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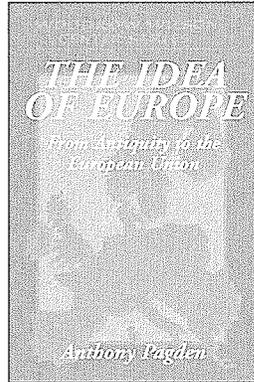
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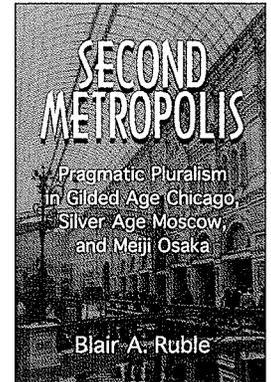
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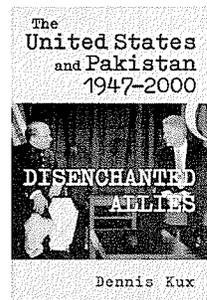


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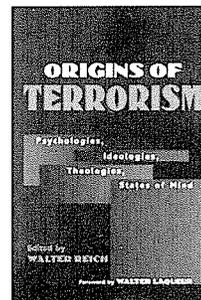
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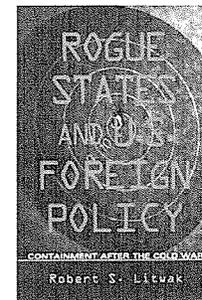
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11 THE CRISIS WITHIN ISLAM

by *Richard W. Bulliet*

Why did so few Islamic leaders forthrightly condemn the attacks of September 11? It's the latest symptom of a crisis of authority that has been building for more than a century—and which now must be resolved.

20 WHAT IS NATURE WORTH?

by *E. O. Wilson*

One-fifth of Earth's plant and animal species could vanish or be bound for extinction in the next several decades. A founding father of sociobiology makes a passionate practical and moral case for preserving genetic diversity.

40 DO THE PEOPLE RULE?

by *Michael Lind*

Popular sovereignty is the foundation of the American political system, but the nation's leaders—from James Madison to Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan—have been divided over its meaning for practical government.

50 THE ONCE AND FUTURE MUSEUM

Museums and the Democratic Order by *Miriam R. Levin*

How the museum evolved, from Egypt, to Fifth Avenue, to Bilbao, to the Web.

The Museum as Artifact by *Jayne Merkel*

Today's museum buildings get more attention than the exhibits they house.

DEPARTMENTS

2 EDITOR'S COMMENT

3 CORRESPONDENCE

8 FINDINGS

A Fire Bell in the Night
Cruelty to Animals
Punching the President

81 THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

While America Slept
Philosophers vs. Philosophes
Covering the War

107 CURRENT BOOKS

Honor Moore
on the poet's voice

Kai Bird
on Edward Teller

Jim Sleeper
on nationalism

Reviews by *Justin Kaplan, Rosanne Cash,*
Mark Kingwell, Christopher Lydon,
Allison Eir Jenks, and others

128 FROM THE CENTER

COVER: *Kapok Tree* (1995), by Alexis Rockman. Courtesy of Gomey, Bravin & Lee, New York. Design by David Herbick.

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Editor's Comment

Edward O. Wilson is widely known as the pioneer of sociobiology, a theory often criticized or applauded for what many see as its conservative implications for political life. In books such as *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (1975) and *On Human Nature* (1979), the Harvard University entomologist has argued that human behavior, like that of other animals, is most powerfully influenced by the gene's imperative to survive and transmit its precious cargo of information to future generations. Critics have assailed the theory as, among other things, deterministic and overly pessimistic about the possibilities of improving the human condition. In *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (1998), Wilson caused more controversy by arguing that his brand of biologically based thinking should be extended into the social sciences, the humanities, and every other domain of human knowledge. (See our excerpt, "Resuming the Enlightenment Quest," *WQ*, Winter 1998.)

In this issue, Wilson puts on another one of his hats, as a concerned scientist deeply troubled by the disappearance of plant and animal species around the globe. (He built his career on the patient, loving study of ants.) It is a stance that would seem to put him squarely in a very different political camp. But Wilson's whole career shows that the best ideas—and the best minds—are not prisoners of political ideology. Indeed, his own field of sociobiology has already spawned not just whole new fields of inquiry and new debates but new thinkers, some of whom take his insights in very different directions than any of his critics (and perhaps Wilson himself) expected.

As we enter the Age of the Gene, one of the few certainties is that Wilson will be seen as one of its seminal figures, an original voice to which it is always worth listening.

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The writer's telephone number and postal address should be included. For reasons of space, letters are usually edited for publication. Some letters are received in response to the editors' requests for comment.

Taking Issue

According to Peter Berkowitz and Benjamin Wittes ["The Professors and *Bush v. Gore*," *WQ*, Autumn '01], my "work dripped with disdain for the conservative majority" of the Supreme Court long before *Bush v. Gore*. This is simply not true.

In fact, a forthcoming book of mine goes out of its way to defend the Supreme Court's decisions in the area of campaign finance. In contrast to the harsh judgments of *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976) and its progeny that generally prevail in the academy, I defend the basic principles of the Court's jurisprudence. In contrast, I challenge the authors to point to a single essay or book of mine that engages in disdainful criticism of a major area of the Rehnquist Court's work.

I leave it to your readers to compare my essay in the *London Review of Books* with the Berkowitz/Wittes characterization of my arguments concerning the 2000 election. This can be done by searching www.lrb.co.uk. But it is harder to check on their broad-brush mischaracterizations, and so it seems appropriate to set this part of the record straight.

Bruce Ackerman
Yale University Law School
New Haven, Conn.

Peter Berkowitz and Benjamin Wittes are certainly right to say that "scholars who assume the office of public intellectual must exercise a heightened degree of care and restraint in their public pronouncements." But they do not live up to their own standards.

As Berkowitz and Wittes well know, my little piece in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* was a response to the editors' somewhat whimsical request for a very brief essay on how historians in the far distant future would regard *Bush v. Gore*. I chose to accept the invitation with an obviously whimsical piece from an imaginary historian. The piece was not intended to reflect my own considered views on the subject. (Anyone who doubts the element of whimsy should consult the piece itself, with its multiple references to made-up

events in the first half of the 21st century.) By contrast, my comments on National Public Radio *did* reflect my own views, indeed, the same view that I have elaborated in my academic writing: On the one hand, the Court, with its decision on *Bush v. Gore*, might well have done the nation a big favor, and no one should accuse the justices of partisan motives. (In his strident book on *Bush v. Gore*, Alan Dershowitz sharply criticizes me for saying this.) On the other hand, the Court's reasoning was embarrassingly weak as a matter of law, and for this reason it has serious problems from the standpoint of legitimacy.

Berkowitz and Wittes take the hilarious step of juxtaposing my comments on NPR with my science-fictional piece in the *Chronicle*, thus manufacturing a conflict between "two seemingly irreconcilable views" and lumping me together with scholars making "flamboyant assertions supported only by their authority." Berkowitz and Wittes are certainly entitled to defend *Bush v. Gore* against its critics. But they should be more careful about converting disagreements on the merits into attacks on the good faith of their fellow citizens. They should exercise a heightened degree of care in their public pronouncements.

Cass R. Sunstein
University of Chicago Law School
Chicago, Ill.

Teaching History

Wilfred M. McClay has written a perceptive and poignant essay ["History for a Democracy," *WQ*, Autumn '01] advocating a long-needed great awakening for the place of history in American life. Endorsing his plea, I add a few words.

When Lincoln said we must "disenthral ourselves," it was from the "dogmas" of the past and not from the past itself, for in the same speech he declared, "We cannot escape history." Similarly, John Adams stated that we must "disabuse" ourselves of the past. "The dogma of Aristotle is the most unphilosophical of the world, the most inhuman and cruel. Until this wicked position, which is worse than the slavery of the ancient republics, or



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modern West Indies, shall be held up to derision and contempt, to the execration and the horror of mankind, it will be of little purpose to talk or write about liberty." (Try teaching Adams at the University of Chicago!)

The spectacular sales of David McCullough's biography of Adams may be encouraging, but the phenomenon says nothing about the academic world, where the book is either neglected or trashed, as it was by Princeton University professor Sean Wilentz in the *New Republic*. The most popular book on the campus right now is Micheal Hardt and Anthony Negri's *Empire*, a preposterous fairy tale in which Karl Marx is an environmentalist and globalism will do today what socialism was supposed to do yesterday: bring an end to capitalism.

While McClay's manifesto is timely, its title, "History for a Democracy," troubles me as one who is convinced that the postmodernists are telling us what Adams tried to tell us two centuries ago: "No democracy ever did or ever will exist." The term *democracy* has become a kind of meta-narrative implying that there is a single idea, an essential concept under which everything comes together. But *The Federalist's* authors themselves were convinced that there could be no sovereign idea governing America; there would only be differing groups and classes. Adams even claimed that the term *the people* had no existence in the real world beyond its linguistic expression. What we have today, in our multicultural climate, is a series of demanding factions living off their own ethnic fictions.

It may not be enough to call for more attention to American history without considering what kind of history. Recently, I attended a conference at the City University of New York on the subject of how and what to teach in a short, single survey course in U.S. history. One young instructor proudly announced: "In my unit on the Black Panthers, I . . ." When you add PC to the Ph.D., the thugs get more time than the theorists.

John Patrick Diggins
Graduate Center of the
City University of New York
New York, N.Y.

Serious Writing?

I enjoyed reading Jay Tolson's essay, "Wittgenstein's Curse" [WQ, Autumn '01], and I even share some of his impatience with acad-

emic jargon and unreadable hackwork. But I have to say that if Tolson be held to the standard of logical clarity he appears to champion, then his argument is something of a mess.

The essay offers startling inferences and daring leaps aplenty, such as the claim that Alan Sokal's essay was accepted by *Social Text* "because the writing was as impenetrably bad as most prose published in *Social Text*, and indeed as bad as so much current academic writing," and the claim that postmodernists' radical skepticism about "absolute or objective truth" has "enslaved them all the more to pseudoscientific doctrines." These are minor transgressions against the dictates of logic, and perhaps they are important only to dweebish devotees of lucidity like me, but surely it's worth pointing out that:

(a) Sokal's essay adopted tedious academic jargon, but the journal's editors actually asked him to cut the stuff. What they didn't catch—to their eternal and well-earned shame—was Sokal's hilarious mishmash of contemporary physics, and the irony of his deadpan citations of humanists who didn't know what the hell they were talking about. And the real reasons *Social Text's* editors didn't catch that stuff were that they were so pleased to have gotten a submission from a physicist, and that (more crucially) Sokal's essay flattered one of them with repeated and reverent citation. Jargon had very little to do with it. As for the prose standards of *Social Text*, readers of the *WQ* are cheerfully invited to read either one of the essays I've published in the journal, and take the taste test for themselves.

(b) There is no necessary connection between philosophical skepticism and pseudoscience, and Tolson admits as much himself. The burden is on him, therefore, to show how postmodernists' alleged enslavement to pseudoscience derives precisely and directly from their skepticism. But first he'd have to acknowledge that many, many contemporary postmodernists have nothing to do with pseudoscience, instead of rehashing Sokal and Jean Bricmont's delicious examples from the addled Lacanian French Left. (I spent a good deal of time composing a "postmodern" argument about social justice in *Life As We Know It* [1996] while doing my homework in genetics and prenatal testing, so I have something at stake here.) And then Tolson would have to explain how humanists and social scientists could actually forge "absolute or objective truth" about human affairs, and how this would help us to understand pseudophysics when we see it.

So much for the minor points. The real reason I'm replying to Tolson is to try to clear that poor Mr. Wittgenstein of all the charges brought against him. Honest, Jay, he had nothing to do with it, I was with him all night and he never left the house.

I could point out, for instance, that very, very few humanists, including people like me who cite *Philosophical Investigations* in our sleep (it's all over *Life As We Know It*, for instance), have actually read all of the *Tractatus*, much less taken it as the model for "serious" intellectual work. Or that the most ambitious, *Tractatus*-like system builders in the history of my field, such as René Wellek and Austin Warren or Northrop Frye (who really did attempt, in *Anatomy of Criticism*, to establish universally valid principles for the "discipline" of literary criticism), wrote remarkably lucid prose. Or I could argue that academe sustains all manner of cliques and claques that produce verbiage that Tolson rightly dismisses as "professional feather display," and that most of those cliques and claques are not Wittgensteinian. (I suspect that some are neither intellectual nor serious, to boot, but since the same can be said of any number of plain-speaking folk in academe—and journalism—there doesn't seem to be any strong inverse correlation between difficult prose and intellectual merit.) But I hope the point is clear: Tolson's heart is in the right place, and he's got a very good ear for bad writing, but it's simply not true that Wittgenstein's language produced legions of academic Calibans who know only how to curse.

Michael Bérubé
Paterno Family Professor in Literature
Pennsylvania State University
State College, Pa.

Were some of the essays in "The Making of the Public Mind" a put-on, or were they intended to be serious? Jay Tolson's article on the decline of scholarly writing is itself so draped with obscure jargon that I finally concluded that the author just had to be putting me on. There are some paragraphs that rise above the mire and muck of academic writing, but very few. And I cannot tell you how hard I looked for the soul of *any* sentence in Sven Birkerts's essay. I have a habit of holding my breath as I read a sentence. I was absolutely gasping at the end of some of his monsters. On the first page of the essay, for example, is one with almost 70 words! Certainly not minimalist!

Kenneth Ruggles
Palm Desert, Calif.

The Wilsonian Moment

I read with considerable interest James Chace's essay "The Wilsonian Moment" [WQ, Autumn '01], in which he argues for the continued relevance of Woodrow Wilson's liberal internationalist vision and transcendent principles at a time when neorealist strains are still prevalent in international relations. Much unexamined rhetoric heralding the new era of globalization notwithstanding, Chace reminds us of the extent to which the United States and other nations cling to sovereign identities, whether national, religious, or tribal, among others. Tensions between sovereign power and adherence to principles has been a constant in human affairs.

The conflict in Afghanistan and the "war against terrorism," with all of the ethno-religious complexity, clan factionalism, and regional allegiances they highlight, throw into stark relief how tenuous are claims to multi-lateral or international comity, in a world in which imperatives of faith, identity, and history remain defining realities.

Chace speaks of the "Wilsonian moment" (January 1919–July 1920), when the American Commission to Negotiate Peace labored largely in vain to secure the objectives of a "just peace" and a "world made safe for democracy." As I have argued in *American Historians in War and Peace* (1994), what Wilson and his advisers (among them many of the nation's eminent historians) discovered was not so much the difficulty of balancing principles of national sovereignty with issues of human rights, as Chace suggests (though all recognized the dilemma). Rather it was the defiance and triumph of narrow "sovereign" self-interest, leavened with a poisonous mix of fear, ignorance, and retribution, that doomed all hopes for the "negotiated peace" and "open covenants openly arrived at" that Wilson so hoped to leave as his and his nation's legacy.

The "secret treaties" (though Walter Lippmann, Wilson, Edward House, and others knew their contents before Paris) therefore stand as a metaphor for all obstacles to achieving the "concert" of ideals sought by Wilsonians then and since. These obstacles are as great today as they were at the beginning of the last century. This suggests the need for caution in the future.

America's self-proclaimed exceptionalism and "triumphalist imperium" must be harnessed to the preservation of human liberties and driven by the enlightened sovereign will of its people and government to achieve them, even when that principle appears at times to conflict with our own immediate interests, whether military, political, or economic. It was true in Europe in 1919 and it remains so today as the United States negotiates the dangers (and opportunities) of the "new world order."

As Wilson discovered, no easy balance indeed.

Jonathan M. Nielson
Department of History
Columbia College
Sonora, Calif.

A Loyal Reader

I am an original subscriber. I have your Volume I, No. 1 issue of Autumn 1976 and most copies between then and Volume XXV, No. 4, which celebrated the anniversary of your 25th year.

Your original principles as explained in Steve Lagerfeld's essay [WQ, Autumn '01, p. 4] are what attracted me to the magazine. I am a high school dropout, and serving four years in the army during World War II showed me how little education I had. Although I enlisted in October 1941 as a private, I was discharged four years later as a second lieutenant promoted to a first lieutenant. I was 30 years old and should have gone to school and college under the GI Bill, but wanted to get married and start a family, which I did. But I also started reading anything and everything. Your magazine is just what I needed. I am now 85 years old and read each issue from beginning to the last page. Thank you a thousand times.

J. Roux Setzer
Hickory, N.C.

More than a Moment

Perhaps "The Chautauqua Moment" is a clever headline for your review of the article, "'Dancing Mothers': The Chautauqua Movement in Twentieth-Century Popular Culture," by Russell L. Johnson ["The Periodical Observer," WQ, Autumn '01]. However,

both the title and the review give a somewhat misleading and incomplete picture of the context of the history they attempt to describe.

The Chautauqua Lake Sunday School Assembly was founded in 1874 by two significant gentlemen: one a minister, the other an industrialist. John Heyl Vincent was the general agent and secretary of the Sunday School Union and a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Lewis Miller was an inventor and industrialist. They shared a common vision for developing a summer experience that would develop a cadre of Sunday school teachers educated in their Christian roots and also enriched by opportunities to appreciate the arts, sciences, and humanities. The dedication of Lewis Miller and the personal resources he contributed over the years were critical in providing a solid financial foundation for the realization of this shared vision. As early as the second year of the Assembly there was interest in replicating this idea, and by 1889 there were as many as 200 assemblies across the country modeled after the first one in Chautauqua, New York. In 1886 Vincent wrote a book, *The Chautauqua Movement*, which detailed the components of the vision as it had unfolded.

The third generation of development of the Chautauqua Movement was in what became known as the circuit or independent chautauquas, about which Russell Johnson writes in his article.

The final sentences of the review state that “by the 1950s, only one chautauqua was left—in Mediapolis, Iowa. It was no longer ‘the most American thing.’” Although the earlier era of circuit chautauquas has ceased to be, the “mother” Chautauqua Institution in Chautauqua, New York, welcomes 150,000 visitors for a nine-week summer season of intense programming in religion, science, humanities, and the arts. It not only has a vibrant summer program, it is an established residential community that has a growing year-round population and accompanying events. (A full listing of these can be found at www.ciweb.org.) In addition to the Chautauqua Institution, there are several other early assembly locations that continue to have summer programming: Ocean Park, Maine;

Ocean Grove, New Jersey; Bay View, Michigan; Lakeside, Ohio; and Boulder, Colorado. There is also a resurgence of interest in reestablishing summer chautauqua events in other parts of the country.

The Chautauqua Movement continues to influence many Americans. With a history extending back for 127 years, we believe that it has enjoyed much more than “a moment,” to be sure.

*Joan Fox
Director of Public Information
Chautauqua Institution
Chautauqua, N.Y.*

Meaningful

I want to tell you how much I enjoyed Mark Kingwell’s article, “What Does It All Mean?” [WQ, Spring ’01]. I graduated with a degree in philosophy several years ago and it was like a wonderful splash of cold water on a hot day to take a walk with the good, old (dead) boys again.

The answer Kingwell gives to his question is similar to the one given some time ago by the famed Joseph Campbell, who answered this question by saying that it’s the wrong question. We are not looking for the meaning of life, Campbell said, we are looking for the experience of being alive, which the quest for meaning wipes out. The quest for meaning is what removes us from life. I think Kingwell’s answer is similar in that he focuses on the experience of searching for meaning or the experience of the consciousness that asks the question.

Now I am pursuing a degree in technical communication and have been forced to suffer through a number of classes on literary analysis. I have always felt that English (as it is defined in current university settings) is just reduced philosophy. For that reason, it gets itself into tangles it doesn’t have the tools to untie. I am currently suffering through Chomsky’s generative grammar, in which we reduce all language to a series of symbols. Kingwell gives voice to my own nagging suspicion about the absurdity and ultimate futility of such an endeavor. Thanks again for the thoroughly enjoyable read.

*Jessica Nealon
Charlotte, N.C.*

Findings

A Fire Bell in the Night

“Here are brave Men, Men of Spirit and Humanity, good Citizens, or Neighbours, capable and worthy of civil Society, and the Enjoyment of a happy Government,” Benjamin Franklin enthused in a 1733 tribute to his city’s firefighters. In words that have a strange resonance in the wake of September 11, he called them “Heroes and effective Men fit to compose the Prime of an Army.”

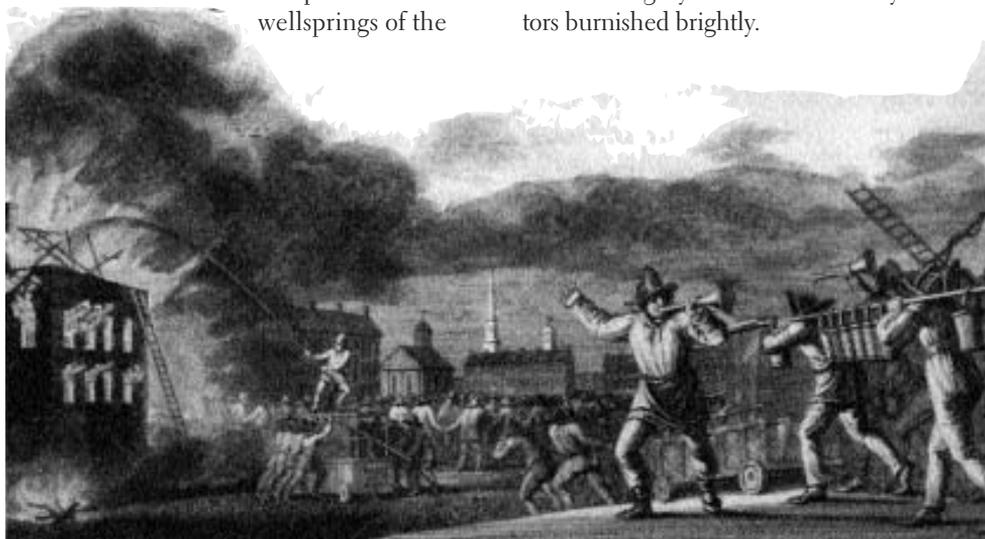
There’s more than one connection between the colonial origins of American firefighting and the heroism of the New York City firefighters who raced into the burning World Trade Center towers. The sheer courage of their act was vastly magnified by its political character, as these blue-collar Americans risked everything to save janitors and Wall Street bond brokers alike, immigrants and the native-born.

In 18th-century America, historian Benjamin L. Carp writes in the *William and Mary Quarterly* (October 2001), volunteer firefighting companies were pillars of public life and wellsprings of the

Revolution. Franklin organized Philadelphia’s Union Fire Company in 1736, and many other revolutionary leaders belonged to or led such groups. “It is of some Importance in Boston to belong to a Fire Clubb and to choose and get admitted to a good one,” John Adams observed in 1774.

What made these groups special, says Carp, was the opportunity they provided for men to distinguish themselves. “A man realized his liberty through virtue by sacrificing his private interests for the wider community,” Carp writes. For merchants and artisans, who were generally deemed incapable of higher pursuits, the opportunity was especially important. Philadelphia’s Northern Liberty Fire Company included prominent landowners, an innkeeper, an architect, and a lumber merchant.

After the Revolution, Carp writes, fire companies proliferated and their spirit of “egalitarian voluntarism” prevailed. Firemen enjoyed even greater stature as public figures, and they were held up to the nation as models of urban culture and public virtue—a legacy their New York City inheritors burnished brightly.



This inspiring scene adorned New York firefighters’ membership certificates in the early 1800s.

Cruelty to Animals

In Frederick Crews's wicked *Postmodern Pooh* (2001), the resilient bear and his pals are subjected to the attentions of an imaginary panel of scholars at an annual meeting of the Modern Language Association. One by one, representatives of every prominent contemporary critical approach reduce themselves to dust. Here's an excerpt from the chapter titled "The Fissured Subtext," by Crews's imaginary post-structuralist Marxist, or Marxist poststructuralist, Carla Gulag, Joe Camel Professor of Child Development at Duke University:

"Knowing how animals traditionally mark their territory, we could say that Pooh, had he pooped on Rabbit's floor, would have established a kind of squatter's rights to the premises. That's just the sort of privilege-annihilating development that every progressive could applaud. But the ownership theme can emerge only surreptitiously, in unconscious self-parody, as Rabbit, by hanging his wash on 'the South end' of his new doorstep, at once alludes (by denial) to the unspeakable threat of soiling, reasserts his supposed property rights, and reminds us that lands below the equator are those most susceptible to neocolonial exploitation."

Don't Trust This Poll

Do the people rule? Elsewhere in this issue (see p. 40), Michael Lind gives an answer drawn from the theory and history of popular sovereignty in America. The *Public Perspective* (July–Aug. 2001) and the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation recently took a simpler approach: They asked the people, and the people said no.

Asked how much influence public opinion has on the actions of official Washington, 49 percent of those surveyed responded "not too much" or "none at all."

When the pollsters put the same question to Washington "policy leaders," they got a very different response. Only 16 percent responded in the negative; 51 percent said popular views have "a fair amount" of influence, and 33 percent said "a great deal."

How much influence *should* the people have? Sixty-eight percent of the general public said "a great deal." Only 42 percent of the policy leaders agreed. (Yet when reminded of occasions when majority sentiment has been wrong, 51 percent of the public agreed that public officials should use their own judgment when they think the majority is off-base.)

Aren't polls a great way for the public to better communicate its views to the nation's leaders? The public doesn't seem to think so. Only a quarter of those surveyed think polls are the best means of communication. Half think that polls are inaccurate, prone to manipulation, and marred by inherent limitations.

The Trembling Temple

The library is the grandest building on many university campuses, the town hall or temple of the academic community. It's a study hall, a social center, and an intellectual crossroads, where students and professors come as pilgrims in search of knowledge. Or at least it used to be.

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* (November 16, 2001) reports that the Internet is beginning to take a bite out of library traffic. At Augusta State University in Georgia, the number of visitors passing through the front doors has dropped from 374,000 five years ago to 272,000. At the University of South Carolina, students now check out only one-seventh as many books and other materials as they did in the 1996–97 academic year. Some librarians are responding by pouring money into new electronic resources. Others, taking a page from the chain bookstores, are pouring lattes and serving snacks.

The *Chronicle's* Scott Carlson reports that many librarians and academics are ambivalent about the library's decline. It's unclear why they would be anything but highly alarmed. Yes, the growing availability of information online is a wonderful thing, but the World Wide Web has so far captured only a minute fraction of the world's accumulated knowledge. Isn't the student who relies only on the Web condemned to a kind of blindness? Isn't reading (and writing) books

Findings

the central activity of the university? Shouldn't the temple of shared learning be something more than a coffee shop?

That Ancient Gleam

The Beatles had it exactly right: Lucy was in flashy company up there in the sky. According to Matthew Hart, in *Diamonds: A Journey to the Heart of an Obsession* (2001), "Diamonds abound in the universe. If more light were present, one might see the long reaches of space glittering with jewels." The carbon that makes diamonds "exists in huge reservoirs in the interiors of stars." When the element was subjected billions of years ago to the explosive pressures of stellar evolution, it was transformed. The diamonds, in turn, entered meteorites that bombarded Earth for millions of years, at a time when its atmosphere was still thin enough for the meteorites and their diamonds to penetrate without being destroyed. "It may be," says Hart, "that, given the way in which crystals grow by adding successive layers, some of that rain of ancient diamonds falling to Earth seeded diamonds that we mine today . . . [and] the diamond on someone's finger might contain at its center a dot of a jewel whose antiquity goes back 10 billion years."

Punching the President

In November 1904, President Theodore Roosevelt sent this note to one Michael J. Donovan (*The Selected Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, H. W. Brands, ed., 2001):

Dear Mike:

Can you send me on three pairs of boxing gloves, and can you tell me some good men here in Washington who, in the winter months, I can have come around two or three times a week to box with me and my son and another young kinsman? I wish sometime you could get on here for a day or two yourself.

Faithfully yours.

What might those "good men" have been told? "You're invited to the White House to



A fanciful Puck cartoon pits Teddy Roosevelt against Democrat Alton B. Parker.

punch the president—and please stay for lunch.”

The Age of Now

History professor Anders Henriksson calls the bits of wisdom he has gleaned over the years from the exams and papers of American college students “flights of creative inanity.” He has now compiled a history of the world, *Non Campus Mentis* (2001), told entirely in the words of those imaginative students (who appear, in fact, to inhabit a parallel universe). The *WQ* has published the professor’s findings twice before, in 1983 and 2000, but there’s a perennial urgency to these reflections by the nation’s young. Herewith in its entirety from the new book, chapter 26, “The End of History: The Age of Now”:

The historicle period ended shortly after World War II–III. Historians and others attempt to pin the tail on the reluctant monkey of change.

The public appears no brighter than a herd of lemmings spreading toward a cliff. Thus has our stream of consciousness developed a waterfall.

There has been a change of social seen. The last stage is us. We, in all humidity, are the people of currant times.

It is now the age of now. This concept grinds our critical, seething minds to a halt.

The Crisis Within Islam

Who speaks for Islam? The events of September 11, which left the world waiting for a decisive repudiation of terrorism by Islam's leaders, give that question fresh urgency. Answering it will require the resolution of a century-old crisis that has silenced many of those who speak for the Muslim majority.

by Richard W. Bulliet

Islam is a religion of peace, President George Bush has declared. The imam at the local mosque has likely offered the same assurance, as has your Muslim neighbor or coworker. Yet many in the West remain suspicious that Islam is not at all a peaceful faith, and that the conflict sparked by the September 11 attacks is not just a war against terrorism but a "clash of civilizations."

It's not hard to understand why. Osama bin Laden, who became the world's best-known Muslim during the 1990s, declared that there is no path open to a believing Muslim except jihad, or holy war, against the United States. Islamic authorities who refuse to join him, bin Laden said, are betraying the faith. At the same time, the few prominent Muslims who have disowned the terrorism perpetrated in Islam's name on September 11 and actively affirmed its peaceful character have been drowned out by the silence of the many others who have not, or who have in their confusion failed to condemn unequivocally bin Laden's acts.

This strange silence does not reflect the attitude of traditional Islam but is a

painful manifestation of a crisis of authority that has been building within Islam for a century. It is this crisis that allowed bin Laden, despite his lack of a formal religious education or an authoritative religious position, to assume the role of spokesman for the world's Muslims. The crisis has undermined the traditional leaders who should be in a position to disqualify or overrule a man who does not speak--or act--for Islam.

Today's crisis grows in part out of the structure of Islam itself--a faith without denominations, hierarchies, and centralized institutions. The absence of such structures has been a source of strength that has permitted the faith to adapt to local conditions and win converts around the world. But it is also a weakness that makes it difficult for Muslims to come together and speak with one voice on important issues--to say what is and what is not true Islam.

Islam's structural weakness has been immeasurably magnified by a series of historical forces that have gradually compromised the authority of its traditional religious leaders in the Middle East and

elsewhere. The imams and muftis (legal scholars) who once shaped the worldviews of ordinary Muslims and confidently articulated the meaning of the faith have been overshadowed by more innovative and often radical figures with much shallower roots in tradition. Hundreds of millions of ordinary Muslims feel that they understand their religion perfectly well, and that it provides no justification for the murderous crashing of airliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. But until Islam's crisis of authority is resolved, these people will have no voice, and public confusion about what Islam really stands for will persist.

The crisis has three related historical causes: the marginalization of traditional Muslim authorities over the past century and a half; the rise of new authorities with inferior credentials but greater skill in using print and, more recently, electronic media; and the spread of mass literacy in the Muslim world, which made the challengers' writings accessible to vast new audiences.

The deepest roots of the crisis go back to the early 19th century, when the Muslim world was forced to begin coming to grips with the challenge of European imperialism. Governments in these countries responded by embracing a variety of reforms based on European models. This response began in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire (which both escaped the imperial yoke) in the early 19th century; spread to Iran, Tunisia, and Morocco by the end of the century; and was then embraced in many countries during the era of decolonization after World War II. In subject lands—including India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Algeria, and West Africa—European colonial governments imposed similar reforms from above.

Strongly influenced by the example of European anticlericalism, which seemed to 19th-century leaders in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire to be an essential ele-

ment in the making of European might, these leaders moved to strip traditional Muslim religious authorities of their institutional and financial power. Later, popular leaders such as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938) in Turkey and Hafez al-Assad (1928–2001) in Syria, continued the attack in the name of secular nationalism. By secularism, however, they meant not separation of church and state but suppression of the church by the state.

For centuries, the traditional religious authorities had interpreted and administered the law in Muslim lands. The reformers replaced Islamic sharia with legal codes of European inspiration, and lawyers trained in the new legal thinking took the place of religiously trained judges and jurisconsults in new European-style courts.

The 19th-century Egyptian and Ottoman reformers also established new schools to train military officers and government officials. These elite institutions, which were to serve as models for most mass school systems in the Middle East after World War II, taught modern subjects such as science and foreign languages—though, significantly, little in the way of liberal arts—and worked to instill a secular outlook in their students. The traditional Islamic schools were discontinued, downgraded, or stripped of funding.

Another traditional element that lost prominence in 19th-century Muslim society due to the opposition of reformist governments was the ubiquitous Sufi brotherhoods—mass religious organizations that held out the promise of a mystical union with God. The secular leaders of the modernizing nations feared that the Sufi sheiks, with their otherworldly perspectives and intellectual independence, might become a significant source of resistance to reform. But the decline of Sufism left a spiritual vacuum that nationalist zeal ultimately fell far short of filling.

In many parts of the Islamic world after

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Crisis and schism are recurring features in the history of Islam. This scene from a Persian fresco depicts a seventh-century battle between the Shiite Imam Shah Zaid and his enemies.

1800, governments took control of the financial endowments that mosques, seminaries, and other religious institutions had amassed over the years from the contributions of the faithful. Many of these endowments were considerable, and in Egypt, Iran, and other countries had had the effect of gradually concentrating a significant share of the national wealth under religious control. Confiscating this resource, as Egypt did early in the 19th century, or centralizing its administration in a government ministry, the later Ottoman practice, put financial control in the hands of the state. Mosque officials, teachers, and others employed in many religious institutions now were subject to government pressure.

This slow but persistent assault on the foundations of religious authority diminished the stature and influence of traditional religious leaders in public life. Many ordinary Muslims grew to distrust the pronouncements of their religious leaders. Were their views shaped by religious conscience and learning, or by the need to

curry favor with the government officials who controlled their purse strings? By the 1930s the sun clearly was setting on the old authorities.

Even as governments in the Middle East and elsewhere were hammering at the sources of traditional religious authority, a powerful technological revolution struck a second blow. Printing technology, which had begun to transform European society in the 15th century, had its first impact in the Islamic religious world only in the second half of the 19th century (though government and the technical fields were affected somewhat earlier). For centuries, the lines of religious authority within Islam had been formed by personal links between teachers and their disciples. Now this traditional mode of preserving, refining, and transmitting ideas faced competition from writers, editors, and publishers with little or no formal religious training and few ties to established teachers. They became authorities simply by virtue of putting their words into

print. A Muslim in Egypt could become a devoted follower of a writer in Pakistan without ever meeting him or anyone else who had met him.

Al-Manar (The Minaret), a magazine published in Cairo by Rashid Rida between 1898 and 1935, provides a typical example of how this new trade in religious ideas worked. Rida had studied in both an Ottoman state school with a "modern" curriculum and an Islamic school, but he wielded his influence as a writer and editor. In the pages of *Al-Manar* thousands of Muslims around the world first encountered the modernist ideas of Rida's mentor, Muhammad Abduh, an advocate of Islam's compatibility with modern science and of greater independence in Muslim thought. But Rida soon took the magazine in another direction, advocating Arab nationalism and eventually embracing the religious conservatism of Saudi Arabia.

By tradition, a Muslim teacher's authority rested on his mastery of many centuries of legal, theological, and ethical thought. But as lawyers, doctors, economists, sociologists, engineers, and educators spewed forth articles, pamphlets, and books on the Islamic condition, this ancient view lost force. After World War II, the most popular, innovative, and inspiring thinkers in the Islamic world boasted secular rather than religious educational backgrounds. (This is still the case. Bin Laden, for example, was trained as an engineer; his associate Ayman al-Zawahiri was a surgeon; and their ideological predecessor Sayyid Qutb was an Egyptian schoolteacher.)

Because radio and television were under strict government control in most Muslim countries, these new thinkers expounded their ideas in print—at least until the advent of audio- and videocassettes made other mediums possible. The Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran brought worldwide prominence not only to Ayatollah Khomeini, an authority of the old type who used books and audiotapes to spread his views, but also to the sociologist Ali Shariati, whose writings and spell-binding oratory galvanized Iran's universi-

ty students, and the economist Abolhasan Bani Sadr, who was elected president of the new Islamic Republic in 1981. In Sudan, lawyers Mahmoud Muhammad Taha and Hasan Turabi gained large followings; the philosophers Hasan Hanafi in Egypt, and Muhammad Arkoun in Algeria both propounded influential interpretations of Islam.

The new thinkers of the past half-century have offered a wide variety of ideas. Some have called for a return to life as it was lived in Muhammad's time (though they often disagree about what seventh-century life was like) and disparaged the teachings of scholars from later centuries. Others have joined bin Laden in preaching terrorist violence as the solution to Islam's problems. Still others, such as Rashid Ghannushi in Tunisia and Abbassi al-Madani in Algeria, have called for the creation of Islamic political parties and for their open competition with other parties in free and democratic elections. In Iran, President Muhammad Khatami leads a powerful, democratically oriented reform movement.

It is also true, however, that some of the leaders who capitalized on the new media to build large followings were both extremists and formally trained religious figures. Khomeini is the most obvious example; Egypt's Sheik Umar Abdurrahman, who is languishing in an American prison since being convicted for his role in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, is another.

The final element in the making of today's crisis was the decision by the newly independent states of the post-World War II era to pursue compulsory education and mass literacy. The young Muslims who came of age in the developing world during the 1960s thus had the tools to read what the new authorities were writing. Because their schooling included minimum exposure to the traditional religious curriculum and texts—and in many cases admonitions by their government teachers not to put too much stock in religious scholarship—they did not feel obliged to follow the dictates of the old authorities. And



Hasan Turabi, one of Islam's "new authorities," celebrates his Islamic Front's victory in Sudan's 1996 parliamentary election. Sudan played host to Osama bin Laden in the 1990s.

they appreciated the contemporary vocabulary and viewpoints of the new Islamic writers. So long as nationalism offered them the promise of a better future, they remained loyal to their political leaders and governments. But when the nationalists' dreams failed and the future dimmed, as it did in most Muslim countries during the 1970s, people looked elsewhere for hope and inspiration, and they didn't have to look far.

Traditional Islam is far from dead. Many Muslims still stand firmly by the legal opinions (*fatwas*) and moral guidance of traditionally educated muftis and the orthodox teachings of the imams at their local mosques. But the momentum seems to be with the new authorities. This has created an unusual dynamic within the Muslim world. While the new authorities seldom defer to the old, the old feel compelled to endorse some of their rivals' ideas in order to seem up to date and retain influence. The locus of debate thus has been steadily shifting in favor of the new authorities.

Local imams and other religious offi-

cial are also dependent (in a way their rivals usually are not) on their national government. They are caught in a three-way squeeze between government interests, their religious training, and the popular teachings of their rivals. This helps explain the strange silence that has prevailed since September 11. Some traditional religious figures have chosen to say nothing. Some have tacitly admitted the evil of terrorism while denying that Islam and Muslims had anything to do with the attacks. Some have resorted to anti-American rhetoric. And some have condemned the terrorist acts but stopped short of recognizing and condemning the instigators.

This failure of the traditional leadership has left Muslims everywhere in a quandary. They know what their faith means to them, and they think this meaning should be obvious to everyone. They do not pray five times a day, fast during Ramadan, make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and live modest, peaceful, hard-working lives for the secret purpose of destroying Western civilization and slaughtering Americans. They find the association of such violent ideas with their religion odi-

Crisis Within Islam

ous and preposterous--and threatening if they happen to live in the United States. Yet nobody seems to speak for them.

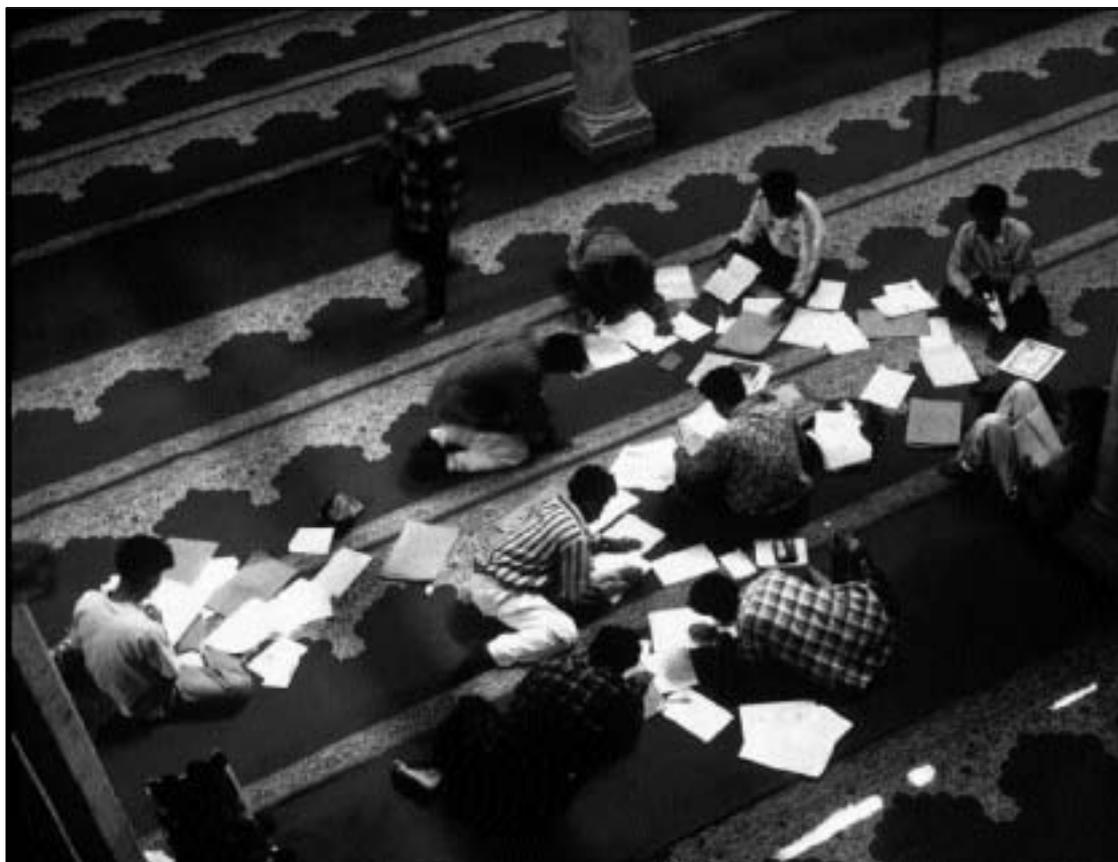
This is not to suggest that giving voice to the feelings of ordinary Muslims would somehow release a hidden reservoir of support for America's global preeminence and its policies in the Middle East and other regions. Many, if not most, Muslims are highly critical of these policies. Those with the strongest anti-American feelings applauded the events of September 11 and praised bin Laden for launching them--even, in some cases, while shuddering at the thought of living in a world governed by his religious vision. But these supporters of terror, though prominently featured on television, do not represent the Muslim majority. Indeed, a good number of the Muslim world's apologists for terror are not themselves religious people.

In any event, opposition to U.S. policies is hardly restricted to the Islamic world. No one should mistake political views for religious ones--millions of non-Muslims

(including some Americans) voice similar criticisms of the United States. For Americans to want Muslims to repudiate terrorism and disown its authors is reasonable. To want them to agree wholeheartedly with everything America does in the world is unrealistic.

What Muslims lack in this moment of crisis is a clear, decisive, and unequivocal religious authority able to declare that the killing of innocents by terrorist attacks is contrary to Islam and to explain how Muslims can stand firmly against terrorism without seeming to embrace the United States and its policies. When authority itself is in question, the middle gives way.

History suggests that Islam will overcome its current crisis of authority, just as it has overcome a number of other crises in its past. The first of these arose soon after the prophet Muhammad's death in A.D. 632. Later in the seventh century, as the generation that had personally known



Muhammad died off, the Muslim community split over several issues, particularly the proper line of succession to the caliphate that had been established after Muhammad's death. (It was from this crisis that the Sunni-Shiite split grew.) Civil wars erupted. The crisis of authority was temporarily resolved by the consolidation of a military state, the Umayyad Caliphate, and the suppression of dissent. The caliphate shifted the seat of power from Medina, in Arabia, to Damascus, and quickly extended its rule over a vast empire that stretched from Spain in the west to what is now Pakistan in the east.

In the middle of the ninth century, as the conversion of non-Arab peoples brought into Islam people bearing the traditions of Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Greek philosophy, Islam again entered a period of uncertainty. The caliphate had passed into the hands of the Abbasids, so named because they claimed descent from the Prophet's uncle Abbas. The caliphate, its seat now in Baghdad, flourished--this period was in many ways the apex of Arab civilization. But when a new religious challenge arose, the caliph's resort to force failed. Against him was arrayed a new class of religious scholars who maintained that Muslims should follow the tradition of the prophet Muhammad, as preserved in a multitude of sayings and anecdotes, rather than the dictates of a caliph in Baghdad. Today's declining Islamic authorities date the beginnings of their power to this confrontation. Under the leadership of the scholar Ahmad ibn Hanbal and others who followed him, it was eventually agreed that Muslims would look to a consensus of scholars--in theory, throughout the Muslim lands, but in practice within each locality--for guidance on how to live moral

lives. (Ahmad ibn Hanbal himself was founder of one of the four main schools of Islamic law within the Sunni tradition.)

A fresh crisis of authority arose, however, as it became evident that the sayings of the Prophet were too numerous and internally contradictory for all of them to be true. A new group of scholars set out to establish rules for determining which sayings were most likely to be true, and they gradually collected the most reliable of them into books. Nevertheless, several centuries elapsed before these books of "sound" traditions won recognition as the sole authoritative guides to Muslim behavior.

The key to this recognition was the spread during the 12th and 13th centuries of *madrasas*, Islamic seminaries that had first appeared in Iran in the 10th century. Institutions such as al-Azhar in Cairo, the Zaituna Mosque in Tunis, the Qarawiyyin Madrasa in Fez, and clusters of seminaries in Mecca and in Ottoman Istanbul and Bursa gained particular eminence. The *madrasas* adopted the authoritative compilations of prophetic traditions as a fundamental part of their curricula, along with instruction in the Koran and the Arabic language. Other collections were gradually forgotten. The Muslim religious schools of today, whether grand edifices like al-Azhar and the Shiite seminaries at Qum in Iran, or the myriad humble *madrasas* of Pakistan and *pesantrens* of Indonesia, have roots in the resolution of this crisis of authority that arose more than 800 years ago.

Even as the *madrasas* were being established, a new upheaval was beginning. It grew out of the feeling of many common people--including those in late-converting rural areas of the Middle East and more recently Islamized lands in West Africa, the Balkans, and Central, South, and Southeast Asia--that Islam had become too legalistic and impersonal under the guidance of the scholars and *madrasas*. Religious practice, these Muslims felt, had

Students spread out to study on the floor of the mosque at al-Hazar University in Cairo, one of the oldest and most important traditional institutions in the Islamic world.

Crisis Within Islam

become a matter of obeying the sharia and little else. The rise of Sufi brotherhoods beginning in the 13th century was a response to this popular demand for a more intense spiritual and communal life. Born in the Middle East, Sufism spread quickly throughout the Muslim world. The Sufis made room for music, dancing, chanting, and other manifestations of devotion that were not permitted in the mosque. But Sufi practices did not supersede conventional worship; the sheiks who led the Sufi brotherhoods provided religious guidance that paralleled rather than opposed the authority exercised by the established scholars and seminaries.

One can see in this capsule history of Islamic religious development a demonstration of the fact that a faith with no central institution for determining what is good or bad practice is bound to experience periodic crises of authority. But this history also demonstrates that the Muslim religious community has overcome every crisis it has confronted.

How will it overcome this one? There is no way to rebuild religious authority on the old foundations. The modern state, the modern media, and the modern citizen must be part of any solution. Islam's history suggests that any new institutions that grow out of the current crisis will not supplant those already in place. Seminaries will continue to impart to their students a mastery of fundamental legal and interpretive texts, and their graduates will continue to issue weighty legal opinions. Because Muslims retain a historical memory of being unified under a caliphate—a powerful state predicated on Islamic teachings—the dream of Islamic political unity will not disappear.

Any response to the current crisis must appeal to the many Muslims whose spiritual, moral, and intellectual needs have not been met by the faith's traditional institutions. Fortunately, the violent, totalitarian philosophy of bin Laden and his allies represents only one of the possible responses. Others are more promising.

Throughout the Muslim world organizations modeled (consciously or uncon-

sciously) on the ancient Sufi brotherhoods but expounding this-worldly interpretations of Islam have been able to attract thousands of members. (A revival of Sufism itself seems to be underway in Iran, Central Asia, and other areas.) In some ways resembling political parties, but dedicated as well to the pursuit of social welfare programs, these fraternal organizations often present themselves as prototypes of a modern, nonclerical form of Islamic government. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, and the Hezbollah (Party of God) in Lebanon differ widely in their interpretations of Islam, but they share a willingness to exist in a modern political world of participatory institutions. The Islamic Salvation Front actually triumphed in the first round of Algeria's 1991 parliamentary elections and failed to take power only because the Algerian military stepped in. The country has been convulsed by violence ever since.

No one can safely predict whether the participation of such groups in an electoral system would further the spread of democracy or simply give them a platform for preaching noxious doctrines. Hezbollah leader Sheik Muhammad Fadlallah, for example, has embraced the concept of a secular, multiparty political system in Lebanon, even at the cost of alienating some of the support within Iran for his Shiite group. But Hezbollah originally rose to prominence in Lebanon through violence during the country's years of civil war (and it has continued its campaign against Israel). Still, the fact that such groups formally advocate participatory governing institutions—and that the Islamic Republic of Iran has developed such institutions—does give reason for hope.

Another set of possibilities for change within Islam is provided by educational and research institutions that exist independently of both traditional seminaries and formal government educational systems. These institutions provide venues for modern Muslim intellectuals to develop new ideas about contemporary issues. They are as likely to be found in London, Paris, and Washington as in

Cairo and Istanbul--London's Institute of Islamic Political Thought and the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences in America, outside Washington, D.C., are leading examples--and the thinkers they host often provide valuable guidance for the growing population of Muslims living outside the Muslim world.

In some Muslim countries, governments now sponsor educational institutions devoted to teaching about Islam from the perspective of the contemporary world. The Institutes of Higher Islamic Studies in Indonesia are a notable example. Some of these institutes may soon become full-fledged universities offering both religious and secular courses.

Iran may seem an unlikely quarter in which to look for encouragement, but it too may provide some clues to the future direction of Islam. There, an avowedly Islamic state is pursuing a unique experiment integrating elections and other modern political elements into an Islamic framework of government. Though Iran may prove to be the first and only enduring Islamic republic, the intellectual trends that have developed there, sometimes to the dismay of conservative religious leaders with seminary backgrounds, encourage Muslims to think that a lively intellectual life and engagement with worldwide currents of thought can survive and flourish in a religious environment. Iran remains far from a model republic, but the trajectory that has taken it from being a country bent on the export of revolution to one with a sizable electoral majority favoring liberalization is encouraging.

Finally, another source of innovation may be the substantial numbers of secular Muslims who--contrary to the Western stereotype--live not only outside the traditional boundaries of the Islamic world but within them. Secular Muslim thinkers have been elaborating the idea of *turath* (heritage) as a point of intersection between the past and a present in which the particulars of religious law and practice seem irrelevant. In engaging the "modern" Muslim intellectuals, these secularists are striving to create legitimacy for non-observant forms of Islam.

Although these modernizers within con-

temporary Islam seem to work at cross purposes as much as they work in concert, some sort of fusion among them seems the most likely route to resolving today's crisis of authority. There is little possibility that nonobservant Muslim intellectuals, ideologues of Islamic political parties, thinkers attached to centers and institutes, and teachers in government-sponsored religious schools will ever see eye to eye on everything. But in the past, discord within Islam was often resolved when Muslim leaders agreed to respect divergent views while recognizing a common interest in the welfare of the global Muslim community. Muhammad himself declared, in one of his most oft-cited sayings, "The difference of opinion in my community is a divine mercy."

But more immediate action is needed than the development of long-term concord within Islam. The ugly alternative is a "clash of civilizations" like the one envisioned by Harvard University political scientist Samuel Huntington and echoed in the propaganda of bin Laden and other extremists. Polarizing the world between Islam and the West would serve the interest of the people who fly airliners into skyscrapers; it would spell tragedy for everybody else. Even if Islam's uncertain authorities, new and old, cannot agree on issues that might imply support for American foreign policy, they should be able to recognize an oncoming catastrophe and take measures to avoid it.

Islam's leaders must act. The heads of Islamic centers and institutes around the world, along with leading Muslim intellectuals of every persuasion, must clarify the meaning of their faith. Non-Muslims in the United States and other countries are eager for signs of leadership in the Muslim world. They await an affirmation that the vision of a peaceful, fraternal world embodied in Islam's past and in the hearts of most ordinary Muslims still guides the people who claim to speak in Islam's name. The crisis of September 11 can be the crucible in which the tools for resolving Islam's own crisis of authority are forged. The lessons of the past encourage hope that Islam will find a path out of its confusion of voices. We listen with hope in our hearts. □

What Is Nature Worth?

There's a powerful economic argument for preserving our living natural environment: The biosphere promotes the long-term material prosperity and health of the human race to a degree that is almost incalculable. But moral reasons, too, should compel us to take responsibility for the natural world.

by Edward O. Wilson

I n the early 19th century, the coastal plain of the southern United States was much the same as in countless millennia past. From Florida and Virginia west to the Big Thicket of Texas, primeval stands of cypress and flatland hardwoods wound around the corridors of longleaf pine through which the early Spanish explorers had found their way into the continental interior. The signature bird of this wilderness, a dweller of the deep bottomland woods, was the ivory-billed woodpecker, *Campephilus principalis*. Its large size, exceeding a crow's, its flashing white primaries, visible at rest, and its loud nasal call—*kent! . . . kent! . . . kent!*—likened by John James Audubon to the false high note of a clarinet, made the ivory-bill both conspicuous and instantly recognizable. Mated pairs worked together up and down the boles and through the canopies of high trees, clinging to vertical surfaces with splayed claws while hammering their powerful, off-white beaks through dead wood into the burrows of beetle larvae and other insect prey. The hesitant beat of their strikes—*tick tick . . . tick tick tick . . . tick tick*—heralded their approach from a distance in the dark woods. They came to the observer like spirits out of an unfathomed wilderness core.

Alexander Wilson, early American naturalist and friend of Audubon, assigned the ivorybill noble rank. Its manners, he wrote in *American Ornithology* (1808–14), “have a dignity in them superior to the common herd of woodpeckers. Trees, shrubbery, orchards, rails, fence posts, and old prostrate logs are all alike interesting to those, in their humble and indefatigable search for prey; but the royal hunter before us scorns the humility of such situations, and seeks the most towering trees of the forest, seeming particularly attached to those prodigious cypress swamps whose crowded giant sons stretch their bare and blasted or moss-hung arms midway to the sky.”

A century later, almost all of the virgin bottomland forest had been replaced by farms, towns, and second-growth woodlots. Shorn of its habitat, the ivorybill declined precipitously in numbers. By the 1930s, it was down to scattered pairs in the few remaining primeval swamps of South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana. In the 1940s, the only verifiable sightings were in the Singer Tract of northern Louisiana. Subsequently, only rumors of sightings persisted, and even these faded with each passing year.

The final descent of the ivorybill was closely watched by Roger Tory Peterson, whose classic *A Field Guide to the Birds* had fired my own interest in birds when I was a teenager. In 1995, the year before he died, I met Peterson, one of my heroes, for the first and only time. I asked him a question common in conversations among American naturalists: What of the ivory-billed woodpecker? He gave the answer I expected: "Gone."

I thought, surely not gone *everywhere*, not *globally*! Naturalists are among the most hopeful of people. They require the equivalent of an autopsy report, cremation, and three witnesses before they write a species off, and even then they would hunt for it in séances if they thought there were any chance of at least a virtual image. Maybe, they speculate, there are a few ivorybills in some inaccessible cove, or deep inside a forgotten swamp, known only to a few close-mouthed cognoscenti. In fact, several individuals of a small Cuban race of ivorybills were discovered during the 1960s in an isolated pine forest of Oriente Province. Their current status is unknown. In 1996, the Red List of the World Conservation Union reported the species to be everywhere extinct, including Cuba. I have heard of no further sightings, but evidently no one at this writing knows for sure.



Ivory-billed Woodpecker (1840–44),
by John James Audubon

Why should we care about *Campephilus principalis*? It is, after all, only one of 10,000 bird species in the world. Let me give a simple and, I hope, decisive answer: because we knew this particular species, and knew it well. For reasons difficult to understand and express, it became part of our culture, part of the rich mental world of Alexander Wilson and all those afterward who cared about it. There is no way to make a full and final valuation of the ivorybill or any other species in the natural world. The measures we use increase in number and magnitude with no predictable limit. They rise from scattered, unconnected facts and elusive emotions that break through the surface of the subconscious mind, occasionally to be captured by words, though never adequately.

We, *Homo sapiens*, have arrived and marked our territory well. Winners of the Darwinian lottery, bulge-headed paragons of organic evolution, industrious bipedal apes with opposable thumbs, we are chipping away the ivorybills and other miracles around us. As habitats shrink, species decline wholesale in range and abundance. They slide down the Red List ratchet, and the vast majority depart without special notice. Over the past half-billion years, the planet lost perhaps one species per million species each year, including everything from mammals to plants. Today, the annual rate of extinction is 1,000 to 10,000 times faster. If nothing more is done, one-fifth of all the plant and animal species now on earth could be gone or on the road to extinction by 2030. Being distracted and self-absorbed, as is our nature, we have not yet fully understood what we are doing. But future generations, with endless time to reflect, will understand it all, and in painful detail. As awareness grows, so will their sense of loss. There will be thousands of ivory-billed woodpeckers to think about in the centuries and millenniums to come.

Is there any way now to measure even approximately what is being lost? Any attempt is almost certain to produce an underestimate, but let me start anyway with macroeconomics. In 1997, an international team of economists and environmental scientists put a dollar amount on all the ecosystems services provided to humanity free of charge by the living natural environment. Drawing from multiple databases, they estimated the contribution to be \$33 trillion or more each year. This amount is nearly twice the 1997 combined gross national product (GNP) of all the countries in the world—\$18 trillion. *Ecosystems services* are defined as the flow of materials, energy, and information from the biosphere that support human existence. They include the regulation of the atmosphere and climate; the purification and retention of fresh water; the formation and enrichment of the soil; nutrient cycling; the detoxification and recirculation of waste; the pollination of crops; and the production of lumber, fodder, and biomass fuel.

The 1997 megaestimate can be expressed in another, even more cogent, manner. If humanity were to try to replace the free services of the natural economy with substitutes of its own manufacture, the global GNP would have to be

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increased by at least \$33 trillion. The exercise, however, cannot be performed except as a thought experiment. To supplant natural ecosystems entirely, even mostly, is an economic—and even physical—impossibility, and we would certainly die if we tried. The reason, ecological economists explain, is that the *marginal value*, defined as the rate of change in the value of ecosystems services relative to the rate of decline in the availability of these services, rises sharply with every increment in the decline. If taken too far, the rise will outpace human capacity to sustain the needed services by combined natural and artificial means. Hence, a much greater dependence on artificial means—in other words, environmental prostheses—puts at risk not just the biosphere but humanity itself.

Most environmental scientists believe that the shift has already been taken too far, lending credit to the folk injunction “Don’t mess with Mother Nature.” The lady is our mother all right, and a mighty dispensational force as well. After evolving on her own for more than three billion years, she gave birth to us a mere million years ago, the blink of an eye in evolutionary time. Ancient and vulnerable, she will not tolerate the undisciplined appetite of her gargantuan infant much longer.

Abundant signs of the biosphere’s limited resilience exist all around. The oceanic fish catch now yields \$2.5 billion to the U.S. economy and \$82 billion worldwide. But it will not grow further, simply because the amount of ocean is fixed and the number of organisms it can generate is static. As a result, all of the world’s 17 oceanic fisheries are at or below sustainable yield. During the 1990s, the annual global catch leveled off around 30 million tons. Pressed by ever-growing global demand, it can be expected eventually to drop. Already, fisheries of the western North Atlantic, the Black Sea, and portions of the Caribbean have largely collapsed. Aquaculture, or the farming of fish, crustaceans, and mollusks, takes up part of the slack, but at rising environmental cost. This “fin-and-shell revolution” necessitates the conversion of valuable wetland habitats, which are nurseries for marine life. To feed the captive populations, fodder must be diverted from crop production. Thus, aquaculture competes with other human activities for productive land while reducing natural habitat. What was once free for the taking must now be manufactured. The ultimate result will be an upward inflationary pressure across wide swaths of the world’s coastal and inland economies.

Another case in point: Forested watersheds capture rainwater and purify it before returning it by gradual runoffs to the lakes and sea, all for free. They can be replaced only at great cost. For generations, New York City thrived on exceptionally clean water from the Catskill Mountains. The watershed inhabitants were proud that their bottled water was once sold throughout the

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Passion Flowers and Humming Birds (c. 1875–85), by Martin Johnson Heade

Northeast. As their population grew, however, they converted more and more of the watershed forest into farms, homes, and resorts. Gradually, the sewage and agricultural runoff adulterated the water, until it fell below Environmental Protection Agency standards. Officials in New York City now faced a choice: They could build a filtration plant to replace the Catskill watershed, at a \$6 billion to \$8 billion capital cost, followed by \$300 million annual running costs, or they could restore the watershed to somewhere near its original purification capacity for \$1 billion, with subsequently very low maintenance costs. The decision was easy, even for those born and bred in an urban environment. In 1997, the city raised an environmental bond issue and set out to purchase forested land and to subsidize the upgrading of septic tanks in the Catskills. There is no reason the people of New York City and the Catskills cannot enjoy the double gift from nature in perpetuity of clean water at low cost and a beautiful recreational area at no cost.

There is even a bonus in the deal. In the course of providing natural water management, the Catskill forest region also secures flood control at very little expense. The same benefit is available to the city of Atlanta. When 20 percent of the trees in the metropolitan area were removed during its rapid development, the result was an annual increase in stormwater runoff of 4.4 billion cubic feet. If enough containment facilities were built to capture this volume, the cost would be at least \$2 billion. In contrast, trees replanted along streets and in yards, and parking area are a great deal cheaper than concrete drains and revetments. Their maintenance cost is near zero, and, not least, they are more pleasing to the eye.

In conserving nature, whether for practical or aesthetic reasons, diversity matters. The following rule is now widely accepted by ecologists: The more numerous the species that inhabit an ecosystem, such as a forest or lake, the

more productive and stable is the ecosystem. By “production,” the scientists mean the amount of plant and animal tissue created in a given unit of time. By “stability,” they mean one or the other, or both, of two things: first, how narrowly the summed abundances of all species vary through time; and, second, how quickly the ecosystem recovers from fire, drought, and other stresses that perturb it. Human beings understandably wish to live in the midst of diverse, productive, and stable ecosystems. Who, if given a choice, would build a home in a wheat field instead of a parkland?

Ecosystems are kept stable in part by the insurance principle of biodiversity: If a species disappears from a community, its niche will be more quickly and effectively filled by another species if there are many candidates for the role instead of few. Example: A ground fire sweeps through a pine forest, killing many of the understory plants and animals. If the forest is biodiverse, it recovers its original composition and production of plants and animals more quickly. The larger pines escape with some scorching of their lower bark and continue to grow and cast shade as before. A few kinds of shrubs and herbaceous plants also hang on and resume regeneration immediately. In some pine forests subject to frequent fires, the heat of the fire itself triggers the germination of dormant seeds genetically adapted to respond to heat, speeding the regrowth of forest vegetation still more.

A second example of the insurance principle: When we scan a lake, our macroscopic eye sees only relatively big organisms, such as eelgrass, pondweeds, fishes, water birds, dragonflies, whirligig beetles, and other things big enough to splash and go bump in the night. But all around them, in vastly greater numbers and variety, are invisible bacteria, protists, planktonic single-celled algae, aquatic fungi, and other microorganisms. These seething myriads are the true foundation of the lake’s ecosystem and the hidden agents of its stability. They decompose the bodies of the larger organisms. They form large reservoirs of carbon and nitrogen, release carbon dioxide, and thereby damp fluctuations in the organic cycles and energy flows in the rest of the aquatic ecosystem. They hold the lake close to a chemical equilibrium, and, to a point, they pull it back from extreme perturbations caused by silting and pollution.

In the dynamism of healthy ecosystems, there are minor players and major players. Among the major players are the ecosystems engineers, which add new parts to the habitat and open the door to guilds of organisms specialized to use them. Biodiversity engenders more biodiversity, and the overall abundance of plants, animals, and microorganisms increases to a corresponding degree.

By constructing dams, beavers create ponds, bogs, and flooded meadows. These environments shelter species of plants and animals that are rare or absent in free-running streams. The submerged masses of decaying wood forming the dams draw still more species, which occupy and feed on them.

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Elephants trample and tear up shrubs and small trees, opening glades within forests. The result is a mosaic of habitats that, overall, contains larger numbers of resident species.

Florida gopher tortoises dig 30-foot-long tunnels that diversify the texture of the soil, altering the composition of its microorganisms. Their retreats are also shared by snakes, frogs, and ants specialized to live in the burrows.

Euchondrus snails of Israel's Negev Desert grind down soft rocks to feed on the lichens growing inside. By converting rock to soil and releasing the nutrients photosynthesized by the lichens, the snails multiply niches for other species.

Overall, a large number of independent observations from differing kinds of ecosystems point to the same conclusion: The greater the number of species that live together, the more stable and productive the ecosystems these species compose. On the other hand, mathematical models that attempt to describe the interactions of species in ecosystems show that the apparent opposite also occurs: High levels of diversity can reduce the stability of individual species.

Under certain conditions, including random colonization of the ecosystem by large numbers of species that interact strongly with one another, the separate but interlocking fluctuations in species populations can become more volatile, thus making extinction more likely. Similarly, given appropriate species traits, it is mathematically possible for

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When observation and theory collide, scientists turn to carefully designed experiments for resolution. Their motivation is especially strong in the case of biological systems, which are typically far too complex to be grasped by observation and theory alone. The best procedure, as in the rest of science, is first to simplify the system, then to hold it more or less constant while varying the important parameters one or two at a time to see what happens. In the 1990s a team of British ecologists, in an attempt to approach these ideal conditions, devised the *ecotron*, a growth chamber in which artificially simple ecosystems can be assembled as desired, species by species. Using multiple ecotrons, they found that productivity, measured by the increase of plant bulk, rose with an increase in species numbers. Simultaneously, ecologists monitoring patches of Minnesota grassland—outdoor equivalents of ecotrons—during a period of drought found that patches richer in species diversity underwent less decline in productivity and recovered more quickly than patches with less diversity.

These pioneering experiments appeared to uphold the conclusion drawn earlier from natural history, at least with reference to production. Put more

precisely, ecosystems tested thus far do not possess the qualities and starting conditions allowed by theory that can reduce production and produce instability as a result of large species numbers.

But—how can we be sure, the critics asked (pressing on in the best tradition of science), that the increase in production in particular is truly the result of just an increase in the number of species? Maybe the effect is due to some other factor that just happens to be correlated with species numbers. Perhaps the result is a statistical artifact. For example, the larger the number of plant species present in a habitat, the more likely it is that at least one kind among them will be extremely productive. If that occurs, the increase in the yield of plant tissue—and in the number of the animals feeding on it—is only a matter of luck of the draw, and not the result of some pure property of biodiversity itself. At its base, the distinction made by this alternative hypothesis is semantic. The increased likelihood of acquiring an outstandingly productive species can be viewed as just one means by which the enrichment of biodiversity boosts productivity. (If you draw on a pool of 1,000 candidates for a basketball team, you are more likely to get a star than if you draw on a pool of 100 candidates.)

Still, it is important to know whether other consequences of biodiversity enrichment play an important role. In particular, do species interact in a manner that increases the growth of either one or both? This is the process called *overyielding*. In the mid-1990s, a massive study was undertaken to test the effect of biodiversity on productivity that paid special attention to the presence or absence of overyielding. Multiple projects of BIODDEPTH, as the project came to be called, were conducted during a two-year period by 34 researchers in eight European countries. This time, the results were more persuasive. They showed once again that productivity does increase with biodiversity. Many of the experimental runs also revealed the existence of overyielding.

Over millions of years, nature's ecosystems engineers have been especially effective in the promotion of overyielding. They have coevolved with other species that exploit the niches they build. The result is a harmony within ecosystems. The constituent species, by spreading out into multiple niches, seize and cycle more materials and energy than is possible in similar ecosystems. *Homo sapiens* is an ecosystems engineer too, but a bad one. Not having coevolved with the majority of life forms we now encounter around the world, we eliminate far more niches than we create. We drive species and ecosystems into extinction at a far higher rate than existed before, and everywhere diminish productivity and stability.

I will grant at once that economic and production values at the ecosystem level do not alone justify saving every species in an ecosystem, especially those so rare as to be endangered. The loss of the ivory-billed woodpecker has had no discernible effect on American prosperity. A rare flower or moss could vanish from the Catskill forest without diminishing the region's filtration capacity. But so what? To evaluate individual species solely by their known practical value at the present time is business accounting in the service of barbarism. In 1973, the economist Colin W. Clark made this

point persuasively in the case of the blue whale, *Balaenopterus musculus*. A hundred feet in length and 150 tons in weight at maturity, the species is the largest animal that ever lived on land or sea. It is also among the easiest to hunt and kill. More than 300,000 blue whales were harvested during the 20th century, with a peak haul of 29,649 in the 1930-31 season. By the early 1970s, the population had plummeted to several hundred individuals. The Japanese were especially eager to continue the hunt, even at the risk of total extinction. So Clark asked, What practice would yield the whalers and humanity the most money: Cease hunting and let the blue whales recover in numbers, then harvest them sustainably forever, or kill the rest off as quickly as possible and invest the profits in growth stocks? The disconcerting answer for annual discount rates over 21 percent: Kill them all and invest the money.

Now, let us ask, what is wrong with that argument?

Clark's implicit answer is simple. The dollars-and-cents value of a dead blue whale was based only on the measures relevant to the existing market—that is, on the going price per unit weight of whale oil and meat. There are many other values, destined to grow along with our knowledge of living *Balaenopterus musculus* and as science, medicine, and aesthetics grow and strengthen, in dimensions and magnitudes still unforeseen. What was the value of the blue whale in A.D. 1000? Close to zero. What will be its value in A.D. 3000? Essentially limitless—to say nothing of the measure of gratitude the generation then alive will feel to those who in their wisdom saved the whale from extinction.

No one can guess the full future value of any kind of animal, plant, or microorganism. Its potential is spread across a spectrum of known and as yet unimagined human needs. Even the species themselves are largely unknown. Fewer than two million are in the scientific register, with a formal Latinized name, while an estimated five to 100 million—or more—await discovery. Of the species known, fewer than one percent have been studied

beyond the sketchy anatomical descriptions used to identify them.

Agriculture is one of the vital industries most likely to be upgraded by attention to the remaining wild species. The world's food supply hangs by a slender thread of biodiversity. Ninety percent is provided by slightly more than 100 plant species out of a

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quarter-million known to exist. Twenty species carry most of the load, of which only three—wheat, maize, and rice—stand between humanity and starvation. For the most part, the premier 20 are those that happened to be present in the regions where agriculture was indepen-

dently invented some 10,000 years ago, namely the Mediterranean perimeter and southwestern Asia; Central Asia; the Horn of Africa; the rice belt of tropical Asia; and the uplands of Mexico, Central America, and Andean South America. Yet some 30,000 species of wild plants, most occurring outside these regions, have edible parts consumed at one time or other by hunter-gatherers. Of these species, at least 10,000 can be adapted as domestic crops. A few, including the three species of New World amaranths, the carrotlike arracacha of the Andes, and the winged bean of tropical Asia, are immediately available for commercial development.

In a more general sense, all the quarter-million plant species—in fact, all species of organisms—are potential donors of genes that can be transferred by genetic engineering into crop species in order to improve their performance. With the insertion of the right snippets of DNA, new strains can be created that are, variously, cold resistant, pest resistant, perennial, fast growing, highly nutritious, multipurpose, sparing in their consumption of water, and more easily sowed and harvested. And compared with traditional breeding techniques, genetic engineering is all but instantaneous.

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The method, a spinoff of the revolution in molecular genetics, was developed in the 1970s. During the 1980s and 1990s, before the world quite realized what was happening, it came of age. A gene from the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis*, for example, was inserted into the chromosomes of corn, cotton, and potato plants, allowing them to manufacture a toxin that kills insect pests. No need to spray insecticides; the engineered plants now perform this task on their own. Other transgenes, as they are called, were inserted from bacteria into soybean and canola plants to make them resistant to chemical weed killers. Agricultural fields can now be cheaply cleared of weeds with no harm to the crops growing there. The most important advance of all, achieved in the 1990s, was the creation of golden rice. This new strain is laced with bacterial and daffodil genes that allow it to manufacture beta-carotene, a precursor of vitamin A. Because rice, the principal food of three billion people, is deficient in vitamin A, the addition of beta-carotene is no mean humanitarian feat. About the same time, the almost endless potential of genetic engineering was confirmed by two circus tricks of the trade: A bacterial gene was implanted into a monkey, and a jellyfish bioluminescence gene into a plant.

But not everyone was dazzled by genetic engineering, and inevitably it stirred opposition. For many, human existence was being transformed in a fundamental and insidious way. With little warning, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) had entered our lives and were all around us, changing

incomprehensibly the order of nature and society. A protest movement against the new industry began in the mid-1990s and exploded in 1999, just in time to rank as a millennial event with apocalyptic overtones. The European Union banned transgenic crops, the Prince of Wales compared the methodology to playing God, and radical activists called for a global embargo of all GMOs. “Frankenfoods,” “superweeds,” and “Farmageddon” entered the vocabulary: GMOs were, according to one British newspaper, the “mad forces of genetic darkness.” Some prominent environmental scientists found technical and ethical reasons for concern.

As I write, public opinion and official policy toward genetic engineering have come to vary greatly from one country to the next. France and Britain are vehemently opposed. China is strongly favorable, and Brazil, India, Japan, and the United States cautiously so. In the United States particularly, the public awoke to the issue only after the transgenie (so to speak) was out of the bottle. From 1996 to 1999, the amount of U.S. farmland devoted to genetically modified crops had rocketed from 3.8 million to 70.9 million acres. As the century ended, more than half the soybeans and cotton grown, and nearly a third (28 percent) of the corn, were engineered.

There are, actually, several sound reasons for anxiety over genetic engineering, which I will now summarize and evaluate.

Many people, not just philosophers and theologians, are troubled by the ethics of transgenic evolution. They grant the benefits but are unsettled by the reconstruction of organisms in bits and pieces. Of course, human beings have been creating new strains of plants and animals since agriculture began, but never at the sweep and pace inaugurated by genetic engineering. And during the era of traditional plant breeding, hybridization was used to mix genes almost always among varieties of the same species or closely similar species. Now it is used across entire kingdoms, from bacteria and viruses to plants and animals. How far the process should be allowed to continue remains an open ethical issue.

The effects on human health of each new transgenic food are hard to predict, and certainly never free of risk. However, the products can be tested just like any other new food products on the market, then certified and labeled. There is no reason at this time to assume that their effects will differ in any fundamental way. Yet scientists generally agree that a high level of alertness is essential, and for the following reason: All genes, whether original to the organism or donated to it by an exotic species, have multiple effects. Primary effects, such as the manufacture of a pesticide, are the ones sought. But destructive secondary effects, including allergenic or carcinogenic activity, are also at least a remote possibility.

Transgenes can escape from the modified crops into wild relatives of the crop where the two grow close together. Hybridization has always occurred widely in agriculture, even before the advent of genetic engineering. It has been recorded at one or another time and place in 12 of the 13 most important crops used worldwide. However, the hybrids have not overwhelmed their wild parents. I know of no case in which a hybrid strain outcompetes wild



Leopard in a Sausage Tree (1979), by Robert Bateman

strains of the same or closely related species in the natural environment. Nor has any hybrid turned into a superweed, in the same class as the worst wild nonhybrid weeds that afflict the planet. As a rule, domesticated species and strains are less competitive than their wild counterparts in both natural and human-modified environments. Of course, transgenes could change the picture. It is simply too early to tell.

Genetically modified crops can diminish biological diversity in other ways. In a now famous example, the bacterial toxin used to protect corn is carried in pollen by wind currents for distances of 60 meters or more from the cultivated fields. Then, landing on milkweed plants, the toxin is capable of killing the caterpillars of monarch butterflies feeding there. In another twist, when cultivated fields are cleared of weeds with chemical sprays against which the crops are protected by transgenes, the food supply of birds is reduced and their local populations decline. These environmental secondary effects have not been well studied in the field. How severe they will become as genetic engineering spreads remains to be seen.

Many people, having become aware of the potential threats of genetic engineering in their food supply, understandably believe that yet another bit of their freedom has been taken from them by faceless corporations (who can even name, say, three of the key players?) using technology beyond their control or even understanding. They also fear that an industrialized agriculture dependent on high technology can by one random error go terribly wrong. At the heart of the anxiety is a sense of helplessness. In the realm of public opinion, genetic engineering is to agriculture as nuclear engineering is to energy.

The problem before us is how to feed billions of new mouths over the next several decades and save the rest of life at the same time—without being trapped in a Faustian bargain that threatens freedom and security. No one knows the exact solution to this dilemma. Most scientists and economists who have studied both sides of it agree that the benefits outweigh the risks. The benefits must come from an evergreen revolution that has as its goal to lift food production well above the level attained by the green revolution of the 1960s, using technology and regulatory policy more advanced, and even safer, than that now in existence.

Genetic engineering will almost certainly play an important role in the evergreen revolution. Energized by recognition of both its promise and its risk, most countries have begun to fashion policies to regulate the marketing of transgenic crops. The ultimate driving force in this rapidly evolving process is international trade. More than 130 countries took an important first step in 2000 to address the issue by tentatively agreeing to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which provides the right to block imports of transgenic products. The protocol also sets up a joint “biosafety clearing house” to publish information on national policy. About the same time, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, joined by the science academies of five other countries (Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and the United Kingdom) and the Third World Academy of Sciences, endorsed the development of transgenic crops. They made recommendations for risk assessment and licensing agreements and stressed the needs of the developing countries in future research programs and capital investment.

Medicine is another domain that stands to gain enormously from the world’s store of biodiversity, with or without the impetus of genetic engineering. Pharmaceuticals in current use are already drawn heavily from wild species. In the United States, about a quarter of all prescriptions dispensed by pharmacies are substances extracted from plants. Another 13 percent originate from microorganisms, and three percent more from animals—making a total of about 40 percent derived from wild species. What’s even more impressive is that nine of the 10 leading prescription drugs originally came from organisms. The commercial value of the relatively small number of natural products is substantial. The over-the-counter cost of drugs from plants alone was estimated in 1998 to be \$20 billion in the United States and \$84 billion worldwide.

But only a tiny fraction of biodiversity has been utilized in medicine, despite its obvious potential. The narrowness of the base is illustrated by the dominance of ascomycete fungi in the control of bacterial diseases. Although only about 30,000 species of ascomycetes—two percent of the total known species of organisms—have been studied, they have yielded 85 percent of the antibiotics in current use. The underutilization of biodiversity is still greater than these figures alone might suggest—because probably fewer than 10 percent of the world’s ascomycete species have even been discovered and given scientific names. The flowering plants have been similarly scanted. Although it is likely that more than 80 per-

cent of the species have received scientific names, only some three percent of this fraction have been assayed for alkaloids, the class of natural products that have proved to be among the most potent curative agents for cancer and many other diseases.

There is an evolutionary logic in the pharmacological bounty of wild species. Throughout the history of life, all kinds of organisms have evolved chemicals needed to control cancer in their own bodies, kill parasites, and fight off predators. Mutations and natural selection, which equip this armamentarium, are processes of endless trial and error. Hundreds of millions of species, evolving by the life and death of astronomical numbers of organisms across geological stretches of time, have yielded the present-day winners of the mutation-and-selection lottery. We have learned to consult them while assembling a large part of our own pharmacopoeia. Thus, antibiotics, fungicides, anti-malarial drugs, anesthetics, analgesics, blood thinners, blood-clotting agents, agents that prevent clotting, cardiac stimulants and regulators, immunosuppressive agents, hormone mimics, hormone inhibitors, anti-cancer drugs, fever suppressants, inflammation controls, contraceptives, diuretics and antidiuretics, antidepressants, muscle relaxants, rubefacients, anticongestants, sedatives, and abortifacients are now at our disposal, compliments of wild biodiversity.

Revolutionary new drugs have rarely resulted from the pure insights of molecular and cellular biology, even though these sciences have grown very sophisticated and address the causes of disease at the most fundamental level. Rather, the pathway of discovery has usually been the reverse: The presence of the drug is first detected in whole organisms, and the nature of its activity subsequently tracked down to the molecular and cellular levels. Then the basic research begins.

The first hint of a new pharmaceutical may lie among the hundreds of remedies of Chinese traditional medicine. It may be spotted in the drug-laced rituals of an Amazonian shaman. It may come from a chance observation by a laboratory scientist

unaware of its potential importance for medicine. More commonly nowadays, the clue is deliberately sought by the random screening of plant and animal tissues. If a positive response is obtained—say, a suppression of bacteria or cancer cells—the molecules responsible can be isolated and tested on a larger scale, using controlled experiments with animals and then (cautiously!) human volunteers. If the tests are successful, and the atomic structure of the molecule is also in hand, the substance can be synthesized in the laboratory, then commercially, usually at lower cost than

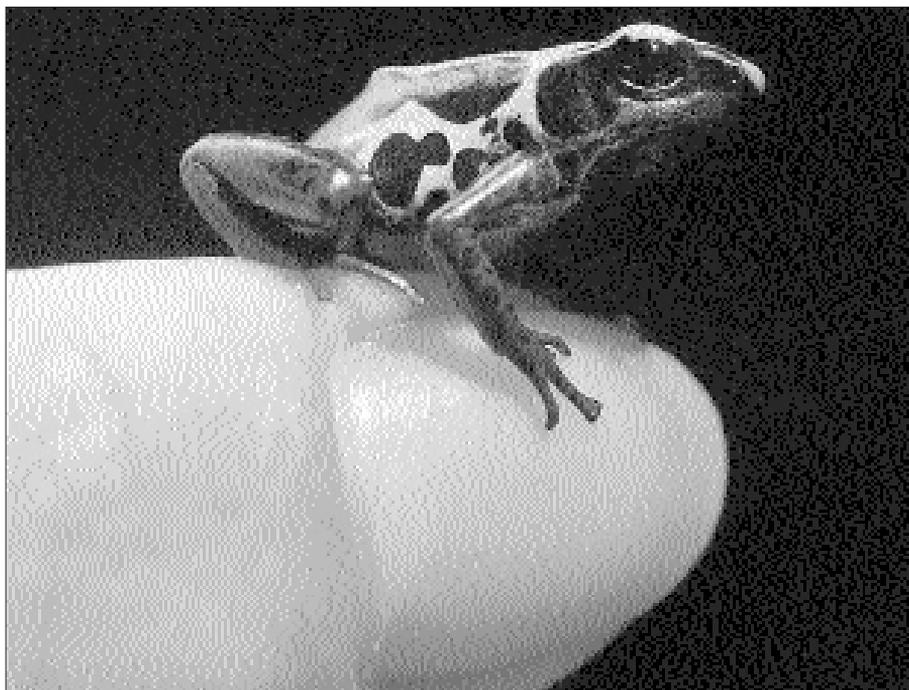
**THE PROBLEM BEFORE US
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by extraction from harvested raw materials. In the final step, the natural chemical compounds provide the prototype from which new classes of organic chemicals can be synthesized, adding or taking away atoms and double bonds here and there. A few of the novel substances may prove more efficient than the natural prototype. And of equal importance to the pharmaceutical companies, these analogues can be patented.

Serendipity is the hallmark of pharmacological research. A chance discovery can lead not only to a successful drug but to advances in fundamental science, which in time yield other successful drugs. Routine screening, for example, revealed that an obscure fungus growing in the mountainous interior of Norway produces a powerful suppressor of the human immune system. When the molecule was isolated from the fungal tissue and identified, it proved to be a complex molecule of a kind never before encountered by organic chemists. Nor could its effect be explained by the contemporary principles of molecular and cellular biology. But its relevance to medicine was immediately obvious, because when organs are transplanted from one person to another, the immune system of the host must be prevented from rejecting the alien tissue. The new agent, named cyclosporin, became an essential part of the organ transplant industry. It also served to open new lines of research on the molecular events of the immune response itself.

The surprising events that sometimes lead from natural history to medical breakthrough would make excellent science fiction—if only they were untrue. The protagonists of one such plot are the poison dart frogs of Central and South America, which belong to the genera *Dendrobates* and *Phyllobates* in the family Dendrobatidae. Tiny, able to perch on a human fingernail, they are favored as terrarium animals for their beautiful colors: The 40 known species are covered by various patterns of orange, red, yellow, green, or blue, usually on a black background. In their natural habitat, dendrobatids hop about slowly and are relatively unfazed by the approach of potential predators. For the trained naturalist their lethargy triggers an alarm, in observance of the following rule of animal behavior: If a small and otherwise unknown animal encountered in the wild is strikingly beautiful, it is probably poisonous, and if it is not only beautiful but also easy to catch, it is probably deadly. And so it is with dendrobatid frogs, which, it turns out, secrete a powerful toxin from glands on their backs. The potency varies according to species. A single individual of one (perfectly named) Colombian species, *Phyllobates horribilis*, for example, carries enough of the substance to kill 10 men. Indians of two tribes living in the Andean Pacific slope forests of western Colombia, the Emberá Chocó and the Noanamá Chocó, rub the tips of their blowgun darts over the backs of the frogs, very carefully, then release the little creatures unharmed so they can make more poison.

In the 1970s a chemist, John W. Daly, and a herpetologist, Charles W. Myers, gathered material from a similar Ecuadorian frog, *Epipedobates tricolor*, for a closer look at the dendrobatid toxin. In the laboratory, Daly found that very small amounts administered to mice worked as an



A South American poison dart frog is deadly out of all proportion to its thumbnail size.

opiumlike painkiller, yet otherwise lacked the properties of typical opiates. Would the substance also prove nonaddictive? If so, it might be turned into the ideal anesthetic. From a cocktail of compounds taken from the backs of the frogs, Daly and his fellow chemists isolated and characterized the toxin itself, a molecule resembling nicotine, which they named epibatidine. This natural product proved 200 times more effective in the suppression of pain than opium, but was also too toxic, unfortunately, for practical use. The next step was to redesign the molecule. Chemists at Abbott Laboratories synthesized not only epibatidine but hundreds of novel molecules resembling it. When tested clinically, one of the products, code-named ABT-594, was found to combine the desired properties: It depressed pain like epibatidine, including pain from nerve damage of a kind usually impervious to opiates, and it was nonaddictive. ABT-594 had two additional advantages: It promoted alertness instead of sleepiness, and it had no side effects on respiration or digestion.

The full story of the poison dart frogs also carries a warning about the conservation of tropical forests. The destruction of much of the habitat in which populations of *Epipedobates* live almost prevented the discovery of epibatidine and its synthetic analogues. By the time Daly and Myers set out to collect enough toxin for chemical analysis, after their initial visit to Ecuador, one of the two prime rainforest sites occupied by the frogs had been cleared and replaced with banana plantations. At the second site, which fortunately was still intact, they found enough frogs to harvest just one milligram of the poison. From that tiny sample, chemists were able, with skill and luck, to identify epibatidine and launch a major new initiative in pharmaceutical research.

It is no exaggeration to say that the search for natural medicinals is a race between science and extinction, and will become critically so as more forests fall and coral reefs bleach out and disintegrate. Another adventure dramatizing this point began in 1987, when the botanist John Burley collected samples of plants from a swamp forest near Lundu in the Malaysian state of Sarawak, on the northwestern corner of the island of Borneo. His expedition was one of many launched by the National

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Cancer Institute (NCI) to search for new natural substances to add to the fight against cancer and AIDS. Following routine procedure, the team collected a kilogram of fruit, leaves, and twigs from each kind of plant they encountered. Part was sent to the NCI laboratory for assay, and part was deposited in the

Harvard University Herbarium for future identification and botanical research.

One such sample came from a small tree at Lundu about 25 feet high. It was given the voucher code label Burley-and-Lee 351. Back at the NCI laboratories, an extract made from it was tested routinely against human cancer cells grown in culture. Like the majority of such preparations, it had no effect. Then it was run through screens designed to test its potency against the AIDS virus. The NCI scientists were startled to observe that Burley-and-Lee 351 gave, in their words, “100 percent protection against the cytopathic effects of HIV-I infection,” having “essentially halted HIV-I replication.” In other words, while the substance the sample contained could not cure AIDS, it could stop cold the development of disease symptoms in HIV-positive patients.

The Burley-and-Lee 351 tree was determined to belong to a species of *Calophyllum*, a group of species belonging to the mangosteen family, or Guttiferae. Collectors were dispatched to Lundu a second time to obtain more material from the same tree, with the aim of isolating and chemically identifying the HIV inhibitor. The tree was gone, probably cut down by local people for fuel or building materials. The collectors returned home with samples from other *Calophyllum* trees taken in the same swamp forest, but their extracts were ineffective against the virus.

Peter Stevens, then at Harvard University, and the world authority on *Calophyllum*, stepped in to solve the problem. The original tree, he found, belonged to a rare strain named *Calopsyllum lanigerum*, variety *austrocoriaceum*. The trees sampled on the second trip were another species, which explained their inactivity. No more specimens of *austrocoriaceum* could be found at Lundu. The search for the magic strain widened, and finally a few more specimens were located in the Singapore Botanic Garden. Thus supplied with enough raw mate-

rial, chemists and microbiologists were able to identify the anti-HIV substance as (+)-calanolide A. Soon afterward the molecule was synthesized, and the synthetic proved as effective as the raw extract. Additional research revealed calanolide to be a powerful inhibitor of reverse transcriptase, an enzyme needed by the HIV virus to replicate itself within the human host cell. Studies are now underway to determine the suitability of calanolide for market distribution.

The exploration of wild biodiversity in the search for useful resources is called *bioprospecting*. Propelled by venture capital, it has in the past 10 years grown into a respectable industry within a global market hungry for new pharmaceuticals. It is also a means for discovering new food sources, fibers, petroleum substitutes, and other products. Sometimes bioprospectors screen many species of organisms in search of chemicals with particular qualities, such as antiseptics or cancer suppression. On other occasions bioprospecting is opportunistic, focusing on one of a few species that show signs of yielding a valuable resource. Ultimately, entire ecosystems will be prospected as a whole, and all of the species assayed for most or all of the products they can yield.

The extraction of wealth from an ecosystem can be destructive or benign. Dynamiting coral reefs and clearcutting forests yield fast profits but are unsustainable. Fishing coral reefs lightly and gathering wild fruit and resins in otherwise undisturbed forest are sustainable. Collecting samples of valuable species from rich ecosystems and cultivating them in bulk elsewhere, in biologically less favored areas, is not only profitable but the most sustainable of all.

Bioprospecting with minimal disturbance is the way of the future. Its promise can be envisioned with the following matrix for a hypothetical forest: To the left, make a list of the thousands of plant, animal, and microbial species, as many as you can, recognizing that the vast majority have not yet been examined, and many still lack even a scientific name. Along the top, prepare a horizontal row of the hundreds of functions imaginable for all the products of these species combined. The matrix itself is the combination of the two dimensions. The spaces filled within the matrix are the potential applications, whose nature remains almost wholly unknown.

The richness of biodiversity's bounty is reflected in the products already extracted by native peoples of the tropical forests, using local knowledge and low technology of a kind transmitted solely by demonstration and oral teaching. Here, for example, is a small selection of the most common medicinal plants used by tribes of the upper Amazon, whose knowledge has evolved from their combined experience with the more than 50,000 species of flowering plants native to the region: motelo sanango, *Abuta grandifolia* (snakebite, fever); dye plant, *Arrabidaea chica* (anemia, conjunctivitis); monkey ladder, *Bauhinia guianensis* (amoebic dysentery); Spanish needles, *Bidens alba* (mouth sores, toothache); firewood tree, or capirona, species of *Calycophyllum* and *Capirona* (diabetes, fungal infection); wormseed, *Chenopodium ambrosioides* (worm infection);

Biodiversity

caimito, *Chrysophyllum cainito* (mouth sores, fungal infection); toad vine, *Cissus sicyoides* (tumors); renaquilla, *Clusia rosea* (rheumatism, bone fractures); calabash, *Crescentia cujete* (toothache); milk tree, *Couma macrocarpa* (amoebic dysentery, skin inflammation); dragon's blood, *Croton lechleri* (hemorrhaging); fer-de-lance plant, *Dracontium lorentense* (snakebite); swamp immortelle, *Erythrina fusca* (infections, malaria); wild mango, *Grias neuberthii* (tumors, dysentery); wild senna, *Senna reticulata* (bacterial infection).

Only a few of the thousands of such traditional medicinals used in tropical forests around the world have been tested by Western clinical methods. Even so, the most widely used already have commercial value rivaling that of farming and ranching. In 1992 a pair of economic botanists, Michael Balick and Robert Mendelsohn, demonstrated that single harvests of wild-grown medicinals from two tropical forest plots in Belize were worth \$726 and \$3,327 per hectare (2.5 acres) respectively, with labor costs thrown in. By comparison, other researchers estimated per hectare yield from tropical forest converted to farmland at \$228 in nearby Guatemala and \$339 in Brazil. The most productive Brazilian plantations of tropical pine could yield \$3,184 per hectare from a single harvest.

In short, medicinal products from otherwise undisturbed tropical forests can be locally profitable, on condition that markets are developed and the extraction rate is kept low enough to be sustainable. And when plant and animal food products, fibers, carbon credit trades, and ecotourism are added to the mix, the commercial value of sustainable use can be boosted far higher.

Examples of the new economy in practice are growing in number. In the Petén region of Guatemala, about 6,000 families live comfortably by sustainable extraction of rainforest products. Their combined annual income is \$4 million to \$6 million, more than could be made by converting the forest into farms and cattle ranches. Ecotourism remains a promising but largely untapped additional resource.

Nature's pharmacopoeia has not gone unnoticed by industry strategists. They are well aware that even a single new molecule has the potential to recoup a large capital investment in bio-prospecting and product development. The single greatest success to date was achieved with extremophile bacteria living in the boiling-hot thermal springs of Yellowstone National Park. In 1983 Cetus Corporation used one of the organisms, *Thermus aquaticus*, to produce a heat-resistant enzyme needed for DNA synthesis. The manufacturing process, called *polymerase chain reaction* (PCR), is today the foundation of rapid genetic mapping, a stanchion of the new molecular biology and medical genetics. By enabling microscopic amounts of DNA to be multiplied and typed, PCR also plays a key role in crime detection and forensic medicine. Cetus's patents on PCR technology, which have been upheld by the courts, are immensely profitable, with annual earnings now in excess of \$200 million—and growing.

Bioprospecting can serve both mainstream economics and conservation when put on a firm contractual basis. In 1991, Merck signed an agreement with Costa Rica's National Institute of Biodiversity (INBio) to assist the search for new pharmaceuticals in Costa Rica's rainforests and other natural habitats. The first deposit was \$1 million dispensed over two years, with two similar consecutive grants to follow. During the first period, the field collectors concentrated on plants, in the second on insects, and in the third on microorganisms. Merck is now working through the immense library of materials it gathered during the field program and testing and refining chemical extracts made from them.

Also in 1991, Syntex signed a contract with Chinese science academies to receive up to 10,000 plant extracts a year for pharmaceutical assays. In 1998, Diversa Corporation signed on with Yellowstone National Park to continue bioprospecting the hot springs for biochemicals from thermophilic microbes. Diversa pays the park \$20,000 yearly to collect the organisms for study, as well as a fraction of the profits generated by commercial development. Funds returning to Yellowstone will be used to promote conservation of the unique microbes and their habitat, as well as basic scientific research and public education.

Still other agreements have been signed between NPS Pharmaceuticals and the government of Madagascar, between Pfizer and the New York Botanical Garden, and between the international company GlaxoSmithKline and a Brazilian pharmaceutical company, with part of the profits pledged to the support of Brazilian science.

Perhaps it is enough to argue that the preservation of the living world is necessary to our long-term material prosperity and health. But there is another, and in some ways deeper, reason not to let the natural world slip away. It has to do with the defining qualities and self-image of the human species. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that new species can one day be engineered and stable ecosystems built from them. With that distant prospect in mind, should we go ahead and, for short-term gain, allow the original species and ecosystems to be lost? Yes? Erase Earth's living history? Then also burn the art galleries, make cordwood of the musical instruments, pulp the musical scores, erase Shakespeare, Beethoven, and Goethe, and the Beatles too, because all these—or at least fairly good substitutes—can be re-created.

The issue, like all great decisions, is moral. Science and technology are what we can do; morality is what we agree we should or should not do. The ethic from which moral decisions spring is a norm or standard of behavior in support of a value, and value in turn depends on purpose. Purpose, whether personal or global, whether urged by conscience or graven in sacred script, expresses the image we hold of ourselves and our society. A conservation ethic is that which aims to pass on to future generations the best part of the nonhuman world. To know this world is to gain a proprietary attachment to it. To know it well is to love and take responsibility for it. □

Do the People Rule?

Presidents as diverse as William McKinley, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter have spoken the simple words: “Here the people rule.” But the meaning of the words is by no means as straightforward as it may seem. Who exactly are the people? The inhabitants of 50 different states, or the inhabitants of a single nation? One people, or 50 peoples joined by compact? The questions are as old as the nation, and perhaps best answered today by recognizing validity in each position.

by Michael Lind

If American government were a cake, what kind of cake would it be? Political science and law examinations at American universities frequently ask some version of that question. Is the best metaphor for the relationship between the federal and state governments in the U.S. Constitution a layer cake, in which each level retains its own identity? Or does the United States have a “marble cake federalism,” in which, according to the political scientist Morton Grodzin, “ingredients of different colors are combined in an inseparable mixture, whose colors intermingle in vertical and horizontal veins and random swirls”? Layer cakes and marble cakes do not exhaust the metaphorical possibilities. The political scientists Aaron Wildavsky and David Walker have suggested, respectively, that a birthday cake and a fruitcake can symbolize American federalism. All the culinary constitutionalism seems appropriate for a nation that some claim was once a melting pot but is now a salad bowl.

This battle of metaphors reflects a deep and enduring disagreement among Americans about the nature of popular sovereignty in the United States. Is the United States a creation of the individual states—or are the states a creation of the Union? Is there a single American people—or are there as many “peoples” as there are states?

The debate began when the ink was hardly dry on the new federal constitution drafted in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787. That fall, delegates from across Pennsylvania convened in Philadelphia to ratify or reject the document. On October 6, 1787, the delegates heard from James Wilson, a Scots-born lawyer who had been one of the leading thinkers at the past summer’s constitutional convention (President George Washington would appoint him to the Supreme Court in 1789). “There necessarily exists in every government,” Wilson told the delegates, “a power



The Tearing Down of the Statue of George III (1857), William Walcutt's painting of a revolutionary crowd in New York City, is a classic celebration of the people's sovereignty.

from which there is no appeal; and which, for that reason, may be termed supreme, absolute and uncontrollable. Where does this power reside?"

Wilson rejected the British idea that the government—in the case of Britain, the crown-in-parliament—was sovereign: “The idea of a constitution limiting and superintending the operations of legislative authority seems not to have been accurately understood in Britain. To control the power and conduct of the legislature by an overruling constitution was an improvement in the science and practice of government reserved to the American states.” However, Wilson continued, it

would be a mistake to assume that the constitution is sovereign: “This opinion approaches a step nearer to the truth, but does not reach it. The truth is that, in our governments, the supreme, absolute, and uncontrollable power remains in the people. As our constitutions are superior to our legislatures, so the people are superior to our constitutions.”

Although the idea of popular sovereignty reached its fullest development in the United States during the War of Independence and the early years of the American republic, it was an ancient concept. The Roman republic and, at least

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in theory, the subsequent Roman Empire were based on the *imperium populi*, the delegated sovereignty of the people. The idea of popular sovereignty was revived in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance by Christian and humanist opponents of the divine right of kings.

In 17th-century England, during decades of civil war and other political turmoil, English

thinkers worked out the basics of the modern doctrine of popular sovereignty. Drawing on earlier writers, philosopher John Locke argued that every people has a right to change its government whenever the government becomes tyrannical. Although the theory of popular sovereignty remains controversial in Great Britain, all mainstream American constitutional thinkers have accepted the Lockean premise that, in the words of the Declaration of Independence, “to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government.”

The paramount debate in American history has not been about the ultimate sovereignty of the people, but rather about the identity of the people (meaning a single entity, in the sense of *populus*). Is there a single American people? Or is the United States a federation of as many peoples as there are states?

The two rival interpretations of popular sovereignty in America have been the *nationalist theory* and the *compact theory*. The nationalist theory holds that from the beginning there has been a single American people, which has existed in the form of successive “unions.” Lincoln summarized this view in his first inaugural address: “[W]e find the proposition that, in legal contemplation, the Union is perpetual confirmed by the history of the Union itself. The Union is much older than the Constitution. It was formed, in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was further matured, and the faith of

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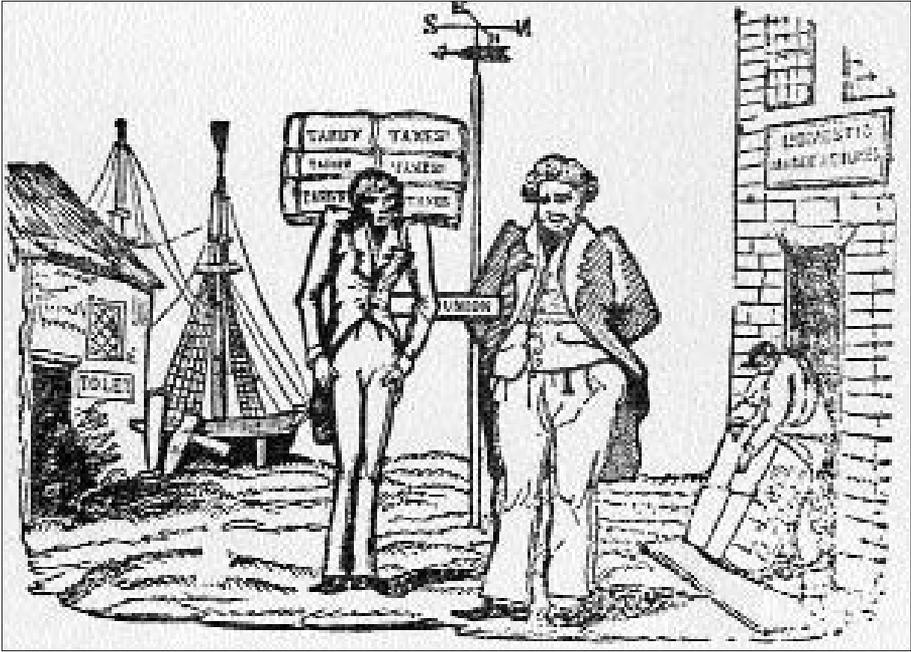
all the then thirteen states expressly plighted and engaged that it should be perpetual, by the Articles of Confederation in 1778. And, finally, in 1787 one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution was ‘to form a more perfect union.’”

Lincoln’s nationalist interpretation of history drew on the thinking of the Supreme Court justice Joseph Story in his *Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States* (1833). According to Story, the Continental Congress, formed by delegates from the then-British colonies, “exercised de facto and de jure sovereign authority, not as the delegated agents of the governments de facto of the colonies, but in virtue of original powers derived from the people.” The Declaration of Independence was “implicitly the act of the whole people of the united colonies,” not of separate state peoples that had independently seceded from the British Empire.

Though the compact theory, like its competitor the nationalist theory, comes in several versions, every version holds that the American union is a compact among the states—the state *peoples*, that is, not the state governments. The most familiar version, held by Thomas Jefferson, John C. Calhoun, and the Confederate secessionists, can be described as the *unilateral compact theory*. South Carolina senator John C. Calhoun, its most brilliant proponent, argued in the Senate in 1833 that “the people of the several States composing these United States are united as parties to a constitutional compact, to which the people of each State acceded as a separate sovereign community.” Calhoun denied “assertions that the people of these United States, taken collectively as individuals,” had ever “formed into one nation or people, or that they have ever been so united in any one stage of their political existence.”

According to Calhoun’s unilateral version of the compact theory, the people of each state, represented in a constitutional convention, could authorize the secession of the state. They could also “nullify” laws they regarded as unconstitutional, a case that was made in response to President John Adams’s unpopular Alien and Sedition Acts by the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798. (Thomas Jefferson was the secret author of the Resolutions.) In the Nullification Crisis of 1832–33, South Carolina claimed a right to nullify a federal tariff law, and backed down only when President Andrew Jackson threatened to use federal force against the state.

As an interpretation of the federal constitution that went into effect in 1789, the unilateral compact theory is unconvincing. The alleged right of states to declare federal laws unconstitutional is incompatible with the supremacy clause of the Constitution and the role of the Supreme Court in adjudicating conflicts between the state and federal governments. But the claim that there is a constitutional right of unilateral secession is not as easily settled, because the Constitution is silent on whether, or how, states that have ratified it can depart from the Union. The most reasonable inference is that states can leave the United States only by the legal route of a constitutional amendment or by the extra-legal route of a new constitutional convention that dissolves the federal constitution and creates a new union with new members. Responding to the possibility that opposition to the War of 1812 would inspire some of the states of New England



Protective tariffs placed a heavy burden on cotton-growing southerners while aiding manufacturers in the North. The conflict fueled the Nullification Crisis of 1832.

to secede, Thomas Ritchie, editor of the *Richmond Enquirer*, wrote, “The same formality which forged the links of the Union is necessary to dissolve it. The majority of States which form the Union must consent to the withdrawal of any one branch of it. Until that consent has been obtained, any attempt to dissolve the Union, or obstruct the efficacy of its constitutional laws, is Treason — Treason to all intents and purposes.”

The unilateral compact theory, then, is weaker than the nationalist theory of successive unions as an interpretation of the federal constitution of 1787. But as an explanation of American constitutional history right up through the ratification process of the federal constitution, the compact theory is more persuasive than the nationalist theory.

On July 4, 1861, President Lincoln said in a message to Congress, “The Union is older than any of the States, and, in fact it created them as States.” Political scientist Samuel H. Beer restated this nationalist argument in *To Make a Nation: The Rediscovery of American Federalism* (1993), when he wrote that “the reallocation of power by the Constitution from state to federal government was simply a further exercise of the constituent sovereignty which the American people had exercised in the past, as when they brought the states themselves into existence.”

The argument is flimsy. For one thing, it implies that without permission from the Continental Congress, the colonial populations would not have abolished their colonial governments and created new republican governments. To make matters worse for the nationalist theory, the phrasing of the Declaration of Independence supports the compact theory by referring to the formation of new state governments by the authority of the people of the colonies when it means the people of Massachusetts, the people of Virginia, and so on. And these colonial peoples, which became the peoples of the first states, had come into

existence generations earlier—when each colony had been established by royal charter, if not before.

Nationalists also emphasize the description of the United States as “one people” in the Declaration of Independence: “When in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands, which have connected them with another. . . .” But elsewhere the Declaration refers to the colonies in the plural, and concludes that “these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States.” The author of the Declaration, Thomas Jefferson, was a fervent champion of the compact theory. Indeed, the Declaration claims that for generations the individual colonies had been separate states in a federal empire held together only by personal allegiance to the British monarch. During the Constitutional Convention, Maryland’s Luther Martin summarized the view that was implicit in the Declaration: “At the separation from the British Empire, the people of America preferred the establishment of themselves into thirteen separate sovereignties instead of incorporating themselves into one.”

The United States continued to look like a league of sovereign states under its first formal constitution, the Articles of Confederation (1781–89). In his *Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* (1787–88), John Adams treated each state as a republic but rejected the applicability of the concept of republicanism to the United States as a whole, on the grounds that, under the Articles, Congress was “not a legislative assembly, nor a representative assembly, only a diplomatic assembly.” In April 1787, James Madison observed that under the Articles of Confederation, “the federal system . . . is in fact nothing more than a treaty of amity of commerce and of alliance, between independent and sovereign states.”

The history of the constitutional convention of 1787 and the process of ratification also supports the compact theory. The authors of *The Federalist*—Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay—informed their readers that the new federal constitution would replace a league of states with a federal (or as Madison called it, a “compound”) republic. If the “Union” under the Articles of Confederation were already a nation-state, albeit a decentralized one, it would have made no sense for Madison, Hamilton, and Jay to warn against disunion if the federal constitution were not adopted.

The method by which the federal constitution was ratified also refutes the arguments of nationalists such as Lincoln and Story that a union based on a single people had existed since 1776 or 1774. Samuel H. Beer writes, “Nationalist theory required that ratification be both popular and national, a procedure which expressed the will of individuals, the ultimate authority in a republic, and which embraced a single nationwide constituency, acting on behalf of the people at large in the United States.” During the Constitutional Convention, Pennsylvania’s Gouverneur Morris indeed proposed that the Constitution be ratified by “one general Convention, chosen and authorized to consider, amend, and establish the same.” His proposal was rejected. The Constitution was ratified not by a national convention or even by the state governments but by the peoples of the states.

One of the peculiarities of the ratification process is that the new constitu-

tion went into effect upon being ratified by nine of the 13 states. (A similar rule of nine had earlier been used under the Articles of Confederation to authorize the admission of new states to the United States.) Nationalists argue that the rule of nine meant that the Constitution was ratified by a numerical majority of the American people, considered as a single national community. According to Beer, “Calculated according to the index of representation in the House, as proposed by Madison, any nine states would have had not only a majority of the states but also a majority of the population.” Beer himself admits that the rule of nine guaranteed this nationwide numerical majority “without saying so.” But the argument that the ratifiers had to be hoodwinked into taking part in a majoritarian procedure that they did not understand weakens rather than strengthens the case for the nationalist interpretation.

If the understanding of the ratifiers of the Constitution and not of the drafters is the one that counts for the purposes of American constitutional law, then one must reject the promising variant of nationalist theory proposed in 1987 by Professor Akhil Amar of Yale Law School. Amar suggested in the *Yale Law Journal* that during the process of ratification of the Constitution, “previously separate state Peoples agreed to ‘consolidate’ themselves into a single continental people.” In contrast with the Story-Lincoln version of nationalist doctrine, Amar’s variant would grant that the compact theory is an accurate description of the United States up until 1789, when the United States became a federal republic.

The most interesting part of Amar’s theory—the notion that previously distinct state peoples fused during 1787–88 to become a single national people—is contradicted by Madison’s statement in *The Federalist* 39 that the federal constitution would be ratified “by the people not as individuals composing one entire nation, but as composing the distinct and independent States to which they respectively belong.” Amar’s view is also incompatible with the way in which states were later added to the Union. The formation of a state “people” in a territory for only a few months or weeks would be pointless if the “people” were then dissolved into a unitary American people once the new state joined the Union. The compact theory makes more sense. A people in a state formed from a territory delegated a portion of its sovereign power to the federal government on joining the Union, but reserved the rest—and maintained its identity as a distinct population. Texas, the only state that began as an independent republic, would never have joined if its people thought they were dissolving “the people of Texas” and reducing Texas to a mere address.

The Tenth Amendment may be fatal to all versions of the nationalist theory of a single constituent American people: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” Under a nationalist interpretation of the amendment, the single national people divided its sovereign power into three lumps and gave one to the federal government and one to all state governments, while reserving the third lump of sovereignty to itself. Thus, the Tenth Amendment created a zone of reserved popular power upon which neither the states nor the federal government could encroach.

That interpretation is appealing today, when, thanks to the Fourteenth

Amendment and the civil rights revolution, the Bill of Rights has been partially held to restrain the state governments as well as the federal government. But it is a way of thinking that was alien to all but a few extreme nationalists during the early Republic. The Supreme Court ruled in *Barron v. City of Baltimore* (1833) that the federal Bill of Rights applied only to the federal government; the peoples of the several states had to limit state governments by passing state bills of rights. The only restraints on the states were a few in the federal constitution, such as the prohibition of bills of attainder and titles of nobility, and the guarantee that every state would have a republican government. Only the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which were not ratified until after the Civil War, in 1868 and 1870 respectively, nationalized part or all of the Bill of Rights. (The degree of nationalization is hotly disputed to this day.)

It follows, then, that the compact theory provides the only plausible interpretation of the Tenth Amendment. As odd as it may seem to contemporary Americans, in theory at least there are as many peoples as there are states. Each state people assigns the same portion of its popular sovereignty to the federal government. But each state people—that of Massachusetts or Virginia, for example—is then free to allocate powers to the state government, or reserve them for the people of the state, in different ways, as each sees fit.

It appears, therefore, that Lincoln was mistaken when he argued that “the Union is older than any of the States, and, in fact, created them as States”—and that President Ronald Reagan, in his first inaugural address, was correct: “The Federal government did not create the states; the states created the Federal government.” The compact theory of popular sovereignty, which holds that there are as many sovereign peoples as there are states, explains far more of American constitutional history and law than the nationalist theory does with its positing of a single, unitary American people. This conclusion may seem surprising. After all, Americans are highly mobile and rarely feel an intense loyalty to the state in which they happen to live. They define

their identities far more commonly by factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, and political ideology than by state patriotism; indeed, the very phrase “state patriotism” seems quaint. Nevertheless, the nationalization of American society

has not been accompanied by a nationalization of America’s constitutional structure. Even in the 21st century, there is no mechanism such as a national ballot initiative or referendum by which Americans nationwide can express their views. The United States Senate still represents state constituencies, and the only national officer, the president, is chosen by the Electoral College, in accordance with a formula that takes states as well as populations into account. The Electoral College made it possible for

TEXAS . . . WOULD NEVER HAVE JOINED [THE UNION] IF ITS PEOPLE THOUGHT THEY WERE DISSOLVING “THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS” AND REDUCING TEXAS TO A MERE ADDRESS.

George W. Bush to defeat Al Gore, who received more of the popular vote.

In addition to seeming old-fashioned, the compact theory has long been tainted by its association with the Confederate secessionists and with later southern racists who used “states’ rights” theory to defend institutionalized racial segregation. Fortunately, like the nationalist theory, the compact theory comes in more than one version. And even more fortunately, its most plausible variant—that of James Madison—undermines the arguments of both the Confederates and the segregationists and produces a view of the U.S. Constitution that most contemporary liberals as well as most conservatives can accept.

Madison, the “Father of the Constitution,” has been accused of inconsistency. It is often said that he was a nationalist when he helped draw up the federal constitution and co-authored *The Federalist*; that he became a states rights theorist when he supported Jefferson’s Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions in 1798 and when, as president, he favored limited government; and that he finally returned to his early nationalism late in life when he denounced nullification and the idea of secession. Though Madison, like any public figure, sometimes contradicted himself, he appears more consistent once he is identified as a member of the compact school—but a member with significant differences with other compact theorists, such as John C. Calhoun, his adversary in old age.

On March 15, 1833, the retired Madison wrote a letter to Massachusetts senator Daniel Webster, who, in his famous “Second Reply to Hayne,” had defended the authority of the federal government and the desirability of perpetual union. “I return my thanks for the copy of your late very powerful speech in the Senate of the United States,” Madison wrote Webster. “It crushes ‘nullification’ and must hasten the abandonment of ‘secession.’” But having agreed with Webster’s conclusions, Madison dissented from the logic of the nationalist theory Webster shared with Story (and that would later be taken up by Lincoln):

It is fortunate when disputed theories can be decided by undisputed facts. And here the undisputed fact is that the Constitution was made by the people, but as embodied into the several states, who were parties to it and therefore made by the States in their highest authoritative capacity. They might, by the same authority and by the same process have converted the Confederacy [the United States under the Articles of Confederation] into a mere league or treaty; or continued it with enlarged or abridged powers; or have embodied the people of their respective states into one people, nation or sovereignty; or as they did by a mixed form make them one people, nation, or sovereignty, for certain purposes, and not so for others.

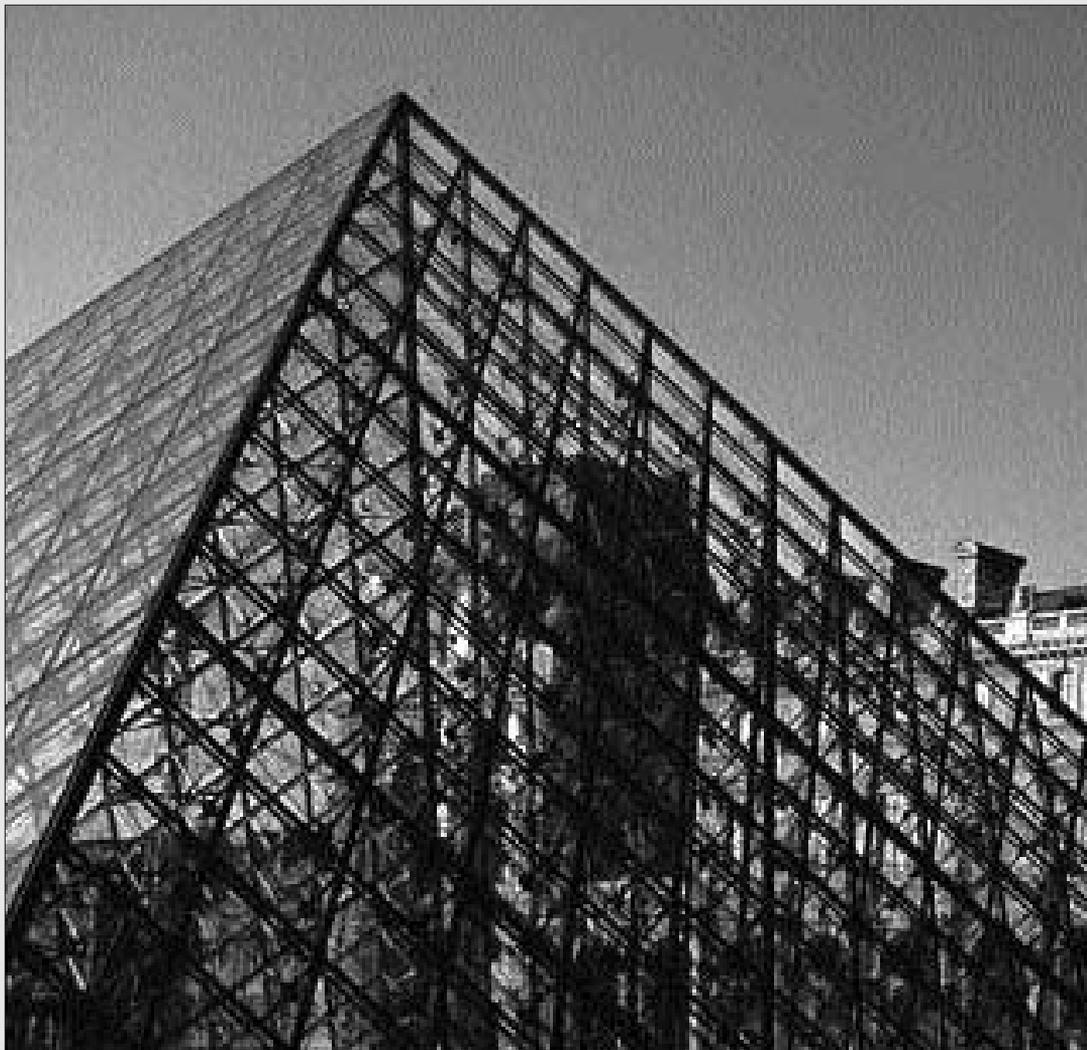
So far, Madison is merely restating the conventional theory of the Constitution as a compact among different state peoples. But he goes on to say that “whilst the Constitution, therefore, is admitted to be in force, its operation in every respect must be precisely the same”—whether the Constitution is thought to have been authorized by one national people (Webster’s view) or by the separate state peoples (Madison’s view). The compact can be revised or dis-

solved, but only with the agreement of all the parties, not just one or a few. In other words, according to Madison, the compact theory, properly understood, leads to the same conclusions as the nationalist theory: Unilateral secession by a state and unilateral nullification of federal laws are unconstitutional. Further, this Madisonian version of the compact theory would not support the later states' rights argument against federal civil rights legislation. After ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, the only genuine argument was about what the federal civil rights regime would be—not about whether there would be one.

Madison's subtle version of the compact theory reconciles the actions of Lincoln in preserving the Union with the idea of plural sovereign states that shaped the logic of the Declaration of Independence as well as the form of the federal constitution and the method by which it was ratified. Madison's mutual compact theory is more convincing than Calhoun's unilateral compact theory (which is incompatible with the federal constitution) and Lincoln's nationalist theory (which does not take accurate account of the War of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the ratification process of the Constitution).

Even in Madison's pro-union version of the compact theory, a state people retained the moral right, though not the legal right, to rebel on its own against a tyrannical federal government. In his letter to Webster, he warns against confusing "the claim to secede at will, with the right of seceding from intolerable oppression. The former answers itself, being a violation, without cause, of a faith solemnly pledged. The latter is another name only for revolution, about which there is no theoretic controversy." Madison's theory could establish that unilateral secession was illegal and unconstitutional under the terms of the 1787 constitution, but it could not establish that an illegal secession was an illegitimate act of revolution. But no mere constitutional theory could. The justice or injustice of a revolution is a matter for political and ethical theory, not for constitutional law. Most contemporary Americans would agree that the revolution of the people of South Carolina against the British Empire was justified, but that the later revolution of the same people against the United States was not. In both cases, a majority of the South Carolina population supported the revolution; but the goal of the first was to preserve and increase republican government in North America, while the goal of the second, in fact if not in rhetoric, was to preserve and possibly extend the zone of chattel slavery in North America.

The conclusion must be that popular sovereignty in itself is not a sufficient basis for the moral legitimacy of governments or their acts. In a world in which peoples rather than kings are the sovereigns, the peoples, like kings, may use their sovereign power for evil as well as for good. As James Wilson told the Pennsylvania convention in 1787 when he described the theory of popular sovereignty, "There can be no disorder in the community but may here receive a radical cure. If the error be in the legislature, it may be corrected by the constitution; if in the constitution, it may be corrected by the people. There is a remedy, therefore, for every distemper in the government, if the people are not wanting to themselves. For a people wanting to themselves, there is no remedy." □



THE ONCE AND

Born barely two centuries ago, the modern museum soon evolved into an institution devoted to charting the course of progress—in science and technology, art, national history, and other realms. Now scholars and curators are questioning some of the assumptions behind this approach. Is history a grand march of progress, or is it something more complex and nuanced? What is a museum for? Some trends suggest a triumph of form over content. Cities around the world are erecting



FUTURE MUSEUM

spectacular museum buildings that lack an essential ingredient of traditional institutions: a permanent collection. Our authors trace the history of the museum and ponder its prospects as it seeks to explain the past to the present while pointing us toward the future.

52 *Museums and the Democratic Order* by *Miriam R. Levin*

66 *The Museum as Artifact* by *Jayne Merkel*

Museums and the Democratic Order

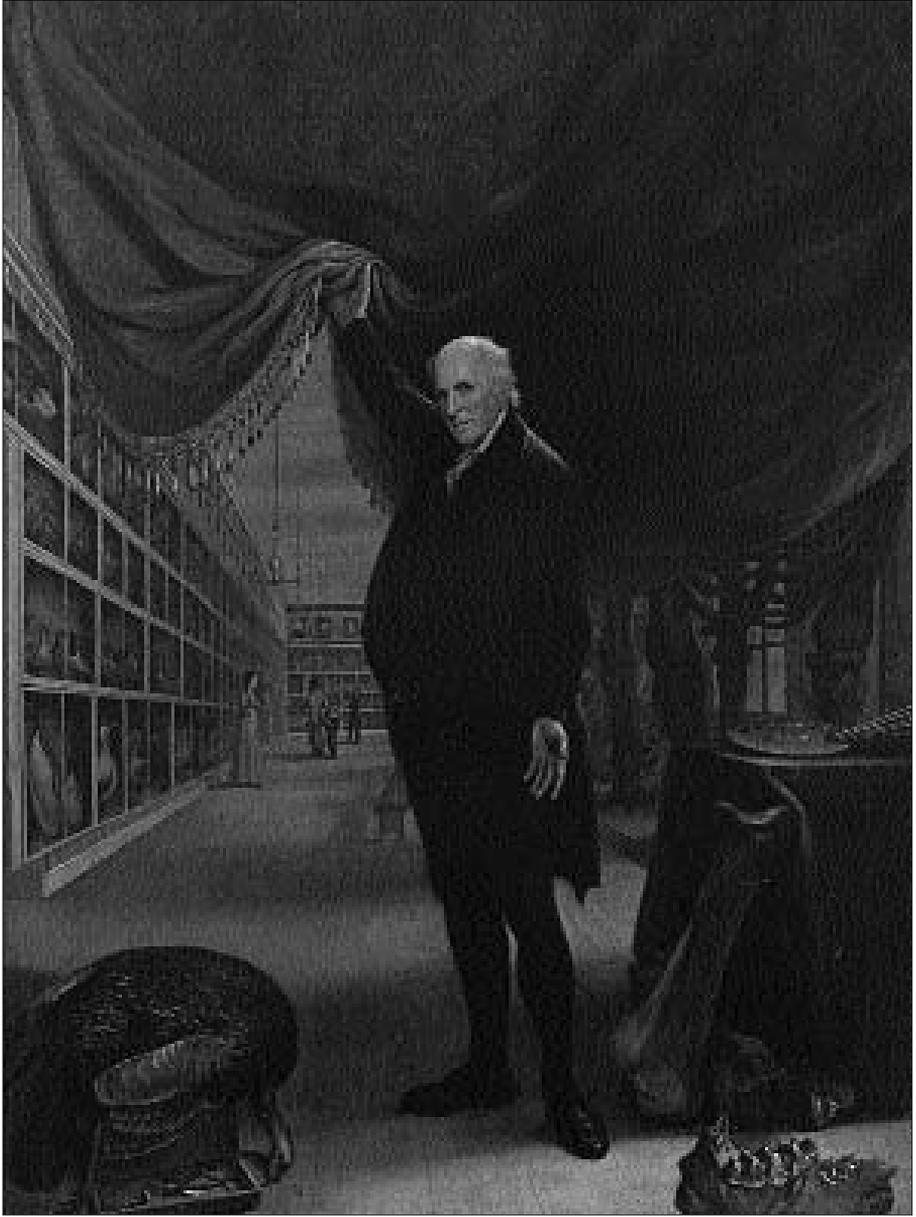
by *Miriam R. Levin*

The origin of the museum is inextricably linked with the storms of history. “Again and again, museums have received new impetus from lurches of humanity,” Lawrence Vale Coleman noted in the three-volume study of American museums he published on the eve of World War II. “And now, with turmoil everywhere, these institutions are gaining ground more surely than ever before.”

Almost 60 years later, Stephen Weil, a former official of the Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum, startled the more conservative members of his profession when he wrote: “Discomforting as the notion may be to many of its advocates, the museum is essentially a neutral medium that can be used by anybody for anything. . . . Museums are at their best and most distinctly themselves when they deal with ‘stuff.’” The process by which that “stuff” is chosen, displayed, and interpreted is how these storehouses of detritus function as agents of social change.

The concept of the museum as a public space rather than a private collection emerged in tandem with the European upheavals of the late 18th century—an age of popular revolutions and the emergence of the modern nation-state, of colonial expansion, and of an abiding faith in reason and progress. In the 19th century museums began to proliferate, stimulated by the growing industrial power and wealth of the West. By the end of the 20th century, as Western businesses and international organizations extended their reach globally, museums cropped up in all the postcolonial nations of the world, becoming an essential element in their development strategies. Spurred by a growing sense of a unique national and cultural identity, and aided by international law governing patrimony rights, countries also began demanding that artifacts taken from them long ago be returned.

Although the museum as we know it is a late-18th-century Western innovation, precedents for the variety of functions museums have come to serve existed much earlier. Chinese emperors and Trojan kings kept their treasures in guarded chambers. Greeks and Romans displayed their valued sculptures, paintings, and other objects in temples that drew travelers to Athens and Rome. In medieval Christian Europe, churches great and small were filled with awe-inspiring relics for veneration. The earliest precedent usually cited for the museum is one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Great Library at Alexandria, which sprang from the fertile collision of Hellenic and Egyptian cultures in the fourth century B.C. Its collection of more than 400,000 manuscripts embodied what was then thought to be all that was known in the world. That



The Artist in His Museum (1822), by Charles Willson Peale. Peale hoped that his Philadelphia museum, launched in 1784, would give America a premier institution that would rival famed European collections such as the British Museum and the Louvre.

knowledge served the political and economic ambitions of the Ptolemaic dynasty as well as the interests of scholars.

European rulers, aristocrats, merchants, and scholars in the Age of Discovery were familiar with these precedents. They began to build collections that included paintings, herbs, and such oddities as “a knot tied by the wind on a ship at sea” for their private study and enjoyment, keeping them in “cabinets of curiosities,” as the rooms were called. They were driven by the same impulses as the ancients — cupidity, curiosity, egotism, and sensory pleasure — but the expansion of their world after 1492 to include an entire hemisphere, hundreds of cultures,



and thousands of previously unknown species stimulated European collecting to an unprecedented degree.

By the 17th century, the rulers of France and England began to realize that a market for such objects could assist them in their continuous struggle to maintain a favorable balance of trade—if only the market existed. They opened their collections—not only their fine art, but their botanical gardens and herbariums—to members of the royal academies for the express purpose of encouraging research whose results would augment the state’s coffers and add to its glory. (Among the most important collections were those belonging to Louis XIV, including the paintings in the Louvre and the scientific specimens in what is now the Musée National d’Histoire Naturelle in Paris.) In the mercantile age, new sources of food and medicine, new products for export, and innovative designs for the luxury goods

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The Gallery of the Louvre, depicted in this 1831 painting by Samuel F. B. Morse, housed magnificent works of art, but they were not displayed with ease of viewing in mind.

coveted by the aristocracy were means to the end of market domination.

The second half of the 18th century saw the emergence of truly national museums open to the public—albeit a very limited public. Reformers of the Enlightenment encouraged governments and the wealthy to recognize that science and technology were the keys to building a stable social order. The advance of both required an educated populace, so institutions devoted to collecting, preserving, studying, and exhibiting things now had a new justification: public education. Nonetheless, the presentation of the collections left a great deal to be desired. In 1838, a visitor to the British Museum in London, founded by an act of Parliament 85 years before, described a hodgepodge of minimally organized stuff. Although the growing size and comprehensiveness of the museum's collections matched the expansive energies of England itself, the place was, in fact, a jumble. Access remained extremely limited.

Across the Channel and across the Atlantic, the revolutions in France and America brought the citizenry into public life on a scale never before seen. First in France and later in America, the state embraced the idea of museums as truly public institutions. Even before the upheaval of 1789, Parisian artists and artisans and the new

upper bourgeoisie struggled with the Crown over access to what was increasingly considered a national patrimony in the Louvre. By 1793, the revolutionaries had opened the collections to the nation and created a truly national museum of art. Later, as Napoleon's armies conquered the Continent and moved into Egypt, their plunder greatly (if temporarily) enhanced the collections. The Louvre was renamed the Musée Napoléon, and on certain days the general public could view without charge its holdings—now augmented by the lootings of the Grande Armée and displayed in groups that recognized national origins, periods, and artists. The realization that the treasure brought to French soil by French armies was now a part of the glory of France had a transforming effect on the public psyche; the trauma of having to return the works of art to their original owners after France's defeat at Waterloo was therefore all the more profound.

In a society without royal collections or the palaces to contain them, but with citizens who wanted to create a strong nation within a strong republic, museums in the United States were more attuned to the marketplace than were their British and French predecessors. In 1784 Charles Willson Peale, an energetic, patriotic, and entrepreneurial scientist-artist, welcomed paying customers to his muse-

um in Philadelphia, which he hoped would become a national institution. Peale had the blessings of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson for his project, and he shared their enthusiasm for the French Enlightenment. He set out to create a comprehensive museum that would challenge those in Europe, if not in the size of its holdings then in the quality of their presentation. Nationalism, mixed with a firm Protestantism, stirred Peale to attempt to prove to European scientists that America was superior in its God-given biological and geological resources and in its intellectual and democratic aspirations. His museum would be a secular temple, where the “most perfect order in the works of a great Creator—whose ways are wisdom,” would become manifest. It would also be an instrument for order and tranquility, inspiring citizens through “charming models for every social duty, in order to render man . . . more content in the station where he is placed.”

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Peale knew that a popular audience might not find rows of studiously arranged fishes particularly gripping, so he worked to present the contents of his collection, which paralleled those of the old cabinets of curiosities, in ways that

would “afford a source of entertainment in the mind, the very reverse of dissipation and frivolity which seems at present to have seized the inhabitants of this growing City.” In developing his natural history collections and ethnological materials, he gave special attention to specimens from North America. And even as he recognized the marketing value of the odd and alarming—the trigger fin-

ger of an executed murderer, the five-legged cow with six feet and two tails that had for years faithfully provided the Peale family with milk—he sought to wrap them in a higher moral purpose.

In the familiar painting that hangs in the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, we see Peale lifting a curtain to reveal a somewhat idealized view of the main room of his museum as it was in 1822. The animals are arranged according to the Linnaean system. Though the painting includes neither the wax figures he dressed for realistic effect in Native American garb, nor his exotica from the Far East, some of his innovations are on view. Drawing on his artistic ability to communicate ideas and his scientific observation of nature, he tried to present his objects in context. The animals he carefully stuffed and preserved are posed behind glass against painted backdrops that evoke their natural habitat. The dark and bulky mastodon bones and the wild turkey are from a recent expedition to the Rocky Mountains. On the walls above are portraits of modern savants and artists from Europe and the United States, many painted from life by Peale’s son Rembrandt. Because the organized presentation of the collections was meant to have a salutary effect on the public, the painting includes visitors who appear fully engaged by the objects on

display. Indeed, attracting visitors was an ever present concern to the proprietor—as it would be to future American museum administrators.

To stay in business and maintain his educational mission, Peale sought a balance that would leave visitors “happily amused and certainly instructed.” For a small sum he would produce silhouettes of visitors, and he put on special exhibitions, concerts, and lectures. He found it difficult to guess what visitors would take away from their experience—which was often not what he had hoped they might. Some admired the portraits but couldn’t care less about the natural history collections. Others came for the thrill of observing nature’s mistakes. Peale admitted anyone who could pay the 25-cent entry fee, but Americans weren’t particularly enthusiastic about spending their money or their leisure time in museums. Peale’s museum managed to survive 60 years, but in the end his hopes to found a national museum went unfulfilled and his collections were dispersed, as were those of the museums in Baltimore and New York with which his sons were involved.

The United States did not have a national museum until the 1850s. Although the British scientist James Smithson died in 1829, leaving his fortune to the United States of America to found an institution “for the increase and diffusion of knowledge,” his bequest did not stipulate how the two purposes were to be achieved, an omission that precipitated many years of debate. The act of Congress that in 1847 established the Smithsonian allotted half the income from the bequest to research efforts and half to a library and museum. In 1855, the National Museum at last opened its doors in the Castle building on the Mall. Even then, Joseph Henry, the first Secretary of the Smithsonian and a strong proponent of research, resisted the idea of a public museum. Research advanced knowledge; museums full of exhibits would only entertain the masses—and draw funds away from research. Nonetheless, Henry was pleased that during the Civil War its collections were “a never-failing source of pleasure and instruction to the soldiers quartered in the city.”

The comfortable classes in Europe and the United States—the newly rich and the growing middle—on contemplating themselves, their relationship to the past, and their achievements in science and technology, found a satisfying explanation for their superior powers in the idea of progress, which, while pointing cheerfully toward the future, also provided a format for coherently organizing the past. Beginning about 1870, and for more than a century thereafter, wealthy donors and a growing cadre of scientists, scholars, and museum personnel energetically scoured the Earth for archaeological and ethnological artifacts, works of art and craft, biological specimens, machines, and manufactured products. This mass of material stuff—brought to heel and displayed in hundreds of new public museums—revealed the very drama that the Victorians saw unfolding in the world at large: history as a progress to their present moment. Not so incidentally, this idea of historical progress sanctioned their efforts to bring the lands and peoples of the world under their control.

In the United States, the robber barons were covering the country with iron rails, telephone wires, and power lines. They were making vast fortunes in oil, steel, banking, railroads, breakfast cereals, and they were building huge mansions



P. T. Barnum's museum of "living human curiosities," many of them fakes, was little more than a circus sideshow, but it grossed \$400,000 in its first season, in 1871.

that incorporated fireplaces, chandeliers, columns, and paneling—sometimes whole rooms—stripped from European castles. To the workers at home, the captains of industry were spreading the discipline of hard work and, by 1914, preaching the rewards of the \$5 day; abroad, they went shopping, scooping up those fine objects that mass production simply could not supply. The acerbic sociologist Thorstein Veblen mocked the tastes of this new class, but the Rockefellers, Carnegies, Mellons, Fricks, and other private citizens like them became public benefactors to an extent hitherto unknown in the modern world. In business, they may have skirted the law; through their patronage, they bought themselves immortality—or tried to.

It's hard to imagine what public museums would be today had it not been for such men. New museums were created—and substantial collections given to existing museums—by names still familiar today: Morgan, Huntington, Barnes, Phillips, Gardner, Taft, Whitney, Frick, Walters, Ringling, Bache, Freer, Mellon, Rosenwald, Rockefeller. After the 1929 market crash, the huge endowments they had established sustained—wholly or substantially—201 public museums through the Great Depression. At the start of World War II, there were numerous municipal, state, and county museums; 60 general museums housing collections of art, history, anthropology, applied science, and natural history; and hundreds more institutions specializing in one or another of those fields. One extraordinary museum of specialization was New York City's American Museum of Natural History. Founded in 1869 by a group that included Theodore Roosevelt, Sr., and J. Pierpont Morgan, the museum has gone on to sponsor more than a thousand scientific expeditions and amass a collection of 30 million specimens and artifacts. But there had been a profound change

since Peale, some 80 years before, sought to reveal God's grand design in the order of things. In the industrial age, natural history and cultural artifacts had more utilitarian functions, such as the development of industry and the promotion of patriotism. Most important, though, was the conviction that history was a continuum, the continuum represented progress, and the future would be better (if everybody worked hard).

Patrons also encouraged new types of museums. Taking as their model the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, whose vast collection of decorative arts from all over the world was unparalleled, the founders of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1870) and the Cleveland Museum of Art (1913) hoped that the study of fine arts and crafts might influence taste in all the social classes, in time improving the design of manufactured goods—and not so incidentally stimulating demand in a competitive market. This was the first of three important museum innovations that began in the late 19th century and reached their zenith in the interwar period.

Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia (1926), the great project of John D. Rockefeller, is a notable example of a museum in which not only the object but the entire environment of the object is painstakingly restored and also made pristine. In the case of Williamsburg, the object was an entire colonial town, saved from the ravages of time and real estate developers to become a kind of national shrine. Here visitors from around the country and the world can get an idea of life in the pre-industrial society of our country's origins. Henry Ford, on a vast acreage near his Dear-

born, Michigan, plant, opened Greenfield Village and the Henry Ford Museum in 1929. The "village" consisted of a conglomeration of structures Ford had purchased and moved to the site, among them the buildings, complete with tools and furnishings, where Thomas Edison had invented the light bulb and

Alexander Graham Bell the telephone. Greenfield Village offered an idealized view of the American small towns that had cradled Ford and the other great inventors of his generation. Ironically, these same men had laid the foundations for the giant industrial society that was destroying the very culture Ford's village was meant to preserve.

But it was the museum of science and industry, modeled after the great Deutches Museum in Munich, Germany, that proved to be the most popular innovation in the American museum world, and the most controversial. The Henry Ford Museum, adjoining Greenfield Village, was one of several such institutions. There were others in New York and Chicago; the Boston Science Museum and the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia are other notable examples. All celebrat-

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Museums

The Smithsonian Institution's 1903 fossil display was typical of the age in its studied aversion to showmanship.

ed the progress of the nation as measured by its machines, inventions, and industrial products. Ford's museum was unique among them in that it celebrated the history of inventions with American technologies at the forefront; the others focused more on contemporary scientific processes, inventions, and products.

The industrial museums were wonderfully innovative—and threatening to the traditional idea of what a museum did and how it should go about doing it. They did not merely display steam engines and electric diodes; they showed how they functioned. Indeed, instruction was what these museums were principally about—in a hands-on, interactive sort of way. The exhibits *worked*, to the delight of visitors who leaned forward to press buttons and push levers. Moreover, they tried to make hard industrial labor vividly real to those who had no direct experience of it. Along with the verisimilitude came a strong element of show business. At Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, guides even carried smelling salts to revive visitors overcome by the realism of the simulated coal mine. For good or ill, museums were moving into the realm of “edutainment.” How people *felt* about their museum experience was given equal status with what they *learned* from the experience.

Science and industry museums were strongly connected to another institution growing out of industrial society, the international exposition. Large portions of the museums' collections came from these periodic shows and fairs, and in some cases museums even inherited buildings that had been erected for them. The Smithsonian, for example, got 42 railroad cars of materials from the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, along with a building to house them. Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry moved to a hall that had been built for the Fine Arts Pavilion of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. The museums also borrowed the expositions' concepts of interactive displays and brightly lit, well-labeled cases, as well as schemes to organize and control their growing mountains of stuff.

What the innovative museums salvaged from the past was intended not only to mark but to idealize our progress from it. Yet the very idea of a museum, devoted by necessity to the past, defied the destructive forces of industrialization that were demolishing it. Old and often historic buildings were razed to make room for factories; the factories needed workers, hence the flight from town—the town that Ford idealized in his museum—to city. It is at least ironic that museums were





simultaneously complicit with those same forces. They made a devil's bargain. Museums were sustained by the economic growth that was destroying much of what museums were attempting to preserve for the increasing numbers of tourists who wanted to look through the glass to see what had been lost. The automobile boosted tourism, which in turn fostered consumer-oriented industries, and the resulting prosperity supported the museums. Between 1895 and 1940, the number of cars in the United States grew from four to more than 25 million. With the increase in leisure time and the construction of superhighways throughout the country after World War II, more and more people ventured forth to visit new places, see new things. Museum attendance climbed, but museums now had to compete with Niagara Falls and Madame Tussaud's. So they did what successful tourist attractions from Yosemite to Disney World did: They added lounges, restaurants, bookshops, snappy audio-visual aids, computer technology, and information areas in an effort to appeal to still more visitors.

Museums

The United States, the world's leading industrial power, had no national museum of industry until 1958, when Congress authorized the National Museum of History and Technology as part of the Smithsonian. There had been important initiatives earlier, the seminal one in 1887, when G. Brown Goode became assistant secretary of the Smithsonian in charge of the National Museum. Goode introduced methods that administrator-curators who succeeded him adhered to well into the 1960s. He gathered together all the instruments, machines, and tools that were scattered in other departments and organized them into exhibits according to categories: fire making, transportation, crafts, and so forth. But his forte was to develop a method for organizing materials in all the departments along uniform, evolutionary lines, so that all artifacts and specimens (natural, human, cultural, technological) were subjected to the same systematic, progressive arrangement.

Goode secured his professional stature in a famous speech delivered at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in 1888. Museums, he declared, were handmaidens of science, and history could be studied and displayed as scientifically as natural phenomena. The way museums presented information could demonstrate the laws of science and the laws of history. Both studied the processes of change over time. Natural history, the formation of the cosmos and the Earth, the emergence of biological life and human cultures—all could be encompassed on one long continuum of progress toward more specialized forms. Objects—whether knives, fossil fish, or meteorites—showed the course of this progression. Goode insisted on the importance of labels and explanatory material, and was a stickler for accuracy. He insisted that exhibits incorporate the most recent research. Following Goode, the Smithsonian and its administrators became leaders in establishing the authority of science—and of technology as applied science—in American museums, and that influence has only grown over the years.

By the 1960s, the Smithsonian's old comprehensive museum had split into a congeries of specialized museums under the Smithsonian's umbrella. What happened there was reflected in museums across the country and abroad. Curators scurried to perfect their collections and bring their exhibits in line with current research. But the idea of progress still reigned as an organizing principle. Halls of evolution were installed in natural history museums. Ethnographic departments displayed the culture of traditional societies from industrial society's point of view, and measured them against American cultural and technological dominance. Art museums focused on the heroic emergence of the abstract and other modern styles from past traditions. History museums told the progressivist narrative through the accomplishments of great white men.

The first of the blockbuster shows, "In the Presence of Kings," opened at the Metropolitan in 1967 and drew 247,000 visits. Later, thousands lined up daily at one major and sometimes minor museum after another to see treasures from the Vatican, Impressionist paintings, Tutankhamen's gold, or room after room of Picassos. Scholarly catalogues based on the most up-to-date research actually sold thousands of copies in museum stores. New as well as old donors contributed

more money, and their own collections as well. Thanks to those donors and their own burgeoning endowments, museums had more money to buy newly available works on the world market. Prices began to soar. The Metropolitan Museum's acquisition of Rembrandt's *Aristotle Contemplating a Bust of Homer* for \$2.3 million was front-page news in 1961. The record stood for 18 years. Now that price would be news only because it was so low. By the 1990s the price of art had skyrocketed, and even lesser works routinely sold for a few million dollars. Major works brought in upwards of \$50 million.

Starting in the 1960s, museum administrators began systematic efforts to attract larger and more diverse crowds— with considerable success: The Smithsonian alone recorded 35 million visits in 2000. Researchers physically tracked the movements of visitors. What did they want to know that they had not learned? How could the museum serve them more effectively? By the 1990s, museums were using focus groups to ascertain how they might compete with other attractions. There was another concern: French visitor surveys in the late 1980s had revealed that working-class citizens were staying away from the new Pompidou Center; in the United States, many studies indicated that African Americans, Hispanics, and other minority groups weren't showing up in proportion to their numbers in the population. What to do?

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In recent decades, a new generation of curators has sought to take account of new scholarship on class, race, ethnicity, and gender in the exhibitions they mounted. They have questioned both the progressive claims of Western science and scientists' assertions of objectivity. The system of identification that had been used to categorize artifacts and organize history exhibitions on a continuum of progress was broken. Now it was possible to construct new narratives, to look again at familiar artifacts, and to consider whole ranges of contextual materials previously ignored in order to interpret cultures from more egalitarian and arguably more authentic perspectives.

These multicultural initiatives reflected and helped give shape to massive changes already taking place on a global scale. The new global economy, spurred by Western multinational corporations, was informational and interconnected. Markets were opened, rights were asserted. Culture became a potent force. It acquired political leverage. The past became political in new ways, as questions arose about who could lay claim to certain objects and how those objects should be interpreted. Museums, which communicated through the artifacts of the past, both reflected and engaged in these upheavals. As various cultural groups sought to define themselves in ways often different from the secular, scientific claims of the Western powers, they looked to museums to help them present their heritage.

Museums

The issue of ownership of that heritage took center stage in the 1980s and 1990s, when the Greek government demanded the return of the Elgin Marbles from the British Museum, Sri Lanka the seal of Kandy from Amsterdam, Tahiti its treasures from Paris. In the United States in 2000, the American Museum of Natural History in New York City and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon reached an agreement to explain the significance to the Clackamas tribe of the Willamette meteorite on display in the museum, in addition to the description of the meteorite's scientific significance. The angry objections by veterans' groups to the 1994 plans for the *Enola Gay* exhibition at the National Air and Space Museum (a revised exhibit opened the following year) and the criticisms of the 1994 Science in American Life exhibit at the National Museum of American History show emphatically the struggle of politically empowered groups over ownership of the meaning of the past.

International organizations, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), became a powerful force in organizing and promoting museums throughout the non-Western world after 1960. UNESCO's committee on cultural heritage built networks of communication between national and local populations and the international tourist trade. Tourism was growing by leaps and bounds, boosting the number of museum visitors dramatically, and indirectly increasing the number of museums worldwide. Cities from Cleveland to Los Angeles, from Bilbao to Paris and Munich, sought to attract international corporations by including museums, along with restaurants, malls, and river walks, in their redevelopment plans. This was not only true in the West. Partially spurred by UNESCO efforts, new museums—such as the National Museum of Kenya, the Sulabh International Museum of Toilets in New Delhi, and the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum in Northern Ireland—reflected and served local and national interests.

Such efforts raise questions of whether Western contexts for understanding culture are exportable. Does culture mean the same thing in every society? Professor Seyyid Hossein Nasr of George Washington University raised the question in a doubly provocative way. Asked in 1983 to advise the Saudi government about founding a science museum in Riyadh, he told them that it could be a time bomb:

Do not think that a science museum is simply neutral in its cultural impact. It has a tremendous impact upon those who go into it. If you go into a building in which one room is full of dinosaurs, the next room is full of wires, and the third full of old trains, you are going to have a segmented view of knowledge which is going to have a deep effect upon the young person who goes there, who has been taught about *Tauhid*, about Unity, about the Unity of knowledge, about the Unity of God, the Unity of the universe. There is going to be a dichotomy created in him. You must be able to integrate knowledge.

Despite the quest to find ways to present artifacts that express and form identities distinct from those of the West, the adoption of the museum as an institution that stores and displays artifacts buys into Western culture and the value it places on such structures. Museums are everywhere serving to disseminate particular habits of seeing and feeling through means of communication that were

developed in the West. But museums also provide a universal matrix allowing for variety of content; what information is communicated lies in the organization of the details. And that is local.

Just as in the past, when museums of industry embraced film, audio recordings, and other media to communicate better with the public, today museums as far away as India, Korea, and Kenya are embracing computers and the Internet not only to extend their reach but to make their exhibitions more accessible to more people. And almost every museum now has its own Web page containing information about current exhibitions, museum shops, and even tours, as well as areas that serve the needs of students and their class projects. Multinational corporations have supported the introduction of computers into museums worldwide to create a mutually beneficial network of local and global relationships. Microsoft's first community project undertaken in the Middle East opened in 2000 at "Planet Discovery" in the Children's Science Museum in the Beirut City Center, where a special wing was set up to house computers purchased from local assemblers in Beirut.

The World Wide Web has made possible a new kind of museum: the virtual museum, which has no "real" artifacts, no "real" geographic location, but a library of hypertext images, sounds, and words that create exhibitions out of digitized information that can be reached from any place on the planet with electronic access. (A recent Google search of museum Web pages produced more than 300,000 hits.) The low cost of a Web page certainly gives museums with little money, and even individuals, a certain equality with their more affluent counterparts. Yet despite claims that the Web is a democratic environment on a level previously unknown, these virtual museums only create networks among those who have the means to access the sites.

At the beginning of the new millennium, we are left with a set of institutions that have not only weathered the major lurches of history Lawrence Vale Coleman noted more than 60 years ago but have also helped smooth social transitions. Museums have helped citizens understand the often disturbing processes of development. Their value and power has lain in their historic association with that very malleable and elusive term *democracy*. They have wanted to reach a vast public, but it is only recently that they have been able to—and even then the message the public understands is not necessarily the message the museum people intended to convey, nor is the message always egalitarian. Museums have recently tended to equalize the value of all sorts of artifacts, but they have also—at all times and in all places—favored the politically and economically dominant caste over the less privileged. And if they have hoped to create orderly societies through their effect on the public mind, they have so far touched a relative few.

Museums, in effect, convey two antithetical messages: one of human liberty, of men and women freely communicating; the other, a controlled vision of ordered progress that has fueled the extension of Western influence for more than two centuries. In the future, museums promise to keep alive this dynamic between the individualistic and the ordered, the local and the global, within a matrix of economic and political change. □

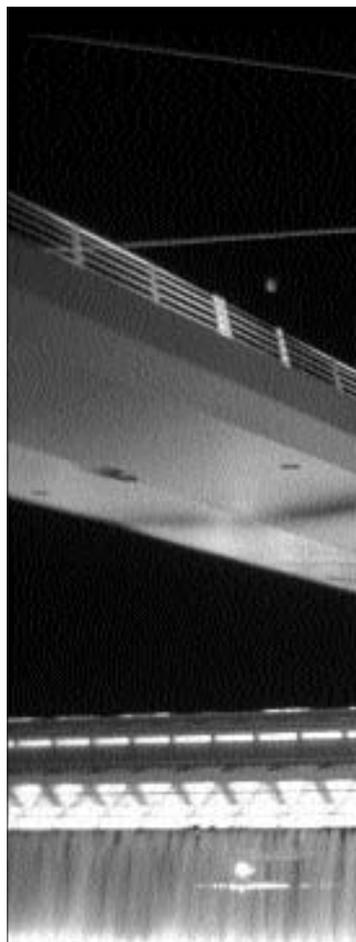
The Museum as Artifact

by Jayne Merkel

Hoping to recapture their days of glory, the citizens of Santiago de Compostela, in Spain's northwestern corner, have embarked on a building program even more ambitious than the one that created the magnificent 11th-century Romanesque church that awed the medieval pilgrims who flocked to the city seeking the tomb of St. James. They are now constructing an 810,000-square-foot Galician Cultural Center on a 173-acre mountaintop two miles from the historic heart of the city. The gargantuan \$125-million effort signals a new age of faith, a faith whose core belief is in the power of museum architecture to attract fame, fortune, and tourists, as the spectacular Guggenheim Museum designed by Los Angeles architect Frank Gehry has done for the Basque capital of Bilbao in northeastern Spain.

The form not the content matters. The \$100 million, 256,000-square-foot Bilbao Guggenheim was not built to house an existing art collection. In fact, there was none. At least until the recent recession, the New York Guggenheim's entrepreneurial director, Thomas Krens, had been establishing a chain of museums around the world (Berlin, Las Vegas, New York's SoHo, and Venice, where the museum has long maintained Peggy Guggenheim's villa) to exhibit the New York institution's holdings. But architecture, not the shows, has attracted the hordes to Bilbao. Because architecture put the Guggenheim on the international map, the people of Santiago de Compostela are using architecture to do the same. After an international competition, they chose as their architect Peter Eisenman of New York. He is of approximately Gehry's age and professional stature—but has an even more radical reputation. His first major building was the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University (1983–89), so much a phenomenon unto itself that it opened before any art was installed. The building was sufficient display.

Like the Bilbao Guggenheim, the Galician Cultural Center is being constructed without a collection. Its six buildings will contain a Museum of Galician History (for exhibitions of photographs, electronic materials, and whatever else can be assembled), a library, a 1,500-seat music theater, an IMAX theater, an administration building with reception halls, and a New





The Milwaukee Museum of Art, a prime example of the new breed of showplace institutions, appears ready to take flight from its perch on the Lake Michigan shore.

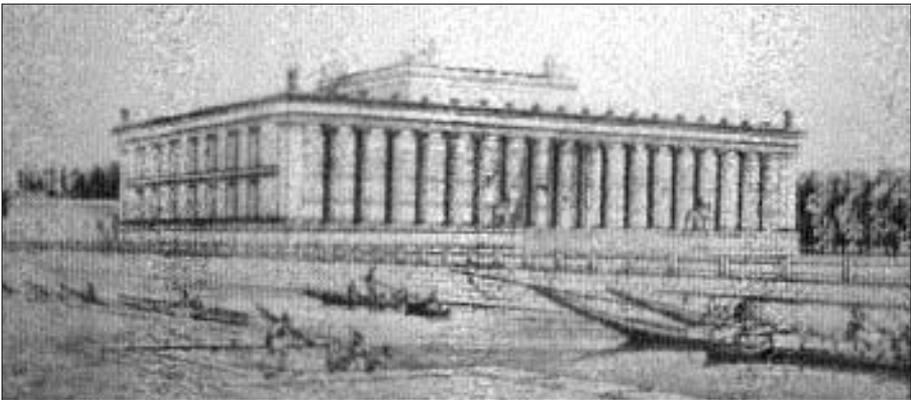
Technologies Center with galleries, video games, an archive, and research areas. But the main attraction will be the massive native-stone buildings that will look as if they were pushed right up through the earth.

Traditionally museums have been built to house collections, and for ancillary functions such as storage, conservation, administration, and education. But after Bilbao opened in 1997, interest in the *architecture* of museums escalated exponentially, and civic leaders all over the world have been hiring famous architects to build museums intended to cause a sensation. Cultural institutions in a number of cities (Chicago, New York, Seattle, Washington, D.C.) have commissioned Gehry himself. Elsewhere, as in Santiago de Compostela, they recruited architects whose work may be even more provocative. A distinguished museum building has become the ultimate contemporary trophy, the most sought-after artifact in the 21st-century city. We have taken to an entirely new level a trend that began, if not in Berlin in 1823, when the great German classicist Karl Friedrich Schinkel designed one of the first buildings for the specific purpose of publicly exhibiting art, then certainly when Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum opened in New York in 1959.

Museums

Most clients of architects are developers who build for profit, and even if they had the will and the expertise to select great architects few of them could justify the commitment in time and money that serious architecture demands. America's public buildings—courthouses, police stations, firehouses, schools—used to be designed by talented architects and constructed of substantial materials, but that changed after World War II, when economy and speed took precedence over design and quality. Occasionally, an initiative such as the U.S. General Services Administration's Excellence in Architecture program supports ambitious design by selecting leading firms such as Richard Meier & Partners or Pei Cobb Freed, but it's the exception. The most valued patrons of ambitious architecture in our time are art museums, just as art collectors today are the principal clients for serious private architecture.

Museums were a product of the Enlightenment. Napoleon opened part of the former royal palace at the Louvre to the public in 1793; there, the French royal collection was exhibited in the Grande Galerie, which had proven ideal for viewing works of art. Within a decade of the opening of the Louvre, professors at the French Academy began drawing plans for museums, and a few years later a collector in the village of Dulwich, near London, commissioned a museum from Sir John Soane. Not



The strong design of Berlin's neo-classical Altes Museum (1830) influenced many that followed.

surprisingly, palace architecture—grand, classical, urban, and horizontal—was a principal influence when the first museums were designed. But like most public buildings at the time, they were built in the classical style for other reasons as well, including classicism's association with government and law (Roman basilicas), with the sacred (Greek temples and Italian Renaissance churches), and with the culture and art of the past.

The most influential early museums were Leo von Klenze's Munich Glyptothek (1816–30) and Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Altes Museum in Berlin (1823–30), which occupies a site surrounded by the Spree River that came to

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be known as Museum Island because a whole cluster of museums grew up there. The Glyptothek has a square plan, with galleries of various geometric shapes surrounding a central courtyard. Though the building rises only one story, a Greek temple front with tall Ionic columns makes it seem larger. Schinkel's brilliant and well-preserved Altes Museum rises two stories behind an uninterrupted giant order of Ionic columns and a broad staircase. Inside, courtyards flank a central rotunda and a monumental stair to second-floor galleries, where perpendicular panels supplement wall space. The upstairs galleries are flooded with natural light from larger windows than, for reasons of security, had been used in single-story museums.

The great art museums in London—Sir Robert Smirke's British Museum (1823) and William Wilkins's National Gallery (1832–38)—follow this classical model, as do so many museums elsewhere in Europe. Almost all the features that most people today associate with art museums were incorporated into these early examples. In one way or another, they solved the major problems of exhibition design—lighting, security, procession through space—and they did so with enough success that the classical museum building persisted for another 150 years.

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Many of the first museums in the United States were built later, when Victorian architecture was in full bloom, so they drew on medieval rather than classical sources. Neo-Gothic and neo-Romanesque buildings for the display of natural or historical objects (such as James Renwick's 1849 Smithsonian castle in Washington, D.C., and Calvert Vaux and J. Wrey Mould's American Museum of Natural History in New York, 1872–77) have tended to retain their original fronts, though many later acquired classical wings. But the classical style soon returned to favor, and the major art museums covered up their Victorian Gothic arches (as in Vaux and Mould's 1874–80 façade for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York) and presented themselves to the public in the "proper" classical mode. Every major (and many a minor) American art museum of the first half of the 20th century has a grand classical façade.

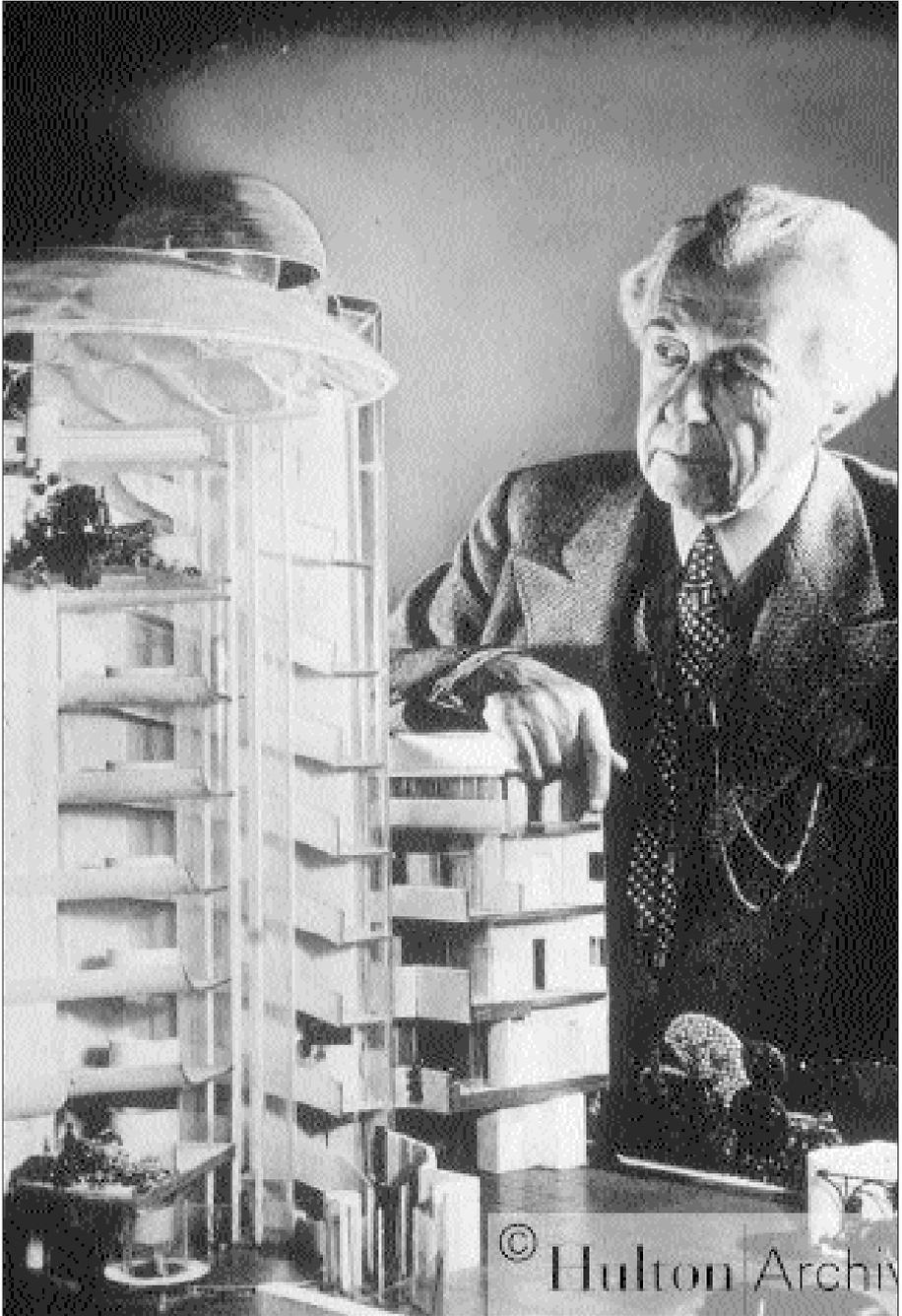
If West Coast museums fail to conform to the classical type, it is because they appeared after the watershed year of 1939. Two years earlier, John Russell Pope of New York, the last of the great classical masters, had won a competition to build the new National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Pope's museum, with a temple front approached by grand stairs and flanked by matching wings, holds its place proudly on the National Mall. A dome rises behind the front, and, inside, dignified grand galleries and inte-

rior courtyards provide a sense of history. The building looks bigger and older than it is—which is how it was intended to look.

In 1939, a new era arrived when the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York set out to build its first permanent home. (The museum had opened in a Fifth Avenue office building just 10 years earlier.) To MoMA's founders, modernism wasn't just a style; it was a cause that transcended national boundaries and connected all the arts. Enthusiasts saw modernism as both the product of a new age and a means of change. Though the design MoMA chose was less radical than an earlier, unrealized scheme for a vertical museum commissioned in 1930 from George Howe and William Lescaze, the new building, by Philip Goodwin and Edward Durrell Stone, was everything traditional museums were not. It was modest in size and scale; it was on a side street (West 53rd Street) rather than a prominent avenue; its design was geometric, abstract, and pioneering, like the art it was built to house; and its architects were not (yet) famous. Goodwin and Stone's smooth white-marble building had a flat façade, punctured by ribbon windows and crowned by a flat roof; within were flexible, open-plan galleries and a broad open staircase. MoMA was completed before Washington's grand National Gallery, and was its opposite in almost every way.

Like other American museums, MoMA grew larger over the years, despite its cramped, midblock site and the high cost of land. Philip Johnson, the museum's first Curator of Architecture and Design, who later became an architect, designed an addition in 1951, an exquisite walled sculpture garden two years later, and a second addition with arches framed in black steel in 1964. The expansions, which contained not only new galleries but a cafe and a museum store, marked the beginning of an important trend in museum building—the creation of spaces to attract visitors and raise money rather than to display objects. MoMA's next building campaign (1977–84) was even more ambitious in that regard. It included a 56-story, glass-walled apartment tower of very expensive condominiums whose sale would offset the cost of another expansion and was also intended to shore up the endowment. The tower, designed by Cesar Pelli, who had just become dean of the architecture school at Yale University, was quietly handsome, and the new galleries blended in with the older ones. But this addition had some uncomfortable commercial touches, such as escalators just inside the garden wall. More important, it changed the scale of the museum.

In 1995, MoMA acquired a hotel next door and began assembling adjacent lots for yet another addition—which, when completed, will almost double the museum's size. The committee to select the design took a worldwide tour of architects' offices and projects, and then announced a competition by invitation only. Surprisingly, none of the elder statesmen, or even elder rascals like Eisenman and Gehry, were asked to compete. Yoshi Taniguchi of Japan produced the most subtle, practical, and contextual final scheme, and was chosen from a group of well-known but still emerging architects in their fifties: Wiel Arets, Herzog & de Meuron, Steven Holl, Toyo Ito, Rem Koolhaas, and Yoshio Taniguchi, Bernard Tschumi, Rafael Viñoly, and Tod Williams Billie Tsien and Associates.



Frank Lloyd Wright contemplating a model of his masterful 1959 Guggenheim Museum.

Though it grew more conservative over the years, MoMA was one of the most influential forces in architecture in the second half of the 20th century. It established the importance of architecture as an art. It identified trends, launched reputations, and, in its exhibitions and publications, codified movements. And it helped make *modern* the only acceptable style for museums of modern art (and eventually for all museums and public buildings). As MoMA grew rich and powerful—thanks to the financial, political, and social power of its Rockefeller patrons, an unexcelled collection, and the relocation of the international art world to New

Museums

York after the outbreak of World War II—museums everywhere tried to compete. Only one upstaged it architecturally.

In 1943, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum hired the most famous and provocative architect in the world, Frank Lloyd Wright, to design a new building (which was not begun until 1956). What Wright produced was no quiet marble box on a Manhattan side street. His defiant spiral is right on Fifth Avenue, across the street and a few blocks north of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Guggenheim was completed in 1959, the year of Wright's death, and though its curved ramps proved a challenge to many of the works hung on its walls, it was clearly a masterpiece, one of the greatest museum buildings in the world. With one sweeping gesture, Wright managed to solve the three problems of museum design that had engaged museum architects from the first—procession through space, lighting, and security. A single continuous ramp leads the viewer all the way up (and down) through the core of the Guggenheim—and what a ramp it is! A gigantic skylight floods the interior with natural light that nonetheless does not shine directly on the works of art. And the concrete conch of a building seems impenetrable, except at the glass front door. Wright even managed to tuck in an entrance plaza, a little shop, an underground theater, lavatories on every level, a balcony overlooking Central Park, and facilities for the trustees. The Guggenheim was a very hard act to follow.

By the 1960s, when American art and modern art were one and the same, the Whitney Museum of American Art, which occupied a quiet, boxy brick building designed by Philip Johnson behind MoMA, on 54th Street, set out to make its own statement. The Whitney's trustees hired Marcel Breuer, a highly respected, German-born New York architect and Bauhaus alumnus. Breuer was known for beautifully crafted suburban houses in natural materials and for some subtle college buildings and chapels. But the Whitney Museum he designed (with Hamilton Smith, 1963–66) is relatively bombastic—a massive, hovering pile of stone on the corner of Madison Avenue and East 75th Street in Manhattan, approached by a bridge over an underground terrace. Unlike the Guggenheim, it gets larger as it rises. Within, it features a gargantuan elevator; huge, well-lit, flexible open galleries that at the time accommodated oversized art better than any at MoMA or the Guggenheim; and, set off from the galleries, an enclosed stone staircase—dark, beautiful, mysterious.

The Whitney contained many fresh ideas, but it also owed a lot to Louis I. Kahn's 1951 addition to the Yale Art Gallery in New Haven, Connecticut. Kahn was a generation younger than the architects who were considered the modern masters: the American Frank Lloyd Wright and Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier, the three Europeans who were largely responsible for the boxy, white-walled structures that MoMA promoted as the "International Style." Gropius, who had directed the Bauhaus in

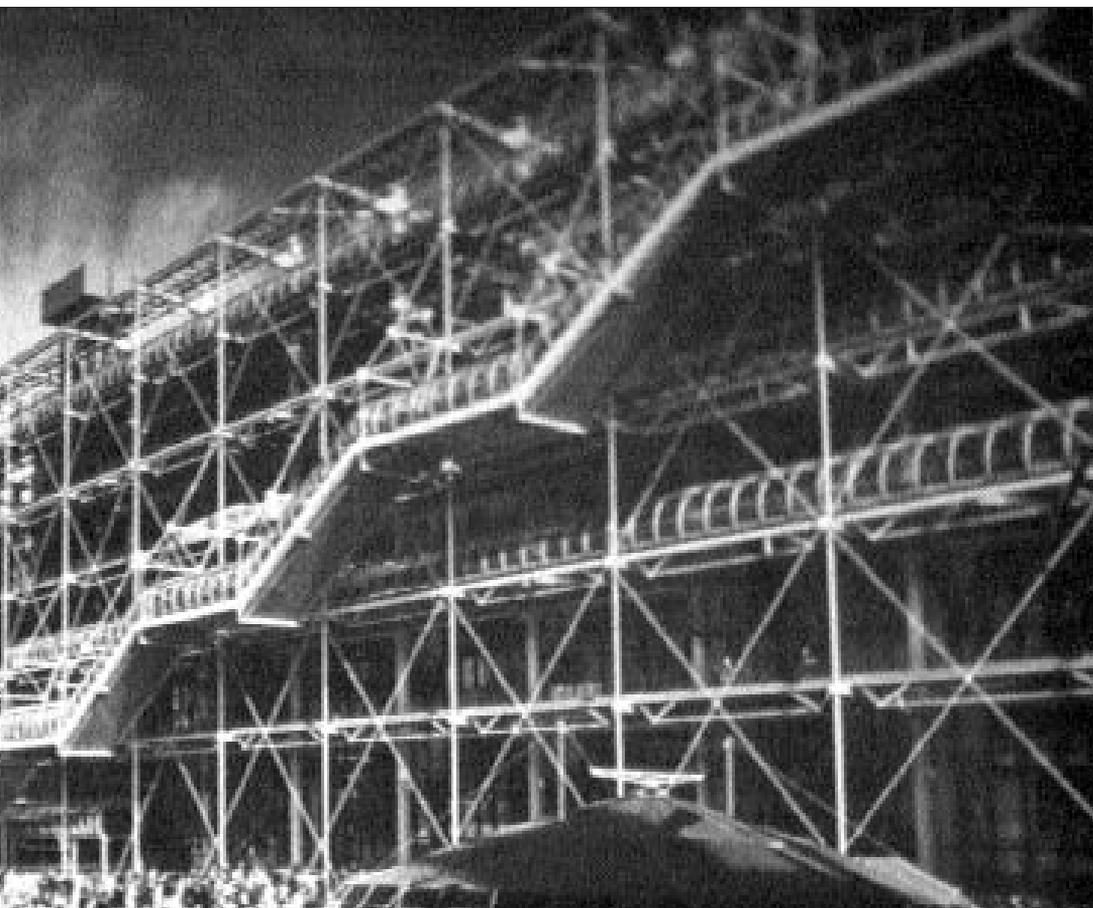
The radical design of the Pompidou Center on the Place Beaubourg in Paris was far more controversial when it opened in 1977 than the contemporary art shown within—or the vibrant street theater without.



Berlin and subsequently headed Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, never designed a significant museum. His influence gradually declined. Le Corbusier grew in stature and range and worked in many materials and with a multiplicity of forms after the 1920s. He created curved shapes as well as rectangles, small enclosed spaces as well as big open ones, in smooth and rough concrete. The Carpenter Art Center at Harvard (with Sert, Jackson, Gourley, 1963), not a museum exactly but a building designed to display art, is one example of his lively and varied late work.

Mies, who succeeded Gropius at the Bauhaus, moved to the United States and became dean of architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. He perfected the steel-framed, glass-walled box filled with what he called "universal space," and he adapted it, exquisitely, to all purposes. His museums include the unbuilt Museum for a Small City (1942), an addition to the Houston Museum of Fine Arts (1951–58), and the New National Gallery in Berlin (1962–68), an enormous glass pavilion with temporary partitions and underground galleries. Mies's influence on every kind of building—office towers (such as the Seagram Building in New York), apartment houses, schools—was so ubiquitous that it eventually provoked the reaction of postmodernism.

As Gropius, Le Corbusier, and Mies achieved old-master status in the 1950s, attention in America turned to the next generation of *American* architects, and



especially to Kahn. A Philadelphia-based professor, he was almost 50 years old when he received his first important commission: to design an 84,000-square-foot addition to the neo-Gothic Yale Art Gallery. The addition, completed in 1953, defers to the decorative exterior of the original gallery adjacent to it by meeting the street with a plain brick wall, marked only by a glass door set perpendicularly between two planes of the façade, along which horizontal bands denote the floor levels. Inside, the building has a Miesian open plan with movable “Pogo panels” on little feet for the display of paintings and a gridded, exposed-concrete ceiling, textured like the work of Le Corbusier, but open so that the mechanical systems inside are visible. Though the building’s triangular ceiling structure derives from theories of the architect-engineer Buckminster Fuller, classical proportions govern its design. Kahn made something new from these influences, and something right for the time.

He subsequently received a number of important commissions, including the Kimball Museum of Art in Fort Worth, Texas (1967–72), and the Yale British Art Center in New Haven (1969–77), directly across the street from the Yale Art Gallery. Both are lighted with elaborate systems of baffles that block the sun’s harmful rays and create a kind of palpable space inside.

Almost contemporaneous with the British Art Center was a museum that, though less awe inspiring, was even more celebrated: the Georges Pompidou National Art and Cultural Center (1971–77), in Paris, designed by Renzo Piano of Genoa and Richard Rogers of London. In many ways, the Pompidou—a big glass box that resembles a 19th-century industrial exhibition hall rather than a museum—is completely different from the British Art Center, and yet it too was influenced by Kahn’s Yale Art Gallery addition. Kahn had exposed the ductwork in the Yale Art Gallery; Piano and Rogers enlarged the Pompidou’s ductwork to Brobdingnagian scale and placed it on the exterior of the building, where escalators within tubes carry visitors along the façade to the upper floors. Shiny metal, glass, and primary-color plastic make the building look like a gigantic Tinkertoy. People loved it from the start, and it suited the exhibitions of its day, but as fashions changed and the Pompidou became the home of the national collection of modern art, curators began to complain that the building was not functional because it had open spaces instead of defined rooms. So the galleries were rebuilt in the 1980s by Gae Aulenti, an Italian architect—who was also hired in the 1980s to turn a vast train terminal in Paris, the Gare d’Orsay, into a vast museum of 19th-century art. The Pompidou was one of the first museum buildings to become a tourist attraction and almost singlehandedly transformed its once-dreary neighborhood. It draws some eight million visitors a year.

The building that most captivated the American public in the 1970s was I. M. Pei & Partners’ addition to the National Gallery in Washington, the so-called East Building, completed in 1978. Composed of a pair of isosceles triangles, this elegant, abstract structure cleverly fills an awkward trapezoidal site on the National Mall. It is sheathed in marble from the same quarry as the marble used for its great neoclassical neighbor, but it relates to the original museum largely by contrast. Instead of applying ornament, Pei made the whole building a piece of sculpture. Like other museum additions of the time, it is devot-



Paul Stevenson Oles' study of the much admired East Building of the National Gallery of Art.

ed less to gallery space (galleries are tucked away in the corners) than to office space, subterranean restaurants with light entering from little glass pyramids that poke above ground, and public meeting space (in the form of a gigantic, glass-roofed lobby atrium). In part, no doubt, because of the acclaim the East Building had received, Pei was asked in 1984 to renovate and expand the Louvre. The \$1.38 billion project added 825,000 square feet of space (less than half of it for galleries) to the venerable museum, largely in the form of underground facilities lighted through an enormous pyramid in the courtyard above.

Louis Kahn's late work exerted much more influence on architects in the United States than either the Pompidou or the East Building. The classical tradition that Kahn had successfully integrated with modernism came into favor in the 1980s as a reaction to Miesian restraint and the stripped-down boxes it inspired. Robert Venturi—like Kahn, a Philadelphia architect who had taught at the University of Pennsylvania and Yale—led the postmodern revolt. Venturi argued that modern architecture was meaningless because, without ornament, it lacked necessary symbols. He and his partner, John Rauch, put the theory into practice in an addition to Cass Gilbert's 1917 Allen Memorial Art Gallery at Oberlin College. They added large-scale, patterned brickwork and columns with gigantic capitals, flattened out and inflated in size for effect.

Venturi brought to architecture not just a sense of irony but a sense of humor. With his wife, Denise Scott Brown, he later designed a larger, far more prominent, and much more complex museum addition than the one at Oberlin: the Sainsbury Wing of London's National Gallery. Venturi and Scott Brown placed well-proportioned individual galleries in the new wing, used restrained ornament, and paid careful attention to the building's side on

Trafalgar Square. The Sainsbury Wing was completed in 1991. Venturi's cleverest museum is a 1972 re-creation of Benjamin Franklin's house in Philadelphia, of which only the footprint and the roofline were known. So that is all Venturi built—a three-dimensional outline. The exhibits are in sheds and underground passageways.

Though the Franklin project parodied the desire to turn back the clock, many converts to the postmodern movement tried to do just that. The office-building boom of the 1980s proceeded with insufficient time for reflection, and much of what was built was unimaginative and shoddy. The most controversial museum project of the era was a proposed addition to the Whitney Museum by Michael Graves—a hulking, brooding pile of colored classical forms that, though handsome and original, tried to dwarf Breuer's building. The proposal elicited such a powerful defense of the original Whitney from architects that it actually strengthened Breuer's reputation and advanced the cause of modern architecture. (Curiously, a Gwathmey Siegel addition [1985–92] to Wright's Guggenheim Museum received little criticism, mainly because, though large, it was respectful and unassertive—and located where Wright himself had once contemplated an addition.)

While the battle of the styles raged on the East Coast, on the West Coast and in Europe modern architecture never really went out of style, and two of the most important commissions of the 1980s, which both happened to be in California, went to modernists. The Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art hired the Japanese architect Arata Isozaki to design a new building in the arts district downtown, and, after considering 80 architects, the Getty Center selected Richard Meier of New York to design its \$1 billion, 360,000-square-foot complex on a 110-acre site looming over the Santa Monica Freeway. Neither commission went to the sentimental hometown favorite, Frank Gehry, who for many years had designed studios for artists and was highly respected within the art world. But in a sense, Gehry ended up winning the first competition when he was asked to convert two industrial sheds to a "Temporary Contemporary" (now called the Geffen Contemporary) on the edge of downtown Los Angeles. Gehry's big open space with exposed roof trusses and a raw feeling was such a success that Isozaki's more costly and "permanent" museum seemed anticlimatic when it opened a few years later.

Meier's huge, buff-stone, much-anticipated Getty opened at almost the same time as Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim. Meier had never abandoned his commitment to an abstract, white-walled, spatially complex form of modern architecture derived from Le Corbusier's early work; he had, in fact, become the master of the mode. The Getty was highly praised and wildly popular with visitors, but the museum in Bilbao stole the show and became an international phenomenon. Even before that happened, Gehry's star had been rising. He completed a lively California Aerospace Museum and Theater in Los Angeles, had a major retrospective at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, was invited to design the Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota and the Vitra Design Museum in Germany, and began to be

embraced by the critical establishment in New York.

The 1980s also saw a carefully orchestrated reaction from within the modernist camp itself to the reductivism of modern architecture. It was led by Peter Eisenman, who spoke (rather opaquely) of being inspired by deconstructionist literary theory. In 1988, Philip Johnson put together an exhibition of “deconstructivist architecture” at MoMA that was meant to suggest that a new movement was afoot. None actually materialized, but for a time there was a lot of talk about “decon” architecture. The true importance of Johnson’s show may have been that it advanced the careers of all the participants—Eisenman, Gehry, Zaha Hadid, Daniel Libeskind, Rem Koolhaas, Wolf Prix of Coop Himmelblau, and Bernard Tschumi—a group that forms the core of those considered for major museum commissions even today.

THE MUSEUM IN BILBAO
STOLE THE SHOW AND
BECAME AN INTERNATIONAL
PHENOMENON.

The completion of two museum projects designed in the late 1980s helped reestablish modernism in New York. One was a garden court linking the Renaissance revival Pierpont Morgan Library, designed by McKim, Mead & White in 1906, with a taller, Italianate brownstone house of 1853 that had once belonged to Morgan’s son. Instead of making the connection “match” either building, Bartholomew Voorsanger created a glass-and-steel pavilion with a piano-curve roof that owed more to Le Corbusier than to Alberti. And because he believed that shoddy materials and careless craftsmanship were partially responsible for the disillusion with modern architecture, Voorsanger made his pavilion as sumptuous as the old buildings it linked by installing gray-veined marble floors, Indiana limestone walls with pewter-clad aluminum panels and mullions, a row of olive trees, and climbing fig vines. The place soothes even as it dazzles.

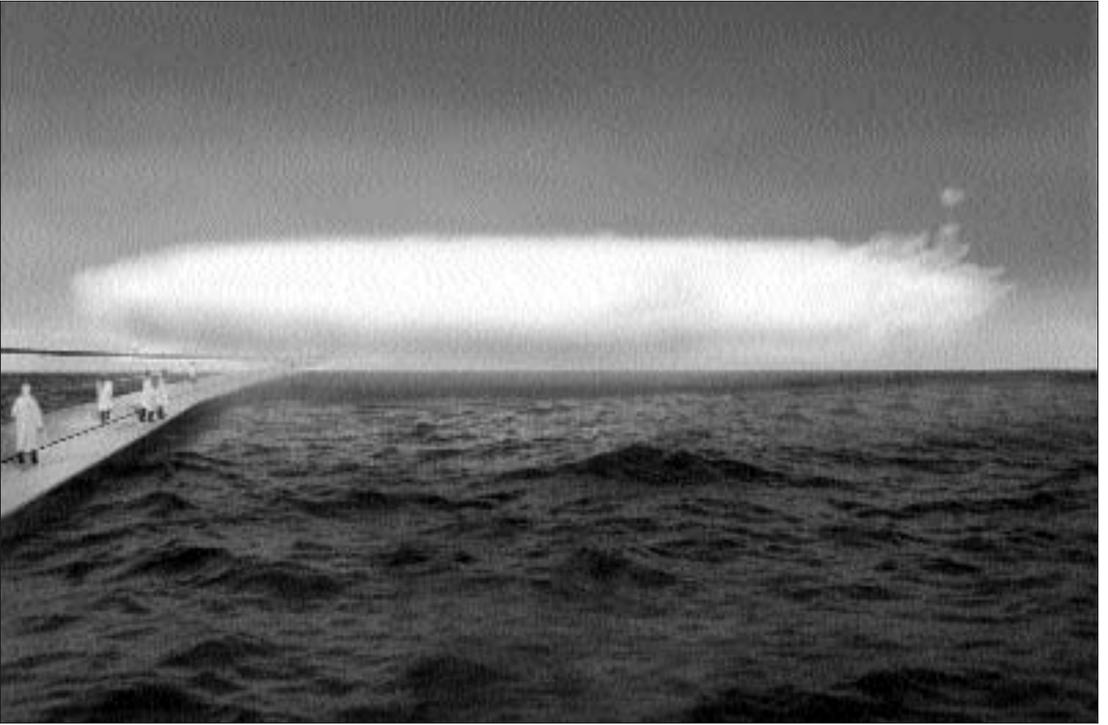
The second project preceded the completion of the Morgan court. In 1987 Richard Gluckman, an architect who had been designing commercial art galleries and working with artists for many years, took a different approach to building a new museum with a design commissioned by the Dia Foundation. Housed in a brick warehouse on the industrial western edge of Manhattan’s Chelsea district, the Dia Center retains the direct, raw quality of the structure and the neighborhood; its plain-concrete interior walls are reconfigured into large, well-proportioned, divisible galleries and enhanced by lighting from exposed industrial fixtures. Gluckman’s spare but beautifully lighted galleries resemble the studios where art is made, and they reproduce the essentials of studio space with subtle detail. Soon after the Dia Center opened, the principal contemporary art galleries in New York started moving from SoHo to Chelsea, and Gluckman found himself invited to design museums the world over. He has joined the surprisingly small and completely international group of contenders for choice museum commissions, made up of veterans of the MoMA “deconstructivist architecture” show, participants in the competition for MoMA’s latest addition, and architects of the most celebrated museums of the 1990s.

There was considerable variety in the museums designed in that

decade (some of which are only now being completed), as evidenced, for example, by the Polshek Partnership's planetarium at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, a fully transparent, machinelike glass cage with a gigantic, solid-white sphere seemingly suspended inside (it actually stands on little legs that look as if they were built to hold a spaceship); Tod Williams Bille Tsien and Associates' sagebrush-green precast concrete addition to the Phoenix Art Museum and new bronze-coated American Museum of Folk Art in New York City; Antoine Predock's Arizona Science Center in Phoenix and Tang Teaching Museum at Skidmore College; Mario Botta's brick-and-granite San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Santiago Calatrava's soaring addition to the Milwaukee Museum, which, in addition to its new galleries and reception spaces, literally creates a bridge to the downtown.

Of a quite different character are the numerous commemorative museums that opened during the decade, such as James Ingo Freed's United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington (1993), stony and contextual on one side, foreboding on the other, and inside, elements from concentration camps, such as oven doors, communicate visually and viscerally. David Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin (1998) disturbs visitors with angular dead-end spaces, narrow lightning-bolt windows, and a zigzagging plan with a 13-foot-wide void that symbolizes the missing Jews and the contributions they never got to make. The exquisite zinc-skinned structure is an abstract chamber of horrors. (One reason the Bilbao Guggenheim was such a sensation is that its exuberance made it the polar opposite of the memorial museums, just as its intertwined curves and endless complexity set it apart from all the understated art museums of the time.)

The goal of much museum architecture today is to stun, and what could be more shocking than a museum that doesn't exist in any traditional physical sense? Of course, the idea is not new. It was advanced by Walter Benjamin in the famous essay "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), by André Malraux in *Museum without Walls* (1947), and by Marcel Duchamp in "Boîte-en-Valise" (1936–41), a box filled with reproductions of his work—in multiple editions, of course. Today it takes the form of the Virtual Guggenheim, an electronic "museum" filled with reproductions of the Guggenheim's holdings. Its colorful, curvaceous, ever-morphing forms were created by architects Lisa-Anne Couture and Hani Rashid, partners in Asymptote Architecture, for "visits" from computer terminals. Similarly ephemeral is the marvelously named Blur Building, a planned exposition pavilion in Lake Neuchâtel at Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland. The design is the work of Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio, who were recently selected to design the new Museum of Contemporary Art in Boston. The Blur Building, accessible by a ramp from the lakeshore, will be sprayed by a mist that makes it seem to disappear. The North Carolina Museum of Art, by New York architects Henry Smith-Miller and Laurie Hawkinson, is fully visible only from high in the air: At that distance, its various structures and fields can be seen to spell out "Picture This."



Visitors will approach the planned Blur Building on Switzerland's Lake Neuchâtel across a ramped bridge. It will deposit them on an open-air platform in the center of a manmade fog mass.

The evidence is overwhelming: Museums are no longer just repositories of treasures or “cabinets of curiosities”; they have become objects in their own right. During the past decade, the exotic has invaded a building type that used to be, quite properly, the most conservative of all—because it was intended to conserve artifacts for the ages. But museums today do not merely conserve. They entertain, feed patrons, sell wares, host parties, and make displays, if not out of whole cloth and real objects, then out of whole bytes and digits. (The richest man in the world, Bill Gates, has assembled a collection of art and books not to enjoy or display them as much as to own the legal rights to reproduce them.) And when museums educate these days, they may well do so using reproductions, films, and video displays rather than original artifacts. That’s a risky course for them to take when more information than anyone can absorb is already coming into homes and schools electronically.

At a time when schools are deteriorating, roads are crumbling, and low-income housing is woefully underfunded, one can’t help but question the vast sums being spent on new museums (\$650 million for the MoMA addition; almost \$1 billion sought for a proposed new Gehry Guggenheim in New York). But the extravagance is certainly good for the art of architecture and for the few architects who get the chance to build museums. The artist Frank Stella said of Victoria Newhouse’s book *Towards a New Museum* (1998) that “it reveals how well the guys in suits who can’t paint perform when they have to design a home for art.” Increasingly, the guys in suits are getting to upstage the guys who can paint. □

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THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

Politics & Government	83	97 Religion & Philosophy
Foreign Policy & Defense	85	99 Science, Technology
Economics, Labor & Business	88	& Environment
Society	91	102 Arts & Letters
Press & Media	95	105 Other Nations

While America Slept

A Survey of Recent Articles

Amid all the uncertainty that followed September 11, one thing seemed predictable: The periodical press would soon be full of retrospectives on the mistakes of perception and policy that left the United States vulnerable to such a disaster. And doubtless there would be political recriminations. Yet that has not happened. The need to maintain a united front, the sense of urgency about future threats, and other imperatives have largely suppressed, at least temporarily, the national appetite for deep inquiries into the past.

One of the more useful analyses of past U.S. policies was written months before the attack. In *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (No. 5, 2001), Martha Crenshaw, a political scientist at Wesleyan University, examines the domestic political currents that have made it difficult for the United States to formulate a coherent antiterrorist strategy. U.S. policy before September 11 lurched forward in response to crises, such as the Oklahoma City bombing, but the sense of urgency was not powerful enough to force the suspension of politics as usual, especially within the executive branch.

"No agency . . . wants an issue on the agenda unless it has an efficient and acceptable solution for it," Crenshaw observes. As a result, counterterrorism policy gets chopped into bite-sized problems

managed by different bureaucracies: the Department of Health and Human Services deals with bioterrorism, while the Department of Energy worries about nuclear materials.

In 1998, President Bill Clinton moved to create a national coordinator for counterterrorism policy on the staff of the National Security Council, but in what the *New York Times* called "a bitter fight," the departments of defense and justice resisted a move they thought would dilute their own power. In the end, a coordinator was named but given little staff and no direct budget authority—and thus little real power.

Bureaucracies also have a tendency to dodge jobs they don't want. The Clinton-era Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), for example, avoided taking charge of a domestic preparedness program. Crenshaw writes: "FEMA officials opted out on budgetary grounds, fearing that the program would be inadequately funded, and thus be a drain on already scarce resources, and that the agency would then be criticized for ineffective implementation of the program."

Many other players contribute to the disarray and gridlock, including interest groups and "experts," the news media, and Congress (which often earmarks counterterrorism money for favored projects).

During the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis, President Jimmy Carter drastically limited his options by promising the families of those held that he would do nothing that would endanger the lives of the hostages.

In the *New Yorker* (October 1, 2001), staff writer Joe Klein blames “institutional lassitude and bureaucratic arrogance” for keeping three post-Cold War administrations from dealing adequately with the terrorist threat. Proposals by the Clinton White House to use cyberwarfare techniques “to electronically lock up bank accounts” used by Osama bin Laden and others were shot down by the Treasury Department, which feared that such an effort would undermine faith in the international financial system.

The Clinton administration comes in for especially heavy criticism by Klein’s sources. Enamored of the “arcade-game” technology of the Gulf War and frightened by the disastrous attempt to capture Somali warlord Muhammad Farah Aidid in 1993, the administration was “more concerned with gestures than with details.” And even its gestures were sometimes compromised. The U.S. cruise missile attacks on targets connected with Osama bin Laden in August 1998 came three days after the president’s grand jury testimony in the Monica Lewinsky case.

It’s not just the government that suffers from gridlock. On January 31, 2001, the United States Commission on National Security/21st Century released a major report highlighting America’s vulnerability to terrorist attack and calling for a major government reorganization to deal with the threat. The press gave it slight attention (and the all-important *New York Times* completely ignored it), notes Susan Paterno in the *American Journalism Review* (November 2001). One reporter suggested to her that the report received little coverage because “it slip[ped] between beats”—it could be a Pentagon reporter’s story, a congressional story, etc. And covering unlikely government reorganization schemes is never a high priority; as Paterno’s source pointed out, even today few of the commission’s recommendations are likely to be implemented.

In the trade publication *Broadcasting & Cable* (October 22, 2001), deputy editor Steve McClellan argues that there is one very big story the news media, particularly TV news, did not cover well: the high tide of anti-American sentiment in the Islamic world. The three major networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) slashed the minutes devoted to reports from overseas roughly in half during the 1990s. Since September 11, foreign coverage has sharply increased; the question is whether there’s enough viewer interest to keep it at a high level.

Now the news media are scrambling to make sure they don’t get caught napping again, and the periodical press is no exception. The emerging conventional wisdom holds that America’s woes in the Arab and Muslim worlds arise in significant part from America’s long support of autocratic governments (such as those in Egypt and Saudi Arabia) that welcomed American help even as they channeled the discontent of their own repressed populations into officially tolerated (and sometimes officially encouraged) anti-Americanism.

Among those focusing on the Saudis are investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, whose report in the *New Yorker* (October 22, 2001) paints a grim picture of a corrupt regime protected by successive American administrations, and writer Ken Silverstein in the *Nation* (December 3, 2001). The Saudis have been accused of underwriting the spread of Islamic fundamentalism abroad even as the fragile regime of King Fahd faces the threat of unrest at home. They own 25 percent of the world’s oil reserves and supply 15 percent of U.S. oil imports. “The problem is this,” a “senior general” told Hersh. “How do we help the Saudis make a transition without throwing them over the side?”

The last word, however, belongs to Martha Crenshaw, who predicts in her pre-September 11 essay that even in the event of “spectacular” terrorist attacks on “important national symbols,” the political process will make it “difficult for any administration to develop a consistent policy based on an objective appraisal of the threat of terrorism to American national interests.”

United We Stand?

“One Nation, Slightly Divisible” by David Brooks, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (Dec. 2001), P.O. Box 37585, Boone, Ia. 50037-0585.

On election night 2000, Americans were transfixed by two spectacles: one in Florida, the other on the electoral maps shown on the TV newscasts. The maps seemed to depict two Americas: The coasts were colored blue, indicating states that had voted for Al Gore; the heartland was almost entirely red, indicating support there for GOP candidate George Bush.

There are two main theories about what divides Americans, and both took shape long before the 2000 election, explains Brooks, a senior editor of the *Weekly Standard* and the author of *Bobos in Paradise* (2000). Liberals such as Gore pollster Stanley Greenberg tend to point to a “division along class lines, between the haves and have-nots.” Thus, Gore campaigned on the slogan “The People versus the Powerful.” Conservatives, such as historian Gertrude Himmelfarb, see America as “divided between two moral systems. Red America is traditional, religious, self-disciplined. Blue America is modern, secular, self-expressive.”

Shuttling between his home in Blue America, the upper-middle-class Washington suburb of Montgomery County, Maryland, and the Red America of Franklin County, Pennsylvania, about 25 miles west of Gettysburg, Brooks found little to support either theory of sharp division.

Franklin County is a rural, virtually all-white area where people work at modest jobs at banks and plants along the interstate, earning an average of \$51,872, just over half as much as folks in Montgomery County. It should be fertile ground for a Gore-like appeal to class resentment and feelings of powerlessness against big corporations and other distant forces. It isn't. (Ironically, Brooks observes, that appeal had much more resonance in affluent Montgomery

County.) Yes, local people said when pressed, there is a divide between the haves and have-nots, but “the people saying yes did not consider themselves to be among the have-nots.” And they aren't kidding themselves, Brooks adds. The inhabitants of Blue America don't realize that it costs a lot less to live comfortably in Red America. Few live lavishly, but there is “little obvious inequality.”

What about a moral divide? While Franklin County is full of churches and religiously oriented bumper stickers (WARNING: IN CASE OF RAPTURE THIS VEHICLE WILL BE UNMANNED), Brooks didn't find much evidence of a wide breach from the more cosmopolitan Blue America, except on issues such as abortion and homosexuality. It has most of the same problems, from teen pregnancy to heroin addiction. None of the local clergy he interviewed said they would condemn a parishioner for having an extramarital affair.

It's “sensitivity, not class or culture,” that separates the people of Franklin and Montgomery counties, Brooks says. They are divided by an “Ego Curtain.” “In Red America the self is small. People declare in a million ways, ‘I am normal. Nobody is better, nobody is worse. I am humble before God.’ In Blue America the self is more commonly large.” Blue America is the land of big résumés and big SUVs. To put it another way, each America embodies one of the two strands of the national character: egalitarianism and achievement.

These differences don't make for a fundamental divide, in Brooks's view. And the events of September 11 closed part of the gap between Red and Blue America. “America is in no mood for a class struggle or a culture war. . . . There may be cracks, but there is no chasm.”

Hazarding the Constitution

“Presidents, Congress, and Courts: Partisan Passions in Motion” by Joyce Appleby, in *The Journal of American History* (Sept. 2001), 112 N. Bryan Ave., Bloomington, Ind. 47408-4199.

If the Framers encouraged one principle in the presidency, it was the independence of the office, even at the expense of a smooth transfer

of power. They were willing to require three elections to choose a president: one popular, one in the Electoral College, and, in case of a dead-

lock, another in the House of Representatives. Yet almost from the beginning, partisanship and political parties have “played havoc with the Constitution and the independence of the president.”

Appleby, a historian at the University of California, Los Angeles, says the Framers looked with dismay on the state governments created during the Revolution, with their weak executives and large, powerful legislatures that were cauldrons of factionalism and populist sentiment.

The Framers conceived of the president as a leader above politics; they did not imagine the rise of political parties. “So little did the Founders expect candidates for president to compete on the basis of ideology,” Appleby writes, “that they conceived of the vice president as a runner-up presidential candidate.”

Whatever illusions remained were dispelled by the election of 1800, which resulted in an Electoral College tie between two Democratic-Republican candidates, Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr. Federalists John Adams and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney trailed. The decision was thrown into the House of Representatives, with each state casting a single vote. That scheme strengthened the Federalists’ hand, and for 35 rounds of balloting they attempted to elect one of their own. Then, Appleby says, “someone found the courage to act honorably.” Representative James Bayard, the



Rep. James Bayard was the hero of the election of 1800.

sole congressman from Delaware and a Federalist, withheld his state’s vote from Burr, allowing Jefferson to prevail. Bayard explained that he had acted “so as not to hazard the Constitution.”

Yet the presidency would never achieve the independence the Founders imagined. For much of the 19th century, Congress more or less ruled the roost in Washington, and until the 1960s the political parties selected their presidential candidates with barely a nod to the public. It was “de facto parliamentarism.”

President Richard M. Nixon’s decision to finance his 1972 reelection through an organization separate from the Republican Party “signaled the beginning of the end for party power brokers.” Yet this change did not produce political nirvana. Presidential candidates grew more responsive to big campaign donors, and the public turned increasingly apathetic toward politics. Which brings Appleby to the 2000 election, in which she says partisan passions found a new home: the Supreme Court. In a sense,

there is something natural about this: “The issues that Americans cared most about in 2000—abortion, school prayer, environmental protection, *Miranda* rights, workers’ safety—had already migrated from Congress to the Court.” Appleby wishes, however, that the Court had allowed the House to decide the election, acting “so as not to hazard the Constitution.”

Who Follows Black Leaders?

“White Residents, Black Incumbents, and a Declining Racial Divide” by Zoltan L. Hajnal, and “The Effect of Black Congressional Representation on Political Participation” by Claudine Gay, in *American Political Science Review* (Sept. 2001), American Political Science Assoc., 1527 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Does having a black representative in Congress, such as John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.), or Albert Wynn (D-Md.), encourage their black constituents to become more politically involved? Does having a black mayor make white voters more like-

ly to vote for black candidates or affect their views on racially charged issues? Two studies yield some intriguing, but disparate, results.

Hajnal, a political scientist at the University of California, San Diego, examines

why, given the choice between a white and a black candidate, “the vast majority of white Americans will vote for a white candidate, even if it means switching parties.” Voter surveys indicate that whites assume that the black candidate, once elected, would shift resources to black constituents. Yet studies show that black “leadership does not greatly improve the economic well-being of African Americans at the city, regional, or state level.” Since the white voters’ fears are rarely borne out, do their attitudes toward black candidates change once they experience a black incumbent?

To some extent, yes. Looking at mayoral contests between 1984 and 1992, some involving first-time black candidates, others pitting black incumbents against both white and black challengers, Hajnal examined both voting patterns and attitudes on a number of issues, such as school integration, affirmative action, and government assistance to blacks. He found that “on average, white support for the same black candidate increased by 25 percent when s/he became an incumbent.” Even in white-majority cities, black incumbents running against white challengers were reelected 74 percent of the time. Having a black mayor also seemed to change white attitudes on racial issues over time. Most change occurred among white Democrats, some among white moderates, and little or none among white Republicans. “Black leadership means even greater divisions between Democrats and Republicans,” concludes Hajnal.

What effect does black leadership have

on black voters? Gay, a political scientist at Stanford University, studied voter participation in 10 congressional districts represented by African Americans during the early 1990s. Most of the districts had a majority of black and other minority voters. Voting rights advocates who pushed for the creation of such districts believed that “black congressional representation [would] lead not only to more progressive legislation but also to greater appreciation by African Americans of the instrumental value of political participation.” But Gay found that “only occasionally” did black voter turnout rates rise in black-represented districts. And turnout among whites was significantly lower (by five to 18 percentage points) when compared with turnout among white voters in other districts.

The seemingly conflicting findings of these two studies may have a logical explanation. Hajnal focuses on races for local offices, which can have a more direct effect on the daily lives of voters. As Gay observes, members of Congress do not have comparable impact. Their influence stems more from the “symbolic politics” of images and issues. She theorizes that black representatives who vigorously support policies favoring their minority constituents may actually encourage *disengagement* of those constituents from politics once they achieve election. She points to the example of Maryland’s Albert Wynn, who attracted more black voters in 1994 after he began eschewing “expressions of militancy for pronouncements on national issues.”

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

What Kind of War?

“A Strange War” by Eliot A. Cohen, in *The National Interest* (Thanksgiving 2001), P.O. Box 622, Shrub Oak, N.Y. 10588-0622.

The attack of September 11 was a battle in a war Americans didn’t quite know they were fighting, declares Cohen, a professor of strategic studies at the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. Not for him any talk of the attack as a crime to be remedied by bringing the culprits

to justice. It was a political act.

The war may be or may become a “clash of civilizations,” in Samuel Huntington’s famous phrase, but at the very least it is a “strange” war. “Strange” because it doesn’t fit the neat categories of military doctrine, with its “end states and exit strategies.” Cohen says that the

Crusades are an instructive, if politically incorrect, example. “They involved armies as the recognizable forces of states along with a welter of entrepreneurs, religious orders, and bandits. They saw strange and shifting alliances in which religious fanaticism could give way to cynical calculations of individual and state interest.”

The foe in this war, in Cohen’s view, is not just Osama bin Laden but “larger movements in the Arab and Islamic worlds” that tap deep rivers of “hatred and resentment.”

The war’s causes are as old as the Muslim resentment of the ascendant West that began when the Turks were driven back from Vienna in 1683, and as new as the appearance of bin Laden, a historically “decisive personality.” But Cohen draws special attention to two intermediate causes.

One is the failure to destroy Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi regime during the Gulf War, which “encouraged others [including Yugoslavia’s Slobodan Milosevic] to see if they could find ways of outlasting or hurting the Americans enough to keep them out of their way.” The other cause is the U.S. failure in

recent decades to promote “the development of clean and reasonably free political institutions” as vigorously in the Middle East as it did in Europe and Asia. “A combination of clientilism, realpolitik, and cultural condescension meant that there was no interest in (to take just one example) the courage of a Naguib Mahfouz [the Egyptian novelist] as a spokesman for values that Americans share.” Washington’s willingness to “deal with a Palestinian Authority dominated by a corrupt and brutal clique” while ignoring other Palestinians is a symptom of this cynicism, Cohen thinks.

“To the extent that American leaders close their eyes to the realities of the sick and thwarted societies of the Arab and, in parts, of the larger Muslim world, they will fail to understand the essential nature of the war in which they find themselves engaged,” Cohen warns. At the same time, Americans must “rediscover the civilizational values that make this country what it is. . . . It is at least as important to know what we are fighting for as to know what we are fighting against.”

EXCERPT

Allies in the Shadows

In the best of worlds, Pax Americana is doomed to a measure of solitude in the Middle East. This time around, the American predicament is particularly acute. Deep down, the Arab regimes feel that the threat of political Islam to their own turfs has been checked, and that no good can come out of an explicit public alliance with an American campaign in their midst. . . .

Ride with the foreigners at your own risk, the region’s history has taught. Syria’s dictator, Hafiz al-Assad, died a natural death at a ripe old age, and his life could be seen as a kind of success. He never set foot on American soil and had stayed within his world. In contrast, the flamboyant Sadat courted foreign countries and came to a solitary, cruel end; his land barely grieved for him. A foreign power that stands sentry in that world cannot spare its local allies the retribution of those who brand them “collaborators” and betrayers of the faith. A coalition is in the offing, America has come calling, urging the region’s rulers to “choose sides.” What these rulers truly dread has come to pass: they might have to make fateful choices under the gaze of populations in the throes of a malignant anti-Americanism. The ways of the world being what they are, the United States will get more cooperation from the ministers of interior and the secret services than it will from the foreign ministers and the diplomatic interlocutors. There will be allies in the shadows, but in broad daylight the rulers will mostly keep their distance.

—Fouad Ajami, a professor of Middle Eastern studies at the Nitze School for Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, in *Foreign Affairs* (Nov.–Dec. 2001)

The Three Korean Wars

“Introduction to the Korean War” by Allan R. Millett, in *The Journal of Military History* (Oct. 2001), George C. Marshall Library, Lexington, Va. 24450–1600.

If it's thought of at all, the Korean War is seen in the United States chiefly as a “proxy in the cold war conflict.” In fact it was at once a war of postcolonial succession, a war of national liberation, and a struggle involving regional and global powers, Millett declares. Not least, it was a war that cost more than three million lives, a toll exceeded in the 20th century only by the two world wars.

According to Korean folklore, the country has been invaded at least 600 times in the past three millenniums. Its location between Japan and mainland Asia made it a swinging door for passing armies of Chinese, Japanese, Mongols, Manchurians, and, later, Europeans and Americans. Nevertheless, the Kingdom of Choson (“land of the morning calm”) survived from 1392 until 1910, when Korea became a Japanese colony.

The Korean War had its immediate roots in the 1920s, says the author, a military historian at Ohio State University, when rivalry sprang up between two national liberation movements. The “Christian-capitalist modernizers” owed much to the Christian missionaries who had been welcomed in the late 19th century as a counterweight to Japanese influence. After popular protests brought a million Koreans into the streets in 1919, Japan brutally suppressed the movement. That created an opening for the Marxist-Leninists. Conflict between the two groups broke into the open between 1927 and 1931, when the commu-

nists “subverted and betrayed” a popular nationalist association captained by their rivals.

The Korean War really began in 1945, Millett believes, as the two national liberation movements angled for influence in the Soviet and American occupation zones. Two leaders



U.S. troops watch shelling of enemy-held territory, February 1951

emerged: Kim Il-sung in the north and Syngman Rhee in the south. Kim Il-sung persuaded his Chinese and Soviet sponsors to support an invasion to “liberate” the south, which he launched in June 1950. But South Koreans, viewing the assault as yet another Chinese invasion, rallied to Rhee.

“The Korean War everyone knows” was thus a global, regional, and ideological struggle, but also very much a Korean affair. The world has seen similar “mixed” wars—in Algeria, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan—and it will see them again. But it must still learn to see them clearly.

The Atlantic Divide

“Estranged Partners” by Jessica T. Mathews, in *Foreign Policy* (Nov.–Dec. 2001), 1779 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Although European leaders have voiced strong support for the U.S.-led war on terrorism, the show of unity belies what has become a trou-

bled relationship. More telling, says Mathews, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, is the string of interna-

tional issues on which the United States and Europe have failed to see eye to eye. “In a solid bloc,” Mathews says, “the European Union (EU) approved, and the United States did not, the creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, the ban on antipersonnel land mines, the biodiversity treaty, and a verification mechanism for the Biological Weapons Control Treaty.”

These differences amount to more than the familiar “quarrels among friends” of years past. They stem from changes in Europe since the end of the Cold War and the unwillingness of the United States to compromise in the international arena. During the Cold War, Europe often deferred to the United States, but with its end, the focus on both sides has shifted more to economic matters and other domestic concerns. Europe’s integration into a common market, though halting, has not only increased its global economic clout, but also, says Mathews, has “allowed Europeans to acquire day-to-day experience—and hence a level of comfort—with exactly the kind of painful compromise, frustrating negotiations, and less-than-perfect outcomes” that characterize major international agreements.

The United States, by contrast, has repeatedly taken a “me-first” view on international issues. Take Washington’s reason for opposing the ICC: “that U.S. military personnel might be arbitrarily prosecuted for war crimes.” Such an argument means little to Europeans, who “also regularly send troops abroad on peacekeeping missions.” Further, it undermines the authority for international sanc-

tions that America wants to impose on countries such as Iran, Libya, and Cuba.

The United States increasingly finds “itself on the wrong side of lopsided international judgments.” The breach is widest over environmental issues, such as the regulation of genetically modified foods and the reduction of greenhouse gases. Europe is now taking the lead on brokering many global agreements, such as the 1997 Kyoto climate accords. But it is also using its economic might to increase its global influence in other areas, as evidenced by its diplomatic mission to North Korea last May and its lead role at last fall’s Durban conference on racism. The EU now boasts a gross domestic product roughly equal to that of the United States. It pays a bigger share of the United Nations’ core budget (37 percent versus the United States’ 22 percent). All of this means that Washington no longer can count on “a community of Western democracies and Third World dependents ready to fall into line behind U.S. leadership.”

For its part, concedes Mathews, “Europe needs to outgrow its knee-jerk criticism of the United States for either doing too much or too little and its addiction to feel-good international agreements without regard to their content or actual ability to solve problems.” (No European country has met its Kyoto Protocol commitments.) But “leaders on both sides of the Atlantic will have to adapt if they hope to close the widening gap that not only threatens the United States’ ability to achieve its international aims but also greatly reduces the likelihood that global challenges can be met.”

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Labor’s Pains

“The Six-Year Itch” by David Moberg, in *The Nation* (Sept. 3–10, 2001), 33 Irving Pl., New York, N.Y. 10003.

In 1995, the upstart John Sweeney seized the helm of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) with talk of a new beginning for organized labor. But the labor movement is still in trouble. A decades-long decline in union membership was briefly stemmed in 1999 but

resumed in 2000. Only about nine percent of private-sector workers—and 13.5 percent of the total work force—now carry union cards.

There have been other blows. Al Gore’s loss in the presidential election cost labor a champion, as well as a number of prolabor measures pushed by the Clinton administration. And

this past March, the 500,000-member carpenters union pulled out of the AFL-CIO.

Moberg, a senior editor of *In These Times*, isn't inclined to blame Sweeney for all these woes. Since Sweeney deposed the lackluster Lane Kirkland, organized labor has become "noticeably more effective in giving workers a voice in American life." For example, union households cast 26 percent of the votes in the 2000 elections, up from 19 percent in 1992. The big problem, according to Moberg, is "a lack of consensus within the labor movement, especially on organizing." Organized labor is not well organized. The problems begin with the AFL-CIO itself, a relatively weak federation of 64 independent unions, many with their own powerful state and local organizations.

The big challenge for labor is signing up new recruits. In 2000 it enlisted only 400,000, down by a third from the year before. Kirkland always insisted that the federation had no role in organizing and that it was up to each union to enlist new members. Sweeney disagrees. What kind of role AFL-CIO should play, however, remains unclear. Should it help particular unions? Act as labor's grand strategist? Or focus on creating a political climate friendlier to unions? The federation's strategic efforts to coordinate multiple-union campaigns in various cities have produced mixed results. Getting commitments to any kind of organizing is not easy. Sweeney is forced to cajole union presidents to follow his lead, and they themselves are often dependent on the union locals, which control half of the labor movement's resources. Many



The AFL-CIO hoped this poster would help recruit Latinos.

are cool to costly organizing campaigns. Meanwhile, some unions eagerly seek out members wherever they can find them, ignoring Sweeney's argument that each union should build membership strength (and therefore bargaining power) in its core industries.

Moberg sides with those who argue that organizing has to be linked with political activism. He thinks, for example, that the AFL-CIO didn't show sufficient enthusiasm in joining protests against the World Trade Organization. He wants to put more pressure on politicians. Some labor activists even favor seeking out opponents to run against labor-backed officeholders who fail to deliver the goods.

Unions must engage "their members as active organizers and campaigners," Moberg argues. They must project "a broad vision of social justice, democracy, economic fairness, and worker rights . . . that inspires members, allies, and the public." With "energy from below" and a grand vision, organized labor may be able "to resolve many of the internal conflicts that seem so intractable now."

Good-bye Glass Ceiling?

"The Gender Gap in Top Corporate Jobs" by Marianne Bertrand and Kevin F. Hallock, in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (Oct. 2001), 201 ILR Research Bldg., Cornell Univ., Ithaca, N.Y. 14853-3901.

There are more cracks in the corporate glass ceiling than most social commentators have noticed, and pay equity is now pretty well established in the executive suites, the authors of this statistical study of 1,500 companies conclude. That's the good news. The bad news is that women occupy less than four percent of the top

jobs in corporate America—though that percentage tripled in a recent five-year period.

In what they describe as "the first detailed description of the relative position of female top executives in the 1990s," the authors found a lot of change. Only 5.4 percent of the firms studied had a woman among their top five exec-

utives in 1992; five years later, 15 percent did. The pay gap shrank: Women earned 52 percent as much as men in 1993, but 73 percent in 1997.

Pay gap? Yes, there is one—the women in this study earned \$900,000 on average in 1997, while the men pocketed \$1.3 million. But the gap is not quite what it appears to be, according to the authors. (Both are economists, Bertrand at the Graduate School of Business at the University of Chicago, Hallock at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.) It's explained by several different factors. Most notably, women were most underrepresented in the biggest corporations, which also offer the biggest pay packages. The women in the study

were also five years younger than the men, on average, and were less likely to occupy one of the top four positions.

Accounting for those differences, the authors find that “the unexplained gender compensation gap for top executives was less than five percent.” There's no evidence of a “taste for discrimination against women,” which is still not the same as saying there's perfect equality.

The most salient questions now, say Bertrand and Hallock, are these: what distinguishes companies that do promote women to top jobs from those that don't? And why do women fare relatively well in smaller corporations while they're “virtually absent from the ‘very top’ of the U.S. corporate world”?

Re-engineering: Act II

“The Superefficient Company” by Michael Hammer, in *Harvard Business Review* (Sept. 2001), 60 Harvard Way, Boston, Mass. 02163.

The man who gave us corporate re-engineering has a new idea. Call it the mating of the giant corporations.

The aptly named Hammer, head of the Hammer and Company consulting firm, was an early advocate of breaking down the walls between units of the corporation, “getting people to work together and share information,” thereby achieving new efficiencies—and costing many people their jobs. Now, he says, the time has come to break down walls that divide corporations from one another.

One company that has shown the way is IBM. In 1998, the company determined that it cost \$233 to handle each order it received from its corporate customers, in large part because an IBM sales representative handled each transaction. So IBM set up a new computer system that let customers place orders directly and track their progress through IBM. In effect, it collapsed the wall between its sales division and its customers' procurement offices. Both sides won, says Hammer. Companies that resell IBM products to others, for example, have been able to cut their own costly inventories of IBM products by 30 percent.

The Internet and other information technologies may enable the process Hammer describes, but “the more important innovation is the change in the way people think and

work. Rather than seeing business processes as ending at the edges of their companies, [they] now see them—and manage them—as they truly are: chains of activities that are performed by different organizations.”

It's not just a matter of streamlining. For example, when General Mills realized it was spending a lot of money sending partly empty refrigerated trucks carrying Yoplait yogurt and other products to many different stops, it looked around for a partner. It found one in butter and margarine maker Land O'Lakes. A sophisticated system of coordination now allows the dairy products to ride in General Mills trucks, which thus carry more goods on shorter routes. The savings have been so large that the two companies are now planning to integrate their order-taking and billing processes too. Hammer thinks that the entire balkanized U.S. trucking fleet is ripe for such collaborative efforts: At any given moment, 20 percent of the trucks on the road are traveling empty.

“It's natural for a company to get nervous about tearing down the walls that enclose its organization. . . .” Hammer concludes. “But most companies were nervous about breaking down the walls between their internal departments and business units, too.” Workers, recalling the old saying about what happens when two elephants mate, may be nervous too.

Reclaiming the Public Self

"Individualism and Its Discontents" by Wilfred M. McClay, in *The Virginia Quarterly Review* (Summer 2001), One West Range, P.O. Box 400223, Charlottesville, Va. 22904-4223.

It may be hard for us to imagine how our ancestors could possibly have gotten along without them, but the terms *individualism* and *self* are relatively new to the lexicon of Western thought. Of course, as McClay reminds us, "a deeply rooted belief in the dignity and infinite worth of the individual person" has a long history in the West. But that traditional insistence on the importance of the individual is not what we mean today by individualism.

The contemporary notion actually began as a term of abuse, observes McClay, who holds the Sun Trust Bank Chair of Excellence in Humanities at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Joseph de Maistre employed it in the 19th century to describe the most reprehensible aspects of the French Revolution, including a doctrine of natural rights that allowed any individual to be his own moral arbiter. A few years later, Tocqueville described individualism as a new social philosophy that "disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellows and to draw apart with his family and friends." It was, in other words, a deliberate withdrawal from the responsibilities of citizenship.

The meaning of individualism has evolved markedly over time in America, McClay notes, and to give the term as it is used today a precise meaning is not easy. It may describe how the dignity and freedom of the individual are to be protected against the control of the state, or it may be an assertion that the individual is a morally autonomous creature, accountable to virtually nothing and to no one and free to develop as the impulses of the self dictate. But the pejorative connotation the word had when it was new has not taken deep root in the United States, and Americans, by and large, regard individualism as "a wholly positive thing, the key ingredient in what it means to be American." "If anything," argues McClay, "the language of individual rights, and the tendency to regard individual men and women

as self-contained, contract-making, utility-maximizing and values-creating actors, who accept only those duties and obligations they elect to accept, grew steadily more powerful and pervasive in the latter part of the 20th century."

But rights-based liberalism was not always the norm in America. Indeed, in early America "a very constrained form of communitarian Reformed Protestantism . . . best represented the dominant social and political outlook." That public philosophy, which allowed the polity a large formative role, was undone in the 19th century by such prophets of the American self and heroic individuality as Emerson and Whitman. In the 20th century, progressive reformers such as Herbert Croly, Jane Addams, and John Dewey downplayed individualism and advanced a "new corporate ideal" that defended "the public interest." But despite a rise in social consciousness during the Great Depression, the new ideal never won wide acceptance, and it was battered by the emergence of the European totalitarian regimes, "whose terrifying success in suppressing the individual for the sake of the collectivity threw all corporate ideals into doubt and disrepute, from which they have yet to recover."

McClay believes that liberals and conservatives alike have been unwilling to "accept the need for an authority, a tradition, an institutional nexus that is capable of superseding individual liberty in the name of social cohesion and the public interest." The idea of individual dignity needs to be rescued from postmodernist subjectivity and the psychology of the self and returned to the public realm. There, the core meaning of individualism—an insistence on the transcendent value of the person—and the core insight of communitarianism—"the recognition that the self is made in culture, and the richest forms of individuality can only be achieved in the sustained company of others"—could both be newly affirmed.

Over the Hill

“The Next Society” by Peter Drucker, in *The Economist* (Nov. 3, 2001), P.O. Box 58524, Boulder, Colo. 80322–8524.

“The new economy may or may not materialize, but there is no doubt that the next society will be with us shortly,” predicts Drucker, the noted author and professor of social science and management at Claremont Graduate University.

Demography is the driving force behind Drucker’s new society. The rapid aging of the populations of the United States and other developed nations means that all the promises about maintaining social security programs in their current form are written on air: “In another 25 years people will have to keep working until their mid-seventies, health permitting,” Drucker declares. Benefits will be “substantially lower” than they are today.

It’s less widely recognized that the younger population in the developed countries is rapidly shrinking. In Germany, with the world’s third largest economy, total population is expected to decline from 82 million today to between 70 and 73 million in 2030. The traditional “working age population” will shrink at an even faster rate, from 40 to 30 million. Almost half the population will be over 65. The pattern is much the same in countries such as Japan, France, Italy, and even relatively undeveloped China. Low birthrates are the primary cause. The United States will face a milder form of change. High rates of immigration during the past several decades will keep total population growing (slowly) through 2030 and mitigate the challenges of a society going gray.

Throughout the nations of the developed world, the demographic crunch is likely to

make immigration a leading political issue. It’s already beginning to reshape politics in these countries. Right-wing, anti-immigrant parties have enjoyed surprising success in Europe. Again, things are likely to be somewhat different in the United States, notes Drucker, since it has a long political and cultural history of dealing with immigration.

Out of these demographic trends will emerge “two workforces,” Drucker believes. The under-50s will follow conventional career paths. The over-50s will combine increased leisure with part-time or temporary jobs and work as contractors and consultants. This trend is already under way, especially among managers, engineers, and other “knowledge workers.” As the work force ages, corporations that hope to attract talented help will need to radically rethink the way they organize work—and workers will need to prepare for lives that won’t be consumed by full-time careers after 50.

Drucker also thinks that high-level “knowledge workers” will eventually cede pride of place to the growing corps of “knowledge technologists”—those who do some form of manual work but require formal education, such as computer technicians, nurses, and paralegals. “Knowledge technologists are likely to become the dominant social—and perhaps also political—force over the next decades.”

Drucker’s essay is full of provocative ideas. But its greatest power as a portent may lie in the author’s own story: Perhaps the world’s most highly regarded futurist, he is 91 years old.

Sushi vs. McWorld

“Supply-Side Sushi: Commodity, Market, and the Global City” by Theodore C. Bestor, in *American Anthropologist* (Mar. 2001), American Anthropological Assoc., Ste. 640, 4350 N. Fairfax Dr., Arlington, Va. 22203–1620.

On a dock early one evening in tiny West Point, Maine, several fishing crews and a mix of American and Japanese buyers gather for a silent auction. The bidders inspect 20

Atlantic bluefin tuna weighing 270 to 610 pounds each. A few decades ago, the giant fish sold (if they could be sold at all) for cat food at a penny a pound. Now, a high-



The catch of the day at Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market, the largest in the world

quality tuna can fetch more than \$30,000. The day after the Maine auction some of the fish will turn up at Tokyo's Tsukiji market, the largest fish market in the world. They will be displayed alongside tuna from Cape Anne, Massachusetts, from towns on the Spanish Costa de Luz on the Atlantic side of the Straits of Gibraltar, and from Colombia, Croatia, and other countries. That night, the Maine tuna may be sent on its way from to sushi bars in Tokyo and Palo Alto, while Spanish tuna steaks may make their way to a North Carolina supermarket.

In this unique and highly specialized worldwide market, Bestor, a Harvard University anthropologist, finds some intriguing insights into the nature of globalization.

It's a market originally made by the Japanese hunger for sushi and sashimi but since vastly expanded as the world has acquired Japan's taste for raw fish. With the Japanese economy in a long-term slump, the industry continues to thrive on American appetites. Bestor sees more than a retooling of Western palates; the taste for sushi, along with the cultural vogue for things Asian, signals the emergence of a new global map in which the Asia-Pacific zone may loom largest. Such developments give the lie to any notion that glob-

alization is a one-way process, just a synonym for Americanization. The economic-cultural traffic is two-way and even multiway.

Out, too, must go the thought that globalization always implies homogenization and standardization. In Bestor's view, global markets don't function like giant global blenders, rendering place irrelevant. Rather, they reconnect places (and local markets) in different ways. "Halifax, Boston, Pusan, and Cartagena are close neighbors in the [new] hinterland, distant—on this [tuna] scape—from Toronto or New York or Seoul or Madrid." Dealing with Japanese markets has immersed West Point fishers and their counterparts around the world in aspects of Japanese culture; to survive, they must be well versed in such things as the nuances of *kata* (ideal form) and its implications for the proper handling of tuna.

The new world market for tuna, like so many other global markets, doesn't impose "a uniform logic on each place," but gives each place "material and cultural means that . . . may be new, alien, or transformed, but [are] no less important for creating local meanings and local social conditions. It is in these interactions that one can find the local in the global."

EXCERPT

Ethnic Diversity's Downside

In 88 B.C. King Mithridates VI of Pontus invaded Roman territory in Asia Minor. He encouraged Asian debtors to kill their Roman creditors. Happy to reduce their credit card bills, the Asians massacred 80,000 Romans.

Ethnic conflict is a tragic constant of human history, still very much in the news today, from the Balkans to Central Africa to Indonesia to Nigeria. Ethnic conflict has a peaceful political dimension as well as the more publicized violent dimension. Recently, the economics literature has studied the effects of ethnic conflict on economic development.

Ethnolinguistic fractionalization in the cross-country sample adversely affects income, growth, and economic policies, which is one explanation for Africa's poor growth performance. More ethnically diverse cities and counties in the United States spend less on public goods. States with more religious-ethnic heterogeneity show lower public support for higher education and lower high school graduation rates. In Kenya, there is less funding for primary schools in more ethnically diverse districts. Ethnic diversity also predicts poor quality of government services. Linguistic or religious diversity leads to greater political instability, which in turn leads to higher government consumption. In U.S. cities, there is a link from ethnic diversity to bloated government payrolls. Ethnically polarized nations react more adversely to external terms of trade shocks. More foreign aid proceeds are diverted into corruption in more ethnically diverse places. Ethnic homogeneity raises social capital, or trust, which in turn is associated with faster growth and higher output per worker. The finding that ethnic heterogeneity lowers trust is confirmed with both U.S. data and cross-country data. In the United States, greater ethnic heterogeneity makes participation in social clubs less likely, which is consistent with the idea that there is not much association across groups. Several decades ago, scholars noted that "cultural and ethnic heterogeneity tends to hamper the early stages of nation-building and growth."

—William Easterly, a World Bank economist, in *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (July 2001)

A Verdict on School Choice

"What Research Can Tell Policymakers about School Choice" by Paul Teske and Mark Schneider, in *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* (Fall 2001), John Wiley & Sons, 605 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10158.

School choice has been around in one form or another for several decades, and while Teske and Schneider do chant the old academic mantra, "more studies are needed," they say there's enough evidence now to point toward some conclusions about the effects of choice. Most of them are pretty positive.

The two political scientists at the State University of New York at Stony Brook surveyed more than a hundred studies of school-choice systems, ranging from

1960s-vintage magnet schools to charter schools and different voucher schemes now being tried out on a limited scale in Cleveland, Milwaukee, and other cities. Their clearest finding: Parents who are able to choose where to send their kids are much more satisfied with the schools than those who lack this option. They also tend to be more involved in their kids' schooling.

How do kids perform in choice systems? Answers vary. Charter schools represent

the nation's biggest experiment with choice, but it's too soon to judge results. The best studies of voucher programs—which generally allow parents the widest array of school choices to put their kids in any school, public or private—show “modest to moderate test score improvements for some, but not all, students who participate.” In New York City, programs that allow students to choose to attend certain public schools within their local school district appear to have helped lift test scores of *all* kids, including those who did not exercise choice. Perhaps, the authors speculate, the competition for students induced all the local schools to improve. Their bottom line: “While not all of these studies conclude that choice enhances performance, it is significant to note that the best ones do, and that [we] did not find *any* study that documents significantly lower performance in choice schools.”

What about concerns that students who enter private schools under voucher plans won't absorb democratic values? Studies show that “students in private schools, and

particularly students in Catholic schools, are either more tolerant of others and know more American civic values than others, or are statistically equal to public school students.”

The “most important question” about school choice is “stratification,” note Teske and Schneider. There's not much question that white, better-educated, and more affluent parents are better informed about school choices than other parents and are more likely to take advantage of chances to improve their child's schooling. Some systems seem to promote more racial and economic separation than others: Magnet schools perform poorly in this respect, while charter schools tend to better reflect the makeup of the general population. The authors say aggressive outreach efforts aimed at poor and minority families might mitigate the problem. They also wonder if the stratification seen in some school choice systems is significantly worse than what occurs in more conventional systems. To answer such questions, of course, more studies are needed.

PRESS & MEDIA

Covering the War

A Survey of Recent Articles

It's too early for anyone to assess the news media's coverage of the war on terrorism—that will likely take as long as the assessment of the conduct of the war itself. Professional criticism of print and TV coverage in the war's early days has been spotty. But the judgment from one quarter has been swift and severe: A November 16 Gallup poll (www.gallup.com) shows that only 43 percent of the public approves of the news media's handling of the war on terrorism. No other institution—including the Postal Service—had less than a 60 percent approval rating in the poll.

What have reporters and editors done to deserve such obloquy? They certainly haven't rocked the boat, according to John R. MacArthur, publisher of *Harper's* and author of *Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the Gulf War* (1992). Writing in the *Nation* (Nov. 19, 2001), he divides his scorn between the

Bush administration, which made it “next to impossible” for reporters to get near the combat in Afghanistan, and the “supine” press. “Evidently afflicted with a guilt complex after Vietnam, the owners of the major newspapers and networks long ago ceased to protest Pentagon manipulation, and now they feel justified by simple-minded polls that show reflexive support for ‘military security.’”

Almost from the day hijacked jets crashed into the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, most discussion of press coverage has focused on what it means for American reporters to be objective in such a conflict. The debate has had a series of defining moments: a teary Dan Rather's declaration that he stood ready to “line up” behind the commander in chief; Tom Brokaw's publicized decision not to wear an American flag lapel pin on TV; the offhand statement by ABC News president David

Westin that he had “no opinion” on whether the Pentagon was a legitimate military target; and the memo from CNN chair Walter Isaacson telling reporters to balance images of U.S. attacks in Afghanistan with reminders of the assaults that provoked them.

Pointing to the Westin statement, Dorothy Rabinowitz writes in the *Wall Street Journal* (Nov. 6, 2001) that the fear of violating the neutrality principle is one of the “terrors” that dominate today’s newspeople; their World War II predecessors were capable of questioning the official line, but “the only terror” they felt was that the war effort might fail.

In *U.S. News and World Report* (Nov. 19, 2001), Rabinowitz’s fellow conservative columnist John Leo takes a different tack, scolding the news media for being “overly submissive,” notably in its “timid” response” to Washington’s request that the TV news networks edit any statements by Osama bin Laden. People in the news media “know they will lose audience if they seem to resist pressure

from Washington or deal neutrally with terrorists,” Leo notes. And war does impose special responsibilities. “But the news business has to find a way to say clearly that it expresses its patriotism by protecting the public’s right to know what’s going on.”

In an article written before September 11, former ABC News correspondent C. Robert Zelnick surveys the history of military-press relations since World War II. “Documented incidents of reporting that actually harmed the United States military or security interests are nonexistent,” he writes in the *Responsive Community* (Winter 2001–02), “although there are a handful of instances where irresponsible press conduct could have produced serious harm.” Defense officials who try to keep the press on a “short leash” are simply aiming to control the “editorial slant of what is reported.”

During the 1991 Gulf War, the Pentagon sharply restricted press access to the battle-

EXCERPT

Reporter Behind the Veil

Hoda el-Salem is a young reporter with a good idea: She wants to write about what the teenage boys in her city do with their idle time after school. She knows it’s a big problem. She sees them herself, hanging out in parking lots, getting into trouble. And she knows the government is worried. Officials have proposed some new after-school recreation centers.

But Mrs. Hoda (as Saudis would address her) can’t drive over to the mall parking lot to interview the young men loitering there. She can’t talk with a kid at a fast-food joint, or wait outside his school. She can’t even call her government source on the telephone to ask about the recreation centers.

When Hoda goes outside her house in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, she has to put on a long, thick black cloak that covers every inch of her body. Then she puts on a black veil that covers all of her hair, and another black veil that covers all of her face. She can’t drive. She can’t talk to a man other than her husband or brothers, usually not even by phone.

She could fax a man some questions. But to do that, she has to get the fax approved by her editor. And that involves another fax, because the editor sits on the other side of a wall at their Arabic-language newspaper, Al-Riyadh. Hoda has never met her editor face to face, because he is a man and he works on the men’s side of the building.

Hoda works on the ladies’ side, in a small set of rooms sealed off from the rest of the building. To get there, she bypasses the front entrance of the modern skyscraper and instead heads around back, to a small, unmarked door near the loading dock, with a security camera above.

—Sally Buzbee, an Associated Press reporter, in the *Columbia Journalism Review* (Sept.–Oct. 2001)

field, but it subsequently agreed with media representatives to operating principles that give Zelnick “some hope” for better access. In late November, a press contingent joined U.S. marines who established a base near Kandahar in Afghanistan but it operated under very tight restrictions, according to the *Washington Post* (Dec. 7, 2001). Meanwhile, correspondents operating independently in Afghanistan proceeded cautiously after eight journalists were killed by local forces. And the press increasingly questioned the government’s policies, especially on the home front.

In the *Columbia Journalism Review* (Nov.–Dec. 2001), lawyer and civil liberties advocate Floyd Abrams writes, “I am more concerned that we will fail to take terrorism seriously enough than that we will fail to protect our liberties diligently enough.” But as Washington inevitably encroaches on the privacy of citizens, press scrutiny becomes ever more important. “Give no ground on First Amendment issues,” he urges.

There’s also been a certain amount of introspection and self-criticism among jour-

nalists. *New York Times* staff photographer Vincent Laforet warned of media sensationalism in an October 25 note from Pakistan on the *Sports Shooter* Web site (www.manginphotography.com): “Don’t trust anything you see on TV and be [leery] of some of the things you read. . . . We covered a pro-Taliban demonstration last week attended by maybe 5,000 protesters. CNN stated there were 50,000. The BBC estimated 40,000. We’re continually hearing of ‘violent clashes with police’ when the TV stations report on non-violent demonstrations we covered ourselves.”

In *American Journalism Review* (Nov. 2001), former network news correspondent Deborah Potter writes that while the TV networks’ “coverage of the attacks and the recovery efforts was generally laudable, the networks’ efforts to explain the ‘why’ and the ‘what next’ seemed feeble by comparison.” Severe cutbacks in foreign coverage since 1989 have left the networks without enough infrastructure and experienced foreign correspondents to explain the wider world to American TV audiences, she says.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Philosophers vs. Philosophes

“The Idea of Compassion: The British vs. the French Enlightenment” by Gertrude Himmelfarb, in *The Public Interest* (Fall 2001), 1112 16th St., N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

We’re too quick to associate the 18th-century Enlightenment with the French philosophes. There was a British Enlightenment as well, and for Himmelfarb, professor emeritus of history at the Graduate School of the City University of New York and the author, most recently, of *One Nation, Two Cultures* (1999), it was the more admirable of the two.

The third Earl of Shaftesbury was the father of the British Enlightenment. In 1711, he introduced the concepts that would be key to British philosophical and moral discourse for the rest of the century, including “social virtues,” “natural affections,” “moral sense,” “moral sentiments,” “benevolence,” “sympathy,” and “compassion.” That last concept played a far larger part than either self-interest or reason in the British Enlightenment. Indeed, it was the

unique achievement of Enlightenment British-style to transform the religious virtue of compassion into a secular virtue. Unlike the French philosophes, British moral philosophers such as Adam Smith thought reason secondary to social virtues of the sort Shaftesbury proposed, and they invoked not reason but an innate moral sense as the basis for those virtues. Smith went so far as to make the idea of compassion the central principle of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*: “How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature which interest him in the fortune of others and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.”

Himmelfarb argues that the religious revival begun in England in 1738 by John

and Charles Wesley—Methodism—was also part of the Enlightenment. The Methodists socialized religion and inculcated a gospel of good works, as reflected, for example, in their efforts to educate the poor. Already tending to the same worthy ends, both moral philosophy and religion were reinforced by the new political economy of natural liberty. For Adam Smith, “self-interest was a moral principle conducive to the general interest,” and the general interest “was simply the totality of interests of all the members of society, including the working classes.”

In sum, the moral philosophy of compassion, the Wesleyan gospel of good works, and the new political economy were responsible for creating an England of schools, hospitals, almshouses, and charitable societies. The social ethic mixed the secular and the religious, the private and the public, and helped England survive an economic revolution without suffering the political revolutions that roiled the Continent.

The French Enlightenment was fundamentally different. “Where the British idea of compassion,” Himmelfarb observes, “lent itself to a variety of practical meliorative policies to relieve social problems, the French appeal to reason could be satisfied with nothing less than the ‘regeneration’ of man.” The philosophes tended to elevate “the whole of mankind” over the individual, the species over one’s neigh-

bor. They disdained the masses—the rabble—who “could not be educated because they could not be enlightened; and they could not be enlightened because they were incapable of the kind of reason that the *philosophes* took to be the essence of enlightenment.”

Attitudes of the French Enlightenment colored France’s subsequent revolution, and, Himmelfarb notes, the revolutionary Republic of Virtue “celebrated not the virtue of compassion but that of reason—an abstract elevated reason that denigrated the practical reason of ordinary people.”

The philosophes and the revolutionaries believed in an ideal of the perfectibility of man and wanted to remake the human race. The British wanted to make life better for individual human beings. British society, says Himmelfarb, “respected the liberty of human beings to be different, and at the same time the equality of human beings in their essential nature. The philosophes, by contrast, committed to the principle of reason, a reason not accessible to all people, had no rationale for a liberal society, let alone a democratic one.” The spirit of the French Enlightenment lives on in communism and in the social engineering of the welfare state, whereas notions at the heart of the British Enlightenment—compassion, evangelicalism, natural liberty that is both moral and economic—in recent years have helped to redefine the social ethic in America.

A Christian America Still?

“The ‘Secularization’ Question and the United States in the 20th Century” by David A. Hollinger, in *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* (Mar. 2001), The Divinity School, Duke Univ., P.O. Box 90975, Durham, N.C. 27708-0975.

There are two basic points of view about secularization in the United States, observes Hollinger, a historian at the University of California, Berkeley. According to the first, which is international and comparative, secularization made little headway in 20th-century America. The country remains “the most Christian of the major industrialized nations of the North Atlantic West.” The second point of view is national and singular, and quite different from the first. It takes Christian cultural hege-

mony for the norm and argues that America drifted far from that norm in the course of the 20th century.

Of course, America is more secular than it was a century ago, and yet, Hollinger argues, Christianity continues to be a major force in the culture. (In the presidential campaign of 2000, voters got to choose between two major-party candidates who made their Christianity a part of their appeal.) A too narrow embrace of one or the other point of view can have, in

Hollinger's words, "striking intellectual and professional consequences." Thus, specialists in American religious history who adopt a master narrative of Christian decline in a national tradition "shoot themselves in the professional foot" and isolate themselves from an American historiography to which they could contribute more substantially if they acknowledged the continuing legacy, and indeed the vitality, of Christianity.

Hollinger expresses four "modest hopes" about the approach such scholars will take to the issue of secularization. The first is that they will grapple with the question of why secular outlooks made so little headway in the United States in the 20th century by comparison with what occurred elsewhere in the Western industrialized world. His second hope is that historians will sharpen the discussion of secularization by using instead, in some specific contexts, the term "de-Christianization," which is a more accurate way of representing what has occurred. After all, the secularization to which church historians refer is most often "the decline in authority of one specific cultural

program—that of Christianity."

Hollinger's third hope is that studies of de-Christianization will confront directly the implications of the process for those who are not Christian to begin with, especially American Jews. Jews were victims, for example, of American higher education's Christian hegemony, and they benefited by de-Christianization. That presents "an interpretive challenge," notes Hollinger, for those church historians who focus primarily on the downside of de-Christianization.

Finally, Hollinger hopes that "we can attend more directly to the cognitive superiority of science than some of the scholars who have the most to say about de-Christianization have proved willing to do." Science, in his view, is not on "an equal epistemic footing with other ways of looking at the world, all of which are then encouraged to respect each other under the ordinance of a genial pluralism." Time will tell whether the response to Hollinger's "modest hopes," especially among the professional historians to whom they are addressed, will be genial at all.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Regulating 'Frankenfoods'

"More than a Food Fight" by Julia A. Moore, and "European Responses to Biotechnology: Research, Regulation, and Dialogue" by Patrice Laget and Mark Cantley, in *Issues in Science and Technology* (Summer 2001), The Univ. of Texas at Dallas, P.O. Box 830688, Mail Station J030, Richardson, Tex. 75083-0688.

Many Americans aren't wild about genetically modified foods, but it's in Europe that "Frankenfoods" are encountering the greatest resistance from consumers and, increasingly, governments. German foreign minister (and Green Party leader) Joschka Fischer said recently that "Europeans do not want genetically modified food—period. It does not matter what research shows; they just do not want it."

The European Union imposed a de facto moratorium on the approval of new genetically modified products in 1999, and while regulations have been proposed that would allow the lifting of the ban, five of the EU's 15 member countries oppose them. Moreover, the regulations include a still undefined "precautionary principle" that could set the bar very high—and that could be exploited as a protectionist tool. For the United States, the stakes are large:

About one-third of its \$46 billion in food exports, and a growing proportion of all American crops (more than 50 percent of soybeans, for example) are grown from genetically modified seed.

Moore, a public policy scholar at the Wilson Center, contends that much of Europe's resistance can be traced to a decline of public confidence in science growing out of "events that have no direct link to genetic engineering." The British government, for example, spent many years assuring Britons that bovine spongiform encephalopathy, better known as mad cow disease, posed no risk to humans. But in 1996, the government did an abrupt about-face. Seventy people have died from a form of the disease; as many as half a million more could die during the next 30 years. Infected cattle have since been discovered in other

European countries. And that's not all. Scandals erupted in France over inadequate effort to protect blood supplies from the AIDS virus and in Belgium over tainted animal feed.

Restoring confidence in science will require a new approach by government, science, and industry, says Moore. Americans, she thinks, will have to embrace the controversial precautionary principle. She also favors much heavier government spending for independent scientific research on food safety and environmental matters. Costs are high. It could take two to three million dollars just to trace the potential impact of one kind of genetically modified corn on one species of butterfly. Greater "transparency" is also needed. Moore notes with approval that Britain's new independent Food Standards Agency is to make all its technical risk assessments and recommendations available to the public.

Scientists generally, she says, must step out of their laboratories and speak to the public more often.

Laget and Cantley, both EU science advisers, take a somewhat different view. Europe is far from being antiscience, they say; its investments in biotechnology research are as great as America's. But Europeans take a different view of food regulation. While American regulation "focuses primarily on the end product," European regulation begins at the farm. The two scientists add that it's no surprise that European consumers aren't eager to buy America's genetically engineered foods, which have "been modified in ways beneficial to the agrichemical companies, the seed suppliers, or the farmers, but not to the consumer." Still, they express confidence in an eventual transatlantic convergence of policies on genetically modified foods.

EXCERPT

The Technology of Memory

It is a paradox that innovation itself in culture almost invariably seems to begin with the recovery of memory. The Renaissance at the dawn of the modern era was a rebirth of classical antiquity; 19th-century romanticism went back to the Middle Ages; and 20th-century artistic modernism began when Stravinsky took music and dance back to the pagan rites of spring and when Kandinsky and Malevich took painting back to the simple lines and colors of early Eastern Christian iconography. Northrop Frye said that our only real crystal ball is a rearview mirror, and in our global era it needs to be as wide-angled as possible. Culture is the DNA that shapes development, and human language is the basic vehicle through which memory is communicated and people are bonded together with a sense of identity. The founder of Hasidic Judaism said that "exile is caused by forgetfulness, and the beginning of redemption is memory."

Yet memory and its vehicle of language are both fading even as the hubris of human intellect probes ever more deeply into both cosmic and microcosmic space. There were about 6,000 languages spoken on this planet at the beginning of the 20th century; there are probably only 600 still widely spoken at the beginning of the 21st century. Together with biodiversity, cultural and linguistic diversity are fading fast. The records are being wiped out, not just of oral but also of written traditions that remain neglected, unread, and in many cases physically disintegrating. Almost the entire manuscript materials of two countries possessing the largest supply of two-dimensional written records in the world, India and Russia, are deeply endangered species with no serious programs or prospects for preservation. The multiple languages, scripts, and ways of recording written words across the vast Indonesian archipelago are being obliterated. Throughout the world virtually all books and paper-based records that have been produced since the introduction of high-acid paper 150 years ago are disintegrating at an accelerating rate and will not last another century—as are films, photographs, television tapes, and recorded sound.

—James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress, in *The Sewanee Review* (Spring 2001)

The Spiritual Side of Medicine

“Science, Faith, and Alternative Medicine” by Ronald W. Dworkin, in *Policy Review* (Aug. & Sept. 2001), 1030 15th St., N.W., 11th fl., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Skeptics can't understand the allure of alternative medicine. Why would patients flock to therapies unproven by science? Yet Americans spent more than \$21 billion on alternative medicine in 1997, and last year spent more money for alternative therapies than they spent out-of-pocket in the entire mainstream medical system. Dworkin, a physician and a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, perceives a logical basis for the migration: “Patients are fleeing the medical profession because doctors concentrate on rational knowledge at the expense of life's mysteries,” he writes. “Organized religion concentrates exclusively on the unknown, and therefore seems to know nothing. In alternative medicine, people have discovered a compromise.”

In the past, when people suffered “the two great misfortunes in life . . . illness and gloom,” doctors, and also clergymen, offered sympathy, counsel, and consolation. Today, urged on by insurance companies, physicians put their patients into diagnostic categories and rush them through, rather than hear out each individual's complaints. Few doctors have the time or patience for such niceties today.

Alternative therapies—including acupuncture, herb therapy, biofeedback, magnet therapy, and chiropractic—attract patients disaffected by conventional medicine as well as those dissatisfied by religion's solutions. In Dworkin's view, practitioners of alternative therapy appeal to patients because they synthesize the most attractive aspects of medical science and religion. “Because alternative medicine is not confined by the limits of rational or testable knowledge, its powers of explanation are enormous, and patients leave . . . thinking that their troubles have real spiritual significance.”

Many of these alternative therapies may depend upon the placebo effect, a phenomenon long recognized among medical professionals. Physicians in the past sometimes dis-

persed placebos, such as sugar pills, for “three purposes: 1) to make a patient feel better when there [was] no illness, 2) to make a patient feel better (e.g., [feel] less pain) in spite of ongoing illness, and 3) to make a patient feel better by instilling hope when medical science deem[ed] a patient beyond hope.” Doctors today are uncomfortable with this kind of deception, despite the fact, says Dworkin, that “conventional medical therapy has little effect on outcome in the vast majority of cases seen by doctors; patients will either recover on their own or stay with their disease.”

Facing diagnoses of chronic or terminal conditions, or experiencing ineffective treatments from doctors, patients seek out alternative therapies, often combining these with the medical treatment they receive from their orig-



Alternative treatments such as crystal therapy usually include an important additional medicine: a sympathetic ear.

inal doctors. Instead of receiving cold, hard truths—or the indifference of assembly-line medicine—patients are told by their alternative practitioners that their condition is unique to them, and that the power to heal may exist inside their own bodies. The “boundless possibilities that suddenly appear on the horizon raise the spirits of these patients in the present. This is not a bad thing.”

The danger, Dworkin cautions, lies in how little oversight the alternative field receives. He favors regulation of herbal medications by the Food and Drug Administration to ensure their purity. Otherwise, he leans toward a hands-off policy: Therapies that border on the religious,

such as transcendental meditation, should be neither supported nor regulated by government. Whatever policies emerge, says Dworkin,

should be crafted “with a degree of sympathy toward those who have found something of value in alternative medicine.”

ARTS & LETTERS

The Prophet of Scientific Morality

“Editor’s Column” by Walter A. McDougall, in *Orbis* (Summer 2001), Foreign Policy Research Inst., 1528 Walnut St., Ste. 610, Philadelphia, Pa. 19102-3684.

Mention Jules Verne (1828–1905), and most people think of the visionary novelist who, among other things, foretold the space age, inspiring such rocket scientists as Robert Goddard and Wernher von Braun, and penned books, such as *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873) and *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* (1870), that spawned Hollywood hits. But the man himself, says McDougall, a historian at the University of Pennsylvania and the editor of *Orbis*, is a jumble of contradictions. Where one would expect to find “a rationalist and promoter of science,” one discovers a romantic. Instead of a bohemian like his contemporaries Victor Hugo and Émile Zola, “one finds a paragon of respectability.” And though Verne inhabits the public consciousness as “an apostle of progress,” McDougall reminds us that he “ended his life issuing jeremiads about the dangers of another Dark Age.”

Born in Nantes, the son of a lawyer who expected Jules to follow him into the legal profession, Verne at an early age acted upon the passions that were to rule his life: “freedom, music, and the sea.” At the age of 11, he stowed away on a ship bound for the West Indies; discovered and sent home, he promised his mother that “from now on, I will travel only in my dreams.” Verne obtained his law license in 1848 in Paris, but that same year Parisian mobs

overthrew the monarchy, and Verne embraced the liberal revolution. He walked away from law, and announced his intention in 1852 to become a writer. It took him a while to realize his ambition. He first married and became a stockbroker, but devoured books on science as he struggled to make his way.

Then, in 1862, a revelation: “It struck me one day that perhaps I might utilize my scientific education to blend together science and romance into a work . . . that might appeal to the public taste.” The result was *Five Weeks in a Balloon*, which launched his writing career. Soon to come were *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864) and the visionary *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865). Verne would publish 64 novels

and 21 short stories, becoming the fourth-most-translated author in history (behind Joseph Stalin, V. I. Lenin, and the detective writer Georges Simenon).

To McDougall, the message of such novels as *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* and *The Mysterious Island* (1875) is “a virtual catechism. Science permits human beings to locate themselves in the cosmos, survive perils, unlock Nature’s secrets, serve their fellow man, and finally become ‘more than a man.’” Verne’s scientist-heroes, such as Captain Nemo, are “godlike” creatures. It all seems to suggest a “positivistic stance: science as a sec-



An illustration from one of Jules Verne's best known works, *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*

ular religion.” But McDougall says that Verne “frankly *romanticized* science and technology as fairy lands liberating his middle-class readers (and himself) from the tedium of modern urban life.”

What accounts for the tone of pessimism that crept into Verne’s work in his later years? Partly, thinks McDougall, it was due to personal misfortune: His wife became an invalid, and his only son, Michel, became a rake. By 1890, Verne was suffering from facial neuralgia, and cataracts destroyed his eyesight in 1900. But experiences also affected his ideas. His

early enchantment with America, which suffuses *Around the World in Eighty Days*, gradually gave way to concern about the technological colossus, and he witnessed firsthand the evils science can bring when Krupp-made cannon smashed Paris in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War. Scientists, once the heroes of his fictions, were now portrayed as evil geniuses. McDougall believes that Verne “saw the dangers of planned science, whether in the hands of governments or corporations,” but he did not fault science; rather, “what he lost was his faith in mankind.”

Naughty but Nice

“Pornographic Art” by Matthew Kieran, in *Philosophy and Literature* (Apr. 2001), The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, Journals Division, 2715 N. Charles St., Baltimore, Md. 21218-4363.

There can be no such thing as pornographic art. That’s the received view, as reported, but not shared, by Kieran, a lecturer in the School of Philosophy at the University of Leeds, who finds none of the supporting arguments convincing.

The first argument is definitional: As a matter of principle, pornography cannot have artistic value. Pornography’s sole aim is sexual arousal. Other kinds of erotic representations, by contrast, have additional aims, including artistic ones.

But why, Kieran asks, should we grant this narrow characterization of pornography? Most representational forms—pictures, novels, films—have little artistic merit, but we do not take this lack as evidence that the respective forms are *incapable* of having artistic merit. Might it not be that the stigma attached to pornography has kept genuine artists from attempting to create it? Besides, it’s far from obvious to Kieran “that there are no artistically valuable pornographic representations.” The onus, he believes, is on others to prove that such things as Nicholson Baker’s novel *Vox*, Georges Bataille’s *Story of the Eye*, Egon Schiele’s portraits, and some of Picasso’s late work are without artistic merit.

A second line of argument against the possibility of pornographic art holds that the very purpose of pornography—sexual arousal—causes pornographic representations to be “artistically indifferent”: “the greater the explicit concentration on the physiological, biological,

and more generally animalistic aspects of sexual behavior,” the more limited the possibilities of representation “in any complex and interesting way.”

Kieran replies that many choices can be made about how the explicitness is to be “treated and conveyed.” Nor is the “inherently formulaic” nature of pornography an automatic argument against artistic expressiveness. “Even where a pornographic representation is formulaic,” he insists, it may realize aspects of originality, as do, for example, many of Rodin’s pornographic nude drawings: “The specifically artistically innovative developments in Rodin’s line drawing enabled him to characterize the lines of action, sexual embraces, and actions in a more athletic, impulsive, vigorous manner which enhances the evocation of sexual arousal.”

Yet another line of argument holds that the aesthetic aspect of a work cannot be appreciated so long as our interest in the work is pornographic. “A pornographic interest,” says Kieran, “is held to be one which involves the objectification of a person’s body, in the service of arousal, by denying or precluding their first-person perspective.”

Kieran counters that many artistic works solicit an interest that precludes the first-person perspective of the represented subject. Among the examples he proposes are Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* and the literature of courtly love, in which the object of desire is idealized as an object to be possessed, and visual art by

Correggio, Rubens, the Pre-Raphaelites, Rodin, Courbet, and Renoir. All of these we appreciate as art. Kieran rejects as well the notion that we cannot take a personal interest in the subject in whom we take a pornographic interest: "In order for sensuous thoughts and arousal to arise, far from being uninterested, we must usually be interested in the subject in some way."

So what's a contemporary example of pornographic art? Nicholson Baker's novel of phone sex, *Vox* (1992), measures up nicely, Kieran says: "The arousal both portrayed and solicited from the reader is symbiotically enhanced by the literary features of the work." The book is a kind of triumphant, unholy grail for Kieran—"a novel which aims to be and is only appreciable as pornographic art."

Traces of Trouble

"Doubting Thomas" by Richard B. Woodward, in *Lingua Franca: The Review of Academic Life* (Oct. 2001), Academic Partners LLC, 135 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

The celebrated American painter Thomas Eakins (1844–1916) had troubles enough, especially of a sexual sort, while he was alive. Now, 85 years after his death, he's in hot water again, but for an entirely different reason. Woodward, an editor at large at *Double Take* magazine, writes that Eakins has been caught in what "even he himself seems to have regarded as a scandalous act." What's worse, "art historians have scientific evidence of guilty behavior."

"For many years," reports Woodward, "the artist celebrated by at least one contemporary critic as 'the greatest draughtsman in America,' and now generally ranked among the towering artists of his age, painted some of his most celebrated canvases from photographs." It's not that the photographs were the raw material by which Eakins was inspired to do hand-drawn work. Rather, the scientific evidence shows that, for some 14 years, from 1872 to 1886, the artist "projected glass-plate negatives or positives onto canvases and paper, using those projected images to dictate the outlines and the details of his painted compositions. . . . He used photographs as stencils. He traced." And because he never acknowledged doing so, it's assumed that Eakins wished to conceal the practice and cover his tracks.

How was the tracing discovered? While preparing an Eakins retrospective for the Philadelphia Museum of Art this past fall, conservators Mark Tucker and Nica Gutman began to clean Eakins's *Shad Fishing at Gloucester on the Delaware River* (1881). They noticed, through the use of infrared reflectography (IRR), penciled outlines of figures and portions of the landscape. "IRR," Woodward

explains, "uses television cameras that are sensitive to near-infrared radiation to detect what's hidden beneath the surface of things. When hooked up to optical scanners . . . IRR can see through layers of pigment and reflect back traces of freehand markings or ruled grids under the surface of the picture." The markings on the Eakins canvas were continuous. That is to say, the artist sketched entire contours without lifting the pencil from the canvas. That prompted the conservators to look at other paintings and watercolors, and led them to conclude that Eakins employed "some kind of projection technique"—a magic lantern, which projects glass transparencies, or a catoptric lamp, which projects photographic prints, or perhaps both. Woodward describes the "painstaking" process the conservators assume Eakins followed: "He projected, traced, painted, checked the results against the projected image, marked the outlines of a hand or an arm with a stylus, painted, checked, and so on across the canvas, building up the surface, always being sure in the end to cover the stylus marks."

Should any of this matter? Art historians will debate whether the findings alter Eakins's high reputation. For some, Woodward notes, the discovery of his use of technology will be of no great consequence; he will seem to have anticipated conceptual art or photorealism, long before their time. But Marc Simpson, an art historian at Williams College, admits to dismay: "We want to believe that a painter like Eakins creates his realistic illusions with skill, hard work, or natural genius, not with any kind of technological trickery." The paintings, of course, remain what they have always been.

Losing Its Grip

“Cracks in the Wall: China’s Eroding Coercive State” by Murray Scot Tanner, in *Current History* (Sept. 2001), 4225 Main St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19127.

Ever since the 1989 protests in Tiananmen Square, China’s rulers have worked hard to suppress dissent, and with the possible exception of the Falun Gong, these efforts have largely succeeded. But Tanner, a professor of Chinese and East Asian politics at Western Michigan University, sees “signs of erosion” in China’s internal security strategy. Beijing’s control over Chinese society is slipping, “perhaps irreversibly.”

“In contrast to the widespread Western image of a highly centralized KGB-style ‘police state,’” Tanner says, China’s security system “is far more decentralized and dependent on active social support than most Westerners suppose.” Decentralization leaves the system open to trouble: Security officers are “overwhelmingly recruited locally and have strong social and economic links to their local societies.” They are often torn between allegiances to family and friends on the one hand, and loyalty to the state on the other.

The security system, Tanner argues, also suffers from an overreliance on the volunteer work of nonprofessional citizen security activists. China’s surprisingly low ratio of professional police to citizens (1.4 million public security officers police 1.3 billion citizens) and the enormous size of the country make the involvement of neighborhood, village, and workplace citizen security committees “absolutely indispensable.” But the dedication of these volunteer security activists is likely to be undermined by the massive social and economic changes China is undergoing. Newfound social mobility, massive layoffs, a rise in social inequality, heavy tax burdens, and rising crime rates all

make it more difficult to secure the loyalty of volunteer activists.

These same forces are also causing a “dramatic increase in unrest.” One analyst counted 100,000 “large-scale protests involving hundreds of people” between 1997 and 2000. Even the Communist Party has admitted that protests are growing in number, size, and effectiveness. Protesters are also resorting to more violent methods: Attacks on party and government buildings and kidnappings of law enforcement officials and citizen security activists are on the rise.

The response by China’s security forces has been “inept,” says Tanner. The police and army “have not received sufficient training or equipment to contain crowds with minimal violence,” and have been known to fire on unarmed crowds. Their blunders have reportedly turned peaceful demonstrations into riots and often have “heightened, rather than defused, social tensions.” The system, moreover, is corrupt: Decentralization has encouraged local officials “to treat police as their private enforcement brigades.”

Key aspects of the nation’s security system have been effective, however: “Twelve years after Tiananmen, China still has no nationwide or even regional independent political parties, labor unions, or intellectual, student, or peasant organizations that could train and raise a credible non-party ‘counterelite.’” Yet as the system that holds these democratic forces in check crumbles, Tanner notes, China’s critics must beware: Without some kind of effective law enforcement, the prospects for a transition to a stable democratic government are dimmed.

Genocide in the Outback?

“The Fabrication of Aboriginal History” by Keith Windschuttle, in *The New Criterion* (Sept. 2001), 850 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019.

When Kathy Freeman, an Australian Aboriginal sprinter, was chosen to carry the Olympic torch during the opening cere-

monies of the 2000 Sydney Olympics, it was widely viewed as a sign that Australians were finally coming to terms with a sordid

colonial past. That past includes a genocidal campaign against Australia's Aborigines, many critics say. In an article widely published during the Olympics, Yale University historian Ben Kiernan wrote of "ethnic cleansing" and "hundreds of massacres," tallying as many as 20,000 Aborigines killed during the British colonization of Australia between 1788 and 1901.

Windschuttle, an Australian historian and author of *The Killing of History* (1997), questions these charges. He argues that "much of the evidence of the claims about massacres, terrorism, and genocide turns out to be highly suspect." While there was armed conflict on the frontier, he believes that the decimation of the Aboriginal population was caused mostly by smallpox, influenza, and other diseases.



Detail from Terre de Diemen, Habitations, an early 19th-century depiction of Australian Aboriginal life.

Kiernan and many other scholars base their estimates of Aboriginal deaths on historian Henry Reynolds's *The Other Side of the Frontier* (1981). But Windschuttle found that Reynolds relied heavily on one of his own works, a 1978 monograph titled *Race Relations in North Queensland*, which "is not about Aboriginal deaths at all. It is a tally of the number of whites killed by Aborigines. Nowhere does it mention 10,000 Aboriginal dead."

Windschuttle also took a hard look at one of the most notorious incidents, the alleged 1804 massacre of some 50 Aboriginal men, women, and children at Hobart in Tasmania. The earliest account, written by

the British officers at Hobart, reports that a group of 200 Aborigines had surrounded a settler couple, threatening them with spears. Soldiers from a nearby camp came to their defense, killing three Aborigines. It was not until the government convened an inquiry 26 years later that a former convict testified that "he thought '40 to 50' blacks had been killed [at Hobart], even though he acknowledged he had not been at the scene at the time." Yet this figure now appears in many history texts as fact.

In Australia, Windschuttle has been compared to Holocaust denier David Irving. His critics argue that white settlers on the Australian frontier "could kill blacks with impunity," says Windschuttle. They say that settlers and the police "either turned a blind eye or were complicit in massacres themselves. Hence widespread killings would have occurred without leaving any trace in the historical evidence." Historian Bain Attwood of Australia's Monash University wrote that "very little historical interpretation is verifiable in any strict sense" and that historians arrive at the truth on the basis of a "scholarly consensus." But Windschuttle counters that if concrete evidence does not exist, "then the consensus can owe nothing to scholarship."

Australian prime minister John Howard has "faced enormous public pressure to issue a formal apology over the issue and thus open the way to large-scale claims for compensation." Some advocates call for establishment of an Aboriginal state, where native peoples could revive their traditional culture. They blame the woes of today's outback Aboriginal communities—"chronic alcoholism, petrol sniffing, heroin addiction, domestic violence, unemployment, and appalling health and education standards"—on the destruction of the Aborigines' culture. But the great majority of the estimated 386,000 Aborigines in Australia today, writes Windschuttle, "show little inclination to fulfill [this] romantic agenda."

CURRENT BOOKS

Reviews of new and noteworthy nonfiction

The Poet's Voice

POETRY SPEAKS:

*Hear Great Poets Read Their Work
from Tennyson to Plath.*

Edited by Elise Paschen and Rebekah Presson Mosby;
Dominique Raccah, series editor.

Narrated by Charles Osgood. Sourcebooks.
336 pp. plus 3 CDs. \$49.95

Reviewed by Honor Moore

Hearing a poem read aloud by its author is an utterly different experience from reading the poem. A poem encountered on the page enters the mind, and the mind must puzzle it out. "Getting" it may require repeated visits, as if its meaning were stubbornly withheld. By contrast, when the poet is a great performer, hearing a poem requires no such effort—the living voice transports us to the dimension where the poem is composed, where all its elements are unified, where the poet's intention is understood.

In the last 20 years or so, great poetry readings have come to form a kind of canon, one that includes such memorable readers as Stanley Kunitz, Carolyn Forché, Frank Bidart, Eileen Myles, and Lucille Clifton. But what do we know of the great readers of the past? *Poetry Speaks*, with narration by the newscaster Charles Osgood, gives us recordings of 42 British and American poets, beginning with Alfred, Lord Tennyson, and ending with Sylvia Plath. Three CDs are tucked into a robust, illustrated volume—edited by Elise Paschen, a poet and former director of the Poetry Society of America, and Rebekah Mosby of National Public Radio—which accords each poet a short biography, a generous selection of the poems (including those read aloud), and an introductory essay by a contemporary poet.

Though the recordings have long been accessible to the specialist, this is the first collection to make them widely available, and the first to offer such abundant contextual material.

It's also the first to capitalize on the recent heightened American interest in poetry. When Dylan Thomas toured the United States in the early 1950s, he returned the sensuality of speech to the performance of poetry, unseating the prevailing overly literal style of reading just as the culture was awakening from its postwar torpor. Later in the decade, the Beat and New York School poets moved poetry off the shallow stages of university auditoriums and into the cafés and jazz clubs. Their performances invented a new American style of reading, recontextualizing traditional metrics and appropriating the rhythms of jazz, blues, and hip speech.

In the ensuing decades, the importance of live poetry grew as new voices seemed to articulate what the culture avoided or suppressed. When the black arts movement emerged from the civil rights struggle, poetry readings inspired new activists. African American poets, notably Gwendolyn Brooks, left mainstream publishers and began to write and read for their own communities. One can discern the change here; when Brooks reads the formal "Song in the

Current Books

Front Yard" (1945), her irony is available only to those who seek it, but the deft street rhymes of "We Real Cool" (1960) cut with the surprise of a switchblade. Still later, the shock of Sylvia Plath, here reading "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus" with insolent power, inspired the great flowering of American women poets in the 1970s.

In the last decade, with the appointment of imaginative and energetic poets laureate (Rita Dove, Robert Hass, and Robert Pinsky), the presence of contemporary poets on public television (two series hosted by Bill Moyers, Pinsky's readings on *The NewsHour*), and the proliferation of graduate writing programs in American universities, there have probably been more people writing, publishing, and giving readings of their poems in the United States than ever before. Ironically, as poets in the literary tradition became more likely to give compelling readings, the written poem has come under siege. Performance art has inspired "performance poetry," hip-hop has spawned a poetry to be spoken or "rapped," and in some circles the champions of poetry "slams"—poetry performance competitions—have come to be as distinguished as Pulitzer Prize winners.

It is this expansion of the audience for live poetry that has opened the way for a major anthology of poetry readings by the great poets of the past. The effect is momentous. It is as if one were at a reading where Tennyson listened to Anne Sexton with mystified astonishment, Allen Ginsberg performed for Walt Whitman, and Yeats eavesdropped on W. H. Auden's reading of "In Memory of W. B. Yeats." To hear, through the rumble of wax cylinder technology, Tennyson's voice rhythmically intoning "The Charge of the Light Brigade" raises the hair on one's neck.

Quickly the static recedes and the voices become clearer. H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), Ezra Pound's contemporary (and onetime fiancée), appears cool and distant in photos, but her reading from "Helen in Egypt" has a vulnerable delicacy that gives the lie to the forceful, truncated lines in which the poem is written. Pound's own Latin and Greek phrases seem disruptive on the page, but in his reading they feel integral, held to the

flow of the poem by the force of the poet's voice. In some of the recordings, the editors include the poet's introduction. Yeats announces that because he spent such a long time putting the stanzas of "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" into verse, "I will not read them as if they were prose!" When he begins to chant those stanzas, the cranky public man recedes and we are lost at Innisfree.

The volume that houses the CDs functions as an extremely luxurious set of liner notes. Alongside the text are photographs of the poets and their artifacts, including Robert Frost on the cover of *Life* and a letter from Wallace Stevens to William Carlos Williams ("Dear Bill") on stationery headed "Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company" in wonderfully fat, scrolly letters.

The editors were shrewd in pairing some contemporary poets with their forebears. C. D. Wright comments on Gertrude Stein; Jorie Graham on Elizabeth Bishop, her Harvard predecessor; and Agha Shahid Ali, the Kashmiri poet who has made the United States his home, on T. S. Eliot, the American poet who made Britain his home. The essays work best when they reframe our sense of a poet by entering the poetry and managing, while never speaking down to us, to put complex, critical ideas in direct and simple language. Pinsky reveals the complexity in Williams's "Queen Anne's Lace" by explicating the relationship of its patterning of images of sensuality and abstraction to the rhythms of jazz. Charles Bernstein presents an elegant and cogent primer on Pound's poetic techniques that brings clarity to the difficult "With Usura" from Canto XLV. Rafael Campo makes an eloquent and convincing case for H.D.'s stature as a Modernist on a par with Eliot and Pound while noting her radical use of classical myth.

Poetry Speaks founders only on the issue of audience. The volume will be used in the classroom, but it will also be purchased by those who want to listen on their own. Given the publisher's stated intention of bringing poetry to a larger audience, the selection of a newscaster to introduce the recordings was understandable, but I found the narration intrusive. Osgood clearly has great sympathy for poetry, but his cliché-riddled presentation (Edna St. Vincent Millay was "a free

spirit”) isn’t up to the intellectual rigor of the rest of *Poetry Speaks*. Osgood’s cozy tone, meant to reassure the novice listener, instead disrupts the enthralling fabric the recordings weave.

“Not words, not music or rhyme I want,” wrote Whitman, “not customs or lecture,

not even the best, / Only the lull I like, the hum of your valvéd voice.”

>HONOR MOORE is the author of two collections of poems, *Memoir* (1988) and *Darling* (2001), as well as a biography, *The White Blackbird: A Life of the Painter Margaret Sargent* by Her Granddaughter (1996). She lives in New York City.

Bomb Thrower

MEMOIRS:

A Twentieth-Century Journey in Science and Politics.

By Edward Teller with Judith L. Shoolery.

Perseus. 628 pp. \$35

Reviewed by Kai Bird

“God protect us from the enemy without and the Hungarians within,” quipped J. Robert Oppenheimer to a friend at Los Alamos during World War II. A disproportionate number of the physicists working to produce the atomic bomb were Hungarian refugees, and every one of them possessed a difficult, demanding personality. But of these men, none was more difficult, more relentless, or more loquacious than Edward Teller.

Born in 1908, Teller is still with us and, to judge from his long-awaited memoirs, as feisty and opinionated today as he was during the Manhattan Project. In those pre-Hiroshima years, Teller annoyed Oppenheimer and other colleagues with his obsession with building a fusion “super” bomb at a time when the Los Alamos physicists were struggling to ready a simpler fission weapon. Temperamentally fixated on his obsessions, Teller persisted after the war and lobbied vigorously for bigger and more destructive bombs. No one worked harder than this physicist and self-appointed lobbyist to supplement America’s already quite destructive atomic arsenal with the apocalyptic thermonuclear weapons we all live with today.

To his friends in the nexus of Republican Party politics and right-wing think tanks centered around

California’s Hoover Institution, Teller is a genius and political hero: the man who persuaded President Ronald Reagan to spend billions on “Star Wars” missile-defense technologies. In the early 1960s and again in 2000, Teller played a key role in defeating a comprehensive test ban treaty. In short, he is a man who has embraced every nuclear weapons system and rejected every substantive arms control agreement ever proposed.



Edward Teller (right) congratulates Fermi Award winner J. Robert Oppenheimer in 1963.

Current Books

We already know much of this story from a vast literature on the bomb and the Cold War, as well as other books about Teller. Unfortunately, the new memoir has little to add. Much of it is a long-winded rehash of Teller's earlier memoir, *The Legacy of Hiroshima* (1962), and a friendly biography, *Energy and Conflict: The Life and Times of Edward Teller*, by Stanley A. Blumberg and Gwinn Owens (1976). (Blumberg put out another version of this hagiography in 1990 under the bloated title *Edward Teller: Giant of the Golden Age of Physics*.) In addition, the book owes a great deal to the memories of a 93-year-old man, unbuttressed by contemporaneous documentation. "That some of my remembrances are not the commonly accepted version of events should not be surprising," Teller confides. It should also not be surprising that historians will be wary of a memoir so heavy with remembered opinion and so light on quotes from letters, diaries, or other archival materials.

Though his life has been steeped in controversy, Teller desperately wants to be liked. Here, he seeks to win over critics by displaying the warm, human side of a man unfairly vilified. He would like the reader to think that this memoir is about the lasting friendships he forged with fellow physicists such as John von Neumann, Ernest Lawrence, George Gamow, Werner Heisenberg, Eugene Wigner, and many other like-minded scientists.

But he can't restrain himself from grousing about a long list of men and women who opposed his science policy recommendations during the Cold War. The godfather of quantum mechanics, Niels Bohr, made him feel "foolish" in a seminar 70 years ago; Stan Ulam, widely credited with the theoretical breakthrough that led to a practical design for the hydrogen bomb, was "difficult company"; and Teller was "not happy" about working under Nobelist Hans Bethe. Without any evidence, he labels the British Nobelist Patrick M. S. Blackett a communist—and fails to mention that Blackett was an early critic of nuclear weapons.

These complaints stand as petty grievances compared with the animus Teller holds for the *bête noire* of this memoir, J. Robert Oppenheimer. Teller understands

that whatever his accomplishments, his life will forever be defined by the story of a betrayal.

In 1954, he testified before the Atomic Energy Commission's security review board, summoned to determine whether Oppenheimer posed a security risk to the nation. Teller testified, "I would like to see the vital interests of this country in hands which I understand better, and therefore trust more. . . . If it is a question of wisdom and judgment, as demonstrated by actions since 1945, then I would say one would be wiser not to grant [Oppenheimer] clearance."

When Oppenheimer's security clearance was revoked, many of their mutual friends blamed Teller. That summer, Teller visited Los Alamos and spotted an old friend, Bob Christy, with whom he had shared a house for a year. "I hurried over," Teller writes, "reaching out to greet him. He looked me coldly in the eye, refused my hand, and turned away. I was so stunned that for a moment I couldn't react. Then I realized that my life as I had known it was over."

In two chapters and an appendix, Teller goes to great lengths to explain his action in the Oppenheimer hearing. He was misunderstood, he says. His doubts about Oppenheimer had nothing to do with the physicist's opposition to the hydrogen bomb. Instead, Teller claims, he testified as he did only because the Atomic Energy Commission's lawyer, Roger Robb, had shown him a transcript in which Oppenheimer admitted inventing a "cock-and-bull story" that implicated a friend in a Soviet spy network seeking information on the atomic bomb project. Teller was so "amazed and confused" by what he read, he says, that a few minutes later he testified that he had doubts about Oppenheimer's judgment.

There are two problems with this story. First, in a 1961 letter to Lewis Strauss, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Teller said he had met with Robb the previous evening, rather than a few minutes before testifying. In this book, Teller acknowledges this handwritten letter but claims that his memory in 2001 of that 1954 conversation is more reliable than his note to a friend written seven years after the event.

Second, the archives demonstrate that Teller himself was the source for many of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's allegations against Oppenheimer. In 1949 and again in 1952, Teller went to the FBI with suspicions about Oppenheimer's motives for opposing the development of the "super." According to Harold P. Green, the lawyer who drafted the charges against Oppenheimer for the 1954 hearing, "a very substantial portion of the charges, certainly most of them related to the H-bomb, were drawn from FBI interviews with Teller."

Teller portrays himself as a friend of Oppenheimer's. But from his own account, he clashed with "Oppie" early and often. The turning point in their fateful relationship came in the autumn of 1942, when the two physicists shared a first-class train compartment to Washington, D.C., for meetings with General Leslie R. Groves, who had just been appointed to run the Manhattan Project out of the Pentagon.

According to Teller, Oppenheimer complained about having to work with Groves, and added: "We have a real job ahead. No matter what Groves demands now, we have to cooperate. But the time is coming when we will have to do things differently and resist the military." A "shocked" Teller replied, "I

don't think I would want to do that." Oppenheimer quickly changed the subject, and Teller believes "the relationship between us changed at that instant." Oppenheimer might well have said such a thing. Some might even say he was admirably prescient. But in Teller's rendering of this story, the ugly implication is clear: Oppenheimer was not to be trusted with the nation's security.

Henry Kissinger, William F. Buckley, Jr., Tom Clancy, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, and Milton Friedman write the expected glowing endorsements for Teller's book jacket. "Now we know Ed Teller," gushes Buckley, "and rejoice in his company." You can't tell from these blurbs, but some eminent men who have known and worked with Ed Teller consider him a blowhard, even a madman. "He's a danger to all that's important," said the late physicist Isidor I. Rabi. "I do really believe it would have been a better world without Teller."

>KAI BIRD, a Wilson Center fellow, is writing (with Martin Sherwin) a biography of J. Robert Oppenheimer. His previous books include *The Chairman: John J. McCloy and the Making of the American Establishment* (1992), *Hiroshima's Shadow: Writings on the Denial of History and the Smithsonian Controversy* (1998), and *The Color of Truth: McGeorge Bundy and William Bundy* (1998).

The Puzzling Persistence of Nationalism

WHO WE ARE:

A History of Popular Nationalism.

By Robert H. Wiebe. Princeton Univ. Press.

282 pp. \$24.95

Reviewed by Jim Sleeper

When death-embracing fundamentalists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, America's most telling response came from New York City firefighters who likewise proved willing to face death—but in order to rescue others, not to slaughter them. Their sacrifice

found emblematic voice in Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, was amplified by Good Samaritan citizens, and prompted reverential, often unanticipated stirrings of patriotism in many of the rest of us. The sudden blossoming of flags received a good deal of comment, but there was scant

reflection upon patriotism's roots, almost as if looking too deeply into this unfamiliar sentiment of national belonging might prove discomfiting.

To some Americans, in truth, the heroes of September 11 seemed nearly as alien as the villains. The firefighters were bound into a brotherhood that has long irritated both the politically correct and the managerially sharp. These were disproportionately white ethnic men belonging to an intergenerational union that *bien-pensant* liberals have deplored as racist and sexist. They were "economically incorrect," too, governed by work rules and prerogatives that, to free-market apostles of quarterly bottom-lining, betokened a medieval guild. Driven by loyalty and courage, these firefighters rushed in to save money managers and their minions, who, though many of them had been raised in the same ethnic and religious traditions, worked under dog-eat-dog rules that didn't reinforce fidelity and teamwork.

Whatever the origins of the firefighters' bonding and sacrifice, Robert Wiebe takes us further than most analysts of nationalism toward understanding how critical such attitudes are to the self-understanding of this or any nation. Writing briskly and unflinchingly—and well before September 11—he traces strains of political nationalism that have proved too elusive for ideology-driven analysts and passionate celebrants.

Marxists such as Eric Hobsbawm and Ernest Gellner tend to fit nationalism into functional analyses that are more respectful of class and political economy than of mystical ties of blood and soil. Martha Nussbaum and other liberals are generally skittish not only about blood-and-soil nationalism, but even about a more civic nationalism, such as our own, that sometimes circumscribes the universal rights it claims to affirm. Multiculturalists such as Homi K. Bhabha and Anthony Smith sometimes veer toward celebrating deeply felt national loyalties that end up doing more harm than good, while Niebuhrian realists such as Samuel Huntington subsume nationalism under broader "civilizational" rubrics that emphasize enduring cultural traits.

Wiebe will have none of it—or all of it, in the sense that he sojourns with each of these viewpoints without embracing them. That makes him a refreshingly odd sort of liberal. As he showed with *The Search for Order* (1967), an account of the United States in the 19th century, Wiebe, a historian at Northwestern University who died in 2000, was less an archivist than a synthesizer by well-informed assertion, and less a political theorist than an anthropologist. With a dry-eyed brilliance that recalls Walter Lippmann's, he conjures cultural and political narratives that are occasionally more glib than strenuous but that usually keep clear of both tendencies. If he does have a passion in *Who We Are*, it is to track nationalism's path among other currents—of religious, racial, and linguistic kinship—that sometimes move at cross-purposes with nationalism itself.

Wiebe begins with a definition that seems clear enough as a guide: "Nationalism is the desire among people who believe they share a common destiny to live under their own government on land sacred to their history." But fasten your seatbelt: Each word can be unpacked like a Pandora's box. Wiebe has no interest in vindicating or vanquishing any of nationalism's many messages; neither has he patience for a cosmopolitanism that would wish it all away.

What he seeks is expositional clarity about something that has resisted capture or quarantine because it is so irreducibly human. "Rather than a gigantic fraud perpetrated time and again on the mindless masses," he writes, "nationalism thrived because it addressed basic human needs." In particular, it addressed (and still addresses) the need for a kind of familial continuity amid demographic upheavals within and beyond national borders.

Nationalism, in this view, is distinct from—and more potent than—statism. "States, hovering like crows over the nests that nationalists make, have also played on the sentiments of ancestry, destiny, and sacred soil," Wiebe writes. "Try though they might, however, they have rarely inspired feelings of kin-connectedness, the core around which cultures of nationalism have developed."

More commonly, the state attempts “to swallow kin-based groups inside a civic whole.” Nationalism often aspires to statehood, but its “grand fictive family” is restive within, and sometimes betrayed by, the state. When statehood cracks or decays, nationalism becomes resurgent.

Anyone with liberal or humanist expectations of politics will need a pretty strong stomach to accompany Wiebe through the twistings and turnings of nationalist affirmations—whether a fraught, failed Zionism or a humiliated, hopeless pan-Arabism, a blundering American white-racist triumphalism or a fatuous black escapism. Any one of these, let alone the whole procession, could turn an observer lachrymose, or just morose. Wiebe is unfazed.

He’s no free-market liberal: “Although individualism as an idea has a long history, capitalist individualism as an orientation has no past and little future. . . . The [capitalist] transactions people make do not bind them beyond those transactions. . . . Where people’s relations are no more than the sum of their market decisions, the best simple summary is Margaret Thatcher’s: ‘There is no society.’ Projected globally, that is the real jungle.” He also contends that, for better or worse, nationalist impulses have a longer future than democracy and socialism, nationalism’s two major historical accompanists and sometime-competitors, with their smug claims to universalism (“another form of provincialism”).

Even so, Wiebe acknowledges that nationalism will sometimes be submerged by other currents, including those created by two other major competitors since the 1970s, warlordism and religious fundamentalism. He observes that quasi-capitalist individualism can twist fundamentalism into unexpected forms: “As if he had been lifted from a James Bond movie, Western society’s quintessential foe at the turn of the 21st century was a single, elusive Saudi, Osama bin Laden, made immensely wealthy by the Western demand for oil, who, it was said, plotted the explosion of unpredictable targets on a global scale.” I rubbed my eyes on recalling that this prepublication edition of the book, with its useful observations about pan-Arabism, Islamic fundamentalism, and

even the Taliban, arrived early in August 2001.

I wish Wiebe had taken better account of Hannah Arendt’s contributions to our understanding of nationalism. She knew that any nation’s claims to fulfill universal yearnings are inseparable from its tendency to draw exclusionary boundaries around functioning communities and representative democracies that affirm those yearnings—and she understood that states that do this can be better than Wiebe acknowledges. Commendably resistant though he is to ideological and heuristic traps familiar to weary students of Marxist, liberal, and multicultural attempts to dismiss or redeem nationalism, he seems only intermittently responsive to the imperatives of politics, which, Arendt emphasized, can bring historical actors toward freedom or, if mishandled, drive them away from it.

And then there’s that nagging glibness. Wiebe calls socialism nothing but a program of fairness to workers, but if there’s anything socialists and conservative capitalists agree on, it’s that socialism is more ambitious than that. He calls the U.S. Constitution “astounding” in a way that makes it seem more an accident than the foundation of a noble and remarkably successful experiment. And he closes with a paean to diversity that, while more complicated than the kind limned by university administrators and third-rate pedagogues, remains vague. His parting admonition that we heed Huntington’s call to “renounce universalism, accept diversity, and seek commonalities” needs elaboration. Would that Wiebe could provide it in another book.

Still, this is the most bracing, insightful study of nationalism in years. Wiebe may make you feel at sea, but he teaches you how to sail, even if to no particular port. That may be just what we need as we try to understand how it is that firefighters have become our strongest spiritual bulwark against fundamentalist terrorists.

>JIM SLEEPER, a journalist who is teaching political science at Yale University, is working on a book about American national identity. He is the author of *The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of New York* (1990) and *Liberal Racism* (1997).

ARTS & LETTERS

THE ANNOTATED HUCKLEBERRY FINN.

Edited by Michael Patrick Hearn.

Norton. 480 pp. \$39.95

Hearn's handsomely designed, album-sized edition of Mark Twain's great novel follows the examples of William S. Baring-Gould's magisterial *Annotated Sherlock Holmes* (1967) and similar treatments of *The Wizard of Oz* (1973), also by Hearn, and *Alice in Wonderland* (1993), by Martin Gardner. Such books have their primal ancestor in the Talmud's commentaries on commentaries. But *Huckleberry Finn* did not come into the world as a candidate for reverential treatment. It is a book born to trouble, a pariah novel denounced in its time as "trash and suitable only for the slums," denounced in our time as racist, but nonetheless not only vindicated but canonized (in several senses). Hearn lists 55 "notable" editions of the book, excluding countless routine reprints in virtually every known language. The subject of an enormous critical literature that has unearthed multiple levels of meaning and intention, Twain's masterpiece has become a sort of freshwater *Moby-Dick*.

Hearn's own 150-page introduction is a model of thoroughness and compaction: It recounts not only the vexed composition of *Huckleberry Finn* but its equally vexed production, publication, and reception, altogether a cautionary demonstration of the agonies of authorship and the vicissitudes of taste. The text of *Huckleberry Finn*—what this ambitious edition is all about to begin with—appears in an exceptionally attractive reprint along with the 174 original sepia illustrations by E. W. Kemble. Hearn's commentary is apt, informed, and engaged, but it sometimes outpaces what it is meant to illuminate instead of trotting alongside. At the outset, for example, Twain's ironic 34-word "Notice"—"Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot"—generates a gloss of more than a thousand words. Perhaps, though, the disproportion is right and proper considering the nature of the prefatory passage.

A major source of trouble for *Huckleberry Finn* has been its 200 or more iterations of the taboo word *nigger*. They have "kept the novel at the center of modern freedom-of-speech disputes," Hearn writes. "Can a book which uses racist language, however subtly, be a great work of literature? Should it have a place in the public school curriculum or library?" The argument over *Huckleberry Finn*'s suitability for impressionable, literal-minded readers with little or no recognition of historical context continues, with occasional ferocity. Hearn is attentive to three of the most crucial and controversial passages in the novel: Huck's initial reluctance to apologize to Jim ("I done it, and I warn't ever sorry for it afterwards"), his decision not to turn Jim in as a fugitive slave ("All right, then, I'll go to hell"), and his blithe and bitter reply to Aunt Sally's question about whether anyone was hurt in a steamboat explosion: "No'm. Killed a nigger." "Well, it's lucky," she says, "because sometimes people do get hurt." Irony, we need to be reminded, may be the most sophisticated of all literary strategies.

Even readers moderately informed about *Huckleberry Finn* are likely to find themselves surprised by how many rich details they may have simply skimmed over: excursions into riverine social history, customs, superstitions, legends, domestic practices, and idioms. The drawback here, the difficulty inherent in such comprehensive treatment, is that the text itself—this brilliant and gripping story of adventure and moral education—may at times be overshadowed by the commentary it has provoked.

—JUSTIN KAPLAN

THE GREAT AMERICAN PAPERBACK:

An Illustrated Tribute to the Legends of the Book.

By Richard A. Lupoff. Collectors Press.
320 pp. \$60

Mass-market paperback publishing in America got off to a rousing third or fourth start with the debut of Pocket Books in 1939. During the 19th century and then in the 1920s and 1930s, several companies had been

drawn to the paperback's promise of lower costs and higher profits, but they could never sustain their operations. Here, Lupoff, a historian of mass culture and the author of a book on Edgar Rice Burroughs, pays lavish, full-color tribute to the companies that finally made a go of it.

While the publishers' stories have been told more comprehensively elsewhere—Thomas Bonn's *Under Cover* (1982), Kenneth Davis's *Two-Bit Culture* (1984), and Piet Schreuders's *Paperbacks, U.S.A.* (1981)—Lupoff delivers a sure-footed overview of the history along with more than 400 reproductions of vintage covers. He has also identified most of the uncredited artists who painted the covers, a boon for paperback collectors who are interested principally in the campy, sometimes risqué, but often just silly artwork.

Why did Pocket and others succeed where their predecessors had failed? According to John Tebbel's magnificent four-volume *History of Book Publishing in the United States* (1972–81), Pocket combined the advantages of uniform size and price with enticing color covers, inexpensive paper, rotary printing (the technology first used to print newspapers on continuous rolls of paper), and—this is the key—a distribution system that treated books like magazines. Pocket allied with newspaper and periodical wholesale outfits, which placed the new paperbacks in drugstores, smoke shops, five-and-dimes, newsstands, train stations, and, of course, bookstores. No longer, the company promised, would readers be forced to “dawdle idly in reception rooms, fret on train or bus rides, sit vacantly at a restaurant table.”

The first Pocket Books were a shrewd mix: a few classics (Shakespeare, Samuel Butler, and Emily Brontë), a self-help book (*Wake Up and Live!*), an Agatha Christie mystery,

Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, a volume of Dorothy Parker's poetry, and, rounding out this selection of something for everyone, *Bambi*. Initially staffed by two people working out of a windowless office, Pocket started distributing in New York City and within a month branched out to most large cities. Within three months, the firm had sold half a million copies of its first 10 books. Shakespeare was the dog that didn't have his day—“a 574-page loss leader,” writes Tebbel—and *Wuthering Heights* was the top seller, owing not to the reading public's jones for Brontë but to the recent Laurence Olivier movie.

Within a few years, American paperback publishing houses were quickly and cheaply printing, widely distributing, and steadily selling titles both high and low, new and old. Lupoff sticks mostly with the low and the new. He calls *Reform School Girl*, whose cover features a tall, blonde woman in a scarlet teddy smoking a cigarette while leaning over to undo her garter straps, “an icon to paperback collectors,” whereas *Moby-Dick*, “masterpiece though it is and despite its many paperback editions, has had no great bearing on paperback publishing history.”

High and low, though, is a distinction the publishers themselves didn't draw. In 1950, Signet published Mickey Spillane's *My Gun Is Quick* and *Vengeance Is Mine!* as well as Vladimir Nabokov's *Laughter in the Dark*. Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* was sold from spinner racks alongside Horace McCoy's *Kiss Tomorrow Good-Bye* (“Love as hot as a blow torch . . . crime as vicious as the jungle”).

These books were available for one-tenth the price of a hardcover book. Widely available, too: Bonn describes how readers in Columbus, Ohio, in 1941, could buy hard-



Lupoff calls this infamous cover “*inde-scribable, unbelievable, incomparable.*”

cover books from six places, while a Pocket Book could be theirs at any one of 224 outlets, for a quarter. It's easy to assume that the paperback revolution was all about campy artwork and cheesy come-ons, but to pay attention mostly to the covers, as astonishing as some of them are, is to ignore the social impact of an innovation that made writing available widely and cheaply.

Today's mass-market paperbacks are not as inexpensive, even adjusting for inflation; they require more than an hour's work at minimum wage, the early standard for pricing. Neither are they available as widely. Fewer classics and newer books of value are published in the format. With the advent of Vintage paperbacks in the early 1980s, most serious paperbacks, both fiction and nonfiction, began appearing in larger, pricier trade editions. Probably never again will a prospective reader, someone looking for a book, just something to pass the time, be lucky enough to stand within arm's reach of both a Nabokov and a Spillane.

—PAUL MALISZEWSKI

TEMPERAMENT:
*The Idea That Solved
Music's Greatest Riddle.*

By Stuart Isacoff. Knopf. 259 pp. \$23

The lyre of the mythic Orpheus, enchanting even to trees and rocks, and the spirit-healing harp of the psalmist David have everything to do with the story of *Temperament*. Into modern times, musicians and instrument makers have been driven to break the code that gave that ancient music its magical powers. The tuning of notes and their spacing in the octave were thought to be the heart of the matter.

From the sixth century B.C. on, Pythagoras ruled the discussion with his general dictum that the right relationships were mathematical. The top note of the octave resonates exactly twice as fast as the bottom note (in "Over the Rainbow," the vibrational leap in the opening notes on the word "somewhere" is 1:2, as also in Duke Ellington's "Daydream"). Equally important to Pythagoras was the 2:3 ratio between the tones of the "perfect fifth" (the opening notes of "My Favorite Things") and the 3:4

ratio in the "perfect fourth" (the start of "Auld Lang Syne"). The exaltation of the "major third" (the mi-mi-mi-do! opening of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony) came later; with a 5:4 ratio of vibrations, it extended the rule of small integers over the definition of musical value.

Beauty lay not just in the ears but in the clarity of numbers. In the 17th century, Johannes Kepler argued that the courses of the several planets corresponded precisely with the harmonious proportions of musical thirds, fourths, and fifths. That is, music was the language both of man's singing inner life and of the celestial spheres in their orbits. "From earliest times," writes Isacoff, the editor of *Piano Today* magazine, "number, sound and virtue wrapped themselves like intertwining vines around the trunk of Western culture."

The problem with the number mysticism in music was spotted early on, even by Pythagoras. Intervals deemed "perfect" on their own were not neat nesting blocks that fitted perfectly together. Rather, like weeks fitting into months fitting into calendar years (or like mates in blessed matrimony), pleasing musical units had to be stretched here and whittled there to make a workable whole. The expressive voice and the tolerant ear had no trouble with the compromises, but the development of fixed-note instruments and especially keyboards forced hard choices and fierce arguments starting in the Renaissance. This is the terrain of Isacoff's chatty survey, an anecdotal, name-dropping slide show of the evolution that made pianos and orchestras possible.

Many paths led eventually to the system that dominates today, "equal temperament," which divides the octave into 12 uniform "half-tone" intervals. Another approach, "just intonation," preserved perfect fifths and major thirds more adamantly. "Mean-tone temperament" sacrificed the sanctity of the fifth in favor of the third. "Well temperament," which J. S. Bach loved, preserved clear differences of color and character among the scales built on each of 12 keys. Finding the right temperament sounds like an engineering challenge, but innumerable churchmen, sages, scientists, and musicians deemed it vastly more. Vincenzo Galilei,

father of the astronomer, made a humanist cause of liberating music (as singers naturally do anyway) from “the tyranny of inviolable number.” Descartes, by contrast, maintained that equal temperament’s altered proportions were a violation of nature.

The spirit of *Temperament* owes more than a little to Dava Sobel’s marvelous little volume *Longitude* (1995). *Temperament*, unlike *Longitude*, has no breakthrough moment and no single hero (the Baroque composer Jean-Philippe Rameau comes close). Though the book is light sailing, the pleasure here is that it gives readers a glimpse of the oceanic depths of musical metaphors and mysteries still unsolved by cognitive science and evolutionary psychology. Please, God, may we never know just where music comes from, or why it moves us so!

—CHRISTOPHER LYDON

**WHAT LIPS MY LIPS
HAVE KISSED:**

*The Loves and Love Poems of
Edna St. Vincent Millay.*

By Daniel Mark Epstein. Henry Holt.
300 pp. \$26

A poem’s “I” can hypnotize us into believing we have seen through the portals of a poet’s secret anguish. That’s commonly an illusion, but not in the case of Edna St. Vincent Millay. Epstein, a poet who has written biographies of Aimee Semple McPherson and Nat “King” Cole, persuasively links themes in Millay’s life to themes in her verse, including guilt, longing, rituals, religious defiance, and, of course, eroticism.

Millay (1892–1950) grew up in Maine with two younger sisters and a divorced, hardened mother, Cora. To support the impoverished family, Cora often took nursing jobs out of town, which left frail Vincent, as she was known, as de facto parent. The upbringing sparked an uprising of sorts, hushed but heartfelt. “I guess I’m going to explode,” teenage Vincent confided to her diary.

(Epstein enjoyed nearly unprecedented access to the poet’s papers at the Library of Congress.) In another entry, she laments her household responsibilities and longs for carefree “jump-rope and hop-scotch days.” At 19, she wrote that “I have been ecstatic; but I have not been happy”—a passage the biographer deems key to understanding Millay’s personality.

While still living at home, Millay gained a measure of local renown through her poetry. Her fame spread vastly with the poem “Renaissance,” published in a collection of new work by some 60 poets in 1912. One reader maintained that the book’s description of Millay had to be a hoax: “No sweet young thing of 20 ever ended a poem precisely where this one ends; it takes a brawny male of 45 to do that.” Millay went on in 1923 to win the Pulitzer Prize in poetry, the first woman to do so. By her early thirties, she had established herself as America’s best-known poet.

In 1923 she wed the Dutch-born Eugen Boissevain; the marriage proved long and lenient. “She must not be dulled by routine acts; she must ever remain open to fresh contact with life’s intensities,”



Edna St. Vincent Millay (undated photograph)

declared her adoring husband, who graciously disregarded her periodic love affairs. The affairs, like much else in her life, found their way into her witty, carefully crafted diary entries, and then into her poetry. Through the diaries, Epstein traces obvious and pure links between the poet's feelings and her verse.

Millay yearned for the respect of the critics as well the devotion of the public, but she lost both with *Make Bright the Arrows* (1940), a heavy-handed tribute to the Allies. "There are a few good poems, but it is mostly plain propaganda," she acknowledged to one correspondent. She hoped reviewers would at least single out the good poems, but they didn't. Her reputation never recovered, and morphine, alcohol, and agoraphobia overshadowed her final decade.

Shifting fashions in poetry further dulled her reputation. Millay's great strength was fiery passion, not the calculated perplexity of Eliot and Pound. Today, in an age dominated by narrative poems in the third person, her first-person confessional verse can seem sentimental. But don't be surprised if Epstein's vigilant investigation sparks a Millay renaissance—a new wave of admiration for the many costumes of her erotic sovereignty.

—ALLISON EIR JENKS

JAY'S JOURNAL OF ANOMALIES.

By Ricky Jay. Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
202 pp. \$40

The historian of stage magic faces a daunting assignment: recreating spectacles as vividly as possible while observing the taboo against revealing their methods. Thus, writing histories of conjuring (and such related forms of deception as confidence games and sports hustling) is itself an exercise in sleight-of-hand. Readers have to be entertained but not fully enlightened, convinced of the skill of the performance but left arguing among themselves about the secrets—especially because sometimes even the experts can only guess.

Jay, a magician's magician, widely considered the outstanding sleight-of-hand specialist of our time, is up to this challenge. He is a stage and television performer/writer, an actor and consultant to the film industry in

its portrayals of conjurers and confidence artists, a scholar and collector of magic history, and the author of *Learned Pigs and Fireproof Women* (1986) and the cult classic *Cards as Weapons* (1977).

Jay's Journal of Anomalies presents material from the author's bibliophile quarterly of the same title, with rare and superbly reproduced illustrations from the author's collection. Each issue is an excursion to the farther shores of theater and the extremes of the human condition. We learn about levitation, a favorite of spectators at least since the days of Euripides, and about such early conjurers as Isaac Fawkes, whose skill at extracting eggs from a seemingly empty black bag stunned his 18th-century contemporaries.

Beyond stage magic, *Jay's Journal* celebrates the full and sometimes frightening gamut of a centuries-old European and American demimonde. Where academics would probe the otherness of the past and see these performances as keys to vanished mentalities, Jay seems to revel in dissolving conventional boundaries between past and present. An affable if sardonic cicerone, he has special affection for the acts of the 18th and early 19th centuries, but he also notes that the last flea circus in New York City lasted until 1965 and holds out hope for the revival of the art.

The flea circus is on the divide between two classes of oddities that fascinate Jay. One is the animal prodigy, such as the mathematical poodle Munito and another of the breed called Inimitable Dick, who mimicked the sensational fin-de-siècle illuminated dances of Loïe Fuller: timeless feats that reveal the skills of animals and trainers alike.

Jay takes special delight in questionable creatures purported to be freaks of nature. Among the fabulous beasts exhibited to the gullible were the Mighty Bovalapus (actually an ordinary Philippines water buffalo) and the Cynocephalus or dog-headed man (probably a yellow baboon). Today's taboo against exploiting disabilities would doom the careers of brilliant dwarf performers such as Hervio Nano, the Gnome Fly. Our billionaires, whatever their other failings, do not wager on the weight of extremely fat people, as 18th-century English aristocrats did. And how do we account for the strange

enthusiasm, well into the last century, for apparent crucifixions and the simulated amputation of noses? The Hunger Artist of Kafka's famous story had, as Jay reveals, many real-life counterparts.

Perhaps, though, taste has changed less than we might suppose. In a postindustrial

society, we gawk not at physical exhibitionism but at frontier science and televised self-revelation. Just as Jay celebrates the Bonassus and the Bold Grimace Spaniard, perhaps some future connoisseur will revel in Dolly the Sheep and *The Jerry Springer Show*.

—EDWARD TENNER

CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS

STANDING UP TO THE ROCK.

By T. Louise Freeman-Toole. Univ. of Nebraska Press. 213 pp. \$26

"In our wedding vows," writes Freeman-Toole, a freelance writer and sixth-generation Californian, "my husband and I pledged to live together in a 'green and peaceful place.'" A few years into the marriage, Silicon Valley's sprawl drove them from Santa Cruz. They ended up in an agricultural region called the Palouse, along the Idaho-Washington border. "It was like being able to take our children back to the time we had grown up in—a safer, slower, and kindlier world." Alternately engaging, lovely, frustrating, dense, and thoughtful, *Standing Up to the Rock* recounts this change of worlds.

But not without a good many side trips. Freeman-Toole tells of her ancestors and of her strong emotional response to rugged landscapes. She includes a heroine's journey and a feminist awakening, a tutorial in cattle ranching, and a population of eccentric and fascinating characters, many of whom deserve entire books unto themselves. Some of these tales reach fruition better than others. Occasionally, a character appears with a sketchy introduction, disappears, and pops up again later with biographical back story, as in a screenplay. Freeman-Toole's poetic prose is more than enough to engage the reader without such gimmickry.

The author redeems herself in the last chapter, which is positively elegiac. She quotes her friend Liz Burns, a rancher (and one of those who surely merits her own biography): "Stop thinking in the abstract about the environment, the economy, politics. Start seeing individual porch lights. Care about *these* animals, *these* native plants, *these* people, this perfect place." The admo-

nation made me wonder about those perfect places within us all, and why, when we find them, we are often compelled to leave. It made me contemplate the central theme of this rich book: what it really means to be home.

—ROSANNE CASH

ON MY HONOR:

Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth.

By Jay Mechling. Univ. of Chicago Press. 323 pp. \$30

At the start of *On My Honor*, Mechling promises to steer a middle course between the right, which sees the Boy Scouts as the solution to America's "character" problem, and the left, which sees them as part of the problem. He calls both of these views skewed, but it is soon clear that he deems the right-wing view considerably more skewed. A former Eagle Scout who is now a professor of American studies at the University of California, Davis, Mechling asserts his bona fides by citing his "progressive male guilt" over the "militarism," "sexism," "homophobia," and "disrespect for real Indians" of his own scouting days. Little has changed, he reports: The similarities between scout camp of the late 1950s and scout camp of the late 1990s are "too many to celebrate a victory of 'progressive' masculinity over Cold War masculinity."

A curious idea, this distinction between "progressive" and "Cold War" masculinity. What he means by the latter is a harder, more macho masculinity, which he discredits as (among other things) a mere contingency of the Cold War. He himself advocates a softer, more tender masculinity, and even tries to claim some of its social-science

Current Books

theorists, including William Pollack and Nancy Chodorow, as latter-day versions of the two men whose ideas were basic to the founding of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), G. Stanley Hall and Ernest Thompson Seton. Mechling discerns a “strong resemblance” between the masculinity theories of the 1890s and those of the 1990s—evidence, in his view, that the two decades “responded in similar ways to a perceived crisis in masculinity.”

But didn't the alleged crisis of the 1890s lead to the cultivation of a distinctive and traditional version of masculinity, while the theorists a century later seek to break it down? That objection disappears once we understand those old-timers and their marked “sexual ambiguities.” In Mechling's view, “the founders of the BSA were ‘role models’ for an androgynous masculinity not dissimilar from the new masculinities that emerged in response to parallel social and economic pres-

ures on masculinity in the 1990s.”

The villains of the book are today's professional Scouts and bureaucrats at BSA headquarters who vigorously oppose the admission of atheists, girls, and homosexuals. These men seek to foster “a narrow, inflexible, exclusively heterosexual definition of masculinity” because of their own “powerful anxiety about masculinity.” The particular troop of California scouts that Mechling has chosen for his study is meant to show us, by contrast, how progressive scouts can be.

Progressive and yet pragmatic. When the scoutmaster decides against holding a joint campfire with nearby Girl Scouts, Mechling approves. “You know how the boys act around girls,” the scoutmaster tells him. “They show off, get silly, get really out of control.” How, I wonder, would that basic fact of life be altered by the utopian masculinity that Mechling proposes?

—JAMES BOWMAN

HISTORY

CHURCHILL: *A Biography.*

By Roy Jenkins. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 1002 pp. \$40

Winston Churchill had three contemporaries who he felt may, just may, have been up to his own standard as a world leader: David Lloyd George, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin. Each of the three has attracted many biographers, but few have been able to get behind the mask. Churchill's biographers do not have that problem. His psyche is exhaustingly documented in his own prodigious writings, Martin Gilbert's official biography of eight thick volumes, and countless other biographies.

Do we need another Churchill book? Jenkins answers by setting forth his unique qualifications. He has written well-received biographies of H. H. Asquith and William E. Gladstone. He has had wide parliamentary and ministerial experience. He served both as home secretary and Chancellor of the Exchequer, just as Churchill did. Both he and Churchill knew what it was like to wait for the call that didn't come, though Churchill's ultimately did come. Jenkins could have used in his



Winston Churchill surveying the damage done to Coventry Cathedral during World War II.

defense Lord Chesterfield's words upon retiring: “I have been behind the scenes, both of pleasure and business. I have seen all the coarse pulleys and dirty ropes, which exhibit and move all

the gaudy machines; and I have seen and smelt the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decoration to the astonishment and admiration of the ignorant audience.”

Churchill’s enduring appeal, to biographers and readers alike, lies in his character. He outshone his contemporaries with astonishing energy, the discipline required to write book after book, and the power to survive repeated disasters, some self-inflicted and some beyond his control. Always the fighter, writer, and man of action.

Jenkins’s mastery of his subject is shown by the way he compares Churchill to Lloyd George. Both men were at the center of things at the commencement of World War I, Lloyd George as prime minister and Churchill as a member of his team. Jenkins deems them the two British politicians of genius (using the word in the sense of exceptional and original powers transcending purely rational measurement) in the first half of the 20th century. In drawing out the comparison, Jenkins says that Lloyd George was “undoubtedly stronger in a number of significant qualities than was Churchill, and one, and perhaps the most remarkable, of his strengths was that he could long exercise an almost effortless authority over Churchill.” Churchill, partly for old times’ sake and partly to safeguard his flank (there was talk of bringing back Lloyd George to act as the wartime prime minister), toyed with the idea of making his old boss the ambassador to Washington or minister of agriculture. Neither job came off.

If Churchill had died in the middle 1930s, he would be of little interest to today’s biographers. It was World War II that made him. It put him in touch with Roosevelt and Stalin. Churchill described President Roosevelt as the greatest American friend Britain ever found. Did Churchill consider FDR a personal friend? In a puzzling lapse, Churchill did not attend Roosevelt’s funeral. After considering a number of possible explanations, Jenkins writes: “It is more probable that the emotional link between Churchill and Roosevelt was never as close as was commonly thought. It was more a partnership of circumstances and convenience than a friendship of individuals, each of whom . . . was a star of a brightness which needed its own unimpeded orbit.” FDR’s views on Churchill, like FDR’s views on many

things, are still under study by the experts. Stalin’s views on Churchill will remain a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.

Jenkins, as part of the winding down, brings Gladstone on stage. Having written the Gladstone biography and now having concluded the Churchill biography, Jenkins opines that Gladstone was undoubtedly the greatest prime minister of the 19th century, and Churchill undoubtedly the greatest of the 20th century. “When I started writing this book I thought that Gladstone was, by a narrow margin, the greater man, certainly the more remarkable specimen of humanity. In the course of writing it I have changed my mind. I now put Churchill, with all his idiosyncrasies, his indulgences, his occasional childishness, but also his genius, his tenacity and his persistent ability, right or wrong, successful or unsuccessful, to be larger than life, as the greatest human being ever to occupy 10 Downing Street.”

—JACOB A. STEIN

COMMUNISM:

A History.

By Richard Pipes. Modern Library.

175 pp. \$19.95

This concise volume offers a sobering, superbly informed, and tragically disquieting analysis of communism. Pipes, a Harvard University historian, tells a story of lofty ideals betrayed by sordid, indeed criminal, practices. For him, this fanatical attempt at large-scale social engineering has, in the end, no redeeming features.

The best chapters deal with Pipes’s specialty, Sovietism. Lenin, he believes, arguably had a greater impact on 20th-century politics than any other public figure in the world. Pipes convincingly demonstrates that Lenin’s revolutionary passion flowed, not from a desire to transcend injustice, but from an obsessive rejection of liberal modernity, pluralism, and political freedom.

The original Marxian vision might have produced the sort of evolutionary socialism that developed in Western social democracies. But the philosophy carried with it a dictatorial potential, which Lenin, with his essentially antidemocratic, neo-

Jacobin mindset, exercised fully. Stalin's extremism, Pipes argues, was the logical outgrowth of Lenin's reign of terror. This assertion may understate the radical novelty of Stalin's totalitarian regime, with its unparalleled efforts to destroy enemies (real and imagined), civil society, and human creativity.

Pipes maintains that Soviet communism supplied many of the ideas that animated fascism. The similarities are indeed striking. Both doctrines despised pluralism and civic individualism. Bolsheviks detested private property, peasants, social democrats, and liberal intellectuals; Nazis hated Jews, plutocrats, Marxists, and liberals. In fact, as Pipes shows, Stalin's rabid hatred of the moderate German Social Democrats made possible Hitler's rise to power in 1933.

Though he explores the economic elements of Marxist doctrine, Pipes spends little time on its philosophical origins. He does not mention, for instance, Hegel's cult of history and the dialectical method as crucial components of Marx's secular political religion. Without dialectics, one cannot understand the Marxian dream of a classless society to be achieved via revolutionary cataclysms. I emphasize this point because, unlike Pipes, I think communism was first and foremost about ideas. Marxists, Leninists, and Maoists wanted power, of course, but they also wanted to translate their utopian worldview into a new order where the forces of good (Labor) would oppose and finally defeat those of evil (Capital).

I also expected a deeper treatment of communism's appeal to intellectuals and industrial workers, East and West alike. Pipes mentions that Stalin used antifascism to attract support but does not dwell on the seductive power of communism's professed ideals. Once again, communism was not only about terror, but also, as François Furet showed in his great book *The Passing of an Illusion* (1999), about dreams, expectations, messianic fervor, and, for many, deep disillusionment. Pipes does not tell us enough about the role of disenchanted Marxists in the dissolution of Leninist myths and finally in the destruction of

communism. Despite such omissions, the book provides an unsparing and timely account of the rise and fall of communist utopian radicalism in the 20th century.

—VLADIMIR TISMANEANU

SPECIAL PROVIDENCE:
American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World.

By Walter Russell Mead. Knopf. 374 pp. \$30

Mead, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, believes that history matters, and that those who shape today's American foreign policy must understand the decisions of their predecessors. Only by studying the past, he writes, can we recognize what has made the United States "the most powerful country in the history of the world."

In the book's intellectual core, Mead sets forth a typology of four "basic ways of looking at foreign policy" that, he argues, have informed the nation's foreign affairs debates since the founding. "Hamiltonians" seek to link the national government with business and to integrate the country into the world economy. "Wilsonians" believe in upholding the rule of law and in spreading democratic values throughout the world, while "Jeffersonians" are less concerned with democratizing others than with preserving democracy at home. Finally, "Jacksonians" seek above all to maintain the country's physical security and economic well-being.

Often engaging, *Special Providence* is filled with details that will be new to many readers. Mead is incisive, for example, on the "special relationship" between Great Britain and the United States, and luminous in discussing the "missionary tradition" that has long informed America's engagement with the world. And who can quarrel with the notion that policymakers and citizens alike would benefit from knowing more about the American past? Mead's typology, though, may not offer much of a shortcut to understanding a messy world that cannot readily be reduced to a handful of discrete categories.

More fundamentally, *is* the past still prologue? When terrorists are willing to use commercial airliners to kill thousands of civilians, when opening a letter can send hundreds rac-

ing for antibiotics, and when the United States is forging partnerships with Russia and China, we are in uncharted waters. Mead's book demonstrates just how starkly the world has changed.

—JONATHAN ROSENBERG

**ILLINOIS JUSTICE:
*The Scandal of 1969 and the
Rise of John Paul Stevens.***

By Kenneth A. Manaster. Univ. of Chicago Press. 332 pp. \$27.50

In this account of an obscure, three-decade-old political scandal, Manaster crafts a compelling morality play around a theme that's more timely than ever: the often unseemly, but sometimes noble, intersection of law and politics. An attorney with a supporting role in the original events, Manaster provides a well-researched history of a 1969 scandal involving two Illinois supreme court judges. An up-and-coming Chicago litigator named John Paul Stevens investigated the allegations for a court-appointed commission. His effective work, which ultimately led to the resignation of both judges and significant reform of the Illinois legal system, helped him gain appointment to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in 1970 and then to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1975.

The Stevens connection may give this fine book its national significance, but the story of Illinois politics in the 1960s, "a culture that thrived on the fruits of influence and the enjoyment of clout," is compelling in its own right. The cast of characters is sometimes overwhelming but always fascinating. We have the original complainant, Sherman H. Skolnick, a thorn in the side of the political establishment with his frequent accusa-

tions of corruption in the justice system. There are reporters competing to break the story, plus disturbing indications that the culture of influence led the *Chicago Daily News* to downplay the allegations. There are the state supreme court justices, Ray Klingbiel and Roy Solfisburg, under investigation for accepting bank stock from a lawyer whose criminal appeal was before them. Any good scandal has a supporting cast of wheeler-dealers and hangers-on, and they are all here as well. Finally, there are the attorneys who sat on the special commission and those who conducted the investigation. The 1969 experience, Manaster observes, influences Justice Stevens's work on the Supreme Court today.

After our experience with independent counsel investigations that take years to complete, as Justice Stevens notes in the foreword to the book, it seems remarkable that the special commission in this case completed its work in just six weeks, the deadline set by the Illinois supreme court. Certainly there are differences between the two types of investigations, not the least of which is that independent counsel are charged with prosecution as well as investigation, while this commission had only the duty to investigate and report. But perhaps there is a lesson here. The criminal law may be the most complicated and least satisfying tool for addressing abuses of the public trust.

The Illinois supreme court justices were not prosecuted for their lapses. But they were forced to resign, and the public learned about the intricate web of influence in the justice system of the state. One finishes the story believing that this was enough.

—KATY J. HARRIGER

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

**THE RECKLESS MIND:
*Intellectuals in Politics.***

By Mark Lilla. New York Review Books. 216 pp. \$24.95

This elegant little book is a victim of its own success. Moving briskly from one denunciation to another, taking sure aim at a gallery

of 20th-century intellectuals who entangled themselves in practical matters, Lilla, a professor on the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago, leaves readers convinced but unhappy. His suggestion that intellectual flirtation with politics all too often leads to pathological results—tyran-

Current Books

nies of both left and right—is amply supported but finally depressing.

Lilla deftly eviscerates the ambitions of Martin Heidegger and Michel Foucault, and mercilessly exposes the rather banal liberalism that emerges, almost unwillingly, from Jacques Derrida's deconstructionism. He is more forgiving of Walter Benjamin, whose messianism, Lilla argues, should be rescued from the bad Marxist uses to which it has often been put. And he writes with some admiration of Alexandre Kojève, the influential interpreter of Hegel, and of Carl Schmitt, the conservative political theorist whose antiliberalism, based on a conviction that conflict and enmity are essential to political life, has been adopted at both ends of the political spectrum.

The essays in this book began as reviews in the *New York Review of Books* and the *Times Literary Supplement*, and now and then that etiology shows through. But this is not debilitating, and Lilla's assessments of the main currents of 20th-century intellectual life, especially French and German, are accurate and cogent. The book functions as a sort of primer on Continental thought from 1900 to 1989.

In a long concluding essay, "The Lure of Syracuse," Lilla attempts to untangle the threads of Plato's complex position on philosophy and politics. (Plato sailed several times to Syracuse in a futile attempt to institute an ideal state there by educating the philosophically minded tyrant Dionysius the Younger.) Lilla is right to argue that Plato's cel-

ebrated defense of the philosopher-king is meant as a cautionary tale, not a blueprint for political reform. And he is likewise right to emphasize that eros, the force of desire, can lead to either wisdom or tyranny: The philosopher-king and the tyrant are not so dissimilar, except in the crucial sense that eros inspires one to seek the truth and the other to seek only his own satisfaction.

But Lilla provides little in the way of wisdom about how truth seekers can avoid becoming, in his term, "philotyrants." We have indeed grown wary of big ideas entering the political realm, especially as wielded by those with little taste for the messy details of life—such people tend to be dangerous. And yet, one doesn't have to be an intellectual to fear a politics devoid of ideas, hope, idealism, and some norm of justice that takes us beyond the materials given.

Lilla's provocative book is valuable less for its conclusions than for the deep response it implicitly demands. What is philosophy for? Should wisdom be pursued for its own sake, or is there an intellectual duty to try to change the world? Socrates tells us that the philosopher, once escaped from the metaphysical imprisonment of the cave, seeks to make the difficult downward journey in order to free his fellows. Everyone with a feeling for philosophy must decide whether to take that trek. Unfortunately, an awareness of the dangers only makes the choice more pressing.

—MARK KINGWELL

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

SPUTNIK:

The Shock of the Century.

By Paul Dickson. Walker. 310 pp. \$28

Dickson was a freshman at Wesleyan University in 1957 when he saw the first Soviet-made satellite scooting through the night sky at 18,000 miles per hour. That was the year Elvis Presley recorded "Jailhouse Rock," Jimmy Hoffa got elected head of the Teamsters, Beaver Cleaver first shuffled his feet on CBS, and the National Guard escorted black students into Central High School in Little Rock. American

democracy was forward looking and righteous, communist collectivism was backward and evil—so why had the Russians beaten us into space with this 184-pound basketball called Sputnik?

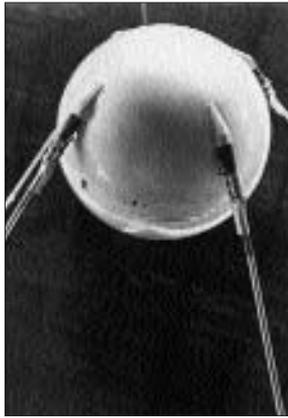
As Dickson recounts in this entertaining, admirably straightforward account of how and why America entered the space race, Sputnik changed the terms of the Cold War, mostly for the better. Until Sputnik (a Russian word meaning "traveling companion of the Earth"), the Eisenhower administration had other things on its mind—

namely, whether the Soviet Union was really turning out long-range nuclear missiles “like sausages,” as Nikita Khrushchev boasted. Only when a RAND Corporation report stressed that satellites could track Soviet military activities did American leaders grow interested.

But there were procedural hurdles. Until the creation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, many different scientific groups and branches of the military vied for the job of launching satellites. And Congress could not easily be persuaded that satellite reconnaissance was even possible. A senator from Louisiana, listening to the testimony of America’s top rocket scientists, broke in to ask whether they were out of their minds. The Soviets faced obstacles of their own, including the kind of paranoia that led Joseph Stalin to lock up the country’s best rocket scientist in Siberia, for fear that the man was scheming to overthrow the Soviet government.

Dickson focuses mostly on America, unveiling the personalities behind the blueprints (former Nazi Wernher von Braun ran the U.S. Army’s missile program) and moving back and forth in time to trace the short- and long-term effects of Sputnik. Though it’s always irritating to be told what Americans felt at a given time, the writer makes a good case for how radically the satellite destabilized and redirected the national psyche. Sputnik not only opened people’s automatic garage doors as it passed over, it also persuaded taxpayers to hand over billions of dollars for John F. Kennedy’s moon-landing program. It yielded a generation of science majors and tipped the balance in education away from rote learning and toward independent thinking. It ultimately created a nation of e-mailing, Web-siting high-technophiles who couldn’t build a road or repair a bridge if their lives depended on it.

“No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money,” Samuel Johnson is said to have observed. Dickson is no blockhead, but



A model of Sputnik I

rather a journeyman writer of more than 40 books on such topics as ice cream, baseball, jokes, names, slang, think tanks, golf, and Frisbees. Here, he melds the work of innumerable scientists and scholars (his bibliography runs to 18 pages) with the “incredible amount” of material declassified during the past decade. As for the book’s illustrations, many are from a collection of Sputnik-related photographs the author

bought on eBay.

Who, in 1957 or 2000, could have predicted that the first shock of the next century would result not from space-age technology but from a handful of men bearing box cutters and airline tickets?

—A. J. HEWAT

***THEATER OF DISORDER:
Patients, Doctors, and the
Construction of Illness.***

By Brant Wenegrat. Oxford Univ. Press.
292 pp. \$35

Wenegrat, an associate professor of psychiatry at Stanford University School of Medicine, argues that many human illnesses of past and present are in fact “illness roles.” Patients adopt and play out these roles for their own benefit, often with the encouragement of deluded or naive doctors. He doesn’t contend that all disorders, or even all mental disorders, qualify as illness roles. Rather, he limits his attention to those forms of suffering that have no underlying organic basis and that are relatively circumscribed in time and place. Some patients knowingly fashion their symptoms, whereas others take on their roles with utter sincerity. But Wenegrat has little sympathy for any of them. Illness roles, he maintains, are “inherently antisocial.”

Despite massive detail and documentation, Wenegrat makes several careless errors—he botches a date, misconstrues the work of Anton Mesmer, and uses the obsolete term *hysteria*—but the book suffers from several larger problems. On the con-

ceptual level, Wenegrat never explains what distinguishes an illness role from a true illness. While hedging about chronic fatigue syndrome and multiple chemical sensitivity, he is confident that schizophrenia qualifies as genuine, even though the incidence of diagnosed schizophrenia is a fraction of what it was a generation ago. And he avoids entirely such difficult examples as post-traumatic stress disorder.

On the methodological level, Wenegrat often generalizes from a case to a class. After telling of a therapist who seemed intent on applying the multiple personality disorder label to a patient influenced through hypnosis and outright coercion, the author declares that the disorder always develops as a way of pleasing the therapist. He similarly suggests that because 19th-century neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot molded his “grand hysterics,”

whose symptoms included seizures and delusions, manipulative therapists control all such patients.

Finally, the moral level: To dismiss suffering people as playing roles for gain is condescending, if not hostile. Wenegrat archly assumes that behavioral scientists can explain the whys and wherefores of human suffering better than the sufferers themselves. With his many curious anthropological examples of demonic possession and collective neurosis, he exalts the detached scientific observer while showing little sympathy for forms of psychic pain unfamiliar to our culture.

Theater of Disorder is a missed opportunity. Illness roles are pervasive and powerful, and they shouldn't be treated as merely outlandish.

—KARL E. SCHEIBE

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FROM THE CENTER

September 11, 2001, has joined December 7, 1941, atop the list of dates seared into the American memory. Yet while the attacks were devastating, they also opened up important long-term opportunities for the United States. America should now use its power and influence, as it did following World War II, to foster greater peace and prosperity in the world.

The shock of terrorist attacks is reverberating around the globe. From the United States to Russia, from Iran to China, and from Germany to Pakistan, nations are reexamining their relationships with one another and reconsidering their international roles. In this new environment, opportunities abound for the United States to strengthen its ties with other nations and resolve some of the world's most intractable disputes.

To succeed, we must improve our understanding of other nations and bring fresh approaches to international challenges. That means, for example, deepening our appreciation of the grievances and poverty that fuel support for terrorism, and it means transforming our international alliances, non-proliferation policies, and development assistance into more effective antiterrorism tools.

This is where the Woodrow Wilson Center comes in. The Wilson Center promotes serious, constructive dialogue on national and international issues in a civil and bipartisan setting. Those who come to the Center are not narrow specialists or ideologues but scholars, policymakers, and business leaders with wide-ranging interests and a firm grip on the challenges we confront. They are remarkable people, blessed with independent and vigorous minds and capable of analyzing complex events with judgment and insight, and of separating facts from propaganda, truth from half-truths and lies.

Many of the Center's activities are helping to clarify our vision of the post-9/11 world. Two areas where the Center is making an important contribution to the public dialogue are in the consideration of civil liberties in wartime and of the political climate of the Middle East and Central and South Asia.

The Center has hosted several meetings inquiring into the delicate balance between

national security and civil liberties, including a discussion of the civil liberties of Arab Americans and a forum with Chief Justice William Rehnquist on the wartime policies of presidents Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Some participants insisted that severe restrictions on civil liberties should never be countenanced; others observed that temporary wartime restrictions have usually been followed by an expansion of freedom in the postwar years.

Many commentators have noted that the United States lacks sufficient expertise on the Middle East and Central and South Asia. The Wilson Center is making great strides to help remedy that deficiency. It recently hosted symposiums on U.S. relations with Egypt, Jordan, Iran, and Pakistan; seminars on suicide terrorism

and the role of new media in the Middle East; a meeting on India's response to terrorism with the Indian ambassador to the United States; and a showing of the widely acclaimed Italian film on Afghanistan, *Jung (War): In the Land of the Mujaheddin* (2000).

These events, which featured scholars and policymakers with substantial experience in the countries being discussed, highlighted the many challenges and opportunities in the Muslim world. Many speakers emphasized that the United States will only defeat terrorism if it fights with the tools of peace as well as the tools of war. By bringing the Israelis and Palestinians back to the peace table, exploring possibilities for new ties with Syria and Iran, and encouraging key allies, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, to open up their societies, the United States can help provide greater hope and opportunity to people in the Middle East and beyond.

The Wilson Center offers a model of how public discourse should proceed in a country as vast and diverse as ours. Now, perhaps more than ever, we need thoughtful discussion of the complex challenges facing the nation and the world. The Wilson Center is committed to promoting the dialogue and research that will help America meet its goals.

Lee H. Hamilton
Director





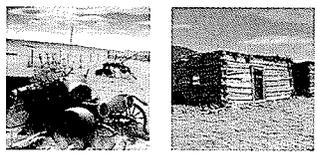
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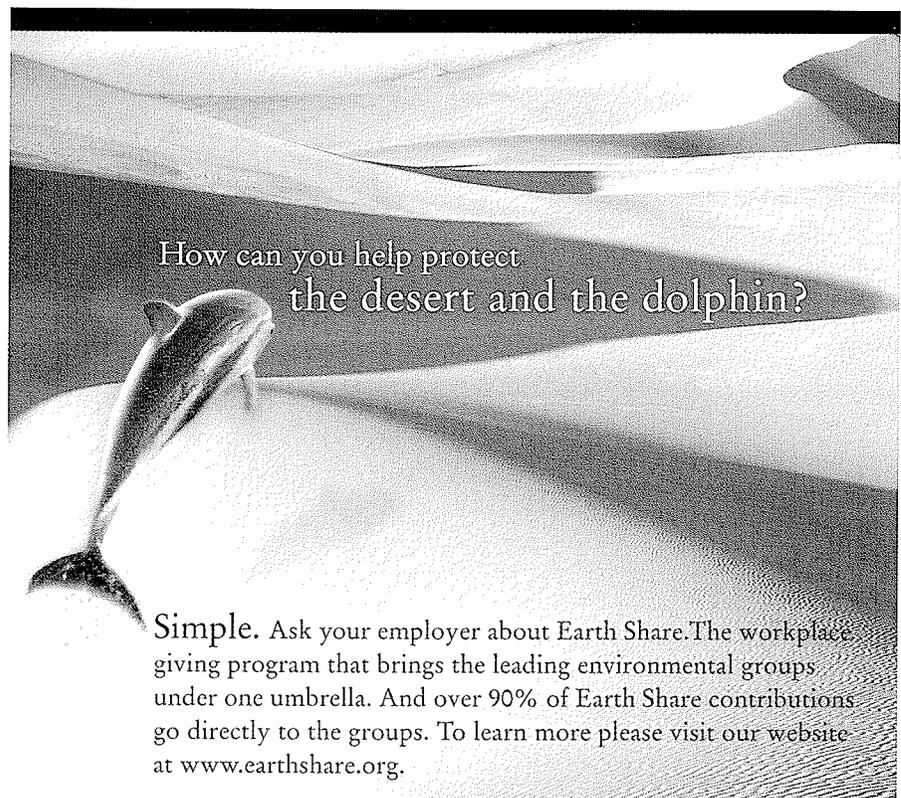
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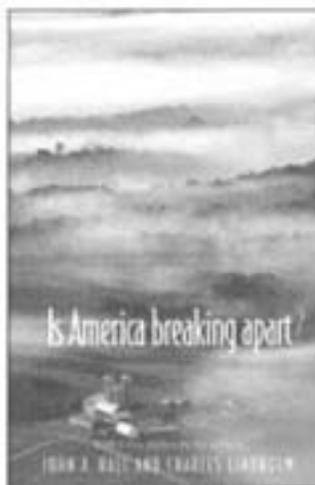


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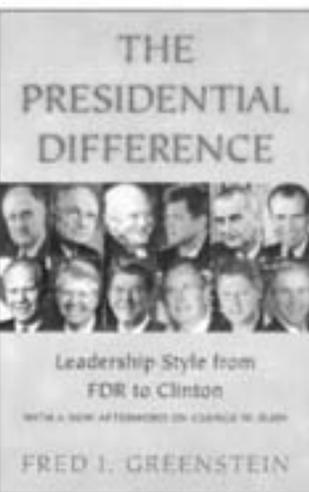
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