25th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

WQ

THE WILSON QUARTERLY

WINTER 2001
$6.00/ CAN $7.80
www.wilsonquarterly.com

Europe's Existential Crisis
BY MARTIN WALKER

Mr. Bellow's Masterpiece

The Russian Demographic Meltdown

In Search of Cosmic Harmony

THE GULF WAR'S LEGACY OF ILLUSIONS

WQ

An Invitation

Please join us in Washington, D.C.,
October 2001, as the
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
celebrates the 25th Anniversary of

The Wilson Quarterly

Details to be announced in the Spring 2001 issue of the magazine. Participation will be limited. To be included on our mailing list, please send an e-mail to WQ@WWIC.SI.EDU, *or write to the* Wilson Quarterly, *One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004–3027. Attention: Anniversary.*

Subscribers

We've got a **NEW WEB ADDRESS.** You can now find us at

http://www.wilsonquarterly.com

At our Web site, you can . . .

- **Check the current status** of your *Wilson Quarterly* subscription
- **Change your subscriber address**
- **Order** a subscription

Our Web site also features . . .

- **Summaries** of the contents of the current issue
- **Selected articles** in their entirety from previous issues
- A generous selection of current **Periodical reviews**
- **Book reviews**, with ordering links to Amazon.com
- An **index** to articles from more than 20 years of the WQ
- Direct **links** to other Wilson Center sites

Editor's Comment

Scholarly passion is regrettably rare, and often hidden. In Murray Feshbach, the author of this issue's lead article, that passion is unmistakable. A visit to his Wilson Center office, for example, seldom fails to yield an urgent lecture on the desperate state of Russian society, punctuated by anecdotes, asides, and quips while supporting charts and graphs chug from his computer printer and he reaches into the neat stacks of documents piled high almost everywhere. There! he says excitedly, jabbing a finger at a table surrounded by swirling Cyrillic text. There are the numbers that prove his point. In Feshbach's presence, it is absolutely essential that you get his point.

People have been getting Murray Feshbach's point for several decades: Politicians, government officials, journalists, and others with an interest in things Russian regularly consult him. After arriving at the U.S. Bureau of the Census in 1957, he joined a small group of government and academic analysts who explored the inner life of the Soviet Union, ferreting out bits of information from obscure sources and personal contacts to construct a statistical montage of the country's vital signs. (Gathering data became much easier after the death of communism, he says, but things have become "a little less better" in recent years.) By the 1970s, this research was pointing to unexpected weaknesses in the Soviet system. In 1980, Feshbach and Christopher Davis dropped a bombshell when they documented a sharp rise in Soviet infant mortality. Later, after he had moved on to Georgetown University, word filtered back from Soviet sources that the revelation had saved thousands of infant lives. Feshbach grows unaccustomedly somber when he tells the story. It was, he says, his proudest moment.

Feshbach's fresh warning about the Russian condition in this issue represents a return in more than one respect. We first published his work 20 years ago, after he spent a year as a Wilson Center Fellow. It is a delight to have him back at the Center, now as a Senior Scholar, and in our pages as well.

THE WILSON QUARTERLY (ISSN-0363-3276) is published in January (Winter), April (Spring), July (Summer), and October (Autumn) by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars at One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004–3027. Complete article index now available online at http://wwics.si.edu/WQ/WEBIND.HTM. Subscriptions: one year, $24; two years, $43. Air mail outside U.S.: one year, $39; two years, $73. Single copies mailed upon request: $7; outside U.S. and possessions, $8; selected back issues: $7, including postage and handling; outside U.S., $8.
Periodical postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. All unsolicited manuscripts should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.
Members: Send changes of address and all subscription correspondence with *Wilson Quarterly* mailing label to Subscriber Service, *The Wilson Quarterly*, P.O. Box 420406, Palm Coast, FL 32142–0406. (**Subscriber hot line: 1-800-829-5108.**) Postmaster: Send all address changes to *The Wilson Quarterly*, P.O. Box 420406, Palm Coast, FL 32142–0406. Microfilm copies are available from Bell & Howell Information and Learning, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. U.S. newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 2020 Superior Street, Sandusky, Ohio 44870 (for information, call 1-800-221-3148).
ADVERTISING: Kathy Read, TEL.: (202) 691-4018, FAX: (202) 691-4036. PUBLISHER/MAIL ORDER: Kalish, Quigley & Rosen, TEL.: (212) 399-9500, FAX: (212) 265-0986.

WQ
WINTER 2001
THE WILSON QUARTERLY
Published by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
WQ Online: http://www.wilsonquarterly.com

COVER: Desert Storm victory parade, New York, June 10, 1991. Photograph by Robert Maass/SIPA Press. Design by David Herbick.

USPS 346-670 | Volume XXV, Number 1 | Printed in the U.S.A.

Correspondence

Letters may be mailed to One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004–3027, or sent via facsimile, to (202) 691-4036, or e-mail, to wq@wwic.si.edu.
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.

Turkey's Prospects

I would like to add a few remarks to the two arguments made in your articles on Turkey ["The Turkish Dilemma," *WQ*, Autumn '00] that may point toward how Turkey's chronic political dysfunction may end.

Though Cengiz Çandar obviously doesn't share the worshipful attitude toward Atatürk of the Kemalist elite, in saying that Atatürk "invented the tools necessary to turn an empire into a republic" he nevertheless overstates the founder's contribution. The only "tools" essential for transforming Turkey are the minds of Turkey's citizens.

In fact, thoroughgoing as Atatürk's revolution may appear, it hardly touched the keystone of Turkey's stultifying political culture: patriarchal authority. Mustafa Kemal himself was dubbed "the Father of Turks." Over three-quarters of a century later, Turks still speak of the "Daddy State," and former president Süleyman Demirel, who last summer reluctantly left office after seven years, was also known as "Dad."

Atatürk seemed to understand that liberating the minds of the Turkish people was the key to joining the West. Unfortunately, given his military background and the need to expel foreign invaders, Atatürk adopted an authoritarian style that inadvertently recreated the very structure he'd sought to demolish.

This patriarchal structure has ensured that patronage overshadows principle and encouraged Turks to ape the forms of the West without understanding, much less internalizing, their underlying essence. As the writer Çetin Altan pointed out, the Westernizing reforms that started with the Ottomans generated in Turks an appetite for Western goods but not the capacity to manufacture them.

Turkey's history has created other obstacles to emulating the West. While the two world wars discredited nationalism in Europe, Turkey's experience, particularly its neutrality during World War II, seemed to confirm the virtues of jealously guarded sovereignty. Turkey's unique experience of nationalism set this value on a collision course with the other founding principle of Kemalism—the importance of joining the West. Just as few in Europe and the United States have pondered the possible unforeseen implications of the European Union's becoming a Eurasian power, which Martin Walker notes in his essay, few Turks anticipated that the sacrifice of sovereignty would be a consequence of joining Europe, and only now are they beginning to grapple with it.

Joining Europe would have another unintended—but enormously beneficial—consequence: undermining the very patriarchy that has so infantilized Turkish society. In practice, the authority of a Turkish father depends as much on the rigidity of the economy and the lack of credit as on traditional culture. European-scale prosperity and finance would erode this authority by giving ambitious young people the material wherewithal to strike out on their own.

As Çandar says, Turkey's current position is full of ironies. If Turkey does manage to join the European Union, it will have realized Atatürk's dream in spite of the authoritarian generals and senior bureaucrats who claim, misleadingly, to be his political heirs.

Whit Mason
Fellow, Institute of Current World Affairs
Istanbul, Turkey

Allow me to congratulate you for publishing two well-argued articles on the domestic situation and international posture of Turkey. Even if there are gaps in Martin Walker's knowledge of history (the Ottoman dynasty, which descended from a Turcoman warlord, did not trace its ancestry to the Prophet Muhammad; Cyprus was conquered by the Ottomans in the 16th, not the 14th, century; "mountain Turks" was never the official term for Kurds), the fact remains that his main argument is well worth

considering. It is by encouraging the European Union to accept Turkey as a full member that the United States may be creating problems for itself, given that the EU and the United States often pursue different policies in the Middle East and the former Soviet Union. The flaw in Walker's argument is that the implementation of a common EU foreign and defense policy and Turkey's full membership in the EU are still distant prospects. Of course, while the process goes on, all the parties to it will pursue their national interests. One should concentrate, therefore, on Turkey's actual approach to current problems rather than on hypothetical changes that EU membership may bring to it.

One hesitates to cross swords with Cengiz Çandar, both because he is a distinguished analyst of Turkish affairs and because his liberalism is in tune with current orthodoxy. Yet the fact remains that the reforms being implemented in Turkey today became possible only after the military "engineered" the fall of the demagogic government led by the Islamist politician Necmettin Erbakan in 1997, just as the late prime minister Turgut Özal was able to open the country to the global free market only because the military had taken power in 1980. The moderate stance of the Islamic Virtue Party today owes much to the banning of its predecessor, the Welfare Party. The Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Öcalan would not have called on the militants of his Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) to end their insurrection and leave the country had he not been captured, tried, and sentenced to death. Advocates of liberal solutions to Turkey's domestic divisions are thus the beneficiaries of measures, often harsh, that are taken by the military in the name of Kemalism, the legacy of Atatürk. The current efforts at democratization are a delicate process that could threaten public order in view of the antipathy and mutual fear between secularists and Islamists.

On Republic Day, October 29th, an Islamist daily came out with the headline "Congratulations on your 77th anniversary." This is not surprising: More than a century had to pass before French Catholics could bring themselves to celebrate the anniversary of the French Revolution, which, as Çandar rightly says, provided the inspiration for Atatürk's reforms. Turkey will get there too, but it will take time and patience. In the meantime, order has to be preserved. Turkey has a freely elected parliament, and it is a safe and friendly country, to which foreign officers like to be posted and which tourists enjoy visiting. Let us keep it that way, remembering the awful example of Iran, where liberal criticism of the Shah opened the way to government by illiberal mullahs.

Andrew Mango
Author of Atatürk *(2000)*
London, England

More on Privacy

I read the article "The Genetic Surprise" by Phillip J. Longman and Shannon Brownlee with great interest [WQ, Autumn '00]. The authors do not mention that there is, in fact, a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on genetic information in the private insur-

ance market. The law, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, generally prohibits group health plans and health insurance issuers from establishing eligibility rules for enrollment that discriminate based on genetic information. It also prohibits those same plans and issuers from charging an individual in a group health plan a higher premium based on genetic information.

Nevertheless, their points remain valid that the increasing sophistication of the private insurance market in calculating risk has enormous ramifications. If these points were taken to their logical extension, the population could be segmented into smaller and smaller groups based on health, which could lead to a situation in which the very sick were paying enormous costs, essentially underwriting their own health care costs, while the healthy were paying very little. This would seem to undermine the basis for affordability—that is, pooling the healthy with the sick in order to spread the risk and bring the costs to an average that is more affordable for a wider population.

States have been coping with insurance regulation for a long time. At least 28 states have established risk pools for those who are too sick to buy affordable insurance in the private market. This does spread the costs to a broader economic base. However, the funding mechanisms for these risk pools vary. For example, some are funded through state revenues and some allow insurance companies to write off their contributions to the pools. One could argue that this, in effect, relieves insurance companies of bearing the costs for those who fall ill. For that reason, the funding mechanisms for these pools should become part of the discussion on whether or how to restructure health insurance.

Insurance companies are profit-seeking organizations and, thus, are risk averse. Genetic information is only one mechanism that companies can use to restrict their exposure. Riders to exclude conditions, restrictions in benefit coverage, and aggregate limits on disease-specific conditions are also prevalent and also lessen the value of health insurance for selected individuals. Health care costs continue to escalate, and insurance companies can't be faulted for striving to remain profitable.

Clearly, the reliance on the private insur-

ance market for health insurance is a concern for all of us. I don't believe, however, that the threat caused by the potential uses of genetic information, as a single factor, necessarily triggers a move to socialized medicine. The complexities of health care, the history of health care delivery in this country, and health care economics, not to mention the desires of the American populace, could well take us down a much more circuitous route before any solution or outcome is evident.

Gale P. Arden
Director, Private Health Insurance Group
Health Care Financing Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, D.C.

Giving people control over the conditions under which their personal information is used or shared is an excellent baseline approach to protecting privacy in the Internet age. As Jeffrey Rosen points out in "Why Privacy Matters" [WQ Autumn '00], people do not necessarily want information to be kept private. They want to have control over its release. Unfortunately, this approach may not be all that protective of privacy. One reason is that the level of effort needed to read the fine print of every disclosure agreement is absurdly high. Another reason, however, is more subtle. The psychological character of the Internet environment itself influences human behavior and may affect people's choices when they make decisions online—which is where most of these decisions will be made.

Behavior online is often less inhibited. People online have a propensity to behave uncharacteristically—to become more aggressive, more abrupt, or unusually willing to make self-disclosures. Psychological and physical distance, unusual communication rhythms, lowered self-awareness, and other features of Internet-based interaction can lead to behavior that would be far less likely in a face-to-face setting, where social constraints, norms, and potential consequences are more salient. These characteristics of the Net will affect the way we make decisions about privacy and the conditions under which personal information can be relinquished. Many will make "disinhibited" choices they regret later. For example, the most revealing admissions in legal cases often come from e-mail, even though the sender is aware that e-mail can be monitored and archived.

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

Statement of ownership, management, and circulation of *The Wilson Quarterly*, published four times a year at One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004–3027 for October 1, 2000. General business offices of the publisher are located at One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004–3027. Name and address of publisher is Kathy Read, One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004–3027. Name and address of editor is Steven Lagerfeld, One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004–3027. Name and address of managing editor is James Carman, One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004–3027. Owner is the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004–3027. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of exempt status for federal income tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months. The average number of copies of each issue during the preceding 12 months is: (A) Total number of copies printed: 64,552; (B) Paid circulation: (1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales: 2,129; (2) Mail subscriptions: 55,604; (C) Total paid circulation: 57,733; (F) Total free distribution by mail, carrier, or other means: 883; (G) Total distribution 59,716; (H) Copies not distributed: 4,836; (I) Total: 64,552; Percent paid circulation: 96.68; The actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date is: (A) Total number of copies printed: 61,886; (B) Paid circulation: (1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales: 1,969; (2) Mail subscriptions: 51,374; (C) Total paid circulation: 53,343; (F) Total free distribution by mail, carrier, or other means: 895; (G) Total distribution: 55,538; (H) Copies not distributed: 6,348; (I) Total: 61,886; Percent paid circulation: 96.05. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Kathy Read, *Publisher*

Even with strong measures in place to ensure that we can control the release of personal information, we will still need to acquire a heightened awareness about our decision-making processes, and how the online environment affects them, if we are to use that control effectively.

Patricia Wallace
Chief, Information Strategies, and Executive Director, Center for Knowledge and Information Management
Robert H. Smith School of Business
University of Maryland, College Park

Lincoln's Intent

Allen C. Guelzo ["Lincoln and the Abolitionists," *WQ*, Autumn '00] sees Abraham Lincoln's road to abolishing slavery as somehow odd or unusual in American governmental leadership, not just for Lincoln's time but presumably from the Founding Fathers to the present. By juxtaposing reform against compromise, Guelzo brings to mind the '60s activists of another century—the 20th—who were perfectly willing to sacrifice compromise on the altar of zealous radical change, i.e., "reform."

Two points need to be made. First, definitions of American ideals have been open to interpretation ever since they were articulated decades before the founding of the Republic. John Locke, whose writing ushered in the Age of Reason (and whom Guelzo seems to view with suspicion), said in his famous *Second Treatise of Government* (1690) that people are innately good; have natural rights of life, liberty, and property; and should be protected by constitutional government. Thomas Jefferson substituted " the pursuit of happiness" for "property" in this triad of human rights in the Declaration of Independence (1776). But in the Bill of Rights (Fifth Amendment, 1789), the Framers of the Constitution restored "property" to its former place.

Both Locke and Lincoln knew that the terms are synonymous; that a dominant trait of human nature is greed ("selfishness," said Lincoln), and that the law must control it. When the South challenged the Constitution by seceding from its jurisdiction, especially by using the economic argument that slaves were property, England and France—initially sympathetic to the Confederacy—closely watched how Lincoln would respond. When all compromise failed, even by force of Union arms up to September 1862, Lincoln finally proclaimed emancipation, a triple-pronged political, economic, and moral (and mortal) blow to the Old South that both preserved the Constitution and freed the slaves.

Second, in Lincoln's day—from the Age of Jackson to the Civil War—the United States was widely regarded inside the country and beyond it as an "experiment in democracy." That it was: a republic minus a monarch or global commitments à la Britain. Born in a pre-industrial age, it was tested most severely by the fact that the South remained rooted in an agrarian mode while the rest of the nation (the North and West) industrialized. When the North and West became the majority by 1860, the South dissolved the Union. "Is there, in all republics," Lincoln asked a joint session of Congress on July 4, 1861, "this inherent and fatal weakness?" He did not know the answer, but he never doubted that constitutional government must be preserved: "A right result will be worth more to the world than 10 times the men and 10 times the money it will cost."

This was not mere rhetoric; the rest of the world was struggling into an uncertain future as well. The years between 1860 and 1870 saw wars of national unification in three monarchical nations—Italy, Japan, and Germany—plus the creation of the Austria-Hungary Dual Monarchy. Ironically, all four had to be brought down by force of arms in the next century by a genuinely unified American people and their allies.

The war for the Union was "essentially a people's contest," Lincoln told the Congress on that July 4th, "a struggle of maintaining in the world that form and substance of government whose leading object is to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders [a subtle hint at ultimate emancipation]—to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all—to afford all an unfettered start and a fair chance in the race of life. This is the leading object of the government for whose existence we contend." It still is. Abraham Lincoln was a master statesman—and global reformer!

Clark G. Reynolds
Distinguished Professor of History
College of Charleston
Charleston, S.C.

Findings

Schools, Dazed

Education was one of the defining issues of the recent presidential campaign, and no doubt it will be an issue in the next campaign as well, and the one after that. School reform is in America's bloodstream, and that's not necessarily a sign of good health.

The historian Diane Ravitch, who served in the U.S. Department of Education as assistant secretary in charge of education research from 1991 to 1993 and is now a senior research scholar at New York University, with affiliations to a trinity of think tanks—the Brookings Institution, the Manhattan Institute, and the Progressive Policy Institute—has written an admirable account of what's been done to America's schools over the past century in the name of reform. The title of the book renders her judgment: *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*.

By setting the consequences of past policies in a rich historical context, Ravitch makes a forceful contribution to contemporary debates about standards, curricula, and methods in the nation's schools. She told a Washington audience recently that her book is a cautionary tale about how experts can muck things up, even when they mean well. "Avoid all 'movements' in education," she advised. "They throw reason to the winds."

The experts of the progressive education movement emerged at the start of the 20th century and were inspired by John Dewey, who said that the school was the primary means of social reform and that the teacher was "the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God." (That kind of statement would probably have had Dewey up on charges before a school board today for his insensitivity to atheists.)

Ravitch believes that successive waves of "progressive" reformers throughout the 20th century committed three great errors. They made the schools instruments of social engineering rather than instruments of, well, education. They assumed that large numbers of children were incapable of learning a great deal of what the schools had traditionally taught, and so were to be directed into essentially vocational tracks. And they thought that it was less important to teach knowledge than it was to engage students in activities and experiences.

Time and again, Ravitch observed, the reformers failed to ask the fundamental question (or else gave the wrong answer): "What is it that schools—and only schools—can and must do?" Her own answer was full of good sense: "The main purpose of education is to develop the mind and the character of students. You shouldn't try to manage the society through the schools. Just educate the kids, and educate *all* of them—expect *all* children to learn. The schools should teach literacy and numeracy and impart a proper understanding of history, the sciences, literature, and a foreign language; and they should encourage students to understand the importance of honesty, personal responsibility, intellectual curiosity, industry, kindness, empathy, and courage."

Ravitch, who is no less a champion of hard-pressed teachers than she is of students, noted that only 38 percent of America's teachers have minors or majors in academic subjects, such as history or mathematics or political science or literature. The degrees of the majority are in education—a field with many weeds. "If you could change just one thing about America's schools," Ravitch was asked, "what would it be?" She replied after only a moment: "What if all teachers were well educated?"

That's the language not of reform but of revolution.

Spare the Homework, Save the Child?

One of the hotter theaters of action in the school reform wars is the debate over homework. Consider the heated skirmish that occurred at a Harvard University forum on education this past fall. Etta Kralovec, vice president for learning with Training and Development Corporation in Maine, and political economist John Buell, the authors of *The End of Homework: How Homework Disrupts Families, Overburdens Children, and Limits Learning* (2000), staked out a controversial position: Homework is the great "black hole of learning." Even grade school students may have to spend more than two hours a night on it, while older students can put in as much as 50 or 60 hours a week of combined class time and homework.

Freedom: Pre-Sputnik kids didn't have much homework to worry about.

That's not always been the case. In 1901, for example, California legally banned homework, as part of a progressive education agenda. Once the memorization drills of the 19th century fell out of favor, the popularity of assigning homework went into a half-century decline in America. But after Sputnik was launched in 1957, school achievement became wedded to national political and economic goals, and the amount of homework increased significantly. That happened again in the 1980s, in response to Japan's decade of economic ascendancy—and to studies that had American high school students ranking near the bottom internationally in mathematics and science test scores.

Kralovec and Buell insist there are no conclusive studies linking homework and higher levels of scholastic achievement. What's more, they contend, homework actually widens the gap between underprivileged students and those with computers, stable home lives, and involved parents. So drop the homework, lengthen the school day, and leave students free after the bell rings to pursue outside interests and spend time with their families. (It's not surprising that some educators have accused Kralovec and Buell of pandering to students' sense of self-esteem.)

Janine Bempechat, an assistant professor of education at Harvard, took an opposing position: "The assignment of homework, over time, serves to foster the kinds of qualities that are critical to learning—persistence, diligence, and the ability to delay gratification."

But is homework the only thing eating away at American kids' free time? Jobs, sports, and extracurricular activities all compete with academic work for a larger portion of their attention. And the biggest sinkhole for their time? What else? Television.

A Shrinking Pay Gap?

There's good news and bad news about the controversial gap between the wages of women and men. Since 1979, the United

States has been narrowing the gap at a faster pace than 16 other countries, according to a new study by economists Francine D. Blau and Lawrence M. Kahn. But the differential is still greater in the United States than it is in eight of those countries.

A large part of the U.S. gap is a product of the higher *overall* level of wage inequality in the United States. For example, the less-skilled and less-educated fare worse in this country, regardless of gender, than they do in other affluent countries. Yet American women have been improving their job qualifications more quickly than women elsewhere—and it's possible they actually encounter less discrimination. "It seems plausible that the gender pay gap will continue to decline at least modestly in the next few years," Blau and Kahn say in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (Fall 2000). But thanks to continuing discrimination and the fact that women still do most of the housework and child care, "it seems unlikely to vanish."

Women's Pay as a Percentage of Men's
(Median weekly earnings of full-time workers)

	1979–81	1994–98
Australia	80	87
Austria	65	69
Belgium	na	90
Canada	63	70
Finland	73	80
France	80	90
Germany	72	76
Ireland	na	75
Italy	na	83
Japan	59	64
Netherlands	na	77
New Zealand	73	81
Spain	na	71
Sweden	84	84
Switzerland	na	75
United Kingdom	63	75
United States	63	76

Growing Attached

After University of Toronto philosophy professor Mark Kingwell, a vocal and public opponent of academic tenure, was awarded tenure, he reflected slyly on the development in his book *In Pursuit of Happiness: Better Living from Plato to Prozac* (2000):

> The rumors that my academic colleagues only gave me a permanent job so that I would finally shut up about them, or the theory that the surest way to tenure is to argue for its abolition on television, do not, so far as I know, have any basis in fact. Nor is it the case, as some people have suggested, that all tenured professors are like the tiny marine creature known as the sea squirt, whose unique evolutionary strategy involves finding a suitable home to attach itself to, at which point, finding the organ no longer necessary for survival, it consumes its own brain as food.

Viral Revolution

Rising rates of obesity in the United States may seem an inevitable consequence of lazy living, but a new study suggests that at least some obesity should be traced not to too much TV and an excess of Ring-Dings but to a virus.

For decades, the medical community resisted the notion that stomach ulcers were caused by a bacterium and not by "hurry, worry, and curry." Scientists are being more open-minded about the work of Nikhil Dhurandhar, an assistant professor of nutrition and food science at Wayne State University, who has proposed a link between a virus and obesity.

Dhurandhar and his colleagues infected chickens and mice with Ad-36, a virus that causes the common cold in humans. The infected animals put on almost 2.5 times as much body fat as the control group. Dhurandhar then looked at rates of Ad-36 infection in humans and found that 30 percent of obese individuals had antibodies to the virus, while only five percent of the lean subjects did.

The research is in an early stage, and the results are far from conclusive. Still, Dhurandhar's study, published in the August 2000 issue of the *International Journal of Obesity*, may well begin to revolutionize our understanding of obesity—not just by diminishing the social stigma associated with the condition but by pointing the way, in certain instances, to a simple cure.

Dhurandhar's findings are part of a larger

medical revolution that's linking more and more everyday germs to serious chronic conditions, such as heart disease and liver cancer. In 1997 the World Health Organization estimated that up to 84 percent of cases of some cancers are attributable to viruses, bacteria, and parasites. As Gail H. Cassell, vice president of infectious disease research at Eli Lilly and Company, wrote in *Emerging Infectious Diseases* (July–Sept. 1998) "Few areas of research hold greater promise of contributing to . . . the eventual relief of human suffering."

The Calendar at Work

The United Nations has declared 2001 the International Year of Volunteers. And also the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. And also the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance.

From 1959 (World Refugee Year) to 1993 (International Year for the World's Indigenous People), the UN General Assembly managed to keep each year's job assignment down to one. But since 1994, which was the international year of both the family and the "Sport and Olympic Ideal," years have borne increasing burdens.

And it's not just individual years: 2001 ushers in the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World. Weeks and days have their own responsibilities, from the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories (in May) to World Book and Copyright Day (April 23). It's only a matter of time until an International Happy Hour.

The Bear Facts

The myth was irresistible: On a hunt in the Mississippi Delta in 1902, the exuberant sportsman-president Theodore Roosevelt came upon a black bear that had been captured by a member of his party. Roosevelt refused to take the life of the helpless animal. The nation heard the story. To commemorate the event, a woman named Rose Michtom in Brooklyn made, and immediately sold, a couple of bears stuffed with excelsior and fitted with shoe-button eyes. Her husband, Morris, wrote the president asking for permission to market a line of the toy animals as "Teddy Bears." The president apparently said yes, and in no time at all the Michtoms couldn't keep up with the orders. They earned a fortune. The country took the teddy bear to heart, and kids took it to bed, where it has been a cuddly comfort ever since.

What actually happened during that 1902 hunt, according to Douglas Brinkley writing in *Oxford American* (November/December 2000), might not have sent Rose Michtom so quickly to the excelsior bin. There was a captured bear. But by the time Roosevelt happened upon the beast, it had crushed one of the hunting dogs to death and seriously wounded two others, and its own skull had been smashed by the butt of a rifle. The bear was unconscious and tied to a tree. Roosevelt refused under circumstances so dismaying to a true huntsman to shoot the bear. Instead, he had it put out of its misery by another member of the party, who used a bowie knife to slit the bear's throat. The carcass was draped across a horse and removed.

It was on its way into history—and the nursery.

Edgy Observations

In the age of the posted e-response, annotating a book—reacting to a text by challenging, commending, instructing, or razzing the author in pencil or ink right there on the page—may be a dying art. But the practice has a noble past, and some readers have been so good at it that their marginal notes are more interesting and valuable than the work they decorate. The English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (he of the Ancient Mariner, Kubla Khan, and opium dreams) was a vigorous annotator. Indeed, as H. J. Jackson reports in *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (Yale University Press, 2001), it was Coleridge who brought the word *marginalia* from Latin into

English when, in 1819, he published under that name in *Blackwood's Magazine* his notes on Sir Thomas Browne.

Coleridge even invented shorthand symbols to register his views of particular works with a minimum of fuss. In 1796, Jackson recounts, Coleridge and Robert Southey, his brother-in-law, wrote an epic poem, *Joan of Arc*. Years later, after relations between the two men had cooled, Coleridge criticized the portions of the poem Southey had written and devised a wicked system of annotation for the occasion:

> *S.E.* means *Southey's English*, i.e. no English at all.
> *N.* means Nonsense.
> *J.* means discordant *Jingle* of sound—one word rhyming or half-rhyming to another proving either utter want of ears, or else very long ones.
> *L.M.* = ludicrous metaphor.
> *I.M.* = incongruous metaphor.
> *S.* = pseudo-poetic Slang, generally, too, not English.

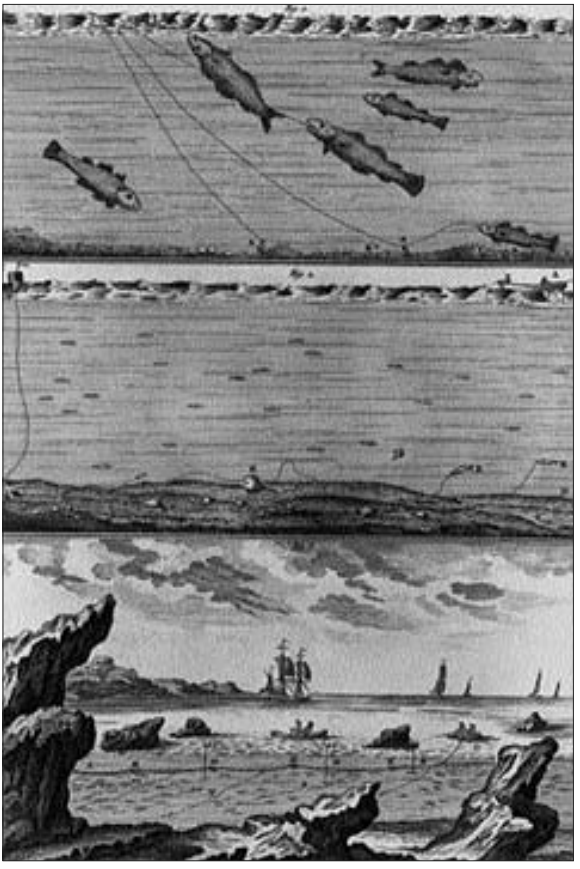
Fish Story

In the 14th century, a barrage of rapid climatic shifts began to batter the Northern Hemisphere. The climatic changes ushered in the Little Ice Age, a 550-year period of unpredictable weather patterns that disrupted agricultural production, undermined governments—and gave *Gadus morhua*, the Atlantic cod, a pivotal role in the discovery and settlement of North America.

According to Brian Fagan, author of *The Little Ice Age: Prelude to Global Warming 1300–1850*, "Climate change is the ignored player on the historical stage." But hundreds of new ice core samples and tree ring records are finally beginning to win for climate the attention it deserves. Scientists have now reconstructed an accurate meteorological account of the past 600 years, and the time line reveals a powerful, though indirect, link between weather and history. In that complex net of circumstances, the Atlantic cod was caught unawares.

The cod had been a dietary staple since Roman times, but it became indispensable in the eighth century, when the Catholic Church first allowed the pious to eat fish on holy days (because it was a "cold" food and therefore did not break the fast). By the onset of the Little Ice Age, the Atlantic cod was "a commodity more valuable than gold," and had a devoted following among English and Basque fishermen. When the temperature of the North Sea and the oceans surrounding Iceland began to fall in the mid-14th century, the cold-sensitive cod fled southwestward—and their devotees were forced to follow.

The Basques, says Fagan, probably explored the coast of Labrador by the mid-1400s—beating Columbus to the New World by several decades—and the English not long afterward. "By 1500, huge fishing and whaling fleets sailed every year for the



Fishing for cod off the coast of 18th-century Newfoundland

Grand Banks." It's no coincidence that the great headland of Massachusetts is called Cape Cod.

The precise dates for these events cannot be fixed, Fagan admits, but some facts are certain: Cooler conditions drove the cod, cod trade drove the fleets, and the Canadian and American coasts were explored and settled much earlier than they would have been in a more temperate world.

Antic Ancients

The Loeb Classical Library, which now includes almost 500 volumes, is acting a lot friskier these days than it did in its youth. The series began in 1911, and the format hasn't changed since then: Greek or Latin text on the left-hand page, English translation on the right. What *has* been changing over the past few decades is the honesty and completeness of those translations. They were always in English, at least nominally, but it was often an English more suited to a fabled 19th-century propriety than to 20th-century taste. The plain fact is those antique Greeks and Romans were routinely, unashamedly, spectacularly ribald. So omission, euphemism, and evasion kept the translators respectable (and maybe out of court). Whenever their ancient sources crossed the line, the translators retreated from stuffy English to a foreign tongue. They made naughty Greek into naughty Latin—and naughty Latin into wicked Italian.

Readers today can't be shocked by *what* they read in Greek and Roman authors. It's *where* they read it that may bring them up short. They're surprised to learn that the ancients had a word—or rather, lots of words—for sentiments and activities they may have supposed of more recent vintage.

There'll be no going back for the bold new Loeb. Jeffrey Henderson, the current editor of the series, did his Ph.D. dissertation in the 1970s on the impenetrably bawdy passages of Aristophanes—and made them all too blessedly clear. Once you've matched Aristophanes grin-for-grin, you can stare down Medusa.

Celebrate the Plate

Is there anything more "old economy" than a license plate? Stamped from metal, fastened to lumbering creatures from the Auto Age, and subjected to mud baths and bug splatterings, the license plate is the antithesis of high tech. But last year, in an effort to draw e-business to the state, Pennsylvania jettisoned its venerable slogan "Keystone State" in favor of the more cyber-savvy "WWW.STATE.PA.US." Nebraska will adorn its plate with a Web page address next year.

The Keystone State's regrettable "platelift" fell just short of the seminal anniversary in license plate history. One hundred years ago, in 1901, New York became the first state to require all motor vehicles to display license plates. To the joy of collectors ever since, the state neglected to issue official plates, leaving motorists free to craft their own vehicular badges in a variety of materials, sizes, and shapes, from Mickey Mouse-like ears to the now traditional rectangle.

Once state governments began to issue standardized plates—starting with Massachusetts in 1903—artistry was out and politicians stepped in, with state-issued slogans from New Hampshire's "Live Free or Die" to Idaho's "Famous Potatoes." Lately, however, there's been a return to the tradition of self-expressive plates. Vanity plates are familiar enough, but New York, for example, also offers drivers more than 200 optional legends, including "Conserve Open Space" and "Love Your Pet."

Now, after 100 prolific years of effort by plate makers in 50 states, it is nearly impossible to collect every model. Not that the 3,000 members of the Automobile License Plate Collectors Association don't try. Humble junkyard plates may go for only $5 or $10, but connoisseurs will pay a pretty penny for the rare or pristine: That first Massachusetts plate from 1903 earned a bid of $35,000 in an auction last year.

Russia's Population Meltdown

Declining birth rates and soaring rates of disease now threaten Russia's very survival as a nation.

by Murray Feshbach

Last July, in his first annual presidential address to the Russian people, President Vladimir Putin listed the 16 "most acute problems facing our country." Number one on the list, topping even the country's dire economic condition and the diminishing effectiveness of its political institutions, was the declining size of Russia's population. Putin put the matter plainly. The Russian population is shrinking by 750,000 every year, and (thanks to a large excess of deaths over births) looks likely to continue dropping for years to come. If the trend is not altered, he warned, "the very survival of the nation will be endangered."

Unfortunately, even Putin's grim reckoning of the numbers may understate the dimensions of the calamity confronting his country. Its birthrate has reached extraordinarily low levels, while the death rate is high and rising. The incidence of HIV/AIDS, syphilis, tuberculosis, hepatitis C, and other infectious diseases is soaring, even as the Russian health care system staggers. Perhaps 40 percent of the nation's hospitals and clinics do not have hot water or sewage. Seventy-five percent or more of pregnant women suffer a serious pathology during their pregnancy, such as sepsis, toxemia, or anemia. Only about 25 percent of Russian children are born healthy. (The rate of infant *mortality*, however, has declined, at least according to official statistics.) The leading Russian pediatrician Aleksandr Baranov estimates that only five to 10 percent of all Russian children are healthy.

As if these challenges were not enough, Russia bears the burden of decades of environmentally destructive practices that have a direct, harmful impact on public health. Their legacy includes not just conventional pollution of the air and water but serious contamination around many nuclear and chemical sites throughout the country. In Dzerzhinsk and Chapayevsk, two of the 160 "military chemical cities" that produce chemicals for the military-industrial complex, the rate of spontaneous abortions or miscarriages is above 15 percent of conceptions—a strong indication of chromosomal aberrations produced by the environment. Yet a weakened Russia lacks the means to contain ongoing pollution or to begin the monumental task of environmental cleanup. The decline in the size of the Russian population, and in Russians' general health, vastly increases the difficulty of creating the economic health upon which such a cleanup—and so much else—depends.

It is not only compassion that should arouse the concern of the West. While some may cheer the weakening of this less-than-

friendly power, still armed with large numbers of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, Russia's sickening decline raises the twin prospects of political disintegration and subsequent consolidation under an authoritarian leader hostile to Western interests. The nation's problems, in any event, can no longer be thought of as somehow only its own. Last year, an unclassified U.S. National Intelligence Estimate warned that the global rise of new and re-emergent infectious diseases will not only contribute to social and political instability in other countries but "endanger U.S. citizens at home and abroad." Deaths from infectious diseases (including HIV/AIDS) in the United States have nearly doubled, to some 170,000 annually, since 1980. And Russia's deteriorating weapons stockpiles pose a threat of unknown dimensions, particularly to the nearby Scandinavian countries.

The broad outlines of Russia's looming catastrophe can be sketched in stark terms. Russians are dying at a significantly faster rate than they are being born. Gloomy as it was, President Putin's speech was based on the relatively rosy projections of the Russian State Statistical Agency, or Goskomstat. This scenario assumes an increase in the total fertility rate beginning in 2006, a decline in the mortality rate, and an increase in net in-migration. But only the latter projection is remotely plausible.* By 2050, I believe, Russia's population will shrink by one-third. In other words, it will drop from roughly 145 million today to about 100 million, a blow that even a stable, prosperous country would have difficulty sustaining.

My projections, based on a model developed for West Germany by the Population Reference Bureau, are less apocalyptic than those of some other Russian officials, Duma members, and demographers. A new study produced under the auspices of the Institute of Social and Political Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences, for example, predicts that population will decline to between 70 and 90 million by 2045. If one takes the annual 750,000 decrease noted by Putin and multiplies it by 50 years, the result is a drop in population of 37.5 million persons, to a net total of 108 million—not far from my estimate of 100 million. The U.S. population, meanwhile, is projected by the U.S. Bureau of the Census to grow by 2050 from today's 275 million to 396 million, a level almost four times the projected Russian population.

In broad demographic terms, one can say that Russia's population is being squeezed by two pincers. On one side is the fertility rate, which has been falling since the early 1980s. Russian women now bear little more than half the number of children needed to sustain the population at current levels. In absolute terms, the number of annual births has dropped by half since reaching a high of 2.5 million in 1983. Due to Russia's rising mortality rates, fertility would need to reach 2.15 births per woman just to reach the so-called simple population replacement level. As of 1999, however, the total fertility rate stood at 1.17 births per woman. That is to say, Russian women bear an average of 1.17 children over their entire fertile life, from ages 15 to 49. Fertility would need to rise by some two-thirds to reach the replacement level.

The Goskomstat projection points to an increase in fertility to 1.7 births per woman by 2006. But this prediction seems to be

*Russia's net in-migration of between 150,000 and 200,000 in 1999 spared it an even more severe population decrease than the 750,000 recorded. Putin, calling upon ethnic Russians to return, has suggested that migration will solve the country's demographic problem. But unless a fresh round of deterioration drives more people from the Central Asian republics into Russia, annual net in-migration can be expected to shrink to between 100,000 and 150,000. And the reduced out-migration by Russian Jews, which has also improved Russia's numbers, may be only a temporary response to tensions in the Middle East and instances of anti-Semitism in Europe.

Illegal immigrants—mostly Chinese in the Russian Far East—are a source of new population. But illegals cannot necessarily be counted as full members of society, and indeed Russian officials are already beginning to express concern about the Chinese influx and its long-term implications for Russia's sovereignty over its eastern reaches.

> Murray Feshbach, *formerly branch chief at the U.S. Bureau of the Census and a research professor at Georgetown University, is a Senior Scholar at the Wilson Center. He is the author most recently of* Ecological Disaster: Cleaning up the Hidden Legacy of the Soviet Regime *(1995), and editor in chief of the* Environmental and Health Atlas of Russia *(1995).*

based on a simple extrapolation of existing trends that does not take into account the deterioration of Russians' health. The harsh reality is that the number of women in the prime childbearing ages of 20 to 29 is falling, while the rates of sexually transmitted diseases among men and women (which affect fertility) and gynecological illnesses are both rising. The ranks of eligible parents, especially fathers, are being thinned by tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, alcoholism, drug abuse, and other causes. Fifteen to 20 percent of all Russian families experience infertility, with males accounting for 40 to 60 percent of the cases. Even as mortality and disease take more and more young people out of the pool of potential parents, attitudes toward childbearing have changed for the worse. An estimated two-thirds of all pregnancies now end in abortions. It is hard to see how the hoped-for fertility gains will occur. A steeper decline in Russia's population seems unavoidable.

Death now visits Russia much more frequently than before. The annual death toll has risen by a third since the mid-1980s.

Mortality rates are also assumed to rise in the official calculation, but much less markedly than I anticipate. Some perspective on the Russian situation is provided by a comparison with the United States, which projects an average life expectancy at birth and survival rates for specific age groups that are far from the best in the world—especially among 15- to 19-year-old males, who kill themselves with drugs, alcohol, and motorcycles. But in the United States, a boy who lives to age 16 has an 88 to 90 percent chance of living to age 60. His Russian counterpart has only a 58-60 percent chance. And those chances are shrinking.

Tuberculosis is only one of the maladies whose surging incidence is not reflected in current Goskomstat projections. The disease flourishes among people weakened by HIV/AIDS, alcoholism, and poverty. Findings by the research institute of the Russian Federal Security Service project enormous numbers of deaths from tuberculosis. Whereas only 7.7 of every 100 new Russian tuberculosis victims died in 1985, the death rate is now 25.5 per 100. According to official reports, the number of tuberculosis deaths soared by 30 percent in the 1998–99 period. The 1999 death toll of 29,000 was about 15 times the toll in the United States, or nearly 30 times greater when measured as deaths per 100,000 population in both countries.

The Russian authorities also underestimate the future impact of HIV/AIDS, spread chiefly by sexual contact and intra-

venous drug use. Vadim Pokrovskiy of the Federal Center for AIDS Prevention, Russia's leading HIV/AIDS epidemiologist, estimates there will be five to 10 million deaths in the years after 2015 (deaths that, I believe, aren't reflected in the projections). Most of the victims will be 15 to 29 years old, and most will be males—further diminishing the pool of potential fathers.

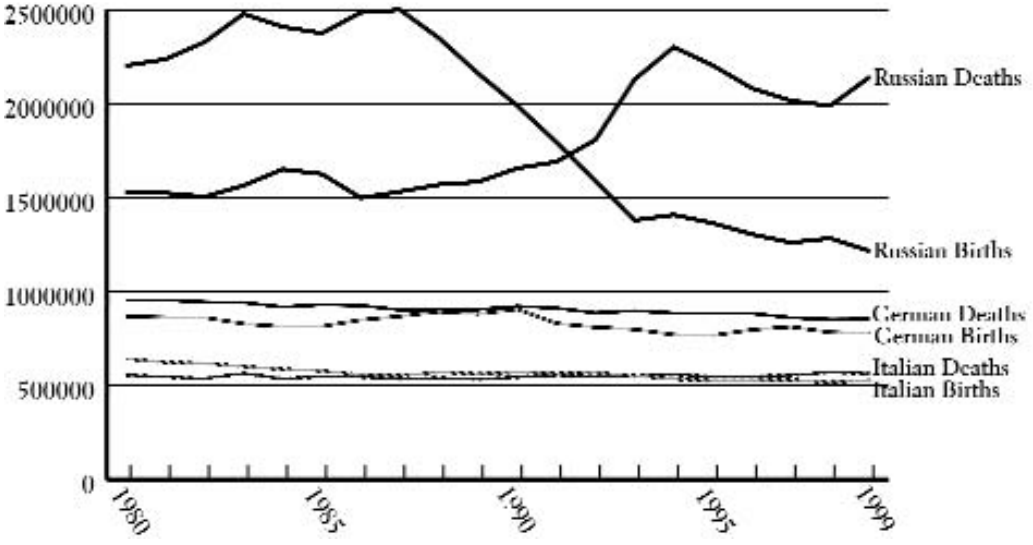
Moscow reported 2.5 new cases of HIV nationally per 100,000 population in 1998, but the actual rate may be five, 20, or even 50 to 100 times greater, according to Russian epidemiologists and health officials. (The U.S. HIV incidence rate was 16.7 new cases per 100,000 population in 1998.) The Baltic port city of Kaliningrad and its surrounding oblast hold the unhappy distinction of recording the highest official rate of HIV increase, at 76.9 new cases per 100,000. Moscow, however, is currently overtaking it.

Some Russian demographers take comfort from the fact that their country is not entirely alone, since deaths exceed births in a number of European countries. But in countries such as Germany and Italy, the net ratio is close to 1.1 deaths to every birth. In Russia, deaths exceeded births by 929,600 in 1999, a ratio of 1.8:1 . If health trends and environmental conditions are not dramatically changed for the better, Russia could see two or more deaths for every birth in the not-too-distant future.

None of this is to say that there are not some signs of improvement. Childhood vaccination rates for tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, and other diseases have risen since 1995. Vaccination for rubella (German measles), which causes birth defects when contracted by pregnant women in the first trimester, was added to Russia's prescribed immunization calendar in 1999. (However, no vaccines are produced in the country and none are yet imported; almost 600,000 cases were reported in 1999.) But the larger trends support the vision of looming demographic catastrophe. And a number of other developments also offer dark portents for the country's future rates of fertility and mortality, and for the general health of its people, especially its children.

Sexually transmitted diseases have seen incredible rates of increase during the past decade. These diseases cripple and kill, damage reproductive health, and

How Russia Compares, 1980–99



While Russia isn't the only nation to suffer more deaths than births, the size of the Russian gap is alarming—akin to what a country might experience during wartime.

are associated with the spread of HIV/AIDS. The causes can be traced to the explosion of pornography and promiscuity; to the growth of prostitution, notably among 10- to 14-year-old girls; and, especially, to drug abuse involving shared needles and syringes. In 1997, the Ministry of Internal Affairs estimated that the market for illegal drugs was around $7 billion, 600 times greater than in 1991.

The Russian Ministry of Health reported 450,000 new cases of syphilis in 1997, and Goskomstat published a figure of close to 405,000. These are the last reasonably accurate statistics we are likely to have, thanks to a 1998 law that imposes prison terms on syphilitics who contract the disease through drug abuse.

Just as one would predict, the number of registered new cases of syphilis declined in 1998 and 1999. However, the explosion in new cases of HIV, and a concomitant increase in the estimated number of drug addicts, belie the latest figures on syphilis. The "epidemiological synergy" between HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (including gonorrhea, which is vastly under-reported) suggests not only that syphilis is more widespread than reported but that further increases in the incidence of HIV/AIDS can be expected.

The 1998 law that classified drug addicts as criminals ensured that few addicts—a group at high risk for HIV—will seek treatment. A specialist cited in *Komsomol'skaya Pravda* in 1998 made this grim prediction: "We will see increased risk of complications and overdoses, the death rate among drug addicts will rise, incidence of HIV/AIDS will rise; and...the illegal market of drug-related services will begin to develop quite intensively."

Smoking is a habit among an estimated 70 percent of Russian males and one-third of females, and multinational tobacco companies aim to increase their sales in the country. The World Health Organization estimates that some 14 percent of all deaths in 1990 in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were traceable to smoking-related illnesses; it expects that number to rise to 22 percent by 2020.

Alcohol consumption reflects an epidemic of alcoholism. Russian vodka produced for the domestic market (usually in half-liter bottles) comes with a tear-off top rather than a replaceable cork or screw top because it's assumed that the bottle, once opened, will not be returned to the refrigerator. An estimated 20 million Russians—roughly one-seventh of the population—are alcoholics. Russia's annual death toll from alcohol poisoning alone may have risen to 35,000 in 2000, as compared with 300 in the United States in the late 1990s.

Hepatitis B has sharply increased in incidence, but the sole producer of vaccines for the disease told me in Moscow that only 1.3 million doses are produced annually to meet a total demand of 13 to 14 million doses. Perhaps even more alarming in the long run are increases in the incidence of **hepatitis C**, an illness that chiefly attacks the liver and requires a very costly treatment protocol. The disease is often fatal.

Micronutrients are in short supply, especially iodine. No iodized salt has been produced in Russia since 1991, and little or none has been imported. In young children, iodine deficiency causes mental retardation.

Avitaminosis is common. A longitudinal study by the Institute of Nutrition of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences finds shortages of folic acid as well as vitamins A, B complex, D, and E among 30 percent of the population.

Heart disease exacts a toll, in age-standardized death rates, more than twice that in the United States and Western Europe. The death rate from such disease per 100,000 population is currently 736.1 in Russia, 267.7 in Belgium, 317.2 in the United Kingdom, and 307.2 in the United States.

Cancer is becoming more common. New cases increased from 191.8 per 100,000 population in 1990 to 200.7 in 1998. The incidence is likely to rise as a consequence of long-term exposure to low doses of radiation from decades of nuclear testing, as well as to benzo(a)pyrene, dioxin, and other industrial carcinogens. As in

so many other cases, official statistics understate the problem. There is significant under-reporting of breast cancer, for example, especially among women of Muslim origin, who are reluctant to seek treatment from male doctors.

To all the foregoing challenges to the Russian future we must add a daunting collection of environmental ills. Russia will have to cope with a legacy of industrial development undertaken virtually without heed of the consequences for human health and the environment, just as it will have to contend with the consequences of decades of testing and stockpiling of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

The crises that temporarily focus worldwide attention on these problems, such as the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident, only begin to hint at their severity. The news media beamed shocking reports of the 1994 Usinsk oil spill around the world, but it was only one of 700 "major" accidents and spills (defined as those involving 25,000 barrels of oil or more) that occur every year in Russia, spreading phenols, polyaromatic hydrocarbons, and a variety of other toxic chemicals. As Victor Ivanovich Danilov-Danilyan, the former head of the State Committee on Environment, notes, these losses are equivalent to about 25 Exxon Valdez spills *per month*!

Radioactivity remains a continuing concern. After the 1963 Test Ban Treaty barred open-air atomic weapons testing, the nuclear powers continued to conduct underground tests. But there was an important difference in the Soviet Union. There, many of the nation's more than 100 nuclear explosions occurred in densely populated regions such as the Volga, as well as in the Urals and Yakutiya (Sakha) regions. After first denying that any of those explosions had been vented into the atmosphere, then Minister of Atomic Industry Viktor Mikhaylov later admitted that venting had occurred in 30 percent of the underground blasts.

What goes on today within the 10 formerly secret nuclear cities devoted to the development and production of nuclear weapons in Russia remains largely a mystery. Around the city of Chelyabinsk, a thousand miles east of Moscow in the Urals, some 450,000 Russians face unknown risks from a series of spills and accidents that occurred from the late 1940s to the 1960s. And area rivers may have been tainted by seepage from nuclear waste directly injected deep underground at the Krasnoyarsk, Dmitrovgrad, and Tomsk sites. Near the Tomsk-7 facility, the site of a serious nuclear accident in 1993, Russian and American environmentalists recently found evidence of phosphorous-32, a radionuclide with a half-life of only about two months. The discovery strongly suggests that radioactive wastewater used in cooling Tomsk-7's two remaining plutonium-producing plants was illegally dumped.

Chemical pollution is widespread. Even in Moscow, which is home to much heavy industry, there is evidence that pollution has caused genetic deformities in the young [see photo, facing page]. In a study of the impact of chemical, petrochemical, and machine-building industries on human health, the Russian Ministry of Health found that newborns suffered congenital anomalies at a much higher rate (108 to 152 per 10,000 births) in industrial cities than in rural localities (39 to 54 per 10,000).

Alarming cases of mercury pollution, which causes illness and birth defects, have been reported (though aggregate official data have never been published). Three years ago, 16 tons of mercury was released upriver from the major northern city of Arkhangel'sk. In Krasnoural'sk, a city in the Urals that produces car batteries, Russian and American researchers have found that 76.5 percent of the children are mentally retarded. Lead is the cause. Cadmium and arsenic are prevalent in the air and land throughout much of Russia. In the Arctic north, wind-blown heavy metal salts and other pollutants from the city of Norilsk's nonferrous metal plants have left the land barren and treeless for 75 kilometers to the southeast.

These children born in adjacent Moscow neighborhoods all suffer the effects of the same uncommon genetic anomaly—strong evidence that parental exposure to chemical pollution is responsible.

Lakes and rivers everywhere are badly polluted by heavy metals dumped by industry and allowed to run off farmland. Estimates by the Yeltsin-era Ministry of Ecology and other observers suggest that only 25 to 50 percent of Russia's fresh water is potable.

The world has not been blind to Russia's plight. By late 1998, the United States and other donors had sent more than $66 billion in aid, according to a U.S. government estimate. The list of donors includes even South Korea, and recently officials of the European Union and the World Health Organization have recognized the need to act aggressively. But the aid has been inadequate and piecemeal, and its delivery has been hampered by corruption and inept administration. The frightening reality is that it may already be too late to help. Andrey Iliaronov, an economic adviser to President Putin, has pointed to 2003 as the year of reckoning, when the demographic crisis, the crumbling infrastructure, and the burden of massive foreign debt may combine to deal a crippling blow to Russia's remaining productive capacity—and thus, to its ability to help itself.

Where will the money come from for all the myriad improvements needed in reproductive and child health, for tuberculosis prevention and treatment, for HIV/AIDS cocktails of protease inhibitors? Who will supply the $400 billion needed to clean up the water supply over the next 20 years, or the $6 billion to clean up chemical weapons storage sites, or the hundreds of billions to clean up nuclear waste? The list of needs is depressingly long, and the Russian government has not always taken the right steps to address them. Last year, for example, President Putin abolished Russia's main environmental agency, the State Committee on Environment, and transferred its responsibilities to the Ministry of Natural Resources, which is in the business of developing the country's oil and mineral reserves. And yet, despite how daunting the task may seem, and how long the odds of success, we cannot simply ignore the ruin in Russia. The United States and other nations of the world have a profound interest in helping to avert an economic and demographic Chernobyl that would give a fearful new meaning to the word *meltdown*. ❑

The Great American Augie

Saul Bellow won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1976, but the great novel that set him on the course for the prize had been published 23 years earlier, in 1953. The peripatetic hero of *The Adventures of Augie March* spoke in an idiom entirely new to American literature—an astonishing mix of the high-flown and the low-down. Christopher Hitchens explains why, after almost half a century, Augie remains vibrant and irresistible.

by Christopher Hitchens

Augie March stands on the Chicago lakeshore at dawn on a New Year's Day in the 1930s:

> I drank coffee and looked out into the brilliant first morning of the year. There was a Greek church in the next street of which the onion dome stood in the snow polished and purified blue, cross and crown together, the united powers of earth and heaven, snow in all the clefts, a snow like the sand of sugar. I passed over the church too and rested only on the great profound blue. The days have not changed, though the times have. The sailors who first saw America, that sweet sight, where the belly of the ocean had brought them, didn't see more beautiful color than this.

Nick Carraway stands on the Long Island shoreline at the close of *The Great Gatsby*:

> And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes—a fresh green breast of the new world. . . . The trees that had made way for Gatsby's house had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent . . . face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.

One man is reflecting at day's end and one at day's beginning. Both have just been put through it by flawed and wretched humanity. Nick Carraway has been to several funerals, and Augie March has had a close shave while helping a girl who isn't his girlfriend survive an illegal abortion. Both draw strength from the idea of America. Nick derives consolation, but Augie, it might be truer to say, finds inspiration. Reflecting on Jay Gatsby's futile quest—his "dream"—Nick decides that Gatsby "did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night." Augie doesn't take much stock in dreams, and he is about to venture onto those very fields.

I do not set up as a member of the jury in the Great American Novel contest, if only because I'd prefer to see the white whale evade capture a while longer. It's more interesting that way. However, we do belong to a ranking species, and there's no denying that

La Salle Street in downtown Chicago as the young Saul Bellow would have seen it in 1925.

the contest is a real one. The advantage *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), Saul Bellow's third novel, has over *The Great Gatsby* (1925), which, coincidentally, was F. Scott Fitzgerald's third novel too, derives from its scope, its optimism, and, I would venture, its principles. Or rather, its principle, which Augie states clearly in the opening pages and never loses sight of:

> What did Danton lose his head for, or why was there a Napoleon, if it wasn't to make a nobility of us all? And this universal eligibility to be noble, taught everywhere, was what gave Simon airs of honor.

"The universal eligibility to be noble" (eligibility connotes being elected as well as being chosen) is as potent a statement of the American dream as has ever been uttered. Simon is Augie's older brother, and Simon doesn't "make it." But that's not the point. Augie doesn't exactly make it either. Well, it's an ideal not a promise. Augie decides to match himself against the continent, seeking no one's permission and deferring to no idea of limitation. His making, like his omnivorous education, will be his own.

In the pages of Bellow's novel, for the first time in American literature, an immigrant would act and think like a rightful discoverer, or a pioneer. The paradox of the American immigrant experience had hitherto been exactly that so many immigrants came to the New World not in order to spread their wings but to adapt, to conform, to fit in. When we are first introduced to Augie March, he is in cramped conditions, in a poor Jewish family semi-stifled by its own warmth and replete with dread of the wider world. Our hero doesn't know any better—and yet he does know. "I am an American, Chicago born," he proclaims in the very first line of the novel. It's important to understand what that assertion meant when it was made, both to Bellow himself and to the audiences for whom he wrote.

Barely a half-century before *The Adventures of Augie March* was published, Henry James had returned to New York from Europe and found its new character unset-

tling in the extreme. In *The American Scene*, published in 1907, he registered the revulsion he imagined "any sensitive citizen" might feel, after visiting Ellis Island, at having "to share the sanctity of his American consciousness, the intimacy of his American patriotism, with the inconceivable alien." On the Lower East Side, James discerned the "hard glitter of Israel." In east-side cafés, he found himself in "torture-rooms of the living idiom." And he asked himself: "Who can ever tell, moreover, in any conditions and in presence of any apparent anomaly, what the genius of Israel may, or may not, really be 'up to'?" The Master was by no means alone in expressing sentiments and sensitivities of this kind. With *The Adventures of Augie March*, and its bold initial annexation of the brave name of "American," his descendants got the answer to the question about what that genius was "up to."

Saul Bellow was born—and named Solomon—in 1915, across the border in Lachine, Quebec. (Lachine itself was named by a Columbus-minded French military officer who was sent to look for China and declared he'd found it.) Bellow's parents smuggled him across the Great Lakes as an infant, and he did not discover that he was an illegal immigrant until he signed up for the U.S. armed forces in World War II. The authorities sent him back to Canada and compelled him to reapply—kept him hanging about, in other words. Among other things, *Augie March* is a farewell to the age of Bellow's own uncertainty, an adieu to the self of his two earlier novels, *Dangling Man* (1944) and *The Victim* (1947).

Though affirmatively, almost defiantly American, *The Adventures of Augie March* is by no means a paean to assimilation and amnesia. As a youth, Bellow composed and performed a standup spoof of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" in Yiddish, and he has always been acutely aware of his Russian roots. (He helped Irving Howe and *Partisan Review* with the first translations of his future fellow-Nobelist Isaac Bashevis Singer.) One triumph of *Augie March* is that it takes *Yiddishkeit* out of the torture rooms and out of the ghetto and helps make it an indissoluble and inseparable element in the great American tongue. Those of us who inherit Lenny Bruce, Walter Matthau, Woody Allen, and Philip Roth as part of our vernacular birthright take for granted this linguistic faculty and facility. But it was not a birthright in 1953.

Only in the preceding year, for one thing, had Bellow's peers and cothinkers and kibitzers got around to producing the famous *Partisan Review* symposium "Our Country and Our Culture." In those pages, the veterans of the cultural combat of the 1930s—most but not all of them Jewish—had asked whether the time had perhaps come to rewrite their project of permanent opposition. There were demurrals and reservations, but, on the whole, the formerly "alienated" began to speak as lawfully adopted sons and daughters of the United States. The exceptions, those who distrusted what they saw as a coming age of conformism, included Irving Howe and the poet Delmore Schwartz. But when *Augie March* astonished the critics by showing that an egghead novel could be a literary and a commercial success, Schwartz was won over.

His review of *Augie* opened with the simple declaration that "Saul Bellow's new novel is a new kind of book." He compared it favorably with the grandest efforts of Mark Twain and John Dos Passos. And he was struck at once by the essential matter of the book, the language and the style: "Augie March rises from the streets of the modern city to encounter the reality of experience with an attitude of satirical acceptance, ironic affirmation, the comic transcendence of affirmation and rejection." Indeed, Schwartz made the immigrant vengeance on the old guard quite explicit: "For the first time in fiction America's social mobility has been transformed into a spiritual energy which is not

>Christopher Hitchens *is the author of* No One Left to Lie To: The Values of the Worst Family *(1999), and a columnist for* Vanity Fair *and the* Nation.

doomed to flight, renunciation, exile, denunciation, the agonised hyper-intelligence of Henry James, or the hysterical cheering of Walter Whitman."

Schwartz, who would be the inspiration for the protagonist of Bellow's *Humboldt's Gift* (1975), admired Augie the character for the very quality that some reviewers distrusted: his unreadiness to be committed, or, as Augie puts it, "recruited." Among the hostile reviewers was Norman Podhoretz (my own touchstone for critical deafness and ineptitude), who, as recently as last year, revisited the squabble and—incredibly—echoed Henry James's anti-Jewishness in accusing Bellow of "twisting and torturing the language"!

This context helps to explain why *Augie March* still constitutes a template for modern American literature. Just as, when new, it formed and altered the attitudes of Jews and Anglo-Saxons—Bellow's audiences, to whom I alluded earlier—so it still waits for readers and critics and helps them to take their own measure of America.

In the late 1930s, the natty Mr. Bellow looked as ready as young Augie March to take on the world.

This pilot-light phenomenon can be seen in comments by the father-and-son novelists Kingsley Amis and Martin Amis. In 1987, Martin wrote that "for all its marvels, *Augie March*, like *Henderson the Rain King*, often resembles a lecture on destiny fed through a thesaurus of low-life patois." In 1995, he began an essay as follows: "*The Adventures of Augie March* is the Great American Novel. Search no further. All the trails went cold 42 years ago. The quest did what quests very rarely do; it ended." Kingsley Amis greeted the original publication by telling the readers of the *Spectator* of Bellow's "gaiety and good humour, his fizzing dialogue, his vitality." But two decades later, his mood had changed: "Bellow is a Ukrainian-Canadian, I believe. It is painful to watch him trying to pick his way between the unidiomatic on the one hand and the affected on the other." After 20 years, Amis père had sunk into the belief that everyone in America was "either a Jew or a hick."

Augie March, "the by-blow of a travelling man," informs us early on that the expression "various jobs" is the Rosetta Stone of his life. But the awareness of eligibility is in him, and he'll fight his corner for it and never be a hick. "What I guess about you," says one of his pals, guessing correctly, "is that you have a nobility syndrome. You can't adjust to the reality situation. . . . You want to accept. But how do you know what you're accepting? You have to be nuts to take it come one come all. . . . You should accept the data of experience." To which Augie replies, more confidently perhaps than he

feels, "It can never be right to offer to die, and if that's what the data of experience tell you, then you must get along without them."

Even while he is still stranded at home in Chicago, knowing somehow that there must be more to life and America, Augie invests his banal surroundings with a halo of the numinous and the heroic. For a start, he transfigures the cliché of the Jewish mother:

> [Mama] occupied a place, I suppose, among women conquered by a superior force of love, like those women whom Zeus got the better of in animal form and who next had to take cover from his furious wife. Not that I can see my big, gentle, dilapidated, scrubbing and lugging mother as a fugitive of immense beauty from such classy wrath.

And then there is old William Einhorn, the lamed and misshapen local organizer and fixer and memoirist, whom Augie ("I'm not kidding when I enter Einhorn in this eminent list") ranks with Caesar, Machiavelli, Ulysses, and Croesus. It's Einhorn who so memorably lectures Augie after he has a narrow squeak with a two-bit, no-account piece of larceny that could have turned nasty:

> That was what you let yourself in for. Yes, that's right, Augie, a dead cop or two. You know what cop-killers get, from the station onward—their faces beaten off, their hands smashed, and worse; and that would be your start in life. . . . But wait. All of a sudden I catch on to something about you. You've got *opposition* in you. You don't slide through everything. You just make it look so.

Einhorn then takes the role of Augie's missing father—and releases in his listener a spurt of love that he's too wised-up to acknowledge at the time:

> Don't be a sap, Augie, and fall into the first trap life digs for you. Young fellows brought up in bad luck, like you, are naturals to keep the jails filled—the reformatories, all the institutions. What the state orders bread and beans long in advance for. It knows there's an element that can be depended on to come behind bars and eat it. . . . It's practically determined. And if you're going to let it be determined for you too, you're a sucker. Just what's predicted. Those sad and tragic things are waiting to take you in—the clinks and clinics and soup lines know who's the natural to be beat up and squashed, made old, pooped, farted away, no-purposed away. If it should happen to you, who'd be surprised? You're a setup for it.

Then he adds, "But I think I'd be surprised."

Before Einhorn is through with his homily, he adds one more thing. "I'm not a lowlife when I think, and *really* think," says the poolroom king and genius swindler. "In the end you can't save your soul and life by thought. But if you *think*, the least of the consolation prizes is the world."

I judge this a hinge moment in a novel that sometimes has difficulty with its dramatic unities. Einhorn summons the shades of the prison house for the growing boy and evokes for us the omnipresence of violence, injustice, and stupidity. He senses the lower depths of the underclass, while we sense in him what we feel in reading Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*: the unrealized potential of a great man who might have been. He, too, has felt the eligibility. And he has an untrained instinct for the examined life. Whatever he's speaking—and it's demotic American English, all right—it's not lowlife patois.

So when Augie breaks free and sets out, he is no Candide or Copperfield. And the novel is no Horatio Alger tale. Many of Augie's ground-down relatives *do* end up in institutions. Bellow's Chicago is not vastly different from Upton Sinclair's in *The Jungle*. Even in the peace and prosperity of the 1950s, Bellow was able to recall the bitterness of want and exploitation, the reek of the hoboes met on stolen train rides, the sharpness of class warfare, the acuteness of ethnic differences among poor whites in the days before all such individuals were absurdly classified together as "Caucasian." (One of Simon's coal-yard drivers has a dread of running over a kid in a "Bohunk" neighbor-

hood—exactly the sort of confrontation nightmare that is now reserved for Chicago's black South Side.)

Of all the odd jobs that Augie takes (and these include being a butler as well as a shoe salesman, a paint seller as well as a literary looker-upper), the three that are best-described involve, obliquely or directly, his oppositionism. As a dog groomer for the upper classes, Augie feels a sense of wasteful absurdity in the work he must perform. As a contract book- thief, he increases his knowledge of the classics and also his acquaintance with Marxist intellectuals. As a union organizer for the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), he is brushed by the grandeur of the American labor movement, which briefly did unite all trades and ethnicities in a collective demand for justice. This episode of mobilization and jacquerie calls on all of Bellow's power of taxonomy and onomatopoeia:

> There were Greek and Negro chambermaids from all the hotels, porters, doormen, checkroom attendants, waitresses. . . . All kinds were coming. The humanity of the under-galleries of pipes, storage, and coal made an appearance, maintenance men, short-order grovelers. . . . And then old snowbirds and white hound-looking faces, guys with Wobbly cards from an earlier time, old Bohunk women with letters explaining what was wanted, and all varieties of assaulted kissers, infirmity, drunkenness, dazedness, innocence, limping, crawling, insanity, prejudice, and from downright leprosy the whole way again to the most vigorous straight-backed beauty. So if this collection of people had nothing in common with what would have brought up the back of a Xerxes' army or a Constantine's, new things have been formed; but what struck me in them was a feeling of antiquity and thick crust.

Later, when adrift in Mexico, Augie meets the very incarnation of opposition, Leon Trotsky:

> I was excited by this famous figure, and I believe what it was about him that stirred me up was the instant impression he gave—no matter about the old heap he rode in or the peculiarity of his retinue—of navigation by the great stars, of the highest considerations, of being fit to speak the most important human words and universal terms. When you are as reduced to a different kind of navigation from this high starry kind as I was and are only sculling on the shallow bay, crawling from one clam-rake to the next, it's stirring to have a glimpse of deep-water greatness.

In an early draft of the novel, Augie signs up to work for the exiled heretic. (Bellow himself had been to Mexico to try to see Trotsky, but he arrived the day after the old man's assassination.)

Opposition, however, is only one of Augie's internal compasses. Another, operating both more and less predictably, is sex. He prefers earthy and honest expressions for this preoccupation, mentioning at one point a girl whose virtue was that she "made no bones" about what they were together for. Occasionally, he can be rhapsodic (the paramour of Guillaume the dog trainer is "a great work of ripple-assed luxury with an immense mozzarella bust"). And he can also be tender. There are few sweeter girls in fiction than Sophie Geratis, the staunch little Greek union militant. ("She had a set of hard-worked hands and she lived with her beauty on rough terms. I couldn't for even a minute pretend that I didn't go for her.") But he doesn't feel the thunderbolt until he meets Thea Fenchel.

Thea has an eagle named Caligula, and she wants Augie to help her "man" the eagle and train it to smash full-grown iguanas—in Mexico. He falls in with the plan because he's fallen completely for the woman. And he falls so completely for the woman because—this is his weakness—she is so utterly sold on him. The magnificence of the bird he can appreciate; the project of making it into a trained hunter gives him a chill. And the lordly avian Caligula turns out to be, of all things (and in Thea's contemptuous word), "chicken." The bird will not obey. Once she sees that Augie doesn't mind this—indeed, secretly approves of it—Thea's respect for Augie is gone.

Not all reviewers admire this long and necessary section of the novel, and many have puzzled over the significance of the bird. (Is the eagle symbolically *American*? Not if it's called Caligula—and not if it's chicken.) But I think the eagle is essential in showing how Augie is compelled to admire anything, but especially something so noble, that will not permit itself to be domesticated. He pays a high price. He suffers appalling torment at the loss of Thea, and lovesickness and sexual jealousy have seldom been more brutally depicted. But the wrenching experience does get him back to Chicago, "that somber city," to take stock and begin again.

Poverty, love, and war, they say, are the essential elements in the shaping of a man—and of a bildungsroman. So when war deposes the depression as the great disciplinarian of the lower orders, Augie signs up right away for the navy, thinking the while, "What use was war without also love?" (That may be the most masculine sentence ever penned.) He lucks out with Stella Chesney. His brief and near-terminal combat experience gives him his best opportunity yet to release the "*animal ridens* . . . the laughing creature" within himself. A man of "various jobs" is never going to be more at home than in the lower deck of a ship, and he makes comedy out of the confidences of his messmates. Here again, Bellow's ear is unerring:

> "You think I maybe have an inferiority complex, do you think?" one of them asked me. I passed out advice in moderate amounts; nobody is perfect. I advocated love, especially.

After a harrowing experience in an open boat when his ship is torpedoed ("They found one reason after another to detain me at the hospital," Augie laconically phrases it), he hopes at war's end for a safe and tranquil harbor. But the truth is harsher: "Brother! You never are through, you just think you are!" For a very brief while, he imagines being a sort of Catcher in the Rye, running a foster home where his broken-up family could also take shelter. But life isn't through with him yet, and he has to live up to the great sentence on the novel's opening page: "Everybody knows there is no fineness or accuracy of suppression; if you hold down one thing you hold down the adjoining." To hold down his own curiosity would be to betray his profoundest instinct. And thus we find him sardonically installed at a table in a European café at the novel's close, working as a middleman for an Armenian entrepreneur and declaring "I was an American, Chicago born, and all these other events and notions." (Bellow, incidentally, boasts that he wrote not one word of *Augie March* in Chicago; he took himself off to Positano, Rome, Paris, and London. There is nothing provincial about his Americanism.)

If we reflect along with Augie, we look back at a host of brilliantly realized minor characters in the novel, warranting comparison with Dickens and with that remarkable boy on the Mississippi who also had *The Adventures of* in his title. Perhaps one shouldn't play favorites among the minor characters, but Guillaume, the fancy dog trainer who relies too much on the hypodermic when dealing with recalcitrant pooches ("Thees jag-off is goin' to get it"), will always be mine.

The two key words that encapsulate the ambitions of Bellow's novel are *democratic* and *cosmopolitan*. Not entirely by coincidence, these are the two great stand-or-fall hopes of America. The two qualities that carry Augie through are his capacity for love and his capacity for irony. These, together with reason, are the great stand-or-fall hopes of humanity. The 17th-century English metaphysical poets used the evocative word *America* as their term for the new and the hopeful; they even addressed lovers by that name. Augie March concludes, more cannily, by seeing the unfunny side of the funny side:

> Or is the laugh at nature—including eternity—that it thinks it can win over us and the power of hope? Nah, nah! I think. It never will. But that probably is the joke, on one or the other, and laughing is an enigma that includes both. Look at me, going everywhere! Why, I am a sort of

An older Saul Bellow, with railroad tracks extending to a distant skyscrapered Chicago.

> Columbus of those near-at-hand and believe you can come to them in this immediate *terra incognita* that spreads out in every gaze. I may well be a flop at this line of endeavor. Columbus too thought he was a flop, probably, when they sent him back in chains. Which didn't prove there was no America.

Not much in Bellow's preceding work prepared readers for *The Adventures of Augie March*. It's not necessary to believe, as I do, that the novel is the summit of his career (he has published 19 books to date), but let's call *Augie* his gold standard.

At elevated points in the subsequent novels, we think, "Yes, that's a passage worthy of *Augie March*." We feel the heritage in the acuteness and, sometimes, the faint, fascinated disgust of intimate physical observation. (In *Herzog* [1964], for example, a rabbi is "short-bearded, his nose violently pitted with black.") It's there in the restless mining of great texts for contemporary examples, or for what Bellow himself would perhaps scorn to call "relevance." (Again, Moses Herzog dashes off aggressive, inquisitive letters to thinkers such as Martin Heidegger.) It's there also, to stay with *Herzog* a moment longer, in the fascination with fathers or with paternal surrogates on the Einhorn scale. It's in the strong dose of nostalgia, to employ the word accurately for once, informing characters' recollection of details from home. It's there when illness, decrepitude, moral crisis, and mental crisis too assert themselves. (How often I find myself recalling the line from *Humboldt's Gift* about "the mental rabble of the wised-up world.")

Wanderlust, a theme fundamental to *The Adventures of Augie March*, is recurrent in the later novels. The instinct for travel is registered strongly in *Humboldt's Gift*, *Henderson the Rain King* (1959), *The Dean's December* (1982), and most recently in *Ravelstein* (2000). But this wanderlust is no mere touristic instinct. For Bellow, a certain internationalism is an essential component of education and formation. What's the point of having all these roots if they're all that you know? And, by way of corollary, what's so great about being a cosmopolitan if you don't know where you came from?

The Bellow novels that came before *The Adventures of Augie March* aspired to it, and the novels that came after drew their confidence and breadth and lift from *Augie*. Augie taught his heirs to spread their wings and take a chance—to risk the world. ❑

Europe's Existential Crisis

After more than 50 years of effort to create a united Europe, the European Union has reached a critical moment. Even as more than a dozen nations clamor for membership, many citizens in the 15 current member-states are growing skeptical of the leaders who have championed the European dream.

by Martin Walker

Last May, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright handed German foreign minister Joschka Fischer a most confusing diagram. Beneath an array of apparently random scribbles, it depicted a map of Europe that appeared to have been defaced by an unusually energetic infant who had been allowed to run wild with a box of crayons.

After some effort, the eye could discern a number of sharply dissimilar circles drawn upon the map in different hues. There was one circle in blue for the 15 members of the European Union (EU), and another in red for the 19 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and another in green for the seven countries jostling to join NATO in its next round of enlargement. The 11 countries that have adopted the new single currency, the euro, were marked in brown. There was another circle, in yellow, for the six countries of central and eastern Europe that are deemed to be on the fast track for early membership in the EU, and another in orange for the six thought to be on a rather slower course toward entry. There was yet another, in a kind of violet, which marked the 12 EU countries that had signed on to the Schengen Accord.

Europa: Vision 3000 *(1987), by Curt Stenvert*

Named after a quaint Luxembourg village where one can stand on the bank of a stream and toss pebbles into either France or Germany, the accord eliminates internal border controls. Having entered any one of the 12 states, a visitor can pass without a passport into the rest.

There were even three circles disappearing far off the map in the direc-

tion of Siberia and the Chinese border. One was for those 43 countries (including Russia) that make up the Council of Europe, the body that runs the European Court of Human Rights. A second was the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which includes the former Soviet republics among its 55 members. The third was for those 27 countries, including former Soviet states such as Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, linked to NATO through the Partnership for Peace.

"The map showed circles intersecting with circles that intersected with still more circles in a rather bamboozling way," commented Andreas Michelis, a German diplomatic spokesman. "The American question was, where do we turn among all these elements?" The European question—which confronts the 15 nations of the EU with increasing urgency as 13 countries (Malta having since joined the 12 on the Americans' map) hammer on the door for entry—is, where does Europe stop?

The Europe of the new millennium was supposed to be a fairly simple place. In the happy rhetoric of President George Bush during the Cold War's endgame, the old continent would at last, after the 20th century's wars and revolutions and genocides and gulags, be "whole and free." Whole, that is, after the geographical divide of the Iron Curtain, and free after the collapse of communism. But this begs a larger question. Is "wholeness" fulfilled by the boundaries of Renaissance Europe, which exclude Russia and half the Balkans? Or is Reformation Europe to be the measure, to include the Roman Catholic and Protestant lands but leave out Orthodox Russia and Serbia? Christian Europe might include Russia but exclude Turkey, Albania, and Bosnia. Europeans have grappled with this conundrum since Charles de Gaulle offered his vision of "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals." That satisfied few. Europeans shrank from the prospect of including half of Russia. But Russians, even today, hate the concept because it *leaves out* half of their country. Americans have tended to take an expansive view, from former secretary of state James Baker's grandiose conception of a new transatlantic community "from Vancouver to Vladivostok," to President Bill Clinton's latest call for both NATO and the EU to clear the path for eventual Russian and Ukrainian membership.

For Americans, instinctively thinking of their own history in creating a unified federal state, a Europe whole and free was the best and perhaps the only guarantee against the old continent's reversion to its warlike past. In the 20th century, Europe spawned two world wars, became the focal point of the Cold War, and then produced the wars of the Yugoslavian succession in the Balkans. Each of these confrontations provoked the eventual deployment of American troops. As a result, the consistent U.S. policy of supporting Europe's integration was not only a rational response; it contained a healthy dose of self-preservation. It was rooted in the hope that an integrated Europe

>Martin Walker, *formerly bureau chief in Moscow, Washington, and Brussels for Britain's* Guardian *newspaper, wrote this essay during his tenure as a Public Policy Scholar at the Wilson Center. His latest book,* America Reborn, *was published last year by Knopf.*

Mission impossible? Javier Solana's (center) job is to forge a common foreign and security policy.

could be America's partner in stabilizing the world and steering it through trade and investment into a wider prosperity. But Europe's progress toward becoming "whole and free" has been disappointing. In the first decade after the Soviet collapse, NATO took in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, three new members from the far side of the old Iron Curtain. The EU has yet to admit one. Even allowing for the time required to clear the rubble after the fall of the Soviet and Yugoslavian empires, Europe has been moving slowly.

Perhaps the cruelest feature of the jibe embodied in the American map was that Washington was still asking the same question Henry Kissinger had posed back in 1973: "When I want to speak to Europe, whom do I call?" Europe was supposed to have answered that famous inquiry a year ago, with the appointment of Spain's Javier Solana as High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. His task was to coordinate the diplomacy of the EU's 15 nations into one broad and common strategy and to establish an EU force that could handle peacekeeping tasks. He was also supposed to provide a kind of one-stop shopping trip for Americans (and others) seeking to know what Europe thought about a foreign-policy issue and what it might do about it. In reality, diplomacy is still conducted essentially at the bilateral level, with the national governments of France, Britain, Germany, and so on, and through NATO, of which the four traditionally neutral EU nations (Ireland, Austria, Finland, and Sweden) are not members. This complicates matters. Solana also has to spend much of his time watching his back against efforts by the EU Commission in Brussels to trespass on his turf. The Commission, which in some ways is the EU's executive branch and runs its own departments of external relations, thinks he ought to work for it. But Solana was appointed by the European Council, which is composed of the 15 heads of national governments. Solana and his job now

constitute the terrain on which an inter-Union power struggle between Commission and Council is being waged.

From an American point of view and putting to one side simmering trade quarrels over bananas and beef and genetically modified foods, the Europeans are not much of a partner. They spend far less on defense, and get even less deployable military force for what they do spend. The Kosovo bombing campaign was largely waged by U.S. warplanes, which flew two-thirds of all strike missions. Lacking reconnaissance satellites, drones, and electronic warfare aircraft, and short of smart bombs, the Europeans were hardly fit to be on the same battlefield. As the Pentagon's "After-Action Review" warned: "Such disparities in capabilities will seriously affect our ability to operate as an effective alliance over the long term." The Europeans have been less than helpful to U.S. interests in the Middle East and have sought to outflank the sanctions against Iran and Iraq. And Europe shares blame with the United States for the sad failure of Western aid, credits, and know-how to help bring Russia to stable democratic prosperity. The West's collective failure to do for its adversary in the Cold War what the United States alone achieved for Western Europe, Germany, and Japan after World War II is the greatest disappointment of the past decade.

There were two important tasks American administrations believed that Europe could achieve in the 1990s: ending the Balkan wars and shepherding eastern Europeans to prosperity. Both jobs were botched.

Russia's self-inflicted wounds may have been so deep as to render foreign help irrelevant. But there were two important tasks American administrations believed that Europe could—and hoped that it would—achieve in the 1990s: ending the Balkan wars and shepherding eastern Europeans to prosperity. Both jobs were botched. U.S. troops had to intervene again in Bosnia in 1995 and in Kosovo in 1999, just as their fathers and grandfathers had intervened in Europe's earlier tribal wars in 1917 and 1941. And it appears that yet another U.S. presidential election has come and gone without the EU finally starting to take in the most qualified of the 13 candidate nations.

The Europeans themselves defined enlargement, the vogue term for bringing in new members to fulfill the idea of one Europe whole and free, as one of their two grand strategic objectives when they signed the Maastricht Treaty in 1991. In June 1993, at their summit in Copenhagen, EU heads of government formally agreed that membership would be open to all eastern European states that met the economic and democratic standards. In 1997

The EU: A Guide for the Perplexed

Americans find the European Union (EU) baffling, but then, so do most Europeans, not least because Europe, as a way of ensuring that consensus reigns, does a number of things twice.

The Courts. There are, for example, two European courts. The first is the European Court of Human Rights, and it has nothing to do with the EU. It's run by the Council of Europe, which comprises 43 nations (including Russia). The second court, the European Court of Justice, *is* part of the EU, but, being limited to enforcing and interpreting treaties, it is far weaker than the U.S. Supreme Court. Nonetheless, the Court of Justice has broad powers over trade, competition, and employment law, and its reach is continually widening.

The Parliaments. Twins again. One is the European Parliament, which usually sits in Strasbourg, France, though its main offices are in Brussels. Its 625 members are elected every five years, and their numbers roughly reflect the population size of their respective nations—there are, for example, 98 members from Germany but only six from Luxembourg. This parliament can neither initiate nor enact legislation on its own. But its powers are growing steadily, thanks in part to the use of U.S. Congress-style hearings on key appointments, such as those to the board of the new European Central Bank. The European Parliament also has the crucial power to approve or disapprove the EU's budgets.

The second parliament, the Council of Ministers, has the real power to decide the most serious matters. Each of the 15 national governments holds a seat. Four times a year, the 15 heads of government represent their nations at the Council of Ministers, which is then called the European Council.

The Executive Bodies. There is no single elected executive authority in the EU comparable to America's president. Rather, the European Commission, made up of 20 commissioners nominated by the national governments, supervises the EU bureaucracy and administers such areas as the Common Agricultural Policy, the humanitarian aid program (by far the world's biggest), the aid programs to Russia and eastern Europe, and trade policy. But the Commission, which has traditionally been the custodian of the European federal ideal, was discredited in 1999, when all 20 commissioners were forced to resign amid charges of corruption, and its strategic function has been largely usurped by the Council of Ministers.

In the Council's regular sessions, all 15 national ministers of health, or labor, or finance gather to set common policies. The Council also keeps firm hold of the new common foreign and security policy. In all Council affairs, the individual governments and their representatives jealously guard their national prerogatives, which are all the stronger because of the linguistic variety that makes Europe so different from the United States. Almost as important as the Council's meetings are the weekly meetings in Brussels of the subsidiary COREPER, the Committee of Permanent Representatives—the 15 national ambassadors who act as Europe's executive management.

The Central Banks. There are, of course, two sets of central banks. Each nation retains its own central bank, and the Frankfurt-based European Central Bank, established in 1998, manages the new single currency (the euro). As with so much else in the new Europe, this arrangement is not without complication: Only 11 of the 15 EU nations have thus far embraced the euro.

—Martin Walker

A Euro Cartoon Gallery

A Frenchman's request to pay for oil in euros provokes hilarity (left). A Spaniard being led toward the promised land of greater European integration in a 1991 cartoon (middle left) doubt that its promises will be fulfilled. Former German chancellor Helmut Kohl morphs into a euro symbol (bottom).

Chancellor announces practical steps towards Euro

Credits: Opposite page, top, Jean Plantu, from *L'Express*, Sept. 14, 2000, middle, Idigoras Y Pachi/*El Mundo*, bottom, Copyright Peter Brookes/*The Times*, Dec. 13, 1996. This page, top, Dave Brown/*The Independent*, middle, Clive Goddard, from www.Cartoon-Stock.com, bottom, Stefan Gustafsson/*Hallands Nyheter.*

British cartoonists mock London's efforts to embrace the euro (above) and their own country's ambivalence about closer ties to Europe (right). "Mother Sweden" opens her arms to Europe (below) after Swedish voters approved membership in a 1994 referendum.

and 1998, German chancellor Helmut Kohl and French president Jacques Chirac went before the Polish parliament to declare that Poland would be a member of the EU by 2000. These promises proved hollow. Jan Kulakowski, Poland's chief negotiator with the EU, has now set his sights on entry by 2002, but the EU says it will be "ready" after 2003, and officials in Brussels are looking at the period 2005–06. Optimists are counting on the deadline set by British prime minister Tony Blair, who wants the new members in and able to take part in the next European Parliament elections, in June 2004.

Europe is also fumbling the second grand strategic task it set itself at the beginning of the 1990s: to establish an economic and monetary union, symbolized by a common currency. To his credit, then German chancellor Helmut Kohl stressed repeatedly that monetary union was an integral part of political union. But the qualifying rules for the euro did not say that. And most other national politicians evaded the issue, as if suspecting that their voters might be ready for a single currency but were not yet ready for a single state. Above all, the politics of the euro were allowed to overrule the economics from the beginning.

PROMISED A SOUND AND STABLE CURRENCY LIKE THE DEUTSCHE MARK, EUROPEANS HAVE BEEN GIVEN AN UNCONVINCING REPLACEMENT THAT HAS BEHAVED MORE LIKE THE ITALIAN LIRA.

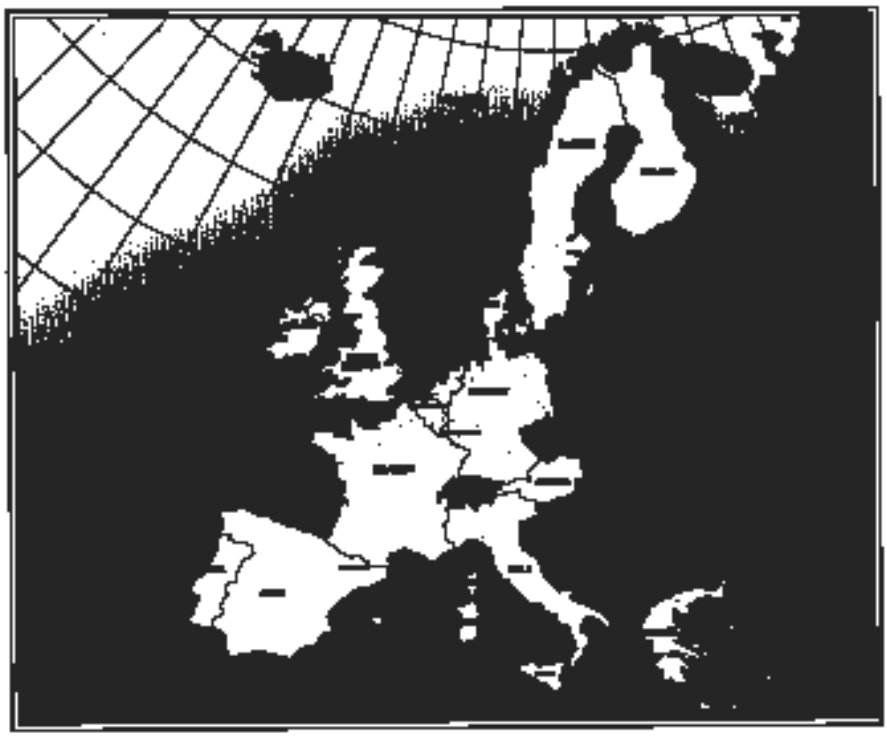
The euro was indeed launched in January 1999, at least as a virtual currency to be used in bank accounts. The introduction of the new notes and coins will not follow until January 2002. But the euro's birth was marked by financial manipulations and sleights of hand that justified many of the doubts of the financial markets, and that contributed to its decline against the dollar. The rules to qualify for monetary union had been simple enough: An applicant country's level of public debt should be no higher than 60 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), and its annual budget deficit should be no higher than three percent of GDP. For the essentially political reason of creating the largest possible group of members, these rules were flouted. Belgium and Italy were both admitted with levels of debt that exceeded 100 percent of GDP. France manipulated the pension debt of its state-owned telecommunications company to make the threshold, and Germany made it only in the year after the euro's launch, when it banked the receipts from its auction of new telecommunications licenses.

The verdict of the markets was damaging. The Danish referendum vote in September 2000 against joining the monetary union probably owed most to the euro's sharp decline against the U.S. dollar. Born at a value of $1.17, the new single currency declined steadily until, in the week before the Danish vote, it reached a low of $0.84. As the Danes voted, German opinion polls showed significant majorities of 55 to 63 percent wanting to keep the

deutsche mark rather than make the planned switch to euro notes and coins in January 2002. Promised a sound and stable currency like the deutsche mark, Europeans have been given an unconvincing replacement that has behaved more like the Italian lira. Paradoxically, the euro's decline helped stimulate the sluggish German and French economies into an export-led boom as their goods became steadily cheaper for American consumers. In 2000, the EU countries were enjoying a trade surplus with the United States of more than $7 billion a month. This in turn helped nudge the unemployment level in France and Germany below the politically critical level of 10 percent, still uncomfortably high when rates in the United States and Britain were below five percent.

Madeleine Albright's indecipherable map was even more telling than it looked. Europe on the ground was indeed a very messy place when the Americans, tongue not entirely in cheek, showed it to their allies. And yet, from the European point of view, that map was an extraordinarily hopeful document. Its very complexity was part of its charm. For most of the past few hundred years, while Europe emerged as a distinct culture and exploded into the world with the Renaissance, the Age of Exploration, and the Industrial Revolution, the continent's essential map had been simple. It was a Europe of imperial bastions and nation-states. The proliferation of new affiliations on the American map thus represents the

The EU and its Neighbors



The 15 current EU members are shown in white. Six applicants are on the "fast track" for future membership: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia.

welcome emergence of the diplomatic equivalent of a pluralist civil society in place of what had been an assemblage of armed camps. The new Europe is both constrained and bound together by a series of nets, which reflect the real meaning of those multicolored circles on the map. There is the golden net of trade, and the steel net of security. There is the judicial net of the European Courts of Justice and of Human Rights, and the bureaucratic net of the EU's *acquis communautaire*, the 80,000 pages of rules and regulations that aspirant new members must incorporate into their own laws and administrations.

The essential difference between a European and an American perspective is one of time. Europeans look back 50 years to the first trembling steps of the European project, with the Schuman plan for merging the French and German coal and steel industries, and see almost miraculous progress. War, which was Europe's natural condition for centuries, has become unthinkable within the EU family. The long peace has brought unimagined prosperity. Europe has already built a single market, which operates by common rules that are enforced by the common legal system of the European Court of Justice. Europeans look forward 20 or 30 years, to a Europe of perhaps 30 nations, stretching from the Arctic to the Black Sea and perhaps even to the Caspian Sea. That putative Europe would be prosperous, democratic, and stable, united by a single currency and pursuing common economic, social, and foreign policies. Any European citizen would have the right to live and work and travel freely throughout the continent, using the same currency and enjoying the same legal rights in a manner not possible since the days of the Roman Empire.

Americans tend to take a more immediate and less roseate view. The problems of rebuilding the Balkans, assuring the security of the Baltic states, managing Russia, fixing trade disputes, and agreeing upon mutually acceptable rules for multinational mergers and electronic trading and competition in a globalized economy are urgent now. American politicians operate by a two-year or four-year clock, the intervals between congressional and presidential elections. In a Europe of 15 nations, elections happen all the time in one place or another, and politicians come and go, and there is no single winner like the U.S. president and no single arena of decision like the U.S. Congress. Indeed, the crucial rights of the European Parliament are defined as rights of codecision, in which laws are made in conjunction with the unelected EU Commission and with the European Council, where the 15 heads of national governments meet. The political system is therefore as pluralist, which is to say as confused and as baffling for an outsider seeking a source of accountability, as the indecipherable map. For impatient Americans, this European

> THE EUROPEAN UNION IS NOT YET A STATE, OR A POLITICAL ACTOR, SO MUCH AS IT IS A PROCESS, CONSTANTLY IN THE COURSE OF BECOMING.

complexity also means that decisionmaking is very slow.

The EU is not yet a state, or a political actor, so much as it is a process, constantly in the course of becoming. It defies conventional analysis, being simultaneously less and more than the sum of its parts. It is something less than a state, yet considerably more than an economic association. It is not yet a federal system, but it is already, because of the European Central Bank and some common laws such as the European Convention on Human Rights, something more than a confederacy. It is a great power, but only in the economic sense. All the rest is potential, rather as the infant United States might have seemed at the time of *The Federalist*. This is a parallel repeatedly invoked by enthusiasts for the European project, who understandably like to impose a deep chronological perspective upon a process whose daily course is continually buffeted and obscured by the smoke and dust of political battle. The parallel is, however, selective. Europeans tend to skate over the fact that the defining event of America's long progress toward union was the Civil War.

Europe's defining events may already be upon it. Having agreed in principle in 1991 to develop a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Europe now has one, with a single responsible official in charge, Javier Solana. He is also now equipped with a collective promise from the 15 heads of government, meeting in council at their Helsinki summit in December 1999, to mobilize by 2002 a force of 60,000 troops. They would be posted on assignment from the EU's various national armies, and capable of being deployed for up to a year. Because of leave and rotation, this will mean some 150,000 troops being trained or ready for such a force. Issues of command are still being discussed. Such a force would be able to replicate the current NATO peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Kosovo, on whose troop numbers it was based. For the foreseeable future, it will be restricted to "permissive" environments of peacekeeping and spared the hostile environments of peacemaking. While its likely missions at present seem to be limited to the softer end of peacekeeping, the force is the nucleus of a potential European army. The Helsinki summit also resolved that the 60,000 troops would be joined by 15 warships and 15 squadrons of military aircraft. The Council members agreed as well to purchase more than 200 Airbus jets, equipped as military transports, to give the EU force the capacity for strategic airlift it currently lacks.

This was a dramatic departure for an EU that had in its previous 40 years studiously avoided military matters, preferring to leave them to NATO. It is also a dramatic departure for the United States. Previous U.S. administrations had warned the EU sternly against any such development, which was seen as an inherent threat to the primacy of NATO, and thus against U.S. interests. The Clinton administration, by contrast, has encouraged the Europeans to proceed, so long as NATO's prerogatives are respected, as a way to encourage them to assume a greater share of the burdens (financial and military) of sustaining international stability. That new American position has not only encouraged the EU to develop some of the military tools of

a conventional strategic actor, but has encouraged and even prodded Europe into increasingly ambitious geopolitical roles. The United States has urged the EU to move faster with enlargement, and to take the lead in rebuilding the Balkans, economically and politically. Europeans are increasingly uncomfortable with these grandiose assignments. President Clinton personally put great pressure on his EU counterparts to accept Turkey as a formal candidate for membership, despite objections that 70 million Muslims would not be easily absorbed into a largely Christian Europe. The EU heads of state also fear that since Turkey borders Iran, Iraq, and Syria, Turkey's accession could steer the EU into the dangerous neighborhood of the Middle East and Central Asia. In Aachen, Germany, last June, when he became the first U.S. president to receive the Charlemagne Prize, in recognition of his services to European integration, Clinton told the EU: "No doors can be sealed shut to Russia—not NATO's, not the EU's. Russia must be fully part of Europe." This stunned EU officials, who noted that Russian membership in NATO could require U.S. and European troops, under Article V of the Treaty, to help defend Russia's Siberian borders against Chinese or Islamic threats.

A force of 60,000 is a modest beginning. But it comes from a collection of wealthy countries that among them spend some $140 billion a year on defense and have 1.8 million troops under arms, compared with the 1.3 million in the U.S. armed forces. They boast an advanced military-industrial and high-tech capacity, with a well-developed aerospace industry, satellites, and space launch capability. The EU contains, moreover, in Britain and France, the world's third and fourth biggest nuclear arsenals. The British and French navies include ballistic nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers. There is little doubt that, properly organized, equipped, and deployed, the EU could quickly become as serious a strategic rival for the United States as it is today a commercial one. Since this is precisely the kind of remote but theoretically conceivable prospect that contingency planners are paid to consider, it is unlikely that this possibility has been lost on the Pentagon. It has not been lost on some critics of the venture. John Bolton, who was an assistant secretary of state in the Bush administration, told Congress in November 1999, "The aim to align the foreign and defense policies of the EU's members into one shared and uniform policy is at times motivated either by a desire to distance themselves from U.S. influence or, in some cases, by openly anti-American intentions."

Recent French rhetoric about America as the "hyperpower," whose current dominance needs the restraints and balances of a multipolar world, has fueled such concerns. And since the days of President de Gaulle, the need for Europe to develop the means to become a strategic actor in its own right, independent of the United States, has been a theme of French foreign policy. But that is unlikely to happen, for a number of reasons. First, staunch Atlanticist powers such as Britain, the Netherlands, and Denmark would not support a European foreign policy that challenged America or threatened NATO. Indeed, Javier Solana went to his new job as

CFSP chief directly from a successful stint as NATO secretary-general, a post in which he established firm Atlanticist credentials. Second, there is no sign that Europeans are prepared to pay for the bigger defense budgets such an ambition would require. Only Britain is increasing its defense spending, and that to a modest 3.1 percent of GDP. American defense spending in 1999 was 3.5 percent of GDP, the lowest share of national wealth since 1940, but markedly greater than the European average of 2.4 percent. In Germany, budget cuts are trimming the country's defense share down to 1.8 percent of GDP.

Still, serious difficulties are looming for transatlantic strategic relations. In the Middle East, Europeans dependent on oil imports have been far more accommodating to the Arabs than to Israel. The divergence in policy was clear during the outbreak of fighting between Israel and the Palestinians in October 2000, when the European members of the United Nations Security Council, Britain and France, refused to back U.S. efforts to block a resolution critical of Israel. Another policy clash is looming over the Baltic region, where the United States is far more supportive of the three states' hopes of joining NATO (in the teeth of intense Russian opposition) than the Europeans are. Finally, the Europeans are openly skeptical of U.S. plans for a ballistic missile defense system, whose associated radar stations are supposed to be deployed on British and Danish soil.

> THE NEED FOR EUROPE TO DEVELOP THE MEANS TO BECOME A STRATEGIC ACTOR IN ITS OWN RIGHT, INDEPENDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, HAS BEEN A THEME OF FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY.

Transatlantic tensions have been routine in NATO's half-century history, and so have European resentments of American strategic dominance and military leadership. What is both new and disturbing for the Atlantic alliance is the unique situation produced by the extraordinary degree to which the United States has become since the Cold War the dominant military, political, economic, technological, and cultural power in world affairs. Above all, the American pioneering of the "new economy" explains why the Europeans are now facing a critical moment. In the simplest of terms, Europeans can no longer take complacent refuge in that long-term perspective that sees great progress in the past 50 years and even more in the future. The world has changed too fast for that. The Cold War is over and the crucial Atlanticist glue has consequently lost its cohesive force. (NATO may one day wish to erect a small statue to Slobodan Milosevic, whose timely provision of a new common enemy justified NATO's continued existence.) The old transatlantic bargain of the Cold War, under which Europeans were content with being an economic superpower while leaving the serious military and political leadership to the Americans, is increasingly difficult to sustain.

Not only has the geopolitical world of the Cold War passed, but the geo-economic world that is replacing it operates to a very large degree by American rules.

Most crucial of all for its impact on the way Europeans live and work, the new digital economy is based on American technology and American patents, and the United States has built a commanding lead. To remain competitive, Europeans have been steadily reforming and even dismantling their traditional "social market" model of generous welfare states and high taxes. The British under Margaret Thatcher were the first to take this path, which explains why this essentially American policy is now known in Europe as the Anglo-Saxon model. The nominally left-of-center government of Tony Blair in Britain has echoed the Clinton administration's assertion that "the era of Big Government is over" with welfare reform, workfare, and a commitment to free trade and free markets. In the summer of 2000, the German, French, and Italian governments each in turn announced "historic" tax cuts (French finance minister Laurent Fabius called them "the biggest in 50 years"), and reforms of the pension and welfare systems are also underway in these three biggest economies of the euro zone.

In domestic and political terms, this abandoning of the old social market model that served them so well is perhaps an even bigger departure for Europeans than is the decision to build an autonomous military force. The state can no longer be relied upon as the guarantor of security. Labor unions have lost much of their traditional power across Europe. State-owned companies, which used to provide job security, are being privatized and downsized across Europe. Germany's new pension rules require workers to set up their own investment accounts to help finance their retirement. The need to embrace the new economy has forced major changes upon Europe's corporate culture. Over the past five years, hostile takeovers have become commonplace, accepted, and even welcomed, rather than frowned upon. An investment system that was based on banks and cross-ownerships has been quickly replaced by equity, as Europeans have been trading in their traditional savings accounts and bonds to embrace the stock market and the NASDAQ-style Neuermarkt in Germany. These developments in turn have whittled away Europe's old bastions of trade union power, which were already under threat from the prolonged period of double-digit unemployment in the 1990s. The new pattern of employment is increasingly part-time, and based on limited contracts, and often outflanks the unions. After 50 years of wel-

ONE OF THE CULTURAL SHOCKS THAT HAS JOLTED EUROPEANS HAS BEEN, UNDER THE TWIN DEVELOPMENTS OF IMMIGRATION AND WAVES OF REFUGEES, A REMINDER OF THEIR OWN CAPACITY FOR XENOPHOBIA.

fare state comforts, many Europeans think of the new economy in terms of new insecurity rather than new opportunity, particularly when their traditional champions in the trade unions or social democratic parties appear unable or unwilling to defend them. The social systems of Europe are being transformed, along with the continent's geopolitical condition and the wider geo-economic environment, just as its citizens are being instructed to surrender their familiar national currencies for a less-than-convincing replacement.

But can it fly? An oversized image of a euro coin stands before the European Central Bank building in Frankfurt, Germany.

In short, public and private finances have been increasingly Americanized over the past five years, which may have helped European competitiveness but has had some sobering social and political effects. One of them is the erosion of that comforting sense of communal and caring superiority over the supposedly heartless American materialism that many Europeans used to nurture. Another source of European condescension, especially during the years of the civil rights struggle, was American "racism." One of the cultural shocks that has jolted Europeans has been, under the twin developments of immigration and waves of refugees, a reminder of their own capacity for xenophobia.

All wars have consequences, and the Balkan wars flooded the continent with refugees in a way unparalleled since the aftermath of World War II. Since many of them were illegal, estimates took the place of reliable figures, but the EU reckoned that its 15 members were host to some four million refugees, most but not all fleeing the wars of the Yugoslavian succession. Almost three million of them were in Germany, and another half million were in Austria, which helps explain the spasm of electoral protest that brought Jorg Haidar's Freedom Party 27 percent of the vote. A nationalist and populist who opposed Austria's membership in the EU, and now opposes both the euro and enlargement, Haidar periodically issued provocative statements about the "patriotic sacrifice" and "loyal service" of veterans of Hitler's war machine. The entry of his party into Austria's new

coalition government inspired protests across Europe, and a rather odd suspension of diplomatic courtesies by the EU partners. This token gesture, which amounted to little more than a refusal to pose for the usual "family photo" after European summits, outraged many Austrians who felt that Europe had no business sitting in judgment on their democratic choice.

It also sent a current of alarm through the smaller nations of the EU, which have sometimes objected that the big nations, and in particular France and Germany, pay too little regard to their rights and sensitivities. In Denmark, the decision to discipline Austria became an important issue in the referendum campaign, because Denmark's anti-immigrant People's Party made it so. The Danes' refusal to adopt the euro, by the significant if narrow margin of 53 to 47, owed something to their unease that Europe might one day want to challenge some Danish democratic vote. Populist parties, running on promises to stop immigration into Europe, are not restricted to Austria. In France, Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front could rally some 15 percent of the vote with a demand to start sending immigrants back to their lands of origin. And in elections in Belgium the week after the Danish referendum, the Vlaams Blok (Flemish Bloc), on a similar platform of repatriation and expulsion of immigrant children from Flemish schools, won 33 percent of the vote in the city of Antwerp.

THE EUROPEAN UNION'S CHOSEN TASK OF BRINGING PROSPERITY AND STABILITY TO EASTERN EUROPE AND THE BALKANS WILL BE A COSTLY AND CONTROVERSIAL MISSION FOR AT LEAST A GENERATION TO COME.

Europe is not about to go fascist. But its voters are becoming susceptible to xenophobic appeals from populist and authoritarian parties warning that Europe has too many refugees and too many immigrants, and that enlarging the EU will bring low-wage competition from Polish and other guest workers. It will also be expensive, because many of the countries awaiting entry into the EU are so poor that they amount to a serious challenge to development. The GDP of today's EU is almost exactly $23,000 per head, more than four times greater than that of the Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians, who are in the first rank to join the EU in the coming years. The average EU citizen is more than 10 times richer than an average resident of Romania or Bulgaria, both of which are due to join in the second wave. And the fall of Slobodan Milosevic last October has presented for payment that postdated check the EU signed while NATO bombs were dropping on Serbia. Once Milosevic left the scene, the EU promised in the Stability Pact of 1999, Serbia and the other ex-Yugoslavian states could expect to join the line waiting for NATO and EU membership. Forget, for the moment, President Clinton's urgings that the EU leave open its doors for Russia, Ukraine, and Turkey; the EU's chosen task of bringing

By refusing to embrace the euro in a referendum last year, Denmark dealt a severe blow to the sagging European currency and to hopes for speedier European economic integration.

prosperity and stability to eastern Europe and the Balkans will be a costly and controversial mission for at least a generation to come.

The problem is made more acute by the crisis of authority that is simultaneously gripping Europe. Those political elites who have in the past taken the most pride in the European project are now held in low esteem. In Germany, former chancellor Helmut Kohl has been protected against criminal inquiries over the receipt of illegal campaign funds by his parliamentary immunity, in a scandal that has badly damaged his party and soured his own reputation as the German unifier. Country after country has been rocked by scandal. Italy saw the decimation of its political class with the Tangentopoli inquiries, which culminated in the trial of one former prime minister (Giulio Andreotti) for Mafia connections, and the flight into exile of another (Bettino Craxi). In France, the conservative president Jacques Chirac and the socialist former finance minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn have both been accused of involvement in a scheme to raise party funds through rake-offs on public works projects in Paris. Spain's former premier Felipe González was badly tarnished by legal probes that established the responsibility of his ministers for the use of "death squads" in the dirty war against Basque terrorism. In Britain, where Tony Blair was helped to his 1997 election victory by attacking the "sleaze and scandals" of the Conservative incumbents, a million-pound donation to Blair's Labor party had to be returned after a scandal erupted. The donor, Bernie Ecclestone, ran the Formula One car racing industry, which was seeking government support to prevent the EU's banning of lucrative tobacco advertising.

In February 1999, all 20 members of the EU Commission felt impelled to resign after a prolonged scandal over fraud and mismanagement that had pro-

voked the European Parliament to withhold approval of the EU's budget. The political scandals did not simply reveal a tarnished handful of individual leaders, but began to look systemic, as if the European establishment as a whole was in question. The Commission, whose constitutional role is to be the guardian of the European Treaties, is the only body with the right to initiate legislation at the European level. It is the bureaucracy that manages the EU and its $90 billion annual budget. It is also the custodian of the European idea, and has traditionally been the driving force behind the entire integration project. The Commission's mass resignation, in a period when most European countries were undergoing what might be called their Watergate phase, thus reflected discredit upon the European grand design itself just as enlargement and the single currency were to put Europe's institutions to their sharpest test. The new Commission, led by former Italian premier Romano Prodi, has not restored the situation, being distracted by bureaucratic infighting that has filled Europe's newspapers with claims of coups against Prodi, or Prodi's countercoups against the rival authority, the European Council.

It is in this context that Haidar's support in Austria and the Danish referendum vote should be seen, along with opinion poll majorities in Germany against both enlargement and the euro. Led by Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, the entire Danish establishment, from government ministers and top businessmen to the main media outlets and bankers, campaigned for a yes vote on the euro. Their failure symbolized the wider crisis of authority between Europe's elites and the citizens. "The political elite has never told the truth," claimed Jens-Peter Bonde, a maverick member of the European Parliament who campaigned against the euro. "All along they pretended the EU was about selling Danish pig meat for higher prices than on the world market. That was the story: that it came only with benefits for the economy and never had aspirations to transform itself into a political union."

"The political elite has never told the truth," claimed Jens-Peter Bonde, a maverick member of the European Parliament who campaigned against the euro.

A large part of the difficulty the Blair government in Britain faces over its proposed referendum on the euro is that it has insisted on presenting the case purely in economic terms. Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown has set up five economic tests to measure the degree to which the British and European economies are converging; these are his criteria for judging whether the time is right. But as the Conservative opposition has argued with growing force, it is both wrong and electorally dishonest to present a matter as fundamental as the surrender of a national currency, and the crucial policy decisions over the money supply and interest rates that go with it, as purely economic. William Hague, the Conservative leader, has targeted this issue with precision: "The British prime minister and his Chancellor of the Exchequer have attempted to argue that the intro-

Europeans increasingly resent the effects of EU harmonization efforts that impinge on traditional life and culture, such as the demand that Germany alter rules on beer purity.

duction of the euro has no constitutional implications whatsoever, and is a purely technical question. I find it difficult to believe they really believe this. The euro has potentially huge political consequences."

The political consequences are becoming plain to see. Europe's political elites have agreed to establish a single currency, along with a common foreign policy, backed up by a dedicated military force to give it teeth. These are the crucial building blocks of a single political entity. Is that what Europeans want? Not only has this question never been put to European voters, but with the exception of occasional referendums, it cannot be. The elections that matter to most voters take place within nation-states, where "Europe" is just one of a host of more immediate and familiar issues. Elections to the European Parliament, which have seen steady declines in voter turnout, to a historic low of 43 percent in 1999, tend to reflect the popularity of national political parties at the time. And by definition, most politicians aspiring to become members of the European Parliament tend to be pro-European anyway. As a result, referendums such as the Danish vote on the euro or the French vote to ratify the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (which passed by barely one percent) represent the few occasions when voters can record their view of the European project itself. When the question of whether voters wanted a federal Europe was last put (in 1995) in the EU's Eurobarometer opinion poll, only two of 15 countries—the Netherlands with 56 percent and Belgium with 53 percent—recorded a majority yes vote. Germany and Italy recorded over 40 percent yes. The remainder, including Austria (35 percent), Denmark (26 percent), Sweden (30 percent), Ireland (32 percent), and Spain (34 percent) were less enthusiastic. A highly ambitious political edifice is thus under construction in Europe on uncertain foundations of public support. One of the remarkable features of the Danish referendum is that it took place at all. There was no such referendum on the euro in Germany, Italy, or France.

This problem of political legitimacy is complicated by the fact that the executive body that runs Europe on a day-to-day basis, the EU Commission, is not elected at all. The 20 commissioners are appointed by the member states, and they supervise a permanent bureaucracy of some 20,000 officials who are answerable only to the unelected commissioners. The Commission has made itself unpopular by a host of meddlesome and petty regulations for which "Europe" is commonly blamed. Steven Thorburn of Sunderland became a national hero in Britain in September 2000 by selling fruit and vegetables measured in pounds and ounces at a local market rather than by metric measure. His three old-fashioned scales were confiscated, and local officials informed him that he would be prosecuted and could go to prison for selling his goods in the way British markets have done for centuries. Germans grumble at the way the EU bureaucrats of Brussels, acting in the name of competition, tried to get them to drop their 500-year-old purity law, which stipulates that good German beer can be made only from hops, yeast, malt, and water. Greeks complain about the EU rules on making their traditional feta cheese, and Spaniards protest that Brussels does not always know best how to smoke hams. In rural France, local police, reflecting a spirit of widespread resistance to the bureaucrats of Brussels, routinely warn traders when inspectors are coming to enforce the EU rules that prevent "unhygienic" sales of traditional and homemade local cheeses, jams, and foie gras.

THE COMMISSION HAS MADE ITSELF UNPOPULAR BY A HOST OF MEDDLESOME AND PETTY REGULATIONS FOR WHICH "EUROPE" IS COMMONLY BLAMED.

This is the unfriendly face of Europe to many of its citizens, not a grand and noble vision of a Europe whole and free, but a remote body of unelected bureaucrats threatening traditional ways. A Eurobarometer poll published last July found, for the first time in history, that only a minority 49 percent of Europeans favored their country's membership in the EU. "Only when we show citizens that they will not have to submit to unified rules and regulations can we gain approval for Europe and win back the skeptics," commented German president Johannes Rau. But without unified rules and regulations, what would be left of the idea of European union? More ominously for the future, the poll revealed scant support for making enlargement a priority. On average across the EU, only 27 percent said it should be a priority; 60 percent said it should not.

This is Europe's existential crisis: Its governments and institutions are confronted by the essential questions of what Europe is and what it might yet be, and whether they will be able to summon the political will and public support for the next big step of enlargement. They have already failed one crucial test: reforming the controversial Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which consumes $40 billion a year, half the EU budget. Originally designed to ensure that Europe would be able to feed itself, the CAP has become a massive subsidy program for

European farmers. It cannot survive the coming of new member states from eastern Europe, where Poland alone has more farmers than Britain, France, and Germany combined. Indeed, enlargement can hardly proceed while the CAP endures. And yet, at the EU's Berlin summit in 1999, France blocked the implementation of an already-agreed-upon reform plan, and Germany acquiesced.

The situation is serious. The EU's two grand missions are in trouble. It is an open question whether Poland will become a full member by 2005, even though it has already decimated its steel industry to meet EU requirements. It has even become debatable, given the opposition in German opinion polls and the new demands for the resignation of Wim Duisenberg, head of the European Central Bank, whether the euro will be fully launched with notes and coins in January 2002. The mood of alarm has inspired some leading political figures to make important speeches. The classic case for a full-blooded federal Europe was advanced this year by German foreign minister Joschka Fischer. He wants an elected president of Europe with executive authority, a federal parliament with full legislative powers, and a written European constitution. France's president Chirac has responded with a call for a hard core of enthusiast states to proceed as far and fast as they choose down the path to integration, leaving laggards behind, all while basing the new Europe firmly on the nation-state. (If this sounds like trying to have one's cake and eat it too, so be it. France has never seen a contradiction between European integration and the interests and primacy of the French nation-state. Indeed, the waspish might say that France has confused the two since the days of Napoleon and Louis XIV.) Europe's wise old men, Helmut Schmidt, Valéry Giscard d'Éstaing, and Jacques Delors, have called for fundamental constitutional reform. Tony Blair, although the most pro-European British leader in more than 20 years, is determined to uphold the nation-state against the federal option. He has proposed strengthening the role of the European Council, which comprises the 15 heads of government, and giving the European Parliament a second chamber of deputies drawn from the various national assemblies. He has also warned that "the difficulty with the view of Europe as a superstate, subsuming nations into politics dominated by supranational institutions, fails the test of the people."

"There are issues of democratic accountability in Europe, the so-called democratic deficit," Blair argued in an important policy speech in Warsaw last October, when he called for Poland and other candidates to be full EU members by 2004. But his real purpose was to address the question of political legitimacy: "The truth is, the primary sources of democratic accountability in Europe are the directly elected and representative institutions of the nations of Europe—national parliaments and governments. That is not to say Europe will not in future generations develop its own strong demos or polity, but it hasn't yet."

> EUROPE'S GOVERNMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS ARE CONFRONTED BY THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION OF WHAT EUROPE IS AND WHAT IT MIGHT YET BE.

All this grand constitutional talk may sound like shuffling deck chairs on the *Titanic*, but it must be done. Europe's leaders have to specify where it is going, and the public has to decide whether they agree. Moreover, there is an instant practical reason for reform: The looming prospect of enlargement requires it. The current Commission of 20 (one for each state and two each for the five largest countries) must be trimmed, to avert a Commission of 40 that would be even more unwieldy.

More crucial still, the question of voting weights must be decided. At present, big countries such as France, Germany, Britain, and Italy get 10 votes each in the Council of Ministers. Medium-sized countries such as the Netherlands (pop. 15.8 million) and Portugal (pop. 9.9 million) get five votes each. Sweden (pop. 8.9 million) gets but four, and Luxembourg (pop. 0.4 million) gets two. In voting terms, this means eight million Germans are the equivalent of 200,000 Luxembourgers. Enlargement will require wholesale renegotiation of this system, along with a definition of what constitutes a blocking minority, and how far the traditional national veto should be whittled back to let issues be settled by majority vote. At present, one big and two small countries can block anything.

The EU summit at Nice this past December was supposed to resolve these matters. Stretching into five days, it proved to be the longest and most bitter EU summit ever, with small nations threatening to walk out rather than be bullied by the big ones. Finally, the 15 national leaders agreed to re-weight each nation's vote in the Council of Ministers—the future newcomers included—while crafting a complex formula for majority votes and blocking minorities that would allow three big countries to stop any change. They deferred other constitutional reforms until a new conference in 2004, but they kept the EU bicycle wobbling along by crafting the bare minimum of structural changes required for enlargement.

The immediate future of Europe will depend, to a greater or lesser degree, on events and decisions made in the United States. The euro's revival is likely to depend on a fall of the dollar accompanying an American financial crisis, whether on Wall Street or through the ballooning trade deficit. Enlargement of the EU depends on sustained U.S. pressure and the speed with which the United States prods NATO into the next phase of its own enlargement. Any EU military mission will depend on the United States' stepping back and letting Europe take the lead in some future crisis. And it is this American relationship that remains the most crucial for Europe. To a striking degree, Europe's integration has been pushed and backed consistently by the United States since the post-1945 years of NATO's formation and the Marshall Plan. Not all U.S. presidents have gone so far as John F. Kennedy, who in June 1963 solemnly envisaged an eventual political union between the United States and a future United States of Europe. Nonetheless, with President Bush's support for German unification, and President Clinton's support for enlargement and a European defense structure, U.S. backing has been maintained. American strategy was defined with some precision by Strobe Talbott, deputy secretary of state in the Clinton administration:

> When our Administration says we support European integration, we mean both deepening and broadening; we mean both the consolidation of international institutions and the expansion, or enlargement, of those institutions. That means we encourage our friends in Europe to embrace the broadest, most expansive, most outward-looking, most inclusive possible version of integration. We have done so for reasons of our own self-interest. A politically united Europe will be a stronger partner to advance common goals. An economically united Europe creates a much more attractive environment for American investment. But I will be quite frank: We have an ulterior motive as well. We hope that the enlargement of NATO, of which we are a member, will contribute to the conditions for the enlargement of the EU, of which we are not a member, but in which we have such a profound, I'd even say vital, interest. From our vantage point, NATO enlargement and EU expansion are separate but parallel processes in support of the same overall cause, which is a broader, deeper transatlantic community.

But America may soon be facing its own existential question about the kind of Europe it hopes to see. If the revival of the euro depends on a fall of the dollar, or if America's geostrategic goals in Turkey and Russia to stabilize Eurasia falter because reluctant Europeans decline unwelcome new responsibilities, or if the Europeans refuse to deploy America's missile defense radar, then the 50-year-old Cold War bargain will be in trouble. The bigger Europe gets, the less it will want to play Sancho Panza to the American Don Quixote. Understandably, America wants a prosperous and stable Europe that can be a partner in global management without challenging America's leadership role. Equally understandably, the Europeans assume partnership means sharing power, as well as responsibilities. The question, as posed by French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine, is "whether a United States which is so powerful can or cannot accept having real partners."

An even more acute question emerges from that monstrously complex map with which this essay began. It is not simply a matter of whether Europeans live up to American expectations that they will serve as custodians and bankers for the survivors of the Soviet and Yugoslavian empires. Nor is it limited to the question of whether they are prepared to continue to accept Americans as first among equals of the European powers, with the permanent right to take the top military posts in NATO. American policymakers have learned from experiences such as Vietnam and Somalia, and from quarrels with Congress over foreign aid, to respect the force of public opinion, or even of public prejudice. Europe's policymaking elites are now facing a similar lesson. So the ultimate existential question for Europe is not whether it will be a federal state or a confederacy, or whether its military power will ever match its economic wealth, or whether it will partner with or challenge America. The real question is whether the European public, battered by social change and sick of high taxes and corrupt politicians, still trusts its elites to take such grandiose and costly decisions in its name. The noble aspiration of a Europe whole and free, harmonious and united, continues to inspire many of the continent's leaders. Their challenge, amid mounting public resentment and resistance, is to convince the voters to follow them. ❑

Is Harmony at the Heart of Things?

Virtually all civilizations, from the Greek and the ancient Mayan to our own, are united by a determined quest for evidence of harmony in the cosmos.

by Anthony Aveni

On January 1, 1801, the first night of a new century, the renowned Sicilian astronomer Giuseppe Piazzi turned his telescope toward a point in the sky between Mars and Jupiter. The faint object he found, exactly where his calculations had predicted, was the first asteroid ever identified. He named it Ceres, after the Roman goddess and protector of his native island. A year later, a German astronomer sighted a second asteroid, which he called Pallas. Its slow but perceptible drift against the background field of distant stars was a dead giveaway that it, too, was a relatively nearby celestial body orbiting the sun. By 1890 astronomers had identified more than 300 asteroids, ranging in size from the giant Ceres, some 500 miles in diameter, to much smaller chunks of rock. Today, with the Hubble space telescope in place, we can track millions of them, all floating in a wide belt between 200 million and 400 million miles from the sun—an unnerving vision at a time when most scientists have come to agree that it was the impact of a single errant asteroid that did in the dinosaurs. What if, we ask ourselves, another asteroid comes hurtling toward Earth?

But the human experience with asteroids so far has much more to tell us about harmony than about apocalypse. One of the more interesting things about asteroids is the unusual way nature has arrayed them in space, and one of the more interesting things about human beings is revealed by our insistent search for an explanation of this arrangement. It is a search strongly rooted in our ancient intuited sense that all things in nature operate rhythmically. Taken to the extreme (which is where I fully intend to carry it), this universal rhythm-seeking reveals nothing less than humanity's age-old attempt to penetrate the mind of God. But let's start with the asteroids.

Several great "scholars of the skies," including Galileo (with pointer) and Copernicus (third from right), share in the search for harmony in the cosmos in a 19th-century print.


ATLAS COELESTIS.
seu
HARMONIA
MACROCOSMICA

In the 1850s, when astronomers plotted all the asteroid orbits they'd thus far discovered, they noticed a curious pattern: There were about a dozen gaps in the asteroid belt, "forbidden zones" that the asteroids seemed to shun. Today, we might liken these gaps to the blank bands separating the songs on an old LP record.

What could explain them? The answer didn't come until 1866, when Indiana University astronomer Daniel Kirkwood happened upon a curious coincidence. If there had been asteroids in the gaps, Kirkwood found, there would have been a direct relationship between the time it took each of them to travel around the sun and the time it takes the giant planet Jupiter to do the same. (Not coincidentally, Jupiter is the nearest object large enough to exert a strong gravitational force on the asteroids.) The relationships could be expressed as fractions. Moreover, these fractions were always composed of small whole numbers: one-half, two-thirds, three-fifths, etc.

From there, it was but a few relatively simple steps to understand how Jupiter would pull asteroids in the forbidden zones—which are now called Kirkwood's Gaps—out of their orbit. Imagine that you and I are runners on a circular track and that we start out simultaneously on a half-mile run. Say I complete it in three minutes while you, a faster runner, do it in two (or two-thirds my time). In other words, in the time it takes you to make a full revolution, I can manage only two-thirds of a circuit. If a TV camera in a Goodyear blimp flying overhead follows you from some arbitrary 12 o'clock position on the track all the way around back to that position again, it will show me going only as far as the eight o'clock position. If we continue running at our established paces, once more around the track puts you back to that same 12 o'clock position after four minutes of running but finds me plodding only as far as the 4 o'clock point. At the end of your third revolution, six minutes into the race, you will have gained a full lap, overtaking me at precisely the 12 o'clock point, where I have just completed only my second lap.

Next let's suppose that you are completing the circuit not in some simple fraction of my time but in one made up of larger numbers, such as 11/13. By playing with the hands of a clock, we can see that it will take many more laps before we encounter each other on the same part of the track. (If you're theoretically minded, there is a simple mathematical formula in most elementary astronomy texts you can use to figure this out. The answer turns out to be once every six and one-half of the faster runner's laps.) As a general rule, the smaller the numbers that make up these fractional periods, the more frequent the close encounters.

Now switch back from track stars to real stars, and Kirkwood's Gaps seem less of a mystery. The gaps exist because asteroids that once may have traveled in these vacant zones would have lapped Jupiter more frequently in their

>Anthony Aveni *is Russell B. Colgate Professor of Anthropology and Astronomy at Colgate University. He is the author of many books, including* Stairways to the Stars: Skywatching in Three Great Ancient Cultures *(1997) and* Between the Lines: The Mystery of the Giant Ground Drawings of Ancient Nasca, Peru *(2000).*

orbit around the sun, thus bringing them under the giant planet's strong gravitational influence more often. Eventually, gravity prevailed, jerking them out of orbit. (The same logic explains the gaps between the rings of Saturn, with the killer gravitational force supplied by the nearby moon Mimas.) In astronomical parlance, Kirkwood's Gaps are caused by *commensurations* between the periods of asteroids and the period of Jupiter.

"All is number," according to a dictum attributed to Pythagoras (circa 580–500 B.C.).

An interesting word, commensurate. Literally, it means having a common measure, or divisible by a common unit a whole number of times. This combination of parts into a consistent arrangement to form a whole creates what we call *harmony*. Order of this kind pleases the senses, as in the balanced combination of hues that brings joy or satisfaction to the eye by producing harmonious colors. We describe colors that seem to blend in an orderly way as "going together" or "resonating" with one another. In mechanical or electrical systems, resonant vibrations are set up when a periodic stimulus beats in time with the natural frequency of the system. The simplest example I can think of occurs when you push a child on a swing in time with the natural frequency of the swing.

From earliest times, humans have sought harmony and rhythm even where they are not readily perceptible, in fields as varied as astronomy, music, and calendar making. The search for the commensurate, the real subject of this essay, is as old as the oldest religion and far older than the oldest science. It emanates from a time long past, when numbers were thought to have lives of their own.

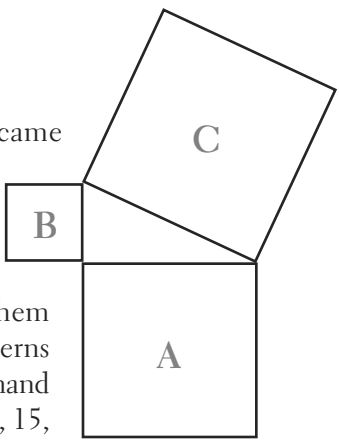
All musicians are aware of the harmonic tones that issue from commensurate lengths of strings we pluck or tubes we blow through. The harmonic principle in music was discovered in the 6th century B.C. by the Greek philosopher Pythagoras. We don't know where he got the idea that number and harmony are linked. One story (probably apocryphal) has it that he heard the sonorous ringing of a blacksmith's hammers of differing weights. But we can be fairly sure that, drawn by curiosity, he eventually took a length of string and marked out on it the proportions 12:8:6. Cutting it into 12:6 and plucking the respective lengths, he heard an octave. The division 12:8 produced a fifth, while the 8:6

resonated in a fourth. These all are consonant chords. (But divide that string 13:11 or 19:12 and you will get a decidedly dissonant chord!) Thus did Pythagoras make the momentous discovery that acoustical consonances are created by commensurate lengths composed of low numbers.*

If all musical sound can be reduced to numbers, Pythagoras wondered, why not other things? The anthropomorphic origin of the number 10 is clear enough—we have 10 fingers and 10 toes. And like the two kinds of numbers, odd and even (or positive and negative), there are two sexes, as well as good and evil. Take the balanced nature of the number four (two times two). Couldn't that represent justice? And why shouldn't six be the number of marriage? (It is the product of 3 and 2, the lowest "male" and "female" numbers.)

Pythagorean inquirers endowed numbers with both a psychological and an ethical dimension. The notion that numbers are the essence of form derives from the Greek love affair with geometry. Though we often think of it as an abstract realm of thought—remember the endless chain of proofs in high school geometry class?—the word *geometry* literally means "land measure." It started out as a practical skill associated with building and farming. Indeed, the celebrated Pythagorean theorem on right triangles is really a formula for finding harmony by equating different areas.

That the square *on* the hypotenuse equals the squares *on* the other two sides of the triangle means that if you make a square, one side of which is the hypotenuse, and two other squares on the remaining two sides of the triangle, the area of the first square is the sum of the area of the other two squares ($C^2=A^2+B^2$), as in the diagram:



The idea that number yields form probably came from the early representation of numbers as dots arranged in patterns. Tallying a large number of items is made simple by visual arrangements. (I remember as a child how quickly I could count up all the pennies in my piggy bank by spreading them out on a large surface, then eyeballing them in patterns of five and sweeping each group with the side of my hand back into the container.) Thus, the numbers 6, 10, 15, 21, 28, etc., are "triangular" because they can be laid out in equilateral triangles. In a bowling alley, for example, the 10 pins are arranged in a 4-3-2-1 pattern. Early numerologists regarded 4, 9, 16, 25, 36, etc., as square, while 6, 12, 20, 30, etc., were thought to be rectangular.

Numbers live! They show their faces in patterns of time as well as space.

*Are such consonant chords artifacts of culture or is the human ear tuned biologically? On this side issue in the age-old nature-nurture debate, the jury is still out. However, some psychologists argue that the tones produced in the simple frequency ratios in a piece by Beethoven or Mozart are naturally more pleasing to the senses than the more complex tones in a modern composition by a Berg or Webern. To prove their point, a group of university scientists recently subjected infants, some as young as four months, to the music of classical and atonal composers. The kids seemed more contented when the harmonious chords of Beethoven's Ninth were played, but they fretted, frowned, and screeched their own dissonant cries as soon as they heard the combined C sharp and F sharp of Schönberg.

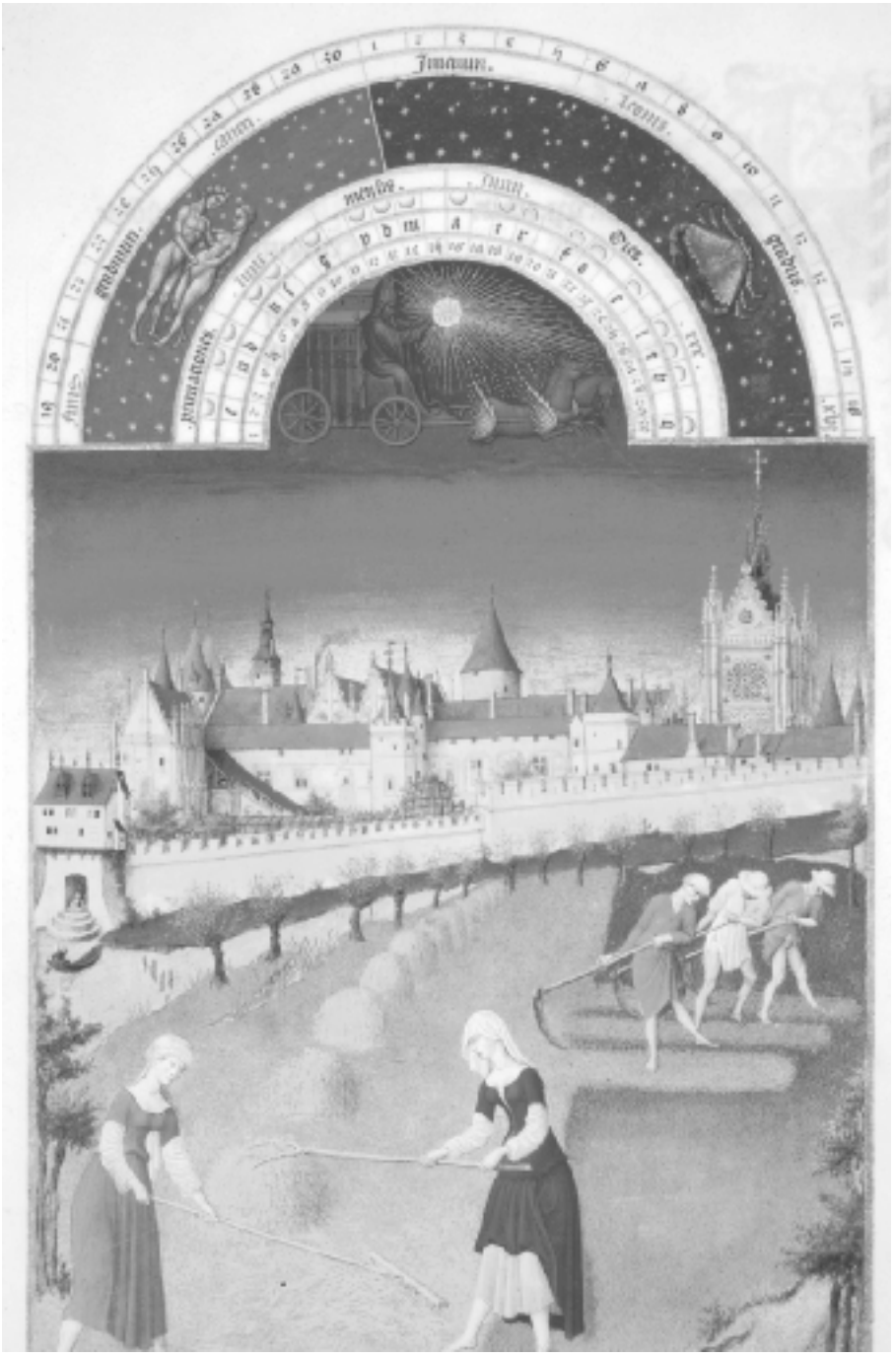
Whether we are dealing with musical harmony or the gravity-produced resonance between missing asteroids and the planet Jupiter, the secret lies in finding the numbers that mesh concordantly, that join together to convince the eye, the ear, or the soul that a degree of order resides in the experience at hand.

Number meets time on the turf of astronomy. One of the basic functions of ancient skywatching the world over lay in the development of calendars. People devised them for various reasons, ranging from the loose demands of agriculture to the more rigid dictates of a state religion. We create calendars to control time. Our desire is to predict the arrival of future events as accurately as possible, literally to reach dates in the future. But to know how nature will behave in the future, we must draw upon the lessons of the past. For clues we can observe the changing position of the Sun at the horizon, the reappearance of the thin crescent Moon, the first morning rise of a bright star or planet, the shortest length of a shadow cast by a stick, or the occurrence of the first rain after a lengthy dry period. But while every calendar begins with a sequence of observed natural events, it is only when these phenomena are related through a numerical correlation that one has a calendar. That's where temporal commensuration begins.

HARMONY PLEASES THE SENSES, AS IN THE BALANCED COMBINATION OF HUES THAT BRINGS JOY OR SATISFACTION TO THE EYE BY PRODUCING HARMONIOUS COLORS.

An early example of this sort of future-date-reaching can be found in the various attempts (I would call them struggles) by the cultures of the world to commensurate the movements of the two primary celestial bodies: the seasonal year of the Sun and the lunar month of the phases. The rising or setting Sun moves through a complete cycle of positions at the horizon in the course of 365.2422 days, while the Moon completes its synodic cycle, from first visible crescent through full and new phase and back again to first crescent, in 29.5306 days. Ancient astronomers reckoned these periods with great precision by repeated observations made over very long intervals.

That these basic time cycles do not naturally mesh is a fact of life. History teaches us that the goal of calendar makers was to invent a harmonic scheme by finding a way to make the cycles fit. How might this work in practice? The solar year is divisible by the synodic month 12 times, with a remainder of 10.8750 days. Suppose we were to begin each month with the occurrence of a first crescent Moon. For simplicity's sake, suppose further that the first of these crescents occurs exactly at the June solstice, when the Sun attains its greatest northerly extreme on the horizon. Recognizing this, calendar keepers would note that the 13th crescent in the lunar cycle would occur some



Elaborate but functional, a 15th-century calendar reminded users that June is the haymaking month.

11 days before the next June solstice, or 354 days later. In other words, in the first solar year, 12 lunar synodic months will have been completed, with a little bit left over. In the second solar year, the 24th crescent in the lunar series would occur about 22 days before the end of the year. By the third solar count, the first crescent would be recorded about 33 days before year's end.

To make things fit better, a calendrical rhythm maker might ask: Why not add a 13th month to the third year to take up the temporal slack? That would

result in only three days left over. Following this scheme, the fourth and fifth solar years would consist again of 12 months, but the sixth year would contain 13 months, the last one ending about six days short of the solstice.

This method of inserting extra days or months into the calendar is called *intercalation*. Following the cardinal rule of calendar making—if harmony isn't there, find a way to create it—timekeepers would try to devise a method of intercalation that would guarantee that the lunar and solar years would never get out of step by more than a month. It is easy to see that the simple 12-12-13-12-12-13 method can be further improved by inserting an extra 13-beat measure into the rhythm once the shortfall between first crescent and solstice builds up to a full month. Ancient cultures were thus able to develop some rather impressive intercalation schemes. The leap year schedule in our own calendar is an excellent example of intercalation. It derives from attempts to fit a time period consisting of a whole number of days into a seasonal year made up of a nonwhole number of days.

Such concerns are far distant from the way we think about numbers and time in our daily lives. Ours is a world denuded of the absolute significance of number, thanks in large part to the 17th-century scientific revolution. In one of his dialogues, Galileo (1564–1642) denounced the ancient Greek notion that number, by itself alone, can determine how matter will behave. He put this Pythagorean belief in the mouth of the aptly named Simplicio, who says he believes that the number three is perfect because all complete and whole things in the world have three dimensions as well as three parts (e.g., a beginning, a middle, and an end). Galileo replies through the voice of Salviati—his name is significant too, if you think about it—who scoffs at the notion that a mere number "has a faculty of conferring perfection upon its possessors."

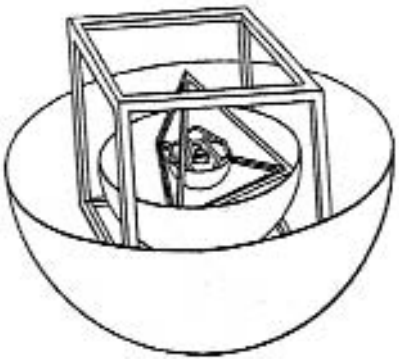
Needless to say, Galileo prevailed. All that remains of the archaic Pythagorean way of thinking about numbers is a lucky 7, an unlucky 13, and "three on a match." The number 10, thoroughly stripped of its divine properties, survives as the base of most of our mathematical systems.

Still, the concept of harmonic numbers found its place in the minds of some early scientists. "There is geometry in the humming of the strings. There is music in the spacing of the spheres." Johannes Kepler, the 17th-century German astronomer, was very much influenced by these words of Pythagoras. He took them to mean that God's secret was encoded in a series of planetary musical tones. Kepler (1571–1630) was convinced that the spheres containing the orbits of the planets are separated by intervals that correspond to the relative length of strings that produce consonant tones, what he called the "*harmonices mundi*" or the "harmony of the spheres."

Kepler dedicated a large portion of his life to studying the positions and motions of the planets, with the goal of determining the sizes and shapes of their orbits. (It was Kepler who discovered that the orbits were elliptical.) Was there a single mathematical or geometrical law, he wondered, that governed a planet's distance from the Sun?

One day, while inscribing a circle inside an equilateral triangle before his class at the University of Graz, in Austria, Kepler is said to have been struck by the idea that the placement of one geometrical figure within another might hold a key to the answer. Kepler knew that there were only five regular polyhedrons (solid figures whose faces are composed of identical polygons): tetrahedrons, cubes, octahedrons, dodecahedrons, and icosahedrons. He was also aware of a famous geometrical proof that demonstrates an essential quality of regular polyhedrons: A sphere can be inscribed within each regular polyhedron such that it touches the center of each face of the polyhedron. Also, spheres can be circumscribed about each of these figures such that the corners of each polyhedron touch the spheres.

Kepler's "eureka moment" came when he realized that there were six planets orbiting the sun (Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto were unknown in the pre-telescopic era) and, consequently, five spaces between them. In his *Astronomia Nova* (1609), he exclaims: "I have brought to life and found true far beyond my hope and expectations that the whole nature of harmonies in the celestial movements really exists—not in the way I thought previously, but in a completely different, yet absolutely perfect manner." Had God deliberately designed the architecture of the universe so that the five regular polyhedrons, each in its correct place, would fit exactly between the planets' orbits around the sun? At the very moment of revelation, according to one version of the story, Kepler dropped his chalk, fled the classroom, and sequestered himself for an intense, lengthy encounter with the axioms of the God-given geometry and numerology of the cosmos. Convinced he was on the right track, Kepler even spent a large portion of his salary to construct a model of the spheres and polyhedrons that fit perfectly one inside the other.



Kepler's model of the solar system

As Kepler later would be forced to admit, his theory about the cosmic significance of the regular polyhedrons was wrong. Never a quitter, the great astronomer tried equating planetary speed with musical pitch. Perhaps the faster planets trilled out high notes while the slower ones growled choral responses in the bass register of the firmament. Together the planets would resonate in a heavenly symphony composed by the Creator. When he attempted to write out God's musical score, Kepler happened upon his harmonic law, the one that correlates a planet's period of revolution with its distance from the Sun. It turned out to be one of the keys to Isaac Newton's discovery of the law of universal gravitation in 1687.

Contemporary historians of science call Newton a genius, while Kepler is often denigrated for having followed the lead of a nonsensical revelation about commensurate geometry. But in the Europe of Kepler's era, it would not have been

unreasonable to think of God as a universal craftsman, the divine musical composer who set the planets in motion, each with its own pitch that contributed to the Harmony of the Worlds. And Kepler's quest for the commensurate still resonates. In 1930, on the 300th anniversary of his death, as scientists were exploring the spacing of electrons about atomic nuclei, the physicist Arnold Sommerfeld asked,

> Would Kepler, the Mystic who, like Pythagoras and Plato, tried to find and to enjoy the harmonies of the Cosmos, would he have been surprised that atomic physics had re-discovered the very same harmonies in the building-stones of matter, and this in even purer form? For the integral numbers in the original quantum-theory display a greater harmonic consonance than even the stars in the Pythagorean music of the spheres.

The search for things commensurate—for balance, equilibrium, and harmony that please the senses—hasn't been only a Western pursuit. It lies at the foundation of mathematical systems in cultures all over the world. A case in point is the divine coalescence of numbers derived by the ancient Maya, a culture just about as far removed from our Greek ancestors as we can imagine.

Numeration had great potency in ancient Mayan thought. During the first millennium A.D., Mayan artisans chiseled numbers in stone and painted them in manuscripts, on pots, and on wall-sized murals all over Central America. Among the relics of Mayan civilization are tall, rectangular stones called *stelae*, engraved with highly stylized numbers. Epigraphers think people once stood in front of these monuments chanting the names of their number gods, hoping to influence divine intervention in their lives. Each number was conceived as a god with particular characteristics related to age, sex, sexual prowess, and other aspects of human existence. Thick lipped, his face spotted with tattoos, the god who depicted the number two symbolized death and sacrifice; the wrinkled countenance of number five reminds us of the wisdom of old age. In Mayan society these sacred numbers apparently made the passage of time possible, for the number gods are often shown carrying the burden of the days, parceled out into units (like our days, months, and years), upon their backs.

To comprehend the Mayan numerological mentality, we must listen to the sky. Like the ancient Greeks, we pick up the beat of the two loudest instruments in the firmament, the Sun and the Moon, and then, if we are Maya, listen for the next most audible. It comes from the planet Venus, the third brightest object in the sky. The search for harmony compels us to seek another beat, to create a musical score to which all three luminaries can dance.

What made Venus so special for the Maya was the fact that its cycle of 584 days happens to resonate with the cycle of the seasons, or 365 days, in the perfect ratio of two small whole numbers: eight to five. In practical terms, this means that to the careful eye any visible aspect of Venus

timed relative to the position of the sun will be repeated almost exactly eight years later. For example, if Venus first appears as a morning star on the first day of winter 2001, it will repeat that performance very close to that date in 2009 and again in 2017. How satisfying it must have been for the Mayan keeper of the days to find such pristine order in an otherwise chaotic world!

A seasonal index like this one could be useful to any practical-minded people who kept time by a solar-based calendar, especially if they had latched on to expressing periods in whole-number ratios. For a time, the Maya became obsessed with this Venus cycle, recognizing that it also conformed with the moon's phases. The Venus eight-year cycle also equals a whole number of lunar synodic months (99 of them to be exact). So, the phase of the moon that accompanies the first appearance of Venus—say, at the December solstice in 2001—will be repeated around the time of the December solstice eight years later, thus signaling the return of Venus.

The Mayan number god zero carries the burden of days. The figure appears on a stone stela *found in Honduras.*

The euphonious coming together of natural cyclic periods may seem unimportant to us. It scarcely matters, for example, what day of the week coincides with New Year's Day from year to year. But for societies whose systems of timekeeping were based on repetitive natural phenomena, some of them projected all the way back to the mythic creation of the world, the revelation of commensurate quantities underpinning the wanderings of their celestial deities would have been regarded as a major discovery revealing the secrets of the universe.

Mayan philosophers of time were not content only to compose a celestial symphony. They sought rhythm-making numbers linked to other periodicities involving the pulse of their lives, cosmic beats that penetrated their very bodies. For example, they recognized that the length of time Venus spends as a morning or an evening star was approximately equal to the sacred count of 260 days. That number appeared very early (ca. 600 B.C.) in the development of the Mayan calendar, when Mayan timekeepers recognized the near equivalence of the time of human gestation in days and the product of the number of layers in heaven (13) and the number of fingers and toes on the human body (20)—yet another kind of commensuration.

Captivated by the rhythms of life and nature, Mayan seekers of the commensurate apparently would go to any lengths to acquire the magical beat. Let me close by citing a recent discovery in ancient Mayan epigraphy that I believe is as important to the study of the Maya as the discovery of Kirkwood's Gaps was to the rise of 19th-century astronomy. In a sense, the two discoveries resonate with each other.

In the Mayan world, common birth dates implied common attributes, for the date of one's birth was said to ordain one's destiny. To provide a numerological charter attesting to the legitimacy of their rulers, the ancient Maya went to a great deal of trouble to demonstrate that leaders were born on days with the same name as the gods who created the world. So we ought not be surprised to find in the Mayan inscriptions certain large numbers that are exactly divisible by a wide range of natural time cycles. There is on page 24 of the Venus Table in the Dresden Codex (a Mayan hieroglyphic book of divination dated to shortly before the Spanish conquest), a very seminal large number that occupies the starting point in a time-reckoning scheme that accurately tracks the position of the planet Venus in the sky. The magic number is written as an interval said to have elapsed since events that took place in heaven before the creation of the world as we now know it. This number translates from the Mayan base-20 system of counting into 1,366,560 of our days (about 3,741 years). My colleague, the late Yale University linguist Floyd Lounsbury, dubbed it the "super number" of the Mayan codices. I think he had good reason for doing so, because he had discovered, to his amazement, that it is an exact whole multiple of several other numbers of vital interest to the Maya: the period of Venus (584 days), the length of the entire Venus Table (37,960 days), the period of Mars (780 days), the seasonal year (365 days), and the period of Mercury (117 days). And, as might be expected, it is also commensurate with the most sacred of all Mayan cycles, the 260-day count.

I cannot even begin to hazard a guess about how the Maya might have happened upon this "mother of all numbers." It must have taken generations of careful skywatching and years of mathematical calculation to root out the commensurate cosmic number par excellence, the "gravitational constant" in the Mayan universe of numbers. Like the lost chord, such a grand cycle resonating perfect harmony defies all credibility even as it inspires awe.

I have a feeling that all cultures at one time or another taste the passion for perfection derived from questing after the commensurate. I wonder what the Mayan Kepler, enraptured by that eureka moment of discovery, must have thought when the divine cosmic beat suddenly popped out at him. Ptolemy of Alexandria, greatest of all the Greek astronomers, captured the feeling perfectly when, after his own harmonic revelation more than two millennia ago, he wrote that "in studying the convoluted orbits of the stars my feet do not touch the earth, and, seated at the table of Zeus himself, I am nurtured with celestial ambrosia." ❑

Wilson Center Events

"The Human Rights Conundrum: Supporting Democracy in Indonesia"
Todung Mulya Lubis, human rights lawyer, Indonesia, **R. William Liddle**, Professor of Political Science, Ohio State University, **Sidney Jones**, Executive Director, Human Rights Watch/Asia, **Eric Bjornlund**, Fellow, Woodrow Wilson Center, **January 17**

"The New Party Card? Orthodoxy and the Search for Post-Soviet Russian Identity"
Nikolas Gvosdev, Associate Director, J. M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, Baylor University, **January 18**

"Mongolia in Russian-Chinese Relations: 1960–2000"
Robert Rupen, Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, University of North Carolina, **January 22**

"East Asia at the Center"
Warren I. Cohen, Distinguished University Professor of History, University of Maryland, and Senior Scholar, Woodrow Wilson Center, **January 23**

"The Situation in the Other Yugoslav States: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Macedonia"
Anastasia Karakasidou, Professor of Anthropology, Wellesley College, **Obrad Kesic**, Director of Government Affairs, ICN Pharmaceuticals, Inc., **John Lampe**, Professor and Chair, Department of History, University of Maryland, **Vjeran Pavlakovic**, Ph.D. candidate, Department of History, University of Washington, **Lea Plut-Pregelj**, University of Maryland, **Sabrina Ramet**, Professor of International Studies, University of Washington, and Fellow, Woodrow Wilson Center, **February 22**

The Director's Forum
Dr. Francis Collins, Director, National Human Genome Research Institute, **March 6**

This calendar is only a partial listing of Wilson Center events. For further information on these and other events, visit the Center's Web site at http://www.wilsoncenter.org. The Center is in the Ronald Reagan Building, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. Although many events are open to the public, some meetings may require reservations. Contact Maria-Stella Gatzoulis at (202) 691-4188 to confirm time, place, and entry requirements. Please allow time on arrival at the Center for routine security procedures. A photo ID is required for entry.

THE GULF WAR'S LEGACY OF ILLUSIONS

The Persian Gulf War is 10 years in the past, but its legacy endures, in individual lives and in our national life. Alex Vernon led a tank platoon as a young lieutenant in the war. He challenges those who now want to theorize the combat into unreality, as if it were a bloodless event that occurred only on TV, and makes clear how dangerous it can be to misrepresent the awful reality of any war. Andrew J. Bacevich considers the long-term significance of the Gulf War for the United States. The war's legacy, he argues, is not what it seemed in the immediate afterglow of victory, but rather a series of problematic consequences that will trouble the nation well into the 21st century.

The Gulf War and Postmodern Memory

by Alex Vernon

When I returned from the Persian Gulf War 10 years ago, I sometimes found myself thinking—and less frequently found myself admitting to fellow veterans—that I wished the war had been bloodier. Not for Iraq. God no. For America.

The apparently flawless execution of Operation Desert Storm would, I thought, lead the army to conclude that its many systems required no serious rethinking. How, for example, would we have handled medical evacuation for significant casualties of an armored battle inside the enemy's territory, hundreds of miles away from adequate medical facilities? My band of lieutenant friends recognized the army's many imperfections, and, as young men do, cockily presumed to know much more than the experienced and knowledgeable people running the show. Those of us who had recently graduated from West Point *just knew* the military academy had become too soft, too nurturing—"kinder and gentler," in the parlance of our commander-in-chief. Our easy victory in the Gulf would hardly encourage a return to the days when West Point considered attrition a healthy culling process.

As for its effect on the nation, our victory, we were told, had rammed a wooden stake through the heart of "Vietnam." That undead, undying specter was finally dead and no longer sucking away at America's jugular. It was time for the nation to move on. Or so we were told.

I also found myself, during those first years after the war, declining to discuss military actions and possible military actions elsewhere in the world. I disqualified myself from answering the question of whether they should occur at all, on the grounds that I was neither expert enough in foreign policy nor detached enough to do so. I could not erase from the scenario the image of me *there* (wherever *there* was).

Should we be in the Balkans? That was the easy one: I don't know, I said, over and over again, but *I* wouldn't want to be there. Not as a tanker. Those mountains, those villages—that's not tank country, that's antitank country, that's nasty infantry country, promising bayonets and snipers and house-to-house fighting and narrow roads through mountain passes mined to kill me through the soft underbelly of my tank. Give me wide-open desert or give me

Burning oil field, U.S. officers, and a destroyed Iraqi tank—the Gulf War photo op as photo op.

nothing. By sticking to questions of terrain and tactics, I could always avoid the fundamental question: *Should* we be there? What about Rwanda? Somalia?

When the United States did send troops to Somalia, not long after I had resigned my commission and entered graduate school, the army eventually deployed elements of my old tank battalion, part of the 24th Infantry (Mechanized) Division out of Fort Stewart, Georgia. One of those elements was the platoon I had led in combat into Iraq, which was now under the leadership of a new lieutenant. One day at Stewart, before I left the army, he pulled up beside me at a stoplight as we headed back on post after lunch. Instead of waving hello, he shot me the bird. I thought: He'll be in the army for life.

My platoon had mobilized without me. How utterly wrong that felt. I belonged with them, wherever they were.

Remembering all the letters I had received in the desert, I wrote to members of the platoon, and to close friends deployed in other units. I wasn't sure whether our country should be in Somalia, and certainly not on the terms set by President Bill Clinton, with his bad habit of defining military operations in terms of months instead of actual objectives (to placate national fears of another endless Vietnam). But I thought *I* should be in Somalia.

I still feel duty's tug. About the Balkans now, for example. As uncomfortable as I was in a uniform leading soldiers—uncomfortable with the responsibility for hurting or killing others, or for getting my own soldiers hurt or killed—when I see deployed soldiers, I feel the distance between us, and I ache a little to join them. The situation gives me moral pause. A perverse nostalgia, you may say. Well.

An image comes, of Somalis dragging a dead American soldier through the streets, over and over again, courtesy of CNN.

A memory follows, of arguing with a friend about whether the news media should show such images. My friend was still in the army, and she believed that showing them did nothing but insult the memory of those men, disrespect their sacrifice, and pain their families, over and over again. I fished for reasons to defend the media. She accused me of having turned liberal on her at my new professional home, the famously progressive state university in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Years later, I have no answers, for her or myself, but I have better questions. Do such images preserve for us the memory of war's horror? Do they perpetuate a myth of American civility over Third World savagery, a myth of innocence we should know better than to believe, a myth that My Lai and other incidents from the Vietnam War, as reported in autobiographies and oral histories, should have forever expunged?

If the images do preserve for us the memory of war's horror, is that a good thing?

On the one hand, images of war's horror keep us in touch with what we talk about when we talk about war. That is what another war veteran, the novelist and essayist Tim O'Brien, had in mind back in 1980, a decade after he returned from his war—I was 13 years old—when he wrote to correct America's image of the maladjusted Vietnam veteran:

> Contrary to popular stereotypes, most Vietnam veterans have made the adjustment to peace. Granted, many of us continue to suffer, but the vast majority of us are not hooked on drugs, not unemployed, are not suicidal, are not beating up wives and children, are not robbing banks, are not knee-deep in grief or self-pity or despair. Like our fathers, we came home from war to pursue careers and loves and cars and houses and dollars and vacations and all the pleasures of peace. . . . Well, we've done it. By and large, we've succeeded. And that's the problem. We've adjusted too well. . . . In our pursuit of peaceful, ordinary lives, too many of us have lost touch with the horror of war. Too many have forgotten—misplaced, repressed, chosen to ignore—the anguish that once dominated our lives. . . . That's sad. We should remember.

War is about suffering, and bleeding, and dying. That's what O'Brien wanted us not to forget. And when I stopped thinking (rather insularly) about the army and started thinking about the country, I realized that that's what I meant when I half-wished the Gulf War had been bloodier. O'Brien concluded:

> It would seem that the memories of soldiers should serve, at least in a modest way, as a restraint on national bellicosity. . . . We've ceased to think and talk seriously

>ALEX VERNON *graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1989 and was sent the following year to the Middle East, 24 days after Iraq invaded Kuwait. He currently teaches literature and writing at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where he will complete his Ph.D. in English this spring. His first book, the collaborative memoir* The Eyes of Orion: Five Tank Lieutenants in the Persian Gulf War *(1999), won a 1999 Army Historical Foundation Distinguished Book Award.*

about those matters for which we once felt such passion. What to fight for? When, if ever, to use armed forces as instruments of foreign policy? . . . We used to care about these things. We paid attention, we debated, passion was high.

So yes, the image of Somali citizens dragging the corpse of an American soldier through the streets might have its merits.

On the other hand. I didn't notice that my postwar aversion to discussing the politics of war had undergone a change until August 1998, when two bombs exploded near U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and we retaliated with an air strike against a reputed terrorist training camp in Afghanistan and another facility in Sudan, both run by Osama bin Laden, the probable force behind the embassy bombings. When the news of our retaliation broke, I was sitting in a seminar on postmodern literature. The following week, I wrote to the professor who led the seminar:

> Last week we "smartly" bombed several suspected terrorist outposts, because we weren't strong enough to send troops, the only military action that could really achieve the mission and that bore any sign of moral courage (to ourselves or the world). The phrase "cruise missile" even suggests a kind of teenage wayward nonchalance, and the whole affair was executed with uncertain objectives and uncertain results, beyond the likely fueling of more terrorist and national fires against us. We injured the innocent in the process, and have invited the injury of innocent Americans. I know I am—we are—as responsible for that confused attack as the president; and we are made—legitimately so—terrorist targets because of it; and I am off to teach a class on Fitzgerald in the 1930s.

That last phrase, about Fitzgerald, so abruptly juxtaposed, underscores my continuing troubled relationship with myself as an academic, especially in today's postmodern university culture, where intellectuals can be taken seriously when they declare that Vietnam was a war waged on the television set and not on the battlefield, or that the Gulf War never even happened.

Then came our undeclared air war against Kosovo in the spring of 1999. I doubted that we could win—airpower alone had never before been sufficient to win a war. (I won't challenge here the tenuous assumption that air power alone, and not the threat of a ground force, determined the outcome.) As I had with our bombing of bin Laden's training camp, I thought it cowardly to prefer to risk a handful of casualties among "their" civilians rather than to risk the same number of casualties among our volunteer soldiers. We know that our smartest weapons cannot eliminate collateral damage, and that some civilians will die in any destructive operation of such proportions. When our no-risk intervention policy authorizes—legitimates—the devaluation of the lives of the innocent, relative to our own more precious American lives, I hear echoes, however faint, of Dresden, Hiroshima, and even My Lai. I know full well that for every Scott Grady shot down and dramatically rescued,

the Serbs and Croats can produce hundreds, maybe thousands, of examples of suffering and heroism.

If images of brutally killed American soldiers, whether from Somalia or Vietnam, inspire a no-risk American military intervention policy, is that a good thing? I do not mean to suggest, as Madeleine Albright has done about our troops, that we should *use 'em 'cause we got 'em*. I don't know that placing an occupation force in Kosovo, with all the attendant dangers and unsure purpose and duration of such an action, would have been preferable to what was done. I'm saying only that we need to understand war and ourselves a bit better. And I'm hardly the first to observe that our language of smart weapons and surgical strikes relies on misleading metaphors from science and medicine, as if we were removing a belligerent cancer. But that's a lie. We aren't removing cells gone bad. We're killing people.

IF IMAGES OF BRUTALLY KILLED AMERICAN SOLDIERS, WHETHER FROM SOMALIA OR VIETNAM, INSPIRE A NO-RISK AMERICAN MILITARY INTERVENTION POLICY, IS THAT A GOOD THING?

I also recognize that the impulse behind smart weapons is essentially and undeniably humane. It springs from the desire to wage pure wars, wars fought between military forces only, in which noncombatants are involved as little as possible. And it wants those pure wars waged humanely: We disable the enemy not by taking out hundreds of thousands of his troops but by knocking out his command, control, and resource centers. Yes, people will be killed. But not nearly as many as might otherwise have died. I recognize that, in a democracy, the case for American military intervention can rarely win the debate. When we intervene, we accuse ourselves of American imperialism. When we fail to intervene, we accuse ourselves of heartlessness. When our foreign-policy makers fall back on the amoral position of intervening only when American security and economic interests are at stake, we can hardly fault them, even as we accuse them of base self-interest and materialism.

We haven't completely exorcised the shade of Vietnam after all. And might that be a good thing?

* * *

Ten years. An infrequent friend of mine, when he learned I was working on a book about the Gulf War, wished me well and let me know, in no uncertain terms, that my war was "historically insignificant."

Perhaps. Probably. Nevertheless.

I don't know how military historians are dealing with the war in their scholarship and their teaching. Researching my book, I spent an afternoon at

the oral history branch of the U.S. Army Center of Military History in Washington, D.C., getting copies of interviews with officers and soldiers from my division. The custodian of the tapes told me I was only the third person to inquire about them, and the first to use them. The other two researchers, both academics, thought them useless, because the interviewees spoke of things the academics didn't care about, and in a lingo they didn't understand. It seems that military history is larger than individuals, and must be rendered in a language different from that of the soldiers fighting the wars.

However much the Persian Gulf War has or has not inspired military historians, it has become a darling subject for certain intellectuals of the postmodern and media studies variety. At its most extreme, their sort of theorizing produces statements such as Jean Baudrillard's "The Gulf War did not take place." For Baudrillard, so enamored of his own rhetoric of simulation—whereby representations of an object or event become real in themselves, and thereby challenge the reality of the original object or event—his rhetorical nullification of a historical event makes perfect sense. A different language indeed.

Other critics, such as the one compelled always to refer to the conflict as "the Persian Gulf TV War," treat it as if it were a species of "reality TV," like MTV's *Real World* or CBS's *Survivor*—a war arranged for the sake of the viewing audience and for the advertisers, but otherwise irrelevant, "a war that was actually contrived to look like a video game," "a simulation of live war," mere "infotainment." The hundreds of dead coalition forces and the thousands of dead Iraqis, the maimed, and the sufferers of Gulf War syndrome can apparently restore their lives with the push of a button. Because the war was televised, these postmodern and media studies intellectuals insist that the distinction between the spectator on the couch and the soldier in the field has dissolved. After all, they argue, the audience at

The author stands by the tank he commanded in the war.

home sees the video of smart bombs in flight, sees exactly what the operator sees, supposedly in real time, unfiltered and unedited. So the spectator's eyes become the soldier's.

Get real.

Here's what I, who apparently missed the war because I was in the war, imagine. The spectator, watching television, tires of the endless coverage, all those talking heads, and flips the channel to *Saturday Night Live* for some comic relief. But on comes a skit with Kevin Nealon imitating Norman Schwarzkopf. So the spectator flips the channel again, maybe to a late-night soft-porn flick, until he wearies too of that sapless fantasy, wearies of television altogether and of his long day, gives up and goes to bed. He sleeps somewhat fitfully.

THE REVISIONIST CHICANERY FORGETS THAT THE IRAQI ARMY WAS THE FOURTH LARGEST IN THE WORLD, AND THAT ITS SOLDIERS HAD YEARS OF COMBAT EXPERIENCE.

But half a world away, we did not stop when the television clicked off. We pushed on through the night—praying that the officer in the tank up front knew where he was going, none of us knowing when to expect contact, when, with bursts of light and radio chatter, the night would explode.

In a 1984 essay on why men love war, William Broyles, Jr., wrote about "the sort of hysteria that can grip a whole country, the way during the Falklands war the English press inflamed the lust that lurks beneath the cool exterior of Britain. That is vicarious war, the thrill of participation without risk, the lust of the audience for blood. It is easily fanned, that lust; even the invasion of a tiny island can do it. Like all lust, for as long as it lasts, it dominates everything else; a nation's other problems are seared away, a phenomenon exploited by kings, dictators, and presidents since civilization began."

Did Broyles, who clearly distinguishes the home-front experience from the battlefield experience, accurately and presciently describe the national mood in the United States during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm? Was the mood a kind of blood lust? I don't know. I wasn't here. I was there. I missed my war.

Because Iraq did not put up the fight that the military had warned us might occur, some postmodern intellectuals have played the revisionist trick of labeling the warnings lies and disinformation. For them, the warnings constituted a scripted pregame show, falsely hyping the underdog's abilities so that people would watch and be suckered into hoping for a sudden-death overtime. The revisionist chicanery forgets that the Iraqi army was the fourth largest in the world, and that its soldiers had years of combat experience, while our troops had none (but for the generals and sergeants-major who had fought as lieutenants and privates in Vietnam). The revisionism forgets that there was never any certainty Iraq wouldn't use chemical weapons, never any certain-

A Gulf War Primer

The Time Line:

August 2, 1990: Iraq invades Kuwait.
August 7, 1990: Operation Desert Shield begins.
January 17, 1991: Operation Desert Storm and the air war phase begin.
February 24, 1991: The Allied ground assault begins.
February 28, 1991: The cessation of hostilities is declared.
March 1, 1991: Cease-fire terms are negotiated.

By the Numbers:

Peak strength of coalition forces:
795,000 (U.S. 541,000, Allies 254,000)

Coalition casualties:
U.S.: 148 killed in action, 458 wounded in action
Allies: 92 killed in action, 318 wounded in action

Coalition aircraft losses:
U.S.: 63 (40 fixed-wing aircraft, 23 helicopters)
Allies: 12

Peak strength of Iraqi forces:
Estimates vary from an implausible 540,000 down to 250,000–400,000.

Iraqi casualties:
An estimate of 35,000 dead derives from circumstantial evidence.

Estimated Iraqi equipment losses:
Aircraft in air-to-air engagements: 42
Aircraft destroyed on the ground: 81
Iraqi aircraft flown to Iran: 137
Battle tanks: 3,700
Ships: 19 sunk, 6 damaged

Prisoners of war:
Captured Iraqis released by U.S. forces to Saudi control: 71,204

Sources: U.S. Department of Defense, *DefenseLINK*; and *The Gulf Conflict 1990–1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order*, by Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh (1993)

ty the ground war wouldn't be bloodier for us. Colin Powell feared we might find ourselves fighting in urban centers such as Basra, where Iraqi civilian women, possessed of the spirit of their Viet Cong sisters, would strap mines to their bellies and hurl themselves at our vehicles. My own division commander, Barry McCaffrey, confidently predicted that the ground war would last from four to 14 days, with a coalition victory. But he also predicted a 10 percent American casualty rate, and so made certain he had 2,000 replacements on hand for his augmented division of some 20,000 soldiers. (Given that all 2,000 replacements were infantry and armor soldiers, frontline troops, we can extrapolate a higher percentage of casualties in those direct-fire units, something closer to 15 or 20 percent. That translates to three of my platoon's 16 men. Hernandez? Wingate? Brown?) It is neither a lie nor disinformation when you believe what you say.

When literary-theorists-turned-war-commentators dismiss the geographic

Iraqi soldiers and an artillery piece, in a photo from a roll of film found in a captured Iraqi tank.

battlefield in favor of the cyberspace one, they fail to see what every soldier has always known: Terrain dictates. The jungle, not the economic condition of late capitalism, dictated the fragmented, chaotic, platoon-fought Vietnam experience. The desert dictated the clean, sterilized, division-scale encounters of the Gulf War, and possibly even contributed to our decision to wage war there, just as the eastern European mountains and villages possibly contributed to our limited Balkan intervention strategy.

The theorists' narcissistic imposition of their experience of the war on everyone else—including the actual combatants, the suffering Kuwaiti and Iraqi citizenry, and American families and friends for whom spectatorship was not a video game of omniscience but a nightmare of uncertainty—is tantamount to intellectual imperialism, a ruthless annexation of the actual by the rhetorical. Yet until Gulf War participants generate a worthy artistic response, literary and cultural academics who want to engage the war have little choice but to turn it into a text, into something they can analytically deconstruct—and therefore, only logically, something that was, from the beginning, constructed, produced, staged.

Still, I hope that we can salvage something from the postmodern prattle. If the boundary between spectators and soldiers has indeed dissolved, then the spectators must acknowledge the blood on their hands. We are all complicit. But such an acknowledgment is mere wishful thinking when many intellectuals, luxuriating in our Pax Americana, are more removed from the world than ever: They no longer survey events from their traditional aeries but from the distance of orbiting space stations. The wishful thinking also ignores the Gulf War's lasting legacy—the myth of the clean war, in which

our technological might brings foes to their knees and we risk not a drop of our own precious blood.

I want to call this myth our Gulf War syndrome, but for obvious reasons cannot. The myth of the clean war lets us hang on to another American myth, that of our enduring innocence. Tim O'Brien finds a similar phenomenon in the clichéd cinematic depictions of the Vietnam War. It's what we might call the myth of the mad war, as told most vividly in *Apocalypse Now*. That 1979 film "opted for a simple solution to a complex set of questions. By going after the Grand Answer—lunacy, the final heart of darkness—the film avoids and even discredits those more complicated, ultimately more ambiguous questions of what went wrong in Vietnam. It's just too damned easy to chalk it all up to insanity. Madness explains everything, right? No need to examine messy motives, because crazies don't *have* motives. No need to explore history, because lunatics operate *outside* it. No need to engage issues of principle or politics, because maniacs don't *think* about such things. The Grand Answer exculpates all of us: innocent by reason of insanity."

After the Gulf War, we have managed to cling to the myth of American innocence for exactly the opposite reason: because the war was clean, simple, uncomplicated, and nontraumatizing. That we inflicted great suffering and trauma is beside the point. Because we came out relatively unscathed, because we collectively experienced the war as a video game, we retain the wide-eyed innocence of children.

American's unflagging faith in its own innocence sometimes stands us well. Alexis de Tocqueville recognized that very quality as the source of our faith in our own perfectibility and in the future; we refuse to mire ourselves in the past, or even in the present. But believing in our innocence is also an easy way of ducking the hard questions. To be fair, some who harp on the televised aspects of the Gulf War do so to reveal the discrepancies between the television version and the real thing. Nevertheless, the effect of rendering the war in the language of literary theory is not unlike the effect of seasoning military discourse with such euphemisms as *collateral damage* and *surgical strikes*: Both remove us from the actuality. Power attends language. Reducing the war to theoretical jargon, or discussing it only as a television event, fosters an attitude of detachment and distance, of control and superiority, which in moral terms becomes an ideology of innocence.

Which is why I half-wished the war had been bloodier. To dispel the myth of the clean war. To make conversation about it conversation that matters.

* * *

In May 2000, Seymour Hersh, who had won a Pulitzer Prize back in 1970 for his exposé of the My Lai massacre, published a piece in the *New Yorker* that explored possible war crimes committed by U.S. soldiers in the Persian Gulf. His article accused my former division, the 24th Infantry (Mechanized), first, of a devastating, division-level, orchestrated attack—the Battle of the Causeway—on a practically defenseless column of retreating Iraqi soldiers and

civilians during the postwar cease-fire; and, second, of a general lapse in discipline, which led to a number of smaller, platoon-level potential war crimes.

The charge that the division commander, Maj. Gen. Barry McCaffrey, ordered a militarily unjustifiable attack against retreating forces is not new, a fact that Hersh acknowledges. The army cleared McCaffrey and the division shortly after the war, but Hersh and other observers have so documented their case that only future historians can settle the issue. About the possible, isolated, small-scale war crimes, Hersh's article comes down to a series of *he said/she said* affairs. Despite his conspicuous desire to repeat the success of his My Lai exposé, Hersh, to his credit, presents testimony on both sides.

I refuse to pretend to know what happened. My brigade did not participate in the suspect battle, and I witnessed no localized acts of atrocity. I will say, however, that Hersh's representation of the Iraqi army as totally without fight does not square with my experience. It was a modest war for our side, no doubt, but it was a war.

Richard Swain called his excellent book on the war *The Lucky War*. Yes, as combat soldiers go, we were an extremely lucky lot. (One study concluded that it was safer for military personnel to be in the theater of operations than to stay at home and risk training accidents and drunk-driving tragedies.) When Hersh quotes the memoir I co-authored with four other former lieutenants from my battalion, he chooses to present only instances in which we describe the enemy soldiers as being so pathetic and so mistreated by their superiors that their single action toward us was raising their hands in surrender. He does not cite those moments in our book when the Iraqis fought back, when artillery rounds and mortar fire and antitank missiles and small arms came speeding our way. Grant Hersh that our 24th Division did not meet significant Iraqi resistance. Still, the impression he might give some readers is that coalition forces throughout the entire theater encountered no greater enemy threat. Yet tank battles did occur, and a friend of mine in another division earned a Silver Star for crawling into a barbed-wire-laced minefield to clear it under enemy fire.

I appreciate Hersh's restoration of the human dimension of the war, along with its ambiguity. There were events (as in all wars) that warrant reinspection, and veterans who are still racked by what they did or saw. The television version, in which the war unfolded simply and cleanly, misrepresents the soldier's experience, and contributes to the spectator's illusion of understanding, just as television coverage of Vietnam did a generation before. For those of us in our moving vehicles, the fog of battle was made of the kicked-up sand, rain, smoke, tired eyes, and night.

* * *

They say you lose your innocence when you go to war, but I'm not so sure. You no more lose your innocence in war than you achieve adulthood when you lose your virginity. It takes a few years. It takes perspective. Maybe war leads to the loss, but the loss doesn't follow immediately. And if the loss does come with the war, you fight awareness of it, and hold on as long as you can to the illusion of innocence.

The oral history told by one fighter pilot in Vietnam reveals a man who understood that the war preserved his innocence: "At the end of my tour, I was not much more mature than when I left. When I got home, I became painfully aware that the world was passing me by. So I went back." By going back for a second tour, he could keep the real world at bay; he could defer responsibility and growing up, and cling to adolescence. Yet might the pilot's self-awareness indicate a sort of denial? By consciously associating lost innocence with hometown responsibility, he can, for a time, avoid contemplating the innocence lost over there in the war.

When the 20-year-old Ernest Hemingway returned from the Great War, he bragged about his wounding to audiences at his Oak Park high school and at ladies' social clubs; he even showed the pants he had been wearing when the 200 bits of mortar shell shrapnel shredded his leg. When I first thought about this act of youthful bravado, I found it at odds with my understanding of someone who has lost his innocence. But now I'm not sure. It's a critical commonplace to say that Hemingway's writing shows a man's futile attempt to recover the innocence of his prewar, prewound, preadult self—though, in his case, the complex web of his innocence and braggadocio and his attitude toward war is not so easily untangled.

Could it be that innocence itself is a fantasy? Is losing one's innocence a myth that paradoxically preserves the very idea and possibility of innocence? By imagining its loss, its absence, we presuppose that it existed in the first place. What, after all, does it mean to lose one's innocence? What were we before, and what do we become? The expression, as explanation, is too easy, too unsatisfying. Understanding requires a few years. It takes perspective. And in the end, we may find that we have no answers, only better questions.

* * *

My memory stretches 10 years thin, and strains. The passage of time both helps and hinders perspective. Hindsight clouds. Events obtrude. Innocence beckons. Revisionism rears.

Five years after the Gulf War, four fellow ex-lieutenants from our tank battalion asked me to complete a book project they had started two years earlier, which turned into the collaborative memoir quoted by Hersh. Writing about past selves helps us come to terms, the cliché offers. True enough, but hardly the whole truth. Past selves die hard, and slowly, if they die at all.

I was disturbed to read in the manuscript a diatribe by one of the ex-lieutenants against the cowardice of a young officer who opted not to deploy—disturbed because I had also seriously considered requesting permission to stay behind. I was shocked to read that another of the authors was nearly killed by friendly fire during a cross-border reconnaissance mission a few nights before the ground offensive—shocked because I had not heard the story before, and shocked because I had cheered that night when the company I was attached to

fired on what it presumed was the enemy. As it turns out, our targets could very well have been my friend and his platoon. We'll never know. Mostly, I was horrified to read a passage written by one of my closest and dearest friends about the second day of the ground war. His company, leading the battalion, encountered an outpost building. His commander ordered him to fire:

> The sabot round rocketed from the gun tube like a thunderbolt and flew through the building, caving in the wall. Immediately, dozens of Iraqi infantry appeared and scattered about 600 meters in front of us like honeybees from a knocked-over hive. . . . We cut loose with machine guns from all of our tanks at the Iraqi infantry in front of us. . . . The enemy dismounts threw up their hands as we barreled toward them. My platoon ceased firing, rolled past them and over a dune on the far side of the building.
>
> "Underberg, fire up that building," I ordered. I wanted to ensure we roused anything left after Downing's sabot.
>
> Underberg loved firing his loader's machine gun. He jumped up in his hatch, swung it around, and put 100 rounds through the target in a few seconds. The building caught fire. A few Iraqis ran out the door. Underberg cut them down, riddling them with machine gun bullets.
>
> As the platoon rounded the far side of the building, we found another 50 dismounts just sitting on the sand in a big group. . . . At last they mustered the energy to raise their hands to surrender. Had Underberg not been reloading, he probably would have already wasted the whole lot.

Reading this section of Rob's draft for the first time—to slip into soldier-speak—rocked my world. It sent me reeling, a brick ramming into my gut. I was dizzy, and nauseous, and tearful, and confounded. I had no idea what to say the next time I spoke to him; I had no idea whether I *could* speak to him. I couldn't shake the image of a dozen or so Iraqi soldiers, all in khaki, most with mustaches, fighting to escape a burning building, the first few sent to the ground by the bullets, the next cluster freezing in place as the final group slams into their backs, the whole lot scrambling for their lives, some of them one last ignorant breath away from death.

> By dismissing the possibility of inhumane action by our army, I could deny the potential for it in me.

I would never have fired on men fleeing for their lives from a burning building, I told myself. I would have forcibly prevented my loader from firing at soldiers huddled pacifically on the ground.

What could I possibly say to Rob? There was a period when I doubted I would be able to maintain the friendship at all. I had no idea how to edit the scene the way I had edited many smaller moments in the other authors' drafts, when they did not quite realize how their prose might be read.

Rob is the best storyteller of the group, and he plays up the effect of his cavalier attitude. Leading up to this event, he writes throughout the book

U.S. Marines guard a handful of the 71,000 Iraqis captured in the Desert Storm campaign.

about how his job is to shoot everything in his path and get his men home, and it sounds right, it sounds like exactly the right attitude. Until the passage. Reading it that first time, and for years afterward—in fact, until only very recently—I could never determine whether he was just being Rob, writing the way he talks to make a story exciting, without realizing how the telling hits the ear, or whether he was accurately conveying his cold-blooded, practically murderous disregard.

I didn't know how to soften the language and pull the punch. I didn't know how to tamper with a spirit so vastly foreign to my own. At most, I changed a couple of words and tweaked the punctuation.

Over time, I got past doubting the friendship. I did so by avoiding the subject altogether, with him and, as much as I could, with myself.

Then, out of the blue, Sy Hersh called me at home about his article several weeks before it appeared. He spoke to me about the Battle of the Causeway. He told me about eyewitness accounts he had collected of American atrocities committed against surrendering and surrendered Iraqi soldiers and against Iraqi civilians. We talked several times, though I had no particularly useful firsthand information for him. I let my fellow authors know about the article, and, in general, they dismissed the accusations. War is never black and white, they chorused. Not even that postwar cease-fire was black and white.

In the years immediately after the war, I dismissed any book that took a similar attitude toward exposing Gulf War atrocities. The authors weren't there, I reasoned. They can't begin to imagine what it was to be there. By dismissing the possibility of inhumane action by our army, I could deny the potential for it in me. Insisting on my own innocence enabled me to assume the moral high ground. It asserted (falsely) a certain detachment, related, I suspect, to the intellectuals' dismissal of the war as a merely virtual

happening. Both strategies, theirs and mine, arrogantly and inexcusably insisted on our own innocence.

In challenging me to reimagine the war from various perspectives, Hersh's article did something else for me. The situations loosely corresponded: McCaffrey's division faced a thousand vehicles that may or may not have posed a threat; Rob's platoon faced enemy soldiers who may or may not have posed a threat. Hersh did not quote Rob's passage, as I feared he might, as an example of morally dubious American action. I began to realize that I had judged Rob without fully imagining myself in his tank commander's hatch, even though I was in an identical hatch, never far away. I narcissistically imposed on him my experience of not having had to see the faces of the soldiers I shot at. Instead of identifying with him, I had chosen to identify with the victims. I had allowed my postwar knowledge of the war's relative ease to eclipse the true historical me, who rode into a battle of indefinite length and outcome, my hand never far from the trigger.

So Rob's passage haunts me now for different reasons. I've come to doubt my initial reaction, and I strongly suspect that I might have taken precisely the same action he took—because it was war, and you didn't know which of those apparently defenseless Iraqis had a grenade behind his back. Maybe what disturbed me when I first read Rob's story was less what he did, or how he wrote about what he did, than it was the unconscious realization of my capacity to do the same thing. But I wasn't prepared to admit that. In my denial I betrayed a friend, and an officer of the most honorable and capable sort. Only now does my memory fetch an old thought from the months after the war, when a string of ritual gang-induction murders occurred in Savannah: I thought, I could do that—not to join a gang, of course, but if I really felt I had to, I could, without hesitation, blow a man away.

* * *

Do you know the story of Ferdinand the bull? It was my childhood favorite. Ferdinand doesn't care to butt heads and compete with the other bulls, or to dream about fighting the matadors. He prefers to sit alone beneath a tree, smelling the flowers. On the very day that five men in funny hats come to find the fiercest bull to fight in the ring, a bee stings Ferdinand, and the sting sends him sprinting and stomping and snorting about the field in an enraged huff. The men, impressed by his vigor, catch him and take him to Madrid. Ferdinand enters the arena. But he refuses to fight. Instead, he sits in the center of the ring, smelling the flowers tucked in the ladies' hair. Does he even know where he is? The men in funny hats return him to his pasture, and at the end of the book he is once again beneath his tree, idyllically, smelling flowers, as if the moment in the arena had never happened, as if charging the picadors and the matador in retaliation for their spearing and prodding were beyond all imagining, beyond all possibility. Beneath his tree, smelling flowers, living a calf's life, happily ever after.

Isn't it pretty to think so? ❑

A Less than Splendid Little War

by Andrew J. Bacevich

"Nearly a decade after its conclusion," observes Frank Rich of the *New York Times*, "the Persian Gulf War is already looking like a footnote to American history." Rich's appraisal of Operation Desert Storm and the events surrounding it manages to be, at once, accurate and massively wrong.

Rich is correct in the sense that, 10 years on, the war no longer appears as it did in 1990 and 1991: a colossal feat of arms, a courageous and adept-

The American forces that won the Gulf War march triumphantly through the streets of New York.

ly executed stroke of statesmanship, and a decisive response to aggression that laid the basis for a new international order. The "official" view of the war, energetically promoted by senior U.S. government figures and military officers and, at least for a time, echoed and amplified by an exultant national media, has become obsolete.

In outline, that official version was simplicity itself: unprovoked and dastardly aggression; a small, peace-loving nation snuffed out of existence; a line drawn in the sand; a swift and certain response by the United States that mobilizes the international community to put things right. The outcome, too, was unambiguous. Speaking from the Oval Office on February 28, 1991, to announce the suspension of combat operations, President George Bush left no room for doubt that the United States had achieved precisely the outcome it had sought: "Kuwait is liberated. Iraq's army is defeated. Our military objectives are met." Characterizing his confrontation with Saddam Hussein's army, General Norman Schwarzkopf used more colorful language to make the same point: "We'd kicked this guy's butt, leaving no doubt in anybody's mind that we'd won decisively."

In the war's immediate aftermath, America's desert victory seemed not only decisive but without precedent in the annals of military history. So stunning an achievement fueled expectations that Desert Storm would pay dividends extending far beyond the military sphere. Those expectations—even more than the action on the battlefield—persuaded Americans that the war marked a turning point. In a stunning riposte to critics who had argued throughout the 1980s that the United States had slipped into a period of irreversible decline, the Persian Gulf War announced emphatically that America was back on top.

In a single stroke, then, the war appeared to heal wounds that had festered for a generation. Reflecting the views of many professional officers, General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, expressed his belief that the demons of the Vietnam War had at long last been exorcised. Thanks to Operation Desert Storm, he wrote, "the American people fell in love again with their armed forces." Indeed, references to "the troops"—a phrase to which politicians, pundits, and network anchors all took a sudden liking—conveyed a not-so-subtle shift in attitude toward soldiers and suggested a level of empathy, respect, and affection that had been absent, and even unimaginable, since the late 1960s.

Bush himself famously proclaimed that, with its victory in the Persian Gulf, the United States had at long last kicked the so-called Vietnam syndrome. That did not mean the president welcomed the prospect of more such military adventures. If anything, the reverse was true: Its military power unshackled, the United States would henceforth find itself employing force *less* frequently. "I think because of what has happened, we won't have to use U.S. forces around the world," Bush predicted during his first postwar press conference. "I think when we say something that is objectively correct, . . . people are going to listen."

To the president and his advisers, the vivid demonstration of U.S. military

>ANDREW J. BACEVICH *is professor of international relations at Boston University, where he also serves as director of the Center for International Relations. He is currently writing a book on U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War.*

prowess in the Gulf had put paid to lingering doubts about American credibility. Its newly minted credibility endowed the United States with a unique opportunity: not only to prevent the recurrence of aggression but to lay the foundation for what Bush called a new world order. American power would shape that order, and American power would guarantee the United States a preeminent place in it. America would "reach out to the rest of the world," Bush and his national security adviser Brent Scowcroft wrote, but, in doing so, America would "keep the strings of control tightly in [U.S.] hands."

That view accorded precisely with the Pentagon's own preferences. Cherishing their newly restored prestige, American military leaders were by no means eager to put it at risk. They touted the Gulf War not simply as a singular victory but as a paradigmatic event, a conflict that revealed the future of war and outlined the proper role of U.S. military power. Powell and his fellow generals rushed to codify the war's key "lessons." Clearly stated objectives related to vital national interests, the employment of overwhelming force and superior technology, commanders insulated from political meddling, a predesignated "exit strategy"—the convergence of all these factors had produced a brief, decisive campaign, fought according to the norms of conventional warfare and concluded at modest cost and without moral complications. If the generals got their way, standing ready to conduct future Desert Storms would henceforth define the U.S. military's central purpose.

IN THE WAR'S IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH, AMERICA'S DESERT VICTORY SEEMED NOT ONLY DECISIVE BUT WITHOUT PRECEDENT IN THE ANNALS OF MILITARY HISTORY.

Finally, the war seemed to have large implications for domestic politics, although whether those implications were cause for celebration or despondency depended on one's partisan affiliation. In the war's immediate aftermath, Bush's approval ratings rocketed above 90 percent. Most experts believed that the president's adept handling of the Persian Gulf crisis all but guaranteed his election to a second term.

* * *

Subsequent events have not dealt kindly with those initial postwar expectations. Indeed, the 1992 presidential election—in which Americans handed the architect of victory in the Gulf his walking papers—hinted that the war's actual legacy would be different than originally advertised, and the fruits of victory other than expected. Bill Clinton's elevation to the office of commander in chief was only one among several surprises.

For starters, America's love affair with the troops turned out to be more an infatuation than a lasting commitment. A series of scandals—beginning just months after Desert Storm with the U.S. Navy's infamous Tailhook convention in 1991—thrust the military into the center of the ongoing Kulturkampf. Instead

of basking contentedly in the glow of victory, military institutions found themselves pilloried for being out of step with enlightened attitudes on such matters as gender and sexual orientation. In early 1993, the generals embroiled themselves in a nasty public confrontation with their new commander in chief over the question of whether gays should serve openly in the military. The top brass prevailed. But "don't ask, don't tell" would prove to be a Pyrrhic victory.

The real story of military policy in the 1990s was the transformation of the armed services from bastions of masculinity (an increasingly suspect quality) into institutions that were accommodating to women and "family friendly." The result was a major advance in the crusade for absolute gender equality, secured by watering down, or simply discarding, traditional notions of military culture and unit cohesion. By decade's end, Americans took it as a matter of course that female fighter pilots were flying strike missions over Iraq, and that a terrorist attack on an American warship left female sailors among the dead and wounded.

As the military became increasingly feminized, young American men evinced a dwindling inclination to serve. The Pentagon insisted that the two developments were unrelated. Although the active military shrank by a third in overall size during the decade following the Gulf War, the services were increasingly hard-pressed to keep the ranks full by the end of the 1990s. Military leaders attributed the problem to a booming economy: The private sector offered a better deal. Their solution was to improve pay and benefits, to deploy additional platoons of recruiters, and to redouble their efforts to market their "product." To burnish its drab image, the U.S. Army, the most straitened of the services, even adopted new headgear: a beret. With less fanfare, each service also began to relax its enlistment standards.

Bush's expectation (and Powell's hope) that the United States would rarely employ force failed to materialize. The outcome of the Persian Gulf War—and, more significantly, the outcome of the Cold War—created conditions more conducive to disorder than to order, and confronted both Bush and his successor with situations that each would view as intolerable. Because inaction would undermine U.S. claims to global leadership and threaten to revive isolationist habits, it was imperative that the United States remain engaged. As a result, the decade following victory in the Gulf became a period of unprecedented American military activism.

The motives for intervention varied as widely as the particular circumstances on the ground. In 1991, Bush sent U.S. troops into northern Iraq to protect Kurdish refugees fleeing from Saddam Hussein. Following his electoral defeat in 1992, he tasked the military with a major humanitarian effort in Somalia: to bring order to a failed state and aid to a people facing mass starvation. Not to be outdone, President Bill Clinton ordered the military occupation of Haiti, to remove a military junta from power and to "restore" democracy. Moved by the horrors of ethnic cleansing, Clinton bombed and occupied Bosnia. In Rwanda he intervened after the genocide there had largely run its course. Determined to prevent the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) from being discredited, he fought a substantial war for Kosovo and provided Slobodan Milosevic with a pretext for renewed ethnic cleansing, which

NATO's military action did little to arrest. In lesser actions, Clinton employed cruise missiles to retaliate (ineffectually) against Saddam Hussein, for allegedly plotting to assassinate former president Bush and against Osama Bin Laden, for terrorist attacks on two U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998. As the impeachment crisis loomed at the end of 1998, the president renewed hostilities against Iraq; the brief December 1998 air offensive known as Operation Desert Fox gave way to a persistent but desultory bombing campaign that sputtered on to the very end of his presidency.

All those operations had one common feature: Each violated the terms of the so-called Powell Doctrine regarding the use of force. The "end state" sought by military action was seldom defined clearly and was often modified at midcourse. (In Somalia, the mission changed from feeding the starving to waging war against Somali warlords.) More often than not, intervention led not to a prompt and decisive outcome but to open-ended commitments. (President Clinton sent U.S. peacekeepers into Bosnia in 1995 promising to withdraw them in a year; more than five years later, when he left office, GIs were still garrisoning the Balkans.) In contrast to Powell's preference for using overwhelming force, the norm became to expend military power in discrete increments—to punish, to signal resolve, or to influence behavior. (Operation Allied Force, the American-led war for Kosovo in 1999, proceeded on the illusory assumption that a three- or four-day demonstration of airpower would persuade Slobodan Milosevic to submit to NATO's will.) Nor were American soldiers able to steer clear of the moral complications that went hand in hand with these untidy conflicts. (The United States and NATO won in Kosovo by bringing the war home to the Serbian population—an uncomfortable reality from which some sought escape by proposing to waive the principle of noncombatant immunity.)

In short, the events that dashed President Bush's dreams of a new world order also rendered the Powell Doctrine obsolete and demolished expectations that the Persian Gulf War might provide a template for the planning and execution of future U.S. military operations. By the fall of 2000, when a bomb-laden rubber boat rendered a billion-dollar U.S. Navy destroyer hors de combat and killed 17 Americans, the notion that the mere possession of superior military technology and know-how gave the United States the ultimate trump card rang hollow.

* * *

Judged in terms of the predictions and expectations voiced in its immediate aftermath, the Persian Gulf War does seem destined to end up as little more than a historical afterthought. But unburdening the war of those inflated expectations yields an altogether different perspective on the actual legacy of Desert Storm. Though it lacks the resplendence that in 1991 seemed the war's proper birthright, the legacy promises to be both important and enduring.

To reach a fair evaluation of the war's significance, Americans must, first of all, situate it properly in the grand narrative of U.S. military history. Desert Storm clearly does not rank with military enterprises such as the Civil War or World War II. Nor does the abbreviated campaign in the desert bear comparison with other 20th-century conflicts such as World War I, Korea, and Vietnam. Rather, the most appropriate comparison is with that other "splendid little war," the Spanish-American War of 1898. Norman Schwarzkopf's triumph over the obsolete army of Saddam Hussein is on a par with Admiral George Dewey's fabled triumph over an antiquated Spanish naval squadron at Manila Bay. Both qualify as genuine military victories. But the true measure of each is not the economy and dispatch with which U.S. forces vanquished their adversary but the entirely unforeseen, and largely problematic, consequences to which each victory gave rise.

A noisy magazine-cover Uncle Sam celebrates the nation's swift victory in the Spanish-American War in 1898.

In retrospect, the Spanish-American War—not just Dewey at Manila Bay, but Teddy Roosevelt leading the charge up San Juan Hill and General Nelson Miles "liberating" Puerto Rico—was a trivial military episode. And yet, the war marked a turning point in U.S. history. The brief conflict with Spain ended any compunction that Americans may have felt about the feasibility or propriety of imposing their own norms and values on others. With that war, the nation enthusiastically shouldered its share of the "white man's burden," to preside thereafter over colonies and client states in the Caribbean and the Pacific. The war saddled the American military with new responsibilities to govern that empire, and with one large, nearly insoluble strategic problem: how to defend the Philippines, the largest of the Spanish possessions to which the United States had laid claim.

The Spanish-American War propelled the United States into the ranks of great powers. Notable events of the century that followed—including an ugly campaign to pacify the Philippines, a pattern of repetitive military intervention in the Caribbean, America's tortured relationship with Cuba, and three bloody Asian wars fought in three decades—all derive, to a greater or lesser

extent, from what occurred in 1898. And not one of those events was even remotely visible when President William McKinley set out to free Cubans from the yoke of Spanish oppression.

A similar case can be made with regard to the Persian Gulf War. However trivial the war was in a strictly military sense, it is giving birth to a legacy as significant and as ambiguous as that of the Spanish-American War. And, for that reason, to consign the war to footnote status is to shoot wide of the mark.

The legacy of the Gulf War consists of at least four distinct elements. First, the war transformed Americans' views about armed conflict: about the nature of war, the determinants of success, and the expectations of when and how U.S. forces should intervene.

Operation Desert Storm seemingly reversed one of the principal lessons of Vietnam—namely, that excessive reliance on technology in war is a recipe for disaster. In the showdown with Iraq, technology proved crucial to success. Technology meant *American* technology; other members of the coalition (with the partial exception of Great Britain) lagged far behind U.S. forces in technological capacity. Above all, technology meant American airpower; it was the effects of the bombing campaign preceding the brief ground offensive that provided the real "story" of the Gulf War. After coalition fighter and bomber forces had isolated, weakened, and demoralized Saddam Hussein's army, the actual liberation of Kuwait seemed hardly more than an afterthought.

With Operation Desert Storm, a century or more of industrial age warfare came to an end and a new era of information age warfare beckoned—a style of warfare, it went without saying, to which the United States was uniquely attuned. In the information age, airpower promised to be to warfare what acupuncture was to medicine: a clean, economical, and nearly painless remedy for an array of complaints.

OPERATION DESERT STORM SEEMINGLY REVERSED ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL LESSONS OF VIETNAM—NAMELY THAT EXCESSIVE RELIANCE ON TECHNOLOGY IN WAR IS A RECIPE FOR DISASTER.

Gone, apparently, were the days of slugfests, stalemates, and bloodbaths. Gone, too, were the days when battlefield mishaps—a building erroneously bombed, an American soldier's life lost to friendly fire—could be ascribed to war's inherent fog and friction. Such occurrences now became inexplicable errors, which nonetheless required an explanation and an accounting. The nostrums of the information age equate information to power. They dictate that the greater availability of information should eliminate uncertainty and enhance the ability to anticipate and control events. Even if the key piece of information becomes apparent only after the fact, someone—commander or pilot or analyst—"should have known."

Thus did the Persian Gulf War feed expectations of no-fault operations. The Pentagon itself encouraged such expectations by engaging in its own flights of fancy. Doctrine developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the 1990s publicly committed U.S. forces to harnessing technology to achieve what it called "full spectrum dominance": the capability to prevail, quickly and cheaply, in any and all forms of conflict.

This technological utopianism has, in turn, had two perverse effects. The first has been to persuade political elites that war can be—and ought to be—virtually bloodless. As with an idea so stupid only an intellectual can believe it, the imperative of bloodless war will strike some as so bizarre that only a bona fide Washington insider (or technogeek soldier) could take it seriously. But as the war for Kosovo demonstrated in 1999, such considerations now have a decisive effect on the shape of U.S. military operations. How else to explain a war, allegedly fought for humanitarian purposes, in which the commander in chief publicly renounced the use of ground troops and restricted combat aircraft to altitudes at which their efforts to protect the victims of persecution were necessarily ineffective?

TECHNOLOGICAL UTOPIANISM HAS ALSO ALTERED FUNDAMENTALLY THE MORAL DEBATE ABOUT WAR AND THE USE OF FORCE.

Technological utopianism has also altered fundamentally the moral debate about war and the use of force. During the decades following Hiroshima, that debate centered on assessing the moral implications of nuclear war and nuclear deterrence—an agenda that put moral reasoning at the service of averting Armageddon. Since the Persian Gulf War, theologians and ethicists, once openly skeptical of using force in all but the direst circumstances, have evolved a far more expansive and accommodating view: They now find that the United States has a positive obligation to intervene in places remote from any tangible American interests (the Balkans and sub-Saharan Africa, for example). More than a few doves have developed markedly hawkish tendencies.

The second element of the Gulf War's legacy is a new consensus on the relationship between military power and America's national identity. In the aftermath of Desert Storm, military preeminence has become, as never before, an integral part of that identity. The idea that the United States presides as the world's only superpower—an idea that the Persian Gulf War more than any other single event made manifest—has found such favor with the great majority of Americans that most can no longer conceive of an alternative.

That U.S. military spending now exceeds the *combined* military spending of all the other leading powers, whether long-standing friends or potential foes, is a fact so often noted that it has lost all power to

astonish. It has become noncontroversial, an expression of the way things are meant to be, and, by common consent, of the way they ought to remain. Yet in the presidential campaign of 2000, both the Democratic and the Republican candidates agreed that the current level of defense spending—approaching $300 billion per year—is entirely inadequate. Tellingly, it was the nominee of the Democratic Party, the supposed seat of antimilitary sentiment, who offered the more generous plan for boosting the Pentagon's budget. The campaign included no credible voices suggesting that the United States might already be spending *too much* on defense.

The new consensus on the military role of the United States—a consensus forged at a time when the actual threats to the nation's well-being are fewer than in any period since the 1920s—turns traditional American thinking about military power on its head. Although the Republic came into existence through a campaign of violence, the Founders did not view the experiment upon which they had embarked as an exercise in accruing military might. If anything, the reverse was true. By insulating America (politically but not commercially) from the Old World's preoccupations with war and militarism, they hoped to create in the New World something quite different.

Even during the Cold War, the notion lingered that, when it came to military matters, America was indeed intended to be different. The U.S. government classified the Cold War as an "emergency," as if to imply that the level of mobilization it entailed was only a temporary expedient. Even so, cold warriors with impeccable credentials—Dwight D. Eisenhower prominent among them—could be heard cautioning their fellow citizens to be wary of inadvertent militarism. The fall of the Berlin Wall might have offered an opportunity to reflect on Eisenhower's Farewell Address. But victory in the Gulf, which seemed to demonstrate that military power was ineffably good, nipped any such inclination in the bud. When it came to Desert Storm, what was not to like?

Indeed, in some quarters, America's easy win over Saddam Hussein inspired the belief that the armed forces could do much more henceforth than simply "fight and win the nation's wars." To demonstrate its continuing relevance in the absence of any plausible adversary, the Pentagon in the 1990s embraced an activist agenda and implemented a new "strategy of engagement" whereby U.S. forces devote their energies to "shaping the international environment." The idea, according to Secretary of Defense William Cohen, is "to shape people's opinions about us in ways that are favorable to us. To shape events that will affect our livelihood and our security. And we can do that when people see us, they see our power, they see our professionalism, they see our patriotism, and they say that's a country that we want to be with."

American paratroopers jumping into Kazakhstan, U.S. Special Forces training peacekeepers in Nigeria and counternarcotics battalions in Colombia, and U.S. warships stopping for fuel at the port of Aden are all

part of an elaborate and ambitious effort to persuade others to "be with" the world's preeminent power. Conceived in the Pentagon and directed by senior U.S. military commanders, that effort proceeds quite openly, the particulars duly reported in the press. Few Americans pay it much attention. Their lack of interest suggests that the general public has at least tacitly endorsed the Pentagon's strategy, and is one measure of how comfortable Americans have become, a decade after the Persian Gulf War, with wielding U.S. military power.

The third element of the Gulf War's legacy falls in the largely misunderstood and almost completely neglected province of civil-military relations. To the bulk of the officer corps, Desert Storm served to validate the Powell Doctrine. It affirmed the military nostalgia that had taken root in the aftermath of Vietnam—the yearning to restore the concept of self-contained, decisive conventional war, conducted by autonomous, self-governing military elites. And yet, paradoxically, the result of Desert Storm has been to seal the demise of that concept. In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, the boundaries between war and peace, soldiers and civilians, combatants and noncombatants, and the military and political spheres have become more difficult than ever to discern. In some instances, those boundaries have all but disappeared.

Operation Allied Force in the Balkans in 1999 was the fullest expression to date of that blurring phenomenon. During the entire 11-week campaign, the Clinton administration never budged from its insistence that the military action in progress did not really constitute a war. As the bombing of Serbia intensified, it became unmistakably clear that the United States and its NATO partners had given greater priority to protecting the lives of their own professional soldiers than to aiding the victims of ethnic cleansing or to avoiding noncombatant casualties. When NATO ultimately prevailed, it did so by making war not on the Yugoslavian army but on the Serbian people.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE PERSIAN GULF WAR, THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE, SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS, COMBATANTS AND NONCOMBATANTS, AND THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL SPHERES HAVE BECOME MORE DIFFICULT THAN EVER TO DISCERN.

The consequences of this erosion of civil-military distinctions extend well beyond the operational sphere. One effect has been to undermine the military profession's traditional insistence on having wide latitude to frame the policies that govern the armed forces. At the same time, in areas quite unrelated to the planning and conduct of combat operations, policymakers have conferred ever greater authority on soldiers. Thus, although the

Persian Gulf War elevated military credibility to its highest point in memory, when it comes to policy matters even remotely touching on gender, senior officers have no choice but to embrace the politically correct position—which is that in war, as in all other human endeavors, gender is irrelevant. To express a contrary conviction is to imperil one's career, something few generals and admirals are disposed to do.

Yet even as civilians dismiss the military's accumulated wisdom on matters relating to combat and unit cohesion, they thrust upon soldiers a wider responsibility for the formulation of foreign policy. The four-star officers presiding over commands in Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Pacific have displaced the State Department as the ultimate arbiters of policy in those regions.

The ill-fated visit of the USS *Cole* to Aden last October, for example, came not at the behest of some diplomatic functionary but on the order of General Anthony Zinni, the highly regarded marine then serving as commander in chief (CINC) of U.S. Central Command, responsible for the Persian Gulf. Had Zinni expressed reservations about having a mixed-gender warship in his area of operations, he would, of course, have been denounced for commenting on matters beyond his purview. But no one would presume to say that Zinni was venturing into areas beyond his professional competence by dispatching the *Cole* in pursuit of (in his words) "more engagement"—part of a larger, misguided effort to befriend the Yemeni government.

Before his recent retirement, Zinni openly, and aptly, referred to the regional CINCs as "proconsuls." It's a boundary-blurring term: Proconsuls fill an imperial mandate, though Americans assure themselves that they neither possess nor wish to acquire an empire. Zinni is honest enough to acknowledge that, in the post-Cold War world, the CINC's function is quasi-imperial—like the role of General Douglas MacArthur presiding over occupied Japan. The CINC/proconsul projects American power, maintains order, enforces norms of behavior, and guards American interests. He has plainly become something more than a mere soldier. He straddles the worlds of politics, diplomacy, and military affairs, and moves easily among them. In so doing, he has freed himself from the strictures that once defined the limits of soldierly prerogatives.

Thus, when he stepped down as CINC near the end of the 2000 presidential campaign, Zinni felt no compunction about immediately entering the partisan fray. He announced that the policies of the administration he had served had all along been defective. With a clutch of other recently retired senior officers, he threw his support behind George W. Bush, an action intended to convey the impression that Bush was the military's preferred candidate.

Some critics have warned that no good can come of soldiers' engaging in partisan politics. Nonsense, is the response: When General Zinni endorses Bush, and when General Schwarzkopf stumps the state of Florida and denounces Democrats for allegedly disallowing military absentee ballots, they are merely exercising their constitutionally protected rights as citizens. The erosion of civil-military boundaries since the Persian Gulf War has emboldened officers to engage in such activities, and

the change reflects an increasingly overt politicization of the officer corps. According to a time-honored tradition, to be an American military professional was to be apolitical. If, in the past, the occasional general tossed his hat into the ring—as Dwight D. Eisenhower did in 1952—his party affiliation came as a surprise, and almost an afterthought. In the 1990s, with agenda-driven civilians intruding into military affairs and soldiers assuming the mantle of imperial proconsuls, the earlier tradition went by the board. And that, too, is part of the Gulf War's legacy.

But perhaps the most important aspect of the legacy is the war's powerful influence on how Americans now view both the immediate past and the immediate future. When it occurred near the tail end of the 20th century, just as the Cold War's final chapter was unfolding, the victory in the desert seemed to confirm that the years since the United States bounded onto the world stage in 1898 *had* been the "American Century" after all. Operation Desert Storm was interpreted as an indisputable demonstration of American superiority and made it plausible to believe once again that the rise of the United States to global dominance and the triumph of American values were the central themes of the century then at its close. In the collective public consciousness, the Persian Gulf War and the favorable conclusion of the Cold War were evidence that, despite two world wars, multiple episodes of genocide, and the mind-boggling criminality of totalitarianism, the 20th century had turned out basically all right. The war let Americans see contemporary history not as a chronicle of hubris, miscalculation, and tragedy, but as a march of progress, its arc ever upward. And that perspective—however much at odds with the postmodernism that pervades fashionable intellectual circles—fuels the grand expectations that Americans have carried into the new millennium.

Bill Clinton has declared the United States "the indispensable nation." According to Madeleine Albright, America has become the "organizing principal" of the global order. "If we have to use force," said Albright, "it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further than other countries into the future." Such sentiments invite derision in sophisticated precincts. But they play well in Peoria, and accord precisely with what most Americans want to believe.

In 1898, a brief, one-sided war with Spain persuaded Americans, who knew their intentions were benign, that it was their destiny to shoulder a unique responsibility and uplift "little brown brother." Large complications ensued. In 1991, a brief, one-sided war with Iraq persuaded Americans, who thought they had deciphered the secrets of history, that the rising tide of globalization will bring the final triumph of American values. A decade after the fact, events in the Persian Gulf and its environs—the resurgence of Iraqi power under Saddam Hussein and the never-ending conflict between Israelis and Arabs—suggest that large complications will ensue once again.

As Operation Desert Storm recedes into the distance, its splendor fades. But its true significance comes into view. ❑

The Periodical Observer

Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

The Clinton Legacy: A First Draft

A Survey of Recent Articles

Use of the L-word was banned in the White House last year, lest any observer get the impression that the 42nd president of the United States was obsessed with his *legacy*. But as President Bill Clinton moved reluctantly toward the exit after two terms in office, journalists, scholars, and others began to appraise his eight-year performance. Clinton himself, not surprisingly, tried to give them a hand.

"I will leave the White House even more idealistic than when I entered it in terms of my belief about the capacity of our system and our people to change and to actually solve, or at least reduce, problems," he says in an "exit interview" in *Talk* (Dec. 2000–Jan. 2001). "We have turned around so many things."

Clinton's Exhibit A is, of course, the booming economy. He promised in 1992 to "focus like a laser beam" on the economy, and few deny his administration some credit for the ensuing prosperity. *American Prospect* (Aug. 28, 2000) coeditor Robert Kuttner notes that Clinton must share credit with Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, "and with fortunate timing. Thanks to information technology and the disinflation of the 1990s, these were likely to be good years." Even *National Review* (Nov. 20, 2000) senior editor Ramesh Ponnuru concedes that "Clinton's economic record . . . is pretty good."

Clinton also promised in 1992 "to end welfare as we know it," and four years later, despite the opposition of liberals and most of his staff, he signed the welfare reform bill passed by the Republican Congress, ending the cash entitlement for poor mothers. Peter Edelman, a Department of Health and Human Services official and Clinton friend, quit over this and still believes it was wrong. But welfare specialist David Ellwood, of Harvard University, tells Washington correspondent Joe Klein in the *New Yorker* (Oct. 16 & 23, 2000) that "the results are much better than I expected." Not only have the welfare rolls been almost cut in half, but Clinton "did exactly what he said he was going to do: he made work pay. He did it incrementally, but the results have been dramatic." More than half of the poorest women are now in the work force.

Clinton's persistent efforts since 1994 "to force a reluctant Republican Congress to spend more money" on various social programs, "especially those that raised the income of the working poor," helped millions and constituted "the most admirable aspect" of his whole record in office, Klein believes. Head Start's budget grew from $2.8 billion in 1993 to $5.3 billion in 2000; child

care supports went from $4.5 billion to $9.3 billion; the earned income tax credit increased from $12.4 billion to $30.4 billion. In his 1997 balanced-budget agreement with the Republicans, Clinton won more than $30 billion in new tax credits for higher education, effectively making the first two years of college a middle-class entitlement. This affected more people than the original GI Bill of Rights (which applied only to returning World War II veterans), Klein points out.

In foreign affairs, Clinton's modest record is the best one could have hoped for in a world without the defining issues of the Cold War, argues Stephen M. Walt, a professor of international affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, writing in *Foreign Affairs* (Mar.–Apr. 2000). Despite Clinton's idealistic rhetoric, his strategy has been "hegemony on the cheap, because that is the only strategy the American people are likely to support." But Richard N. Haass, director of foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution, charges that "Clinton inherited a world of unprecedented American advantage and opportunity and did little with it." He deserves credit for gaining congressional approval of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organization, Haass writes in *Foreign Affairs* (May–June 2000), and his administration scored some advances in arms control, helped bring peace to Northern Ireland, and "brought some measure of stability—however fleeting or tenuous—to Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo." But Clinton leaves in foreign affairs not "a legacy" but "a void: no clear priorities, no consistency or thoroughness in the implementation of strategies, and no true commitment to building a domestic consensus in support of internationalism." He paid too little attention to foreign affairs—and too much to polls, Haass believes.

For all Clinton's "high swift intelligence, his impressive technical command of all the issues, [and] his genuine intellectual curiosity . . . he's not a fighter," comments historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., in a *New York Times Book Review* (Nov. 26, 2000) interview. "He lacks self-discipline. He is sometimes too clever by half, and he dislikes making enemies. FDR said, 'Judge me by the enemies I have.' Bill Clinton, for all his intellectual and magnetic qualities, hates making enemies."

He has made some, nevertheless. Norman Podhoretz, editor at large of *Commentary*, despises Clinton as "a scoundrel and a perjurer and a disgrace to the office." Yet Podhoretz contends that Clinton's very defects of character enabled him to move the Democratic Party "in a healthier direction than it had been heading" for more than a quarter-century. (Others who applaud this move toward the center take a much more favorable view of Clinton, of course.) If Clinton had had any principles, Podhoretz argues in *National Review* (Sept. 13, 1999), "he would have been incapable of betraying the people and the ideas he was supposed to represent." His impeachment "forced even the intransigent McGovernites of his party, who had every reason to hate him, into mobilizing on his behalf for fear of the right-wing conspiracy they fantasied would succeed him."

Clinton claims in *Talk* that his impeachment was "just a political deal." But however history judges the Republican impeachment drive, Clinton's own ethical and legal misconduct in the White House is unlikely to be overlooked. Historians who ranked all U.S. presidents in a 1999 C-Span survey put Clinton dead last when it came to "moral authority." He ranked 21st overall, far below the usual greats and near-greats, and just four rungs above Richard Nixon, the only president forced to resign in disgrace.

"Self-inflicted wounds," however, were just one reason that the Clinton presidency did not rise "to great heights," George C. Edwards III, director of the Center for Presidential Studies at Texas A&M University, told *National Journal* (Jan. 1, 2000) correspondent Carl M. Cannon. Another reason was that the opposition party controlled the Congress after 1994, limiting his legislative ambitions. And a third reason was "the absence of a crisis." As Klein writes: "He was president in a placid time; he never had the opportunity to achieve greatness."

Abolish the Electoral College?

"Pondering a Popular Vote" by Alexis Simendinger, James A. Barnes, and Carl M. Cannon, "As Maine and Nebraska Go..." by Michael Steel, "Can It Be Done?" by Richard E. Cohen and Louis Jacobson, and "What Were They Thinking?" by Burt Solomon, in *National Journal* (Nov. 18, 2000), 1501 M St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

In the eyes of many Americans, the Electoral College is like the vermiform appendix: a useless organ that can cause trouble on occasion. After the extraordinary presidential election last year, a majority of Americans indicated in polls that they favor doing away with it and electing presidents by direct popular vote. Senator-elect Hillary Rodham Clinton (D.-N.Y.), former Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kan.), and other political figures agreed. In the *National Journal*, various correspondents explore the implications.

To begin with, of course, abolition would require a constitutional amendment, and that would not be easy. After third-party candidate George Wallace won six states and 46 electoral votes in 1968, raising the specter of a presidential election being thrown into the House of Representatives, just such an amendment was proposed. With President Richard Nixon's backing, the House of Representatives in 1969 overwhelmingly approved the amendment. A year later, however, the measure died in the Senate, in part because small states resisted. Senate passage would have required a two-thirds majority, and then legislatures in three-fourths of the states would have had to give their approval.

But suppose the Constitution were amended. What then? Largely rural, less populous states would lose voting power. Under the Electoral College system, there are now 538 electoral votes: The District of Columbia has three, and each state gets as many votes as it has senators and representatives. Since every state thus gets at least three electoral votes, the less populous states have more weight than they otherwise would. Though many of the concerns that prompted the Founding Fathers to create the Electoral College are indeed outdated, observes Solomon, regional interests still compete. "The lightly populated locales still feel overwhelmed by the behemoths."

Without the Electoral College, states as such would no longer have a major role in presidential elections, and so their importance as political units would diminish, notes Paul Allen Beck, a political scientist at Ohio State University. Presidential politics would be nationalized, and the way campaigns were conducted would change. Wooing a national audience, candidates would spend less time shaking hands and more time on TV. No longer could candidates lavish attention on "battleground" states and ignore vote-rich states where a win or a loss was a foregone conclusion. Instead of courting independent "swing" voters in certain key states, note Simendinger, Barnes, and Cannon, candidates would be intent "on winning big in the states where loyal party supporters reside, and in generating a bigger turnout of those loyalists." Former GOP National Committee Chairman Haley Barbour thinks the incentive for vote fraud would increase: Under the current system, there's little reason for partisans to "run up the

ED STEIN reprinted by permission of Newspaper Enterprise Association, Inc.

score" in states that their candidate is virtually certain to carry.

The current "winner-take-all" system also "discourages third parties," notes L. Sandy Maisel, a political scientist at Colby College in Maine. Direct popular election might give alternative candidates, such as Ralph Nader and Pat Buchanan, more influence on the major parties.

Short of getting rid of the Electoral College, there is still a way to make it less likely that the electoral and popular votes will get out of alignment—and no constitutional amendment would be needed. The states could simply drop their winner-take-all formula for apportioning electors. Two states have already done this: Maine and Nebraska each give the statewide winner two electoral votes, but allocate the remaining ones by congressional district. Other states have not followed suit. One reason: Unless all the states adopted the approach, those that did would lose clout in the Electoral College and standing in the candidates' eyes, relative to the winner-take-all states.

Caricaturing Congress

"Congress and the Welfare State" by James T. Patterson, in *Social Science History* (Summer 2000), Duke Univ. Press, Box 90660, Durham, N.C. 27708–0660.

Congress has been taking it on the chin lately from many historians and other scholars who see it as a villain in battles over the expansion of the American welfare state since the mid-1930s. Though sympathetic to their concerns, Patterson, a historian at Brown University, chides them for oversimplifying.

Congress, for the most part, hasn't simply been on the "conservative" side, doing the bidding of corporations and other special interests, athwart the popular will, Patterson says. "On the contrary, Congress has generally approved what the majority of the American people have seemed willing to support."

Linda Gordon, a historian at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, for instance, has blamed "powerful minorities" in Congress for "inequities" in the 1935 Social Security Act, such as the "stingy and humiliating conditions" attached to its Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program. But in the 1930s, as in later decades, writes Patterson, most Americans instinctively distinguished between the "deserving" and the "undeserving" poor, and opposed public assistance for the latter. In 1935, backers of ADC thought that it "would help 'deserving' people, mainly widows and their young children." They never dreamed that the program would evolve into the chief source of government support for large numbers of unwed mothers and their children.

Likewise, the decision by Congress and President Franklin D. Roosevelt to exclude domestic and farm workers from the old age insurance program. This did affect many African Americans and other minorities. Some scholars see racism at work. But there's no evidence "that racial considerations mattered much" in the deliberations, Patterson says. Concerns about fiscal feasibility swayed many experts and even some liberal advocates. Other nations made the same exclusion when they began their old age insurance programs.

Nor was the great power wielded by congressional committee chairmen—which has been much reduced in the House since the early 1970s—invariably used to constrain or tear down the welfare state, Patterson notes. It took a brilliant legislative maneuver by House Ways and Means Committee chairman Wilbur Mills (D-Ark.), for instance, to fashion "the compromise that led in 1965 to Medicare."

Members of Congress know, "perhaps better than scholars," says Patterson, that presidents who propose bold new social programs generally expect the proposals "to be narrowed and refined," so that the programs can be effectively implemented, with broad popular backing. Members of Congress also "often sense that dramatic efforts for 'reform' enjoy considerably less popular support than liberals have imagined." Budgetary considerations, including the popular desire to keep taxes down, play a very important part. Indeed, suggests Patterson, some scholars could learn a lesson or two from Congress's realism.

Folly in Colombia?

"Two Wars or One? Drugs, Guerrillas, and Colombia's New *Violencia*" by William M. LeoGrande and Kenneth E. Sharpe, in *World Policy Journal* (Fall 2000), World Policy Institute, New School Univ., 66 Fifth Ave., Ninth Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

The $1.3 billion in military and other aid that Washington decided last year to put into the war on drugs in Colombia and the Andean region "marks a major shift in U.S. policy"—one that won't help the United States and may harm Colombia, contend political scientists LeoGrande and Sharpe, of American University and Swarthmore College, respectively.

In the name of fighting the traffic in illegal drugs, the United States is effectively escalating its involvement in Colombia's long-running war with Marxist guerrillas, the authors maintain. The escalation was prompted by a dramatic increase in coca production in two southern provinces of Colombia. These are strongholds of the main leftist guerrilla force, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, which derives millions of dollars a year from "taxes" on the drug production and trade. But the U.S. "war" on illegal drugs "cannot be won in the Colombian rain forest," say LeoGrande and Sharpe. "Even if the United States defoliates every acre given over to growing coca, burns every laboratory, and destroys every last gram of Colombian cocaine, it will have won a hollow victory. The drug business will simply move elsewhere, as it always does." The market is too lucrative to die.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the United States targeted the major drug trafficking organizations in Colombia, which imported most of their coca leaf from Peru and Bolivia. By the mid-1990s, the key leaders of the Medellín and Cali cartels had been killed or captured, but the flow of drugs continued. Many smaller producers appeared, and some of the business shifted to Mexico (which became the major supplier of cocaine to the western United States). As Colombian coca leaf production expanded (after U.S. efforts succeeded in reducing coca production in Bolivia and Peru), the growers, rather than the traffickers, became the main U.S. enemy in Colombia. For all Washington's efforts over the last decade, however, the total amount of land planted in coca in the Andean region—almost 500,000 acres—has remained about the same, LeoGrande and Sharpe observe. "Faced with eradication campaigns, peasants simply plant elsewhere." The new eradication campaign that Washington envisions in southern Colombia will fare no better—and "have no impact whatsoever on the supply of drugs entering the United States."

But the shift in U.S. policy will have a terrible impact in Colombia, intensifying the violence and making a negotiated settlement between the Marxist guerrillas and the Colombian government more difficult. "Despite fits and starts, the peace process in Colombia is not nearly as moribund as some U.S. officials imply," the authors believe. But instead of improving the prospects for peace, the United States "is about to put Colombia's fragile democracy at greater risk by escalating the new *Violencia*. . . . It is the people of Colombia who will pay the price for the inability of the United States to face the fact that its 'war' on drugs can only be won at home."

Global Lawfare

"The Rocky Shoals of International Law" by David B. Rivkin, Jr., and Lee A. Casey, in *The National Interest* (Winter 2000–01), 1112 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; "The New Sovereigntists" by Peter J. Spiro, in *Foreign Affairs* (Nov.–Dec. 2000), 58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child forbids the death penalty for children and sets other standards for their protection. Only two member nations have refused to ratify the agreement: Somalia . . . and the United States. And that

is not the only international agreement at which the world's lone superpower has balked in recent years. On issue after issue—global warming, land mines, establishing the International Criminal Court, and others—the United States has stubbornly refused to go along. Spiro, a law professor at Hofstra University, finds this deplorable, but Rivkin and Casey, law partners who have practiced before the International Court of Justice, think it's the trend in international law that's the problem.

"International law is enjoying a tremendous renaissance," Spiro exults. "It is now an important and necessary force in the context of globalization, governing the increasingly transnational elements of virtually every area of legal regulation, including such domestic issues as family, criminal, commercial, and bankruptcy law. Respect for human rights has significantly advanced over the last 20 years." Yet the United States has given its full blessings only to free-trade agreements (provided they ignore environmental, labor, and human rights considerations). By otherwise making such a blanket rejection of international agreements, the United States is undermining its position of international leadership, he argues. Particular issues can be debated, but in a globalized world the United States cannot simply "pick and choose" among international conventions and laws, rejecting those it dislikes.

Rivkin and Casey are equally alarmed—but by the efforts of human rights activists, scholars, the UN and other international organizations, and some governments ("including, episodically at least, the Clinton administration") to transform "the traditional law of nations governing the relationship between states into something akin to an international regulatory code." Nongovernmental organizations, such as the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines, have played the leading role in this drive—and they are "not elected, not accountable to any body politic, and . . . not inherently better or worse than other special interests," Rivkin and Casey maintain. For centuries, national sovereignty has been "the organizing principle of the international system," and sovereignty is "the necessary predicate of self-government." If the legality of U.S. actions is to be determined by "supranational, or extranational, institutions," they believe, then the American people will have lost their "ultimate authority."

In the "new international law," they contend, are claims (some inconsistent with others) "that heretofore purely domestic public policy issues—such as the death penalty, abortion, gay rights, environmental protection, and the relationship between parents and children—must be resolved in accordance with 'prevailing' international standards; that, with the possible exception of repelling armed attack, only the United Nations Security Council can authorize the use of military force; that the 'international community' is entitled to intervene under a variety of circumstances in the internal affairs of states; and that the actions of individual civilian and military officials of states fall under the purview of international criminal jurisdiction."

Spiro anticipates that "economic globalization will inevitably bring the United States in line" with the new order. In the meantime, though, economic and other pressure on U.S. corporations and individual American states will be needed to help things along. Rivkin and Casey, in contrast, consider it urgent that the new U.S. president champion the traditional law of nations.

Economics, Labor & Business

The Estate Tax Debate

A Survey of Recent Articles

In 1999 and again last year, Congress voted to abolish the estate tax, but each time, President Bill Clinton vetoed the measure, saying it would benefit only the rich. Although most Americans are not rich, 60 percent favor abolishing the tax, according to a poll last June, and the issue continues to be debated.

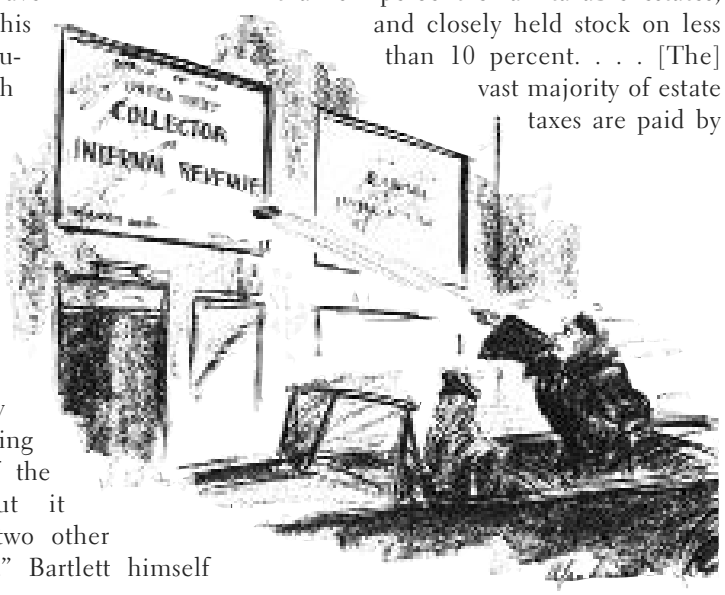
Under current law, only estates of $675,000 or more are taxed, with the tax rate starting at 37 percent and rising to 55 percent on estates of $3 million or more. Less than two percent of Americans who die owe any estate tax at all, but many Americans apparently dream of accumulating enough riches to be threatened by the tax: 41 percent in a 1999 *Newsweek* poll claimed that they are very or somewhat likely to become wealthy.

"The fundamental justification for estate taxation is [the belief] that great private wealth is socially undesirable," writes Bruce Bartlett, a senior fellow at the National Center for Policy Analysis, in the *Public Interest* (Fall 2000). But he argues that, on the contrary, great wealth and the inequality it represents and fosters are vital to the functioning of the U.S. economy.

"A secondary rationale" for estate taxation, Bartlett asserts, "is that inherited wealth is undeserved and perhaps even harmful for the recipient." But study after study, he says, shows that most great wealth in America does not come chiefly from inheritances. A recent survey of the wealthiest one percent of Americans found that inheritances were not a significant source of wealth for 90 percent of them. But "the desire to leave an estate drives people to work and save," Bartlett argues. "To the extent that the estate tax reduces a parent's ability to leave an estate to his children, it will have a negative effect on his willingness to accumulate wealth through work, saving, and investing."

"The threat of a tax strike by the rich is terrifying," sardonically comments James K. Galbraith, a professor of public affairs and government at the University of Texas at Austin, writing in the same issue of the *Public Interest*, "but it squares poorly with two other points Bartlett makes." Bartlett himself notes that the very wealthy engage in careful and costly estate planning to avoid the tax, while "a disproportionate burden . . . often falls on those with recently acquired, modest wealth: farmers, small businessmen, and the like. In many cases, their incomes may not have been very high, and they died not even realizing they were 'rich.'" But, Galbraith asks, if the very wealthy can readily evade the tax, and many of the less wealthy are not even fully aware of the extent of their fortune, then how can the estate tax be such a disincentive to work, save, and invest?

Edwin S. Rubenstein, director of research at the Hudson Institute, writing in its journal *American Outlook* (Nov.–Dec. 2000), zeroes in on the disproportionate effect of the tax, arguing that the impact on farmers and small business owners can be "devastating." A 1995 survey found that slightly more than half of family businesses would find it hard, thanks to the estate tax, to survive the principal owner's death. But economists William G. Gale of the Brookings Institution and Joel Slemrod of the University of Michigan, in Brookings *Policy Brief* No. 62 (June 2000), warn against letting the tail wag the dog: "Farms and other small businesses represent a small fraction of estate taxes. In 1997, farm assets were reported on less than six percent of all taxable estates, and closely held stock on less than 10 percent. . . . [The] vast majority of estate taxes are paid by



people who own neither farms nor small businesses."

If the estate tax has little effect on the concentration of wealth in America, as some opponents of the tax contend, then that, observe Gale and Slemrod, "could be construed as an argument for increasing, rather than decreasing, the tax." Abolition of "the most progressive tax instrument in the federal tax arsenal," they say, would hurt nonprofit organizations (to which the wealthy are induced by the tax to give), reduce federal revenues (by the amount the tax produces, which was $28 billion in 1999, or about 1.5 percent of all federal revenue), and "create a gaping loophole for capital gains in the income tax." (The estate tax gets at capital gains that were never realized and so escaped the income tax.) "Many arguments commonly made against the tax are demonstrably specious," Gale and Slemrod conclude. "To the extent that any of them are valid, they suggest reform rather than abolition."

Leon Friedman, a professor at Hofstra University's School of Law, writing in the *American Prospect* (Nov. 6, 2000), has a different idea: Abolish the estate tax, but impose a one percent tax on the net worth of the richest one percent of Americans "on a regular basis during their lifetime." This, he says, would generate more than $100 billion a year in federal revenues, "reduce the national debt, shore up Social Security and Medicare, allow for significant tax decreases for the middle class, and eliminate the need for an estate tax."

The Downside of Debt Reduction

"Life without Treasury Securities" by Albert M. Wojnilower, in *Business Economics* (Oct. 2000), National Assn. for Business Economics, 1233 20th St., N.W., #505, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Should the huge federal budget surpluses expected in coming years, assuming they actually materialize, be used to wipe out the $3.4 trillion national debt? Americans ought to think twice, warns Wojnilower, a former official of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York who now advises two private investment firms. Eliminating Treasury notes and bonds would have "radical implications for the financial system." One possibility: Japanese government securities could eventually emerge as the new international benchmark .

Because Treasury securities are backed by the U.S. government and are thus virtually risk-free, they are the anchor of the financial system. They have taken the place of gold, serving as a benchmark for calculating the riskiness of other assets, a hedge against those risks, and a safe haven in times of uncertainty. The trade in Treasury securities alone, $190 billion a day, generates steady earnings that encourage dealers to "make markets" in less secure bonds issued by corporations, government agencies, and other borrowers—thus expanding the supply of credit. More important, Treasuries are used in hedging: Investment firms that hold other kinds of bonds sell Treasuries "short," reducing potential losses if the other bonds lose value—which also expands the supply of credit.

But it's in a credit panic such as the one surrounding the 1998 collapse of Long Term Capital Management that Treasuries have their greatest value, says Wojnilower. Such crises trigger a "flight to quality," as people and institutions park their money someplace where its safety and liquidity are guaranteed. That "someplace" has long been Treasuries. Without them, Wojnilower says, investors would look to the few other big lenders in the world, with potentially unhappy results.

One alternative would be to seek the safety of the handful of banks deemed "too big to fail" by national governments. That, Wojnilower fears, would make these banks "inordinately huge and powerful," and would tempt governments to use them "as instruments of domestic and foreign policy." But markets could also seek safety elsewhere—in Japanese securities (if Tokyo finally sets its house in order), or in securities issued by U.S. government-sponsored corporations,

such as the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae), which have Washington's unspoken guarantee behind them. If the corporations succeeded in claiming this role, Wojnilower says, they would have the ability to borrow and lend capital at the cheapest rates around. Inevitably, he fears, Congress would widen the permissible scope of these corporations' lending (currently restricted mostly to home mortgages), producing dangerously large "universal banks."

What to do? The Treasury could continue issuing securities if Congress stipulated that the proceeds, instead of being used to fund government operations, were to be lent to carefully designated "financial intermediaries." How much should the Treasury borrow? That, Wojnilower says, should be left to the Federal Reserve.

The Economics of Creativity

"Economics and the New Economy: The Invisible Hand Meets Creative Destruction" by Leonard I. Nakamura, in *Business Review* (July–Aug. 2000), Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Dept. of Research and Statistics, 10 Independence Mall, Philadelphia, Pa. 19106–1574.

For those persuaded that the United States has a "new economy," the watchword—taken, ironically, from an *old* economic theory—is "creative destruction," as former goods and livelihoods are replaced by new ones. Creativity, and the profits won by entrepreneurs who have it, are what make the capitalist system go, economist Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1950) thought—and the wealthy young wizards at Microsoft and elsewhere may be proving him right. But to find out if it's really time to wave goodbye to Adam Smith's "invisible hand" and welcome "creativity" as the engine of progress, economists must try harder to measure that elusive quality, argues Nakamura, an economic adviser in the Philadelphia Fed's research department.

Creativity is nothing new, of course. Even when Smith was writing his *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Nakamura notes, inventors and other "creative" folk had an economic impact. "But the flow of payments to creative work was minuscule compared with those that flowed to the labor, land, and capital that directly produced products." Economic progress came naturally from competition and wider markets, Smith believed. Taking their lead from him, neoclassical economists celebrate perfect competition and regard creativity as beyond the scope of economic theory.

Schumpeter, however, in his masterwork, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (1942), took a different view, Nakamura writes. "He argued that what is most important about a capitalist market system is precisely that it rewards change by allowing those who create new products and processes to capture some of the benefits of their creations in the form of short-term monopoly profits. Competition, if too vigorous, would deny these rewards to creators and instead pass them on to consumers, in which case firms would have scant reason to create new products." In this view, governments should encourage innovation by granting entrepreneurs temporary monopolies over the fruits of their creative efforts. That is the reasoning behind such things as patents and copyrights.

The Schumpeterian view may be "a better paradigm for the current U.S. economy," says Nakamura. Most workers are no longer engaged in direct production of goods and services, but in white-collar jobs, he points out. "Managers, professionals, and technical workers, who are increasingly involved in creative activities," now make up 33 percent of the work force, almost double the proportion in 1950. There are six times as many "creative professionals": Scientists, engineers, architects, writers, designers, artists, and entertainers now number 7.6 million.

It is "inherently difficult" to measure the economic value of creativity, Nakamura notes. Many existing economic measures implicitly assume perfect competition, in which creativity has no economic value at all. Official statistics thus "understate nominal output, savings, and profits."

Some technical measures of U.S. economic growth are being revised (to reflect, for instance, recognition of computer software as an investment). But until the process is much further along, Nakamura concludes, it will be hard for economists to tell whether "creative destruction" is all that it's currently cracked up to be.

SOCIETY

The End of the 'Colortocracy'

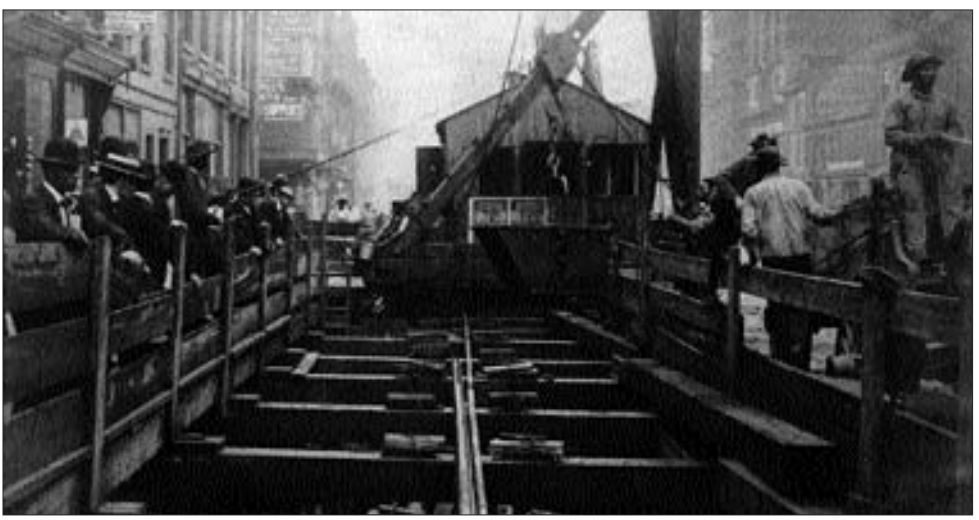
"The Emerging Philadelphia African-American Class Structure" by Elijah Anderson, in *The Annals* (Mar. 2000), American Academy of Political and Social Science, 3937 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104.

Affirmative action and other civil rights measures have done more than bring many blacks into the American mainstream, argues Anderson, a sociologist at the University of Pennsylvania. They also have disrupted the old "castelike" class structure within the black community in Philadelphia and other cities, rendering longstanding distinctions based on shades of skin color less important.

Since the time of slavery, Anderson observes, variations in shades of skin color have made a difference within the black community. An old folksaying put it this way: "If you're light, you're right; if you're brown, stick around; but if you're black, get back."

In *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), the first case study of an African-American community in the United States, black sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois discerned four classes: On top, Anderson notes, were the well-to-do: light-skinned doctors, lawyers, and others, whose "relatively privileged ancestors were the offspring of slaves and slave masters." Next came an emerging middle class of schoolteachers, postal workers, storekeepers, and ministers, whose skin color was "more brown, sometimes even dark." Below that group was "the solid working class," made up of people, generally migrants from the South, who "tended to be dark-complexioned." Finally, at the bottom of the class structure, says Anderson, were "the very poor who worked sporadically if at all: Du Bois's 'submerged tenth.'"

"One of the most unappreciated but profound consequences" of the civil rights policies intended to promote black equality with whites, Anderson maintains, was "the destabilization" of the castelike system within black society. By giving the same opportunities to dark-skinned blacks as to light-skinned ones, affirmative action policies reduced the relatively privileged position of the light-skinned



The Library Company of Philadelphia

The social gap that divided the onlooking black Philadelphia gentlemen from the black workmen was as wide as the subway tunnel that was under construction on Market Street in 1904.

"colortocracy." "Blacks of all hues" entered formerly white institutions as students, teachers, and workers. Corporations, universities, and government agencies became "the major arbiters and shapers of black mobility," and class positions in the black community "became increasingly dependent on achievement and less on ascription."

Today, the black community in Philadelphia is no longer concentrated in a single area of the city. And the social classes within that community, writes Anderson, "are qualitatively different from those of Du Bois's time." Members of the new black elite come from various backgrounds and in various hues, are "largely indifferent to earlier rules of the color caste," and live in Chestnut Hill and other predominately white and affluent neighborhoods. Members of the black middle class, often the offspring of industrious working-class parents, live mostly in Mount Airy and other racially mixed areas, though many continue to reside in the old inner-city neighborhoods.

The black working class and underclass have seen the least change, and have been hurt by the loss of manufacturing jobs. Still, says Anderson, "the legacy of past exclusion continues to haunt blacks at all levels of the class structure."

Sizing Up Affirmative Action

"Assessing Affirmative Action" by Harry Holzer and David Neumark, in *Journal of Economic Literature* (Sept. 2000), American Economic Assn., 2014 Broadway, Ste. 305, Nashville, Tenn. 37203, and "What Does Affirmative Action Do?" by the same authors, in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (Jan. 2000), Cornell Univ., Ithaca, N.Y. 14853–3901.

Does affirmative action in business and education, along with government "set-asides" for minority firms, result, as many critics suggest, in poorer-performing employees, students, and contract firms? In an overview of past research, and a new study of their own, Holzer and Neumark, economists at Michigan State University, answer no on most counts.

Looking at more than 3,200 employers in Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, and Los Angeles surveyed between 1992 and 1994, Holzer and Neumark found that 56 percent used affirmative action in recruiting. These firms attracted (not surprisingly) more minority and female job candidates, screened them more intensively, were more likely to ignore educational or past employment deficiencies or criminal records when they hired—and were more likely to provide training for their new hires. These actions by employers apparently paid off: Subsequent performance ratings showed that the minority and female workers did, if anything, better than white men.

Some 42 percent of the employers surveyed used affirmative action in hiring (as well as, for the most part, in recruiting). Holzer and Neumark found that these firms were more likely to hire women or minorities with lesser qualifications—but also to give them remedial training, thus erasing the differences. Overall, affirmative action, while boosting employers' costs, did not appear to result in weaker job performance.

Various studies have attempted to determine whether the proverbial "playing field" is level for minorities and women in the labor market. Summarizing these studies in the *Journal of Economic Literature*, Holzer and Neumark write that "while differences in educational attainment and cognitive skills account for large fractions of racial differences in wages, employer discrimination continues to play a role." Does affirmative action help? Studies found (again, not surprisingly) that it results in employment gains for minorities and women. But on the question of its impact on the performance of employees and firms, say Holzer and Neumark, the various studies they examined yield "no definitive conclusion." The data suggest, however, that white women in affirmative action firms are not less qualified and do not perform less competently than their male counterparts. Also, the authors observe, while "there is some evidence of lower qualifications for minorities hired under affirmative action programs," especially when measured by test scores or formal education, "evidence of lower performance . . . appears much less consistently or convincingly."

In universities, Holzer and Neumark note,

there is little evidence of discrimination. On the contrary, universities now give minorities preferential treatment in admissions, and though hard evidence of cause-and-effect is lacking, the overall increase in minority enrollments has been "striking." While recent studies indicate that black college students, on average, have lower college grades and graduation rates than whites, those at more selective schools perform better than they would at less selective ones. With minority "special admits" to medical school, there is a further benefit: Minority physicians are more likely to treat patients who are minorities and poor.

As for whether minority set-asides in government contracting and procurement prop up weak companies, the evidence is mixed, the authors say. Some studies have found that minority firms that "graduate" from such programs have no worse failure rates than other firms. "On the other hand, there is some evidence that minority business enterprises deriving a large percentage of their revenue from local government are relatively more likely to go out of business." The cause, however, may be that some of these firms are only fronts set up to exploit the programs for the benefit of large, nonminority enterprises.

Bowling with Uncle Sam

"A Nation of Organizers: The Institutional Origins of Civic Voluntarism in the United States" by Theda Skocpol, Marshall Ganz, and Ziad Munson, in *American Political Science Review* (Sept. 2000), 1527 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

To hear some conservatives and communitarians tell it, big government and its "top-down" efforts to do good have sapped America's civic health, turning a once proud land of bustling volunteers, active with friends and neighbors in multitudes of tiny local groups, into a nation of isolated, self-absorbed slackers, mindlessly clicking their remotes. Instead of "a thousand points of light," millions of TV screens glowing in the social dark. The solution: Turn off the set, stop looking to government, and join . . . a bowling league. But wait! cry Harvard University sociologist Skocpol and her colleagues. Government can help! After all, they argue, it served in the past as a model for voluntary membership organizations.

They cite a classic 1944 article, "Biography of a Nation of Joiners," by historian Arthur Schlesinger, Sr. Voluntary groups were few in colonial America, he wrote, but the struggle for independence and then the adoption of the Constitution taught lessons in cooperation. In the early 1800s, Americans began to organize associations along the lines of the federal political system, "with local units loosely linked together in state branches and these in turn sending representatives to a national body." Subsequently, the Civil War heightened national feelings, giving "magnified force" to association building in the late 19th century.

Buttressing Schlesinger's analysis, Skocpol and her colleagues dredged up historical data on large-membership organizations from an ongoing study of the origins and development of volunteer groups, as well as from historical directories, then looked at the local groups listed in 1910 city directories for 26 cities. "In every city," they write, "most of the groups listed in the directories were part of regional or national federations, ranging from a minimum of 63 percent in Boston to a maximum of 94.5 percent in Rome, Georgia."

Looking further at groups listed in city directories between 1890 and 1910 in eight small cities, the authors found that religious congregations and local chapters of large federations (other than labor organizations) were "quite stable," while strictly local groups tended to come and go. "Once founded, churches and chapters linked to the largest federations took firm root and became the enduring core of civil society in modernizing America." The chapters flourished, they say, thanks in part to the efforts of national and state federation leaders, such as Thomas Wildey of the Odd Fellows and Frances Willard of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, who "were constantly on the move," spreading ideas and recruiting members.

If large federations growing "parallel to the institutions of national republican government" first made the United States "a civic

nation," conclude Skocpol and her coauthors, then Americans worried about civic decay today must look beyond bowling leagues and soccer moms. They must seek to revitalize "representative democracy as an arena and positive model for associational life."

PRESS & MEDIA

Get Me Drama, Sweetheart

A Survey of Recent Articles

News (or what passes for it) is always breaking now, wave after wave surging ceaselessly from the Internet, television, and radio, hitting the battered shore of consciousness—and leaving more and more Americans feeling that they can get along just fine without the lengthy elaborations the next day's newspaper will bring.

To win back readers, newspaper editors have tried almost everything, from color and jazzy graphics to pious "public journalism" promoting civic betterment. But circulation has kept tumbling. Since 1993, even the thick, ad-rich Sunday papers have been losing readers.

Now there's a new remedy: "narrative journalism." It uses some of the techniques of fiction—such as building a central narrative, deploying characters, and setting scenes—to deliver the news in the form of an unfolding drama. Enthusiasts and skeptics debate the merits of this approach in *Nieman Reports* (Fall 2000), published by the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University.

The "voice" that the reader "hears" in traditional news stories is bland and impersonal, but it can be made more engaging to readers "without threatening the crucial mission of newspapers," contends Mark Kramer, a professor of journalism at Boston University. Gripping, revealing, and accurate narratives can be crafted, he says, that appeal to readers' "civic" emotions.

In many narrative-minded newspapers these days, news stories often have an anecdotal "lede" (lead), with the point of the story buried in a "nut graf" below. Other, more ambitious narrative news stories, at the risk of seeming pointless, have no explicit point at all. A 15-part series about racial relations in the United States that appeared in the *New York Times* last June and July concentrated on the stories of many individuals and deliberately avoided drawing any broad conclusions.

Some narrative journalism has proven compelling. Sales of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* jumped by 20,000 in 1997 when a month-long series by reporter Mark Bowden appeared, reconstructing in dramatic detail the battle four years earlier in which 18 U.S. soldiers died in Mogadishu, Somalia. Enhanced with audio and video clips on the *Inquirer*'s Web site, the series drew increasing "hits" each day—until the daily number reached 40,000, causing a server to crash.

Successful narrative journalism has even been done on tight daily deadlines. At Florida's *St. Petersburg Times*, after months of background research, Thomas French and two other reporters covered a murder trial by turning out narrative "chapters" in the continuing saga each day—chapters in which the day's "news" was disclosed not right away, as it would be in a traditional news account, but only gradually, as it would be in a novel. "The verdict itself," French notes, "was revealed on the third jump page, in the 112th paragraph." Two readers complained, but hundreds of others lauded the unusual coverage.

The news does not always lend itself to narrative journalism, however, and adding a dollop of narrative to news stories does not necessarily make them more engaging. Indeed, it can make them less useful, former *Washington Post* columnist Nicholas von Hoffman points out in the *New York Observer* (Oct. 16, 2000). The *New York Times*, he complains, "is now larded with meandering, verbose stories" with "long-way-around-the-barn" human-interest leads.

Busy readers are forced to "skim through paragraphs of secondary fluff to get to the point of the thing. For the crisp and reliable imparting of important and necessary information, the style leaves everything to be desired because it invites muzziness, confusion, and imprecision."

"Obviously," says Kramer, narrative journalism should be done only by reporters and editors who have "the knack" for it. But even some talented writers can't resist the temptation to turn messy realities into compelling stories by reordering events or inventing details, observes Anthony DeCurtis, a contributing editor at *Rolling Stone*. "The industry's nasty little secret, unfortunately, is that editors often look the other way, or even encourage such embellishment. . . . Those same editors are, of course, shocked—shocked!—when scandal breaks out."

Fearful Confusion

"Risky Business: Vividness, Availability, and the Media Paradox" by John Ruscio, in *Skeptical Inquirer* (Mar.–Apr. 2000), 944 Deer Dr., N.E., Albuquerque, N.M. 87122.

Do more Americans die each year from (a) shark attacks or (b) falling airplane parts? Remembering the movie *Jaws* (1975) and news accounts of various incidents involving homicidal sharks, most people would probably answer (a). The correct answer, however, is (b). Falling airplane parts get nowhere near the publicity but kill 30 times as many people in an average year. Ruscio, a social psychologist at Elizabethtown College, Pennsylvania, says this illustrates a larger truth: The mass media give us a warped sense of life's hazards.

In part, this is because of the nature of "news": Man bites dog, not dog bites man. (Shark bites man is another story.) Seeking out the unusual to captivate readers or viewers, the news media then do their best to make their accounts vivid, emphasizing concrete details and the personal and emotional aspects of the story. Precisely because the accounts are vivid, Ruscio points out, they tend to stick in readers' and viewers' minds, available for ready recall later. "A news report will leave a more lasting impression by documenting one individual's personal suffering than by providing a scientific argument based on 'mere statistics.'"

The calm pair in Robert LaDuke's* Smoke *(1998) seem to have correctly gauged their risk of being hit by the airplane.

The likely cumulative result, he says, is a distorted picture in our minds of the risks we face. In a widely cited 1979 study, college students were asked to rank 30 technologies and activities according to their danger. The students deemed nuclear power most dangerous, even though specialists in risk assessment put it 20th on the list, less hazardous than riding a bicycle. That same year, a much publicized (albeit nonfatal) accident occurred at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in

Pennsylvania. Twenty years later, with people's memories refreshed by media "anniversary" stories, observes Ruscio, a professor declined a job offer from his own Elizabethtown College because the professor's spouse feared living so close to Three Mile Island.

With effort, Ruscio notes, individuals can develop critical habits of mind that protect against media fearmongering. Unfortunately, he adds, that offers scant protection against "ill-advised *policy* decisions" by government in response to popular, media-generated misconceptions.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Why Study Religious History?

"The Failure of American Religious History" by D. G. Hart, in *The Journal of the Historical Society* (Spring 2000), 656 Beacon St., Mezzanine, Boston, Mass. 02215–2010.

Trying in recent decades to make their discipline more relevant and academically respectable, religious historians have ended up trivializing it, argues Hart, a professor of church history at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

"The past three decades have witnessed a great expansion of non-Protestant academic studies of religion," he says, "but no serious engagement of the fundamental intellectual question of what religion is doing in the academy."

EXCERPT

The Enlightenment 'Project'

In recent decades it has become fashionable to condescend to the Enlightenment as the world of unworldly pamphleteers foolishly wedded to the theory of progress, unhistorical in its contempt for the past and committed to a cold, prosaic rationalism. . . . Nowadays, when someone speaks of the "Enlightenment project," a term that instantly reveals its user's partisanship—we know that this is a way of pronouncing the whole enterprise a failure.

Counter-arguments, no matter how soundly grounded, have not helped much. Anyone who cares to read the major texts of the Enlightenment, whether British or American or Continental, can recognize the injustice of these charges: The theory of progress [for example] was a 19th-century speciality, whereas Voltaire wrote his poem on the Lisbon earthquake and Candide *to ridicule the theory of perfectibility....*

Still, the question remains: was all the philosophes' *expenditure of energy worth it? Their attack on unreason was principally directed against the ravages that religious beliefs and religious practices had wrought through the centuries. Once the truth about the fallibility of the Bible and the absurdity of accepting childish fairy tales as revelations had been established, they hoped, the way to a more reasonable, less heartless, life would be open. No doubt, the* philosophes' *confidence in the healing powers of reason was excessive. We have learned that secular tyrannies can be as murderous as religious ones, and that philistinism can flourish amid universal literacy. . . . And yet reason is always better than irrationality, moderation always better than fanaticism, liberalism always better than authoritarianism. If the three are bound to fail, or at least to be compromised in the clash of opinion and self-interest, these enlightened principles remain the only acceptable prescriptions for human, and humane, survival.*

—Peter Gay, the noted historian whose works include *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (1966–69), in the *Times Literary Supplement* (Oct. 6, 2000)

It was only during the 1950s that religion, which previously had been confined largely to seminaries and university divinity schools, emerged as a separate academic field, when private colleges and universities began to establish religion departments. Many state universities followed suit during the next decade. But "clerical motives dominated the field. Not only did religion faculty still harbor older notions of caring for the souls of students, but the courses they offered were virtually identical to the curriculum at Protestant seminaries and divinity schools, minus the practical work in pastoral ministry," Hart says. Reflecting "a mainstream Protestant hegemony" and narrowly focused on church history, religious historians at the time gave short shrift to Mormons, Christian Scientists, African Americans, and others outside that mainstream.

To rectify this and to integrate their subject into the respectable ranks of professional history, religious historians began in the 1970s to turn away from the Protestant mainstream. They took their lead from social historians, and set out to demonstrate the relevance of religion to "the victims of American hegemony." Leaving "the straight and narrow path" of church history, they took "the long and winding road of diversity," through the study of minorities: Jews, ethnic Catholics, evangelicals, African Americans, women, Hispanics, Native Americans, and gays and lesbians.

This academic strategy, Hart writes, "inevitably identifies religion with the latest census statistics rather than with the practices and beliefs of religious traditions and communions." It also fails to add much to what other academic historians have been doing in their studies of cultural diversity. Those historians "largely remained indifferent to American religious history."

But "pure church history," even if carried out with more intellectual integrity than in the past, "would not have succeeded any better," Hart says. Accounts of "the religious life of individuals and communions" are of little interest to those outside the particular fold.

What historians of religion in America should be addressing, in Hart's view, are the ways in which religion has influenced "the policies, institutions, and culture that have shaped the United States." The failure of religious history, and the reason the field remains marginal, he says, is precisely that "it has focused for most of the past three decades on marginal topics."

Science, Technology & Environment

Searching for Web Equality

"Shaping the Web: Why the Politics of Search Engines Matters" by Lucas D. Introna and Helen Nissenbaum, in *The Information Society* (July–Sept. 2000), Taylor & Francis, 325 Chestnut St., Ste. 800, Philadelphia, Pa. 19106.

Commercialization has already dampened hopes that the World Wide Web will serve as an egalitarian force. Now, Introna, a lecturer in information systems at the London School of Economics, and Nissenbaum, a lecturer at Princeton University's Center for Human Values, worry that "biased" search engines are making some Web sites more "equal" than others.

The World Wide Web contains, by one estimate, some 800 million "pages." Search engines steer users to particular Web pages. A 1999 study of leading search engines found that none indexed more than 16 percent of the total, and that all combined covered only 42 percent. An unindexed Web page is almost impossible for users to find if they do not know its Uniform Resource Locator (URL), or "address."

Who decides whether to index a particular Web page? At "directory-based" search engines such as Yahoo!, editors do most of the work. The criteria for inclusion are vague, and apparently not applied with any consistency, Introna and Nissenbaum assert. At Yahoo!, by one estimate, a submitted Web page has roughly a 25 percent chance of being accepted. Inclusion becomes more likely, the

authors say, as the number of links a page has to and from other sites increases. Also, "when editors feel they need more references within a category, they lower the entry barriers."

Other search engines, such as Alta Vista, Lycos, and Hotbot, dispense with the human editors and use software "spiders" to identify candidates. Precise details about how the spiders operate are closely guarded trade secrets, which stirs the suspicion of Introna and Nissenbaum. Pages with many links from other valued sites, especially sites that themselves have many "backlinks," are likely candidates.

Getting noticed by a search engine is only the first hurdle for creators of Web pages, the authors note. "Because most search engines display the 10 most relevant hits on the first page of the search results, Web designers jealously covet those . . . top slots." Search engine owners are reluctant to detail their ranking rules, but a site's chances of doing well apparently improve if it has many keywords and they are high up in the document, and if many other sites are linked to it.

In the end, Introna and Nissenbaum argue, "popular, wealthy, and powerful sites" threaten to overwhelm the Web's other voices. They urge full disclosure of search engines' underlying rules, and the development of "more egalitarian and inclusive search mechanisms."

What Caused the Ice Ages?

"Ice, Mud Point to CO_2 Role in Glacial Cycle" by Richard A. Kerr, in *Science* (Sept. 15, 2000), 1200 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Every 100,000 years or so for the last million years, vast, miles-high glaciers have moved southward from the Arctic, relentlessly driving all life before them. The last ice age ended only about 10,000 years ago, when the ice retreated to its present polar extent. What caused these monstrous ice ages? In recent decades, notes Kerr, a *Science* staff writer, scientists have come to think that the glacial cycles were somehow linked to slight variations in the shape (or eccentricity) of the Earth's orbit that occur at about the same 100,000-year intervals. John Imbrie, a paleoceanographer at Brown University, has also proposed that the ice sheets themselves amplified the orbital variations' weak effects.

Kerr reports that Nicholas Shackleton, a paleoceanographer at the University of Cambridge (whose original research also appears in this issue of *Science*), has found a new actor in the drama: carbon dioxide. Shackleton "finds that orbital variations may muster carbon dioxide into and out of the atmosphere, and the resulting waxing and waning of greenhouse warming may drive the glacial cycle."

The mixture of heavy and light oxygen isotopes preserved in skeletons in deep-sea mud and in ancient air bubbles in Antarctic ice provided Shackleton with windows on conditions millennia ago.

The isotope mixture in the fossils of microscopic, bottom-dwelling marine animals depended partly on the mixture of oxygen isotopes in the seawater in which they lived—and that, in turn, depended on the amount of ice trapped on land. But the isotope mixture in the skeletons also partly depended—though to a lesser extent, it was long thought—on the temperature of the seawater. This unknown influence made the isotope mixture in the skeletons an imprecise gauge of the ice volume as it varied over time. Using that gauge, Shackleton saw an apparent correlation between the ice-volume changes and the 100,000-year orbital variations, although the link "was not impressive," Kerr says.

Shackleton then looked at air bubbles in a 400,000-year-long ice core from Antarctica. The oxygen-isotope composition of that air was not affected by ocean temperatures, but was affected by the volume of ice that existed. By comparing this geologic record with the other one, writes Kerr, Shackleton was able "to tease out [the] intimately entangled climatic influences with unprecedented accuracy."

To Shackleton's surprise, "deep-sea temperature accounted for more variation of

oxygen isotopes than ice volume did." Indeed, deep-sea temperature, atmospheric carbon dioxide as recorded in the gas bubbles, and orbital eccentricity "all varied in step, on the same 100,000-year cycle," Kerr reports, while ice volume "lagged behind," apparently ruling out ice as a prime mover.

Shackleton sees the lockstep of the three factors "as a sign of cause and effect," says Kerr. When an ice age began, in his view, "changes in eccentricity—presumably by shifting the distribution of sunlight across the globe—could have decreased atmospheric carbon dioxide, weakening the greenhouse and cooling the ocean and atmosphere." The opposite changes would have occurred at the ice age's end.

Imbrie and others agree that Shackleton has made "a major step forward." But many questions remain, geochemist Daniel Schrag of Harvard University told Kerr. How, for example, do orbital variations "muster" carbon dioxide into and out of the atmosphere?

Animal (Research) Rights

"Science and Self-Doubt" by Frederick K. Goodwin and Adrian R. Morrison, in *Reason* (Oct. 2000), 3415 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Ste. 400, Los Angeles, Calif. 90034–6064.

The animal rights movement has been condemning scientists' use of animals in biomedical research for two decades now, with some extremists even resorting to terrorism. In April 1999, for instance, the Animal Liberation Front caused more than $1.5 million in dam-

EXCERPT

Mission Impossible

The nature-nurture dichotomy, which has dominated discussions of behavior for decades, is largely a false one—all characteristics of all organisms are truly a result of the simultaneous influences of both. Genes do not dictate destiny in most cases (exceptions include those serious genetic defects that at present cannot be remedied), but they often define a range of possibilities in a given environment. The genetic endowment of a chimpanzee, even if raised as the child of a Harvard professor, would prevent it from learning to discuss philosophy or solve differential equations. Similarly, environments define a range of developmental possibilities for a given set of genes. There is no genetic endowment that a child could get from Mom and Pop that would permit the youngster to grow into an Einstein (or a Mozart or a García Marquez—or even a Hitler) as a member of an isolated rain-forest tribe without a written language.

Attempts to dichotomize nature and nurture almost always end in failure. Although I've written about how the expression of genes depends on the environment in which the genes are expressed, another way of looking at the development of a person's nature would have been to examine the contributions of three factors: genes, environment, and *gene-environment interactions. It is very difficult to tease out these contributions, however. Even under experimental conditions, where it is possible to say something mathematically about the comparative contributions of heredity and environment, it can't be done completely because there is an "interaction term." That term cannot be decomposed into nature or nurture because the effect of each depends on the contribution of the other.*

—Paul R. Ehrlich, a professor of population studies and of biological sciences at Stanford University, in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Sept. 22, 2000)

age to a University of Minnesota laboratory. The animal rights campaign has had powerful effects, write Goodwin, a former director of the National Institute of Mental Health, and Morrison, a professor of veterinary medicine at the University of Pennsylvania: "Nothing impairs creativity like fear."

The animal rights movement considers animals "moral agents on a par with people," Goodwin and Morrison note. Peter Singer, author of *Animal Liberation* (1975) and now a professor of bioethics at Princeton University, maintains that all creatures able to feel pain are morally equal to human beings. Ingrid Newkirk, national director of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, once infamously declared that "six million Jews died in concentration camps, but six billion broiler chickens will die this year in slaughterhouses."

An activist pretends to suffer imprisonment at Harvard Square last April to dramatize scientists' alleged mistreatment of animals.

The animal rights philosophy is "profoundly confused," contend Goodwin and Morrison. "Rights stem from the uniquely human capacity to choose values and principles, then act on choices and judgment." Extending the concept of rights to animals "dangerously subverts" the concept itself.

The activists also are guilty of opportunism in their choice of targets, the authors contend. More than 99 percent of the animals used by people are used for food, clothing, sport, and other everyday purposes, yet the activists aim their protests chiefly at scientific research. Why? Scientists have less political clout than farmers and hunters.

"Less than a quarter of the studies in biomedicine involve animals (and more than 90 percent of those are rats and mice), but . . . such animal studies are indispensable," the authors assert. Dr. Thomas E. Starzl, a pioneer in kidney transplants, once noted that most of the subjects died in his first series of experimental transplants, but by the fourth series, all survived. Fortunately, the earlier subjects were dogs; only in the fourth series did he use human babies.

Even deliberately inflicting pain on animals is sometimes justified, the authors believe. This is done in an estimated seven percent of research, and it "has enabled us to develop effective painkillers."

Attempting to meet animal rights activists halfway, Goodwin and Morrison say, is "a losing game." Now a push is on to require justification of animal research by specifying the particular outcomes sought. But many scientific and medical discoveries—such as the value of lithium in treating bipolar disorder—came about by accident rather than design.

Scientists, they conclude, should recognize that they are in "a struggle for minds" and be clear about what justifies animal research: "Human beings are special."

Lost in the Wilderness

"Five Paths of Environmental Scholarship" by Eric T. Freyfogle, in *University of Illinois Law Review* (Spring 2000), 504 E. Pennsylvania Ave., 244 Law Building, Champagne, Ill. 61820.

A quarter-century ago, "environmental law scholarship was a value-driven enterprise" and its goals were clear: "to safeguard human health and to save key wilderness areas, exotic species, and other natural gems." The culprits—"selfish businesses and misguided governments"—were evident to everyone, writes Freyfogle, a professor at the University of Illinois College of Law.

Today, the field is a muddle. An increasing number of scholars display "little passion about environmental ills." An "environmental lawyer" is as likely to defend polluters as sue them. Worse, the academic discipline of environmental law is deeply divided. Freyfogle identifies five distinct intellectual groupings: Libertarians, Simple Fixers, Dispute Resolvers, Progressive Reformers, and Advocates for the Land Community.

Ranging from those who value individual rights above environmental protection (Libertarians), and those who believe that the market and technology are the keys to a greener world (Simple Fixers), to Progressive Reformers, who see law as the best solution, and the Advocates, who are "the most ecologically oriented," these groups follow very different "moral and intellectual paths."

The division has derailed environmental law. "Scholarly debates," Freyfogle says, "are often poorly joined, if joined at all, because the true disagreements are deeper and on points not overtly raised." Scholars are unaware of—or unwilling to admit—the role their "assumptions about values, human nature, history, epistemology, [and] a dozen equally important matters" have in shaping their conclusions.

The structure of the academic world also tends to stifle debate, Freyfogle points out. Student editors of law reviews prefer articles that present provocative, readily grasped issues and neat solutions. Law school professors who want to get published—and thus win tenure—"are best advised to stay within or close to . . . the [moderate theories of the] Simple Fixers and Progressive Reformers."

Confessing his sympathy with the Advocates of the Land Community, Freyfogle argues that environmental degradation has stemmed from "human behavior and values"—specifically, "an arrogant, domineering attitude toward nature." If legal scholarship is going to help at all, he concludes, scholars must first acknowledge the root of the problem: man.

Arts & Letters

The Thinking Man's Pianist

"Glenn Gould, the Virtuoso as Intellectual" by Edward W. Said, in *Raritan* (Summer 2000), Rutgers Univ., 31 Mine St., New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

Few classical music performers have excited the public's imagination like Glenn Gould, the eccentric, Canadian-born pianist who died in 1982 at the age of 50. His performances displayed both remarkable virtuosity and peculiar adornment—"humming, gesticulating, untoward grimacing and conducting as he played," writes Said, a Columbia University professor and author of the forthcoming *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Gould eschewed the romantic repertory of Chopin, Liszt, and Rachmaninoff that propelled contemporaries such as Van Cliburn and Vladimir Ashkenazy to superstardom, and then famously deserted the public stage in 1964 to devote himself to a cloistered recording career restricted almost entirely to the works of Johann Sebastian Bach. Since his death (from a stroke), Gould has been the subject of a host of articles and books, as well as a 1993 documentary, *Thirty-two Short Films about Glenn Gould*. In Said's view, this enduring fascination with Gould, the pianist's steadfast devotion to Bach, and his unconventional career are all linked by the unwavering intellectualism that forms the basis of Gould's art.

Glenn Gould: "I hope people won't be blinded to my playing by . . . my personal eccentricities."

According to Said, Gould's career "places him in a particular intellectual critical tradition, in which his quite conscious reformulations . . . reach toward conclusions that are not normally sought out by performers but rather by intellectuals using language only." He did not play to placid audiences; he challenged his listeners. Said bases this interpretation on Gould's prolific writings and lectures about his life as a performing musician. In these, the pianist evinced his belief that music—though imperfect and artificial because of its human construction—represented a means of escape from what he called the "'negation' or senselessness of what everywhere surrounds us." Yet, asserts Said, only by relying on constant invention and expression could Gould produce this "state of ecstatic freedom by and in his performance."

This thirst for interpretive experimentation helps explain Gould's "complete retirement from the ordinary routine of concertizing" and also his gravitation toward Bach. Said believes that Bach's own penchant for endless experimentation, most evident in the *Goldberg Variations* of the 1740s (Gould's signature performance piece) as well as in numerous fugues and inventions, proved irresistible to a performer of Gould's temperament. Bach's compositions provide "an opportunity for the thinking intellectual virtuoso to try to interpret and invent . . . each performance becoming an occasion for decisions in terms of tempo, timbre, rhythm, color, tone, phrasing, voice leading and inflection." Far from being confined to a strict reading of the musical manuscript, Gould could "communicate a sense of reinvention, of reworking Bach's own contrapuntal works," yet increasingly the virtuoso turned away from the performance hall's "implacable chronological sequence" in favor of what he liked to call the "'take-twoness' of recording technique . . . repeated invention, repeated takes."

What Gould attempted, Said asserts, was an "ambitious task of stating a credo about striving for coherence, system, and invention in thinking about music as an art of expression and interpretation." By rejecting the stage and its attendant hero worship, Gould tried to present, says Said, "a critical model for a type of art that is rational and pleasurable at the same time, an art that tries to show us its composition as an activity still being undertaken in its performance." This is "not only an intellectual achievement, but also a humanistic one," Said argues, and perhaps explains "why Gould continues to grip and activate his audience."

The Good Biographer

"Waking the Dead: The Biography Boom in America" by Ron Chernow, in *culturefront* (Summer 2000), New York Council for the Humanities, 150 Broadway, Ste. 1700, New York, N.Y. 10038.

Biographies tumble off the presses in profusion these days, a boom linked, for better or worse, to "the current obsession with celebrity," observes Chernow, the author of *Titan* (1998), an acclaimed biography of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. Critics such as Janet Malcolm and Stanley Fish complain that biographers often impose a specious meaning on the messy reality of a life. But Chernow contends that while lesser authors simply glorify or, more often, vilify their subjects, good biographers are far more respectful of complexity.

"The best biographers don't see one monolithic truth about a person, but many overlapping truths," he writes. "Psychologists and novelists . . . have given us a protean sense of the human personality as a collection of personas, implausibly mixed together." Often, as authors find out more during their research, their attitude toward their subject radically changes—which wouldn't happen, Chernow points out, "if biographers were all prisoners of personal or political agendas." Aware of "the subjective nature of their work," many biographers, says Chernow, aim not for "some impossibly 'definitive' portrait, but simply [for] honest approximations of the truth. They don't necessarily squeeze, bend, hack, and torture their subjects' lives to fit the Procrustean bed of their preconceived theories."

But how does the good biographer convey the subject's life in all its "roundedness"? "Frequently, the most effective means . . . is to offer multiple perspectives and ample detail," Chernow says. By capturing the subject in various settings and "drawing on numerous anecdotes and vignettes," the biographer can "conjure up the person without resorting to heavy-handed authorial intervention."

"One of the wonders of the craft," Chernow reflects, "is that a wealth of testimony from diverse and seemingly contradictory sources can sometimes cohere into a sharp, realistic portrait. All the little dots of color suddenly resolve themselves into a brilliant likeness."

EXCERPT

Against the E-book

When that day [of the electronic book] comes, what will we mean by knowledge? What is a culture if the information that forms it never stands still? Since the development of the codex in roughly 400 A.D., *we have come to live with an implicit hierarchy of information, with books at the top. They are our final record. First we talk about an idea, then we assay it in newspapers, magazines, television, and radio, and finally we decide whether it merits permanent remembrance. If so, it finds its way into a book.*

The primacy of the book follows naturally from its form. It has a protective shell that keeps dust and sunlight off the fragile printed pages, allowing the words within to be legible for centuries. This primacy will disappear when the book becomes as evanescent as an image on a TV screen. Without its physical advantages, how long will the book's authority persist, and what, in turn—if anything—will take its place? Probably nothing, because nothing will ever again have the physical properties to do so. This absence will in turn change our mental lives. The codex was proof (some would say misleading evidence) that there were ideas that lasted, that deserved special respect. The invention of the e-book will push us to the reverse conclusion—that knowledge is in perpetual flux. It will make relativists of us all.

—D. T. Max, a contributing editor of *The Paris Review*, in *The American Scholar* (Summer 2000)

The Art of the Franchise

"The Artist and the Politician" by Jonathan Weinberg, in *Art in America* (Oct. 2000), 575 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.

Editors in search of American art that depicts voting or political campaigning almost invariably turn to George Caleb Bingham's *The County Election* (1851–52) or one of his other "election" paintings. While some critics have regarded these works as celebrations of democracy, others have viewed them as attacks. That the paintings lend themselves to *both* interpretations is an indication of the artist's complex achievement, argues Weinberg, a painter and art historian.

Bingham (1811–79) had firsthand experience with the electoral process as a member of the Whig party who held various government positions in Missouri. Largely self-taught as a painter, he had established himself by 1835 as a portrait painter in that state before he was drawn into politics. He lived in Washington, D.C., from 1840 to 1844, where he painted portraits of several prominent politicians but "failed to get the major public commissions he longed for," Weinberg says. Fame came with his western genre scenes, beginning with *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* (1845). He also began running for state office. Though he narrowly won a seat in the Missouri House of Representatives in 1846, the outcome was contested, and the Democratic-controlled legislature decided in favor of his opponent. In a letter to a close friend, Bingham vowed thenceforth to "keep out of the mire of politics *forever*." But he ran again in 1848 and won, then lost two years later.

Each of the six "election" paintings that Bingham executed between 1847 and 1854 was meant to stand on its own, Weinberg says. *Country Politician* (1849) and *Canvassing for a Vote* (1851–52) show a candidate in intimate conversation with a few voters; *Stump Orator* (1847), "now lost and known only through a daguerreotype," and *Stump Speaking* (1853–54) portray another aspect of electioneering; and *The County Election* and *The Verdict of the People* (1854–55) "shift attention from the politician to the process of voting." Art historians see signs of Bingham's disillusion in the latter three paintings.

In *The County Election*, a man in red stands

From the Art Collection of Bank of America

The County Election*: The process, Bingham knew, involves more than solemn oaths on the Bible.*

with his back to a raucous crowd and solemnly swears on the Bible that he has not previously voted in the election. In the foreground, a broadly smiling man "holds his glass up to be filled with hard cider—a favorite tool for attracting voters to a candidate's side. Liquor seems to have completely overwhelmed another man, who is literally dragged to the polls to cast a ballot." Another, seemingly battered man sits on a bench, his condition perhaps indicating "physical coercion or a political argument that has taken a violent turn. The power of both money and chance is symbolized by the toss of a coin directly below the swearing-in [of the voter]." Front and center, two small boys play mumblety-peg—symbolizing, for one critic, the "trivial but rough game" of politics.

Yet *The County Election*'s "comic elements" do not undermine its "coherence and sense of calm," Weinberg maintains. The painting "incorporates the signs of corruption without allowing the voting, or the composition, to spin into disorder. [Bingham] seems to regard cheating as inherent to the process, no less than is the oath on the Bible. Yet these two contradictory aspects of the voting . . . do not undermine the validity of the process." For Bingham, Weinberg says, politics *is* a game—but "a game worth playing."

Other Nations

Why the Troubles Came

"Are the Troubles Over?" by Fintan O'Toole, in *The New York Review of Books* (Oct. 5, 2000), 1755 Broadway, 5th floor, New York, N.Y. 10019–3780.

In the eyes of many pessimistic observers, Northern Ireland's "Troubles," which have claimed more than 3,600 lives, were a product of atavistic Catholic-Protestant antagonism. But "sectarian prejudice did not cause the violence," argues O'Toole, a columnist for the *Irish Times*. "It was, to a great extent, the violence that caused the prejudice."

Who is being threatened? An IRA sign in the Catholic area of Crossmaglen last February did not identify its target.

When the Troubles began in 1968, he says, prejudice generally "was neither very strong nor very active" in the minds of most. Mixed marriages and neighborhoods were becoming common, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was dying, and Loyalist paramilitarism was found only among "a lunatic fringe." Decades later, surveys showed that prejudice was far less evident in people who grew up before the Troubles began than among younger folk.

What changed the situation, O'Toole says, was "organized violence"—of the IRA, Loyalist paramilitaries, and the state. Protesting Catholics initially demanded merely "that the emerging social realities be recognized" and Catholics be given equal civil rights. Many Catholics welcomed the British army's arrival in 1969 to keep the peace, but the army's "crude and arrogant behavior" destroyed that support. Catholic alienation became complete in 1972 when British paratroopers massacred 14 unarmed civil rights demon-

strators in Derry. The IRA then launched an armed campaign. Yet, O'Toole points out, *mass* violence between Protestants and Catholics "did not take hold."

Statistics on the killings from the recent *Lost Lives* by three journalists and an academic, as well as another independent study, belie claims that the paramilitary groups were acting defensively. Of the 1,771 people slain by the IRA, little more than half belonged to the British armed forces, the local police, or military auxiliaries. And of the more than 1,000 killed by Loyalist paramilitaries, only 29 had IRA ties. "The overwhelming majority of their victims were innocent Catholics chosen purely on the basis of their religion," O'Toole says.

The paramilitaries on both sides had to use brutality to enforce their authority. The IRA killed 198 members of the broader Catholic community—compared with 138 killed by the British army. The IRA also was responsible for the deaths, accidental or deliberate, of 149 of its own members—34 more than the British army and police killed. The Loyalist paramilitaries similarly killed twice as many of their own as the IRA managed to slay.

Surveys conducted in Northern Ireland between 1989 and 1995 showed that almost 40 percent of the population—half Catholics, half Protestants—refused to identify themselves as either unionist or nationalist. "Their quiet, even silent, refusal to get involved," O'Toole says, "thwarted the aims of the paramilitaries. The IRA could never win enough active support, particularly in the Republic of Ireland, where most Irish Catholic nationalists live, to have a realistic prospect of forcing the British to withdraw." This reality finally sank in.

With the 1998 Belfast Agreement being implemented and all the main sources of violence "now decisively committed to the peace process," O'Toole says, the Troubles seem over. "Ordinary people . . . finally defeated all attempts to reduce them to unflinching bigots."

Will Russians Sober Up?

"First Steps: AA and Alcoholism in Russia" by Patricia Critchlow, in *Current History* (Oct. 2000), 4225 Main St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19127.

Some 20 million Russians are much too fond of their vodka. That's the estimated number of alcoholics in Russia, a nation of only 145 million. Russians consume, on average, a staggering 3.5 to four gallons of pure alcohol a year—well above the World Health Organization's "safe level" of two gallons per year. Among the adverse consequences: between 25,000 and 40,000 deaths annually from alcohol poisoning, and shortened life expectancy. For various reasons, Russian males born in 1999 have a life expectancy of only 59.8 years, four years less than for those born in 1990.

Excessive drinking has long been "a scourge of Russian society," notes Critchlow, who did fieldwork on the subject for a master's degree from Harvard University. But, she reports, a ray of hope has appeared, in the form of *Anonimnye Alkogoliki* (Alcoholics Anonymous, or AA) self-help groups.

Such organizations were not allowed during most of the Soviet era. Before Mikhail Gorbachev rose to power in the 1980s, Soviet leaders welcomed alcohol sales as a source of state revenue and did not view heavy drinking as a significant social problem. Gorbachev, however, launched an "anti-alcohol campaign," which proved ineffective. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Critchlow says, "economic insecurity, low morale, and a sense of disillusionment have contributed to an increase in excessive drinking." President Boris Yeltsin was "a poor role model." His successor, Vladimir Putin, has criticized excessive drinking by officials. He also has hiked taxes on retail sales of alcohol, but this apparently prompted a turn to bootleg liquor, some of it deadly. In the first five months of 2000, a total of 15,823 Russians died of alcohol poisoning—a 45 percent increase over the toll during the same period in 1999.

Under Gorbachev, restrictions on AA groups were eased, and by the end of his regime, the self-help organizations could be found in 12 cities. By late 1999, there were 180 AA groups in 90 cities and towns. Physicians (whose income is threatened) and Russian Orthodox clergymen (who see

AA as a foreign religious cult) have resisted. A St. Petersburg program claims that 45 percent of its more than 500 patients have stayed sober for at least a year—a very impressive figure, Critchlow says, but the mathematics of alcoholism is daunting.

As the AA movement spreads in the next 10 years, she calculates, it may be able to help perhaps 35,000 alcoholics at most. "Ultimately," Critchlow concludes, "any broad-scale solution . . . must come from within Russian society."

The Country of Laughter and Forgetting

"Czech Malaise and Europe" by Matthew Rhodes, in *Problems of Post-Communism* (Mar.–Apr. 2000), George Washington Univ., Inst. for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies, 2013 G St., N.W., Ste. 401, Washington, D.C. 20052.

After the Velvet Revolution toppled Czechoslovakia's communist government in 1989, and an amicable agreement four years later to split the country in two, the Czech Republic appeared to be on a bright track. Faced with the daunting task of recovering from 40 years of oppression and economic stagnation, the country's leaders, notably Prime Minister Václav Klaus, seemed to be creating a model of postcommunist reform. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) invited the Czech Republic to join, and European Union (EU) membership seemed a foregone conclusion. But then, in 1997, says Rhodes, professor of international security studies at the United States Air War College, "the 'Czech miracle' collapsed." Klaus's Civic Democratic Party lost its majority following a series of bank failures and financial scandals. Foreign investment dwindled, a minority government took over, and EU membership became a distant prospect. What went wrong?

Though the economic downturn began before the minority government headed by Milos Zeman, of the Czech Social Democratic Party, took office, government austerity measures have pushed the Social Democrats' public approval ratings below 20 percent. This has made it harder to advance the party's expressly "pro-Europe" goals, says Rhodes.

Zeman campaigned in 1998 by "combining support for NATO membership with a call for a national referendum on the issue," Rhodes notes. But the referendum idea was abandoned in the face of "intense opposition . . . from the other mainstream parties, as well as the quiet disapproval of NATO officials," and NATO membership became a reality in March 1999. Less than a fortnight later, however, popular Czech support for joining the alliance, never strong, evaporated when air strikes against Yugoslavia in support of the Kosovar Albanians commenced. The Czech government gave NATO forces access to Czech territory and airbases, but Zeman denounced the supporters of the bombing as "primitive troglodytes," and claimed the attack had been planned before Czech admission to the alliance.

Meanwhile, popular support for membership in the EU has dropped from 80 percent in the early 1990s to around 40 percent, despite predictions that isolation could cost the country $6 billion in EU aid over six years. Many Czechs have been put off by the EU's corruption, its trade policies, and its criticisms of their government's efforts to alter Czech laws and institutions to fit EU requirements.

"Many disillusioned Czechs have come to view their country's political machinations with indifference," notes Rhodes. As some see it, the recent complications in ties with the West are "just the latest manifestation of the Czech national tradition of giving perfunctory external obeisance to dominant great powers while inwardly seeking to preserve their own traditions and pursue quiet, provincial lives." It's an approach in keeping with the anarchistic spirit of the famous Czech novelist Jaroslav Hašek's *Good Soldier Schweik* (1920–23), and it may "have served Czechs well under the Hapsburgs, Nazis, and Soviets," Rhodes says. But he fears that without firm leadership by a strong national government committed to the European idea, the Czech Republic may be fated for "marginalization in 21st-century Europe."

Research Reports

Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions

"Sharing America's Neighborhoods: The Prospects for Stable Racial Integration."

Harvard Univ. Press, 79 Garden St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138–1499. 228 pp. $39.95

Author: *Ingrid Gould Ellen*

Many people believe that racially integrated neighborhoods in the United States are rare and likely to "tip," thanks to "white flight." Census data from recent decades contradict these stereotypes, reports Ellen, a professor of planning and public administration at New York University.

Nearly one-fifth of all U.S. census tracts (typically with 2,500 to 8,000 people) were between 10 percent and 50 percent black in 1990, Ellen says. About 15 percent of all non-Hispanic whites and 32 percent of all blacks lived in such communities. And the neighborhoods, by and large, did not appear to be on the way to becoming mostly black. Of 2,773 tracts that were integrated in 1980, more than three-fourths remained so a decade later.

Even so, the 2,773 integrated neighborhoods experienced a 46 percent loss of whites over the decade. The chief reason, Ellen says, was not "white flight"; it exists, but our highly mobile society generates much more natural turnover. Far more important is "white avoidance," that is, decisions by whites moving out of virtually all-white neighborhoods *not* to move into integrated ones. Racial preference surveys and other studies suggest that fears about the quality of largely black neighborhoods play a much bigger role than simple race prejudice. Indeed, black parents also worry about growing black populations.

Despite the negative stereotyping of largely black neighborhoods, concludes Ellen, both whites and blacks are now much less concerned about their neighborhood's racial mix than in the past. It's *changes* in that racial mix that they find worrisome. "Modest" government efforts to improve neighborhoods and to dispel negative stereotypes about them, she believes, could bring about more integration.

"The Crime Drop in America."

Cambridge Univ. Press, 40 W. 20th St., New York, N.Y. 10011–4211. 317 pp. $54.95; paper, $19.95

Editors: *Alfred Blumstein and Joel Wallman*

Between 1985 and 1991, the United States experienced a sharp rise in violent crimes by young men, especially young black men. Arrest rates for homicide doubled for males under 20. Then, starting in 1992, the violence steadily subsided. The homicide rate fell to a level not seen since the 1960s. Political leaders, police chiefs, and advocates of handgun control, incarceration, and "community policing" claimed credit. But the big falloff in violent crime has no one cause, say Blumstein, director of the National Consortium on Violence Research, and Wallman, a program officer at the Guggenheim Foundation.

The earlier rise in violence resulted from a "crack" cocaine epidemic, they note. As more and more older drug dealers were put behind bars, younger men, particularly inner-city African Americans, stepped in to meet the mounting demand, and handgun violence grew. Thanks to "some combination" of police tactics, growing fear of violence, and a new generation's rejection of crack (in favor of marijuana "blunts"), the crack markets decayed, while a booming economy offered legitimate alternative employment.

Homicides involving handguns, which surged 71 percent between 1985 and 1993, fell nearly 37 percent over the next five years. Garen Wintemute of the University of California, Davis, finds that the 1993 Brady law and other efforts to prohibit convicted felons from buying guns apparently helped. A recent California study compared felons facing such restrictions with a group that bought guns after being charged with a felony but not convicted. The latter were 21 percent more likely to be charged with a new gun offense.

The radical expansion of the prison population—to about 1.3 million, four times the total in 1980—also apparently helped. William Spelman of the University of Texas calculates that it resulted in perhaps a fourth of the overall drop in violent crime.

"The Case for Marriage: Why Married People Are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially."

Doubleday, 1540 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10036. 260 pp. $24.95
Authors: *Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher*

Once, just a few generations ago, the folk wisdom was that women "trapped" men into getting married. Today, the oft-expressed view in educated circles is that it's the females who get caught. While men gain the multiple services of a wife, a wedding ring supposedly brings women stress, discontent, and loss of a sense of self. Manifestly unfair! But also untrue, report Waite, a sociologist at the University of Chicago, and Gallagher, a syndicated columnist, in this synthesis of recent research findings. "Both men and women gain a great deal from marriage."

A longer life, for one thing. A study that began in 1968 with more than 6,000 families found that almost nine out of 10 married men alive at age 48 could expect to live to age 65—but that only six out of 10 never-married men could be. Married women have a similar but smaller advantage (nine out of 10, compared with eight out of 10). Why smaller? Mainly because single women typically do not engage in the risky behavior (e.g., drinking, speeding, and fighting) that single men often do.

Husbands, on average, earn at least 10 percent more—and perhaps up to 40 percent more—than single men, according to extensive studies by labor economists. Married men, who lead more settled lives, make better workers, and with their wives' support are able to concentrate on making money. Though wives "get only a small marriage [wage] premium at most," say Waite and Gallagher, overall they "gain even more financially from marriage than men do."

The increased burden of housework that marriage imposes on women is not as great as most people assume. It adds only about six and a half hours to the 25 hours a week of housework done by single women living independently (which is far more than bachelors bother to do). Motherhood, however, boosts the total to 37 hours a week. "When married women cut back on [outside] work to care for children," Waite and Gallagher note, "the family may benefit, but the women themselves are taking a risk—gambling that their marriage will last." Fifty-one percent of mothers worked full-time in 1997, but only 30 percent agreed that this was "ideal." Fear of being cast off without a full-fledged career, say the authors, keeps many women from spending more time with their kids.

Parental divorce has lasting adverse effects on the mental health of one out of five children, sociologist Andrew Cherlin of Johns Hopkins University and his colleagues have concluded. Moreover, a study by other researchers indicates that more than two-thirds of parental divorces do *not* involve "highly conflicted" marriages. Unhappy marriages of this kind often can be turned around, Waite concludes from national survey data. Of couples who said they were unhappily wed in the late 1980s, 86 percent of those who stuck it out for five more years reported being happier, and 60 percent said they were "very happy" or "quite happy."

The appeal of marriage remains strong. Husbands and wives in recent surveys seem about equally satisfied: Some 60 percent say their marriage is "very happy," and 36 percent "pretty happy." In a 1997 survey of college freshmen, 94 percent said they hoped to wed. But marriage, unlike cohabitation, is a social institution as well as a private relationship—and the "social prestige" of marriage has been declining, say the authors. "We [Americans] want marriage, but we are afraid to discourage divorce or unwed childbearing. The marriage vow thus receives less support from families, society, experts, government, and the law." They favor reforming no-fault divorce, particularly for couples with children, and oppose giving cohabiting couples the same legal and other benefits that married couples enjoy.

Wilson Center Digest

Summaries of recent papers, studies, and meetings at the Wilson Center

"NATO and Europe in the 21st Century: New Roles for a Changing Partnership."

A report on a conference, held Apr. 19, 2000, sponsored by the Wilson Center's East European Studies and West European Studies programs

Editor: *Sabina A.-M. Crisen*

When postcommunist Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic sought membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, they wanted the protection that NATO traditionally had afforded against attack by an outside power. When they became members in 1999, however, they found a changed NATO, with other purposes besides collective defense: crisis management and peacekeeping.

Twelve days after the three Central European countries entered NATO, the war in Kosovo commenced. It was "a rude shock" that "drove home the fact that membership entailed obligations as well as benefits," observed F. Stephen Larrabee, a senior analyst at the RAND Corporation and a speaker at this conference. While Poland gave full support to the NATO effort, "the Czech response was hesitant and ambivalent." Hungary was less ambivalent, allowing NATO to use its airspace and bases. It shares a border with Serbia.

The three new members now face the necessity of modernizing their "under funded and badly equipped" armed forces, so they can be fully integrated into the NATO force, noted Marybeth Peterson Ulrich, a political scientist at the U.S. Army War College who also spoke. This integration has been proving much harder than expected. A survey last February found that while most Poles and Hungarians still supported NATO membership, only 44 percent of Czechs did—and 40 percent said it "increases the danger of involvement in a conflict" (com-

EXCERPT

Farewell to the FCC?

Trying to maintain and even extend the [Federal Communications Commission]'s outmoded telecommunications regulatory regime in the face of torrential technological change is like trying to stop an earthquake by sitting on a fault line. As most governments around the world have moved away from monopoly and toward deregulation, the United States could seize the moment and leave the 19th-century regulatory paradigm completely behind by working toward elimination of the FCC and as many of its regulations as possible. The necessary remainder could be folded into . . . the Commerce Department, with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) overseeing consumer protection issues . . . and the Department of Justice overseeing issues of competition and monopoly.

The FCC itself recognizes how the digital age and the forces of technology, competition, and convergence are forcing it to change. In a five-year plan unveiled in May 2000 called "A New FCC for the 21st Century," the agency laid out four core functions: fostering competition, protecting consumers, managing the nation's airwaves, and promoting opportunities for everyone to benefit. The first two functions are clearly responsibilities of the Department of Justice and the FTC; the third can be handled by the Commerce Department, and the last one should be a shared responsibility of the Departments of Commerce, Education, and Labor.

—Leslie David Simon, a Senior Policy Scholar at the Wilson Center, in *NetPolicy.Com: Public Agenda for a Digital World* (Wilson Center Press, 2000)

pared with 29 percent of Hungarians and 25 percent of Poles).

Its new members "enable NATO to project stability eastward," and also provide "expertise and intelligence on political-military affairs in the East," Ulrich says. But some NATO officials "suspect the Czechs of passing on classified information to Russia or other friends in the East. For instance, there is some speculation that the Serbs may have been tipped off about various targets approved by 19 NATO ambassadors during the Kosovo air campaign."

Because of the widespread view that NATO's new members "are falling short of alliance standards, in both the military and political realms," Ulrich points out, plans for further eastward enlargement of NATO "have effectively been put on hold."

"Nuclear Energy Policy in Japan."

A report based on a Feb. 29, 2000, seminar sponsored by the Wilson Center's Asia Program.
Authors: *Michael W. Donnelly et al.*

The September 1999 nuclear accident in Tokaimura—the world's worst since the 1986 Chernobyl disaster—has made the Japanese public more fearful of the peacetime use of nuclear power and has increased skepticism that Toyko is doing enough to ensure safety.

In the accident, inexperienced workers mistakenly dumped six times too much enriched uranium into a tank, causing a runaway chain reaction. It was not brought under control for 20 hours. The three workers involved were exposed to lethal doses of radiation, and one subsequently died; others were exposed to lesser amounts, and nearby residents had to flee their homes. The accident occurred at the JCO Tokai Works uranium-processing plant in Tokaimura, 80 miles northeast of Tokyo.

Michael W. Donnelly, a political scientist at the University of Toronto, said official safety procedures were clearly violated. "Apparently the workers had no special training, no experience with highly enriched uranium, no protective gear, no automatic or remote control equipment." A government investigating committee also found "defects in crisis management procedures" at the facility.

Shigeo Okaya, first secretary in the Science Section of the Japanese Embassy in Washington, said at this seminar that the government "rapidly responded" to the accident, which he blamed on "human error and insufficient oversight." In response, he said, the Japanese Diet appropriated an additional $1.3 billion to deal with the problem, and tightened safety regulations. The Nuclear Safety Commission's staff also was to be increased.

"Japan's basic problem is the lack of an independent regulatory 'watchdog,'" said sociologist Jeffrey Broadbent of the University of Minnesota. The Nuclear Safety Commission is too small and has a strictly advisory role. Tokyo "needs to set up an independent nuclear power regulatory and enforcement agency, with its own adequate budget and staff."

Japan relies on imports for about 80 percent of its energy, and Tokyo views nuclear power as vital to its energy security. "Nuclear fuel recycling creates an indigenous energy supply," Okaya pointed out. Thirty percent of Japan's electricity comes from nuclear power, and the government wants 20 more nuclear plants by 2010.

The Japanese public's support for nuclear power, however, has decreased, Broadbent noted. A poll taken not long after the 1999 accident found only 14 percent in favor of the government's plan to rely more heavily on nuclear power, with 48 percent opting for the status quo and 36 percent favoring a cutback. That seems to mean a majority—62 percent—wanted to continue or increase the use of nuclear power. But when asked to choose among various energy sources, only 20 percent picked nuclear power, compared with 62 percent for solar and wind power, and 55 percent for conservation. Twenty-one percent were "very uneasy" about nuclear power before the accident; 51 percent were after it.

But Japan's safety record previously had been "quite good," observed Harold D. Bengelsdorf, a consultant and retired U.S. government nuclear specialist. Leaders of Japan's nuclear program were truly "shaken" by the Tokaimura accident, he said, and Japanese authorities have moved "to institute various necessary reforms on an urgent basis."

Current Books

Reviews of new and noteworthy nonfiction

Table Talk

FOOD:
A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present.
By Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari; transl. by Albert Sonnenfeld.
Penguin. 592 pp. $18

THE CAMBRIDGE WORLD HISTORY OF FOOD.
Edited by Kenneth F. Kiple and
Kriemhild Conée Ornelas. Cambridge Univ. Press.
2 vols. 1958 pp. $150

BEST FOOD WRITING 2000.
Edited by Holly Hughes. Marlow & Co. 348 pp. $14.95

THE TASTE OF AMERICA.
By John L. and Karen Hess.
Univ. of Illinois Press. 390 pp. $18.95

Reviewed by Lis Harris

Our schools may be crumbling, the audience for serious music, literature, and painting shrunken to pitiful proportions, but we have become ever more choosy about what we eat and where we eat it. Your local supermarket, once the provenance of only the meagerest array of humble vegetables alongside the Spaghetti-O's, has become a veritable souk. Faster ways of transporting goods, genetic engineering, and the general shrinking of the world have brought us terrifyingly unbruisable fresh fruit in all seasons, half a dozen varieties of edible fungi, sparkling sushi, cheeses from remote hamlets in faraway countries, two kinds of Thai curry paste, Italian radicchio, and hundreds of other erstwhile rarities, including five kinds of potatoes, one of which may well be purple.

Nationwide, the restaurant business is booming; in New York alone, 311 restaurants opened in 1999. Although Americans spent $15.75 billion on kitchen cookware that same year, they are working harder and eating out more frequently. To some extent, their food habits signal changes in their interests and values: The generation-to-generation, culturally bound passing-down of eating proclivities and ways of cooking, though still alive, has given way among the stressed and office-bound affluent to a preference for fancy takeout foods, and, further down the economic scale, to a reliance on frozen and fast foods.

One result of this trend has been the seemingly endless proliferation of cookbooks, essays, and treatises about food. As I paddled through a small tributary from this mighty torrent, a phrase I once encountered in a largely admiring biography of

D. H. Lawrence, suggesting that he gave the act of sex "a weight it will not bear," came not infrequently to mind.

Academic speculation about food has had something of the aura of a gold rush over the past decade. Three hundred U.S. anthropologists call themselves specialists in food studies; courses on food and culture are an accepted part of the curricula of the University of California, Berkeley, and Johns Hopkins, Cornell, and Emory Universities; and an annual scholarly meeting, the Oxford University Food Conference, and the American Institute of Wine and Food's *Journal of Gastronomy* have given the food world a certain gravitas. Culinary and gastronomic history have, in short, "moved to the front burner," as Albert Sonnenfeld, Chevalier Professor of French and Comparative Literature at the University of Southern California, writes in the preface to his translation of Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari's excellent compendium *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*.

Flandrin and Montanari, two well-respected European food historians, have compiled a fascinating, readable collection of essays by a wide range of experts who trace the links between food and culture, from the prehistoric and biblical eras through the Middle Ages to contemporary times and the McDonald's-ization of Europe. Sonnenfeld provides an intelligently edited English translation of the 1996 French original, which, replete with graphs, endless lists, statistics, charts, and repetitions, was not easily digested. Written for both the layperson and a growing army of culinary academicians, restaurateurs, and the professionally food-alert, *Food* offers an omnium-gatherum that explores, among other things, the relationship between diet and social hierarchy, explodes various long-standing myths, such as the belief that pasta originated in China and was brought to the West by Marco Polo (it seems to have originated in the Mezzogiorno, in Italy, and traveled northward), and manages to be both clear and streamlined without compromising the historian's fealty to scholarship and complexity.

Unlike Sonnenfeld, who has kindly eradicated such roadblocks as a full-page delineation of the per acre yield of artichokes in the Finistère in 16th-century Brittany, the editors of the two-volume *Cambridge World History of Food*, historians Kenneth F. Kiple and Kriemhild Conée Ornelas, apparently had a laity-be-damned attitude. Theirs is the kind of book often described as "magisterial," weighing in at just over 11 pounds and omitting no chart, table, list, or statistic its 220 experts from 15 countries thought typeworthy. Contributors come from many fields—agronomy, animal science, nutrition, history, geography, anthropology, public health, sociology, and zoology (a by-no-means complete roster). Though as a reference book on a particular subject (say, yaks, khat, or iodine deficiency disorders) it would be an excellent tool, few civilians grazing through the 15-page section on algae, for example, are likely to survive the four full pages and six half or three-quarter pages of tables.

Outside the academy, the American discovery and embrace of sophisticated foodways has also been astounding. In 1998, the latest year for which statistics are available, 1,060 cookbooks were published in this country. If you think, as I did, that there is a basic contradiction between the brisk sale of cookbooks and the fact that fewer people seem to be cooking, an interesting essay by the food writer Anne Mendelsohn, in *Best Food Writing 2000*, explains the reason, apparently long known to publishers and booksellers: The average purchaser of a cookbook does not actually read it. Rather, "thousands of people get their greatest pleasure . . . by sitting down with it and floating into realms of imagination conjured up by clever graphics, opulent layouts, and above all, color photographs." Since most cookbooks are pricey, this seems an expensive way of zoning out, but apparently well worth it, especially for the buyer of the celebrity-chef cookbook, who becomes "not just a citizen of some generic food-fantasy land but a sharer in the restaurant-theater energy generated by particular superstars. Eat at the shrine, buy the cookbook, belong to the enchanted circle." The chef, of course, does not cook from a cookbook, and the editor or co-author hired to convert a restaurant's dishes into home recipes may not be a reliable translator.

The Mendelsohn theory may also account for the generally so-so quality of much of

Banquet Piece with Oysters, Fruit, and Wine ***(c. 1610/1620), by Osias Beert the Elder***

today's popular food writing. Foodies who write are part of a service industry. Their charge is often narrow—to review (or promote) a restaurant, to "discover" a food or food trend, or to portray, as favorably as possible, a well-known chef. The broad-ranging, freewheeling approach to gastronomical essays exemplified by A. J. Liebling (1904–63) and M. F. K. Fisher (1908–92), who still represent the gold standard in the genre, is simply not an option.

"The primary requisite for writing well about food," wrote Liebling, in an essay in *Between Meals: An Appetite for Paris* (1962), "is a good appetite." In a typical Liebling construct, he remarks that "in the light of what Proust wrote with so mild a stimulus [as the madeleine], it is the world's loss that he did not have a heartier appetite." But Liebling's appetite in truth was for the human comedy; he wrote about food as a way of writing about the character of the people who consumed it, an obliqueness of purpose that may well offer the best approach to this most quotidian of subjects. Here is the superb Monsieur Mirande, an elderly Parisian bon vivant, primed, like so many figures Liebling admired, "in the heroic age before the first world war," keeper of multiple mistresses, one of whom runs his and Liebling's favorite restaurant: "a small alert man with the face of a Celtic terrier, salient eyebrows and an upturned nose. He looked like an intelligent Lloyd George." Not an Anglophile, Liebling. The subject of food turns up from time to time directly in his work because Liebling was always fascinated by prodigious feats of gastronomy; in the same essay he and Mirande tuck into a "whacking" lunch, involving, among other things, "a truite au bleu—a live trout simply done to death in hot water, like a Roman emperor in his bath . . . doused with enough butter to thrombose a whole regiment of Paul Dudley Whites," a daube provençale, several guinea hens, some early spring asparagus, and three bottles of wine. Of course you remember the food, but what lingers in your mind long afterward is the singularity of the pair who ate it.

M. F. K. Fisher, like Liebling (though she was a far different kind of writer—crankier, more inward, more personal, and, as a creator of actual cookbooks such as *How to Cook a Wolf*, *The Gastronomical Me*, and *Consider the Oyster*, more kitchen-serviceable), brings to her gastronomic essays a quirkiness of vision and a deftness with language that are wholly original. And, like Liebling, Fisher produced prose that was an energetic mix of high and low. Her 1949 translation of the 1825 treatise

The Physiology of Taste, or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy, by Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (he of the famous aphorism "Tell me what you eat, and I shall tell you what you are"), added a certain heft to her professional persona, as did the memoirs, essays, fiction, and journals that eventually earned her election to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

Both Liebling and Fisher eschewed writing about the passing fashions of their times—their interests were more idiosyncratic—but neither of them was particularly interested in one-upping those who did—unlike, for example, John L. and Karen Hess, a former *New York Times* journalist and a cookbook author, respectively, who have cast themselves as the scourges of our debased popular-food culture. The appendix of their recently rereleased *The Taste of America* (originally published in 1972) includes their infamous and dotty attack on Julia Child, in which the woman who cheerfully brought French cooking into the homes of the multitudes is calumnized as if she were an ax murderess. As George Orwell once remarked about Thomas Carlyle, "an obscure spite" seems to be at work here. Unlike the Hess team, Liebling and Fisher are, above all, generous writers, and though they are deeply bound to reality, their work also retains a mysterious elusiveness.

By contrast, too much of the prose in *Best Food Writing 2000* seems formulaic. It's probably no accident that the two most memorable pieces in the collection, "A Day in the Life" by Anthony Bourdain and "The Belly of Paris" by Megan Wetherall, are heavily reported essays that evoke, respectively, an eye-popping you-are-there sense of the hysterical pace and extraordinary demands of a popular New York City restaurant and the world of the bistros of the old Les Halles (and the *après le déluge* spirit of the few remaining ones); or that the other strong essays in the collection, by R. W. Apple, Nancy Harmon Jenkins, Calvin Trillin, and Rick Bragg, are by professional journalists, accustomed to rummaging around until they produce interesting information. Apple's workmanlike prose ("I love bacon. Sizzle! Pop!") reminds us that one of the benefits of good food writing is that it allows for a certain wholeheartedness that is often off limits in other nonfiction genres, where the cool and the measured reign supreme.

Some of the less successful essays in the collection, such as "Pasta Meets Tomato," are near parodies. Here, the sensual-mystical attractions of the kitchen hold the writer in their grip: "I cook listening to something beyond a recipe—the tomatoes always seem to tell me what kind of sauce they want to be this time." "The Chef of the Future" considers the hot chef of the moment, a man whose restaurant in an out-of-the-way Spanish hamlet has become a mecca for European and transatlantic chefs and upper-tax-bracket travelers, and whose waiters issue stern directives to customers about how and when to eat certain foods on their plate. Unfortunately, the author, a professional food critic, although assuring the reader that she approached her first visit "with skepticism," seems cowed by the chef; she is too quick to join, as she puts it, "the apostles," too reluctant to sound even the smallest note of alarm about his dubious hijinks, including the presentation of a single strawberry macerated in melted Fisherman's Friend, a throat lozenge.

At the other end of the spectrum is "It Takes a Village to Kill a Pig," a slick, epicurean frivolity about the obsessive search of the writer (another food critic) for the perfect boudin noir recipe and ingredients. This quest involves several transatlantic journeys and the apparently money-is-no-object securing of a small brigade of assistants and exotic equipment. As a piece of writing, it provides a satisfyingly thorough description of arcane Gallic sausage-making techniques, but the author's propensity for name-dropping and "I was there and you weren't" self-satisfaction does not make him good company on the page. When, on the pretext of using the bathroom, he creeps into his friend's larder and considers filching a tin of excellent boudin noir, the frank revelation detracts from our already shaky sense of confidence. In fact, we make a mental note, should he ever show up at *our* door, to lock up the silver.

Somehow, Liebling and Fisher managed to transmute their musings on the lowly subject of food into art. They were sly, funny peo-

ple who shared a largeness of spirit and a stubborn distaste for cant that make even their oldest work seem bracing. But they also lived in more capacious times. Both enjoyed long associations with the *New Yorker*, which encouraged their individualistic bent and eclectic interests and gave them the freedom to write whatever they wanted to. If, by comparison, their professional progeny seem to be starvelings who have been forced to breathe thinner air, that's because they are, and have.

>Lis Harris *is the author of* Holy Days: The World of a Hasidic Family *(1985),* Rules of Engagement: Four Couples and American Marriage Today *(1995), and a forthcoming book about an eight-year effort to build a paper mill in the South Bronx. She teaches writing at Columbia University's Graduate School of the Arts.*

Feminist Foremother

MARGARET FULLER, CRITIC:
***Writings from the* New-York Tribune,**
1844–1846.
Edited by Judith Mattson Bean and Joel Myerson. Columbia Univ. Press.
491pp. plus CD-ROM. $75

"MY HEART IS A LARGE KINGDOM":
Selected Letters of Margaret Fuller.
Edited by Robert N. Hudspeth.
Cornell Univ. Press. 368 pp. $29.95

MARGARET FULLER'S CULTURAL CRITIQUE:
Her Age and Legacy.
Edited by Fritz Fleischmann.
Peter Lang. 296 pp. $55.95

Reviewed by Elaine Showalter

The editors of these three books make a vigorous case for the cultural importance of Margaret Fuller (1810–50). "Given the range of her interests and the sophistication of her writing, no other American woman of her time, with the possible exception of Emily Dickinson, so commands our attention," writes Robert Hudspeth, a professor of English at the University of Redlands. Fuller is "today established as a canonical figure," according to Fritz Fleischmann, a professor of English at Babson College in Massachusetts. The past 20 years have seen the publication of Fuller's letters, essays, journals, and translations, and in 1992 the first volume of Charles Capper's magnificent biography, *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life*, both positioned her in the larger context of American intellectual history and illuminated the extraordinary scope and drama of her life. Consequently, suggests

Margaret Fuller

Fleischmann, Fuller "may no longer require advocacy."

As the mother of all American feminist intellectuals and the author of *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), Fuller should be well known, yet to most educated Americans she is nothing more than a name in a textbook. There is no Margaret Fuller Memorial, no museum, no national holiday, not even a postage stamp. Despite enormous academic interest in her life and work, Fuller has not captured the American historical imagination. From Nathaniel Hawthorne to Louisa May Alcott, her Concord neighbors enjoy a popular acclaim that she has yet to receive. Advocacy of her importance is still very much required.

Why has Fuller faced so much resistance as an American intellectual heroine? It's not because her life lacked excitement. She managed to be in all the right places at the right times, from high-minded New England to brawling New York to revolutionary Italy. With inspiring courage, she transcended the limitations of her environment and upbringing to live a truly epic woman's life. She wrote the most influential American feminist tract of the century, visited women prisoners at Sing Sing, met the leading intellectuals and radicals of Europe, and made the daring decision to have a child in a secret affair with a young Italian revolutionary.

But summarizing her credo is a difficult task, one she herself never managed to accomplish. When taken together, her essays, pamphlets, poems, and reviews demonstrate a powerful, original mind. One by one, though, they are unlovable, too often stiff or prolix or rambling. She didn't have Thoreau's folksiness or sententiousness, or Alcott's narrative gift.

Judith Mattson Bean, an English professor at Texas Woman's University in Denton, and Joel Myerson, a professor of American literature at the University of South Carolina, add significantly to the Fuller canon with their selection of more than a hundred articles she wrote as literary editor of the *New-York Tribune* in the 1840s (all 250 of her *Tribune* articles are included on the CD-ROM that accompanies the book). During the two years she wrote analytical pieces for the paper, Fuller tried to establish the parameters of a responsible literary criticism, defended the novel as the representative American literary genre, and, in the editors' words, "embarked on a process of reshaping her identity." In columns that displayed her increasing political confidence and radicalism, she wrote about the turbulent daily life of New York and about work of all kinds, including intellectual work. In so doing, she "explored the full range of the essay as a genre: the character sketch, parable, prose epistle, journalistic essay, periodical essay, hortatory essay, and book review."

Yet Fuller was still uncertain of her stance as a feminist writer. In a review of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, she adopts a masculine disguise: "What happiness for the critic, when, as in the present instance, his task is mainly to express a cordial admiration." The review goes on to characterize women as prone to sentimentality and excessive attention to minor details. Praising much of Browning's work, Fuller nonetheless concludes, referring to the poet's epics, that "we shall never read them again, but we are very glad to have read them once." Much the same sentiment, alas, applies to Fuller's critical writings. Despite their learning, they lack fire.

By contrast, Fuller's personal writings, her journals and letters, show her at her passionate best, unsparingly using her intellect to explain her life. Hudspeth edited the monumental six-volume edition of her letters, and he provides a sampling of them in *"My Heart Is a Large Kingdom."* Fuller made the personal letter a "literary form," he argues, one that she used to "bring news, both about herself and about her world." While Fuller scholars will welcome the collection of her *Tribune* criticism, as well as Fleischmann's collection of essays on her intellectual affiliations and legacies, Hudspeth's selection of the letters is likely to win her new readers and admirers.

The great drama of Fuller's life came during its last years, from 1848 to 1850, when she was in Italy with her younger Italian lover, Giovanni Ossoli (no one knows for sure whether they ever married), and their baby

son, Angelino. The letters from these years, describing the political upheavals of the Italian revolution, but also trying to explain her choices and her emotions to friends at home, are almost too moving to read. Here Fuller brings all her intelligence to bear on the circumstances of her life: a woman of genius, accepting the love and tenderness of a man far beneath her in intellect, daring to bear his child, and finding herself profoundly changed by maternity.

"I thought the mother's heart lived in me before, but it did not," she wrote to her sister Ellen. "I knew nothing about it." To a friend, she wrote: "You would laugh to know how much remorse I feel that I never gave children more toys in the course of my life. . . . I did not know what pure delight could be bestowed." She begged her sister to ask her friends to write: "I suppose they don't know what to say. Tell them there is no need to say anything about these affairs if they don't want to. I am just the same for them I was before." The honesty and clarity of these letters is especially poignant in light of what lay ahead: Having decided to brave public disapproval and make a life back in the United States, Fuller and Ossoli, along with their son, were drowned in a shipwreck off Fire Island.

Had she survived, her public writings might have grown more like her private letters, capable of touching readers' emotions as well as their intellects. Perhaps the tragic story revealed in these letters will move Margaret Fuller beyond the textbooks at last.

>Elaine Showalter *is a professor of English at Princeton University. She is an advisory editor of the* Cambridge Guide to Women's Writing in English *(1999) and the author of* Inventing Herself: Claiming a Feminist Intellectual Heritage *(forthcoming).*

Arts & Letters

SIDETRACKS: Explorations of a Romantic Biographer.
By Richard Holmes. Pantheon. 420 pp. $30

Most of the time, we read biographies for no better reason than that their subjects appeal to us. We simply want to know more about Emily Dickinson or Michelangelo or Edison. But now and again a biographer comes along who transmits in-depth scholarship through an ingratiating style, who approaches the writing of a life as an opportunity for self-expression, even for literary distinction. Don't we return to James Boswell and Lytton Strachey largely for the urbane pleasure of their company?

Certainly I do, just as I eagerly pick up anything by Holmes, best known for his prize-winning biographies of Shelley, Coleridge, and Dr. Johnson's doomed poet friend Richard Savage. Drawn to artists susceptible to "loneliness and despair," this self-described romantic biographer generates such novelistic excitement that one races through his books as if they were intellectual thrillers. Which, in fact, they are. Not that Holmes (suggestive name) doesn't do all the usual detective work of research, going through the archives, consulting sources, marshaling his notes. But when he starts to write, the sentences are those of an artist rather than an academic.

Listen to just a bit of his description of the Victorian philosopher John Stuart Mill, an "administrative piston" at the East India Company for 35 years: "Most of his active life was passed at the end of that 100-yard-long gaslit corridor in Leadenhall Street, behind a thick green baize door, in a high bare office smelling of coconut matting and ink and coal dust, inditing the sealed instructions of Imperial administration. He wrote erect at a mahogany lectern, and gazed through windows overlooking a brickyard wall, where a City clock could be heard but not seen. He dressed habitually in a black frockcoat of old-fashioned angular cut, with a black silk necktie pulled tight round a white cotton wing-collar. He was a tall, bony, slightly stooping figure who shook hands stiffly from the shoulder and was pre-

maturely bald at the age of 30. There was that indefinable mineral quality of a dissenting clergyman." Note the factual details, the evocative diction, the gradual coming into focus of a seemingly unappealing figure. "And yet," adds Holmes, "there were nightingales in his story." That romantic image segues into a brief account of the utilitarian thinker's impassioned, life-altering love for a married woman.

Sidetracks collects a dozen superb "portraits in miniature" (of poet Thomas Chatterton, ghost-story master M. R. James, and photographer Nadar, among others), essays on the nature of biography and the pleasures of living in France, a couple of radio plays, and even a short story about Dr. Johnson's first cat. Holmes interleaves this admittedly occasional material with headnotes that touch on freelance journalism, life with novelist Rose Tremain, and the nature of his art: "The great thing was simply to summon up for one moment a living breathing shape, to make the dead walk again, to make the reader *see* a figure and *hear* a voice."

Though clearly a miscellany despite his efforts to link the various sections, *Sidetracks* is as enjoyable as any of Holmes's more sustained works. It's also a good introduction to his appealing personality. Opening a piece on James Boswell, for example, Holmes provides just the right flourish: "Biography, like love, begins in passionate curiosity."

—Michael Dirda

THE ROYAL ROAD TO ROMANCE.
By Richard Halliburton.
Travelers' Tales, Inc.
305 pp. $14.95

FRESH AIR FIEND.
By Paul Theroux. Houghton Mifflin.
466 pp. $27

Between his birth in 1900 and his disappearance at sea in 1939, Halliburton inspired a generation of travelers, armchair and otherwise. Originally published in 1925 and now back in print, his delightful first book chronicles the 600-day romp around the world that launched his career. Describing himself as a "horizon chaser," the young Princetonian rejects his parents' offer of a grand tour graduation gift and descends instead into what he calls "hobohemia." Often equipped with only camera and toothbrush, the ever exuberant Halliburton charms his way into and out of adventures ranging from tiger hunting to a pirate attack to arrest as a suspected spy.

But even in the 1920s, the exotic could be elusive. The Spain of reality "brutally" supplants the Spain of his dreams when Halliburton spots a Barcelonan in a dowdy Sears Roebuck dress. And he has to work to dodge organized tour groups. En route to Singapore, he slogs for days through cobra-infested jungles just to avoid the route favored by tourists. A travel agent arranges his most adventurous jaunt, a mule trip to Ladakh in the Himalayas. He gives the agency a tongue-in-cheek plug in the book.

A century after Halliburton's birth, travel has become the world's number-one industry. Avoiding the beaten track is even more difficult—a predicament that suffuses Theroux's second collection of essays. "I hated sightseeing," he writes. "In an age of mass tourism, everyone sets off to see the same things." Instead of describing destinations, he focuses on journeys: how he got there and whom he met along the way. Although the essays jump from the Africa of Malawi to the South Pacific of the Trobriands, this method allows Theroux to transform even close-to-home destinations into worthy subjects. By getting to Nantucket under his own power, for instance, the avid kayaker manages to make the overvisited island feel exotic.

Halliburton and Theroux, paramount travel writers of their respective eras, don't have much in common beyond a shared distaste for tourists. While Halliburton discloses almost nothing of his inner life, Theroux reveals everything from his first sexual fantasy to his hurt at constantly being called grumpy. And while Halliburton coasts on the privileges afforded by white skin, Theroux often rides with the natives and takes pride that his writing predicted the events in Tiananmen Square. Like much else, travel writing has grown more personal and more political. But the underlying drive—a love of trespassing—remains unchanged.

—Rebecca A. Clay

LANDSCAPE WITH FIGURES: A History of Art Dealing in the United States.
By Malcolm Goldstein. Oxford Univ. Press. 370 pp. $30

In 1937 Peggy Guggenheim, whose Uncle Solomon founded that famously circular museum, opened an art gallery in London. Hilla Rebay, the German artist who was helping Solomon amass his collection, chided the fledgling dealer: "It is extremely distasteful . . . when the name Guggenheim stands for an ideal in art, to see it used for commerce. . . . Commerce with real art cannot exist. . . . You will soon find you are propagating mediocrity; if not trash." By 1940, Peggy had closed her London gallery—not because she took Rebay's point, but because she hadn't turned a profit. She went to Paris, checkbook in hand, buying a picture a day on the cheap for her own little museum. Only Picasso rebuffed the bulb-nosed American. "Now, what can I do for you, madame?" he asked when she arrived at his studio. "Are you sure that you are in the right department? Lingerie is on the next floor."

Though necessarily episodic, this history of American art dealing is pleasingly written, attentive to nuance, respectful without being sycophantic, and rife with tales of the titans and oddballs who made art their business. The economy and grace of the metaphoric title apply to the admirable book as a whole. The publisher is touting it as "the first history of art dealing in America," but Goldstein, a professor emeritus of English at the City University of New York, makes a far more modest claim. As in Saul Steinberg's cartoon, the states beyond New York scarcely exist here, and only the most influential dealers in American and European art get much play. "Surely that is enough for one book," the author writes courageously. And it is.

American art dealing scarcely existed before the latter part of the 19th century, when European dealers played to Gilded Age millionaires' sense of cultural inferiority by selling them Old Masters. While the dealers showed European paintings, among them Emanuel Leutze's *Washington Crosses the Delaware*, American artists struggled: Thomas Cole's paintings hung in a frame shop, available for $25, and Frederic Church advertised his landscape-painting services in a magazine. An important cultural exchange eventually took place. European dealers such as Alfred Knoedler and the Scotch-Irish William Macbeth recognized the value of the American product, and American dealers such as Peggy Guggenheim promoted and supported European modernists.

The narrative lingers at midcentury, when the author was a poor student traveling down from Columbia University to 57th Street to buy paintings he could ill afford, on installment. The dealers he met then—Grace Borgenicht, Edith Halpert, and Antoinette Kraushaar—were informed, generous with their time, and not unprincipled. By Goldstein's reckoning, they, and those who followed them (especially Betty Parsons, Sidney Janis, and Leo Castelli), genuinely advanced the cause of serious art. While Goldstein gives scant attention to art dealings' last few confused decades, no one could yet call them historic, and perhaps no one ever will.

—A. J. Hewat

THEREMIN: Ether Music and Espionage.
By Albert Glinsky. Univ. of Illinois Press. 403 pp. $34.95

In 1920, Russian engineer Leon Theremin arranged a demonstration for colleagues at his Petrograd research institute. He stood in the

Leon Theremin demonstrating his eponymous device in Paris in 1927.

front of the room, "his arms outstretched, his two hands hovering, fluttering, and diving in air" around two antennas attached to a high-frequency oscillator, according to Glinsky. From a rudimentary loudspeaker came the melody of Camille Saint-Saëns's "Swan." Theremin (1896–1993) had developed a musical instrument that could be played without physical contact.

Theremin and his "etherphone" (soon called the "theremin") won worldwide acclaim. He played concerts in the Soviet Union, Europe, and the United States, for audiences that included V. I. Lenin, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Arturo Toscanini, and George Bernard Shaw. Some reviewers likened the ethereal music to "celestial voices," though Shaw remarked that he had heard pleasanter sounds from a tissue-covered comb. Theremin believed that his instrument, inexpensively mass-produced, would replace the parlor piano. Without any training, people could "wave their hands and express their own musical personality," he said, "providing they possess a musical feeling." He moved to New York City and tried to market the instrument while working as a musician, teacher, inventor, and perhaps spy.

In 1938, Theremin returned to the Soviet Union—and disappeared. Caught up in Stalin's purges, he was imprisoned for eight years and then assigned to a secret research facility. (One of his Cold War inventions came to light in 1952 when a British radio operator in Moscow heard U.S. ambassador George F. Kennan dictating letters. Technicians searched the ambassador's house and found a listening device hidden inside a bas-relief Great Seal of the United States, a hand-carved goodwill gift from Soviet boy scouts seven years earlier.) Invisible and presumed dead for 25 years, Theremin reappeared in the mid-1960s, around the time the Beach Boys used a theremin in "Good Vibrations." During the remainder of his long life, he was honored as the father of electronic music.

Glinsky, a composer who teaches at Mercyhurst College in Pennsylvania, faced many obstacles in writing Theremin's life story. "Theremin routinely supplied different versions of the same incident to different interviewers at different times," he writes. "And when he was finally politically free enough to tell his own story he could no longer be counted on to tell it reliably." In addition, Theremin's contemporaries were mostly dead, and many of the materials were incomplete or infected with historical revisionism.

Through indefatigable research, Glinsky has nonetheless managed to provide a nuanced, comprehensive portrait. Though he is no wordsmith—paragraphs lack transitions, characters are introduced out of place, the chronology meanders—his biography is a triumph. The tale is so bizarrely dramatic that the book is nearly impossible to put down.

Glinsky skillfully uses the inventor's life to contrast communism and capitalism. After Theremin designed a television during the 1920s, for example, the Soviet government confiscated it, stamped it classified, and transformed it into a surveillance device for border guards. During his decade in the United States, by contrast, the Radio Corporation of America hired Theremin as part of its effort to place a television in every living room. "The divergence of Soviet and American culture can be almost unfathomable," Glinsky observes. "And it would be laughable, had it not been so tragic and so typical."

—Steve Weinberg

Science & Technology

THE UNDERGROWTH OF SCIENCE: Delusion, Self-Deception, and Human Frailty.
By Walter Gratzer. Oxford Univ. Press. 328 pp. $27.50

A scientist can go bad in any number of ways. Some of them, such as trimming facts to fit theories, are lamentable but almost understandable. Others, such as making up facts altogether, are unforgivable.

One way of going bad, however, is harder to judge. A reputable, even eminent scientist discovers something unexpected and nearly undetectable. The scientist is intrigued, then enthralled, then obdurately convinced. A few fellow scientists concur, but others, unable to repeat the discovery, attack. War

breaks out. The defenders claim greater perceptual acuity and explain away all findings to the contrary. The attackers finally gather enough counterevidence, and the original finding is dismissed. Gratzer, a British biophysicist and frequent contributor to *Nature*, calls this insistent embrace of an untenable hypothesis "communal derangement"; physicist Irving Langmuir called it "pathological science."

Around 1900, for example, the distinguished French physicist René Blondlot announced the discovery of "N-rays": nearly imperceptible electromagnetic radiation that passed through quartz but not through water. Scientists all over Europe repeated his experiments. Some saw the radiation and made further claims—one announced that N-rays heightened the sensitivity of the human retina—but others couldn't detect it. N-ray defenders derided the critics as insufficiently perceptive. "If N-rays can only be observed by rare privileged individuals," responded one critic, "then they no longer belong to the domain of experiment." Finally, Blondlot claimed to see N-rays even after a colleague had removed an essential part of the experiment. N-rays disappeared from physics.

The Undergrowth of Science assembles case studies in pathological science: Groups of growing cells supposedly emit radiation. Changes in an animal's body are inherited by the animal's offspring. Implanted monkey prostate glands rejuvenate aging men. Disagreeable inherited traits, from imbecility to alcoholism to criminality, are abolished by sterilizing the people who inherited them. Radiation given off by menstruating women kills microorganisms. Fusion, the energy source of the Sun, is reproduced in a jar.

None of these case studies rose to outright fraud. Instead, they resulted from a very human combination of ambition, overcommitment to a dubious investment, hero worship, mass hysteria, and an aversion to being wrong, especially in public. Scientists, Gratzer observes, "are as much a prey to human frailty as anyone else, and their capacity for unbending objectivity is circumscribed."

Pathological science remains with us—fusion-in-a-jar dates from the late 1980s—but it can be difficult for nonscientists to recognize. Gratzer's cases seem like the usual science news that first sounds unreasonable and then turns out to be right or wrong, either one. Throughout history, scientists have successfully defended marginal data, and theories that sounded silly have proved revolutionary. And, though Gratzer explains the experiments thoroughly and clearly, the general reader doesn't know the principles that make, say, radiation from growing cells just plain impossible. Perhaps such principles are uncodified and unspoken. If so, readers have to take a lot on faith.

Still, they're going to like this book. The writing is elegant and unusually intelligent. Science and politics are credibly interwoven. And the hapless scientists, clinging to their theories as the counterevidence mounts, come across as at once terribly weird and terribly normal.

—Ann Finkbeiner

ONE GOOD TURN: A Natural History of the Screwdriver and the Screw.
By Witold Rybczynski. Scribner.
173 pp. $22

When the *New York Times Magazine* asked for an essay on the best tool of the millennium, Rybczynski settled on the humble screwdriver. *One Good Turn* recounts his broadening gyre of historical research and, in the process, reminds us that extraordinary stories sometimes lurk behind ordinary things.

A professor of urbanism at the University of Pennsylvania and the author of *Home: A Short History of an Idea* (1986), Rybczynski begins with a look at the cursory lexicographical attention routinely paid to the word *screwdriver*, proceeds in search of the origins of the tool earlier generations called *turn screw*, and then, perhaps more important, concentrates on the screw. "The screwdriver is hardly poetic. . . ." he writes. "The screw itself, however, is a different matter. It is hard to imagine that even an inspired gunsmith or armorer—let alone a village blacksmith—simply happened on the screw by accident."

The screw thread is not, he explains, a spiral but a helix, "a three-dimensional curve that twists around a cylinder at a constant inclined angle." The earliest known

helix was the water screw developed in the third century B.C., probably by Archimedes: "Only a mathematical genius like Archimedes could have described the geometry of the helix in the first place, and only a mechanical genius like him could have conceived a practical application for this unusual shape."

The innovation most of us take for granted, the cruciform-shaped, socket-headed screw, was patented and marketed by Henry F. Phillips in the 1930s but essentially invented in 1907 by a Canadian, Peter L. Robertson. By enabling machines to drive screws, the socket-headed screw dramatically improved assembly line efficiency, especially at Ford Motor Company, and opened the way for the robotic-driven assembly of machines.

"Mechanical genius is less well understood and studied than artistic genius," Rybczynski observes, "yet it surely is analogous." The kitchen-drawer screwdriver has a lineage going back to Archimedes and perhaps beyond, one every bit as grand as any tradition taught in fine arts classrooms. Though it slights the role of screws in cultures other than European, *One Good Turn* is a wonderfully researched, written, and illustrated book, a pocket model of superb material-culture research.

—JOHN R. STILGOE

THE DRAMA OF EVERYDAY LIFE. By Karl E. Scheibe. Harvard Univ. Press. 281 pp. $24.95

LAW IN BRIEF ENCOUNTERS. By W. Michael Reisman. Yale Univ. Press. 225 pp. $27.50

University of Pennsylvania sociologist Erving Goffman (1922-82) fashioned a career out of the minutiae of human conduct. In such books as *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) and *Behavior in Public Places* (1963), he meticulously analyzed the rhythms of conversation, comportment in elevators and libraries, the postures of models in advertisements, and other matters once deemed too meager for scholarly attention. The field he pioneered is now flourishing, with studies of wafer-thin behavior—"The Effects of Staring and Pew Invasion in Church Settings"—multiplying faster than clones of the Goffmanesque sitcom *Seinfeld*. From different angles, these two books by Goffman disciples cleverly summarize and analyze the sociology of the commonplace.

Scheibe, a psychology professor at Wesleyan University, sees daily life as drama. "Insofar as we truly live," he writes, "we cannot keep from acting." He considers the transformative nature of human interactions, the shifting roles of actor and audience, and the players' tendency to adhere to the appropriate script—shouting at football games but not at golf matches, for instance. He also ponders why we undertake some performances sans audience. Whereas eating is "always and everywhere an occasion for social gatherings," he observes, "the act of defecation is almost always solitary," for, in Scheibe's lofty formulation, "bowel movements remind us of our finitude, our inexorable ties to the soil, even though as philosophers we may pretend to eat only clouds."

The drama of the mundane is a capacious concept, and it makes for a meandering but entertaining book. In one chapter, Scheibe asks what ever happened to schizophrenia, a relatively common psychiatric diagnosis through the 1970s that is now much rarer. He believes that patients who once would have been labeled schizophrenic now are given other diagnoses, especially multiple personality disorder and post-traumatic stress syndrome. Schizophrenics traditionally required years of treatment in state-supported mental hospitals, an impractical prescription in an era of deinstitutionalization, whereas the newer diagnoses generally require only outpatient treatment. Psychiatrists, it seems, avoid diagnosing what they cannot treat. "Now that the stage settings have been struck," he writes, "the actors who populated the wards are no longer controlled by the settings' mythical constraints and are now walking on other boards."

Where Scheibe sees drama, Reisman, a professor at Yale Law School, sees "microlaw": an informal system that prescribes proper behavior and punishes violations. He considers, for example, the conventions for

standing in line. When someone cuts in, self-appointed "line stewards" are likely to protest, at least by grumbling and perhaps by confrontation. If the interloper won't back down, "there will be an uneasy interim during which many queuers will be watching carefully to determine whether the queue is disintegrating. The moment they sense that it is, they will stampede."

Although some of Reisman's observations don't quite fit his microlaw model, with its sanctions for misbehavior, they're still compelling. People generally prefer eye contact while conversing, he notes, but not when making embarrassing disclosures—hence the traditional psychiatrist's office, with doctor seated behind patient. Reisman, who dedicates his book to Goffman, nicely describes the delicate dance of striking up a conversation with a seatmate on a long flight, where a misreckoning can sentence you to hours of tedium: "Initially, the parties may move with extraordinary indirection and caution precisely because of the costs and even risks in getting involved in a rap session with the 'wrong' sort of person."

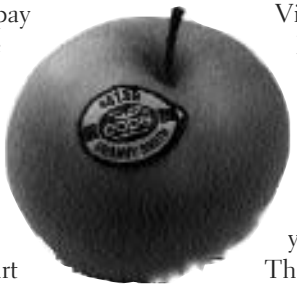
Only connect, counseled E. M. Forster, but, as these books remind us, we are capable of connecting only so far. In strange interludes and ordinary ones, we can't always see behind the masks. Reisman at times seems defensive—one suspects that his Yale Law colleagues don't take microlaw quite as seriously as he would like—whereas Scheibe, who boasts that his students "often express surprise at the rapidity with which the three-hour period has been consumed," comes across as a tad full of himself. But maybe it's just me.

—Stephen Bates

Contemporary Affairs

BRAND.NEW.
Edited by Jane Pavitt.
Princeton Univ. Press. 224 pp. $49.50

I have grown up with Cheerios, and Cheerios has grown up with me. When I was young, the cereal promised me muscle and "go power." Now that I am middle aged, it is, I am assured, good for my heart. There are other ring-shaped oat cereals, but Cheerios is a tradition, and I am willing to pay more for it than for generic brands. General Mills charges almost $4 a pound for the cereal, when even grain-fed beef is selling for less.



Cheerios, then, is a brand—part mythology, part relationship, part image, and, oh yes, part oats. A brand can offer satisfactions greater than the sum of the product's parts. All of us spend much of our lives consuming things. Brands offer a way to organize this consumption and give it meaning.

Branded products have existed for centuries, but the late 1990s was a period of brand mania. The value of brands was thought to greatly increase stock prices. Established brands stretched into new areas—it seemed that Nike's swoosh and Coca-Cola's dynamic ribbon would soon appear on everything. And individuals were urged to develop not simply a personal identity but a brand identity.

Brand.New is a product of this enthusiasm, a coffee-table book sprinkled with substantive essays by academics and others, prepared in conjunction with an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. There may seem to be something odd, decadent even, about so lavish a book filled largely with the commercial imagery that many of us see every day. Still, there are images you may not have seen before. The pink room filled with Hello Kitty paraphernalia—including wallpaper, appliances, countless toys and games, and a chair—and the rather solemn mother and daughter who collected all this sweetness make for a scene I won't soon forget.

In writing that ranges from abstruse to zingy, the essays summarize current thinking about the mechanics and meaning of consumption. More complex conceptions have replaced the Veblenesque notion of the con-

sumer who buys to catch up and the Vance Packard view of the consumer as dupe. Critics now contend that people choose what they buy as a way of defining and understanding themselves and their society. Goods are a kind of language, and contemporary arguments turn on whether the language fosters or limits human expression.

Strikingly, the book says little about branding per se. Essays allude to how corporations manage and modify their brands, but not to how brands are most accurately valued, or how some brands have been successfully extended and others have not. If branding is a kind of language, we don't hear much from the native speakers. The title, with its dot-com period, makes a pretty good book about theories of consumption, a well-trod field, seem like something unique and exciting: an up-to-the-minute study of branding. In other words, it does the job of a brand.

—Thomas Hine

AMERICAN DREAMSCAPE: The Pursuit of Happiness in Postwar America.
By Tom Martinson. Carroll & Graf. 288 pp. $26

Another book about suburbia? They've been pouring off the presses lately, in a torrent of vituperation about the evils of sprawl, the depravity of automobile culture, and the sterility of suburban life. But this book is different. Martinson, a city-planning consultant and longtime suburbanite, has the novel idea that the 140 million Americans who live in the nation's suburbs are not all fools.

All good planners are first of all good social observers, and Martinson offers the rare planner's portrait in which suburbanites will recognize themselves. He points out that most of the vituperation comes from drive-by critics who glimpse suburbia only fleetingly and through an urbanist windshield. Accustomed to the more formal, structured form and life of the city, they see a wasteland of "visual chaos" and social isolation in the hinterlands, while overlooking the diversity of suburban experience and the social and community life that suburbanites weave by picking from geographically far-flung choices. At bottom, Martinson believes, the sprawl critics' critique represents one more battle in the venerable war between cosmopolitan "gentry" and the workaday yeoman class.

He mainly has in mind the New Urbanists, the suburbia critics whose photogenic new communities (such as Seaside and Celebration in Florida) and canny arguments for an updated form of 19th-century town planning have made them darlings of the national media. (See "The Second Coming of the American Small Town," by Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, *WQ*, Winter '92.) The New Urbanists rightly note the absurdity of zoning laws that make it virtually impossible to build anything like an old-fashioned town. But they have not been content to offer their ideas as just another choice for how to live; they insist that only a New Urban America will do.

The critics' various plans for remaking suburbia can be summed up in one word: centralization. This means denser, more urbanized communities, more mass transit, and no new roads. Martinson thinks the critics are blind to the powerful momentum favoring decentralization and to the preferences of suburbanites themselves. The suburban backlash against sprawl is a response, not to decentralization, but to "the congestion and disorder that seem to accompany rapid growth," he writes. "Becoming more like a dense big city—which is many suburbanites' very definition of congestion and disorder—is the last thing" they want.

What they do want is a more natural environment, which to Martinson suggests paying more attention to the larger landscape of suburbia, not just by preserving open space but by working to create a distinctive sense of place in each community. The germ of such an approach lies in the work of the great landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who designed some of the nation's early suburbs. But Martinson notes that, with only a few exceptions such as Ian McHarg, most designers disdainfully turned away from suburbia after World War II. What will entice profit-conscious developers to seek out people like McHarg? Won't regional plan-

ning schemes be needed to shape the larger landscape? Martinson doesn't say enough about these and other questions. But he has seen into the heart of his subject and pointed the debate over sprawl in the right direction.

—Steven Lagerfeld

THE CHINESE.
By Jasper Becker. Free Press. 464 pp. $27.50

Becker has been a resident correspondent in China for 10 years, far longer than the typical reporter's tour, and is now Beijing bureau chief for Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*. In *Hungry Ghosts* (1997), he provided the first book-length account of the 1959–61 famine that killed at least 30 million Chinese. In his equally admirable new book, he turns his attention to the China of the past two decades and considers the urban and rural economies, the army, the intellectuals, and the Communist Party and its officials.

Becker has traveled extensively through China, and his anecdotes make the book particularly valuable. In the back of beyond, for instance, he was speaking to people whom time had passed by when a policeman approached and warned that he should not be there. The policeman "is too poor even to afford shoelaces but everyone cringes and falls silent." Elsewhere, Becker interviews a writer who spent 22 years in labor camps. The man describes the behavior of his fellow prisoners, all of them intellectuals: "They lied, sneaked, and betrayed each other all the time. They stopped at nothing to try and prove their loyalty to the Party. . . . For all their high-flown ideals, they behaved with grovelling servility."

I have never met an ex-prisoner, even one safely abroad, who has voiced such sentiments; anecdotes can be misleading. In addition, some of Becker's judgments are overstated or simply wrong. He writes, for example, that "China is now a society in which everyone seems to be engaged in deceiving and cheating one another." In fact, one of the more striking features of Chinese life during the past 50 years is how many dissidents tell the truth even when they know the consequences could be fatal. The sourcing is often insufficient, too. When Becker provides statistics on business failures and unemployment, for example, the footnote directs us to his own article in the *South China Morning Post*. I have no reason to doubt the author's facts, but I want to know how he discovered them.

—Jonathan Mirsky

History

HENRY M. JACKSON: A Life in Politics.
By Robert G. Kaufman. Univ. of Washington Press. 548 pp. $30

A man for whom the term *Cold War liberal* might have been coined, Henry "Scoop" Jackson (1912–83) is remembered today largely for his hawkish views on the Soviet Union and his determination that America would not just wage but win the arms race. Those positions gave rise to a nickname he detested, "the Senator from Boeing," though his devotion to the interests of the biggest employer in

Jackson won the 1976 Massachusetts Democratic primary.

his state of Washington no doubt helped ensure his election to the U.S. Senate for six terms.

In this solid if sometimes pedestrian biography, Kaufman, a political scientist at the University of Vermont, reestablishes Jackson as an outstanding domestic legislator and an environmental pioneer. He took a leading part in the battle against McCarthyism, fought for civil rights legislation, helped enact laws that vastly expanded the national parks, and campaigned for a national health system, sponsoring what became the Medicare legislation. These liberal credentials notwithstanding, large sections of the Democratic Party couldn't forgive his support of the Vietnam War or his attempt to preserve the bipartisan tradition on foreign policy in general.

Jackson was wooed by Republicans—Richard Nixon tried hard to persuade him to become secretary of defense, and the Reagan campaign in 1980 made rather more oblique promises of cabinet office—but he stayed in the Senate. There, he was a pivotal figure in the critique of Henry Kissinger's détente policies during the 1970s, in the parallel emergence of the neoconservative movement, and in what eventually became the Reagan strategy of forcing the Soviet Union into an arms race it could not sustain. As early as 1957, Jackson had defined "the essence of the Soviet dilemma: The Kremlin must grant some freedom in order to maintain technological growth but allowing freedom undermines communist ideology and discipline."

Kaufman illuminates the personal background to this extraordinarily influential career. A young Republican who was converted to Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal Democrats by the Great Depression, Jackson was an instinctive isolationist. As a freshman House member in 1941 (he moved to the Senate in 1953), he even voted against the Lend-Lease legislation to help equip Britain against Hitler. The war converted him to an almost messianic faith in America's global role and to a firm belief in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization alliance.

Jackson sought the presidency in 1972 and 1976, but few Democrats rallied to so militant a cold warrior. For that, the Democratic Party paid a price: Its perceived weakness on national security helped limit the party to a single White House term in the 24 years between 1968 and 1992. By then, of course, the Cold War had ended. Jackson may have lost many battles, but he can lay claim to a significant share of the deeper victories in the Cold War and in the long campaign for the soul of his party.

—Martin Walker

THE DARK VALLEY:
A Panorama of the 1930s.
By Piers Brendon. Knopf. 795 pp. $35.00

The sudden, baffling economic depression of the 1930s brought worldwide unemployment, poverty, and despair—the 20th-century equivalent of the Black Death. Those in brief authority remained perplexed. Nobody could get the unemployed back to work or deliver what the farmers were producing to the people who were starving. Democratic capitalism no longer seemed to function. The solution, when it came, turned out to be World War II.

Brendon, Keeper of the Churchill Archives and a Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge, gives the 1930s a wonderful summing up in this chronicle of how the Great Depression affected the great powers (the United States, Germany, Italy, France, Britain, Japan, and the Soviet Union). He could have called his book an unauthorized biography of the decade, for, along with reviewing the specialized and revisionist studies, he has mined all the gossip from diaries and memoirs. In a style that combines the authoritative speculations of A. J. P. Taylor with the amusing ironies of Malcolm Muggeridge, Brendon tells us what people wore, what they ate, what they read.

He is particularly interested in the manipulation of public opinion, which the new media of radio and motion pictures took to unprecedented levels. "Propaganda became part of the air people breathed during the 1930s," he writes. Public spectacles and entertainments around the globe were crafted with a propagandist intent: "King George V's Silver Jubilee celebrations and his son's coronation were a democratic riposte to Hitler's barbaric pageants at Nuremberg. Stalin's purge trials dramatised a new kind of

tyranny. Mussolini's aerial circuses advertised the virility of Fascism. . . . Hollywood created celluloid myths to banish the Depression and affirm the New Deal."

Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill get the high marks from Brendon, who nonetheless provides a snapshot that both credits and discredits Churchill. As First Lord of the Admiralty before becoming prime minister, Churchill habitually enjoyed long dinners featuring champagne and liqueurs, returned to the office after 10 p.m., and worked until long after midnight. "He has got into the habit of calling conferences of subordinates after 1 a.m.," a *Times* journalist wrote in his diary, "which naturally upsets some of the Admirals, who are men of sound habits. So there is a general atmosphere of strain at the Admiralty, which is all wrong. Yet Winston is such a popular hero & so much *the* war-leader that he cannot be dropped."

Brendon reminds us that instability, not equilibrium, is the global norm, and that faith in the invincibility of democratic capitalism can prove misplaced. We may assure ourselves that the current prosperity will extend to the hereafter, but so did people in 1929. As Brendon cautions, "Today almost invariably misreads tomorrow, sometimes grossly."

Comprehensive as it is, the book has a few unforgivable omissions. Where is Rudy Vallee crooning, in his upper-class accent, "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" And why no dancing Fred and Ginger surrounded by luxury, unaffected by the blind man on the corner selling apples and singing "Beall Street Blues"?

—Jacob A. Stein

THE MARTIAL ARTS OF RENAISSANCE EUROPE.
By Sydney Anglo. Yale Univ. Press.
384 pp. $45

Inspired by the writings of Michel Foucault, a generation of scholars have written volumes about the history of the human body as a social construct. For all their labors, though, we still know surprisingly little about how our ancestors actually used their bodies—the skills that the anthropologist Marcel Mauss called "*techniques du corps*," which range from everyday routines such as styles of walking and sitting to the most challenging surgical procedures. Like ideas, practices have histories. Yet because practices are more often learned through example and apprenticeship than from books, their histories are far more elusive.

Anglo, a historian at the University of Wales who specializes in the ceremonial life of the Renaissance, reconstructs the exacting skills of Europe's martial arts masters. These men were not just the counterparts of today's fencing masters and boxing and wrestling coaches; they were also the progenitors of Green Beret and Navy SEALS instructors. From the end of the Middle Ages well into the 17th century, the city streets and country roads of Europe abounded with hotheaded, knife-wielding ruffians and armed brigands. Even among intimates, disagreements over points of honor could escalate into mortal combat.

The geometric principles of swordfighting were laid out in a treatise by Girard Thibault of Antwerp in 1628.

The insecurity of the world, and the social and cultural aspirations of teachers and pupils alike, had paradoxical consequences. The numerous surviving manuals of European martial arts evoke a gorgeous, stylized world. One wrestling manuscript was illustrated by Albrecht Dürer. Yet masters had to remind their readers that fighting was not merely an aesthetic exercise. Many discouraged the instructional use of rebated (dulled) weapons as an impediment to lifesaving realism.

Anglo organizes his book around styles of fighting. First he introduces the masters and shows how, for all their theory and literary style, their art remained a craft. Books could enrich but not replace hands-on instruction. He considers attempts to create a geometric science of swordsmanship, a movement that created magnificent treatises but was doomed by fencing's demand for spontaneity and deception. The sword was only the most glamorous of the weapons. The masters also taught fighting with staffs, pikes, and axes, as well as more plebeian skills such as wrestling and combat with daggers and knives.

Anglo ranges from exalted theories to the back-breaking, hamstring-cutting side of Renaissance fighting techniques, but we are left wishing to know more about the practitioners themselves. Who would have thought, for example, that the Hapsburgs would entrust the wrestling instruction of the dukes of Austria to a master named Ott the Jew?

Still, this book is a sumptuous scholarly feast, with delicacies for art historians, bibliophiles, Shakespeare specialists, wrestling fans, Asian martial arts enthusiasts, and graphic designers. Anglo does not shrink from using terms such as *prosopopoeic* (referring to an object speaking of itself as though a person), but he complements academic rigor with wry humor: Questioning some colleagues' preoccupation with a shift in style from cutting to thrusting, he writes that "by concentrating on the point, they have missed it completely."

Now that the president of the Russian Federation, judo master Vladimir Putin, has published his own manual of arms, body skills may be returning to the world stage. This challenging but lucid study raises the curtain.

—Edward Tenner

Religion & Philosophy

THE BOOK OF MIRACLES: The Meaning of the Miracle Stories in Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam.
By Kenneth L. Woodward. Simon and Schuster. 429 pp. $28.

Did that really happen? It's the first question that comes to mind when we hear of a "miracle," a suspension of the normal way the world works, an intrusion of the extraordinary into the everyday. But it's not the question that matters to Woodward, religion editor of *Newsweek*. His subject is not the literal veracity of miracles but their meaning within the traditions of the world's five major religions. "Miracles have the character of signs and wonders," he writes. "As wonders, miracles are always astonishing, but as signs they are never wholly inexplicable."

Woodward's approach to the subject is utterly straightforward. He considers the five religions in turn—the three monotheistic faiths in the first part of the book, the two polytheistic Indian religions in the second—and begins in each case with a compendium of the miraculous deeds of their founding and central figures, such as Moses, Elijah and Elisha, Jesus, Muhammad, Krishna, and the Buddha. He follows the chapters on the foundational miracles with chapters on the miracles of the great saints, sages, and spiritual masters in each tradition who took up the example of the first masters: "In this way, we can see how miracles themselves become signs of the continuing power and presence of God in this world (for Jews, Christians, and Muslims), of the continuing power of the diverse gods and goddesses (in Hinduism), and of the continuing power of the Dharma, or teachings, of the Buddha and, in some Buddhist traditions, of the enduring presence of the Buddha himself."

The entropy that exempts nothing mortal has had its way with miracles too, and Woodward detects a fundamental change in the contemporary tradition: "Miracles have become detached from the rigors of spiritual attainment and from the discernment taught by all religious traditions. Relocated in the theater of the questing inner self, the modern miracle has become a sign of the God within us all. The idea of a miracle has thus been turned on its head. Where classical miracle stories inspired fear and awe, inducing worship of God and admiration of the saints, modern miracles tend to inspire admiration of the divinity that is the self."

You can't help but admire what Woodward has accomplished in this book. He has fashioned

graceful, readable, and illuminating accounts of the various miracle traditions, and, through those narratives of external action, he has found the internal force of the religions. Of course, he does not elevate one religion or religious tradition above another. That would be insensitive, and he is unfailingly sober and respectful. But a little partisan passion in Woodward's scrupulous presentation would have been a forgivable sin and lent some heat to the considerable light.

—James Morris

CONTRIBUTORS

Stephen Bates is literary editor of the *Wilson Quarterly*. **Rebecca A. Clay**, a writer in Washington, D.C., has traveled to all seven continents. **Michael Dirda**, a Pulitzer-winning writer and senior editor for the *Washington Post Book World*, is the author of *Readings: Essays and Literary Entertainments*, newly published by Indiana University Press. **Ann Finkbeiner** is a science writer who teaches at Johns Hopkins University. **A. J. Hewat** is associate editor at the *Litchfield County Times* in New Milford, Conn. **Thomas Hine**, author of *Populuxe* (1986), *The Total Package: The Evolution and Secret Meanings of Boxes, Bottles, Cans, and Tubes* (1995), and *The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager* (1999), is working on a book about shopping. **Steven Lagerfeld** is editor of the *Wilson Quarterly*. **Jonathan Mirsky**, who lives in London, covered East Asia for the *Observer* and the *Times* for many years. **James Morris** is deputy editor of the *Wilson Quarterly*. **Jacob A. Stein**, a practicing attorney in Washington, D.C., has written for the *American Scholar* and the *Times Literary Supplement*. **John R. Stilgoe**, Orchard Professor in the History of Landscape in the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University, is the author of *Alongshore* (1994) and many other books. **Edward Tenner**, the author of *Why Things Bite Back: Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences* (1996), is a visiting researcher at Princeton University. **Martin Walker**, a journalist and the author most recently of *America Reborn: A Twentieth-Century Narrative in Twenty-Six Lives* (2000), was a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center last year. **Steve Weinberg** is the author of *Telling the Untold Story: How Investigative Reporters Are Changing the Craft of Biography* (1992).

Credits: Pages 10, 23, 129, 133, © Bettmann/CORBIS; p. 13, © CORBIS; p. 17, © David Turnley/CORBIS; p. 21, Photograph by Gerd Ludwig, National Geographic Society; p. 25, Courtesy of a private collection; p. 29, Enrico Ferorelli/Timepix; pp. 30–31, *Europa und der Stier—oder: Europa—Vision 3000* (1987) by Curt Stenvert, © 2001 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn; p. 33, © AFP/CORBIS; p. 39, Central Audiovisual Library, European Commission; p. 45, Associated Press/AP; p. 47, Scanpix Suede/SIPA; p. 49, © Adam Woolfitt/CORBIS; p. 55, Andreas Cellarius, *Harmonia Macrocosmica*, Rare Book Division, Library of Congress; p. 57, Detail from *School of Athens*, by Raphael, © Scala/Art Resource, N.Y.; p. 60, Giraudon/Art Resource, N.Y.; p. 62, Reproduced from *Measuring the Universe*, by Kitty Ferguson, published by Walker Publishing Company, Inc., © 1999 by Kitty Ferguson; p. 64, God of Zero, Late Classic Copán Stella D, after Coe 1978a, fig. 15; p. 67, © 1991 Bruno Barbey/Magnum Photos, Inc.; p. 69, © Abbas/Magnum Photos, Inc.; p. 73, Courtesy of Alex Vernon; p. 76, Courtesy of Bob McCann; p. 81, Timepix; p. 83, Nina Derman/SIPA; p. 88, The Granger Collection, N.Y.; p. 108, © Robert W. LaDuke, 1998; p. 113, AP Photo/William Plowman; p. 115, Photograph by Jock Carroll, from *Glenn Gould: Some Portraits of the Artist as a Young Man* (1995), published by Stoddart Publishing Co., Ltd.; p. 118, AP Photo/Peter Morrison; p. 127, *Banquet Piece with Oysters, Fruit, and Wine*, c. 1610/1620, Osias Beert the Elder, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Patrons' Permanent Fund; p. 137, © V&A Picture Library; p. 139, Special Collections Division, University of Washington Libraries, Negative No.: HMJ 26/4; p. 141, © Glasgow Museums.

From the Center

Many expect that the closely divided Congress convening at the start of this new year will become mired in endless bickering and accomplish little. Indeed, the perception of division and contention in Congress is a principal cause of the public's expressed lack of confidence in the institution. I've often been asked, with varying degrees of exasperation, "Why can't the members of Congress end their differences and work together?" The beginning of the 107th Congress seems an appropriate moment to reflect on that question.

Why is it so difficult for Congress to reach agreement on so many issues? One obvious reason is the nature of politics, plain and simple. The ceaseless struggle for partisan or personal advantage, particularly in an election year, can stall the work of Congress substantially. That's certainly something I saw demonstrated time and again during my own 34 years of service as a congressman.

But there's a more fundamental reason. The fact is that Congress was not designed to move quickly or to be a model of efficiency and swift action. All of us need to understand that debate, disagreement, and delay are natural—and important—components of the legislative process, with a long tradition. The Founders intentionally devised a government that would rely on a system of checks and balances to forestall hasty action. So though legislative disputes and delays may often be frustrating to us, they are not the self-evident signs of a democracy in decay.

The job of the Congress is to reach consensus on how to meet the most intractable public-policy challenges of our day. When a consensus exists in society, Congress can move with dispatch. But consensus is rare, especially on the tough issues at the forefront of public life. We live in a complicated country, of vast size and remarkable diversity. Our people are spread far and wide, and they represent a great variety of beliefs, religions, and ethnicities. If Congress is to forge policies that accurately reflect the diverse perspectives of the American people, it must first build consensus, however slowly and painfully.

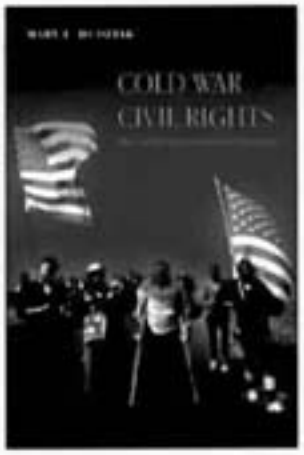
The task of achieving consensus is made additionally difficult nowadays by the sheer number of issues before Congress, by the complex and technical character of many of them, and by the staggering rapidity with which they come at members. In *The Federalist*, James Madison wrote that a member of Congress must understand just three matters: commerce, taxation, and the militia. To a member today, that observation will seem hopelessly antiquated (and terribly appealing). A few years ago, when I sat down with the Speaker of the House to discuss the bills that should be placed on the House calendar in the closing days of the session, he remarked that most of the issues we were discussing would not even have been on the agenda 15 years earlier.

Whenever I visit with students in American government classes, I make a point of flipping through their textbooks to find the time-hallowed diagrams showing "how a bill becomes a law." In a technical sense, of course, the diagrams, with their neat boxes and relentless arrows, are accurate. Yet I can't help but think how boring they are as well. They give a woefully incomplete picture of the often untidy legislative process, and, as a result, they fail to convey its vitality.

None of the human drama of the Congress at work is in the diagrams. Missing entirely are the give-and-take among members and hard-working staff, the political pressures brought to bear on them, the obstacles put in their path, the incremental advances, the unexpected setbacks, and the eventual satisfaction when the job is done. Yes, there may be sharp division and boisterous debate along the way, and the whole procedure may take more time than an outside (or even an inside) observer might think it should. But in the end what matters is that this process of deliberation, negotiation, and compromise serves democracy well and enables us to live together peacefully and productively.

Lee H. Hamilton
Director

New from Princeton



Cold War Civil Rights

Race and the Image of American Democracy

Mary L. Dudziak

Soon after the United States' segregated military defeated a racist regime in World War II, American racism was a major concern of U.S. allies and an obstacle to American Cold War goals throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Mary Dudziak argues that the Cold War helped facilitate key social reforms at home, including desegregation. Never before has a writer so directly connected civil rights and the Cold War.

"A *tour de force*. Dudziak's brilliant analysis shows that the Cold War had a profound impact on the civil rights movement."—Elaine Tyler May, author of *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*

Cloth $29.95 ISBN 0-691-01661-5

The Economic Evolution of American Health Care

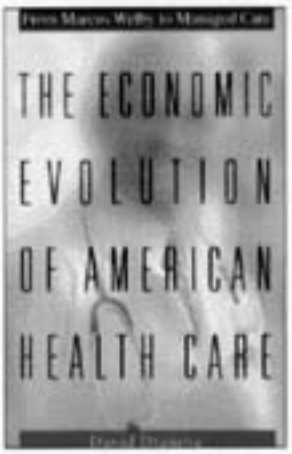
From Marcus Welby to Managed Care

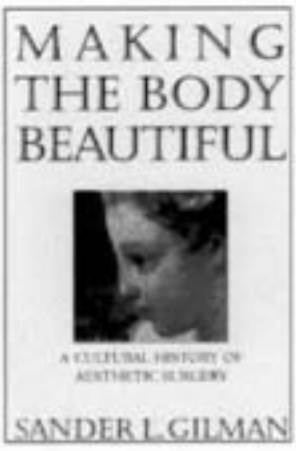
David Dranove

The American health care industry has undergone such dizzying transformations since the 1960s that many patients have lost confidence in a system they find too impersonal and ineffectual. Is their distrust justified? Can their confidence be restored?

David Dranove, a leading health care economist, tackles these and other key questions in this first major economic and historical investigation of the modern medical system. Dranove offers timely policy recommendations for reforming managed care as well as advice for patients making health care decisions.

Cloth $27.95 ISBN 0-691-00693-8





New in paperback

Making the Body Beautiful

A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery

Sander L. Gilman

This is a profound, provocative, and engaging study of how humans have sought to change their lives by transforming their bodies.

"A [wide-ranging] and enjoyable work. . . . Gilman has an eye for detail, yet remains aware of the wider perspective. . . . Fascinating. . . . Rich, elegant and beautiful."—*The Times Literary Supplement*

"Readable and useful. . . . Through Mr. Gilman's long lens, the search for beauty and the fashion for plastic surgery are not a contemporary ill, but something older and more universal."—*The Economist*

Paper $16.95 ISBN 0-691-07053-9

Princeton University Press

800-777-4726 • WWW.PUP.PRINCETON.EDU