unprecedented upsurge of anti-Semitism in France. What is “surprising and confusing,” writes Caldwell, a senior editor at *The Weekly Standard*, is that Le Pen “has practically nothing to do” with the new anti-Semitism. His vote totals were swelled by popular outrage at rising crime rates—higher, by one measure, than in the United States. Today’s anti-Semitism is a product of radical Muslims in France and, more ominously, the French Left. “In fact,” writes Caldwell, “its most dangerous practitioners are to be found among the very crowds thronging the streets to protest” Le Pen.

Between September 2000 (shortly after Palestinians launched the “second intifada” against Israel) and the start of this year, there were, by one count, more than 400 violent anti-Jewish incidents in

France, including firebombings of synagogues and stonings of worshipers. Few of those responsible were followers of Le Pen.



*The aftermath of arson at a Marseille synagogue earlier this year.*

The country's six to eight million Muslims, mostly of North African descent, include a significant underclass, as well as an unknown number of radicalized young people. The French themselves speak of *la banladerisation des banlieues*, a reference to the outer suburbs where many poor Muslims live.

Yet the French political class has resolutely averted its gaze—Chirac going so far as to say there are “no anti-Semites in France”—and treated anti-Jewish violence as the work of juvenile delinquents.

One reason for this reluctance to face facts, according to Caldwell, is that it would mean facing the truth that the French themselves (especially the French Left) are “in danger of embracing” what French academic Pierre-André Taffuëff calls “the new Judeophobia.” Its twin pillars are Holocaust-denial and radical anti-Zionism—not just opposition to Jewish statehood, says Caldwell, but “‘mythic anti-Zionism,’ which treats Zionism as *absolute evil*, against which only absolute warfare can be raised.”

This Manichean view has broad appeal in France, with its long romance with

Third World revolution, and especially among antiglobalization activists. Indifferent to Muslim struggles in Chechnya and elsewhere, they are obsessive about the Middle East. Why? Because the Palestinians confront in “evil” Israel what the antiglobalists see as “the ‘capitalist’ world of the West,” Caldwell writes. José Bové, who became a national hero and leader of the antiglobalist cause after vandalizing a McDonald's in France, has gone so far as to charge that the Israelis sponsored the attacks on French synagogues “in order to distract attention from what they are doing” in the West Bank. Yet Bové is also a leading critic of Le Pen.

There lies the ultimate irony and danger, according to Caldwell: “The most dangerous thing about Jean-Marie Le Pen, who loathes the global economy, distrusts the Jews, and practices gesture politics, is . . . that he'll serve as the hate object who unites anti-Western Islamists and anti-Western antiglobalists, who march against him night after night over ideological differences that grow harder and harder to discern.”

## *Bulgaria's Special Path*

“Bulgaria's Royal Elections” by Zoltan Barany, in *Journal of Democracy* (Apr. 2002), 1101 15th St., N.W., Ste. 800, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Although Bulgaria remained a hardline communist state almost until the end, its ready embrace of parliamentary democracy and its relative tranquility since make it unique among the postcommunist Balkan states. It also stands out for a less admirable reason: its long resistance to fundamental economic reforms.

“Bulgaria's basic difficulty over the last decade,” writes Barany, a political scientist at the University of Texas at Austin, “has been a problem not of *too little* democracy but of *ineffective* democracy: One freely elected government after another has let the economy slide because ministers feared the political consequences of pushing through necessary but exceedingly unpopular economic policies.”

“The first false start came in 1990,” after the communist regime fell, with an assist from Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, in “a sort of polite palace coup.” The Communists changed nominally into socialists, proclaimed

their devotion to pluralism and the rule of law, and won a landslide victory in free elections that June. But the Bulgarian Socialist Party government failed to deliver on its promise of a gradual transition to a market economy.

In late 1991, the center-right Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) won a narrow plurality in the National Assembly. As the ex-Communists “worked busily at turning political clout into economic power,” writes Barany, corruption became rampant. The UDF, however, was chiefly concerned with “wreaking retribution on the communists.” Two more changes of government brought economic reform no nearer. By late 1996, with triple-digit inflation and major banks going bust, “the economy was falling apart.”

Yet Bulgaria's young democratic political system held. A big victory in the 1997 elections by the UDF and its coalition partners resulted in a government that “turned the

economy around and placed Bulgaria firmly on the road to Euro-Atlantic integration.” By early 2000, it had privatized 70 percent of state assets and inflation was down to 6 percent. However, unemployment was still above 18 percent, 40 percent of Bulgarians were in poverty, and corruption remained pervasive.

A disillusioned electorate turned last year to Bulgaria’s ex-king, Simeon II, who had been exiled in 1946 by the Communists. Prime Minister Simeon has promised further economic reform, but his “most daunting task” will be fighting corruption. Barany believes he is ready to do just that.

## *Beijing Is Watching*

“Academic Freedom in China” by Qinglian He, in *Academe* (May–June 2002), American Assn. of Univ. Professors, Ste. 500, 1012 14th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Have the market-oriented reforms and greater openness to the West of the last two decades brought academic freedom to China’s scholars and intellectuals? Not really, writes He, a prominent economist and writer who fled China last year.

Scholars are better off than in the Mao era (1949–76), when critics of the regime could be sentenced to prison or death. However, especially since the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989, the regime has developed “more sophisticated means of ideological control.”

Chinese academics are permitted to read the Western social science literature and employ its techniques, for example, so long as they refrain from direct criticism of the regime. Cooperative academics get salary raises and perquisites. The study of democracy is not allowed; research on the history of the Chinese Communist Party is restricted; and Beijing’s recent reform policies must be shown in a positive light. “Anyone who goes a little beyond the limits set by the departments may face penalties.”

Chiefly because of pressure from international human rights organizations, today’s penalties are hidden. No longer do the authorities formally announce that a scholar has been fired or had his or her books banned—but that is still what happens. Some offenders are put under police surveillance. (He’s own books were officially banned by the government in December 2000, and she left China to become a visiting scholar at the University of Chicago “after months of being followed by security agents who had broken into her home, tapped her phone, and seized documents and personal items,” noted the *University of Chicago Magazine* last year.)

The communist regime also monitors Western scholars who study China. Those who publicly criticize the regime may see “their visa applications rejected without explanation,” losing access that can be vital to a scholarly career. Beijing’s intimidation has been “quite successful,” according to He, “in influencing images of China’s current situation in western scholarship.”

## *Lessons from Sierra Leone*

“Sierra Leone: The State That Came Back from the Dead” by Michael Chege, in *The Washington Quarterly* (Summer 2002), Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1800 K St., N.W., Ste. 400, Washington, D.C. 20006.

Thanks to British and UN peacekeepers, Sierra Leone finally seems to have left civil war and anarchy behind. The country’s long ordeal offers two important lessons for would-be rescuers of failed states, argues Chege, director of the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida at Gainesville.

The first lesson is not to throw money at corrupt dictatorships that repeatedly break their promises to reform. The International Monetary Fund and other aid organizations increased their development assistance to Sierra Leone from \$18 million in 1975 to \$100 million in 1989, “effectively rewarding the making of a disaster,” says Chege.

Sierra Leone's descent began under President Siaka "Pa" Stevens (1968–85). "The 1973 global oil crisis coincided with a dip in diamond and iron ore prices, opening a deficit in external payments that should have been addressed by cuts in public spending, devaluation of the currency, and export diversification," explains Chege. "Stevens's government did the exact opposite," borrowing lavishly and expanding state control over the economy. The inflation rate rose to 50 percent in the 1980s. "With swiftly declining real wages, Sierra Leone's public servants, including the security forces, turned to graft and pilferage of government supplies." By the time Stevens handed the presidency over to his chosen successor, Joseph Momoh, in 1985, the state had already lost legitimacy.

The real trouble began in 1991, with the appearance of the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF), sponsored by President

Charles Taylor of neighboring Liberia, who sold the rebels arms in exchange for diamonds from Sierra Leone's mines. The long-neglected Sierra Leone armed forces soon capitulated, and the country fell into anarchy. Until earlier this year, "networks of warlords and shady external operators, some of them with links leading indirectly to Al Qaeda," flourished amid "one of the goriest civil wars in recent memory."

Chege's second lesson is that the use of private security companies to prop up weak governments (tried twice in Sierra Leone) is a stopgap solution at best: "Western governments, multilateral development agencies, and private foundations have expended large amounts of aid to promote democratic elections, good governance, civil society, and the rule of law." But they need to support two more things: "professional military and police institutions under accountable, democratically elected governments."

## *Riyadh's War with the Web*

"Dueling for *Da'wa*: State vs. Society on the Saudi Internet" by Joshua Teitelbaum, in *The Middle East Journal* (Spring 2002), 1761 N St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-2882.

Ever since its founding in 1902, the modern Saudi state has struggled to "bring its traditional, tribal, and decentralized society under its cultural, ideological, and religious hegemony." Now it confronts an especially insidious foe: the Internet.

The Saudi government offered public Internet access only in 1999, reports Teitelbaum, a senior research fellow at Tel Aviv University's Moshe Dayan Center. Service is expensive and slow; all Saudi Internet traffic is routed through a single server in Riyadh that is equipped with web filtering technology. Early in 2001, when less than seven percent of the Saudi public had access to the Internet, some 200,000 websites were on the proscribed list and 250 were being added every day.

But censorship is an impossible task. Political dissidents such as the exiled London surgeon Sa'd al-Faqih have set up websites abroad; his Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia website ([www.islah.org](http://www.islah.org)) offers users technical tips on how to get around Saudi cen-

sors. And one need not be a computer wizard to get through. Some Saudis use illegal satellite hookups or simply dial up Internet service providers outside the kingdom.

Like people everywhere, Saudis use the Internet mostly for dating and entertainment, but this can be just as subversive as political dissent in a puritanical land where young men and women are supposed to be introduced by their parents. At Saudi shopping malls, Teitelbaum says, young women discreetly invite suitors to slip them their e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers, for unchaperoned conversations. Internet chat-rooms, many of them apparently uncensored, allow the young to talk about matters of the heart and to debate the many restrictions on women.

The Saudi government also exploits the Internet for its own purposes, notably to promote its Wahhabi version of Islam around the world, but the electronically assisted forces of nature promise the Saudis a pitched battle.

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Reviewed by Richard A. Posner

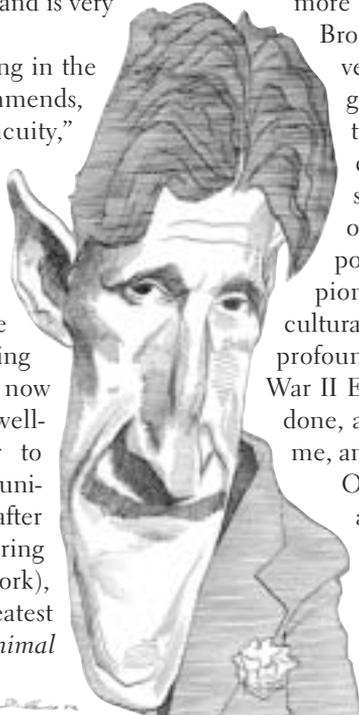
As an Orwell idolater, I was predisposed to like Christopher Hitchens's book, which though not uncritical is immensely admiring. Hitchens is well equipped to write an intelligent, sympathetic guide to and critique of George Orwell (1903–50), for he too is English, an intellectual but not a professor, and a maverick rather than a doctrinaire leftist. A short book, neither a biography nor a full-scale study of Orwell's work, *Why Orwell Matters* nevertheless covers a lot of ground and is very well written.

I don't agree with everything in the book, however. Hitchens commends, as an observation of "great acuity," Lionel Trilling's silly assertion that Orwell "is not a genius—what a relief! What an encouragement. For he communicates to us the sense that what he has done, any one of us could do." This patronizing dictum, so oft repeated and now endorsed by so fervent an Orwellian as Hitchens, bids fair to become canonical. Lacking a university education, dying at 46 after years of execrable health (during which he did his best work), Orwell wrote the greatest political satires since Swift, *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949); was a

brilliant literary critic; wrote some of the 20th century's best journalism and contemporary history, such as *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), and indeed is considered by some the founder of investigative journalism; was one of the most penetrating critics of Stalinism and the fellow-traveling Left, even though he never visited the Soviet Union; ranks among the greatest English prose stylists; invented a number of memorable phrases (such as "some animals are more equal than others" and "Big

Brother"); and wrote with great verve and insight about language (his essay "Politics and the English Language" is a classic), the intelligentsia, social class, and a variety of other subjects. His essays on popular culture made him a pioneer of what is now called cultural studies, and his early novels profoundly influenced post-World War II English fiction. What he has done, any one of us could do? Not me, and not Trilling either.

Orwell is patronized by academics because he was sensible; because he wrote simply, avoiding foreign, Latinate, and obscure words and complex sentence structure; because he said simple things that needed



saying; because he was a late bloomer (no Mozart, he); because he did not go to university but instead became a policeman for five years; and above all because he despised intellectuals and to a degree intellect itself (a typical jibe is “the more intelligent, the less sane”), and particularly *leftist* intellectuals, which most intellectuals are. His uncompromising hostility to communists and fellow travelers has made him a bone in the throat of the Left. Hitchens quotes astounding jabs at Orwell by well-known leftist intellectuals such as E. P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, and Edward Said—the last saying that Orwell observed politics from “inside bourgeois life . . . from the comforts of bookselling, marriage, friendship with other writers. . . . Orwell’s writing life was thus from the start an affirmation of unexamined bourgeois values.” (Orwell’s life *comfortable*?) Orwell’s insistence on plain speaking has particularly affronted the postmodernist Left—he was a foe of postmodernism before it existed.

Orwell’s plain style (not much discussed by Hitchens) is easily misunderstood as artless, contributing to the belief that he was not a genius. He did avoid long sentences and pretentious words, but he did not write in Basic English (Newspeak, the thought-destroying language adopted by the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, is a satire on Basic English). Consider this passage quoted by Hitchens from a 1940 essay in which Orwell recalls a beating incident from his days as an imperial policeman in Burma: “That was nearly 20 years ago. Are things of this kind still happening in India? I should say that they probably are, but that they are happening less and less frequently. On the other hand it is tolerably certain that at this moment a German somewhere or other is kicking a Pole. It is quite certain that a German somewhere or other is kicking a Jew. And it is also certain (*vide* the German newspapers) that German farmers are being sentenced to terms of imprisonment for showing ‘culpable kindness’ to the Polish prisoners working for them.”

Not all the words in this passage are necessary to convey information, nor is the passage literal truth (“kicking” is being used figuratively, surely). After the first two sentences, the true “plain speaker” would have written: “Probably, but less and less frequently. But

Germans are unquestionably mistreating Poles and, even more, Jews, and the German newspapers acknowledge that German farmers are being sentenced to prison for showing ‘culpable kindness’ to the Polish prisoners working for them.” That would be prose as clear as a windowpane, Orwell’s stated aim—only it would not sound like him at all.

Hitchens misses Orwell’s slyness. He posed as a simple man, but he was both an artful writer and a sophisticated intellectual. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* exaggerates the efficacy of brainwashing and considers television an instrument of oppression rather than of liberation; these are typical errors of intellectuals. Here and elsewhere, Hitchens misses some opportunities for valid criticism of Orwell, instead accusing him unjustifiably of a “thuggish episode” concerning W. H. Auden’s poem “Spain.” Written during the Spanish Civil War when Auden was a Communist, the poem at one point depicts a day in the life of a party member, including “the conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder.” Orwell comments acidly: “Notice the phrase ‘necessary murder.’ It could only be written by a person to whom murder is at most a word. . . . The Hitlers and Stalins find murder necessary, but they don’t advertise their callousness, and they don’t speak of it as murder; it is ‘liquidation,’ ‘elimination,’ or some other soothing phrase. Mr. Auden’s brand of amorality is only possible if you are the kind of person who is always somewhere else when the trigger is pulled. So much of left-wing thought is a kind of playing with fire by people who don’t even know that fire is hot.”

Hitchens deems this passage unfair because Auden’s “‘brand of amorality’ consisted in a sincere attempt to overcome essentially pacifist scruples,” and blames the unfairness on Orwell’s “unexamined and philistine prejudice against homosexuality.” He has not read the poem carefully. Auden is not talking about fighting. When soldiers kill in battle, it is not called “murder.” Auden can only be referring to political execution, which the Communists in Spain engaged in wholesale (Orwell narrowly escaped being one of the victims). Once this is understood, the offensive complacency of the poem

becomes apparent and justifies Orwell's criticism—which Auden, to his credit, accepted.

There is no hint that Auden's homosexuality had anything to do with this criticism, although it is true that Orwell used expressions such as the “pansy left” elsewhere in referring to Auden and Stephen Spender. Hitchens engages in the obligatory search for hints of homosexuality in Orwell himself (no prominent person is spared such a search nowadays), and, in a chapter on feminist critiques, concludes that Orwell thought women on average less intelligent than men. But that was a *virtue* in Orwell's eyes. We must be attentive to the special sense in which he used “intelligent” (remember “the more intelligent, the less sane”). Julia, the heroine of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, is too practical minded, too sensible, to fall for the baloney dished out by the Party (“one has to belong to the intelligentsia to believe things like that; no ordinary man could be such a fool,” is another of Orwell's aphorisms). Orwell also fiercely opposed abortion. In short, he was not politically correct. A man who died in 1950 did not subscribe to all the values that the likely readers of Hitchens's book happen to hold a half-century later. How shocking!

Hitchens dubs Orwell “one of the founders of the discipline of post-colonialism” (which makes Said's criticisms seem particularly churlish). I knew that Orwell was critical of imperialism, but the deep and insightful character of his criticisms was not apparent until I read Hitchens's skillful assemblage of quotations from Orwell's scattered writings on the subject. And this helps explain a puzzle about Orwell's reputation: why, though he was a self-described democratic socialist and a loyal member of the British Labor Party, he is not a bone in the throat of the Right as well as of the Left. Part of the reason is his anticommunism and his acute sense of the risk that socialism could become totalitarian—he reviewed Friedrich Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) favorably and named the totalitarianian regime in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* “IngSoc” (English Socialism), though he denied that he had the Labor Party in mind. Norman Podhoretz, as Hitchens reminds us,

absurdly claimed in 1984 that Orwell if still living would have been a neoconservative, just like Podhoretz. No one knows what Orwell would have been thinking at age 81 had he lived that long. But the main reason Orwell does not trouble the Right is simply that British colonialism and the British class system are no longer rallying cries for conservatives. “Democratic socialism,” in addition, was just a slogan for Orwell—he was no economist and had no practical ideas for running a society on socialist principles.

Hitchens, here following Jeffrey Meyers, Orwell's most recent biographer, acquits Orwell of the charge of being a McCarthyite *avant la lettre*. Orwell kept a list of communist sympathizers and near the end of his life turned it over to the British Foreign Office. He did not want these fellow travelers punished or even exposed, but he was concerned that they would undermine the democratic Left if they were given positions of responsibility in the government or the media—as doubtless they would have done. His position was no different from that of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Walter Reuther, and other liberals of the late 1940s who fought communist and fellow-traveler infiltration of American political, labor, and cultural institutions.

Orwell emerges from Hitchens's book as the public intellectual par excellence, a much-needed model in an age in which intellectuals have ever-greater access to the popular media yet are increasingly irresponsible in their utterances, often to the point of absurdity. But emphasis on Orwell as a public intellectual threatens to obscure his literary genius, which has been underrated and does not receive its due from Hitchens. *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* were no doubt intended by Orwell primarily as warnings against Stalinism. But they are great works of the imagination, which, like the works of Swift, equally topical in their time, can be read with pleasure and profit by people who have never heard of Stalin or the Soviet Union (i.e., by young people). *Animal Farm* is a novel of great pathos (concentrated in the figure of the horse Boxer), black humor, and sinister undercurrents.

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a great romantic novel, science-fiction tale, horror story, boys' adventure story, and Kafkaesque novel of the absurd, all rolled into one. Neither work has richly elaborated characters, colorful prose, or complex social situations, but that is just to say that they are not of the same genre as the fiction of Charles Dickens, Fyodor Dostoevsky, or Henry James. Neither are the

works of Franz Kafka or Edgar Allan Poe—and they were geniuses too.

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## Tainted Glass

### THE ARCHITECTURE OF PHILIP JOHNSON.

By Hilary Lewis; photos by Richard Payne. Bulfinch Press. 330 pp. \$85

Reviewed by Tom Lewis

“Philip, am I inside or out?” Frank Lloyd Wright asked when visiting Philip Johnson’s Glass House in New Canaan, Connecticut. “Do I take my hat off or leave it on?” Imagine this meeting of the young and old turks that took place sometime in the 1950s: the young, cosmopolitan Johnson, tall, well dressed, well heeled, gay, promoter of himself and especially of the International Style; the octogenarian Wright, short, dressed in his signature shoulder cape and broad-brimmed hat, often financially strapped, decidedly heterosexual, promoter of his Prairie Style and especially of himself. The two men had been sparring ever since an architecture exhibition in 1932 at the new Museum of Modern Art, where Johnson had depicted Wright as a shadowy forerunner of the brilliant architects of the International School, especially Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. More than once, Johnson had declared Wright the greatest architect of the 19th century.

Mies at the time served as Johnson’s muse. Studying architecture at Harvard University, Johnson even designed his first house in Cambridge along Miesean lines. The Glass House of 1949, echoing Mies’s Farnsworth House in Plano, Illinois, marked the summa of his appreciation, yet it was a very different structure. Mies was so unhappy with the result that he refused Johnson’s offer to spend a night there. And no wonder. Farnsworth’s

girders, columns, and dead-white color appear heavy, sterile, and charmless in comparison with the warmth of Johnson’s glass gem. Johnson had out-Miesed Mies.

Johnson designed like a honeybee, culling virtuous sweets from many flowers. With the Glass House, the nectar didn’t all come from Mies. The structure owes as much to classical ideas of balance as it does to the International Style. True, it has the glass walls and the steel frame that the Internationalists so loved, as well as Mies’s chrome-and-leather Barcelona chairs and day bed. But it also has features that no doubt made Mies uncomfortable, particularly a brick floor, and a brick cylinder that encloses a fireplace and a bathroom. Johnson stresses the totality of a design, too. He pays as much attention to landscapes and interiors as to buildings. Wright’s critical question about the Glass House was on the money; Johnson himself has said that “trees are the basic building block of the place.”

Not all Johnson buildings are as successful as the Glass House. No pretty picture can make the brown wood and glass of the Paine House in Wellsboro, New York, anything other than a mediocre postwar residence. One could easily mistake Johnson’s dormitory at Seton Hill College in Pennsylvania for a Holiday Inn. The John F. Kennedy memorial in Dallas seems less the sacred place he intended than a pair of huge, cold, graffiti-



*Philip Johnson's Glass House in New Canaan, Connecticut. "Comfort is not a function of beauty," said Johnson. "Sooner or later we will fit our buildings so that they can be used."*

attracting concrete horseshoes. The façade at 1001 Fifth Avenue, with its tongue-in-cheek, slanting mansard roof, reduces postmodernism to a silly joke.

But those are exceptions. Most of Johnson's designs are remarkable. The best of his buildings—say, the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute in Utica, New York, the Pennzoil and Transco towers in Houston, the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, the interior of the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center, and even the AT&T Building in New York, with its Chippendale highboy top—are like finely constructed stage sets. All the elements, interior and exterior, come together in graceful harmony.

**I**t has been 60 years since Johnson executed his first design, his own one-story house in Cambridge. Like orchestra conductors and Supreme Court justices, architects tend to live a long time. Mies died at 83; Wright at 91; Johnson is now a vigorous 96. It is only fitting to celebrate his rich career with a handsome coffee-table book. *The Architecture of Philip Johnson* provides a brief foreword by Johnson, an intelligent but light essay by Hilary Lewis, and close to 400 splendid photographs

by Richard Payne, with captions by Stephen Fox. It makes a wonderful companion to Franz Schulze's biography *Philip Johnson: Life and Work* (1994), which was burdened with disappointing illustrations.

Hilary Lewis paints a sunny picture of Johnson's connection to Mies, the influence of historical precedents, and his interest in emerging architectural movements. As she remarks, Johnson "often embraces forms developed by others but then transforms these in various ways." She might have said that he appropriates others' designs and improves on them. The industrious bee alights on many flowers. But Lewis might also have spent a few words on some *fleurs du mal* whose nectar Johnson sucked up and later secreted. They constitute a part of his architecture in general and of his Glass House in particular. This darker past has been documented by Schulze and a number of critics and is important in any assessment of Johnson's work.

After the Museum of Modern Art's International Show that so annoyed Wright, Johnson left for Europe to see the emerging Third Reich. He attended a Hitler rally held outside Potsdam and was taken with the drama of Hitler's harangue as well as "all

those blond boys in black leather.” Returning to the United States, he sought out some of this nation’s fledgling fascists and dictators—first Huey Long, who rebuffed him, and then Father Charles Coughlin, whose magazine *Social Justice* soon featured Johnson’s anti-Semitic diatribes. For a Coughlin rally in Chicago, Johnson designed a platform modeled on one he had seen Hitler use in Potsdam. No doubt he improved on the original.

Johnson’s interest in Hitler led him back to Germany as a guest of the Propaganda Ministry to witness the invasion of Poland. “We saw Warsaw burn and Modlin being bombed. It was a stirring spectacle,” he wrote to a friend, Viola Bodenschatz. Back in the United States, he churned out articles and speeches dismissing Nazi atrocities as fabrications of American and British propagandists. By 1940, after being investigated by the FBI and linked with the “American Fascists” in magazines, Johnson left the public sphere for architecture school at Harvard. He had been an architecture curator and critic; now he would be an architect. The Glass House marked his reentry into public life.

And from what flowers did Johnson suck for his Glass House? The blossoms, it seems, of a burning Poland. As Johnson said in *Architectural Review* in 1950, the main motif of the house, the brick platform and the brick cylinder, came not from Mies “but rather from a burnt wooden village I saw once where nothing was left but foundations and chimneys of brick. Over the chimney I slipped a steel cage with a glass skin. The chimney forms the anchor.” Based on the evidence, biographer Schulze and other critics conclude that the architect had admired this “burnt wooden village” during his Nazi-sponsored junket to Poland. Ruins fascinate Johnson. In his preface to this book, he directs readers to the ruins of the New York State pavilion he designed for the 1964–65 World’s Fair. “In a way, the ruin is even more haunting than the original structure. There ought to be a university course in the pleasure of ruins.” Stirring spectacle indeed.

Whatever its sources, the architecture of Philip Johnson’s career has often been superb. His New Canaan prop-

erty, now about 43 acres, serves as a hive for his many gatherings. In the five decades since he built the Glass House and adjacent guest house there, he has added a pavilion, painting and sculpture galleries, a library/study, a “ghost house” (made of chainlink fencing on the ruined foundation of a farm building), a tower in tribute to Lincoln Kirstein, and a gatehouse. In these structures we glimpse inspiration from, among others, the Mycenaean treasury of Atreus, Pop art, Michael Graves, deconstruction, Giorgio De Chirico, postmodernism, and the Platonic solids. It is not so much a house, Johnson has said, as “a clearinghouse of ideas.”

However talented and clever Philip Johnson is, I suspect that his transmutations will not influence and inspire future architects in the way that the work of Wright, Mies, Le Corbusier, or Louis Kahn has done. Indeed, this already seems to be the case. Rather than having been influenced by Johnson, important younger architects such as Robert Venturi, Frank Gehry, and the late Charles Moore have influenced him.

Johnson’s life and work remind me of Ezra Pound’s. A scurrilous anti-Semite and Fascist, Pound was also an extraordinary poet. I find the political stance of both men repugnant, yet I’m moved by their art. (Fate wasn’t as kind to Pound. While Johnson was executing lucrative commissions for the Rockefeller and Schlumberger oil barons and designing the sculpture garden in the Museum of Modern Art, the poet, who was arrested in Italy for broadcasting fascist propaganda, was languishing in St. Elizabeth’s mental hospital in Washington.) However contemptible Philip Johnson’s politics were (or are), we must recognize him as a Nietzschean to whom art matters above all. And as Nietzsche reminds us, “Our treasure lies in the beehive of our knowledge. We are perpetually on the way thither, being by nature winged insects and honey gatherers of the mind.”

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# RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

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## *THE VEHEMENT PASSIONS.*

By Philip Fisher. Princeton Univ. Press.  
268 pp. \$26.95

With this persuasive and elegant essay on the paradigmatic human passions of fear, anger, grief, and wonder, Harvard University English professor Fisher joins a growing group of scholars bent on emotional rehabilitation: restoring to respectability the emotions so distrusted by Enlightenment rationalism and the forms of Stoicism that predate it. The oft-satirized affectless thinker, the dedicated scientific acolyte who is successful only because dead from the neck down, is being debunked. Emotion, the new thinking says, is itself a form of knowledge.

Fisher goes further than simply defending wonder as the impetus for systematic philosophical and scientific investigation. He wants to claim that more debilitating and unpleasant states, such as anger and mourning, are also forms of knowledge. “Each of the strong emotions or passions defines for us an intelligible world,” he writes, “and does so by means of horizon lines that we can come to know only in experiences that begin with impassioned or vehement states within ourselves.”

Unlike philosophers Ronald de Sousa and Martha Nussbaum, who are also keen to “cognitivize” emotion, Fisher wisely stops short of draining the feeling from feeling. This may have something to do with his background in English rather than philosophy. His book, though considerably less rigorous and exhaustive (or exhausting) than Nussbaum’s *Upheavals of Thought* (2001), is richer in insight and more human. It’s also—this is a hard judgment to defend but apposite—delightful. Fisher ingeniously mixes discussion of Achilles, Oedipus, Othello, Lear, and Ahab with careful critical assessments of Kantian ethics, rational choice theory, and the philosophical underpinnings of the legal system.

While the discussion ranges widely, Fisher’s particular concerns are those experiences we call “vehement”—when we are carried “out of our minds” or, more precisely, out of the worlds our rational minds most-

ly require us to inhabit. As Fisher persuasively shows, we cannot know the limits of mind and world until we butt up against them in passionate, unwilling conflict. Vehement passion is always rooted in affronts to the will, deep challenges to the integrity of the self. Aristotle, Baruch Spinoza, and David Hume are his main guides in this subtle phenomenology of contingency, revealing themselves not only as great systematic philosophers but as thinkers sensitive enough to see that my anger and grief tell me who counts and who doesn’t, that my body (with its quakings and blushings and hot flashes) is inseparable from my soul, and that there are “paths of passion” (as when grief gives way to anger and then to shame or bitterness).

The essential problem of all philosophy, Fisher concludes, is that *my* world—where I am afraid or enraged or resentful, and where I am always alone—is not, and cannot be, *the* world of the modern universalist imagination. Our patterns of thought, especially over the past three or four centuries, have attempted to play down this inconvenient reality, but in vain. Indeed, we could take his insight a step further. The questions of philosophy—the questions of existence—are all, ultimately, insoluble puzzles in epistemology. What do I know about my place in the world? How do I make sense of what I am feeling? How can I know what *you* are feeling? Maybe you love me, maybe you don’t. Can I ever know for sure? Thus does vehement passion take root.

—MARK KINGWELL

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## *DRAWING THE LINE: Science and the Case for Animal Rights.*

By Steven M. Wise. Perseus. 322 pp. \$26

“Legal rights” for chimps, elephants, dolphins, and other animals sounds very new and radical until you stop to consider that there is only one legal right that any animal could possibly exercise: the right to be free from human cruelty or other mistreatment. Whether we call it a “right” or something else

matters little, least of all to the animals.

You have to keep this in mind while reading *Drawing the Line*, for, like other advocates of the cause, Wise has a way of making his case seem more alarming than necessary. His argument amounts to this: Our understanding of animals, and especially advanced mammals, has increased substantially. Their intelligence and emotional sensitivity, though not rivaling our own, are real and morally consequential. Precisely because we alone are rational and moral creatures, we have a duty to acknowledge these facts about animals' natures and capacities and to revise our legal boundaries accordingly.

An attorney in the field, Wise aims for a "realizable minimum" of legal rights for various species, including chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans, and other primates whose mental awareness is proved by, among other evidence, their ability to learn rudimentary sign language. Behavioral scientists try to dismiss this communication as mechanistic imitation, but actually seeing it, as I have, leaves little doubt of conscious and deliberate expression.

In similar research, dolphins correctly press levers marked "yes" and "no" in response to such questions as whether a ball is in their tank, and they show a grasp of "over," "under," "through," and other concepts. The famed Alex, an African gray parrot, can correctly identify objects, shapes, colors, and quantities up to six, and can make simple requests such as "go see tree." Elephants, observed both in captivity and in the wild, prove themselves resourceful problem solvers, justify their reputation for long-term memory, and display many well-documented signs of emotion (as in the case

of calves convulsing in nightmares after seeing their mothers slain).

Each of these species has what Wise calls "practical autonomy"—conscious desires and an ability to pursue those desires—which, he argues, entitles them to "dignity rights" and "legal personhood." The latter concept will jar many readers, but what would legal personhood for, say, elephants amount to? Specific and well-enforced protections from the people who harm them—those engaged in the exotic wildlife trade, for example, or the vicious people who to this day still hunt elephants for trophies.

The strength of Wise's case is that, unlike the dreary utilitarian theories that have given animal rights a bad name, it rests on a belief that individual creatures have intrinsic rather than instrumental moral value, and thereby places animal welfare squarely within the Western legal tradition. Indeed, he might have argued that even as we dispute the finer questions about animal rights, the law has already conceded a crucial point through the many statutes that make it a crime, in most states a felony, to abuse certain animals regardless of whether they belong to the offender—a recognition of moral status and a *de facto* legal right trumping the claims of property.

Critics of animal rights often fail to supply a useful moral alternative that would restrain human cruelty and instill respect for our fellow creatures. To their credit, rights advocates at least confront abhorrent practices and demand hard standards in the care of animals, as Wise has done here with the skill and seriousness the subject deserves.

—MATTHEW SCULLY

## HISTORY

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### JESSE JAMES: *Last Rebel of the Civil War.*

By T. J. Stiles. Knopf. 512 pp. \$27.50

One hundred and twenty years after "that dirty little coward" Robert Ford shot Jesse James in the back of the head while the latter stood on a chair to dust a picture in his Missouri home, scholars continue to debate the outlaw's importance in American social history.

Now, in a deeply researched work that may become the authoritative biography, independent historian and frequent *Smithsonian* contributor Stiles calls James (1847–82) a "forerunner of the modern terrorist."

The assertion strikes a sour note in an otherwise well-written and well-reasoned work, the first significant examination of the outlaw's life since William A. Settle's *Jesse James Was*

*Jesse James, in a photo taken shortly before his death in 1882.*

*His Name* (1966). That life was brief but eventful. James's 21 daylight robberies left more than a dozen dead, and by some estimates netted a quarter-million dollars in loot—a staggering sum at the time.

Unlike previous biographers, Stiles doesn't flinch from the fact that until the end of his life, James was driven by the racist and violent lessons of his childhood. For years before the Civil War officially began, western Missouri was the setting for a bitter guerrilla conflict over the expansion of slavery into the Kansas Territory. The family that Frank and Jesse James were born into in the 1840s was culturally aligned with the Southern aristocracy, and it owned a few slaves. The father, Robert, denounced abolitionists from his Baptist pulpit; the mother, domineering six-footer Zerelda, applauded as patriotic the atrocities committed by Confederate guerrillas, among them William "Bloody Bill" Anderson, a dashing scalp-taking lunatic.

Stiles is at his best when he uses his research into the period to depict the everyday lives of Jesse James and his contemporaries. When he cites unrelated modern scholarship to support his conclusions, however, he is less successful. In downplaying the seriousness of a chest wound suffered by James in 1865, for instance, he notes that a war hospital in 1990s Croatia found similar injuries "particularly survivable"—glossing over medical advances of the intervening century. By contrast, Stiles devotes only a parenthetical note to a singularly pertinent study: the 1995 exhumation and the DNA testing that determined, once and for all, that Jesse James did not escape assassin Ford's bullet. Although few scholars believed that James had survived, the possibility had captured the popular imagination.

The myth of James as noble outlaw began during his lifetime. Previous scholars have maintained that James himself had little role



in fashioning it, but Stiles disagrees. "[James] was far from an inarticulate symbol created by others," he writes. "When the unspoken assumptions are cleared away, a truly substantial Jesse James emerges."

Stiles likens James to a terrorist because of the outlaw's pro-Confederate political consciousness and his close relationship with "propagandist and power broker"

John Newman Edwards, a newspaper editor who wrote about the

James Gang. Although the argument is trendy, the support is thin for comparing Jesse James—even a murderous, thieving, and racist Jesse James—with the sort of modern-day terrorists who flew airliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Despite his scholarship, Stiles falls victim to the most seductive trap in historical research: interpreting the past through a contemporary lens.

—MAX MCCOY

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**ORGANIZING AMERICA:  
*Wealth, Power, and the Origins of  
Corporate Capitalism.***

By Charles Perrow. Princeton Univ. Press. 259 pp. \$34.95

It seems obvious to most people that advanced societies require big organizations. In 1998, about half of job-holding Americans worked for companies with more than 500 employees. We must tolerate the curses of bigness—impersonality, excessive economic and political power—to enjoy the benefits of mass production and high living standards.

Not so, says retired Yale University sociologist Perrow. America could have attained its prosperity without the drawbacks of giant businesses. Smaller companies could have provided comparable gains while treating workers better and minimizing the dangers of concentrated power.

It's a seductive argument, but unpersuasive. In the years when big enterprises began to dominate, the United States overtook

Europe in living standards. In 1870, per capita U.S. income totaled \$2,445 (in 1990 dollars), according to economic historian Angus Maddison. The amount was only slightly higher than the European average, and behind the averages of three major countries (Britain, Belgium, and the Netherlands). By 1913, American per capita income had reached \$5,301, a figure that exceeded Britain's average and was roughly 40 percent above Europe's. If big companies didn't create U.S. prosperity, the coincidence is certainly striking.

To make the alternative case, Perrow examines the 19th-century origins of corporate capitalism by focusing on textiles and railroads. In textiles, he says, there were two models: the big New England mills, usually owned by corporations with hundreds or thousands of employees; and a collection of smaller firms in Philadelphia, usually owned by partnerships and families. The New England firms concentrated on inexpensive textiles, while the Philadelphia mills made smaller batches of more specialized products. According to Perrow, the Philadelphia mills were profitable, employed greater numbers of skilled workers, and generally treated labor better.

As for railroads, he says that government-regulated networks in Britain and France were efficient, which demonstrates that large, unregulated companies weren't necessary for efficiency. Large companies became dominant in the United States, he contends, by creating political and legal advantages for themselves. Railroads bribed Congress and the states for subsidies. Corporations won legal advantages over other business forms: Limited liability, for example, meant that owners weren't liable for the corporation's debts. Perrow also cites the Supreme Court's *Dartmouth College* decision (1819), which, he says, placed chartered corporations "above the state law."

But little of this is convincing. New England textile mills produced the low-cost goods necessary for a mass-consumption society, while the Philadelphia mills served smaller, more selective markets. Perhaps Britain and France regulated railroads efficiently, but could American politicians have done so? This seems dubious. Rivalry among states was intense; Perrow cites instances

when states tried to reroute tracks to help themselves and hurt their neighbors—hardly efficient. Limited corporate liability created economic advantages by attracting investment capital and promoting risk taking. Finally, the *Dartmouth College* ruling didn't put corporations above the law. Rather, it said that once states granted a charter, they couldn't alter the terms without violating the Constitution's protection of contracts.

Early American capitalism was a messy mixture of private money and public privilege, as Perrow reminds us. Eager to protect "property rights," courts often intervened on the side of business. There were corruption and industrial strife. The system's great virtue was that it permitted continuous change, including the rise of modern industry. Bigger does not always mean better, but that's not to say there was an idyllic alternative for pioneering and spreading mass—that is, democratic—markets.

—ROBERT J. SAMUELSON

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*VIDA CLANDESTINA:*

*My Life in the Cuban Revolution.*

By Enrique Oltuski. Wiley. 276 pp.  
\$24.95

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*INSIDE THE CUBAN  
REVOLUTION:*

*Fidel Castro and the  
Urban Underground.*

By Julia E. Sweig. Harvard Univ. Press.  
302 pp. \$29.95

Oltuski tells the story of his transformation from University of Miami fraternity boy to organizer of the urban insurgency wing of Fidel Castro's revolutionary 26th of July Movement in Cuba, where he contributed to the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista's government in 1959. Sweig focuses on the same urban insurgency, but she writes about the collective experience of the young men and women, Oltuski among them, who fashioned the movement.

Revolutionaries make revolutions, both authors agree, and their actions are more important than social and economic conditions in directing the course and outcome of revolutions. But the authors differ on the relative importance of leaders and followers. That difference is one of the central issues in the



*Fidel Castro golfed with Che Guevara at Havana's Buena Vista Social Club, after their victory in the Cuban Revolution of 1959.*

understanding of large-scale acts of political violence over time throughout the world.

Oltuski, who is now Cuba's deputy minister of fisheries, remains an unreconstructed believer in the primacy of leaders. "I think to change, or even to evolve history, it's not enough for the popular conditions to exist," he writes. "You also need the man who strikes the spark and knows how to lead the people along the right path in the midst of as complex a situation as a revolution." In his view, Castro has been such a leader, and the Cuban Revolution is unimaginable without him.

By contrast, Sweig, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, argues that the late-1950s "battle for Cuba's future was a power struggle . . . as much within the opposition as against the Batista dictatorship." Revolutionary Cubans acted in concert, she argues, and those in the urban areas did more than those in the countryside to weaken Fulgencio Batista's grip until about eight months before his fall. Castro's eventual triumph resulted from many factors, including accidents. Sweig acknowledges his many skills but insists that he did not tower over events all along. Many other revolutionaries also made this revolution.

Oltuski and Sweig concur on the significance of the urban underground. In doing so, they dispute the position taken by the official historian of the Cuban Revolution, Ernesto (Che) Guevara, who maintained that Castro-led guerrillas in the mountains were the architects of revolutionary victory. Guevara failed twice when he tried to implement his

theories of rural revolution elsewhere, first in the Congo and then in Bolivia, where he was killed in 1967. Oltuski and Sweig demonstrate that Guevara was wrong about revolution in Cuba as well.

These books disappoint because they focus solely on the urban underground of the 26th of July Movement (named for the date of a major attack on a barracks). One learns little about other revolutionary movements, such as the Revolutionary

Directorate and the Second Front at the Escambray Mountains, whose acts of violence also contributed to Batista's overthrow. And one learns nothing about the state's collapse from within. Six months before Batista fell, Fidel Castro and his brother Raúl commanded only some 400 guerrillas. The Batista regime imploded from a combination of military unprofessionalism, inadequate training, weaponry unsuitable for guerrilla warfare, the theft of war supplies, and inept strategic decisions.

The books are very well written, however, and they convey a lively sense of battle and commitment, chance and tragedy, human foibles and heroism. Whereas Oltuski simply relates his own tale, Sweig has conducted impressive archival and other primary research, employing documents newly declassified by the Cuban government. Her analysis is thorough, careful, and nuanced, and the book will likely become the key work on the subject.

—JORGE I. DOMÍNGUEZ

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***SOCIAL SCIENTISTS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:***

***Making the Case against Segregation.***

By John P. Jackson, Jr. New York Univ. Press. 289 pp. \$45

The U.S. Supreme Court stimulated years of debate by citing, in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), a handful of social science studies attesting to the deleterious effects of legalized racial segregation. Did the Court's reference to "psychological knowledge"

strengthen the decision? Or would *Brown* have been a stronger opinion had the Court simply asserted a constitutional principle without seeking the additional ballast?

Critical commentary has increasingly endorsed the latter view, partly because, as Jackson notes in his valuable new book, “the idea that social scientists’ testimony in *Brown* was unfounded has become the dominant understanding.” But Jackson, a professor of communication at the University of Colorado at Boulder, wants to correct that understanding. He argues that “the social scientists made very limited claims” in their testimony—stressing, for example, “that the problem of [psychological] damage arising from discrimination was exceedingly complex, and that it undoubtedly was intertwined with countless other aspects of society”—and that almost all of the claims were fully justified.

The one exception arose in testimony by Kenneth B. Clark, a professor at City College of New York. In a series of “doll tests,” Clark gave African American children black and white dolls, identical except for skin color, and asked them to choose the “nice” doll, the “bad” doll, and so on. Clark was “only one of dozens of expert witnesses” who testified in the four cases that together made up *Brown*—from South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware, and Kansas—and his *Effect of Prejudice and Discrimination on Personality Development* (1950) was only one of seven social science studies that the Court cited. But the doll tests ended up symbolizing, and tainting, all of the social science evidence.

Ordinarily a rigorous and objective social scientist, Clark “stepped over the bounds of proper scientific procedure and into the realm of advocacy,” Jackson writes. Testifying in the Delaware case, he misrepresented his findings. Elsewhere, he seemed capable of construing contradictory responses on the part of his African American subjects—choosing either the black doll or the white doll as the “bad” one—as proof of psychological damage. “The doll tests became the lightning rod for criticism of the social scientists’ role,” Jackson observes, “and were perhaps the weakest part of the social science evidence in the *Brown* litigation.”

Despite a few troubling errors—for example, a reference to the equal protection clause of the Fifth Amendment (only the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees equal protection)—*Social Scientists for Social Justice* is a thoughtful and original book. Early chapters trace how social scientists were galvanized by “Hitler’s rise to power, the struggle against Nazi ideology, and the perceived need to unify the nation behind the war effort.” These self-described “social engineers” grew convinced that racial prejudice threatened the democratic order. Their most important contribution to *Brown*, a statement filed with the Supreme Court in late 1952, was persuasive because of its neutral, dispassionate tone. Indeed, the doll tests notwithstanding, these social engineers succeeded in their task by functioning “as both objective scientists and effective advocates.”

—DAVID J. GARROW

## ARTS & LETTERS

### *HOW TO LOSE FRIENDS AND ALIENATE PEOPLE.*

By Toby Young. Da Capo Press. 340 pp. \$24

“When *The Front Page* was first produced in 1926,” Young writes, “the *New York Times* theater critic Walter Kerr described the essence of Burns’s appeal as”—stop there: The sentence already contains two factual errors. *The Front Page* premiered in 1928, at which time Walter Kerr was 15 years old. In a one-sentence footnote on the same page of

his memoir, Young tops himself with three mistakes: “When Harold Ross originally conceived of *The New Yorker* in 1922 it was going to be subtitled: ‘Not for the little old lady from Dubuque.’” The magazine was planned in 1924; the phrase was a characterization in the prospectus, never a potential subtitle, and its actual wording was “*The New Yorker* will be the magazine which is not edited for the old lady in Dubuque.”

I break with convention and point out some of Young’s tangential errors at the beginning

rather than the end of this review because they seem germane to the argument. In 1995, Young, an Englishman then 32 years old, was hired to come to New York and join the staff of *Vanity Fair*. The magazine's editor, Graydon Carter, fired him after about two years, a period in which, Young readily acknowledges, he contributed next to no writing, messed up nearly all the administrative tasks he was assigned, and committed a series of other blunders, including bringing in a stripper on Take Your Daughter to Work Day. He does not seek to absolve himself completely from responsibility for his flame-out, but mostly he blames *Vanity Fair* (in his view, an upscale supermarket tabloid under the thumb of publicists for the celebrities it covers), New York journalists ("pinched and hidebound careerists who never got drunk and were safely tucked up in bed by 10 p.m."), and America itself (in the grips of a politically correct tyranny of the majority, much as Alexis de Tocqueville predicted).

But a reading of the book suggests an alternate view: that Young failed because he turned out to be a lazy and undistinguished magazine writer. True, *Vanity Fair* prints its share—more than its share—of celebrity nonsense. But the readers, and consequently the ads, pulled in by the fluff have allowed the magazine to be one of the few in the world with a commitment to the long, exhaustively reported narrative. That isn't Young's kind of thing—if he couldn't be bothered to spend 17 seconds on the Internet checking the opening date of *The Front Page*, how could he be expected to hunt through dusty archives, travel to war zones, or hound stonewalling sources? No, he came to America in order to cover and hang around with celebrities. It's just that he wanted to do it *the right way*, which in his mind had something vaguely to do with the Algonquin Round Table, *The Front Page*, and Jimmy Stewart's character in *The Philadelphia Story*. The trouble is, there *is* no right way to cover celebrities, or rather, to the extent that there is, it has nothing to do with good journalism, good writing, or being able to take a good look at yourself in the mirror.

I don't want to give the impression that Young is unfailingly self-righteous. His first impulse is always to make himself the butt of the joke, and most of the book consists of entertaining anecdotes about his spectacular and mundane failures in the workplace and else-

where. (My favorite ends with Diana Ross screaming at him for hogging a pay phone at the *Vanity Fair* Oscar party.) After much pain and humiliation he eventually acquires a bit of self-knowledge, which he sketches in a deft shift from comedy to something like introspection.

Indeed, Young gets into trouble only when he tries to make a point about something other than himself. So enjoy *How To Lose Friends and Alienate People* for the comic set pieces, but as soon as you encounter the words *Tocqueville* or *Algonquin*, skip to the next chapter.

—BEN YAGODA

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#### ME AND SHAKESPEARE:

##### *Adventures with the Bard, A Memoir.*

By Herman Gollob. Doubleday. 341 pp.  
\$26

Gollob's epiphany about William Shakespeare came rather late in life. But when it did come, it hit with great force, making him feel what Celia feels in *As You Like It*: "O wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful, and yet again wonderful, and after that, out of all hooping!"

Gollob spent his career with words, first as a theatrical agent, then as a literary agent, and finally as a book editor, but only after retiring did he become a serious student of Shakespeare. And, soon, a teacher of Shakespeare as well, as a part-time instructor at Caldwell College in New Jersey. In this "out of all hooping" book, his grace in writing, excitement in discovery, and adoration—"the passion I'd begun to develop for Shakespeare was a mystical experience, a religious experience"—most resemble those of another great Bardologist, British columnist Bernard Levin, author of the similarly enthralling *Enthusiasms* (1983). Both men are blessed with an abundance of life force, and both know how to write a terrific book.

Along with his stimulating and contagious enthusiasm, Gollob provides insights into Shakespearean characters that are sound and often stunning, as when he compares Coriolanus to Douglas MacArthur. He notes that Shakespeare's main characters leave the stage different—usually broader, deeper, kinder—than they entered it. In this sense, Gollob himself becomes a Shakespearean character. Like Hamlet, Portia, Petruchio, Henry V, Antony, Prospero, and others, he suffers, learns,

reflects, accepts, and ultimately changes.

I was dashed only to see H. L. Mencken cited for the proposition that “in general women are practical, men are romanticists.” Excuse me, but Shakespeare reached that conclusion centuries earlier. How about Juliet, who proposes marriage while Romeo’s getting further tangled in his poetry? Or Beatrice, who, when Benedict asks her—he thinks heroically, but in fact rhetorically—how he can help solve the key problem of *Much Ado about Nothing*, replies succinctly, “Kill Claudio”? Or Portia, who, when Antonio is whining and preparing to

die in the arms of his useless sidekick, instantly takes action to save him? So many of Shakespeare’s women are more practical and more intelligent than his men that one wonders, “What can she possibly see in that schlub?”

Gollob sparks his students and readers to be mad about the Bard, and that’s a wonderful thing to do. He quotes John Dryden as saying that Shakespeare has “the largest and most comprehensive soul.” In that respect as well, Gollob is Shakespearean. This book could only have come from someone with a big soul.

—KEN ADELMAN

## CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS

### *THE UNDAMMING OF AMERICA.*

By Elizabeth Grossman. Counterpoint.  
320 pp. \$27

Rivers are the bloodstream of a continent, ferrying the nutrients that keep it healthy and recycling its waste products into new sources of energy. We know that now. But for two centuries America dammed its rivers in the name of progress, nearly destroying nature’s brilliant scheme in a misguided effort to improve upon it. As a source of electrical power, dams are nearly obsolete, accounting for only 11 percent of our total usage. They decimate fish populations, obstruct piscine migration, and thus disrupt the food chain. They change water temperatures and degrade water quality in ways harmful to both vegetation and wildlife. They change soil quality and prevent nature’s flood control mechanisms—wetlands—from doing their job. They hold back the silt, gravel, and nutrients that make agriculture sustainable. They breed bacterial disease.

But dam removal creates almost as many human and technical problems as did putting the damn things up in the first place. Dams invited some people to populate deserts and pushed others off soon-to-be-flooded land. Dams created lakes that created tourism that created jobs. Dams shaped the history of entire states, notably California.

Grossman, a native New Yorker, became radicalized on the subject after moving to Oregon. There, she says, “rivers and salmon are with us as we walk to the corner,” yet dams have rendered many species of salmon nearly extinct. For

this book she also visited communities where river reclamation efforts are underway, with varying degrees of success, in Maine, North Carolina, Colorado, Arizona, Wisconsin, California, Montana, and Washington. So far, Wisconsin—an intensely watery place, with 40,000 miles of rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands—has the best record of dam removal, largely because there is no shortage of water to begin with.

In dry states such as Colorado, Arizona, and California, by contrast, the antiremoval activists are holding the line. In California, where the grid of dams and water diversions reminds the author of a map of the New York City subway system, the politics of dam removal remain highly charged. California’s water consumption competes with the needs of native fish and river restoration, so much so that the state legislature recently declined to fund even a mere assessment of the state’s dams. At the same time, many of California’s small, privately owned dams have been so poorly maintained that their existence poses more of a threat than does their removal.

While the complexities of dam removal cannot be overstated, Grossman learns, neither can the conviction of environmentalists, politicians, and others concerned with civic planning that the time to act is now. “The longer we wait to remove dams that have outlived their usefulness,” she concludes, “the more difficult the problems plaguing these rivers may become.”

—A. J. HEWAT

# SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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*MEASURING AMERICA:  
How an Untamed Wilderness Shaped  
the United States and Fulfilled the  
Promise of Democracy.*

By Andro Linklater. Walker. 288 pp. \$26

When you buy a house in the United States, you cross paths with surveyors. Armed with legal documents and tape measures, they approach your property to verify its dimensions and boundaries, furnishing you with an official statement of its extent. It may be the house and garden that attracted you, but it's the ownership of a piece of land that's fundamental.

The measurement and legal apportionment of real estate may seem an unprepossessing subject, but in the hands of journalist Linklater, the surveyor's tale acquires a tinge of romance. In Europe, private property came into being by piecemeal amendment of ancient customs and by the gradual nibbling away of the presumed authority of monarchs. North America, by contrast, presented a vast tabula rasa waiting to be divided into neat geometrical portions—or so it seemed to the early colonists, the inhabitants they displaced having unaccountably managed to get by for generations without a clear sense of property.

Especially in nonconformist New England and Quaker Pennsylvania, the right of ordinary people to derive a living from land that was

unequivocally theirs became crucial to the ethos of American society. The rectangular plots and city grids so characteristic of the United States, and so arresting even now to European visitors, sprang in large part from the sense of legal nicety and geometric orderliness prized by settlers in the northern colonies. Fanny Trollope, Anthony's mother, deplored the private ownership of land by common people as yet more evidence of the lamentable vulgarity of the Americans; the more astute Alexis de Tocqueville recognized that it fostered democratic spirit.

Linklater's account of the westward expansion of the United States emphasizes the physical act of measuring out the land. For him, the instrument of conquest was the 22-yard surveyor's chain, devised in 1607 by a little-known English mathematician named Edmund Gunter. This seemingly arbitrary length is four times a rod (or pole, or perch), a medieval linear measure derived from the amount of land a man could work in a day. Ten chains make a furlong, and 10 square chains are an acre, both units relating to the work done by a team of oxen pulling a plow. More subtly, Gunter subdivided his chain into 10 units of 10 links each and established arithmetical rules that helped harmonize the old agricultural units with the beginnings of a decimal system.



*Surveyors begin laying out Baltimore in the early 1700s.*

Linklater somewhat overpraises the sophistication of Gunter's chain—it is, in the end, a pretty odd standard of length—but he is right to observe how much it remains with us. Penn Square in Philadelphia is 10 chains on a side; the streets of Salt Lake City are two chains wide; across the country, city blocks and suburban plats hide neat multiples of the old feudal measure. The abrupt right-angled jogs encountered on otherwise straight midwestern roads are a consequence of trying to fit a plane grid onto a curved surface.

The core of Linklater's book is a compelling account of the surveying of the Ohio Territory in the years after independence. The distribution of this rich tract of land among pioneers offers a model for the physical, legal, and economic development of American society. A subtheme on the consistently thwarted attempts, beginning with Thomas Jefferson's, to introduce metric measurements to the United States distracts more than it illuminates, but Linklater has nevertheless produced a charming introduction to a subject one would hardly have imagined could be so engaging.

—DAVID LINDLEY

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**SKEPTICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM:**  
*The Limits of Philosophy and Science.*

By Robert Kirkman. Indiana Univ. Press.  
212 pp. \$19.95

From Rachel Carson on, the Green movement has been heavy with facts, often alarmist ones. To underpin that empirical evidence, some environmentalists have sketched a general philosophical foundation: a large view of nature and our place in it. Bjørn Lomborg's best-selling *The Skeptical Environmentalist* (2001) challenged the empirical basis of Green ideology. Now Kirkman offers a critical account of the philosophical foundations of the ideology.

A professor of science and technology at Michigan State University, Kirkman begins with the idea of nature, which in Cartesian metaphysics is matter, brute stuff in space, the cosmos as vast machine. Against this view stand organicism and holism, which see the universe and the life within it as a unified whole. After discussing Hegel and Kant, Kirkman concludes that speculative philosophy is a poor guide for environmental

thinking about nature. The meanings of *nature* are too varied and contradictory, and, adding to the ambiguity, *nature* and *environment* often are used interchangeably. Where some analysts might try to stipulate strict new meanings for these confusing terms, Kirkman, with commendable honesty, gives up on them altogether.

Kirkman is polite about every thinker he analyzes—too polite. He mentions, for example, the ecofeminists, who see the universe as a system of “weblike relations”—a feminine worldview, apparently—and find this idea useful in furthering both feminism and the Green cause. Kirkman doesn't explain why ecofeminism deserves even a mention. We may like both poetry and fine porcelain, but it does not follow that a plate with a poem on it is better than either alone. The same holds true of putting “eco-” in front of feminism, postcolonialism, Catholicism, socialism, or any other belief system.

Kirkman's bland agreeableness continues though chapters on environmentalism and value theory. Here he concludes that neither science nor philosophical speculation can give us a picture of the place of human beings in the universe, and hence neither can be used to establish value. Martin Heidegger makes an appearance, with his devotion to “dwelling poetically” on “the earth.” No mention of his connections to the Nazis, who were pioneers in many eco-friendly policies, including smoke-free restaurants.

Toward the end of the book, Kirkman notes that the managers of Tsavo National Park in Kenya decided to stop culling and let nature take its course with elephant populations. This “natural” process made for a catastrophic increase in elephant numbers followed by large-scale starvation, with the landscape denuded of vegetation in the process. The Tsavo incident is not analyzed, but it serves as a reminder of how much more engaging the book might have been had it examined environmentalism in terms of the results of applying abstractions—for instance, definitions of “natural.”

With its warnings of catastrophe and promises of salvation, Green thinking can resemble religion. Kirkman has made a start at debunking such pretensions, but a field so rife with moralizing nonsense needs a more robust

critique. Nevertheless, *Skeptical Environmentalism* confirms a long-standing suspicion of mine: No special philosophical principles undergird environmentalism beyond (1) the general biophilic and humanist idea that we should care for living things, particularly if

they are sentient and can feel pain; and (2) the principle that we ought to leave to our descendants a world that makes lives of fulfillment and pleasure possible. Not all good ideas are grand abstractions.

—DENIS DUTTON

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Ken Adelman**, an ambassador to the United Nations and arms control director in the Reagan administration, conducts executive training nationwide with his wife, Carol, in their company, Movers and Shakespeares. **Jorge I. Domínguez** is the Clarence Dillon Professor of International Affairs and the director of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. **Denis Dutton** teaches philosophy at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. **David J. Garrow**, Presidential Distinguished Professor at Emory University Law School, is the author of *Bearing the Cross* (1986), a biography of Martin Luther King, Jr., which won a Pulitzer Prize. **A. J. Hewat** is a writer and editor living in Connecticut. **Mark Kingwell**, a professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto, is the author of *The World We Want: Restoring Citizenship in a Fractured Age* (2001) and *Practical Judgments: Essays in Culture, Politics, and Interpretation* (2002). **David Lindley**, the author of *Boltzmann's Atom: The Great Debate That Launched a Revolution in Physics* (2001) and the coeditor of *Webster's New World Dictionary of Science* (1998), is writing a biography of the Victorian scientist and entrepreneur Lord Kelvin. **Max McCoy** is the author of nine books, including *Jesse: A Novel of the Outlaw Jesse James* (1999). **Robert J. Samuelson**, a columnist for *Newsweek* and *The Washington Post*, is the author of *Untruth: Why the Conventional Wisdom Is (Almost Always) Wrong* (2001). **Matthew Scully**, a former special assistant and senior speechwriter to President George W. Bush, and a former literary editor of *National Review*, is the author of the newly published *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*. **Ben Yagoda**, a professor of journalism at the University of Delaware, is the author of *About Town: The New Yorker and the World It Made* (2000).

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## PORTRAIT: 1952



Fifty years ago, Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected the 34th president of the United States. Television was in its infancy—there had been talk of barring TV cameras from that summer’s Republican convention in Chicago (above). The interstate highways had yet to be built, and the nation’s population (158 million) was a bit over half what it is today. In Korea, American troops were fighting under United Nations auspices. Eisenhower, who was known for his inscrutable utterances, would declare, “Things are more like they are now than they ever were before.”

# Reading Allowed



## Searching for a Corporate Savior

The Irrational Quest for Charismatic CEOs

**Rakesh Khurana**

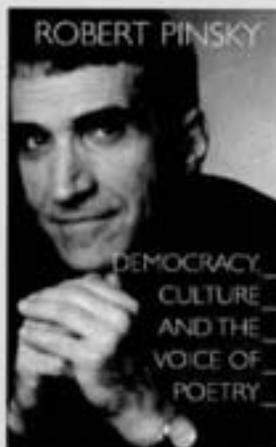
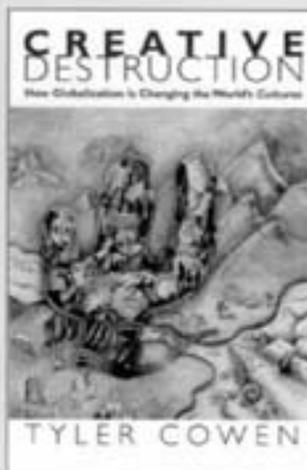
Corporate CEOs are headline news. Stock prices rise and fall at word of their hiring and firing. Yet we know surprisingly little about how CEOs are selected and dismissed or about their true power. This is the first book to take readers into the often secretive world of the CEO selection process. Rakesh Khurana's findings are based on a study of the hiring and firing of CEOs at over 850 of America's largest companies and on extensive interviews with CEOs, corporate board members, and consultants at executive search firms. Cloth \$29.95 ISBN 0-691-07437-2 Due October

## Creative Destruction

How Globalization Is Changing the World's Cultures

**Tyler Cowen**

It is a commonplace that globalization is subverting local culture. But could it be that it is helping as much as it hurts? In this strikingly original treatment of a fiercely debated issue, Tyler Cowen makes a bold new case for a more sympathetic understanding of cross-cultural trade. On the whole, argues Cowen in clear and vigorous prose, cultural "destruction" breeds not artistic demise but diversity. Cloth \$27.95 ISBN 0-691-09016-5 Due November



## Democracy, Culture and the Voice of Poetry

**Robert Pinsky**

The place of poetry in modern democracy is no place, according to conventional wisdom. The poet, we hear, is a casualty of mass entertainment and prosaic public culture. Robert Pinsky, however, argues that this gloomy diagnosis is as wrongheaded as it is familiar. The voice of poetry, he shows, resonates with profound significance at the very heart of democratic culture.

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