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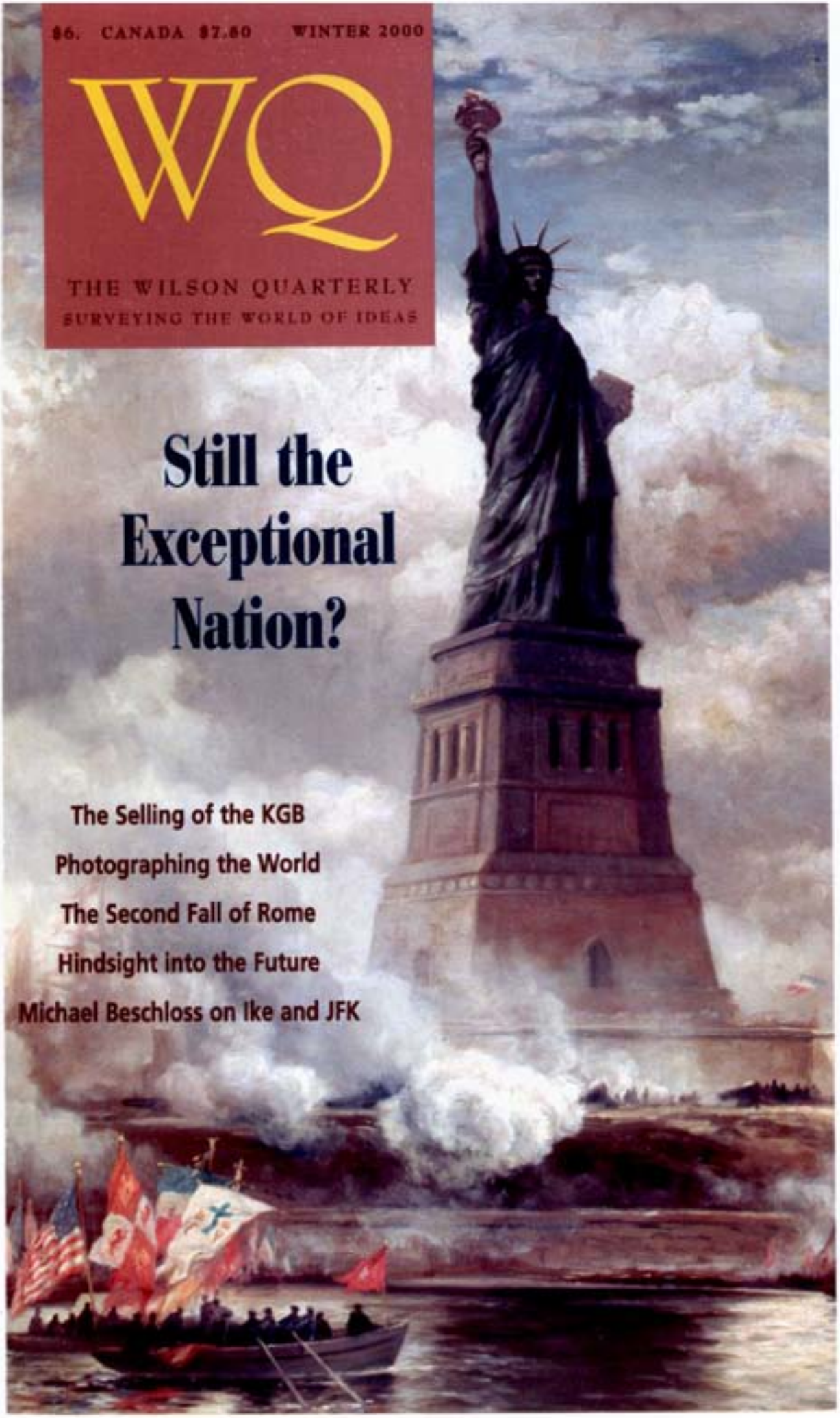
WQ

THE WILSON QUARTERLY
SURVEYING THE WORLD OF IDEAS



Still the Exceptional Nation?

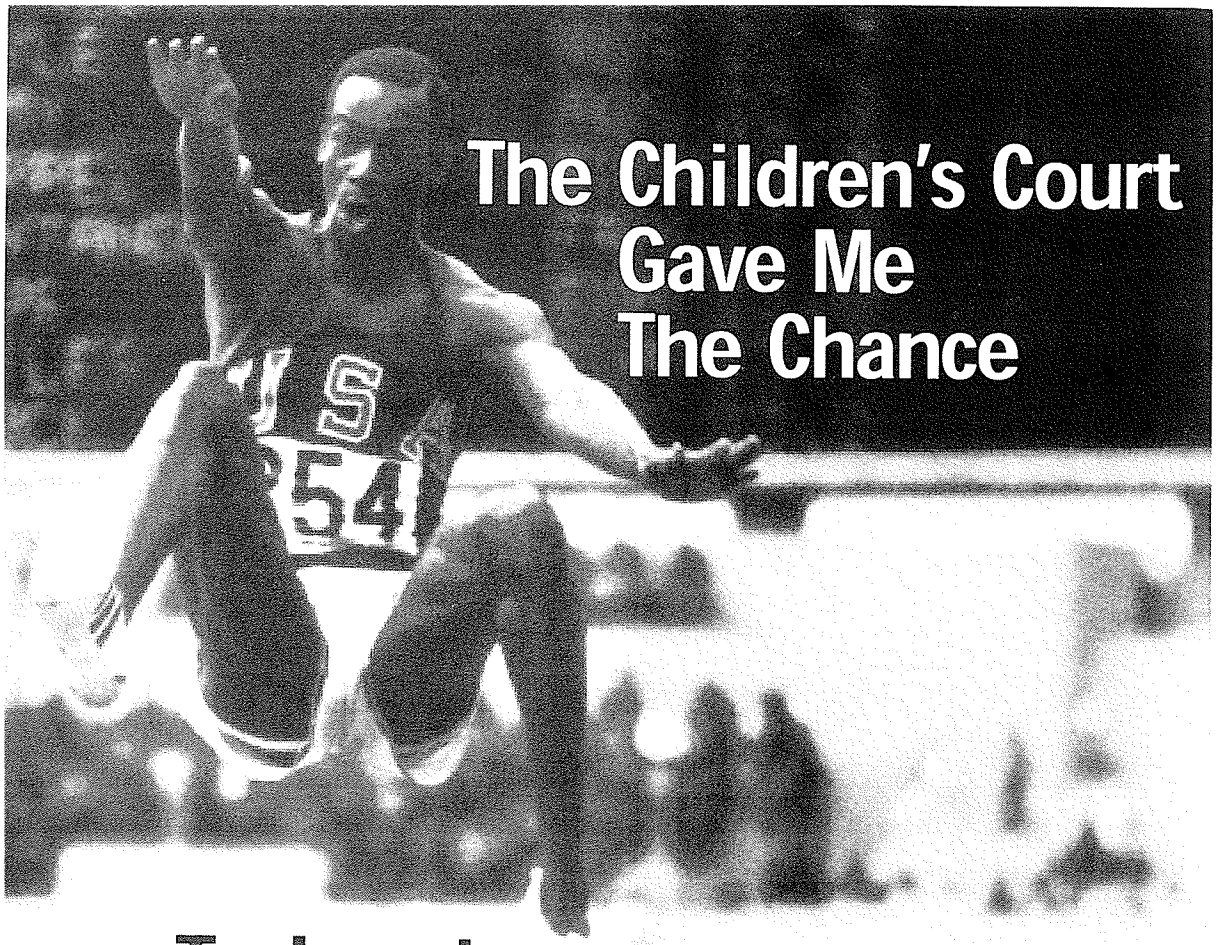
The Selling of the KGB

Photographing the World

The Second Fall of Rome

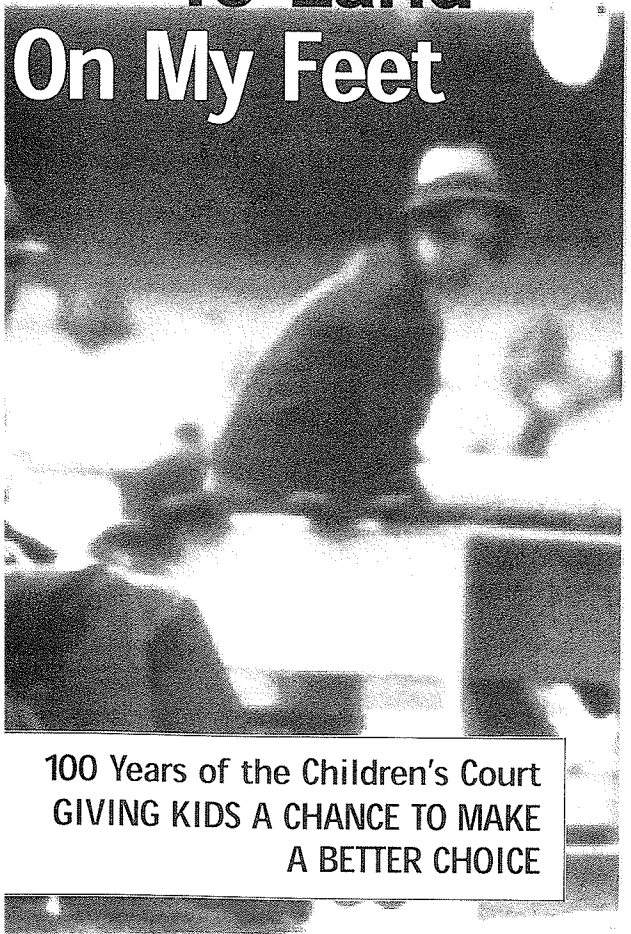
Hindsight into the Future

Michael Beschloss on Ike and JFK



The Children's Court Gave Me The Chance

To Land On My Feet



"Some people think Mexico City was the longest jump I ever made. But just getting there was tougher.

As a kid, I was in a gang... in trouble with the law.

If not for a children's court judge who saw more in me – who knew that when kids are supported by caring adults, they can learn from their mistakes – I could have landed in prison.

He sent me to an alternative school where people helped me get on track.

The children's court gave me the chance to land on my feet."

Bob Beamon,
Olympic Gold Medalist, Long Jump,
Mexico City, 1968

100 Years of the Children's Court
GIVING KIDS A CHANCE TO MAKE A BETTER CHOICE

To find out more about the Children's Court Centennial Communication Project, visit www.cjcj.org/centennial

Justice Policy Institute • U.S. Department of Justice • The Annie E. Casey Foundation
The Children and Family Justice Center

Editor's Comment

Eminent is not the first word a stranger would think to apply upon meeting the affable, inquisitive man who wrote this issue's cover story. Here at the Wilson Center, Senior Scholar Seymour Martin Lipset can be found as deeply engaged in an impromptu hallway discussion as he is in one of the Center's formal meetings or conferences. Over lunch, the talk may range from the high politics of France to revealing details of daily life in Japan to a morsel of intellectual gossip—and then to the theory of gossip. Before long, the stranger would recognize the overwhelming passion to know—to know *everything*—that helps account for Lipset's extraordinary accomplishments: a shelf of influential books, innumerable articles, the presidency of both the American Political Science Association and the American Sociological Association, and many others. A scholar I know summed up his influence by saying that "he may be the most widely known and widely read social scientist in the world."

From the beginning of his career in the 1950s, Lipset has kept his eye on the big questions, and especially on one all-encompassing question: What are the underpinnings of democracy? Where other social scientists have searched for clues in abstract indicators and formulas, he has focused on values and culture. Combining the methods of his discipline with liberal doses of history, personal social observation, and a deep knowledge of other nations, he practices an unusually humane variety of social science.

In 1963, Lipset published one of his more influential books, *The First New Nation*, inquiring into the American experience for ideas that could serve as a guide for the other new nations then emerging from colonialism in Asia and Africa. Now, amid a fresh wave of democratic transformations, Lipset finds his presence and his views in perhaps more demand than ever. He has the pleasure of seeing a good number of his hopes and predictions fulfilled—and of asking, as he does in this issue, yet another big question: What next?

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COVER Detail from *Unveiling of the Statue of Liberty* (1886), by Edward Moran, © Museum of the City of New York/Corbis. Design by Adrianne Onderdonk Dudden.

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Correspondence

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Searching for School Solutions

After 30 years in the education field, I've concluded that nearly all policy issues can be distilled to this: whom do you trust to do right by kids? In the United States, there are five possible answers (and, of course, various combinations): (1) the children's parents, (2) teachers and other educators in individual schools, (3) local school systems, (4) state policymakers, and (5) federal policymakers. Liberals, for the most part, opt for (2) and (5), and sometimes (3), depending on who holds office in their states. Conservatives, for the most part, favor (1) and sometimes (3), again depending on who is making policy in their state.

I've also found that the better you know the inner workings of any of these options, the less faith you're apt to have in it. That's certainly my view of the federal policy scene after long immersion in it. Whatever drives all those interest groups, bureaucrats, and elected and appointed officials, it's not an unquenchable impulse to do right by children! Washington does only a few necessary things in education (e.g., statistics and assessments), and unfortunately does not do them nearly well enough.

Now Tom Loveless ["The Parent Trap," *WQ*, Autumn '99] tells me I can't count on parents, and Chiara Nappi ["Local Illusions," *WQ*, Autumn '99] explains why I mustn't put too much stock in local school boards. This is bitter medicine indeed. Local school systems, with rare exception, turn out to be the chief bastions of the education status quo. So much for America's mantra of "local control." So much for the belief harbored by many conservatives that if Washington and state bureaucrats would just butt out and let communities run their own schools, all would be well.

Curbing one's faith in parents is more bitter still. Some do a fine job, and plenty more would if they had greater power to shape their children's education (a.k.a. school choice) and were better informed about how their kids and schools are actually doing (to which end we need high standards, good tests, and honest external audits). Still, Loveless is right to point out that too many of today's parents have themselves become part of the education problem.

So whom to trust? As in arms control, "trust but verify" is probably the best maxim. No one level of the K-12 enterprise has earned blind trust or unmitigated confidence. I tend to trust parents, provided they have power and good information; individual schools, so long as they have autonomy and nobody is forced to attend them; and states, so long as their governors and legislatures are bent on serious reform. I rarely trust the feds nowadays and share Dr. Nappi's doubts about most local districts. But all these endorsements and misgivings are qualified. No one level should have supreme power over children's educational fates. As with the U.S. government itself, checks and balances are needed. Some powers should be separated. Unfortunately, as in the federal government, this invites stalemate and gridlock. A dictator would be infinitely more efficient in making needed educational changes. But I don't think we can find one who deserves our trust and is worth the risks. I suppose that means we must keep muddling forward, guided, at least, by clear-eyed analyses such as those supplied by Loveless and Nappi.

Chester E. Finn, Jr.
Former Assistant U.S. Secretary of Education
Washington, D.C.

Who could argue with Paul Zoch's premise ["Our Uneducated Educators," *WQ*, Autumn '99] that educational leaders should have strong records of academic achievement and insist on the highest standards? But what happens to students who cannot meet the standards Zoch wants them to implement? Do kids in the lower 75th percentile just go away? I am under the impression that everyone, regardless of SAT scores or ability to take an advanced

placement class, let alone score a "5," has the opportunity to seek fulfillment and happiness in the United States. I thought we lived side by side, blue-collar and white-collar workers, scholars and athletes, degreed and nondegreed.

Can Zoch repair his own automobile or computer, or unclog his sink? Did he build his house? Does he have the sole responsibility to keep his classroom clean, vacuum the carpet daily, or paint the outside of the school where he teaches? The point is this: a world that is only open to intellectuals and those who score high on AP tests is fiction. And that's a good thing.

Most of society's children attend public schools. It is the responsibility of educational leaders to guide all students and, if appropriate, their families within the community. This task includes people whom Zoch, it would appear, is unwilling to have in school. The ability to score high on a college placement test is not necessarily indicative of the abilities needed to fill all the occupations our society requires. When my car goes into the shop for a brake job, my concern is that the mechanic will know how to insure it stops, the first and every subsequent time.

If the purpose of school is to create literate, informed, and well-balanced members of society, school leaders must be able to work with all members of the community and school staff, regardless of their level of academic excellence or years of education. The tools of the trade in this field are more closely tied to people skills and the ability to keep a cool head in the maze of state-mandated costs, content requirements, union contracts, district responsibilities, and confused and angry parents. The ability to facilitate growth and maturation in young people and a willingness to help families navigate the minefield of adolescence are not measured in test scores or a person's ability to meet Zoch's standard of graduate coursework and educational leadership.

Dave Walters
Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.

"The Long Road to Better Schools" points out the naiveté of the prevailing mantra that raising school standards will bring about improvement. Raising standards is undoubtedly important, but, as Tom Loveless points out, any attempt to hold students' and schools' collective feet to the fire will fail unless the standards are embraced by parents. To date, the focus of the standards debate has been on inner-city schools. But when schools threaten to hold back middle-class students who fail to meet standards, cries of outrage and accusations of poor teaching and unfair assessment will erupt, and the standards movement will be dead in the water. Given the poor quality of so many teachers and school administrators (as Charles Glenn ["The Teachers' Muddle," *WQ*, Autumn '99] and Paul Zoch show), parents will be partially correct when they point the finger at schools for failing to educate their children to performance standards. Until we have higher standards for teachers and administrators, it is hardly fair to impose them on students.

It will take at least three other types of reforms to get parents to jump on the standards bandwagon. First, the new standards must be tied to genuine consequences; standards without stakes are meaningless. This means ending social promotion, toughening entrance requirements, and eliminating remedial education at postsecondary institutions.

Second, we need a uniform system of student assessment so that everyone involved—students, parents, teachers, and school administrators—can see how the schools are performing. I favor national examinations in each subject area, but even statewide exams and uniform transcripts would be better than what we have now, which is an undecipherable hodgepodge of numbers and letters that are easily manipulated by schools to show their best side.

Finally, parents must be allowed to choose where their children attend school. Imagine, for a moment, a proposal to reduce air pollution in which individual drivers were penalized financially for driving cars that fail to meet established fuel consumption requirements. There's only

one hitch: you have no choice about which car you purchase. Would you be content to bear this burden? Should parents and their children bear the burden of not being able to choose between schools that can educate students effectively and those that cannot?

Laurence Steinberg
Temple University
Philadelphia, Pa.
Author, Beyond the Classroom: Why School Reform Has Failed and What Parents Need to Do

Consider the following analogy: an individual has neglected his health for years and develops an array of serious, even life-threatening, conditions. Eventually he breaks out in a rash, and his doctor addresses just the rash, treating it with a number of therapies. This corresponds to the way politicians are treating education. As a high school English teacher with 32 years of experience, I believe the *WQ*'s four articles on schools should be required reading for everyone who is involved in educational policy, especially those at the state and national level, where most educational nonsense originates.

Mary C. Haraden
Canyon, Texas

Golden Inconsistency

Michael Kazin's article on William Jennings Bryan ["The Forgotten Forerunner," *WQ*, Autumn '99] reminded me of my father's experience with the Great Commoner some 90 years ago. Earle Pearson was an advance man for the Redpath-Horner Chautauqua Circuit that operated out of Kansas City. One of his duties was to pay the lecturers at each stop on the circuit. Ordinary cash was usually acceptable, but Bryan did not trust paper or silver currency. He insisted on being paid in gold. My father concluded that this displayed more than a little hypocrisy. This was, after all, the presidential candidate who had barnstormed against ordinary Americans being crucified on a cross of gold.

Richard Pearson
East Hartland, Conn.

Paean to Federalism

It's nice to see a Washington institution print a paean to federalism ("An American Dilemma," *WQ*, Autumn '99). In the end, though, Shep Melnick's remedy for the American dilemma is conventionally disappointing. Decentralization has been proposed repeatedly since Eisenhower's election in 1952, yet big government has grown apace. Melnick does not address the obstacles to decentralization. For instance, the federal-aid highway program, which was created on Eisenhower's initiative, is an excellent candidate for turnback to the states, but Congress refuses to relinquish this pork barrel. Despite widespread support for devolution in recent years, there has been virtually no progress, due largely to the fact that Democrats want to centralize what Republicans want to devolve (e.g., social welfare), and vice versa (e.g., tort liability). There is also a simple reason. Interests that succeed in Washington, D.C., want to keep their programs there: "Devolution is wonderful, but devolve someone else's program. Mine is of real national importance."

Of course, other factors also motivate centralization, but insofar as the party system is a very important factor, devolution is unlikely to occur if state and local officials and citizens cannot regain significant measures of control over their political parties. One remedial step might be public financing of all U.S. House and Senate campaigns, not by the federal government but by each state, with no campaign contributions or party-building contributions permitted from interest groups and national party committees. Whether the U.S. Supreme Court would uphold such a scheme is unknown, but the Court is now the most federalism-friendly federal institution, although nearly all of its federalism rulings have been 5-4 decisions.

John Kincaid
Robert B. & Helen S. Meyner Professor of Government and Public Service
Lafayette College
Easton, Pa.

Shep Melnick describes the modern American dilemma as a paradox: Americans demand the services, entitlements, and protections that big government provides, yet we distrust the politics and government in Washington that produce the benefits. In Melnick's succinct, historical recounting of how we got in such a fix, I was with him all the way to the last paragraph, where I got derailed.

"One way to cope with this dilemma," Melnick concludes, "is to bring the providers of those benefits, services, and protections closer to the people who receive them." But how? Our most cherished government benefits, such as Social Security, Medicare, food stamps, and mortgage and charitable deductions, are expensive and unlikely candidates for decentralization. We have been decentralizing various Washington programs since Nixon's presidency, yet hostility toward Washington has continued to grow.

I have a simpler diagnosis and remedy for our dilemma. Distrust of Washington feeds on the partisan warfare that has plagued national policymaking and poisoned our public life for the past three decades. Our core problem is not big government. (The federal government has gotten smaller since the 1960s.) It is divided partisan government. Distrust of government has surged since the 1960s, when popular resentment toward race riots, government lies, campus turmoil, antiwar violence, and countercultural exhibitionism drove American voters to split their party tickets. This set the two elected branches and their polarized partisan keepers at each other's throats.

Rising prosperity in the 1980s and '90s has masked much of the damage caused by our broken system of unified party government, America's version of a parliamentary mandate to govern. But the next serious economic downturn will bring cries of pain and demands for relief on a scale that only Washington can provide. When that happens, the decentralization option isn't going to help us much. What may help most is for one party to win control of both the White House and Capitol Hill.

So pray for your party, in this first election of the 21st century, to win control of both the presidency and Congress. And, failing that, pray for it to lose them both.

Hugh Davis Graham
Department of History
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tenn.

Giving Due Credit

Do environmental problems threaten American national security? According to Geoffrey Dabelko ["The Environmental Factor," *WQ*, Autumn 1999), the "yes" camp created quite a stir in mid-1990s Washington. But under scrutiny, the links between national security and the environment have proven vague, often contrived, and generally unprovable. The arguments of Robert Kaplan and Thomas Homer-Dixon have not passed academic muster; policy interest has dwindled. Curiously, Dabelko concludes his analysis with the equally bold claim that addressing global environmental problems will "aid the cause of peace." This, too, is unlikely to pass academic muster, and for the same reasons.

Interactions between ecological and social systems are extremely complex. Some environmental problems become security issues; at times, addressing these promotes peace. But little is certain. The expectation that scholars can develop models specifying and predicting such outcomes on a regular basis is unrealistic.

There are other ways of assessing Homer-Dixon's work. His arguments helped keep the environment on the policy table and gave Clinton and Gore a way of promoting environmental initiatives in a hostile Congress. They helped to engage various countries, including Russia and China, in dialogue about making the world a safer place, a process that produced over a dozen bilateral and trilateral agreements. They provided support to those working to make defense preparations less environmentally damaging and archived satellite imagery more widely accessible. They encouraged volatile countries like Pakistan to study the ways in which severe environmental stress might contribute to civil conflict and instability. Even if the "yes" camp is wrong, this debate should be valued as part of the expanding environmental discourse that offers much hope for the plight of humankind in the next century. For that we can thank the "little-known assistant professor at the University of Toronto."

Richard Matthew
Schools of Social Ecology and Social Science
University of California
Irvine, Calif.

Mind Your Manners

George Watson's article, "Call Me Mister" [*WQ*, Autumn '99] touched a nerve. When I was new to the United States 17 years ago, I recall the shock I felt at the sudden familiarity of the people, especially government officials who have either forgotten or don't know that they are in service to the public. It is the feeling one gets when someone stands uncomfortably close.

Long overdue is another change, one that I have practiced for the last 15 years: more formal dress at work; and at home, casual attire that avoids any hint of walking-billboard syndrome. Ned Crabb had the last word on dress in his *Wall Street Journal* article "Dress to Regress." One custom I like is the habit of people in my part of the world of addressing each other as Sir or Ma'am during casual interactions. It is a custom I have adopted. And so, I am, Sir. . . .

A. W. Donovan-Shead
Tulsa, Okla.

Watson's illuminating piece on honorifics omitted one curious ambiguity. If I asked Tony Blair a question, I would say, "Prime Minister, what about. . ." and he would answer, "The problem, Mr. Howe, is. . ." If I were at a White House press conference, I would say, "Mr. President, is it true. . ." and he would answer, "Well, Russ. . ." If I did a follow-up with "Well, Bill. . ." the stenotypist would have a cerebral hemorrhage. My colleagues address the president as the lord of the manor and enjoy being answered as footmen. Odd. Gross, even.

Russell Howe
Washington, D.C.

English is my second language, and I grew up using two pronouns of address. I have always felt uneasy addressing my in-laws by the informal *you*, or by their first names. In Spanish, I use the formal *usted* rather than the informal *tu*. It is also proper, when addressing an elder by his or her first name, to say "Don Juan" instead of simply "Juan." After 20 years of marriage, I still have not been able to take the "horrid plunge" when addressing my in-laws.

Angelica Rogers
Visalia, Calif.

Findings

Toward the Year 3000

The approach of the millennium prompted us to telephone Daniel Bell, by far the most illuminating futurist (a term he avoids) of the past several decades. The retired Harvard University sociologist wrote *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (1976) and headed the Commission on the Year 2000, which published *Toward the Year 2000: Work in Progress* (1967). Both books were reissued recently, and both still seem substantially more sophisticated than many of today's efforts, written by assorted pop futurists and simple-minded digiprophets.

But Bell assured us that future studies is alive and well. Big banks, corporations, and the Central Intelligence Agency and other government organizations all engage in long-range planning, attempting to identify "structural shifts" and the changes flowing from them. A case in point: the virtual end of scarcities of basic materials such as copper, thanks to the rise of materials science, which can readily create substitutes (e.g., fiber-optic cables). That means, Bell said, that global commodity cartels are a thing of the past—and that developing countries that try to survive chiefly by selling raw materials will find themselves in trouble.

A surprising caveat was entered the very next day by former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Newt Gingrich, Bell's ideological opposite, who braced a Wilson Center audience with a speech about the urgent need for better government planning in foreign affairs. Gingrich worries that those guiding U.S. foreign and defense policy lack the means and the time to plan far ahead for the post-Cold War world. While private sector leaders have learned to take advantage of information age possibilities, the government apparatus has failed to adapt, he warned. (Noting that the CIA failed to anticipate the financial collapse of Thailand and Indonesia, he suggested that a subscription to the London *Financial Times* would have solved the problem.) There also seems to be less time available to look far ahead. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Gingrich noted, regularly chaired a meeting of the National Security Council that was *not* concerned with a pressing problem.

"You have lots of people who have power and lots of people who have ideas, but almost never in the same room," Gingrich observed. "The people who have power are too busy to learn anything and the people who have ideas are too busy to get power. The result is that you have uninformed power and irrelevant ideas."

Aristocratic Airs

Six hundred years of tradition came to an abrupt end last year when Britain's 700 hereditary peers were drummed out of the House of Lords (though some were allowed to stay on temporarily). Lovers of ancient institutions may find some consolation in the fact that more than 100 rather exotic hereditary titles have survived the millennium—and in fact seemed to escape much notice at all until the recent publication of *Keepers of*

The Herb Strewer

the Kingdom: Ancient Offices of Britain.

With only a few exceptions, such as Chancellor of the Exchequer, the titles are now almost entirely ornamental, notes author Alastair Bruce. But their holders—from the Queen's Swan Marker and the Cock O'The North to the Hereditary Falconer and Black Rod—once performed vital functions.

The royal Herb Strewer, for example, helped alleviate an especially odious problem. Until the 19th century, the royal existence was often disturbed by "foul gases" emanating from the sewage drains of Tudor palaces. Beginning in 1660 under King Charles II, Herb Strewers fought off these noxious odors by spreading rue, mint, sage, chamomile, roses, and lavender throughout the royal apartments. They also preceded monarchs in processions among "their less hygienic subjects." For better or worse, no Herb Strewer has been called to active duty since the coronation of George IV in 1821, but Bruce reports that the current heir (or should we say *air*?) is standing by, eagerly awaiting the call to "sweeten the air at Westminster Abbey once again."

Melting At Last?

Interracial and interethnic marriages are on the rise, according to a new analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 1998 Current Population Survey. The data reveal that the total number of such unions has doubled since 1980, reaching three million. That's five percent of all married couples in the United States. The trend toward intermarriage is strongest among the young; 30 percent of married Asian Americans between the ages of 15 and 24 have married outside the group, as have 16 percent of Hispanics and 11 percent of blacks in this age group.

"This is the beginning point of a blending of the races," predicts William Frey, a sociologist at the State University of New York at Albany and author of the census study. It is likely "that in these households racial or ethnic attitudes will soften," he says in *American Demographics* (Nov. 1999), as families realize that they can embrace many cultures without losing any one facet of their identity.

If Frey is correct, then even as we are busily compartmentalizing identity into racial and ethnic groups with unique rights, many members of these groups are crossing over. Even the 2000 census has been altered to reflect this fact. In 1997, the Office of Management and Budget decided to allow people to pick more than one racial or ethnic category in the family background question. It is estimated that almost 1.5 million Americans identify themselves as multiracial, suggesting that the United States will one day resemble the melting pot it was always reputed to be.

Only One Stein, Only One

Now one of the most respected authors of the 20th century, Gertrude Stein (1874–1946) once inspired more parody than praise. Her famously repetitive style provoked ridicule in even the most well-read circles, as this 1912 rejection letter from a frazzled book publisher attests. The missive appears in the recently published *Letters of the Century, America: 1900–1999*, compiled by Lisa Grunwald and Stephen J. Adler:

> Dear Madam,
>
> I am only one, only one, only one. Only one being, one at the same time. Not two, not three, only one. Only one life to live, only sixty minutes in one hour. Only one pair of eyes. Only one brain. Only one being. Being only one, have only one pair of eyes, having only one time, having only one life, I cannot read your M.S. three or four times. Not even one time. Only one look, only one look is enough. Hardly one copy would sell here. Hardly one. Hardly one.
>
> Many thanks. I am returning the M.S. by registered post. Only one M.S. by one post.
>
> Sincerely yours,
> A. C. Fifield

Who's Afraid of Leisure?

Americans constantly complain that they don't have enough leisure, but their eagerness to fill their spare hours with ceaseless "leisure" activities such as shopping and TV watching suggests that free time may actually be one of the things they fear most. Writing in the *Public Interest* (Fall 1999), political scientist Diana Schaub compares millennial America to ancient Sparta, which faced ruin when there was no war to engage its energies—because, according to Aristotle, the Spartans' leaders had "not educated them to be capable of being at leisure."

Americans, says Schaub, who teaches at Loyola College in Maryland, may be as dependent on work as the Spartans were on war. "It may sound odd, but it is the post-Cold War generations that face the toughest test. They must demonstrate whether the nation can keep its edge without necessity as a whetstone. . . .

"We made a big detour from a liberal understanding of leisure once before. Suburban middle-class American women in the 1950s and 1960s found themselves blessed with hard-working husbands, timesaving technology, and comparatively minimal child-care responsibilities (a result of small families and public schooling), yet by all accounts, they felt empty and incomplete. In *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan called this 'the problem that has no name,' a problem that 'cannot be understood in terms of the age-old material problems of man: poverty, sickness, hunger, cold.' Friedan was right that the malaise these privileged women were experiencing was a result of 'a slow death of mind and spirit.' But she was wrong in saying that the problem had no name—its name was boredom. Feminism was born of boredom, not oppression. And what was the solution to this quandry? Feminists clamored to became wage-slaves; they resolutely fled the challenge of leisure.

"Perhaps it is unfair to fault feminists for having no higher conception of value than what DuBois called the 'Gospel of Pay.' Like other Americans, these women had formed the habit 'of interpreting the world in dollars.' Their assertiveness aped the already misguided American male assertiveness. Feminists would have been better advised to hold out for the superior worth and satisfactions of the domestic realm or perhaps to encourage women to be the vanguard for nobler aspirations. Women could have pursued liberal studies, politics, art, civic culture, and philanthropy. What they needed was an education to make them capable of leisure; what they got instead was a doubling of their duties. Today's overburdened women are beginning to realize that obligatory participation in the work force is not the route to self-realization (or family cohesion or societal happiness). Feminism should have been either intransigently conservative or truly radical. Instead, it was conformist to the core."

A Case of Projection

WHO GOT RUSSIA WRONG? When we saw that headline on the cover of the October 4th issue of the *Nation*, we rashly assumed that the editors of that journal so long noted for its infinite sympathy for the great Soviet experiment were going to engage in a little Soviet-style "self-criticism." Instead, the article turned out to be an exposé of a Pulitzer Prize-winning *Wall Street Journal* reporter's "deluded" and "inappropriately enthusiastic" coverage of market reform in postcommunist Russia. The *Journal* and its reporter ("a knee-jerk anti-Communist") failed, it seems, to notice "the corruption that was a daily reality for the majority of Russians" until it was "far too late."

Hmmmm...

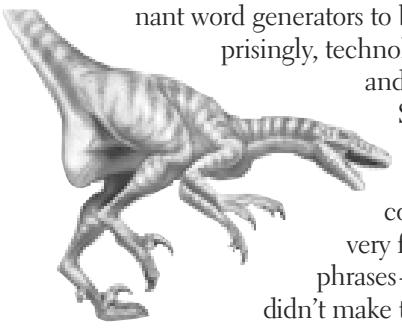
Clicking for Charity

One-click shopping on the Internet is all about ease. You control "the customer experience," as Amazon.com CEO Jeff Bezos calls it. Now it is also possible with just one click to feed a hungry person somewhere in the world "at no cost to you." Visitors to www.thehungersite.com need do nothing more purposeful than click on the "donate free food" button, and corporate sponsors pay one half-cent for a quarter-cup of food, distributed through the United Nations World Food Program, in exchange for free advertising and links.

Press reports have praised the site as one, amidst all the aimless clicking around the Web, that actually accomplishes something. "You can help those less fortunate than yourself without ever having to spend a penny to do it," trumpeted one reviewer. Do a good deed "with no donation from yourself at all." The site may educate people about world hunger (on the home page, a country somewhere on a world map flashes black every 3.6 seconds, signifying a death due to hunger). It may even "push back the boundaries of human compassion" and "channel the cold, financial logic of online advertising to the warmer, social purposes of charity," as one reviewer has claimed. But it also removes the obligation that true charity used to require. It exacts nothing. "Do your part to end hunger," one teaser prompts. "All it takes is one click."

Words to Live By

Last fall, the editors of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* released a list of the words added to the dictionary in the 1990s. It reveals the decade's dominant word generators to be, not surprisingly, technology, leisure, and the media. Street language, however, contributed very few phat phrases—*phat* itself didn't make the cut.



Although some of the new words are merely specialist terms that have made their way into our common lexicon—*velociraptor* (dinosaur), *euro* (new European currency), and *echinacea* (medicinal herb)—most demonstrate the unprecedented demands made on the language by technological innovation, free time, and televison. Contributing 24 of the 99 terms added in the second half of the decade, technology is the leading language generator. The *Internet* alone (amazingly, the term was only added in 1997) has spawned a brood of 12 nouns: *newsgroup*, *chat room*, *clip art*, *home page*, *hyperlink*, *netiquette*, *netizen*, *screen saver*, *search engine*, *spam*, *URL*, and *World Wide Web*.

Leisure generated 13 words, from *aerobicize*, *edutainment*, and *ear candy*, to *ecotourism*, *channel surfing*, and *brewpub*. The most remarkable new leisure terminology, however, could be called "nouns on the run": from *humvees* and *sport-utility vehicles* to *in-line skates* and *mountain bikes*, modern Americans know how to move.

The media take third place, with a dozen words such as *infomercial* and *dramedy*, but their bronze finish only illustrates the limitations of gauging a culture according to the words it lives by. The media, after all, are the means by which new words are popularized. Would anybody care what a velociraptor was if not for a very different kind of monster called *Jurassic Park*?

Stay of Execution

The date for what would have been the "first deliberate elimination of a biological species from the planet," as eight researchers put it in *Science* recently, came and went last June. Smallpox—"the most devastating infectious disease ever to afflict the human race," according to Dr. Brian Mahy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—was slated to draw its last breath on June 30th. But the World Health Assembly voted to delay its destruction until 2002. It was the fourth stay of execution the deadly microorganism has received.

Since the global smallpox eradication campaign ended in victory in 1977, routine vaccination has been abandoned, leaving nearly everyone on the planet susceptible to the disease. Were anyone to swipe the two remaining stores of live smallpox, the world's people would be sitting ducks for bioterrorism and biological warfare, advocates of destruction say.

But opponents point out that there are almost certainly undocumented samples of live smallpox in hidden repositories, from unlabeled laboratory vials to cadavers buried in permafrost. The destruction of known samples, therefore, only reduces the risk of bioterrorism. It does not compensate for the loss of raw material for further research. Study of the smallpox genome could aid our understanding of other viruses, they argue, and benefit humanity in the long run.

The opponents have won for now. Meanwhile, some 600 samples of the potent stuff languish on two laboratory death rows—one belonging to the CDC, in Atlanta, and the other to the Russian State Research Center of Virology and Biotechnology, in Koltsovo, Russia.

When Cats Ruled the World

"I am one who becomes two, I am two who becomes four, I am four who becomes eight, and I am one more besides."

These words of the cat-god Atum-Ra, taken from an Egyptian religious text of the 22nd Bubastite Dynasty (945–715 B.C.), may be the origin of the modern notion that a cat has nine lives. That is one speculation among many in the rambling *Classical Cats: The Rise and Fall of the Sacred Cat*, by Donald Engels. A historian at the University of Arkansas, Engels relates some 4,000 years of feline history, tracing the centrality of the animal in Western civilization.

Cats, he explains, were worshiped by ancient Egyptians to such an extent that they were mummified so they could accompany their masters into the next world. They were revered by Greek and Roman women as a symbol of fertility and guardian of health. No mystery there: at the rate of 1,100 successful pounces a year, the average feral cat could decimate populations of disease-bearing rats and mice. Engels writes, "In silence, in secret, and often at night, the ancient battle between the cat and the rodent, mankind's greatest natural enemy, has continued through the ages. Domesticated cats were the bulwark of Western societies' defense against the rodents and the thirty-five or so dangerous diseases they carry, including typhus and the bubonic plague." What began as gratitude for the service cats provided, became part of the classical world's religious beliefs.

But Christianity turned against the feline hunters. Because they were revered by pagan religions, cats came to symbolize Satan during the medieval era and to be seen as accessories to evil and witchcraft in general. Millions of the animals perished in the so-called Great Cat Massacre ordered by Pope Gregory IX in 1233. Amid the antifeline hysteria, women with suspicious connections to the creatures were also put to death. Hundreds of thousands died. The human tragedy did not end there. The "systematic elimination" of the cat from western Europe allowed the rat population to soar. The Black Death of 1346–51, which killed as many as 20 million people, was a direct result.

During the Enlightenment, cats came to be regarded as the loving companions they are today—still enjoying a form of worship in many households, but not the idolatry that probably had many counting to nine.

Amazing but True

Teenagers who drink alcohol are more likely to have sex, reports a new study by the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.

Maybe a more revealing research question might have been: at what age *aren't* those who drink more likely to have sex?

Wilson Center Events

"China and the Indochina Wars, 1945–75"
A conference sponsored by the Cold War International History Project and the History Department of the University of Hong Kong, held in Hong Kong, **January 11–12**

"The Pinochet Case: Implications for Chile and Beyond"
José Zalaquett, Professor of Law, University of Chile and former member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, **January 14**

"Ethnic Relations in Crimea: Finding a New Framework for Understanding Tensions in the Search for Peace"
Carina Korostelina, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Tavrichesky State University, Ukraine, and Regional Exchange Scholar, Kennan Institute, **January 31**

"The State and the Soldier in Asia: Change and Continuity in Civil-Military Relations"
Briefings and meetings sponsored by the Asia Program and the East-West Center of Honolulu, held at the Wilson Center and on Capitol Hill, **February 2**

"American Religion, Public Policy, and Public Philosophy in the 20th Century"
A conference sponsored by the Division of United States Studies, **February 4**

"The United States-Mexican Border: New Approaches to an Old Problem"
Robert Bach, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, and *Carlos Rico*, Consul-General of Mexico in Boston, **February 24**

"International Security in the Amazon Basin"
A conference sponsored by the Latin American Program and the Environmental Change and Security Project, **March 2**

"Water, Land, People, and Conflict"
A film screening, with panel discussion, sponsored by the Environmental Change and Security Project as part of the D.C. Environmental Film Festival, **March 22, 12–2 P.M.**

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 Cynthia Ely 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 Selling of the KGB

The post-Cold War world is awash in tantalizing tales from the KGB archives. But the new literature on Soviet espionage may be much less revealing than it appears.

by Amy Knight

The fascination in the West with spy stories seems limitless. Tales proliferate about the Cambridge Five spy group (Kim Philby et al.), the various New Deal subversives whose treachery in giving away secrets to the Soviet Union went unnoticed for years, and the efforts of the KGB to subvert Western democracies through propaganda and terrorism. But apparently readers do not tire of the accounts, judging from the recent sensational response to *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive*, by Christopher Andrew, a history professor at Cambridge University, and Vasili Mitrokhin, a former KGB officer.

The Sword and the Shield is the latest example of an emerging genre of spy histories based on materials from the KGB archives. For almost a decade now, Western writers and current or former Russian foreign intelligence officers have been collaborating on books about the KGB's foreign operations during the Soviet period. All of these volumes have a similar style and format, with chapter headings such as "The Great Illegals," "Love and Loyalties," and "A Dangerous Game," along with lengthy appendixes listing code names of secret agents and KGB operatives or presenting organizational charts of the KGB. They also tend to cover much of the same ground. Time and again the reader is told about Lenin's Cheka, the assassination of Trotsky, and Soviet atomic espionage.

Despite the redundancy inherent in the genre, these books have found an eager audience in the West. To be sure, there have been critical reviews and complaints about inaccuracies. But for the most part, the new KGB histories have received much favorable attention, and some of them have reached the best-seller list. They also have reopened debates among historians and the general public about key aspects of the Cold War. Indeed, Andrew and Mitrokhin's recent book, replete with new names (or code names) of Western traitors, set off a media frenzy in Britain and fueled impassioned political debates in several European countries about what to do with former spies.

Few would argue that the release of new information on the KGB's operations abroad is anything but a positive development. We should welcome the possibility of finding out what was happening on the other side of the Cold War

Big catch? Information from the KGB archives recently showed that Melita Norwood, a former secretary in Britain who is now in her eighties, spied for Moscow in the 1940s.

trenches and perhaps resolving some of the questions that have puzzled researchers for decades. What really happened to American prisoners of war believed to have ended up in the Soviet Union after World War II, Korea, and Vietnam? Do we know all there is to know about the KGB and Lee Harvey Oswald? Even in cases that are closed (such as that of convicted American spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg), there is a thirst in the West for more details from the Soviet side.

But in the excitement produced by the new revelations, many of the standards by which scholars traditionally judge historical writings have been lowered, or discarded altogether. Historians and general readers alike seem to have forgotten the importance of understanding where the information in a book has come from and who is interpreting and presenting it. "Even the most tendentious historical views can gain credibility in part because the sources of history can be interpreted in different ways—or sensationalized or falsified or used dishonestly or ignored," *New York Times* journalist Richard Bernstein observed in criticizing a historian's claims that Hitler did not know about the extermination of the Jews.

Bernstein's observation is particularly apt in the case of the new KGB page-turners, given that the source of the rev-

elations is an organization with a long history of falsification and forgery directed against the West. Have these books deepened our historical understanding or have they simply distorted the real picture and caused confusion? Have people been reading facts or *disinformatzia*? A look at how these spy books came about suggests that we should, at the very least, be reading them with more caution.

Andrew's earlier book, *KGB: The Inside Story of Its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev* (1990), began the new wave of collaborative spy history. Andrew teamed up with a high-level defector from the KGB named Oleg Gordievsky to write an extensive new history of the Soviet intelligence agency. Yet, while the book used information Gordievsky reportedly gleaned from the KGB archives, the bulk of the sources cited were secondary (Western histories and memoirs), not KGB documents. It was not until a year later, in 1991, that the KGB actually sanctioned a book project based on its files. In the changed political climate created by Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of openness, KGB officials decided that it was time to have their story told to the West. Facing unprecedented criticism from the newly emboldened Soviet press, the KGB set out to improve its image at home by publicizing its past successes. It also saw the possibility of earning some extra cash.

Enter John Costello, a successful British nonfiction writer, who first attracted the attention of the KGB when he requested documents for a book he was working on and was encouraged to come to Moscow. There he met Oleg Tsarev, a seasoned intelligence officer who spoke perfect English and was at the time deputy chief of the KGB press department. Tsarev had been commissioned by his superiors to write a book about Alexander Orlov, the Soviet spy who defected to the United States in the late 1930s. Because the book would be aimed at Western markets, it was essential to have a Western co-author with connections in the publishing world. Costello was an ideal candidate. In mid-1991, a collaboration sanctioned at the highest levels of the KGB was formally initiated between Tsarev and Costello, with Crown, a division of Random House, as publisher.

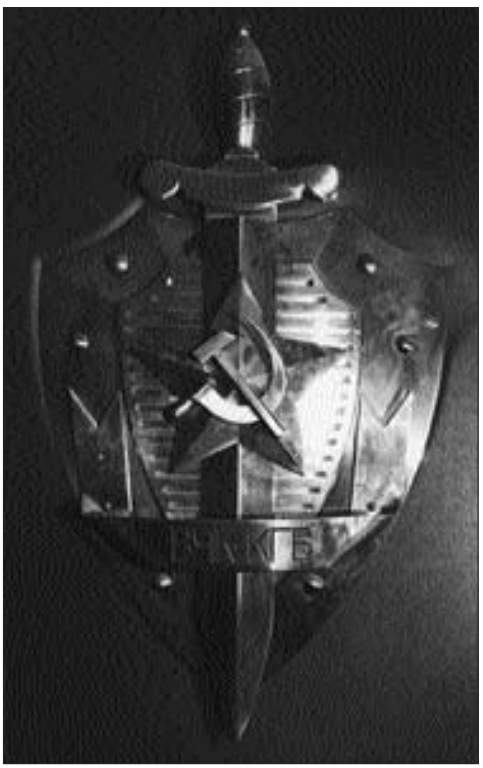
The end product was *Deadly Illusions*, published in 1993 with a great deal of fanfare because of the book's provocative thesis—that Orlov had never been a genuine defector but had stayed loyal to the Soviet Union. He had, the authors asserted, pulled the wool over the eyes of the Americans, who thought all along that Orlov was giving them valuable information when, in fact, he was passing on "half-truths and trivialities." The main source for this extraordinary thesis was the so-called Orlov file, a top-secret KGB dossier. But Costello, who did not read a word of Russian, never actually saw the Orlov file. Instead, he relied on Tsarev, assisted by a coterie of his colleagues at the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (or FIS, as it was renamed after the dissolution of the KGB in late 1991) to make "summaries" of the relevant documents in English.

In an afterword to the book, Costello admitted that this arrangement was not ideal, given that the KGB had a long track record of conspiracies against the West. But, he argued, "We had agreed from the outset that this would not be an 'as told to' account because at least one of the co-authors of this book has seen all the material." Overlooking the fact that his co-author had spent years abroad as a KGB officer, engaging in the deception and disinformation for which the KGB was notorious, Costello was full of praise for the Russians' "new level of openness," which marked a sharp contrast to the secretiveness of the CIA and the FBI. But this

> Amy Knight, *a former Wilson Center Fellow, recently published her fourth book on Soviet and Russian affairs,* Who Killed Kirov? The Kremlin's Greatest Mystery.

openness, it turns out, had distinct limits. Although Costello assured the reader that "all substantive documentation relating to the text will be declassified to coincide with the publication of *Deadly Illusions*," the Orlov documents, after seven years, are still inaccessible.

Deadly Illusions was followed in 1994 by a real blockbuster spy book, *Special Tasks: The Memoirs of an Unwanted Witness—a Soviet Spymaster*, by Pavel Sudoplatov and Anatoli Sudoplatov with Jerrold and Leona Schecter. As American historian Thomas Powers observed, "The book has more authors than a Hollywood movie with script trouble." When excerpts of *Special Tasks* were published in *Time*, and the MacNeil/Lehrer News-Hour devoted a large segment to its revelations, it was clear that the book would take American readers by storm. Among its sensational charges was the claim that several leading Western scientists of the 1940s, including Niels Bohr, Enrico Fermi, and Robert Oppenheimer, gave atomic secrets to the Soviet Union.



The sword and shield emblem of the former KGB

Again, the co-authoring arrangement and the methods of gathering source material were highly unusual. The 87-year-old Pavel Sudoplatov had been a leading official in the NKVD (a Stalinist predecessor to the KGB) during the 1940s and early 1950s, specializing in so-called wet affairs (assassinations and the like). In 1992 his son Anatoli, himself a former KGB employee, apparently decided that it was time to reap some profits from his father's memory bank before it was too late. He approached the Schecters (Jerrold was an American journalist and his wife a literary agent) with a plan for a book, but it did not fly. As the Schecters put it in their introduction, "Sudoplatov's first outline for the book was directed to a Russian audience; we explained that most of the names in the outline were unfamiliar to Western readers." After the younger Sudoplatov went back to the drawing board and came up with some familiar names such as Oppenheimer and Fermi, the Schecters became excited, and a deal was made. The Schecters began taping interviews with the elder and infirm Sudoplatov, prodded on during the sessions by son Anatoli, who must have had dollar signs in his eyes.

There were some hitches, however. Although Pavel Sudoplatov had indeed been an important NKVD official with access to many secrets, his connection with atomic espionage (which was to be the high point of the book) was very limited. In fact, despite the book's claims that Sudoplatov had led the Soviet atomic espionage effort since 1942, he was involved in this area only for a brief period during 1945–46. This was well after several of the spying episodes—presented in Sudoplatov's memoir as authoritative accounts—occurred. As if anticipating that the discrepancy would raise eyebrows, the Schecters said in their introduction that Sudoplatov had received helpful documents from the

FIS and that "in relaxed meetings with former KGB officers who had obtained atomic secrets, he filled in missing pieces of memory." All well and good, except for the fact that many of the book's allegations about the traitorous activity of Western scientists did not stand up to the scrutiny of those who knew about the subject. Indeed, the book was riddled with contradictions and errors. (To cite one of many examples, the authors say that Oppenheimer recruited Klaus Fuchs, a spy for the Soviets, to Los Alamos to work on the bomb, when Oppenheimer had nothing whatsoever to do with the decision.)

The Schecters remained undaunted in the face of a barrage of criticism from historians and members of the scientific community, doggedly defending the veracity of *Special Tasks* by telling people to look at the documentation at the back of the book. This documentation, impressive at first glance, turned out to have been published in the Russian press long before, and it did nothing to confirm Sudoplatov's allegations about Western scientists. As a last resort, the Schecters, like John Costello, offered the feeble promise that we would see archival documents to back up the book's claims: "Documents proving Sudoplatov's oral history are in Moscow archives and eventually will emerge." We are still waiting.

While the archives of the former KGB have remained tightly closed, Western scholars have unearthed a mine of materials in the Communist Party archives, opened to researchers after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Many documents (particularly those less than 30 years old and files relating to top party leaders) are still classified, but historians have found enough new information to justify reassessment of several key episodes in Soviet history. Thanks to the release of transcripts of Communist Party Central Committee plenums, for example, we have a new understanding of struggles within the party leadership over issues such as the crisis in East Germany in June 1953 and Khrushchev's efforts at rapprochement with Yugoslavia. The research process is entirely different from that involving KGB materials. With few exceptions, no one is hand-fed preselected documents. In the party archives (where knowledge of Russian is essential), one has to fend for oneself, spending hours going through lists of what is available, filling out forms, and waiting for requested materials to be delivered, which sometimes never happens. Making copies of documents is expensive and tedious, while the physical challenges—lack of heat and a bare minimum of lighting—can be daunting. Such inconveniences might make ordinary scholars envy the privileged few who get KGB materials with no hassle, but at least research in the party archives offers some freedom of choice, an essential prerequisite for historical objectivity. And the playing field, for the most part, is level. Everybody comes up against the same obstacles in hunting down sources.

That the FIS has preferred to do things a different way is understandable. Like all intelligence services, including the CIA, the FIS has many secrets and could hardly be expected to permit researchers to rummage in its archives. At the same time, however, the FIS wants to influence historical writing, earn some money, and give the impression of openness. The solution has been to handpick the documents and the authors. It is presumably more convenient if the Western co-author does not read Russian and or know a great deal about Soviet history. Otherwise, there might be awkward questions about missing files and documents or requests for materials that could not be released.

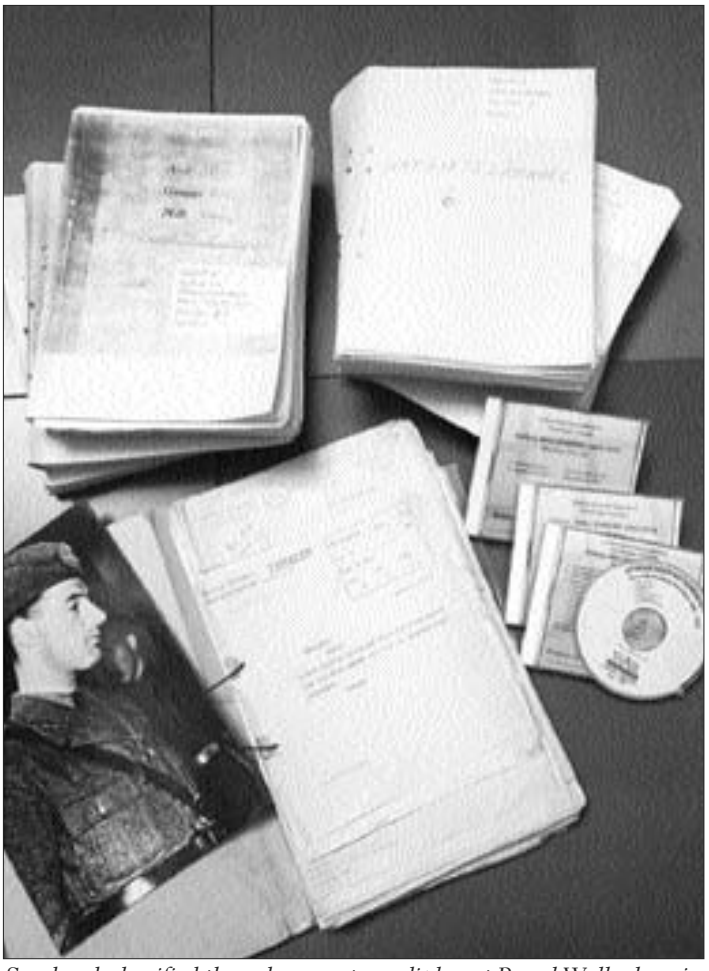
A case in point is *The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America—the Stalin Era*, by Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev, published in early 1999 by Random House to rave reviews. In the *New York Times Book Review*, historian Joseph Persico compared the book's sig-

nificance to that of Ultra (the British project that broke German codes during World War II), and said that the authors provided "proof of the guilt of certain Americans whose spying for the Soviet Union has been the subject of debate for over half a century." In addition to documenting the allegedly traitorous activity of Americans such as Martha Dodd, daughter of a former U.S. ambassador to Germany, Michael Straight, an official in the Roosevelt administration, and former New York congressman Samuel Dickstein, the authors claim to verify the guilt of Alger Hiss and former State Department official Laurence Duggan. Contrary to the general impression of reviewers, however, the authors did not cull their documentation from the FIS archives. Neither Weinstein, the author of a book about the Alger Hiss case, nor Vassiliev, a former KGB officer, ever gained access to the FIS's treasure-trove at its Iasenevo headquarters. Vassiliev simply made summaries of documents that were handed over to him at an office in Moscow by FIS officials and then translated them for Weinstein.

The arrangement was part of a lucrative book deal (involving advances to the Russians of several hundred thousand dollars) made between Random House and the Association of Retired Intelligence Officers, a Russian organization that serves as a middleman for the FIS. Iurii Kobaladze, head of FIS public relations, was the moving force behind the deal, just as he had been with *Deadly Illusions*. Kobaladze said, "We are not opening up the archives, and we are not selling any documents. What we are doing and we are guaranteeing to the authors of these books is that we shall supply them with materials which will allow them to write these books on the basis of documents." All very well for the FIS, which can determine what information the authors write about, and in the process reap substantial profits (none of which reach the Russian taxpayer), but what about the curious reader of these spy tomes, who would like to check the sources?

Although the authors of *The Haunted Wood* substantiate some of the references to KGB files with information from the so-called Venona cables (Soviet transmissions intercepted and decoded by the Americans during World War II), the majority of source notes refer only to KGB file numbers that no one can check. As with the earlier books, if we accept that the grave claims made against Americans are true, in the end we are relying on the word of the former KGB.

The Crown Jewels: The British Secrets at the Heart of the KGB Archives, another work co-authored by Oleg Tsarev, this time with British historian Nigel West (Costello died in 1996), is more of the same. Published in 1999 by Yale University Press, the book purports to offer much new information about well-known British spies (the Cambridge Five, in particular), as well as names of hitherto unknown traitors. As usual, the reader comes away dazzled by the Soviets' phenomenal success at recruiting spies and wondering how the government of the victim country, in this case Britain, could be so stupid. Yet while it is more smoothly written than some of the other spy books, *The Crown Jewels* (titled after the KGB's name for its top-secret files on Britain) does not offer any precious gems. The dust jacket promises, for example, that the book "explores a previously unknown spy ring in Oxford." In fact, all that the authors do is make vague references to a so-called Oxford Group without giving any names (except the code name, SCOTT, of the alleged leader), or specifics about what the group did. For the most part, *The Crown Jewels* merely adds details to already known spy episodes, covering only the period through the 1950s—safe ground from the FIS's standpoint. Since the Russians themselves have already published a number of documents about



Sweden declassified these documents on diplomat Raoul Wallenberg in 1997. He saved tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews from the Nazis during World War II; the KGB archives still hold clues to his fate.

Cold War espionage for this earlier period, the information cannot be viewed as earthshaking.

At least, however, the authors do not make a pretense of having conducted research in the KGB archives. They received the documents through the FIS press bureau, where Tsarev still worked under the tutelage of Kobaladze, by this time a familiar (and probably wealthy) figure in the world of spy history publishing.

Last year's *Sword and the Shield*, by contrast, is billed as something different. Co-author Christopher Andrew tells us that the sources were gathered by a defector, Vasili Mitrokhin, not a representative of the FIS, which means that they are more trustworthy. This in itself is a questionable premise, but even more problematic is the story of Mitrokhin's defection, which strains credulity. Mitrokhin, Andrew tells us, was a secret dissident who strongly disapproved of the KGB even though he worked for its foreign intelligence branch for 35 years. In 1972, for some inexplicable reason, Mitrokhin, who never achieved a rank above major in his entire KGB career, was given the sensitive job of overseeing the transfer of the KGB's entire foreign intelligence archive to its new headquarters outside Moscow. According to Andrew, Mitrokhin had two private offices and unlimited access to the KGB's darkest secrets. With the goal of getting back at his employers by telling the West about the KGB's foreign operations, Mitrokhin spent the next 12 years scribbling thousands upon thousands of notes from the files he saw. Incredibly, given the rigorous security rules in all Soviet archives, no one noticed what Mitrokhin was doing all day or checked him when he was going home at night.

The story gets even more mysterious. Despite all his hard work, Mitrokhin made no attempt to do anything with the notes he took (except to retype them) after his retirement in 1984. His private "archive" would apparently never have seen the light of day if it had not been for the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Emboldened to take action, Mitrokhin traveled to an unnamed

Baltic country in 1992 and knocked on the door of a British embassy. After a few more trips back and forth to Russia, he eventually was "exfiltrated" by the British with all his documents (six suitcases' worth) and his family. All this happened under the very noses of the members of the Russian security services, who apparently did not notice that one of their former colleagues who had had access to top-secret files was going back and forth to one of the now-independent Baltic states (where the Russians were spying up a storm).

Despite the strange circumstances surrounding the Mitrokhin story, which suggest that he had some help from his former employers in assembling his notes, Andrew considers his book to be more reliable than the other collaborative spy histories: "Their main weakness, for which the authors cannot be blamed, is that the choice of KGB documents on which they are based has been made not by them but by the SVR [the Russian acronym for the FIS]." Yet even if we accept that Mitrokhin was a genuine defector who did copy all the notes by himself, Andrew's effort to distinguish his book from the others falls a bit flat. In this case, too, someone other than the author selected the materials, and that someone used to work for the KGB.

While *The Sword and the Shield* contains new information, including the revelation that a British woman named Melita Norwood, now in her eighties, spied for the Soviets several decades ago, none of it has much significance for broader interpretations of the Cold War. The main message the reader comes away with after plowing through almost a thousand pages is the same one gleaned from the earlier books: the Soviets were incredibly successful, albeit evil, spymasters, and none of the Western services could come close to matching their expertise. Bravo the KGB.

What is disappointing, but not surprising, about all these books is their failure to shed light on some of the really pivotal cases of Cold War history. After all the rehashing of the Alger Hiss case, none of these books offer new evidence of his guilt, except for a single cable from the Venona transcripts that makes reference to an American agent codenamed ALES and speculates that it is probably Hiss. And the fate of Raoul Wallenberg, the celebrated Swedish diplomat who was kidnapped by the Soviets in Budapest in 1945, remains unknown. *Special Tasks* is the only book to touch on that case, and all it adds are Pavel Sudoplatov's foggy speculations about what happened to Wallenberg. It is clear, however, from an obscure reference made by Sudoplatov in a footnote to the "Wallenberg family file in the KGB archives" that FIS officials have been lying when they say they have no information about the Wallenberg case. For a variety of political reasons, not the least of which is the embarrassment to Russia if a cover-up were acknowledged, the FIS has chosen to keep Wallenberg's story a secret.

However disappointing these spy histories might be for those who are looking for documented facts and objective analyses, they should not be rejected out of hand, because they are all we have (unless one wants to wade through the self-serving and arid Russian-language memoirs of former KGB officials such as Vladimir Kriuchkov). There is no point in waiting for the Russians to open up their foreign intelligence archives to public access so that scholars can actually do their own research. Unless there is a drastic change in the way Russia's security and intelligence services operate, the FIS will continue to dole out its archival secrets for profit, selling only those documents that uphold its version of history. But this should not stop us from reading what they have to say now. Probably the best approach is to treat these books with the same kind of skepticism we applied to Soviet publications—from which the discerning reader could glean a great deal. In other words, read between the lines, and always consider the source. ❑

The World in Pieces

In the blink of a shutter, photography has the power to document our fragmented world and capture its elusiveness.

by Michael Ignatieff

Photography compresses complex moments of suffering and injustice—which have long and ambiguous histories—into necessarily simplified and abstracted visual icons. We always think photography tells us more than it does. We always think we understand more than we do when we look at a photograph. The reality is that we do not know the people in the photographs; the photographers themselves often do not even know the names of the people whose suffering or elation or terror they are recording. Their photography documents the distance between strangers, between the scream being uttered and going unheard, between the hand reaching out for help and failing to receive any.

But because of photography, our moral imagination is extended to situations we have never been in ourselves. Ignorance is no longer a plausible alibi in a world made transparent by imagery. If we have not done what we should with our knowledge, if we have not acted as we might have done and made our leaders act as they should, we cannot blame our messengers.

Despite the coming of television and the demise of the photoweeklies, photography has retained its ability to define the essential iconography of key historical experiences. Television only seems to tell us everything we need to know. It drains reality of mystery by suggesting that what we see is all there is. Good photography restores the mystery of the world by stopping time so that we can both see and reflect upon what is there. Hence the unending strangeness of photography: that it documents the world, establishes what is essentially there, while at the same time showing to us what we cannot see with our eyes alone. If photography has a redeeming or cleansing effect on our vision, it is because it seems to restore both the reality of the world and its essential elusiveness.

In 1954, the photographer Edward Steichen assembled the *Family of Man* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The hydrogen bomb, just then tested by both America and the Soviet Union, gave frantic urgency to the exhibition's affirmation of human universality. Few photographers today would lay

> Michael Ignatieff, *a journalist and historian, is the author of many books, including* The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience *(1998) and* Isaiah Berlin: A Life *(1998). This essay is adapted from his introduction to* magnum° *(Phaidon Press), published in January to mark the 50th anniversary of the Magnum photo agency.*

Kosovar refugees leaving Albania, April 1999, by Nikos Economopoulos

claim to the ideal of trying to show that human beings are the same underneath the skin. They seem intent chiefly on representing the modern world in all its fragmented, perplexed confusion. The world is in pieces: there are no Cold War mastodons left to oppose, no certainties to align oneself with. So be it, the image makers seem to be saying. Let us go out and see the world. These photographers do not want to affirm, just look; do not want to speak out, just observe; do not want to convince or persuade, just show. The purpose of photography is not political or moral or anything else; the purpose of photography is photography. End of story.

Photographers today work within a visual field dominated by the digitized video image. Sometimes they have to work against the visual field, salvaging something still and permanent from the ceaseless data stream. Sometimes, the stills photographers work with the new aesthetics made possible by the new media. They take for granted the new aesthetics of a video world: the off-center framing, the graininess, the strange, eccentric juxtaposition of images, the deliberate loss of context, the strange, degraded colors. Again, television does not stop to pause over strangeness and incongruity, so instead of being crowded out, stills photographers often have whole fields of our strange new visual world all to themselves.

These juxtapositions and oddities are the visual essence of uneven development in globalization: how new and old, modern, postmodern, and ancient coexist in the same frame. It is all there, like the fragments of some gigantic puzzle we collect in the hope that one day we might be able to assemble it into a discernible pattern. But the pattern escapes us now. It is too close. The photographers, like us, are too close to know what it means, but the act of taking the pictures implies, even in the most forlorn or hopeless context, that one day the shape of our fragmented time will be discernible and that their images will disclose some of the secrets of what we have lived through. ❑

Hindsight into The Future

A History of the Past, Part II

The millennium has spawned many reappraisals of human history but none quite like the narrative that Professor Anders Henriksson has assembled from choice insights found in student papers over the years. In the hands of these young scholars, the past truly does become a foreign country.

Compiled by Anders Henriksson

From the secondary sources we are given hindsight into the future. Hindsight, after all, is caused by a lack of foresight.

Civilization woozed out of the Nile about 300,000 years ago. The Nile was a river that had some water in it. Every year it would flood and irritate the land. There was Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. Lower Egypt was actually farther up than Upper Egypt, which was, of course, lower down than the upper part. This is why we learn geography as a factor in history. Rulers were entitled Faroes. A famed one was King Toot. It was a special custom among them not to marry their wives.

Mesapatamia was squigged in a valley near the Eucaliptus river. Flooding was erotic. Babylon was similar to Egypt because of the differences they had apart from each other. Egypt, for example, had only Egyptians, but Babylon had Summarians, Acadians and Canadians, to name just a few.

The history of the Jewish people begins with Abraham, Issac, and their twelve children. Judyism was the first monolithic religion. Old Testament profits include Moses, Amy, and Confucius, who believed in Fidel Piety. Moses was told by Jesus Christ to lead the people out of Egypt into the Sahaira Desert. The Book of Exodus describes this trip and the amazing things that happened on it, including the Ten Commandments, various special effects, and the building of the Suez Canal. David was a fictional character in the Bible who faught with Gilgamesh while wearing a sling. He pleased the people with his many erections and saved them from attacks by the Philipines.

Helen of Troy launched a thousand ships with her face. The Trojan War raged between the Greeks and the Tories. We know about this thanks to Homer's story about Ulysees Grant and Iliad, the painful wife he left behind. Sparta demanded loyalty, military service, and obscurity from its cit-

Painting by Mike Wilks from The Ultimate Alphabet

izens. King Xerox of Persia invaded Greace, but fell off short at the battle of Thermosalami. Alexander the Great conquered Persia, Egypt, and Japan. Sadly, he died with no hairs. Religion was polyphonic. Featured were gods such as Herod, Mars, and Juice.

The Greeks were important at culture and science. Plato invented reality. The Sophists justified themselves by changing relatives whenever this needed to be done. Lust was a must for the Epicureans. U. Clid proved that there is more than one side to every plain. Pythagasaurus fathered the triangle. Archimedes made the first steamboat and power drill.

Rome was founded sometime by Uncle Remus and Wolf. Roman upperclassmen demanded to be known as Patricia. Senators wore purple tubas as a sign of respect. Slaves led existances of long and ornery work. Spartacus led a slave revolt and later was in a movie about this. The Roman republic was bothered by intestinal wars. Cesar inspired his men by stating, "I came, I saw, I went." He was assinated on the Yikes of March, when he is reported to have said, "Me too, Brutus!"

The Romans had smaller, more practical brains than the Greeks. Stoicism is the belief that you should get through life by baring your troubles. The warmth and friendship of the mystery cults attracted many, who came to feel better through dancing and mutilation. Certain cultists follwed Diane Isis, the godess of whine. Christianity was just another mystery cult until Jesus was born. Eventually Christian started the new religion with sayings like, "The mice shall inherit the earth." Later Christians fortunately abandoned this idea. Romans persacuted Christians by lionizing them in public stadiums.

A tidul wave of Goths, Huns, Zulus, and others impacted Rome. Athena the Hun rampaged the Balkans as far as France. Society was crumpity. Neo-

Platonists celebrated the joys of self-abuse. When they finally got to Italy, the Australian Goths were tired of plungering and needed to rest. A German soldier put Rome in a sack. During the Dark Ages it was mostly dark.

Medeval monarchy was futile. Charlemagne used the "missi dominici" (Latin for "missiles of the king") to inflict government on his people. England's Henry II acquired new parts by marrying Ellenor of Equine. Society was arranged like a tree, with your nobles in the upper twigs and your pesants grubbing around the roots. This was known as the manurial system, where land was passed through fathers to sons by primogenuflecture. Power belonged to a patriarchy empowering all genders except the female. Nuns, for example, were generally women. In the early part of the Middle Ages female nuns were free to commit random acts of contrition and redemption. Later they were forcibly enclustered in harems. Margo Polo visited Kukla Kahn, who rained in China at the time. Russia was run over by Batu Cohen and crushed under the Mongol yolk. Certain tribes of India practiced voodoo inuendo. The Crusades, meanwhile, enlarged opportunities for travel.

Kings resented Popal authority. This caused the so-called Divestiture Controversy and led to the Bolivian Captivity of the Church. The Council of Constance failed to solve this even though Constance herself tried very hard. John Huss refused to decant his ideas about the church and was therefore burned as a steak.

Historians today feel that the renaissance was the result of medevil people being fertalized by events. Italy was pregnent with huge ideas and great men. Machiavelli, who was often unemployed, wrote *The Prince* to get a job with Richard Nixon. Ivan the Terrible started life as a child, a fact that troubled his later personality. This was a time when Europeans felt the need to reach out and smack someone. Ferdinand and Isabella conquered Granola, a part of Spain now known as Mexico and the Gulf States. Columbus came to America in order to install rule by dead white males over the native peoples.

The Catholic church sold indulgences as a form of remission control. Lutherans began to meet in little churches with large morals painted on their walls. Martin Luther King stood for the priesthood of all relievers. John Calvin Klein translated the Bible into American so the people of Geneva could read it. Most Prodestants objected to holy communication. Henry VIII survived an assault from the Papal bull. Philip II tried to force religious monotony on his empire. Henry Bourbon married Edict of Nantes and became King of France with the promise to reconstipate the country to Catholicism. The highlite of the Catholic Reform was the Council of Trend, which decreed that if man did not believe in the birth of the earth he would go to Hell.

There was an increase in climate during the 18th century. Agriculture fed more people as crop yields became lower. These were factors in the better times to come. The Scientific Revolution developed a suppository of knowledge which greatly helped later generations. Copernicus showed that the solar system rotates around the earth. Sir Issac Newton invented the newton. Locke taught that life was a fabula rasa.

The American colonists lived on a continent and England was an island. Thus the Americans wanted independence. Benjamin Franklin, already famous as inventor of the light bulb, persuaded French King George III to help the USA.

>Anders Henriksson, *a professor of history at Shepherd College, is the author of* The Tsar's Loyal Germans: The Riga German Community, Social Change, and the Nationality Question, 1855–1905 *(1983). His first history of the past, "Life Reeked with Joy" (*WQ, *Spring '83), was one of the* Wilson Quarterly's *most widely reprinted articles. He would like to thank the scholars who contributed examples of student bloopers, especially Professor James Greenlee at Memorial University in Newfoundland, Canada, for his annual "Cretinalia Historica."*

The French Revolution was like a tractor. It gave people the understanding that you need change in order to make tracks in the world. The Third Estate was locked out of its motel and had to do its business on a tennis court. Another problem was that France was full of French people. Revolters demanded liberty, equality, and fraternities. Fraternity breeded pride in the nation and therefore thicker political boundaries. In 1799, Napoleon performed a coo. Napoleon fertilized all his life.

The Industrial Revolution was slow at first due to the lack of factories. Great progress was made through the introduction of self-acting mules. Telephopes were not available—communication went by mouth to mouth or telegram. The airplane was invented and first flown by the Marx brothers. Europe was disrupted by the fast paste of change. The social structure was Upper Class, Middle Class, Working Class, and Lowest Poor Scum. Nobles claimed to be descended from better jeans. British paternalists were motivated by "noblesse oblique." Certain members of the lower middle class exhibited boudoir pretentions. The slums became brooding grounds for lower class unrest.

In Russia, the Decembrists attempted a coup du jour. Mazzini was a conservative liberal socialist who founded a revolutionary group known as "Little Italy." Pope Leo XIII is known as the author of *Rectum Novarum*, a book of conservative ideas. Another man to influence the state and others was Kark Marx, who advanced diabolical materialism. His ideas about revolution, condos, and supermen intrigued many.

Nineteenth-century women wore frilly hats day in and day out unless they had a special activity to engage in. In 1887 and surrounding years, it was unheard of to openly express yourself in private. Sex in this period was a very quiet ordeal. Prostitution, considered to be the world's oldest profession, got its beginnings in the 19th century. Feminists argued that sex outside the family would make you go blind or lose your memory. Leaders of the women's movement included Florence Nightengail, Susan B. Anthony, and Crystal Pancake.

Burt Einstein developed the theory of relativism. Marie Curie won the Noel prize for inventing the radiator. Writers expressed themselves with cymbals. Cubism, splatterism, etc. became the rage. There was a change in social morays.

European countries were growing dramatically and instead of spilling onto each other they had to go elsewhere. Another reason that the governments of European nations tried to take over other lands was so that they could gain so-called "cleavage." Most English believed in the missionary position. Admiral Dewey sank the Spanish Armada in Vanilla Bay. The Russo-Japanese War exploded between Japan and Italy. Infestations of gold in South Africa led to the Boar War between England and Denmark.

Germany's William II had a chimp on his shoulder and therefore had to ride his horse with only one hand. The Austro-Hungarian Compromise was the result of a defeated Austria combing with Hungary. The German takeover of All-Sauce Lorrain enraged the French, who clamored for vendetta. The Triple Alliance faced NATO. Europe grew fevered with heated tensions thrusting toward an outlet. In 1914, the assignation of Archduke Ferdman gave sweet relief to the mounting tensions.

The deception of countries to have war and those who didn't want one led the countries of Europe and the world to an unthinkable war which became thinkable. The Germans used the "Schleppen Plan" to surprise France by attacking through Bulgaria, which is not far from Paris. Austria fought the Snerbs. Unressurrected submarine warfare led the Germans to sink the Titanic and thus bring the USA into the war. Florence of Arabia fought over the dessert. Military technology progressed with ideas such as guns which would shoot generally straight. New war techniques caused massive deaths, and today in the 20th century we are used to this war-fair.

After the war the great powers tried to cut military spending by building enormous navies. The Wiener Republic was nobody's ticket to democracy. Economic problems were caused mostly by falling prices, a problem we now recognize as inflation. J. M. Keynes tells us there is no existence between big government and business. When the Davy Jones Index crashed in 1929 many people were left to political incineration. Some, like John Paul Sart, retreated into extra-terrestrialism. The Spartacist revolt was led by a man and woman named Rosa Luxemburg. Hitler believed in a Panned Germany and therefore insisted that Czechoslavia release the Sedated Germans into his care. England's rulers vanely hoped for "peas in our time," but were completely foddled by Hitler. Lennon ruled in Russia. When he died, the USSR was run by a five man triumpherate—Stalin, Lenin, Trotsky, Menshevik, and Buchanan. Stalin expanded capitalism by building machine tractor stations. When things didn't go as planned, he used the peasants as escape goats.

Few were surprised when the National League failed to prevent another world war. The perverbial chickens laid by the poor peace treaties after World War I all came home to roast. The Germans took the by-pass around France's Marginal Line. This was known as the "Blintz Krieg." Japan boomed Pearl Harbor, the main US base in southern California. The Russians defended Stalingrad feercely, as the city was named after Lenin. The Allies landed near Italy's toe and gradually advanced up her leg, where they hoped to find Musalini. Stalin, Rosevelt, Churchill, and Truman were known as "The Big Three." Hitler, who had become depressed for some reason, crawled under Berlin. Here he had his wife Evita put to sleep, and then shot himself in the bonker.

World War II became the Cold War, because Benjamin Franklin Roosevelt did not trust Lenin and Stalin. An ironed curtin fell across the haunches of Europe. Berlin was airlifted westward and divided into pieces. Israel was founded despite the protests of local Arabs known as Zionists. The Marsha Plan put Europe back together with help from Konrad Adenauer, a French leader whose efforts led to the creation of the Communist Market. Many countries signed the GNAT Agreement. The roll of women has greatly expanded also. Famous women since the Second World War are Queen Victoria and India Gandy.

The British Empire has entered a state of recline. Its colonies have slowly dribbled away leaving only the odd speck on the map. Mohammed Gandi, for example, was the last British ruler of India. In 1921, he cast off his western clothes and dawned a loin cloth. This was a good way to get through to people. The French Empire, on the other hand, fell into total term-oil as they clutched painfully at remaining colonies in Argentina and the Far East. South Africa followed "Apart Hide," a policy that separated people by skin colour. Actually, the fall of empires has been a good thing, because it gives more people a chance to exploit their own people without outside interference.

The USSR and USA became global in power, but Europe remained incontinent. Wars fought in the 1950s and after include the Crimean War, Vietnam, and the Six-Minute War. President John F. Kennedy worked closely with the Russians to solve the Canadian Missile Crisis. Yugoslavia's Toto became a non-eventualist communist. Hochise Min mounted the power curve in Viet Nam. Castro led a coupe in Cuba and shocked many by wiggling his feelers every time there was trouble in Latin America. This required the United States to middle in selected bandana republics during the 1960s. Mentally speaking, Russia had to reinvent itself. Gorbachev became top Russian after the death of Leoned Bolshevik.

The historicle period ended shortly after World War II–III. We, in all humidity, are the people of currant times. This concept grinds our critical, seething minds to a halt. ❑

Still the Exceptional Nation?

At the dawn of a new century, the United States finds itself in a position of surprising dominance around the world. It has been a triumph of ideas and values perhaps even more than of power, and the victory has critics worrying about the homogenizing effects on the world. But what, a noted scholar asks, about the effects on America?

by Seymour Martin Lipset

Was Karl Marx right? More than 100 years ago, he declared in *Capital* that "the country that is the most developed shows to the less developed the image of their future," and his early followers had little doubt that the United States was that most developed harbinger country. "Americans will be the first to usher in a Socialist republic," declared the German Social Democrat August Bebel in 1907—even though the American Socialist Party was faring miserably at the polls while his own party held many seats in the Reichstag. Only after the Russian Revolution in 1917 did the Left and its liberal sympathizers begin to look elsewhere for a vision of the future. Now Europe set the standard and America followed—all too sluggishly, in the minds of many.

How could the world's most advanced capitalist society also be the most impervious to the socialist idea? Even the Great Depression failed to alter its course—America's minuscule Socialist and Communist par-

ties emerged from the 1930s with even less support than they had enjoyed at the beginning of the decade. The American experience cast doubt on the inner logic of historical materialism, the essential Marxist doctrine which holds that the shape of a nation's culture and politics is determined by underlying economic and technological forces. The question engaged the attention of many socialists, as well as Lenin and Trotsky; Stalin attended a special commission of the Communist International on "the American Question."

What was a source of perplexity to some was, of course, a source of pride to others. To scholars, it was a phenomenon in need of explanation. Out of this puzzlement came the rebirth of the idea of "American exceptionalism," a concept first developed by Alexis de Tocqueville in *Democracy in America* (1835–40). The young Frenchman wrote that the United States, the lone successful democracy of his time, differed from all the European nations in lacking a feudal past and in being more socially egalitarian, more meritocratic, more individualistic, more rights-oriented, and more religious. These American tendencies were reinforced by the country's religious commitment to the "nonconformist," largely congregationally organized Protestant sects, which emphasized the individual's personal relationship with God, a relationship that was not mediated by state-supported, hierarchically organized churches of the kind that prevailed in Europe.

In 19th-century America, the ideology of the American Revolution was transformed into an all-encompassing liberalism stressing liberty, antistatism, and individualism. In Europe, a dominant conservativism was wedded to the state—it was conservatives such as Britain's Benjamin Disraeli, for example, who invented the welfare state—and it naturally gave birth to state-centered opposition, social democracy. Because its liberal ideology stifled the emergence of a state-centered opposition, the United States became an anomaly.

Today, however, the United States once again finds itself the apparent image of the future. Not only is it the world's sole superpower and its economic colossus, but it seems to be pointing the way toward the political future. The American political system, long considered an aberration because its two main parties embrace liberal capitalism, now looks like the model for the developed world.

Nothing symbolizes this change more dramatically than the political pep rally cum summit meeting that brought four social democratic heads of government to Washington last April under the auspices of

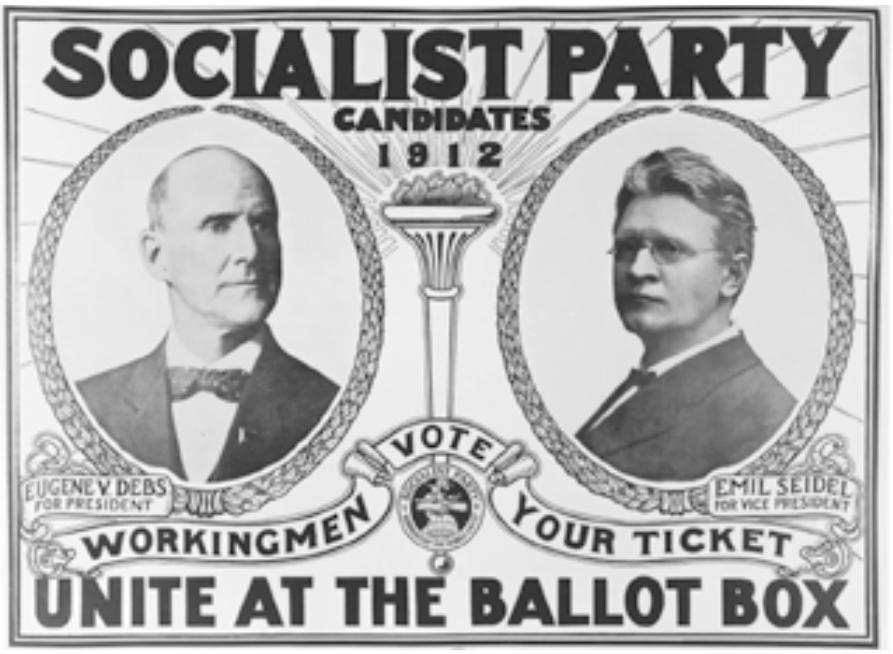
>*Seymour Martin Lipset, a Wilson Center Senior Scholar, is Hazel Professor of Public Policy at George Mason University, a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and a Senior Scholar at the Progressive Policy Institute. He is the author of many books, including most recently,* American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword *(1996) and, with Earl Raab,* Jews and the New American Scene *(1995). His next book, with Gary Marx,* It Didn't Happen Here! Why Socialists Failed in America, *will be published by W.W. Norton. This article is adapted from a monograph, "The End of Political Exceptionalism?" published by the Instituto Juan March de Estudios e Investigaciones in Madrid.*

Groping for a Third Way: D'Alema (left), Kok, Clinton, Blair, and Schröder in April 1999. Clinton, however, was reminded that the others remain members of the Socialist International.

America's centrist Democratic Leadership Council. Britain's Tony Blair, Germany's Gerhard Schröder, the Netherlands' Wim Kok, and Italy's Massimo D'Alema did not come to press the cause of democratic socialism on their backward cousins across the Atlantic. They wanted to join with Democrat Bill Clinton in affirming what they called the Third Way. And they have done so more than once, meeting most recently in Florence last November, where they were joined by Brazil's Fernando Henrique Cardoso. These putative social democratic leaders, as *Washington Post* columnist E. J. Dionne notes, "accept capitalism as a given, but promise to do something about its inequalities and uncertainties. They talk not of 'socialism' but of 'community,' not of 'collectivism' but of 'solidarity.'" They sound, in other words, very much like America's New Democrats.

All of this suggests that Marx may have been right: the development of an economically and technologically advanced society follows a certain logic, and the United States shows where that logic leads—even if it is not to socialism. But if this is true, will it make sense any longer to speak of American exceptionalism? Will the political cultures of other advanced societies increasingly converge with that of the United States?

The change in the character of Europe's political parties largely reflects the remaking of Europe's economic and class structures along American lines. The European emphasis on *stände*, or fixed, explicitly hierarchical social classes rooted in a feudal and monarchical past, is increasingly a thing of the past. Growing economic productivity is opening access to everything from clothes, cars,



No thanks: in the election of 1912, a high water mark of America's Socialist Party, Socialist presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs won only six percent of the popular vote.

and other consumer goods to advanced schooling, powerfully muting the "lifestyle" differences, including accents and dress, that traditionally separated Europe's social classes. The new economic order has been accompanied by demographic shifts, notably a drastic decline in birthrates and an extension of life spans, that have confronted all the developed nations with a common dilemma: raise taxes significantly to pay for more social security, health care, welfare, and other expensive government services, or find ways to cut spending.

The United States has led the economic transformation, shifting sharply away from the old industrial economy built on manual labor, a process that was especially agonizing during the 1970s and '80s. The old economy of General Motors, U.S. Steel, and Standard Oil has given way to the economy of Microsoft, Citigroup—and McDonald's. The proportion of workers employed in manufacturing dropped from 26 percent in 1960 to 16 percent in 1996. In the United Kingdom, manufacturing employment declined from 36 percent of the total to 19 percent, a pattern that prevails from Sweden (with a drop from 32 to 19 percent) to Australia (from 26 to 13.5 percent).

The Old World societies are also following the American lead away from class awareness and organization. Union membership, for example, is declining almost everywhere. Between 1985 and 1995, the proportion of the American labor force carrying a union card fell by 21 percent. Today, only 14 percent of all employed Americans—and only 10 percent of those in the private sector—belong to unions. The propor-

tional losses in France and Britain have been even greater, 37 percent and 28 percent, respectively. In Germany, the decline is a more modest 18 percent.

During the post–World War II era, the distribution of income and occupational skills in Europe has reshaped itself to fit American contours. It has changed from something best illustrated by a pyramidal shape, enlarging toward the bottom, to one better illustrated by a diamond, widest in the middle. The traditional working class, in other words, is shrinking. The middle class is growing, creating solidly bourgeois societies in Europe. Political parties on the left now have little choice but to appeal more to the growing middle strata than to their traditional constituencies, industrial workers and the poor.

Call it what you will—"postindustrial society," "postmaterialism," or the "scientific-technological revolution"—the changing cultures of the emerging societies closely fit the Marxian causal model. The political and cultural "superstructures" are determined, as sociologist Daniel Bell has noted, by the technological structures and the distribution of economic classes.

Many of the trends that Marx anticipated, especially a steady increase in the size of the industrial proletariat, have not occurred. Throughout the industrialized world, job growth is concentrated in the technological and service occupations. College enrollments have swelled, and the degree-bearing population has grown enormously. Alain Touraine, a leading French sociologist and leftist intellectual, writes: "If property was the criterion of membership in the former dominant class, the new dominant class is defined by knowledge and a certain level of education."

With their roots in the university and the scientific and technological worlds, and with a heavy representation in the public sector, the professions, and the industries spawned by computers, the new workers have developed their own distinctive values. Political scientist Ronald Inglehart of the University of Michigan, pointing as well to the influence of a half-century of affluence, argues that these changes have spawned a new set of "postmaterialist" values. An affluent, better-educated citizenry has shifted its political attention away from bread-and-butter economic issues to new concerns: the environment, health, the quality of education, the culture, equality for women and minorities, the extension of democratization and freedom at home and abroad, and last, but far from least, the definition of a more permissive (and highly controversial) morality.

The United States has also been in the forefront of the postmaterialist new politics, quickly exporting the latest concerns of Berkeley, Madison, and other university towns to Paris and Berlin. It gave birth to all the major successful modern movements for egalitarian social change and for improving the quality of life—feminism, environmentalism, civil rights for minorities, and gay rights—just as it did the democratic

revolutions of the 19th century. Writing in 1971, as the new politics was beginning to emerge, the French political analyst Jean-François Revel observed in *Without Marx or Jesus* that the "revolutionary stirrings have had their origin in the United States." The Continent's "dissenters . . . are the disciples of the American movements."

Many political analysts here and abroad still do not fully appreciate the extent to which the Left's new course, its centrist "Third Way," is also the product of common developments throughout the economically advanced democracies rather than events or leaders peculiar to each country. And the collapse of communism, though a heavy blow to the socialist idea, was not the decisive factor. The earliest signs of change came well before anyone dreamed that the Berlin Wall would not survive the millennium. During the 1980s, the Labor parties of Australia and New Zealand cut income taxes, pursued economic deregulation, and privatized important industries. In 1983, the Australian party entered into an accord with the trade unions that resulted, as then-prime minister Robert Hawke emphasized, in a reduction in workers' real wages of at least one percent in each of the eight years that he was head of the government. Hawke declared in 1989 that "the move in the share of the national income from wages toward profits . . . has enabled us to grow."

The New Zealand story is similar. After returning to power under Prime Minister David Lange in 1984, the Labor Party followed what has been described as the most Thatcherite policy among Western governments, including the government of British prime minister Margaret Thatcher itself. It ended "the tradition of taxation according to ability to pay," dismantled the welfare state, and privatized many state enterprises. Lange, complained one critic, believed that "social democrats must accept the existence of economic inequality because it is the engine which drives the economy."

But the pivotal event in this late-20th century political transition was the British election of 1997 (on May Day, ironically), which the Labor Party won by an overwhelming margin after it had abandoned its historic emphasis on public ownership and class politics. Tony Blair's victory marked the end of a century of socialist efforts to eliminate private ownership of the economy in Europe. As a London investment banker observed, "We have got fundamentally two parties now far more like the Democrats and Republicans, instead of socialists and capitalists."

Blair has deliberately followed the free-market, smaller-government policies of President Clinton. It was Blair, then Britain's opposition leader, who in 1995 first uttered the words, "The era of big government is over," which became the sentence of the decade when Clinton repeated them a few months later. Blair's "New Labor" no longer automatically takes the side of trade unions. Organized labor, he emphasizes, must cooperate "with management to

make sure British industry is competitive." Blair promised in a 1997 interview that his administration would "leave British law the most restrictive on trade unionism in the Western world."

One of Blair's first actions after taking office was to shift authority over monetary policy and interest rates from the Treasury to the Bank of England, thereby reducing the power of the party controlling the government to affect the economy. Another initiative, launched after his first postelection meeting with Bill Clinton, was a welfare reform designed to sharply reduce the number of Britons on the dole by pressing single mothers to take paying jobs. Blair promised to "be tough on the long-term unemployed who refuse jobs." In Parliament, he declared that "for millions, the welfare state denies rather than provides opportunity." Not surprisingly, the Iron Lady found much to approve of in Blair's New Labor. "Britain will be safe in the hands of Mr. Blair," Baroness Thatcher declared.

At his jubilant meeting with Clinton, held barely a month after Labor's triumph in the British elections, Blair noted that both prefer "reason to doctrine" and are "indifferent to ideology." Clinton and Blair agreed that the "progressive parties of today are the parties of fiscal responsibility and prudence." The two leaders called for partnership with business to create jobs, replacing the "old battles between state and market."

The story is much the same among left parties outside the English-speaking world. The Swedish Social Democrats, who held office with only two interludes out of power (1976–82 and 1991–98) from the early 1930s on, have also reversed course. The Social Democratic finance minister during most of the 1980s, Kjell-Olof Feldt, sharply reduced the progressivity of his country's tax system, and emphasized the necessity of "accepting private ownership, the profit motive, and differences of income and wealth." Feldt wrote: "The market economy's facility for change and development and therefore economic growth has done more to eliminate poverty" and "the exploitation of the working class" than any political intervention in the market's system of distribution.

Across the Oeresund, the Danish Social Democratic government has also been speaking in terms that no American Republican could reject. In Spain, before he left office in 1996, Socialist prime minister Felipe Gonzalez converted his party—which was Marxist in its initial post-Franco phase—to support of privatization, the free market, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Echoing Winston Churchill, Gonzalez argued that a competitive free-market economy is marked by greed, corruption, and the exploitation of the weak by the strong—but is also "the least-bad economic system in existence." In Portugal, the constitution of 1976, adopted after the Socialist-led democratic revolution that overthrew Antonio Salazar's long dictatorship, proclaimed that the large number of state-owned companies were "irreversible conquests of the working classes." But the Socialist government elected in January

1996 has enthusiastically pursued privatization and other market-oriented policies.

Germany is home to the first major Marxist party in the world, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), founded in 1875. The party rejected Marxism in the late 1950s but remained socialist. Yet as early as 1976, Social Democratic chancellor Helmut Schmidt was arguing that the interests of workers required expanding profits. "The profits of enterprises today," he declared, "are the investments of tomorrow, and the investments of tomorrow are the employment of the day after."

Experimental and provoking diverse reactions, the new dome of Berlin's Reichstag is an apt symbol of the New Europe.

The chancellor elected in 1998, Gerhard Schröder, continues in this tradition. He sees the SPD as part of a "New Middle" rather than the Left. John Vinocur of the *International Herald-Tribune* notes that the New Middle "is a place where words like 'risk,' 'entrepreneurial spirit,' and 'flexible labor markets' coincide with expressions of allegiance to social justice and fair income distribution." Schröder's first finance minister, Oskar Lafontaine, clung to more traditional SPD positions and soon found himself looking for work.

Schröder has promised to improve the German economy, reducing its 10 percent unemployment rate by lowering "prohibitive labor costs" imposed by union contracts and "providing incentives for new capital investment." He noted in the campaign that the SPD is "breaking with . . . statist social democratic attitudes . . . we've understood that the omnipotent and interventionist state doesn't have its place in the current circumstances." Thus far, however, he has failed to improve the economy.

The editors of the *Economist*, noting a few years ago that in most Western countries "the left keeps on moving right," summed up the situation elsewhere in Europe: "In Central Europe, ex-Communists running Poland and Hungary . . . have been boldly trying to reinvent their states on a basis of free markets and respect for private property. The shift of gravity within the left-wing parties in the south has been no less striking. In Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece the left has moved sharply to the right."

There are two interesting European exceptions to the retreat from socialism. One is Norway, whose abundant North Sea oil revenues make it easy to underwrite an expansive welfare state. The other is France. The French Left operates in a society where *dirigisme*, the concept of a strong directing state, has been as powerful a cultural organizing principle as antistatism has been in the United States—producing a French "uniqueness" that may be the counterpoint to American exceptionalism.

France is that rare country where a solid majority of citizens still tell pollsters that the word *bureaucrat* has a positive connotation, and that they would like their children to work for the government. The Right and Left both approve of a strong state, a tradition going back to the monarchy, the empire, and the Revolution. While the Socialists, who resumed power following France's 1997 parliamentary elections, have instituted some modest market-oriented reforms, they are stuck in a curious position. As journalist Roger Cohen observes, "The Gaullist attachment to the state and rejection of market reform [has] encouraged the Socialists to keep further to the left, to distinguish themselves." At the Third Way summit in Florence last November, French prime minister Lionel Jospin pointedly turned his back when Clinton spoke, facing what the *New York Times* described as a "somewhat bemused" Gerhard Schröder.

Curiously, the country most often cited as a model by European social democrats is the Netherlands, once considered a model nanny state. With an unemployment rate of about three percent, far below those of the major Continental economies (and a point below the U.S. rate), and rapid economic growth, the Dutch under a government headed by a former union leader, Wim Kok of the Labor Party, have accepted wholesale changes. Unemployment benefits have been cut, while the rules for sick and disability pay have been tightened. Rules for hiring and firing and for opening new businesses have been eased. Social security taxes have been cut. In a "social pact" comparable to the Australian accord, the unions, then led by Kok, agreed to limit wage increases to two percent per year, in part on the premise that more jobs would be created. One government official says that "the Dutch miracle . . . is that our labor unions could be convinced to rally around a free market economy."

The great reversal that has put the politically "backward" United States at the head of the movement toward a more politically "progres-

sive" future is all the more remarkable for having occurred in the space of only a few years. The Dutch scholar Anton Zijderveld predicts in *The Waning of the Welfare State* (1999) "that most post-welfare state countries in Europe will become more 'American' in their social policies . . . and morality."

The United States clearly is no longer as exceptional politically as it once was. Its political life—dominated by two procapitalist political parties and defined by traditional, moralistic, sectarian religion, classical liberalism (laissez faire), and environmentalist and other post-

These 1950s Welshmen knew exactly where they stood in the class system; their children likely do not.

materialist tendencies—is setting a model for other developed countries. The convergence has even stripped the United States of its past monopoly on populist politics, the traditional outlet of the discontented and dispossessed in a country without a working-class political party. The latest example is Austria, where parliamentary elections last October catapulted Jorg Haider's far-right Freedom Party into a new prominence.

Yet for all that, the United States remains exceptional in other important ways. It is still an outlier at one end of many international indicators of behavior and values. It is still much less statist and welfare oriented, and its governments (federal and state) tax and spend much less in proportionate terms than European governments. It is the most religious country in Christendom, the only one still strongly influenced by the moralistic and individualistic ethos of Protestant sectarianism. It has higher rates of mobility into elite positions than any other nation. It combines exceptional levels of productivity, income, and wealth with exceptionally low levels of taxation and social spending, and equally exceptional levels of income inequality and poverty.

The United States remains well ahead of other large developed countries in per capita income, retaining the lead it has held since the second half of the 19th century. In 1997, U.S. per capita income (measured in terms of purchasing power parity) was $28,740. Switzerland was the only developed country to come close, at $26,320, while Norway ($23,940), Japan ($23,400), and Denmark ($22,740) followed. At the same time, the United States boasts the lowest rate of unemployment in the developed world, about four percent, while Europe has some 20 million out of work, or more than 10 percent of the labor force. Poverty, currently the condition of 13.7 percent of Americans, is more widespread than in Europe, though rates are dropping. (Among African Americans, the poverty rate dropped to 29 percent in 1995, passing below 30 percent for the first time in the nation's history. Today it stands at 28.4 percent.)

The United States is the only Western country in which government extracts less than 30 percent of the gross domestic product in taxes—it took 28.5 percent in 1996. Spending on social welfare is correspondingly low. One has to go outside the Western world to find societies with a smaller state. The Japanese tax take was a tenth of a percent lower, but among the remaining member states of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), only Turkey (25.4 percent), South Korea (23.2 percent), and Mexico (16.3 percent) have lower taxation levels.

American exceptionalism is distinctly double-edged. The United States is not as egalitarian in economic terms as the rest of the developed world. It has the highest proportion of nonvoters in national elections, as well the highest rates of violent crime and the biggest prison population (in per capita terms). Thanks to its meritocratic orientation, it is among the leaders in the unequal distribution of income. Gauged by the Gini

coefficient, the social scientist's standard measure of income inequality, the U.S. score of 37.5 is almost 10 percent higher than that of the next closest country (Britain) among the Western democracies, and far above Sweden's 22.2. To put it in simpler terms, the richest 20 percent of Americans have incomes about nine times greater than the poorest 20 percent, while in Japan and Germany the affluent enjoy incomes only four and six times greater, respectively.

Yet because individualism and meritocratic ideals are so deeply ingrained in them, Americans are much less troubled by such differences than Europeans. According to a 1990 study, Americans are more likely to believe that there should be "greater incentives for individual effort," rather than that "incomes should be made more equal." Proportionately fewer Americans (56 percent) agree that "income differences are too large," as compared with Europeans (whose positive responses range from 66 to 86 percent). In a survey reported in 1995, people in six countries were asked: "How would you prefer to be paid—on a fixed salary . . . or mostly on an incentive basis which will allow you to earn more if you accomplished a lot, but may result in less earnings if you don't accomplish enough?" A majority of Americans (53 percent) opted for the incentive plan; the survey's British, French, Spanish, and German respondents chose a fixed salary by margins ranging from 65 to 72 percent.

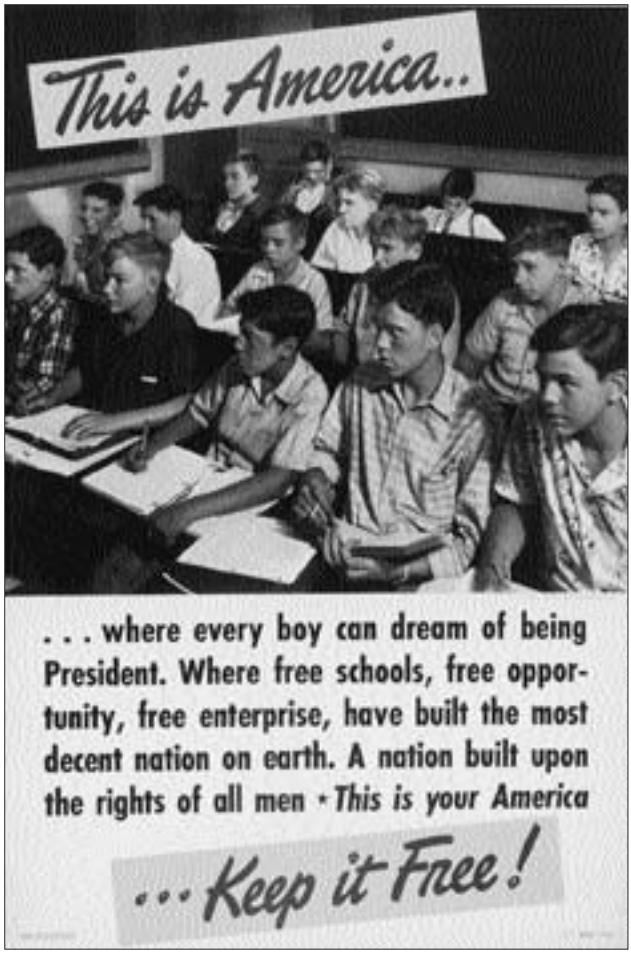
A 1996 survey shows that a policy that reduces income disparities is supported by less than one-third (28 percent) of Americans, while positive responses elsewhere range from 42 percent in Austria to 82 percent in Italy. The British fall in the middle at 63 percent.

Americans are more likely than Europeans to agree that "large income differences are needed for the country's prosperity." Nearly one-third of Americans surveyed in 1987 justify inequality this way, as compared with an average of 23 percent among seven European countries (Great Britain, Austria, West Germany, Italy, Hungary, Switzerland, and the Netherlands). A 1992 review of American public opinion data over 50 years reports: "Surveys since the 1930s have shown that the explicit idea of income redistributing elicits very limited enthusiasm among the American public. . . . Redistributive fervor was not much apparent even in [the] depression era. Most Americans appear content with the distributional effects of private markets."

The historian Richard Hofstadter wrote that the 1930s introduced a "social democratic tinge" into the United States for the first time in its history. The Great Depression brought a strong emphasis on planning, on the welfare state, on the role of the government as a major regulatory actor, and even on redistribution of income. The great crisis challenged the historic American national commitment to the assumptions of classical liberalism and laissez faire, spawning, among other things, New Deal-inspired policies and a growth in trade union strength. These trends, however, have gradually inverted in the reasonably prosperous half-century since the end of

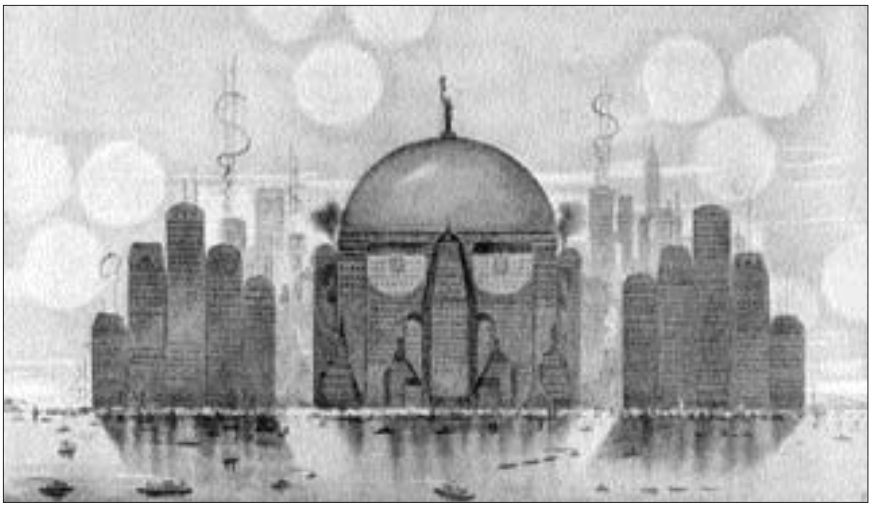
World War II. The tinge—which never approached the full flush of Europe—has faded.

Despite the European Left's embrace of the free market, European governments are still, by American standards, very deeply involved in the economy and society. The differences stem in part from historical identities and values, in part from institutions that have been established over the last century. Once in place, government policies are defended by those who benefit from them, even as they continue to shape expectations about what government can do. The major European countries provided important social services long before the United States, which did not enact pension, unemployment, or industrial accident insurance until the 1930s. It is the only developed nation that does not have a government-supported, comprehensive medical system, and it is one of the few that do not provide child support to all families.



A 1942 poster to build wartime morale could still serve as a summary of American beliefs today—just substitute "child" for "boy."

Today, Americans are still more opposed than Europeans to government involvement in economic affairs, whether through wage and price controls, publicly funded job creation, or the length of the work week. Nor are they favorably disposed toward government regulation in other realms, such as seat belt laws. Only 23 percent of Americans believe it is government's responsibility "to take care of very poor people who can't take care of themselves," according to a 1998 study by the late public opinion expert Everett Carll Ladd. They are less disposed than Europeans to believe that the state is obligated to supply a job for everyone who wants one, to provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed, or to guarantee a basic income.



Third Way triumphs haven't silenced those who still find U.S.-style democratic capitalism abhorrent.

The value differences between the United States and Europe are also reflected in attitudes toward social mobility and personal achievement. Americans are more likely than Europeans to see personal effort, hard work, ambition, education, and ability as more important for getting ahead in life than social background. Confronted with the proposition that "what you achieve depends largely on your family background" in a 1990 survey, only 31 percent of Americans agreed, compared with 53 percent of the British, 51 percent of the Austrians, and 63 percent of the Italians. Asked to choose between hard work and "luck and connections" as the most likely route to a better life, 44 percent of Americans pointed to hard work. Only 24 percent of the most like-minded European group, the British, agreed.

The American commitment to meritocracy is also reflected in the fact that Americans are more disposed than Europeans to favor increased spending on education. (And Americans tend to oppose offering help as a "handout" in the form of outright government grants to students, which Europeans back, preferring instead student loans.) Given that education is seen as the key to upward mobility, it is not surprising that the United States has spent proportionally much more public money on education than Europe, while Europe has devoted much more to welfare. The United States has led the world in providing the kinds of general education needed to get ahead. Since the early 19th century, it has been first in the proportion of citizens graduating from public elementary school, then high school, and more recently in the percentages attending college and receiving postgraduate training.

The other developed countries are now rapidly closing the education gap, however. College entry rates increased by more than 25 percent in 16 OECD countries between 1990 and '96, while the rate in the United States remained about the same. This change and others in education suggest that American-style individualism and ambition have

spread to the point where the United States cannot be considered exceptional in these respects.

Does it still make sense to speak of the United States as the exceptional nation? As social democratic parties the world over shift toward the free market, the differences between the United States and other Western democracies may continue to narrow. Yet deeply rooted institutions and values do not easily lose their influence. The Western democracies may now all fit the liberal mold, but liberalism, too, has its divides. Europe still tends toward the economically egalitarian side, with a penchant for active government; Americans prefer a competitive, individualist society with equality of opportunity and effective but weak government.

There is no reason, moreover, to believe that we have seen the end of change—much less the "end of history." For all its rewards, the free market is not a source of great inspiration. Capitalism does not pledge to eliminate poverty, racism, sexism, pollution, or war. It does not even promise great material rewards to all. Neoconservative thinker Irving Kristol echoes a long line of capitalism's defenders when he allows that it offers "the least romantic conception of a public order that the human mind has ever conceived."

It is hard to believe that the West's now-contented young will not some day hunger again for the "exalted notions" that Aristotle described more than 2,000 years ago. Yet when they do, America will still have an ideological vision, the individualist, achievement-oriented American Creed, with which to motivate its young to challenge reality. The evolving social vision of Europe will necessarily hearken back to the very different ideals of the French Revolution and social democracy.

One does not have to peer far into the future to see that the contest between the forces of change and the defenders of the status quo is not over. In the formerly communist countries of Europe, left and liberal advocates of the free market and democracy confront conservative defenders of the power of state bureaucracies. Elsewhere in Europe, Green parties press the cause of environmentalism and other postmaterialist concerns. And nobody can predict what forces may be put into play by future events, from economic crisis to the rise of China. New movements and ideologies will appear and old ones will be revived. Economic hardship may bolster communitarian efforts to relegitimate the state's role in attacking social, sexual, and racial inequalities.

Even looking only at what is already in view, the United States still stands out. For instance, in every one of the 13 richest countries in the European Union, Green parties are represented in the national parliament or the country's delegation to the European Parliament. Greens have recently participated in ruling government coalitions in Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, and Italy. Only the United States lacks even a minimally effective Green party. One of the great puzzles of the 20th century was posed by the title of German sociologist Werner Sombart's 1906 book, *Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?* The puzzle of the next century may be, Why is there no Green party in the United States? ❑

The Second Fall of Rome

Have the past two centuries of Western culture been one long saga of lionizing Greece while disparaging the cultural prestige and classical values of ancient Rome?

by Michael Lind

The reputation of Roman civilization in the Western world has never been lower than it is today. To a remarkable degree, the cultural and political legacies of both the Roman republic and the Roman Empire have been edited out of the collective memory of the United States and other Western nations not only by multiculturalists attacking the Western canon but by would-be traditionalists purporting to defend it.

The loss of the ancient Romans has been the gain of the ancient Greeks. Today, Western democracy is usually traced back to Athens rather than the Roman republic, something that would have astonished the American Founding Fathers and the French Jacobins. The Roman philosopher-statesman Cicero—perhaps the most important historical model in the minds of early modern European and American republicans—has been replaced by the Athenian leader Pericles as the beau ideal of a Western statesman. The art of rhetoric, once thought to be central to republican culture, has come to be associated with pompous politicians and dishonest media consultants. As for the Roman Empire, it is often thought of as an early version of 20th-century Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany, or, if the emphasis is on decadence, as a rehearsal for the Weimar Republic.

The Course of Empire: Destruction *(1836) by Thomas Cole*

The reputation of Roman literature has fared no better than that of Roman government. Roman authors such as Virgil and Horace and Seneca and Plautus are often dismissed as second-rate imitators of the Greeks. By common consent, the three greatest epic poets of the West are identified as Homer, Dante, and Milton. Even though the epic was a Roman specialty, Virgil, Statius, and Lucan are demoted to a second tier or ignored altogether. In two and a half centuries, Virgil has gone from being the greatest poet of all time to a feeble imitator of Homer and, finally, a paid propagandist comparable to a hack writer in a 20th-century totalitarian state. The Roman playwright Seneca, once revered as a tragedian and a philosopher, is no longer taken seriously by students of literature or philosophy.

The denigration of the Romans and the promotion of the Greeks has not been the product of increased knowledge or refinement in taste. Rather, it is the result of an anti-Roman and anti-Latin bias that has warped Western European and American culture since the late 18th century—a bias that 20th-century modernism inherited from 19th-century romanticism and 18th-century neoclassicism. An unbiased re-examination of the Roman legacy reveals that the ancient Latin traditions in art and philosophy, if not in foreign policy

or government, contain much of value to the contemporary world.

Rome's low reputation today seems astonishing when one considers how central the legacy of Roman civilization was to Western identity only a few centuries ago. From the Middle Ages to the late 18th century, the Roman classics dominated the Western literary curriculum. Before the Renaissance, many Greek classics, preserved by the Byzantines and Arabs, were unknown in the West. Dante, for example, knew Homer only by reputation. Even when more Greek classics became available, few members of the Latin-educated Western elite studied Greek. An English translation of Aeschylus did not appear until 1777.

Renaissance humanists, despite their eclectic interest in Greek as well as Egyptian and Jewish traditions, were chiefly concerned with reviving the culture of Roman antiquity. The architect Palladio combined Roman motifs with vernacular Italian architecture to create a style that replaced Gothic throughout Italy and western and northern Europe. Literary scholars devised "Ciceronian Latin," an artificial dialect using only words Cicero used. Seneca inspired Renaissance tragedy, and his fellow Romans Plautus and Terence provided the models for Renaissance comedy.

A succession of European rulers from Charlemagne to Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor from 1519 to 1556, shared the dream of reviving the Roman Empire in the West. Both Dante and Machiavelli imagined a new Roman Empire. Absolute monarchs such as Louis XIV portrayed themselves as new Caesars. Eighteenth-century republicans in the United States and France identified their new states with the Roman republic and identified themselves with republican statesmen such as Cincinatus, Cato, and Cicero, or tyrannicides such as Brutus.

Unlike some of the radicals of the French Revolution, most of the American Founders had reservations about treating either the Roman republic or the Greek city-states as precedents for a modern national and liberal republic. In 1791, James Wilson denied that "the Grecian and Roman nations" understood "the true principles of original, equal, and sentimental liberty." He declared, "But no longer shall we look to ancient histories for principles and systems of pure freedom. The close of the 18th century, in which we live, shall teach mankind to be purely free." George Washington expressed a similar sentiment in his call for a stronger federal government: "The foundation of our Empire was not laid in the gloomy age of Ignorance and Superstition; but at an Epocha when the rights of mankind were better understood and more clearly defined, than at any other period."

Nevertheless, the American state constitutions and the federal consti-

>*Michael Lind is the Washington editor of* Harper's Magazine *and a Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation. He is the author of several books, including, most recently,* Vietnam: The Necessary War *(1999).*

tution of 1787 incorporated what elite Federalists such as John Adams and the authors of the *Federalist Papers* considered to be the features that gave the Roman constitution a stability missing from the faction-ridden city-states of ancient Greece and medieval Italy: a strong chief magistrate and a bicameral legislature with a powerful senate.

Rejecting this prescription, American populists and radical democrats found a different precedent not in Greek democracy but in the "Ancient Saxon Constitution" of England, whose assembly was invoked as a model for a unicameral legislature with members serving short terms. Thomas Jefferson, who believed in the populist myth of the democratic Anglo-Saxons, informed his fellow former president John Adams in December 1819 that he had been reading the letters of Cicero: "When the enthusiasm . . . kindled by Cicero's pen and principles, subsides into cool reflection, I ask myself What was that government which the virtues of Cicero were so zealous to restore, and the ambition of Caesar to subvert?" Adams had once written that "the Roman constitution formed the noblest people, and the greatest power, that has ever existed." But now he agreed with Jefferson about the Romans: "I never could discover that they possessed much real Virtue, or real Liberty there." (This concession, however, was less damaging than it might appear, because Adams and other Federalists believed that

George Washington *(1832–40) by Horatio Greenough*

institutions such as the Roman Senate were more important than civic virtue in ensuring the success of republican government.)

Despite their doubts about the relevance of classical precedents in politics, the American Founders did not hesitate to borrow the imagery of the Roman republic. Among other things, this practice disguised the extent to which the United States was an organic outgrowth of English society. The very name "republic" was a version of the Latin *res publica*. The building that housed the legislature was called the Capitol, not the Parliament; the upper house was the Senate; a creek on Capitol Hill was waggishly named the Tiber, after the river that ran through Rome. The Great Seal of the United States includes two mottoes from Virgil: *Annuit coeptis* (He approves of the beginnings), and *novus ordo seclorum* (a new order of the ages). In the *Federalist Papers*, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay argued for the ratification of the federal constitution using the name of Publius Valerius Publicola, the first consul of the Roman republic. The enemies of republicanism that they described—faction, avarice, corruption, ambition—were those identified by Cicero, Tacitus, and other Roman writers.

The triumph of Roman imagery in the American and French Revolutions, however, marked an Indian summer of Roman prestige in the West. By the late 18th century, new trends in Western culture were undermining the classical values symbolized by both republican and imperial Rome.

The first challenge came from Scotland. In 1762, the Scottish writer James Macpherson published a "translation" of a supposed third-century epic by the fabled Gaelic bard Ossian. The poems purported to be a loose collection of primitive ballads rather than a polished work of a civilized writer. Before it was exposed as a forgery, the work inspired a Europe-wide vogue; Goethe praised it, and Napoleon took a copy with him to Egypt. The influential German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) argued that the Homeric epics, too, grew out of the spontaneous songs of the ancient Greek *Volk*.

Virgil, once preferred to Homer because he was more civilized, was now considered inferior to Homer—for the same reason. The neoclassicism of the late 18th century was not so much the final stage of Renaissance and Baroque humanism as it was the beginning of a new romantic primitivism that would manifest itself in 19th-century romanticism and 20th-century modernism. The primitive was now associated with virtue and imagination, the sophisticated with immorality and triviality. Among Greek writers, the more primitive and sublime, such as Aeschylus, came to be preferred to those such as Euripides who seemed too sophisticated and self-conscious to Europeans seeking an intellectual vacation from civilized life.

Germany was the center of romantic Hellenism. Among other things, German romanticism was a declaration of independence from the cultural and political hegemony of France. If France identified itself with Rome

(both republican and imperial), then Germany would champion the Greeks. "A break was made with the Latin tradition of humanism, and an entirely new humanism, a true new Hellenism, grew up," writes the historian Rudolph Pfeiffer.

Goethe called the 18th century "the age of Winckelmann," after the German aesthete Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68), who transformed art criticism by attributing the perfection of Greek art to the social and even physical perfection of the ancient Greeks themselves. "The most beautiful body of ours would perhaps be as much inferior to the most beautiful Greek, as Iphicles was to his brother Hercules," Winckelmann speculated. The humanist Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) inspired the 19th-century elite German educational system that put the study of the Greeks at the center of the university and high school curricula. (The German *Gymnasium*, or high school, was inspired by the Greek institution combining the sports arena and the school.)

Ossian Receiving the Napoleonic Officers *(1802) by Anne-Louis Girodet*

Influenced by German philhellenism, Thomas Arnold, the headmaster of Rugby School from 1828 to 1842, reformed the public schools that educated the ruling class of Victorian Britain. The Greek cult of the athletic youth (quite alien to Roman culture, which was symbolized by the middle-aged consul or general with furrowed brow) influenced the British culture that produced the poets A. E. Housman and Rupert Brooke. As George Steiner has observed, "The Homeric saga of warfare and masculine intimacies, with its formidable emphasis on competitive sports, seems immediate, as is no other text, to the boys' school, to the all-male college, the regiment, and the club (configurations cardinal to British, not to Continental societies)."

Hellenomania was a characteristic that English romanticism shared with the German version. Lord Byron's career took him from Scotland, the home of the noble Ossian, to Greece, where he died fighting the Turks on behalf of Greek independence. Shelley declared: "If not for Rome and Christianity, we should all have been Greeks—without their prejudices." An entire minor genre of romantic literature was devoted to nostalgia inspired by Greek ruins or artifacts. In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), Byron, regarding a broken column, wrote: "Cold is the heart, fair Greece! that looks on Thee, / Nor feels as Lovers o'er the dust they loved." It is no accident that Keats wrote an ode inspired by a Grecian urn rather than a Roman vase.

Ancient Greece, a sunny paradise populated by athletes and poets, was contrasted with repressive medieval Christendom or the hideous modern industrial West. For homosexuals such as Oscar Wilde and libertines such as Algernon Swinburne, it symbolized freedom from bourgeois and Christian sexual mores. Roman civilization—imperial, metropolitan, urban, bureaucratic—was too reminiscent of contemporary Europe and North America to be used as a contrast with 19th-century society.

Once Rome became a symbol of stultifying civilization, anti-Latin romantics were quick to find virtuous primitivism and purity in tribal societies—the ancient Celts, Teutons, or Slavs. Indeed, from a romantic nationalist point of view, the fall of Rome before the onslaught of the various trans-Alpine tribes was the necessary precondition for the formation of modern European nationalities.

Romantic nationalism and populism led 19th-century intellectuals to seek ethnic heroes in peasant folklore and long-neglected medieval manuscripts. Ossian was joined by Germany's Siegfried, Ireland's Cuchulainn, England's Beowulf, and Spain's Cid, among others. These new heroes inspired Richard Wagner and William Butler Yeats to create dramas set in the misty prehistory of Germany and Ireland. And the saga of Beowulf, rediscovered in neglected manuscripts in the 19th century, became the foundation of the nationalistic new scholarly discipline of "English literature."

The rise in the reputation of Greek bards and northern European barbarians was accompanied by a rapid decline in the reputation of Roman

Dante and Virgil in Hell *(1822) by Eugène Delacroix*

writers. The shade of Virgil, eclipsed by Homer, may not have had to compete with Ossian once Macpherson's forgery was exposed, but he found a new rival in his admirer Dante.

Most of the leading literary intellectuals of the 19th and 20th centuries preferred Dante to Virgil, whose ghost served as the Florentine poet's guide through hell. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who translated the *Divine Comedy* into English (1865–67), introduced the cult of Dante to the United States. T. S. Eliot, whose poetry contains many echoes of the *Divine Comedy* and who saw Dante as the ideal poet, declared in a 1944 lecture that Virgil "is at the center of European civilization, in a position which no other poet can share or usurp," and that "we are all, insofar as we inherit the civilization of Europe, still citizens of the Roman Empire." But Eliot's classicism was really a kind of Anglo-Catholic romantic medievalism that led the poet to view Virgil through Dante's eyes. Eliot was more interested in Latin Christendom than in pagan Latindom, in Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire than in the Roman Empire of Augustus.

The reputation of Cicero, as well as that of Virgil, underwent a drastic revaluation in the 19th and 20th centuries. The union in Cicero of republican statesman, lawyer, philosopher, and master rhetorician made him the hero of the educated elite in the early American republic. John Adams declared in his *Defence of the Constitutions of the Government of the United States of America* (1787) that "all the ages of the world have not produced a greater statesman and philosopher united in the same character." His son John Quincy Adams described Cicero's *De officiis* (On Duty) as the manual of every republican.

Thanks to Cicero's influence, the major American literary form before

the Civil War was the oration, not the novel or the lyric poem. The celebrity attained by great orators such as Daniel Webster and Edward Everett was only possible in a culture saturated with memories of republican Rome. The replacement of the orator by the Ossianic bard or shaman as the model of the poet was another victory for the primitivist aesthetic shared by neoclassicism, romanticism, and modernism—and another defeat for Rome. Rhetoric, a Greek and Hellenistic art brought to perfection by Cicero and other Romans, was incompatible with romanticism. The romantics equated the rhetorical with the insincere and the spontaneous with the authentic. Although most of the great romantic poets continued to write metrical verse in recognizable versions of traditional genres, the aesthetics of German romanticism, disseminated in Britain by Coleridge and others, held that each art work should be an "organic" outgrowth of the personality of the artist or, in the case of the nationalistic romantics, of the genius of the tribe or race. According to romantic-modernist orthodoxy, "rhetorical" was the greatest insult that could be used in connection with a poet's work, which was supposed to be a spontaneous and sincere effusion, not a work of verbal artifice crafted with an audience in mind.

Even more than Cicero, Seneca was a victim of the German romantic revaluation of the classical past. The Italian writer Giraldi Cinthio, who supplied the plots of *Measure for Measure* and *Othello*, wrote of Seneca in 1543: "In almost all his tragedies he surpassed (in as far as I can judge) all the Greeks who ever wrote—in wisdom, in gravity, in decorum, in majesty, and in memorable aphorism." Elizabethan tragedy, down to its five-act structure, its lurid violence, and its use of ghosts, was inspired by the tragedies of Seneca; Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a Senecan play.

Like Cicero, Seneca was admired as a philosopher as well as a literary stylist and praised by Dante, Chaucer, and Montaigne. Saint Jerome nominated him for sainthood, and his Stoicism influenced thinkers on both sides of the Reformation divide. For a millennium and a half, his place was secure alongside Virgil at the peak of Parnassus. In the 20th century, however, Seneca has been dismissed by literary critics and historians, with a few exceptions such as the poet Dana Gioia. Herbert J. Muller writes in *The Spirit of Tragedy* (1956): "Almost all readers today are struck by how crude his drama is, and how invincibly abominable his taste. It is hard to understand why for centuries western critics and poets had so high an admiration for Seneca, installing his plays among the classics." (Among other things, this implies that Shakespeare, who learned so much from Seneca, was a poor judge of drama.) *The Norton Book of Classical Literature* (1993) does not include one word of Seneca.

The only art in which the Roman tradition held its own in the 19th and 20th centuries was architecture. Beginning with late 18th-century neoclassicism, fads of abstract, primitive simplicity in architecture have repeatedly been followed by shifts in taste back in favor of ornate Roman

or neo-Roman Renaissance styles. Neoclassicism gave way to gaudy Second Empire; the Greek Revival in the early 19th century was followed in the second half of the century by the Beaux-Arts revival. In the 1980s and '90s, one reaction against the geometric abstraction of International Style modernism took the form of neo-Palladian revivalism.

The reason in each case was the same—neo-Greek simplicity in poetry or drama may be sublime, but in architecture it is merely boring. Generations of connoisseurs have shared the sentiment expressed in the 18th century by Lord de la Warr on viewing the Greek Revival building commissioned by Lord Nuneham: "God damn my blood, my lord, is this your Grecian architecture? What villainy! What absurdity! If this be Grecian, give me Chinese, give me Gothick! Anything is better than this!"

Although the Latin-based high culture survived longer in the provincial United States than in Britain or Germany, with Emerson and Whitman most American intellectuals joined the transatlantic romantic movement. By the middle of the 19th century, Ciceronian orators such as Daniel Webster, Augustan poets such as the Connecticut Wits, and classical painters such as Thomas Cole and Benjamin West seemed to belong to another civilization.

The older culture of Latinity did linger on in the American South. The poet Allen Tate described the South's "composite agrarian hero, Cicero Cincinatus": "I can think of no better image for what the South was before 1860, and for what it largely still was until about 1914, than that of the old gentleman in Kentucky who sat every afternoon in his front yard under an old sugar tree, reading Cicero's *Letters To Atticus*."

By the 20th century, the ancient Greeks had almost completely replaced the ancient Romans as the preferred cultural ancestors of Americans. What David Gress, in his recent study of changing conceptions of the West, *From Plato to NATO*, calls the American "Grand Narrative" of Western history was shaped by the Contemporary Civilization course devised at Columbia University after World War I and the Great Books curriculum promoted by Robert Maynard Hutchins and Mortimer Adler at the University of Chicago during the 1930s. These curricular reforms inspired American college courses in "Western Civ," a version of world history disseminated to a wider audience by popularizers such as Will and Ariel Durant and Edith Hamilton, author of *The Greek Way* (1930).

Western Civ (WC) held that Euro-American history between Pericles and Thomas Jefferson was a long and regrettable detour. According to Gress:

> Literature, founded by Homer, came to fruition in the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Representational art, which lay at the core of modern Western identity from the Renaissance to the twentieth century, reached heights never since rivaled in the sculptures of the Parthenon at Athens or the temple of Apollo at Olympia. Philosophy matured in Socrates and culminated, in the fourth century, in Plato and Aristotle. As if all that were not enough, the Greeks also invented democ-

racy and the study of history, and the two were related, just as philosophy and the scientific outlook on nature were related.

This conventional wisdom represented the hardening into orthodoxy of the once-revolutionary claims of the early-19th-century romantic philhellenes. According to the WC orthodoxy, Rome's historical mission was merely to pass on the heritage of Periclean Athens to the modern Atlantic democracies. "Given its liberal slant," Gress writes, "it downplayed the Romans, both of whose aspects caused discomfort: the aristocratic and patriarchal *libertas* [freedom] of the early fathers and the slave-holding, exploitative imperialism of the later conquerors and their henchmen."

The task of the popularizers of Western Civ was made easier by the fact that American Protestantism had always disseminated a negative image of the Roman Empire (and its successor, the Roman Church). American Protestants thought of the ancient Romans as an evil and dissolute people whose favorite pastime was watching Christians being fed to lions in the Coliseum. In the popular mind, hard-bodied Greeks exercised; fat Romans lay on couches nibbling grapes between orgies. The lesson of Roman history seemed clear: if you have too much fun, you will be wiped out by invading barbarians and exploding volcanoes. In Protestant America, Rome symbolized not only pagan immorality but tyrannical big government. The comparison of government entitlements and popular entertainment to Rome's "bread and circuses" for the depraved and riotous masses became a staple of American conservative rhetoric.

If the reputation of Roman culture declined in the 18th and 19th centuries, the reputation of the Roman polity suffered in the 20th. Already a symbol of unimaginative, derivative art and literature, Rome came to be thought of as the forerunner of the most monstrous tyrannies of modern times.

Although early-19th-century Germans, divided among petty states and more adept at art than at arms, imagined themselves as the heirs of the city-state Greeks, 20th-century Germany seemed suspiciously like Rome. The Second Reich (Empire), founded in 1870, was led by a Kaiser (derived from Caesar). Hitler's Third Reich looked even more Roman. German National Socialism was influenced by Benito Mussolini's neo-Roman Fascism, the very name of which referred to the Roman symbol of authority (the fasces, a bundle of sticks bound together with a cord).

Unlike some members of his movement, Hitler had little interest in the culture of the ancient Teutonic barbarians. But pagan Rome, with its Capitol and coliseums and boulevards and triumphal arches, provided the model for his new Berlin, "Germania," the grandiose and never-built capitol for his European empire. The Nazi salute was modeled on the Roman salute, with "Hail, Caesar!" becoming "Heil, Hitler!"

The Ambassadors of Agamemnon Visiting Achilles *(1801) by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres*

In reality, of course, the Roman Empire had as little in common with National Socialist Germany as the Roman republic did with the republics of George Washington or Robespierre. Even so, the image of Rome, already damaged by generations of philhellene propaganda, was further tainted by association with 20th-century dictatorship.

Ironically, the flight of intellectuals, many of them German Jews, from Europe to the United States during the 1930s and 1940s reinforced the influence of the German cult of Greece in the United States. In the writings of Hannah Arendt, American liberals found an idealized version of Greek democracy; in the writings of Leo Strauss, American conservatives found the claim that the American republic was rooted in a tradition of Greek political philosophy.

Whenever a Golden Age of stable government, full churches, and expanding wealth has dawned among western nations, Virgil always returns to supreme favor," the writer Robert Graves observed. "His reputation flourished in . . . Paris under Louis XIV, London under Queen Anne and Queen Victoria, Baltimore in the first half of the 19th century, Boston in the second half, and Potsdam under Kaiser Wilhelm II."

By this logic, one would expect the United States to take a new

interest in its Roman heritage at the beginning of the third millennium A.D. It is, after all, not only the dominant military power on the planet, but it also possesses the most prosperous economy and influential metropolitan culture as well.

Yet there are no signs of a rehabilitation of Rome's reputation in the United States, and the battle between PC and WC is really no more than a battle between yesterday's anti-Latin romanticism and today's. It is only a small exaggeration to say that the entire period from 1760 to 2000 in Western culture has been a prolonged rebellion against the Hellenistic/Roman/Renaissance tradition. By now the war has long since been won. Little purpose is served by ritual abuse of Roman authors such as Statius or Seneca, who have not been read or even translated for generations. The defenders of Western civilization should defend it all, instead of skipping from the Greeks to the Middle Ages to modernity, leaving out the allegedly "sterile" and "derivative" eras of Hellenistic culture, Roman civilization, and Renaissance/Baroque humanism. To write the Roman Empire (and its Byzantine successor) out of Western history is as absurd as trying to remove China from the history of East Asia.

Many, if not most, aspects of Roman society and culture are irrelevant to the modern world, and some are repugnant to modern values. The evil of slavery has been eliminated in most places. Imperialism is archaic in an industrialized world of nation-states. The martial virtues prized in Rome, although perennially relevant to soldiers and police officers, are not central to our civilian, commercial society. It is in the realms of literature, art, and philosophy that Rome has the most to offer us today.

From Roman poets, architects, and sculptors, who revitalized Greek traditions in making them their own, today's writers and artists can learn how to build upon a great tradition without enslaving themselves to it. Western classicism, the architectural historian Michael Greenhalgh writes, "is an approach to art and, indeed, to life that emphasizes the ideal (in form and in content) over the everyday; the power of reason over the often misleading emotions; clarity and simplicity (that is, understatement) over prolixity; measurability (as an index of beauty) over intuition."

Because the classical tradition is cumulative and evolving, Greenhalgh adds, "it is but rarely that the need is felt to return to the sources and to make . . . a *tabula rasa*. Hence to reject the Renaissance and Baroque traditions is to reject the classical tradition." Finally, according to Greenhalgh, "The tradition is logically Roman and *not* Greek, because Rome has consistently been at the centre of European consciousness; whereas Greece (except in antique times, during parts of the Middle Ages, and since the 19th century) has been at the periphery." Artists who are truly postmodern and postromantic might turn for inspiration to the spirit, if not necessarily the forms, of Roman art.

The Roman example in philosophy is even more important in our time. The Roman ideal, which inspired the "Renaissance man," was not the cloistered pedant but the worldly philosopher-statesman who combined contemplation with action. Latin moralists such as Cicero and Seneca, unlike modern philosophers such as Hegel, were interested less in metaphysics and epistemology than in practical questions of how to live an ethical life in a turbulent and evil world. In the modern world, as in the Middle Ages, philosophy has degenerated into an esoteric game played by scholars remote from the centers of public affairs and political debate. Renaissance humanists such as Petrarch, rejecting medieval scholasticism, made the Ciceronian ideal of the engaged, public-spirited intellectual their own. If a new public philosophy is to transcend the dichotomy between academic theory and partisan ideology, its champions could profit from the example of the Roman scholar-statesman.

If one word sums up the central difference between us and the Romans, it is *public*. Roman poetry and oratory were public and theatrical; Roman architecture was public and grand. The very term *republic* (the "public thing") incorporates the word. The horrors of 20th-century collectivism have left us with a reasonable suspicion of coerced community. Even so, the contemporary eclipse of the public and accessible in literature, art, and philosophy by the private and idiosyncratic would have been considered a disaster by the Romans as well as the Greeks. Our term *idiot* comes from the Latin *idiota*, an adaptation of the Greek *idiotes*, which means "private person." The concern about restoring community, shared by many liberals as well as conservatives, suggests that the pendulum is beginning to swing away from the extreme of radical individualism in thought and life.

From the 18th century until the present, an idealization of the primitive has driven the revolt against Rome (or, rather, against what Rome is thought to symbolize). Civilization, classicism, tradition—these have been swear words for most Western intellectuals for the past two centuries. Those who would defend the idea of a cumulative civilization that is at once traditional and progressive must reject the romantic notion that all development is decadence, along with the corresponding bias in favor of the primitive over the civilized, the spontaneous over the studied, the original over the allusive. In defiance of the political avant-garde's cult of revolution and the artistic avant-garde's cult of novelty, it is necessary to insist that we are not limited to the choice of repeating tradition or rejecting it. Renewing tradition is an option as well.

The bias against Roman civilization is not so much a bias against Rome as against civilization itself. As the third millennium dawns, it may be that those defending the idea not only of Western civilization, but of civilization as such, will also find it necessary to defend the idea of Rome. ❑

A Tale of Two Presidents

At particular moments in history, the presidency has required different talents and ambitions of those who held the office, from managing a crisis to maneuvering Congress to moving the nation. No two figures better illustrate the variety of qualities the office demands than Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy.

by Michael R. Beschloss

For most of American history, the presidency has been a weak office, and that was very much in keeping with what the Framers intended. They did not want another king of England; they did not want a dictator. They made sure that there were checks against presidential power, one of them being impeachment, and they were very worried about the idea of a president who would do too much. Much of the power of the presidency comes not from what is in the Constitution but from two other sources.

The first is the president's ability to go to the American people and ask them for something, especially sacrifice. One very good example would be Franklin Roosevelt saying, in effect, in 1940: "You may not want to get prepared for a possible war in Europe and Asia, but this is something I've thought a lot about, and this is a sacrifice that we may have to make." Another example would be a president's appeal for a painful tax increase to achieve a balanced budget.

The second source of presidential power is a president's ability to get things out of Congress. The Founders hoped that presidents would have such moral authority, and people would think they were so wise, that members of Congress would be intimidated. If a president went to Congress and asked for something like civil rights, members would take heed. That's one reason why Lyndon Johnson was a much more powerful president in 1964, 1965, and 1966 than others might have been: because of his experience as one of the most canny and powerful leaders in the history of Congress, he was extraordinarily effective at getting what he wanted.

Dwight D. Eisenhower met at the White House on January 19, 1961 with his successor, John F. Kennedy. Ike called the 1960 election "a repudiation of everything I've stood for."

For most of our lifetimes, we have been in a situation that is something of an aberration. When I was 10 years old, hoping to be able to write history about presidents when I grew up, it seemed very glamorous. I thought these people were, to crib a phrase from Leonardo DiCaprio, "kings of the world." The president was the centerpiece of the American political solar system, the center of our foreign and domestic policy, the most powerful person in the American government, and America was astride the world. That was the case from Franklin Roosevelt until the last year of George Bush's presidency.

In the 1930s, Congress and the American people granted Roosevelt extraordinary influence over domestic affairs. In the wake of Pearl Harbor, they extended that power into foreign affairs. After 1945, Americans thought it was a good idea for power to flow to Washington. That enhanced the power of presidents. People liked federal action and federal programs. Congress was

inclined to defer to the chief executive in foreign policy because we had to win the Cold War. Then, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Americans grew more skeptical about Big Government. Power began to flow away from Washington. When the Cold War ended, foreign policy seemed less urgent. The result is that now we are returning to a time in which presidents don't have the kind of power that they had between the 1930s and the 1980s.

Dwight Eisenhower became president of the United States in 1953, at the apex of presidential power. But that power was enhanced by the man himself and the situation in which he found himself. It is hard to imagine a leader in a more commanding position. As the hero of World War II in Europe, Eisenhower enjoyed as august a national and world reputation as anyone who has ever entered the White House. With his impeccable reputation for character and integrity, he was as much a national father figure as George Washington.

Eisenhower had been elected by a landslide, and in that election he took both houses of Congress back from the Democrats. He could fairly argue that his ample coattails had made the difference. This was a new president with enormous reservoirs of political strength, but also limited ambitions, much more limited than those of Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, or Lyndon Johnson.

Although he would never have alienated conservatives in his party by saying so in public, Eisenhower had no desire to turn back the clock on the New Deal. Instead, he wanted to consolidate those reforms and do what Republicans do: administer the programs more efficiently and economically. Beyond that, he saw himself among the conflicting demands of labor, business, finance, and other engines of the American economy as a balance wheel poised to let postwar prosperity roar ahead under a balanced budget.

He wanted to eliminate isolationism from the Republican Party and postwar America. We sometimes forget how close Republicans came to nominating the isolationist senator Robert Taft of Ohio in 1952. Ike had such deep convictions about this issue that in the winter of 1952 he went to Taft and said, "I feel so strongly about defending the Free World against the Soviets that I will make you a deal. If you renounce isolationism, I won't run against you for president."

Taft easily could have accepted, and Eisenhower never would have been president. It shows you how deeply he felt about this. He wanted to use his office to make sure that no postwar national leader could come to power without vowing to ensure that the United States would remain permanently engaged in the world. That comes about as close as anything Eisenhower had to a deep political conviction.

He hoped that by the end of his eight years in office he would be able somehow to reduce the harshness of the Cold War. As a military man, he was

> Michael R. Beschloss *is the author of a number of books on American history, including* The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khruschev, 1960–1963 *(1991) and* Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963–1964 *(1997).*

very conscious of the danger of nuclear war. Once, sitting through a briefing by a civil defense official who was blithely describing how the federal government could survive underground after a Soviet nuclear attack, Ike told him to stop. "We won't be carrying on with government," he barked. "We'll be grubbing for worms!" He was disgusted that the United States had to spend billions of dollars on what he called "sterile" military programs, when it could have invested in schools and hospitals and roads.

To hold down the arms race as much as possible, he worked out a tacit agreement with Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev. Khrushchev wanted to build up his economy. He didn't want to spend a lot of money on the Soviet military because he wanted to start feeding people and recover from the devastation of World War II. But he knew that to cover this he would have to give speeches in public that said quite the opposite. So Khrushchev would deliver himself of such memorable lines as, "We Soviets are cranking out missiles like sausages, and we will bury you because our defense structure is pulling ahead of the United States." Eisenhower dealt with this much as an adult deals with a small boy who is lightly punching him in the stomach. He figured that leaving Khrushchev's boasts unanswered was a pretty small price to pay if it meant that Khrushchev would not spend much money building up his military.

As a result the arms race was about as slow during the 1950s as it could have been, and Eisenhower was well on the way to creating an atmosphere of communication. Had the U-2 spy plane not been shot down over the Soviet Union in 1960 and had the presidential campaign taken place in a more peaceful atmosphere, John Kennedy and Richard Nixon would have competed on the basis of who could increase the opening to the Soviets that Eisenhower had created. Whether or not that would have sped the end of the Cold War is open to argument.

When he took office in 1953, Eisenhower was disheartened by the bitterness and exhaustion in the American political climate. We had been through a stock market crash, a great depression, five years of global war, a growing Soviet threat, full-fledged Cold War, the Korean War, McCarthyism, and the backlash against it—all in the space of less than a generation. Our nerves were frayed. Ike wanted to be the calming, unifying national symbol who could give us a bit of breathing space.

What personal qualities did Eisenhower bring to the Oval Office? The most obvious: He was the most popular human being in America, and probably the most popular human being in the world. But he was also a much more intelligent man than people understood at the time. People who watched his press conferences—filled with those sentences that lacked verbs and never seemed to end—thought Ike was a wonderful guy but not too bright. Now, almost a half-century later, we have access to his letters and diaries, and records of his private meetings. When you take Ike off the public platform and put him in a small room where he's talking candidly to his aides and friends, you find a leader much in command of complex issues—very different from the caricature of the time.

Harry Truman once predicted that when Ike became president he would be frustrated. Truman said that as a general, Eisenhower would shout, "Do this!" and "Do that!" but that in the White House, when he did that, nothing would happen. Indeed, Ike had never taken part before in domestic politics. But what people overlooked was that in the army for almost 40 years he had been operating in large, bureaucratic organizations, not least the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe. This was good experience for a president who had to deal with a rapidly growing Central Intelligence Agency and Pentagon and with ballooning domestic bureaucracies like the new Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

What qualities did Eisenhower lack? As an orator, he was no Franklin Roosevelt. He seemed to design his language to make sure that no one would remember or, in some cases, even understand what he said. Some scholars, such as political scientist Fred Greenstein of Princeton, think that Eisenhower was often deliberately boring or opaque as a ploy, to keep from polarizing people. Maybe so, but the inability to use what Theodore Roosevelt called the "bully pulpit" is a big problem for a president. It robbed Eisenhower of considerable power that, used in the right way, could have been very important for this country.

Imagine if Eisenhower had been president in 1939. That was when FDR was making the case to the American people that we had to build our own defense forces because we might have to fight a war. His oratorical skills helped to move opinion in Congress and among the American people enough so that when war came, we were prepared. Had Roosevelt been mute, we would have lost World War II.

The ability to move a nation is essential if a president wants to ask Congress and the American people for something. It is just as essential if things are going badly. That's when a president needs to reassure the public. In 1958, America was plunging into recession. Eisenhower refused to improve things by unbalancing the budget. The Republicans lost badly in the 1958 midterm elections, largely because Ike could not or would not explain to Americans why it was necessary to stay the economic course. He allowed his critics to take the initiative, saying, "Eisenhower is tired and washed up and so obsessed with a balanced budget that he doesn't care about people who are suffering."

Another example came the previous year, with the Soviet launching of *Sputnik*, the first earth satellite. Eisenhower's foes said, "Ike is so lazy and asleep at the switch that he has allowed the Russians to be first to launch a satellite. Now the Russians can drop nuclear weapons on Chicago or Detroit." In fact, sending up *Sputnik* was not the same thing as being able to drop a bomb precisely on a target by missile. The Soviets were still years away from being able to do that. But Eisenhower was unable to make that case to the American people. The result was near national hysteria.

Another of Ike's shortcomings was as a horse trader. He once said, "I don't know how to do what you have to do to get something out of a congressman." You wouldn't have heard Lyndon Johnson saying such a thing. Getting

members of Congress to do things they don't want to do is a crucial part of being president.

One of the tapes LBJ made of his private conversations as president captures a revealing conversation he had in 1964. He knows that the key to getting his civil rights bill passed will be Everett Dirksen of Illinois, Republican leader of the Senate. He calls Dirksen, whom he has known for 20 years, and essentially says, "Ev, I know you have some doubts about this bill, but if you decide to support it, a hundred years from now every American schoolchild will know two names: Abraham Lincoln and Everett Dirksen." Dirksen liked the sound of that. He supported the bill, and the rest was history. You will never find an example of a conversation like that in the annals of Dwight Eisenhower. His diffidence about Congress limited his ability to get things done.

If Eisenhower were president in a time requiring a leader standing in the epicenter of heroic change, like Roosevelt in the 1930s and 1940s, for example, he probably would have been a disaster, because he lacked the ambitions and the skills that kind of presidential leadership requires. Yet Eisenhower was magnificently suited to the 1950s. He got people to accept Social Security and other controversial reforms as a permanent way of American life. For much of the decade, he balanced the budget, kept inflation low, and presided over a postwar boom. He fathered the interstate highway system. He was the very image of a chief of state. He made Americans feel good about themselves and their country. He killed isolationism. He muted the U.S.-Soviet arms race as much as any president could have.

To use the parlance of West Point, I would suggest three demerits in Ike's record as president. The first: Joseph McCarthy. Eisenhower was a civil libertarian. He knew what Senator McCarthy's reckless charges about internal communism were doing to this country. Imagine if Eisenhower had stood up in 1953 and said, "McCarthyism is a poison in this society. Believe me, of all people I will be the last to let this country be injured by communists within, but we can't tear this nation apart." That could have changed history. Instead, Ike was stunningly

Ike hovers above the fray of national concerns in 1957. Despite limited ambitions, he mastered the complex issues.

"The Helicopter Era," from *Herblock: A Cartoonist's Life* (Times Book, 1998)

quiet, although some recent revisionists argue that he tried to tunnel against McCarthy behind the scenes.

The most coherent statement Ike made against McCarthy was at Dartmouth in June 1953. He had been chatting about the virtues of playing golf. He urged Dartmouth men to have fun in their lives. They didn't seem to need the advice. But toward the end of that speech, he got serious. He had been told how McCarthy's agents had tried to have certain "subversive" books removed from U.S. embassy libraries abroad. He told the Dartmouth graduates, "Don't join the book burners. Instead, go to the library and read books on communism so you will know what you are fighting against." Nicely said, but these two sentences got little attention. They leave you feeling that Eisenhower could and should have said so much more.

Demerit two: civil rights. Ike never understood how vital it was to integrate American society after World War II. Imagine how he could have used his great moral authority and world reputation. He could have said in 1953, "I went to Europe and helped win the Second World War, but that was just part of the job. Now we have to finish what we fought for by bringing equal rights to all Americans." No other political figure would have carried so much weight.

But Ike had something of a blind spot on civil rights. He had spent a lot of his life in the South and overestimated the degree of resistance to a civil rights bill. We now know that in 1954, when the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* ordered the desegregation of public schools, Eisenhower privately thought it a bad idea.

Ike had an aide named Frederic Morrow who was the first African American to serve on a president's staff. Morrow would talk to the president about civil rights on occasion and would come away feeling that he had made some headway. Then Ike would fly to Georgia for a hunting weekend with some southern friends. When he came back, it was almost as if his conversation with Morrow had never occurred.

Civil rights was a case where Eisenhower's instincts of compromise and moderation served him badly. Segregation was a moral issue. Because of the president's foot-dragging, the civil rights revolution, when it reached full force in the 1960s, was more bitter and violent.

The final demerit: One test of leaders is how they make sure that their ideas and programs will live on after they're gone. One way they do that is by building a political movement like a political party. Eisenhower tried to recreate his party in the image of what he called "modern Republicanism." But he failed. Four years after he left office, Republicans scorned his moderation as a "dime-store New Deal" and nominated Barry Goldwater. The Republican Party we see today is far more the party of Goldwater than of Eisenhower.

Another way you make sure your policies survive is with your words. But so unable or unwilling was Eisenhower to use his powers of persuasion that some of the basic tenets of his political credo vanished almost as soon as he left the White House. Because Ike failed to make the case for a balanced

budget, his Democratic successors were able to start the great inflation of the 1960s. Because Ike failed to make the case for a moderate arms race, John Kennedy started what was at that time the largest arms buildup in human history.

Another way to forge a legacy is to make sure you are followed by leaders who will carry on your purposes. Here Eisenhower failed. He once said that one of the biggest disappointments of his life was that in the race to succeed him, John Kennedy defeated his vice president, Richard Nixon. He called that "a repudiation of everything I've stood for for eight years."

It is hard to imagine two more different men than Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy and perhaps in no way more so than this: Eisenhower in 1953 had access to vast amounts of power; Kennedy in 1961 had access to little.

Kennedy had been elected president by a margin of only 100,000 votes. Congress remained Democratic, but since most members had run well ahead of the new president, they felt they owed him little. As Kennedy saw it, he was faced by a House and Senate dominated by hostile coalitions of conservative Republicans and southern Democrats. Many of those who had known him as a fellow congressman or senator found it hard to get out of the habit of thinking of him as a distracted, absentee backbencher.

The American people had voted for Kennedy narrowly but they didn't really know him. Unlike Eisenhower, from the moment he was elected, Kennedy had to work hard to make an impression. He was always worried that he looked too young for people to think of him as a president. When you look at videotape and newsreels of the period, you notice how stiff and formal Kennedy is on the platform.

JFK came to the presidency devoid of executive experience. The biggest organizations he had ever run were his Senate office and the PT boat he commanded during World War II. What's more, he had been seeking the presidency for so long that he had only vague instincts about where he wanted to take the country. He did want to do something in civil rights. In the 1960 campaign, he promised to end discrimination in housing "with the stroke of a pen." On health care, education, the minimum wage, and other social issues, he was a mainstream Democrat. He hoped to get the country through eight years without a nuclear holocaust and to improve things with the Soviets, if possible. He wanted a nuclear test ban treaty.

But as he was riding to the inaugural ceremonies with Kennedy in 1961, James Reston, the great *New York Times* columnist, asked what kind of country Kennedy wanted to leave his successor. Kennedy looked at him quizzically, as if he were looking at the man in the moon. Kennedy's method was never the grand vision of a Wilson or Reagan. It was crisis management, hour to hour to hour.

Kennedy's vow to land a man on the moon before 1970 is a perfect example. When he became president, he had no intention of launching a crash moon program. Advisers told him it would be too expensive and would unbalance a space program that was divided among communications, military, weather, exploration, and other projects.

But in the spring of 1961, the Russians injured American pride by launching the first man, Yuri Gagarin, into space. Then Kennedy suffered an embarrassing defeat when he and the CIA tried to use Cuban exiles to invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs and seize the country from Fidel Castro. In the wake of that botched invasion, he badgered his aides for some quick fix that would help to restore American prestige. The moon-landing program was rolled out of mothballs.

People at the time often said Eisenhower was responsible for the Bay of Pigs, since it was Eisenhower's plan to take Cuba back from Castro. That does not stand up well under scrutiny. Eisenhower would not necessarily have approved the invasion's going forward, and he would not necessarily have run it the same way. His son once asked him, "Is there a possibility that if you had been president, the Bay of Pigs would have happened?" Ike reminded him of Normandy and said, "I don't run no bad invasions."

Unlike Eisenhower, who almost flaunted his affinity for paperback westerns, Kennedy was a voracious reader of serious books. We also remember JFK as one of the great orators of American history, which is only half right. Extemporaneously, he tended to speak too fast and with language that did not last for long. The great utterances we think of as coming from Kennedy—"Ask not what your country can do for you"; "We choose to go to the moon"; "*Ich bin ein Berliner*"—were almost all in prepared speeches, usually written by his gifted speechwriter Theodore Sorensen. If you read Kennedy's speeches from his earliest days as a congressman in 1947, you can see the difference at the instant Sorensen signs on in 1953. It's almost like the moment in *The Wizard of Oz* when the film goes from black and white to color. Suddenly, Kennedy had found his voice.

When he used that voice, he was amazingly successful in moving public opinion. Think of the impact of Kennedy's inaugural, or his Oval Office speech in October 1962 announcing the discovery of Soviet missiles in Cuba and what he planned to do about them, or his civil rights address in June 1963, when he finally declared, as no president had ever said before, that civil rights was a "moral issue" that was "as old as the Scriptures and as clear as the Constitution."

JFK may never have run a large bureaucratic organization, but he was terrific at managing small groups. Look at the paramount moment of the Kennedy presidency, the Cuban Missile Crisis. How did he deal with the problem? He formed a small group of trusted officials, the Ex Comm (Executive Committee), which met in the Cabinet Room under the close supervision of the president and his brother Robert. Robert Kennedy was probably the most powerful member of a presidential entourage that we've

seen in this century. That cut both ways. On the one hand, John Kennedy had someone he could rely upon as absolutely loyal, someone who totally shared his purposes. But on the other hand, it was virtually impossible for the president to distance himself from anything his attorney general did, since people assumed that when Robert Kennedy spoke, the message came from his brother.

A 1961 lampoon of JFK after the Bay of Pigs. When asked about the fiasco, Ike said, "I don't run no bad invasions."

The tape recordings of the Ex Comm meetings over 13 days make it clear how enormously important it was to have Kennedy and his brother massaging the discussion. During the first week, the group moved from an almost certain intention to bomb the missile sites and invade Cuba to what JFK finally did: throw a quarantine around the island and demand that Nikita Khrushchev haul the missiles out. We now know that had Kennedy bombed, it might have easily escalated into a third world war. If Eisenhower had been running those meetings, with his Olympian approach, they might not have been nearly so effective. Here, Kennedy's talent for crisis management may have saved the world.

He had less success in his day-to-day dealings with Congress. One senator observed that the president would call him and say, "I sure hope I can count on your help on this bill." And he would reply, "Mr. President, I'd love to help you, but it would cause me big problems in my state." If Lyndon Johnson had been president, he would have said, "Tough luck!" and pulled every lever he could to get his bill, even if it meant phoning the senator's bank and having his mortgage called. But Kennedy would say, "I understand. Perhaps you'll be with me the next time."

A good example is civil rights. Whatever he had pledged in the 1960 campaign, he was too overwhelmed by the opposition on Capitol Hill to do much to integrate American society. Voters who remembered his promise to end racial discrimination in housing with a stroke of his pen angrily sent bottles of ink to the White House. Privately, he kept saying, "Wait until 1965. I've got to get reelected in a big way. If I'm lucky enough to run against Barry Goldwater, I'll win in a landslide with a big margin in Congress. Then on all the legislation I want, I can let 'er rip."

But the "Negro revolution," as people called it then, would not wait. In June 1963, with the South erupting in flames, Kennedy sent Congress a civil rights bill that was radical for its time. It was late, and he was pushed into it by

events, but this was genuinely a profile in courage. JFK's public approval ratings dropped about 20 points. Southern states that had helped him win the presidency in 1960 turned against him. When Kennedy went to Texas in November 1963, he was by no means a shoo-in for reelection, and the reason was civil rights.

Unlike Eisenhower, Kennedy never had the eight years he had hoped for. Only two years, 10 months, two days. And he never got that landslide in 1964. That went to Lyndon Johnson, who did have the good luck to run against Barry Goldwater. Thus, to understand JFK's use of power, we have to ask two final questions about what might have happened had he lived.

First, what would have happened to his civil rights bill? There is a good chance the Senate would have defeated it. In the aftermath of Kennedy's murder, Johnson was able to say, "Pass this bill as the memorial to our beloved late president." The Johnson tapes show that he used his monumental abilities to squeeze members of Congress to get the bill passed. Had Kennedy lived, neither of those things would have been possible. If you have to pull something redeeming out of the tragedy of Dallas, then it is fair to say that because JFK gave his life, 20 million African Americans gained their rights sooner than they might have.

The other question is what Kennedy would have done in Vietnam. Some of Kennedy's champions, such as Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield and Kennedy aide Kenneth O'Donnell, quote him as having said privately that he couldn't pull out before the 1964 election because he would be vilified as soft on communism. According to them, he planned to keep the troops in until after he was safely reelected, get the Saigon government to ask us to leave, and then withdraw.

I tend to be skeptical of this. If true, it means that Kennedy cynically would have kept young Americans in harm's way for 14 months or more merely to help himself through the next election, then surrendered the commitment for which they had been fighting.

Nor am I convinced by the notion that a reelected Kennedy in 1965 suddenly would have thrown caution to the winds. He still would have had to serve as president for four years, and if he seemed to cave in on Vietnam, at a time when most Americans believed in the domino theory, there would have been a national backlash that would have undercut his ability to get anything he wanted from Congress, foreign or domestic.

And there was always in his mind the possibility that Robert Kennedy, or other Kennedys, might run for president. I doubt that he would have done something that might have so injured his family's durability in American politics.

A more likely possibility is that if Kennedy had escalated the war for two years and found himself as frustrated as Lyndon Johnson was, he might have been more willing than LBJ to pull out. Throughout his political career, Kennedy was adept at cutting losses. The fact is we will never know. ❑

THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

A New Science of Politics?

A Survey of Recent Articles

To hear political scientists Emerson M. S. Niou and Peter C. Ordeshook tell it, theirs is "a discipline mired in imprecision, vagueness, obscure logic, ill-defined constructs, nontestable hypotheses, and ad hoc argument." And it was in reaction to this intellectual flabbiness, they assert in *International Security* (Fall 1999), that "rational choice" theory—the mathematically oriented approach of which they are leading proponents—has come into academic vogue in recent years.

Niou, of Duke University, and Ordeshook, of the California Institute of Technology, were not simply explaining how this came to be: they, and five other contributors, were vigorously defending rational choice against a pointed indictment by Stephen M. Walt, a fellow political scientist at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. His 44-page attack on rational choice theory and its growing influence appears in the spring issue of *International Security*.

The theory at the center of this controversy grows out of economics. It assumes that social and political outcomes are the collective product of individual choices by rational individuals. Rational choice theorists construct mathematical models to represent real-world situations, then use them to show what the only logical outcomes are.

The approach has roots in the 1950s, but it lately has become fashionable in academia, Walt notes. "Elite academic departments are now expected to include game theorists and other formal modelers in order to be regarded as 'up to date,' graduate students increasingly view the use of formal rational choice models as a prerequisite for professional advancement, and research employing rational choice methods is becoming more widespread throughout the discipline." By one estimate, 40 percent of the published articles in the *American Political Science Review* now take the rational choice approach.

Unfortunately, Walt maintains, the rational choicers' elephantine methodological labors have brought forth, in the political science subfield of international security studies, only the tiniest mice of substance. "Formal rational choice theorists have refined or qualified a number of existing ideas, and they have provided formal treatments of a number of familiar issues," he says, but they have produced little in the way of "powerful new theories." Their elaborate formal exercises often yield only "rather trivial" or unoriginal results. A 1991 study, for example, found that "nations generally enter into alliances in the expectation of improving their security position." Another 1991 study, he charges, merely "reinvented the central elements of deterrence theory without improving on it." Little given to empirically testing their propositions against events in the real world, certainly not in any convincing way, rational choicers, says Walt, "have been largely absent from the major international security debates of the past decade."

But Walt does not appreciate the way in which the scientific enterprise must proceed, respond Niou and Ordeshook. He is, they assert, "someone concerned not with science and empirical regularity as those terms need to be understood for the development of cumulative knowledge, but instead with the commentary and informal discussion we find in newspapers and popu-

lar journals that has too long appeared under the label 'political science.' Such discussion and commentary may be entertaining and even sometimes enlightening, but it remains mere journalism until it can be given the solid scientific grounding that formal theorists pursue."

As for the charge that much of the rational choicers' work only shows what everybody already knew, Niou and Ordeshook aver that that is necessary: "Showing that a prior conclusion follows logically from some set of initial assumptions is a form of reproducibility that science demands—it tells us that the models in question are not mere fantasy and may not even be fundamentally flawed."

Such "basic science," according to Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and James D. Morrow, a senior fellow and a senior research fellow, respectively, at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, responding to Walt in *International Security*, may well take a long time to produce "practical application[s]." But, they say, it has already produced one: "Bueno de Mesquita's 'expected utility' model . . . [which] predicts the outcome of complex political settings." They claim, citing one Central Intelligence Agency official, that "the U.S. government . . . uses the model to assist with important foreign policy matters." Walt, however, comments that "such assertions should be taken with many grains of salt."

Rational choicers deal with domestic political questions as well. In the 1950s, *New Republic* (Oct. 25, 1999) senior editor Jonathan Cohn writes, RAND Corporation economist Kenneth Arrow developed his influential Possibility Theorem—for which he won a Nobel Prize—showing the unexpected ways in which a multicandidate election can frustrate the true preferences of voters. Inspired by Arrow's work, notes Cohn, the late William Riker envisioned a full-blown political science akin to neoclassical economics. At the University of Rochester, he built a department and, eventually, a school of thought on that vision, starting in 1962.

Rational choice scholars explore such things as the problem of "free riders" (who enjoy the benefits but don't share the burdens of membership in political groups) and the behavior of voters. One of their insights is that voters have no obvious reason to vote, since any one voter's chances of affecting the outcome are so slim. In resorting to "psychic gratification" and other explanations for why millions do in fact vote, argue Yale University political scientists Donald Green and Ian Shapiro in *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory* (1994), rational choice theorists undermine their basic assumptions about the "rationality" of human behavior.

The growing controversy in the corridors of political science departments is about more than just the validity of rational choice arguments. What chiefly bothers Walt, for instance, is not the rational choice approach per se (he finds some limited value in it), but rather the "imperialist" tendencies of rational choice scholars. And he is not alone in this complaint. "Critics say it's the scholars' strong-arm mentality, not their strong scholarship, that has propelled rational choice this far," writes Cohn. Rational choicers, however, claim that the outstanding quality of their work has led to their rise. "We're a handful of people," Bueno de Mesquita told Cohn. "The reason it appears to be this dominant thrust is because the clarity of work attracts attention."

Certainly, other research traditions in political science are not immune to criticism. In the study of international politics, writes John Lewis Gaddis, the noted historian of the Cold War, in *Diplomatic History* (Winter 1993), historians and political scientists under the spell of traditional "realist" theory came to assume that "because all nations seek power and influence . . . they did so for equally valid reasons; that in turn led to a kind of 'moral equivalency' doctrine in which the behavior of autocracies was thought to be little different from that of democracies."

Perhaps the effort to turn political science into a "hard" science is a vain one. In any case, it is clear that the controversy over the growing influence of rational choice theory is important. It will affect, as Walt says, not only political science but what political scientists can contribute to broader public debates on significant issues.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

The Dollar Deluge

"Congressional Campaign Finance Reform: A Little May Be Better Than a Lot" by Bruce Larson, in *Miller Center Report* (Fall 1999), P.O. Box 5106, Charlottesville, Va. 22905; "Well Off" by John Mueller, in *The New Republic* (Nov. 15, 1999), 1220 19th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; "Money 2000" by Robert Dreyfuss, in *The Nation* (Oct. 18, 1999), 33 Irving Pl., New York, N.Y. 10003.

America is in for a hurricane of political spending this year, warns journalist Dreyfuss. With a toothless Federal Election Commission (FEC) and no hope of "real" campaign finance reform, he says, the country is stuck with "a free-wheeling, free-market political system in which politicians and parties are bought and sold by America's ruling class." In 1996, an estimated $2.1 billion was spent on all campaigns for federal offices. "For 2000, if current trends hold," he shudders, "the total could be $3.5 billion."

Why is that too much? asks Mueller, a political scientist at the University of Rochester. He points out that Procter & Gamble routinely spends some $8 billion a year to market its products. Isn't democracy worth half that amount?

"The undisciplined, chaotic, and essentially unequal interplay of special interest groups that reformers decry is not a perversion of democracy—it's the whole point of it," Mueller contends. "Democracy is fundamentally a system in which people are (equally) free to become politically unequal. They are allowed to try to increase their political importance by working in politics or by supplying money to appropriate places." There's no promise that everyone will have an equal impact. Many reformers worry particularly about the influence of business "fat cats." But money isn't everything. What about other influentials, such as leading political columnists? Mueller asks. Inequalities are unavoidable, he believes.

Ironically, he observes, "many of the ills reformers now seek to address are byproducts of earlier attempts to clean up the system. By capping individual contributions at the ludicrously low level of $1,000 . . . for example, the Watergate-era reforms diverted political funds into soft money (donations made directly to political parties, which the parties then spend to influence elections) or into direct-issue advertising—which happen to be the two primary targets of most current reforms." The past reforms also helped billionaires such as Steve Forbes, who can finance their own campaigns, "or famous sons, such as George W. Bush, who inherit vast fund-raising networks."

Larson, a political scientist at Fairleigh Dickinson University, is not a fan of the current system, but, addressing the problem of congressional campaign finance, says the obstacles in the way of an ideal system are insurmountable: "the constraints of the First Amendment, the impracticality of public financing for congressional elections, conflicting reform goals, and the propensities of those with a stake in election outcomes to find innovative ways around even the tightest of regulations."

Larson believes a few modest reforms may be within reach, such as strengthened FEC regulation and perhaps a ban on party soft money, "provided it was accompanied by an across-the-board increase in hard money contribution limits." Though Mueller opposes trying to restrict soft money, he, too, favors raising or even eliminating altogether the $1,000 limit set in 1974 on direct contributions. Inflation has since reduced the real value of that amount to less than $400. "Politicians seem to find it politically incorrect to advocate this sensible change," he writes, "even though it would probably reduce the amount of time they spend" chasing after campaign dollars.

Simpson Family Values

"*The Simpsons*: Atomistic Politics and the Nuclear Family" by Paul A. Cantor, in *Political Theory* (Dec. 1999), Sage Publications, 2455 Teller Rd., Thousand Oaks, Calif. 91320.

No issue has roiled American politics more than "family values" in recent years, and for many who decry their decline, Exhibit A is the popularity of TV's dysfunc-

Dysfunctional defenders of traditional values?

tional cartoon family, the Simpsons. What unwholesome role models! traditionalist critics wail. But they should take a closer look, argues Cantor, an English professor at the University of Virginia. "For all its slapstick nature and its mocking of certain aspects of family life, *The Simpsons* . . . ends up celebrating the nuclear family as an institution. For television, this is no minor achievement."

While focusing on the nuclear family, the series relates it to larger institutions—church, school, and even political institutions, such as city government—satirizing them, to be sure, but at the same time acknowledging their importance, Cantor says. The show makes fun of small-town life, but "simultaneously celebrates the virtues of the traditional American small town."

The subtext of *The Simpsons*, creator Matt Groening has said, is that "the people in power don't always have your best interests in mind." This view of politics, adds Cantor, "has something to offer to both liberals and conservatives. *The Simpsons* is based on distrust of power and especially of power remote from ordinary people. The show celebrates genuine community, a community in which everybody more or less knows everybody else (even if they do not necessarily like each other). By recreating this older sense of community, the show manages to generate a kind of warmth out of its postmodern coolness, a warmth that is largely responsible for its success with the American public."

The Simpsons, "hip, postmodern, self-aware," is hardly a simple reprise of *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* or the other TV family shows of the 1950s, Cantor acknowledges. But "for roughly the past two decades, much of American television has been suggesting that the breakdown of the American family does not constitute a social crisis or even a serious problem," and in that context, *The Simpsons*' unorthodox defense of the nuclear family stands out.

"In effect," writes Cantor, "the show says, 'Take the worst-case scenario—the Simpsons—and even that family is better than no family.' In fact, the Simpson family is not all that bad." Though young Bart's "disrespect for authority and especially for his teachers" appalls some critics, Cantor believes he is "an updated version of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn."

But what about Homer, the "dumb, uneducated, weak in character, and morally unprincipled" Simpson father? "Homer is all those things," says Cantor, "but at least he is there. He fulfills the bare minimum of a father: he is present for his wife and above all his children. . . . He continually fails at being a good father, but he never gives up trying, and in some basic and important sense that makes him a good father."

In one episode, Cantor points out, "the question of whether the Simpson family really is dysfunctional" is explored. The civil authorities decide that Homer and his wife, Marge, are unfit parents, send them off to a "family skills class" for reeducation by experts, and turn the Simpson children over to the God-fearing parents next door. But neither "the old-style moral/religious family" nor "the therapeutic state" proves superior in the end. The show concludes, Cantor says, "that the Simpson children are better off with their real

parents . . . simply because Homer and Marge are the people most genuinely attached to Bart, Lisa, and Maggie, since the children are their own offspring."

Who Governs?

International organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank may do much good, but Robert Dahl, the noted Yale University political scientist, points out in *Social Research* (Fall 1999) that they share a grave defect.

After the extraordinary triumphs of democracy in the 20th century, must we, at the century's end, turn to the antidemocratic visions of Plato and Confucius in the hope that we can entrust the governments of international organizations to rulers of adequate virtue, wisdom, and incorruptibility? This would require rulers virtuous enough to seek good ends, wise enough to know the best means to achieve them, and sufficiently incorruptible to maintain their virtue and wisdom despite the temptations of power, ideology, and dogma.

The historical record is not, in my view, reassuring, and I confess that I am as skeptical about the desirability of guardianship in governing international organizations as I am about its desirability in governing countries. Yet solutions are unclear. Consequently, I hope that in the coming century some of our best social scientists would turn to the question of how international organizations can be governed in ways consistent with democratic goals.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Too Much Information

"The Surprising Logic of Transparency" by Bernard I. Finel and Kristin M. Lord, in *International Studies Quarterly* (June 1999), Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 350 Main St., Malden, Mass. 02148.

Transparency is a popular buzzword among the international relations cognoscenti these days, reassuringly suggesting, in this age of Matt Drudge and Cable Network News, that an open society's abundance of available information gives peace a better chance. 'Tain't usually so, declare Finel and Lord, professors of political science at Georgetown University and George Washington University, respectively.

They examined seven international crises, from the War of 1812 to the Sino-Soviet border dispute of 1969—all cases in which neither side wanted war, though in four cases, it came anyway. With the exception of World War I, on which the impact was unclear, Finel and Lord found that "transparency" often worsened the crisis. In one case, it appeared that a *lack* of transparency allowed an easing of tensions.

Take the 1967 conflict between "transparent" Israel and opaque Egypt, which led to a short war in June that neither wanted. Israel's openness to outside observers did no favor to Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser. He seemed "overwhelmed by the 'noise' of Israeli domestic politics," the authors say. "Due to press reports that emphasized the more belligerent statements made by Israeli leaders, media reports that highlighted divided domestic opinion about how to respond, and Nasser's consequent presumption that he could safely draw out the crisis for political gain, transparency exacerbated rather than mitigated the pressures for war." Nasser had so much information, in short, that he could "see whatever he wanted and con-

firm existing misperceptions about Israeli intentions."

Nor is informational "noise" necessarily less problematic just because the government trying to penetrate it is a democracy. In an 1898 conflict between Britain and France over territory in the Upper Nile Valley, "the fact that both states had relatively transparent governments and free presses" may well have provided "*more* room for misperception and not less," the authors say. The press in each country "routinely reported unauthorized views" and played up belligerent statements, while downplaying conciliatory ones. Fortunately, the key policymakers on both sides "were able to insulate themselves from the pressures produced by transparency," and kept up secret diplomatic exchanges. But "without transparency," say Finel and Lord, the crisis "might never have occurred in the first place," or at least been settled sooner and with less acrimony. As it was, war was finally avoided only because France was willing to accept "a humiliating defeat."

Like democracy itself, transparency may be, on balance, a good thing, the authors believe. Nevertheless, they say, the fact remains that, particularly in an international crisis, "more information is not always better."

An Invitation to Meddlers

"Military Success Requires Political Direction" by Ian Bryan, in *Strategic Review* (Fall 1999), United States Strategic Institute, P.O. Box 15618, Kenmore Station, Boston, Mass. 02215.

Ever since the Vietnam War, when President Lyndon Johnson and other civilians allegedly "meddled" in military matters with disastrous results, the view has taken hold in Washington that once America's elected leaders decide to go to war, they should then step aside and let the generals and admirals determine how best to achieve victory. But history suggests just the opposite lesson, contends Bryan, a U.S. Air Force captain. "Political leaders should intervene in military affairs when necessary to ensure that military action supports national policy."

What is purported to be the objective "military view" on employing force in a particular situation may largely reflect the military's bureaucratic imperatives or interservice rivalries, Bryan notes. The air force, for instance, "has historically been more interested in promoting strategic bombing," with itself in control, while the army naturally prefers close air support of ground forces, with an army commander in charge. Sometimes the factions collude, Bryan says, leaving "the country paying for unnecessarily redundant capabilities, or fighting its wars inefficiently so that each service gets a piece of the action." Because all the services took major roles in the attempted Iranian hostage rescue in 1979 and in the invasion of tiny Grenada in 1983, some analysts say, the operational complexity and risks involved were needlessly increased.

Sometimes, the judgments involved in military action go well beyond simple military expertise, Bryan observes. In the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, for example, the military wanted to intercept Soviet ships 800 miles from Cuba. But President John F. Kennedy ordered a 500-mile line instead, giving the Soviets more time to consider the ramifications of challenging the blockade. "Fortunately," Bryan adds, "since we now know there were about 100 tactical nuclear weapons and 43,000 Soviet troops in Cuba, Kennedy also rejected the Joint Chiefs' unanimous recommendation to invade the island even after the Soviet ships turned around."

Civilian direction was also vital in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Bryan contends. Most U.S. military leaders initially failed to grasp the *political* importance of destroying mobile SCUD missiles, which were inaccurate and posed little military danger. The SCUDs, he notes, could have drawn Israel into the war, shattering the Arab coalition.

Even in the case of Vietnam, says Bryan, Johnson's micromanagement of the war has been much exaggerated. "Johnson's real blunder was that he pursued a flawed

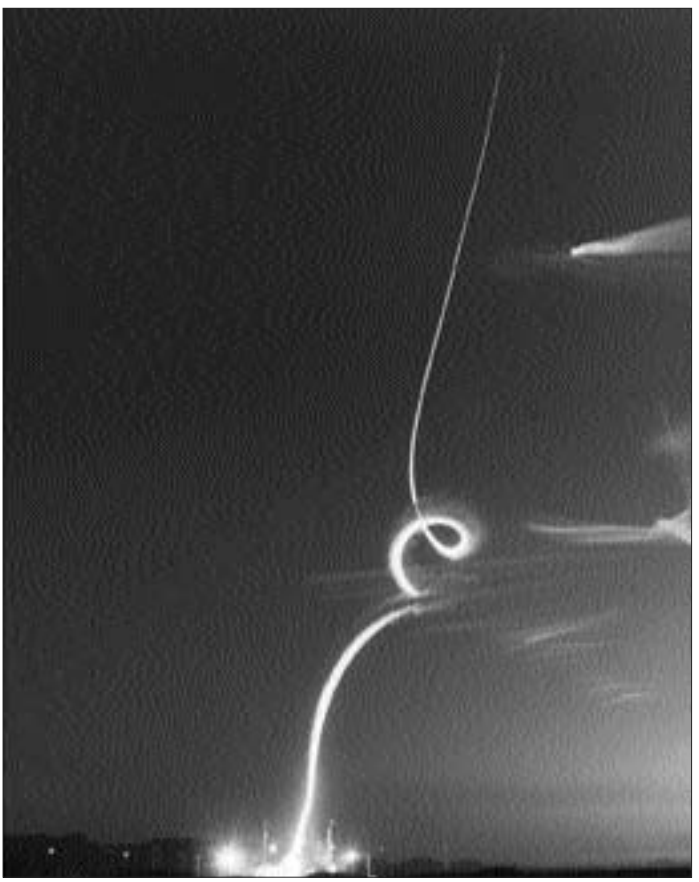
overall policy in Vietnam, not that he forced military action in line with that policy. . . . In fact, there were many areas"—such as General William Westmoreland's counterproductive attrition strategy—"where the Johnson administration *should* have intervened to change military policy in Vietnam, but failed to do so."

The New Missile Debate

"National Missile Defense: An Indefensible System" by George Lewis, Lisbeth Gronlund, and David Wright, in *Foreign Policy* (Winter 1999–2000), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1779 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; "Star Wars Strikes Back" by Michael O'Hanlon, in *Foreign Affairs* (Nov.–Dec. 1999), 58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Should the United States build a limited national missile defense system to protect itself against intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) launched by "rogue" states such as North Korea? With a decision due this year from the Clinton administration, critics such as Lewis and his colleagues, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Security Studies Program, warn that such a system could put U.S. security at *greater* risk. They have valid concerns, argues O'Hanlon, a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, but, on balance, deployment makes sense.

In contrast with former President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, which would have created a space-based shield against a massive Soviet nuclear attack, a new system would defend the nation against direct attack by using ground-based interceptors to destroy incoming warheads. While such a system is "technically feasible" in theory, say Lewis, Gronlund, and Wright, associate director and research fellows, respectively, at the MIT program, "adversaries would be able to take straightforward steps to defeat" it by using decoy or disguised warheads. "Worse still," they claim, deployment—which would be at odds with the 1972 U.S.-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty—would unravel "decades of efforts to reduce U.S. and Russian nuclear stockpiles and to limit proliferation of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles worldwide." Alarming both Russia and China, deployment could lead to "a world with more ICBMs and weapons of mass destruction."



Theater defense missiles, such as the high-altitude THAAD launched in a test last June, have successfully intercepted other missiles, but a national missile defense system remains controversial.

Yet the threat to the United States is real, O'Hanlon notes. The bipartisan Rumsfeld Commission reported in 1998 that North Korea, Iran, or Iraq might soon develop a missile that could threaten U.S. territory. Later that year, North Korea launched a test multistage missile over Japan, and Pyongyang is reportedly working on another missile which might be able to strike the United States with a nuclear-weapon-size payload.

Potential enemy countermeasures need not be decisive, O'Hanlon says. The United States also "could develop interceptors to hit long-range enemy missiles right after they are launched," destroying them "before they ever left the atmosphere and got a chance to dispense warheads and decoys. The interceptors could be deployed near the Korean Peninsula, the Middle East, or other trouble spots"—and probably wouldn't bother Moscow much, "since the defense would not work against missiles launched at North America from the interior of Asia." Even so, this "light" defense itself could provide some protection against "rogue" states.

But the critics are right to worry about Moscow's reaction to *national* missile defense, O'Hanlon says. "Only with a broader arms control and Russia policy in place," he concludes, "can the United States get serious about [it] without jeopardizing nuclear security."

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Doing Better, Not Just Good

"Philanthropy's New Agenda: *Creating Value*" by Michael E. Porter and Mark R. Kramer, in *Harvard Business Review* (Nov.–Dec. 1999), 60 Harvard Way, Boston, Mass. 02163.

Seeking to improve education, but limited by its small size, the Philanthropic Ventures Foundation (PVF), of Oakland, California, gives thousands of schoolteachers in its region modest ($500) grants every year for badly needed classroom materials. And it doesn't burden them with paperwork: teachers simply fax their requests, and get an answer within an hour, and a check within 24. Though the foundation is tempted to try to do good in many other ways, it resolutely sticks to its self-defined mission.

That makes PVF "a perfect example," assert Porter, a Harvard Business School professor, and Kramer, president of a capital management firm and a founder of the recently formed Center for Effective Philanthropy, of what a charitable foundation can do when it sets clear goals and strategies. Sound obvious? Most of America's 44,000 foundations don't do it, the authors say, instead contenting themselves with giving out grants for assorted worthy purposes, spreading their resources too thin, and, worst of all, failing to try seriously to measure how much social bang for the buck they are getting. Nor, despite much rhetoric, Porter and Kramer contend, do foundations give much support to potentially high-impact research. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Ford and Rockefeller foundations jointly sponsored research that led to development of new strains of wheat and rice—and millions of the world's poor benefited. The Pew Charitable Trusts recently created a center to study global warming. But less than nine percent of foundation grants go for research, and most are in basic science and medicine.

Foundations have seen their assets mushroom in recent decades, to more than $330 billion, but they annually give, on average, only 5.5 percent to charity—just half a percentage point above the legal minimum. They invest the rest for financial returns—and, presumably, future benefit to society.

Because foundations are largely free of the political pressures at work on government, and have the time and expertise that private individuals usually lack, the authors argue, they could produce more social benefit. But the foundations "fall far short of their potential," say Porter and Kramer.

They scatter money among worthy causes: "Fewer than nine percent of foundations make 75 percent or more of their grants in a single field," the authors note. They fail to measure the results of their giving.

If foundations did have evidence of success, the authors point out, they could leverage successes by encouraging other donors, via matching grants or in other ways, to support the more effective recipients. But today, matching grants account for only four percent of all foundation grants. More leverage could be gained by becoming "fully engaged" partners with grant recipients. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, for instance, spends $12 million a year aiding nonprofits in "management, planning, restructuring, and staff development."

Until foundations "meet their obligation to create value," Porter and Kramer maintain, they will continue to exist "in a world where they cannot fail . . . [and] also cannot truly succeed."

Overqualified Workers

"Conflicting Signals: The Labor Market for College-Educated Workers" by Jerry Gray and Richard Chapman, in *Journal of Economic Issues* (Sept. 1999), 226 Ayres Hall, Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn. 37996–1320.

What's going on here? College graduates have sharply increased their earnings relative to their less educated peers in recent decades—suggesting there's a *shortage* of college-educated folk. Yet at the same time, more and more college graduates have been working as sales clerks and in other lower-level jobs—suggesting there's a *surplus* of college grads. Some economists [see *WQ*, Winter '98, pp. 125–126] say that some young folks possess sheepskins but still lack "functional literacy"; it's the other college graduates who are getting the higher wages. Gray and Chapman, economists at Willamette University, Salem, Oregon, and Westminster College, Salt Lake City, Utah, respectively, have a different explanation.

Most of the growing wage "premium" for college graduates in recent decades reflects the worsened situation of those without bachelor's degrees, not the improved situation of those who have them, they argue. About 30 percent of prime-age workers now hold college degrees. Earnings of college graduates rose only 2.4 percent between 1979 and 1989, while earnings of high school graduates plummeted 16.9 percent.

Economists usually depict the U.S. labor market as very flexible, with wages and the jobs available fluctuating with the supply of labor. Drawing on economist Lester Thurow's work in the early 1970s, Gray and Chapman argue instead that wages and the array of jobs available are relatively fixed, at least over the short term. There are "high school" jobs, such as sales clerk, and "college" jobs, such as computer programmer.

Since employers assume that better-educated workers will cost less to train, these are more attractive. As the number of workers with bachelor's and advanced degrees increases, say Gray and Chapman, some college grads start to take the better high school jobs. Slowly, the college graduates push the degreeless down the ladder, forcing them to relinquish the better-paying high school jobs.

If this is true, Gray and Chapman say, then one of the classic American cures for inequality, enhancing opportunity by helping people get a college education, is actually serving to *increase* inequality. They believe that only "activist demand management in labor markets" by government, of a type not seen since World War II, holds out hope of reversing the tide.

One Cheer for Censorship

A Survey of Recent Articles

Censorship rears its putatively ugly head in the pages of the *Weekly Standard* (Aug. 23, 1999)—only to be ritually dispatched by commentators in that conservative publication.

Conservatives complain about "the sexual immorality the media purvey," while liberals object to the media's encouragement of violence. Both are right, says David Lowenthal, an emeritus professor of political science at Boston College, but the ill effects go even deeper. "Never before in the history of mankind have the moral restraints and aspirations necessary to the fullness of our nature, and to civilization itself, been subjected to so ubiquitous and persistent an assault." The more immediate impact and immensely greater emotional power of modern media—movies, television, and recordings—greatly magnify the problem. Only government, he declares, might be able to check "this descent into decadence."

Lowenthal proposes that "distinguished citizens," such as William Bennett, Jimmy Carter, Mario Cuomo, Elie Wiesel, and James Q. Wilson, be appointed censors, with their decisions "guided by law, open to inspection, and subject to review by higher courts." To people who say they don't want anyone telling them what they can and can't see, Lowenthal says: "That is exactly our situation now, where a few hidden figures in movie studios and television networks, motivated primarily by profit, decide what will be available for our viewing."

None of the four conservative commentators—Bennett, Terry Eastland, Irving Kristol, and Jeremy Rabkin—think Lowenthal's proposal is now practical.

Bennett, author of *The Book of Virtues* (1993), agrees that the popular culture has become "deeply harmful," but contends that most Americans today do not want Lowenthal's remedy. "We need not rigorous censorship," he says, "but pointed debate. And we need to name names. The goal is to turn the people who are polluting our moral environment into social pariahs."

While Eastland, publisher of the *American Spectator*, "in theory" favors censoring the mass media, he says that the old popular consensus against obscenity, which lasted for at least 150 years, is no more, and he doubts that a new one will emerge. "To those demanding data, as many will who never lived in the older America, the danger from obscenity and violence may seem distant and unreal. That is why it makes sense, for the moment, to employ methods other than regulation—especially methods targeting particular populations. Sponsor boycotts, for example. And journalism that shames Hollywood."

Kristol, editor of the *Public Interest*, observes that he and others made the intellectual case for censorship decades ago, and while many agree "in principle," they won't do anything about it. People "are too busy working, worrying, drinking, and watching television. Or they are simply intimidated by the learned academics who advise them to 'go with the flow.' Or they really don't mind a dash of pornography in their lives. (Topless bars are full of people who vote Republican.) Or they are God-fearing folk who are so busy insulating the lives of their families—and with a fair amount of success—against this decadent culture that they have no time and energy left to fight it."

Rabkin, a political scientist at Cornell University, is "sympathetic to efforts to limit the most graphic depictions of sex and violence in the mass media—where there is still some public consensus to build on," but maintains that Lowenthal, in his preoccupation with the mass media, misses the more serious problem. "The 'mass' of Americans is less corrupt than the most highly educated," Rabkin asserts. "I don't know what to do about the grotesque confusions of, for example, half the law faculties and two-thirds of the humanities faculties in this country. But I am sure that encouraging their own yen for censorship is not the answer."

Toward a Multicultural Middle

"Multiculturalism in History: Ideologies and Realities" by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, in *Orbis* (Fall 1999), Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1528 Walnut St., Ste. 610, Philadelphia, Pa. 19102–3684.

If there's one thing that both advocates and critics of multiculturalism can't seem to stand, it's inconvenient facts, complains Fox-Genovese, a historian at Emory University.

For the critics, who employ *multiculturalism* as "an automatic epithet of opprobrium," the inconvenient fact, she says, is the reality of multicultural society, "the increasing intermingling of peoples throughout the world." In Europe and America, "a tide of immigration" is challenging established institutions and national cultures. It is sparking controversies about jobs and social services and about balancing "the rights of individuals and the cultural autonomy of groups." High unemployment and cutbacks in welfare programs have exacerbated conflicts in countries such as France and Germany. As the global economy expands, she says, the "multicultural character" of the populations of developed nations is bound to increase—and with it will occur "an intensification of multiculturalist passions."

Proponents of multiculturalism, meanwhile, also avert their eyes from "unpleasant facts, especially about the [non-Western] culture with which they identify," Fox-Genovese notes. Preferring to believe that slavery was a uniquely Western crime, for example, they ignore its historical "prevalence throughout the non-Western world, especially among Islamic and African peoples. . . . And the attempt to convince them that until the late 18th century few people of any culture viewed slavery as a moral evil inevitably shipwrecks upon the shoals of their unyielding presentism." Nor, she notes, are American academic multiculturalists much interested "in learning the languages of other cultures, much less in respecting their hierarchical principles and traditions."

Though multiculturalists are reluctant to face it, the fact is that, to a large extent, they "embody the very *Western* traditions they claim to deplore," says Fox-Genovese. "Multiculturalism as ideology owes more to Western individualism than it does to non-Western traditionalism, and the evocation of specific cultures has more to do with self-representation than with immersion in a traditional culture."

Neither party to the debate provides much help in adjusting to the world's new multicultural reality, Fox-Genovese concludes. "What we need is a capacious worldview that invites respect for the cultures of others and loyalty to one's own"—and a historical understanding of the multicultural present that pays attention to the past and to the facts, convenient or not.

The South's Interlude

"South-by-Northeast: The Journey of C. Vann Woodward" by Theodore Rosengarten, in *Doubletake* (Summer 1999), Center for Documentary Studies at Duke Univ., 1317 W. Pettigrew St., Durham, N.C. 27705.

The renowned historian C. Vann Woodward, an emeritus professor at Yale University, was born in 1908 in his grandmother's house in Vanndale, Arkansas, and it seems to him now, looking back, that it was when he was five or so and staying in that house that he first glimpsed what would become the theme of his most resonant scholarly books.

"Across the street from my grandmother's house . . . was a house owned by former slaves who did well and bought some land," he tells Rosengarten, a historian currently at the College of Charleston, South Carolina. "Every Sunday afternoon, Miss Sally would come and visit Miss Ida, my grandmother. . . . She had been the slave of my grandmother's parents. They . . . had lots to talk about. And my grandmother entertained her in the parlor." Not the kitchen, but the *parlor*! "That's when I knew," he says, "there must have been an interlude"—a time after the Civil War when southerners lived without legal racial segregation.

If southerners had done that once, done it for decades, they could do it again: that was the hopeful implication of Woodward's *Origins of the New South* (1951), *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, his 1957 history of segregation in the South, and other works. He showed, writes Rosengarten, that legal segregation "developed

relatively late, an invention of a small, monied elite who exploited the myth of race to solidify its hold over the region. . . . Segregation was, in a word, reversible."

Origins of the New South was Woodward's answer to W. J. Cash's *Mind of the South* (1940), which took the pessimistic view that for the region to give up white supremacy would mean renouncing tradition and nature, that the modern was just a continuation of the old. Three years after *Origins*, Woodward, at the invitation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, wrote a brief on Reconstruction for the plaintiff in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark school desegregation case.

Then, in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, "talking," as he said, "to white people back home," Woodward told them that segregation was rooted in the politics of the 1890s, not in ancient custom or tradition, and he argued that it was not worth preserving. That same year, 1957, Arkansas governor Orval Faubus sent the National Guard into Little Rock's Central High School to thwart racial integration.

Decades of attacks and revisionist criticism have prompted Woodward to alter his view of Reconstruction somewhat. He "no longer disputes that 'de facto segregation was very strong right after the war,'" says Rosengarten. "But after work and outside of church, he maintains, whites and blacks could be found together 'in bars, at balls, in bed, everything.'" Just as Miss Sally and Miss Ida could be found in his grandmother's parlor when he was a boy.

The 'Hate Crime' Chimera

"What's So Bad about Hate" by Andrew Sullivan, in *The New York Times Magazine* (Sept. 26, 1999), 229 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

There's much talk these days about "hate crimes," that is, crimes committed out of hatred for the victim because he or she is a homosexual or in some other way "different." Many favor laws prescribing special punishments in such cases. This makes little sense, argues Sullivan, the gay author of *Virtually Normal* (1995) and a *New York Times Magazine* contributing writer.

Hatred, he argues, is a very vague concept—"far less nuanced an idea than prejudice, or bigotry, or bias, or anger, or even mere aversion to others. Is it to stand in for all these varieties of human experience—and everything in between? If so, then the war against it will be so vast as to be quixotic." And if *hate* instead is restricted to "a very specific idea or belief, or set of beliefs, with a very specific object or group of objects," then the antihate war will "almost certainly" be unconstitutional.

Proponents of hate crime laws usually have "sexism," "racism," "anti-Semitism," and "homophobia" in mind as the varieties of hate that should win criminals extra punishment. But these advocates' implicit neat division between "oppressors" and blameless "victims" is simplistic, Sullivan says, and "can generate its own form of bias" against particular groups, such as "white straight males." This approach, like hate, "hammers the uniqueness of each individual into the anvil of group identity." It also ignores the fact that "hate criminals may often be members of hated groups." According to FBI statistics, for instance, blacks in the 1990s were three times as likely as whites to commit "hate crimes." And, writes Sullian, "It's no secret . . . that some of the most vicious anti-Semites in America are black, and that some of the most virulent anti-Catholic bigots in America are gay."

"Why is hate for a group worse than hate for a person?" Sullivan asks. Was the brutal murder of gay college student Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming, in 1998 worse than the abduction, rape, and murder of an eight-year-old Laramie girl by a pedophile that same year? Proponents of hate crime laws argue that such crimes spread fear beyond the immediate circles of the victims. But all crimes do that, Sullivan says.

Proponents also claim there has been an "epidemic" of hate crimes in recent years, but FBI statistics, he notes, do not bear that out. In 1992, there were 6,623 "hate crime" incidents reported by 6,181 agencies, covering 51 percent of the population; in 1996, 8,734 incidents reported by 11,355 agencies, covering 84 percent of the population. Moreover, most of the incidents involved not violent, physical assaults on people, but crimes against property or

"intimidation." Of the 8,049 hate crimes reported in 1997, only eight were murders.

"The truth is," Sullivan says, "the distinction between a crime filled with personal hate and a crime filled with group hate is an essentially arbitrary one." The government should fight crime, he concludes, but not pursue the utopian goal of eliminating hate from human consciousness. "The boundaries between hate and prejudice and between prejudice and opinion and between opinion and truth are so complicated and blurred that any attempt to construct legal and political fire walls is a doomed and illiberal venture."

Two Native American Paths

"Nineteenth-Century Indian Education: Universalism versus Evolutionism" by Jacqueline Fear-Segal, in *Journal of American Studies* (Aug. 1999), Cambridge Univ. Press, 40 W. 20th St., New York, N.Y. 10011–4211.

In the latter decades of the 19th century, Christian reformers built an extensive network of boarding schools to rescue Indians from "savagery" and make them the equal of any white man. Only after the turn of the century, scholars have held, when pseudoscientific racism supplanted the reformers' universalist ideas, was the goal of rapid assimilation forsaken. Fear-Segal, a lecturer in American history at the University of East Anglia, in Norwich, England, begs to differ. The pioneering reformers were not as united on this goal as they have seemed.

In 1878, just two years after General George Custer and his troops were annihilated by the Sioux at the Little Big Horn, General Samuel Chapman Armstrong welcomed the first Indians to the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, the Virginia school he had founded 10 years before for the education of blacks. (Booker T. Washington was an early graduate.) Armstrong, a missionary's son who had commanded black troops during the Civil War, believed that Indians were at an earlier stage of evolution than whites. "The Indians are grown up children; we are a thousand years ahead of them in the line of progress," he stated. The process of guiding them up the evolutionary ladder, he was sure, would take generations.

Captain Richard Henry Pratt, who founded the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania a year after Armstrong's "Indian Program" began at Hampton, held a different view. He had no use for racial "types." As a

At Carlisle Indian Industrial School, rapid assimiliation to white society was the founder's goal.

young army officer, he had commanded both black soldiers and Indian scouts, and he had concluded that any apparent racial differences were due simply to environment, not to anything innate. He believed, writes Fear-Segal, that like immigrants, Indians just "needed to be absorbed into American society to achieve full participation." And the assimilation should be rapid.

Though the two schools had many similarities (including their emphasis on work and the military atmosphere), this was a clear difference. While Armstrong encouraged his students to write about their different tribal traditions, practice their native arts, and return to their reservations to live, Pratt encouraged his pupils not to go back to their reservations. "Pratt wanted to bring Indians into direct competition with [white] Americans and show they could win," Fear-Segal says. His Carlisle football team became famous (as did Olympic gold medalist Jim Thorpe, a Carlisle graduate). Pratt was strongly opposed to what he called "race schools," which he believed were bound to fail because they ignored the individual, binding him instead to "race destiny."

Their debate—which Pratt effectively lost, even at his own school, particularly after the massacre at Wounded Knee Creek in 1890—seems to echo in today's disputes about multiculturalism. On assimilation, Fear-Segal points out, "Pratt seems more 'tolerant' (as we might put it) than Armstrong; but in their attitudes to tribal cultures the position is reversed. Pratt's 'brotherhood of man,' in its universalism, was not receptive to difference."

Ironically, the 19th-century Indian boarding schools turned out to have an effect that both men might have applauded (at least in part), Fear-Segal observes. By the early 20th century, boarding school attendance had become a common experience among Indians. While most students returned to their reservations, they did so as "English-speaking Indians whose identity was no longer exclusively tribal." And many were eager to find "a new place for the Indian" within the larger American society.

PRESS & MEDIA

Sex and the Women's Magazine

A Survey of Recent Articles

Back in the sexual dark ages, feminist pioneer Betty Friedan cast a stern eye on the pap to which women were being subjected in the glossy pages of the magazines addressed to them. In *Ladies Home Journal*, *McCall's*, *Redbook*, and the like, she scornfully observed in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), there was a superabundance of drivel: an article on overcoming an inferiority complex, a short story about a teenager who doesn't go to college winning a man away from a bright college girl, and much, much more.

"The men who run the women's magazines," Friedan said, seemed to have a low opinion of women. "Where is the world of thought and ideas, the life of the mind and spirit?"

It's still a good question, observes Hal Colebatch, author of *Blair's Britain* (1999), now that women's magazines in the English-speaking world are edited not by men but "overwhelmingly or entirely by women."

At his local newsstand, the cover of *Cosmopolitan* offered these enticements: "Should I stay or should I go now? Take our ditch-or-hitch test" and "The Big Bang: How to Be a Show-Off in Bed." On *Marie Claire*: "Women Who Kidnap Their Own Children," "Are you sleeping with the Right Man?," and "'I had sex lessons to save

my relationship.'" On *She Australia*: "Cameron Diaz on her $38 boob job and why Mariah Carey drives her crazy." No less "intellectually vacuous" than the old magazines, the new ones have added "baseness [and] decadence," Colebatch writes in the Australian journal *Quadrant* (Sept. 1999).

For the most part, argues Alexandra Starr, an editor of the *Washington Monthly* (Oct. 1999), women's magazines today "are pushing the same message they were half a century ago: Women's existence revolves around landing the right guy. Except these days, the seduction isn't accomplished through baking the perfect cake, sculpting your nails, or making sure your hemline isn't crooked." It's accomplished instead through sex, sex, sex. "In 1961 *Redbook* ran an article cautioning young women that premarital hanky-panky could mean giving up any chance of walking down the aisle; today the magazine advises readers on how to drive men wild."

That is what readers want, according to Bonnie Fuller, who succeeded long-time editor Helen Gurley Brown at *Cosmopolitan* (circulation 2.3 million) in 1997 and then long-time editor Ruth Whitney at *Glamour* (circulation 2.1 million) the following year. "What Fuller gave them at *Cosmo*," writes Katherine Rosman, a staff writer for *Brill's Content* (Nov. 1998), "was a redoubled emphasis on sex. Even Brown, who in 32 years at the magazine was endlessly castigated by feminists and conservatives alike for her devotion to sex-related articles, says *Cosmo* is now 'much sexier than I would have gone.'"

"Why," asks Starr, "do women lap this stuff up?" Her answer: "Well, ladies' economic fortunes may no longer turn on landing the right guy, but . . . women want to be perceived as attractive." So do today's men.

In fact, women's magazines and men's magazines such as *Maxim* (circulation 1.3 million) and *Gear* are becoming increasingly indistinguishable in their outlooks, contends *National Journal* (Oct. 2, 1999) correspondent William Powers. "A wave of polymorphously perverse, gender-bending madness has swept across the American newsstand. . . . Women are trading tips on how to improve their abs and get hot men into the sack. Men are studying clothing layouts and fantasizing about life as a top fashion model." Though most of the magazines "seem to be written for the 'slow' reading group of an average fourth-grade class," he says, they "offer evidence that's more reliable than any opinion poll or labor-market statistic of the ways that feminism has changed the culture—probably permanently."

The Second Casualty in Gotham

"Diallo Truth, Diallo Falsehood" by Heather Mac Donald, in *City Journal* (Summer 1999), Manhattan Institute, 52 Vanderbilt Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

A tragic police killing last February had New York City in an uproar for months. But the crisis was a phony one—"manufactured" by the press, particularly the *New York Times*, contends Mac Donald, a contributing editor of *City Journal*.

The slaying was indeed "horrific," she notes. Four undercover police officers in the elite Street Crime Unit, looking for an armed rapist in the Bronx, mistakenly shot a street peddler named Amadou Diallo 41 times—and he turned out to be unarmed. From this incident, as well as the protests and government investigations that followed, the *Times*, Mac Donald asserts, "created a wholly misleading portrait of a city under siege—not by criminals, but by the police. In so doing, it exacerbated the police-minority tensions it purported merely to describe." And it cast doubt on the methods the city has used in recent years under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to bring about a drastic reduction in crime.

The *Times* coverage—which averaged 3.5 articles a day over the first two months—rested on "the unquestioned assumption . . . that the Diallo shooting was a glaring example of pervasive police misconduct," Mac Donald writes. Yet nothing that has come to light "suggests that the shooting was anything but a tragic mistake." The use of deadly force by the New York police was far less common in 1998 (403,659 arrests, 19 killed) than it was in 1993 (266,313 arrests, 23 killed).

Since shooting peaceful, unarmed citizens

was obviously not typical police behavior, Mac Donald says, "the *Times* zeroed in on a different angle. The Street Crime Unit, and the NYPD generally, it claimed, were using the stop-and-frisk technique to harass minorities. The logic seemed to be that the same racist mentality that leads to unwarranted stop-and-frisks led the four officers to shoot Diallo."

The newspaper seemed to regard *any* mistaken police frisks of people thought to be carrying concealed handguns as too many, she says. The Street Crime Unit reported making 45,000 frisks during 1997–98 and 9,500 arrests, of which 2,500 were for illegal guns. That ratio of one gun for every 18 frisks is "well within tolerance," Columbia University law professor Richard Uviller told Mac Donald. "I don't know of any other way to fight the war on handguns—the number-one crime problem in the U.S. today."

The *Times* coverage gave little sense of the danger posed by illegal guns, Mac Donald contends, or of the dramatic reduction in homicides in New York in recent years (from a peak of 2,200 in 1990 to 633 in 1998). Nor did the newspaper pay much attention to community leaders such as one who told her: "If the Street Crime Unit pats me down because I match a description, and the next guy they pat down has a gun, God bless them." According to a recent U.S. Justice Department study, 77 percent of black New Yorkers approve of the police. But thanks in part to the "anti-police" press coverage, the other 23 percent have grown angrier, Mac Donald says, and so Street Crime Unit officers "have pulled back," making fewer arrests. No surprise then, perhaps, that in the months after the Diallo killing, murders in the city were up 10 percent.

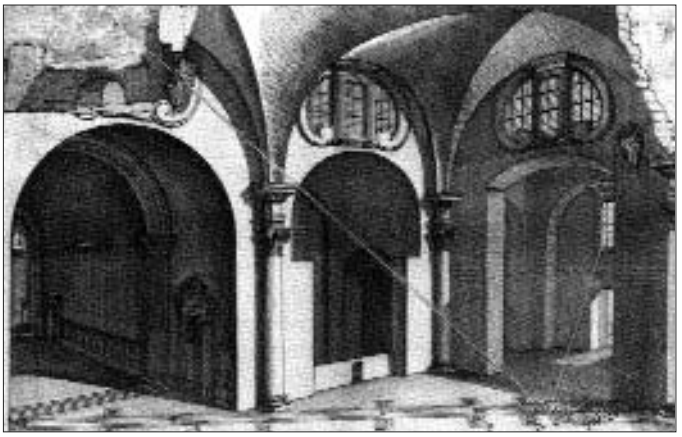
RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Light in the Cathedrals

"The Sun in the Church" by J. L. Heilbron, in *The Sciences* (Sept.–Oct. 1999), New York Academy of Sciences, Two E. 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

After condemning Galileo in 1633 for adhering to the heretical notion that the Earth moved about the sun, the Roman Catholic Church, many historians believe, made Copernican astronomy a forbidden topic among faithful Catholics for the next two centuries. "But nothing could be further from the truth," asserts Heilbron, a historian at the University of California, Berkeley, and a senior research fellow at the University of Oxford.

"Beginning with the recovery of ancient learning in the 12th century and continuing through the Copernican upheavals and on even into the Enlightenment," he writes, "the Roman Catholic Church gave more financial and social support to the study of astronomy—Copernican and otherwise—than did any other institution." The reason for these centuries of lavish backing was the church's pressing need to establish well in advance when Easter (which was to be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox) would fall in a particular year—no easy task, given the state of astronomical knowledge of the time.



A sun ray (right) enters the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Rome in this 1703 drawing, meeting a ray from a star near Polaris.

Are Jews 'Politically Foolish'?

Irving Kristol, coeditor of *The Public Interest* and the "godfather" of neoconservatism, contends in *Azure: Ideas for the Jewish Nation* (Autumn 1999) that his coreligionists are inclined toward "political foolishness."

In general, the political handling of controversial religious and moral issues in the United States prior to World War II was a triumph of reasoned experience over abstract dogmatism. Unfortunately, since around 1950, it is abstract dogmatism that has triumphed over reasoned experience in American public life. . . .

It is a fairly extraordinary story when one stops to think about it. In the decades after World War II, as anti-Semitism declined precipitously, and as Jews moved massively into the mainstream of American life, the official Jewish organizations took advantage of these new circumstances to prosecute an aggressive campaign against any public recognition, however slight, of the fact that most Americans are Christian. It is not that the leaders of the Jewish organizations were anti-religious. Most of the Jewish advocates of a secularized "public square" were themselves members of Jewish congregations. They believed, in all sincerity, that religion should be the private affair of the individual. Religion belonged in the home, in the church and synagogue, and nowhere else. And they believed in this despite the fact that no society in history has ever acceded to the complete privatization of a religion embraced by the overwhelming majority of its members. The truth, of course, is that there is no way that religion can be obliterated from public life when 95 percent of the population is Christian. There is no way of preventing the Christian holidays, for instance, from spilling over into public life. But again, before World War II, there were practically no Jews who cared about such things. I went to a public school, where the children sang carols at Christmastime. Even among those Jews who sang them, I never knew a single one who was drawn to the practice of Christianity by them. Sometimes, the schools sponsored Nativity plays, and the response of the Jews was simply not to participate in them. There was no public "issue" until the American Civil Liberties Union—which is financed primarily by Jews—arrived on the scene with the discovery that Christmas carols and pageants were a violation of the Constitution. As a matter of fact, our Jewish population in the United States believed in this so passionately that when the Supreme Court, having been prodded by the ACLU, ruled it unconstitutional for the Ten Commandments to be displayed in a public school, the Jewish organizations found this ruling unobjectionable. . . .

Since there was a powerful secularizing trend among American Christians after World War II, there was far less outrage over all this than one might have anticipated. . . . Americans have always thought of themselves as a Christian nation—one with a secular government, which was equally tolerant of all religions so long as they were congruent with traditional Judeo-Christian morality. But equal toleration under the law never meant perfect equality of status in fact. Christianity is not the legally established religion in the United States, but it is established informally, nevertheless. And in the past 40 years, this informal establishment in American society has grown more secure, even as the legal position of religion in public life has been attenuated. . . . In the United States, religion is more popular today than it was in the 1960s, and its influence is growing. . . .

Intoxicated with their economic, political and judicial success over the past half-century, American Jews seem to have no reluctance in expressing their vision of an ideal America: a country where Christians are purely nominal, if that, in their Christianity, while they want the Jews to remain a flourishing religious community. . . . Such arrogance is, I would suggest, a peculiarly Jewish form of political stupidity.

By the 12th century, the popes could see that rough calculations of the sort made by their predecessors did not furnish Easters in harmony with the heavens. "In that emergency," says Heilbron, "the popes encouraged the close study of the apparent motions of the sun and moon." Fortunately, ancient Greek mathematical texts by Ptolemy and others were just then being translated into Latin from Arabic versions.

"The key piece of data for making the Easter calculation was the period between successive spring equinoxes," Heilbron writes. "The most powerful and precise way to measure that cycle was to lay out a 'meridian line' (usually a rod embedded in a floor) from south to north in a large dark building, put a small hole in the building's roof or facade, and then observe how many days the sun's noon image took to return to the same spot on the line." Cathedrals were the most convenient large, dark buildings available, and over the centuries they were turned into solar observatories throughout Europe, says Heilbron.

Though the edict against Galileo obliged Catholic astronomers to identify the sun as the "orbiting" body, that made little difference in scientific practice. And since church officials "tended to regard all the systems of mathematical astronomy as fictions," Heilbron says, Catholic writers remained free "to develop mathematical and observational astronomy almost as they pleased."

"The first church meridian built to modern ideas of precision," Heilbron says, was created in 1655 in the great basilica of San Petronio, in Bologna, in the heart of the papal states. Observations made there by astronomer Giovanni Domenico Cassini, and confirmed by independent observers, notes Heilbron, "amassed unimpeachable evidence" in favor of the Copernican theory that had been condemned by Pope Urban VII and the Inquisition only a quarter-century before.

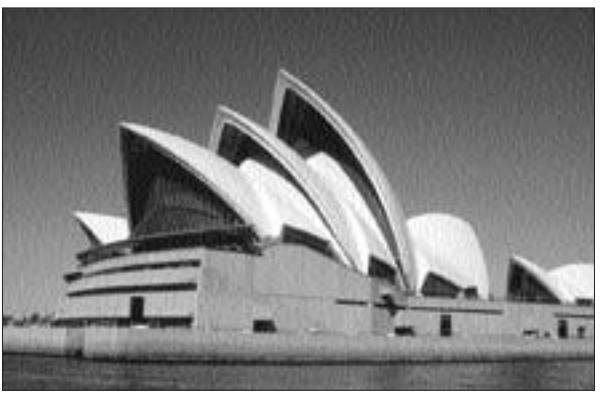
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Architectural Liberation

"A Tale of Two Cities: Architecture and the Digital Revolution" by William J. Mitchell, in *Science* (Aug. 6, 1999), 1200 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Four decades ago, Danish architect Jorn Utzon's winning design for the Sydney Opera House, featuring free-form curved concrete shell vaults, presented an extraordinary structural challenge. After heroic labors, the architect and a London engineering firm figured out how to build an approximation of the spectacular curved surfaces. But other parts of the design were discarded as hopelessly impractical. Ultimately, Utzon was forced to resign from the project. Aside from the magnificent shells, the completed building had little of his design's freshness and originality.

Today, that story would have a much happier ending, writes Mitchell, dean of the School of Architecture and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. For architects, the computer has dramatically narrowed "the gap between the imaginable and the feasible."



The Sydney Opera House's shells were hard to build, but other parts of the architect's vision proved impossible.

In the past, designers of large and complex buildings were severely limited in the geometric and material possibilities they could explore, Mitchell points out. "Traditional drafting instruments—parallel bars, triangles, compasses, scales, and protractors—largely restricted [them] to a world of straight lines, parallels and perpendiculars, arcs of circles, and Euclidean geo-

metric constructions." The limitations of the analytical techniques (based on precedent and rule of thumb) used to predict the building's performance and ensure its structural adequacy further reduced the range of acceptable designs.

But not any more, Mitchell writes. "Modern CAD (Computer Aided Design) systems allow designers to create very complex three-dimensional geometric models with ease." And cheap computer power allows sophisticated analyses and simulations to be done to predict, reliably and precisely, the performance of even the most imaginative structures.

Architect Frank Gehry's initial sketches and model for the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, had "an even more audacious assemblage of free-form curved surfaces than Utzon's," Mitchell says. But thanks to the digital revolution, Gehry did not have Utzon's problems. "The completed building—remarkably true to the architect's first visionary sketches—opened in 1997 to universal acclaim."

The Genetic Genie

"The Moral Meaning of Genetic Technology" by Leon R. Kass, in *Commentary* (Sept. 1999), 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Are popular fears about genetic technology the product of ignorance? Many scientists say so—but not Kass, a physician-philosopher at the University of Chicago. "The public is right to be ambivalent" about genetic technology, he argues.

Genetic technology differs from conventional medicine. When the technology is fully developed, genetic engineers will deliberately make changes that will be passed on to succeeding generations, and may even be able to alter particular future individuals. Genetic enhancement may allow creation of new human capacities. "The genetic genie, first unbottled to treat disease, will go its own way, whether we like it or not," Kass believes.

Genetic engineering aside, gaining advance knowledge of an individual's likely or possible medical future by "reading" his genes may not always be a good thing, Kass observes. "Should we welcome knowledge that we carry a predisposition to Alzheimer's disease [or] schizophrenia?" Such knowledge could prove inhibiting, even crippling. Without "blind hopes," human aspiration and achievement may be diminished.

Most genetic technologists imagine themselves to be enhancing people's freedom in making decisions about their health or reproductive choices. But in reality, Kass contends, genetic power may well curb the freedom of most people, subjecting them even further to "the benevolent tyranny of expertise." Already, in many cases today, he says, "practitioners of prenatal diagnosis refuse to do fetal genetic screening in the absence of a prior commitment from the pregnant woman to abort any afflicted fetus." In other situations, pregnant women are pressured to undergo genetic testing. Eventually, Kass believes, strong economic forces are likely to develop that will work to compel genetic abortion or intervention. "All this will be done, of course, in the name of the well-being of children."

At the root of popular anxiety about genetic technology, Kass says, is the challenge it poses to human dignity. It puts scientists in the role of God, standing "in judgment of each being's worthiness to live or die." And the road from in vitro fertilization "leads all the way to the world of designer babies." Producing genetically sound babies will mean "the transfer of procreation from the home to the laboratory," turning it into "manufacture." This new arrangement, he says, "will be profoundly dehumanizing."

As genetic engineering progresses, Kass contends, the standard of health by which it is guided will become increasingly vague. "Are you healthy if, although you show no symptoms, you carry genes that will definitely produce Huntington's disease?" And with the inevitable arrival of "genetic enhancement," he continues, the standard will vanish along with "our previously unalterable human nature. . . . Because memory is good, can we say how much more memory would be better? If sexual desire is good, how much more would be better? Life is good; but how much extension of life would be good for us?"

Is the Brave New World inevitable? Everything depends, Kass says, on whether the technological approach to life "can be restricted and brought under intellectual, spiritual, moral, and political rule." About that, he is not optimistic.

The 'Digibabble' Age

Writing in *Forbes ASAP* (Oct. 4, 1999), Tom Wolfe, author most recently of *A Man in Full* (1998), casts a skeptical eye on "the current magical Web euphoria," in which it is supposed—à la Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, by way of Marshall McLuhan—that global communications will elevate humanity to a new level of consciousness.

May I log on to the past for a moment? Ever since the 1830s, people in the Western Hemisphere have been told that technology was making the world smaller, the assumption being that only good could come of the shrinkage. When the railroad locomotive first came into use, in the 1830s, people marveled and said it made the world smaller by bringing widely separated populations closer together. When the telephone was invented, and the transoceanic cable and the telegraph and the radio and the automobile and the airplane and the television and the fax, people marveled and said it all over again, many times. But if these inventions, remarkable as they surely are, have improved the human mind or reduced the human beast's zeal for banding together with his blood brethren against other human beasts, it has escaped my notice. One hundred and seventy years after the introduction of the locomotive, the Balkans today are a cluster of virulent spores more bloody-minded than ever. The former Soviet Union is now 15 nations split up along ethnic bloodlines. The very zeitgeist of the end of the 20th century is summed up in the cry, "Back to blood!" . . . . What has made national boundaries obsolete in so much of eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia? Not the Internet but the tribes. What have the breathtaking advances in communications technology done for the human mind? Beats me. SAT scores among the top tenth of high school students in the United States, that fraction that are prime candidates for higher education in any period, are lower today than they were in the early 1960s. Believe, if you wish, that computers and the Internet in the classroom will change all that, but I assure you it is sheer Digibabble.

Is Science Education Irrelevant?

"The False Crisis in Science Education" by W. Wayt Gibbs and Douglas Fox, in *Scientific American* (Oct. 1999), 415 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017–1111.

Ever since *Sputnik* was launched in 1957, there have been repeated cries that American elementary and secondary science education is in "crisis." Supposedly, runs the repeated complaint, it is failing, or on the verge of failing, to produce enough scientists and engineers to assure continued U.S. economic and scientific dominance. Nonsense, assert Gibbs and Fox, a senior writer for *Scientific American* and a freelance science writer, respectively. Indeed, they argue, American schools are *too* devoted to turning out future scientists. They should be reoriented toward producing scientifically literate citizens.

Science education in the public schools traditionally has worked to filter out all students except the brightest and most motivated, according to Paul DeHart Hurd, an emeritus professor in Stanford University's School of Education. The curriculum is heavy on formulas, jargon, and memorization—bound to put off all but the most committed youngsters.

At the universities, further filtering takes place, Gibbs and Fox note. Of the 305,000 students who took introductory college physics courses in 1988, only 1.6 percent went on to get a bachelor's degree in the subject. And of those nearly 4,900 physics

majors, only 700 proceeded to obtain doctorates. But there seems to be no shortage of newly minted science and engineering Ph.D.s., say Gibbs and Fox, in part because of a steady rise in the number of foreign students, most of whom remain in the United States to work. Since 1966, the annual production of science and engineering Ph.D.'s has soared 130 percent, while the U.S. population has increased only 35 percent. And if more Ph.D.'s were needed, universities could probably get them simply by filtering out fewer undergraduates, observes Glen S. Aikenhead, a professor in the University of Saskatchewan's College of Education.

Contrary to the perpetual warnings of the crisis-mongers, it is doubtful that schooling in science before college has much impact on U.S. economic competitiveness, the authors maintain. For the vast majority of students, they say, it "is utterly irrelevant."

In all the crisis chatter, Gibbs and Fox point out, "the question of what schools *ought* to teach about science" is often overlooked. But among science education researchers, teachers, and practicing scientists, "a consensus has begun to emerge...that schools should turn out scientifically literate citizens, not more candidates for the academic elite." Such citizens, having a broad understanding of the scientific enterprise, would be more aware of its important role in society—and perhaps more inclined to give it their generous support.

Freelancing in the Sky

"Delayed Takeoff" by Eric Scigliano, in *Technology Review* (Sept.–Oct. 1999), 201 Vassar St., W59-200, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) set out in the mid-1990s to revolutionize air traffic control. Today, with the airways more congested and planes more prone to delay, the "free flight" revolution is on hold, reports Scigliano, a senior editor at the *Seattle Weekly*.

Widely credited to William B. Cotton, now United Airlines' Air Traffic and Flight Systems manager, the "free flight" idea is that pilots would be liberated from the rigid, circuitous routes imposed by ground-based air traffic control, choosing the quickest, most fuel-efficient paths around wind and weather. Advanced satellite, computer, and communications technologies would keep aircraft from crashing into one another.

As Cotton saw it decades ago, Scigliano explains, "Each plane would maintain two electronic surveillance zones: an inner 'protected zone' around itself, nestled in a larger 'alert zone' spreading out in front. To keep the protected zone inviolate, any overlap of alert zones would send a warning, prompting course corrections and restrictions."

The Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System—in which planes send out radio signals and interpret the responses from other planes—was an early step in that direction, and has been required on all U.S. passenger aircraft since 1993. After congressional hearings and a 1995 government-industry task force report, the FAA launched an ambitious project to test new avionics (on-board instruments and systems) for communications, navigation, and surveillance.

But this grand free-flight plan "crashed and burned," says Scigliano, "thanks to lack of industry (and, consequently, congressional) support." In its place, two smaller and less costly projects have arisen: pared-back avionics trials, and an effort to streamline ground-based air traffic control with better software. Traffic controllers, Scigliano notes, "are relieved that neither program threatens to eliminate their jobs."

Advocates such as Cotton say that free flight is being implemented much too slowly. The current air traffic control system is increasingly overloaded. "Again and again," writes Scigliano, "aircraft simply 'disappear' from controllers' radar screens." Even Air Force One vanished twice in 1998. To compensate for such lapses, controllers expand the distance between planes, increasing delays and congestion.

"With about 21,000 commercial flight departures each day, a number variously projected to grow by two percent to five percent a year," Scigliano writes, "air planners have moved from lamenting congestion to invoking the dreaded 'G' word": gridlock.

Democracy's Artist

"America's Vermeer" by Dave Hickey, in *Vanity Fair* (Nov. 1999), 4 Times Sq., New York, N.Y. 10036.

Norman Rockwell (1894–1978) is often dismissed as an unimportant portrayer of an unreal small-town America, a mere illustrator whose sentimental cornball paintings are of no lasting worth. Hickey, a professor of art history, criticism, and theory at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, strongly disagrees. Rockwell, he avers, was "the last great poet of American childhood, the Jan Vermeer of this nation's domestic history."

Take, for instance, Rockwell's *After the Prom*, an oil painting that was reproduced as a *Saturday Evening Post* cover in 1957. In it, a boy in a white dinner jacket perches on a stool at a drugstore soda fountain and looks on proudly as his date on the next stool, a blonde girl in a white formal dress, lets the soda jerk smell the fragrance of her gardenia corsage, while another customer, apparently a workingman and war veteran, glances over and smiles.

After the Prom, says Hickey, is "a full-fledged, intricately constructed, deeply knowledgeable work that recruits the total

After the Prom *(1957), by Norman Rockwell*

resources of European narrative picture-making to tell the tiny tale of agape [Rockwell] has chosen to portray." The painting's true subject, Hickey says, is not "the innocent relationship between the two young people"—that is more the occasion—but rather "the generosity of the characters' responses, and of our own." The artist's "prescient visual argument" was that, despite 1950s concerns about juvenile delinquents, "'the kids are all right.'"

The picture proposes "a tolerance for and faith in the young as the ground-level condition of democracy," Hickey writes. "And, strangely enough, this is probably the single aspect of Rockwell's work that distinguishes him as a peculiarly American artist. In all other aspects, Rockwell was a profoundly European painter of the bourgeois social world in an American tradition that has almost no social painters. . . . Rockwell painted mercantile society, in the tradition of Frans Hals, William Hogarth, Jean-Baptiste Greuze, Louis Leopold Boilly, and William Frith, but as an American he painted a society grounded not in the wisdom of its elders but in the promise of its youth."

Had *After the Prom* been a comparable European painting, Hickey says, it would have had "earthbound adult lovers surrounded and celebrated by floating infants. In Rockwell's painting, we have floating youths surrounded and celebrated by earthbound adults. Thus, the two adults in *After the Prom* are invested with considerable weight. The soda jerk leans theatrically on the counter. The veteran sits heavily on his stool, leans against the counter, and rests his foot on the rail. The force of gravity is made further visible by the draped sweater on the boy's arm and the hanging keys on the veteran's belt, while the two young people, in their whiteness and brightness, float above the floor—in one of the most complex, achieved emblems of agape, tolerance, and youthful promise ever painted."

Even as Rockwell was painting *After the Prom*, however, the *Saturday Evening Post* was phasing out the sort of covers he had done for the magazine since 1916, his beguiling vignettes of everyday life in America. Instead, the magazine—and Rockwell—turned in the 1960s to the pursuit of celebrities and the repetition of moral platitudes.

Rockwell finally became the illustrator he had always thought he was, says Hickey, and, sadly, he largely ceased being "the important artist he correctly believed himself to be." Yet Rockwell's great works remain—still alive in the public consciousness and, Hickey writes, more important "than his modernist and postmodernist detractors will ever acknowledge."

Another Country

To a rhetorical style redolent of "whole generations of black preachers bearing witness in storefront churches," essayist James Baldwin (1924–87) added "a certain archworldliness" reminiscent of Henry James. The coruscating result appalled black radicals of the 1960s, observes novelist Lewis Nkosi in *Transition* (1999: Issue 79).

Baldwin [forged] a discourse on race that was deliberately unstable, highly provisional, endlessly deferred, designed to obstruct any easy or uncomplicated play of identities: a syntax so fluid and mutable that it all but drove black radicals crazy! After all, radicals work with iron-clad Manichean categories, right and wrong, absolute good and absolute evil; they possess a healthy suspicion of irony, which they rightly apprehend as an agent of political immobilization. Complexity, qualifications—these are always suspect. For such people, black is always black; white, white. Perhaps Baldwin's convoluted syntax was superior to the brute certainties that Eldridge Cleaver was retailing, going so far as to justify the rape of women, white and black. Baldwin probably has the last laugh on the other side of the grave.

Hawthorne's Roman Holiday

"*The Marble Faun* and the Waste of History" by Millicent Bell, in *Southern Review* (Spring 1999), 43 Allen Hall, Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge, La. 70803–5005.

Seldom read today, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Marble Faun* (1860) was the closest thing to a bestseller that eminent author ever had. Early readers were particularly taken with the descriptive views of Rome accompanying the narrative. A *New York Times* reviewer predicted (accurately) that the novel would serve as a guidebook for visitors to the Eternal City. Modern critics, however, have usually been dismissive of the work's travelogue aspect—wrongly so, asserts Bell, an emeritus professor of English at Boston University and the author of *Hawthorne's View of the Artist* (1962). Hawthorne's "allegedly undigested and inferior descriptions" serve an important "poetic function" in the novel, Bell says.

The Marble Faun, she notes, was the pioneering "international novel." In works of this genre, Americans abroad (Hilda and Kenyon in this case) experience a moral and cultural encounter with the Old World. "Like [Henry] James's travelers later," Bell writes, "Hawthorne's visitors to Rome find themselves putting their Americanness to the test. Sin and suffering overtake the European Miriam and Donatello, and in coming to terms with them the Americans undergo a trial of their inherited Puritan ethic."

Of the novel's four protagonists, Bell observes, "only Hilda emerges unchanged, still a Puritan maiden; Kenyon, who might have accepted the lesson of his Roman experience, lays his knowledge aside." The two return to America, "where, as Kenyon told Donatello, 'each generation has only its own sins and sorrows to bear.' The 'weary and dreary Past' is not piled 'upon the back of the Present,' as it is in Rome."

In framing this story, Bell says, the narrator's scenic musings sound like a musical undertone and "qualify Hilda's optimistic idealism," offering "a stoic and ironic vision" of history, the perpetual making and remaking of the past's debris. Contemporary Rome, says the narrator—and Hawthorne, "seems like nothing but a heap of broken rubbish thrown into the great chasm between our own days and the Empire."

The book's oft-ignored descriptions, Bell says, "present a view of the human record as a chronicle not only of confusion and flux but successive miseries, treacheries, and bloodshed. Above all, bloodshed." As Hawthorne (1804–64) was writing *The Marble Faun*, the Civil War loomed on the horizon. Within months of its publication, Fort Sumter would be fired upon. Hawthorne, writes Bell, would become "a lonely dissenter among war enthusiasts," foreseeing "a society in which the world he had known might be as altered and reduced to fragments as the Roman past."

The End of Art?

"The Trivialization of Outrage: The Artworld at the End of the Millennium" by Roger Kimball, in *Quadrant* (Oct. 1999), 46 George St., Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia 3065.

The controversial elephant-dung Virgin Mary recently exhibited in the Brooklyn Museum of Art was another reminder that almost *anything* can be accepted as art today. This is "bad for art—and for artists," says Kimball, managing editor of the *New Criterion*. "It is especially bad for young, unestablished artists, who find themselves scrambling for recognition in an atmosphere in which the last thing that matters is artistic excellence."

Artists desperate to say or do something new in an "art world" obsessed by novelty "make extreme gestures simply in order to be noticed," Kimball observes. But the audience becomes inured. "After one has had oneself nailed to a Volkswagen (as one artist did), what's left?"

To fill the aesthetic void, Kimball points out, politics rushes in. "From the crude political allegories of a Leon Golub or Hans Haacke to the feminist sloganeering of Jenny Holzer, Karen Finley, or Cindy Sherman, much that goes under the name of art today is incomprehensible without reference to its political content."

The avant-garde, which emerged with its "adversarial" gestures in the late 19th century, Kimball avers, "has become a casualty of its own success. Having won battle after battle, it gradually transformed a recalcitrant bourgeois culture into a willing collaborator in its raids on established taste. But in this victory were the seeds of its own irrelevance, for without credible resistance, its oppositional gestures degenerated into a kind of aesthetic buffoonery."

Too much is made, Kimball contends, of the tribulations of the 19th-century avant-garde artists, such as Edouard Manet, Paul Gauguin, and Vincent Van Gogh. "The fact that these great talents went unappreciated has had the undesirable effect of encouraging the thought that *because* one is unappreciated one is therefore a genius." The truth, however, writes Kimball, is that, in any era, "most art is bad. And in our time, most art is not only bad but also dishonest: a form of therapy or political grumbling masquerading as art."

The contemporary art world, in his view, has lost touch with beauty—and "without an allegiance to beauty, art degenerates into a caricature of itself." Yet a purely aesthetic conception of art, divorced from the rest of life, is also unsatisfactory. Art needs "an ethical dimension," Kimball insists. "We have come a long way since Dostoyevsky could declare that, 'Incredible as it may seem, the day will come when man will quarrel more fiercely about art than God.' Whether that trek has described a journey of progress is perhaps an open question."

Mailer the Meteor

In an interview in *New England Review* (Summer 1999), novelist Norman Mailer tells of the impact early fame had on him.

One reason I've always been interested in movie stars is because of the sudden success of The Naked and the Dead *[1948]. I really have the inner biography, in an odd way, of some young actor who has a hit, and is catapulted from being someone who haunts the spiritual bread lines to someone who's worth millions—I'm not talking now about money but of the shift in one's ego. I had that experience. After all, I was utterly unknown. By my own lights I'd not been much of a soldier, and that ate at me. In a squad of 12 men I would have been number seven, eight, or nine, if you're going to rank them by ability. I was always at the bottom half of the squad. That hurt me; I wasn't a good soldier and I wanted to be one. . . . So I was without any large idea of myself and my abilities as a man, and abruptly I was catapulted upward. Suddenly I possessed a power that came to me from my work. Yet it didn't feel as if it had come from what I had done. Indeed, I was very much like a young movie actor who doesn't know where he is, and who he is. I hadn't heard in those days of identity crises, but I was in one. Movie stars have always fascinated me since. I felt I knew something about their lives that other authors don't. . . . It took me 20 years to come to terms with who I was and to recognize that my experience was the only experience that I was ever going to have.*

OTHER NATIONS

The Russian Silence

"The Weakness of Russian Nationalism" by Anatol Lieven, in *Survival* (Summer 1999), International Institute for Strategic Studies, 23 Tavistock St., London WC2E 7NQ, United Kingdom.

It's another case of Sherlock Holmes's dog that didn't bark: the absence during the 1990s in the former Soviet region of any mass mobilization of Russians along

ethnic, nationalist lines. Why hasn't the region gone the bloody way of Yugoslavia, as many in 1992 feared it would?

"Soviet totalitarian rule (which under Lenin and Stalin at least was vastly more thorough and ruthless than anything attempted by Tito in Yugoslavia) destroyed or greatly weakened" the Orthodox Church and the nobility in Russia, as well as nascent civil institutions that had emerged in the final decades of tsarist rule, explains Lieven, a Research Fellow at London's International Institute for Strategic Studies. While this devastated condition has been "a grave weakness for contemporary democracy in Russia and most of the other former Soviet republics," it also has made for relative peace, despite "the extreme economic hardship and psychological and cultural dislocation" experienced by the populace.

Fortunately for Russia, its neighbors, and the West, Lieven says, "Russian national identity in recent centuries . . . has been focused on non-ethnic allegiances." The Soviet state was explicitly founded not on nationalism but on a communist ideology that "contained genuine and important elements of 'internationalism.'" While the Soviets exploited Russian national symbols and traditions during and after World War II, they drained them of almost all meaning other than the "imposed Soviet one." Before the Soviet Union was formed, Lieven says, the Russian Empire, "though much more clearly a Russian state," stressed "loyalty to the Tsar and the Orthodox faith," not ethnicity.

Unlike many other nationalisms, Russian nationalism, as shaped by Soviet rule, conceived of the Russian nation "not as a separate ethnos but as the leader of other nations," Lieven says. The absence of a strong sense of Russian ethnic identity, he notes, also "reflected historical and demographic reality. . . . From the 15th century, Russia conquered and absorbed many other ethnic groups." Hostility exhibited at times toward particular ethnic groups, such as Jews or Caucasians, he says, was "a *focused* hostility . . . for particular reasons, usually economic."

Russians outside Russia have rarely come under physical attack in this decade. Russian president Boris Yeltsin's government stated more than once that it would use force, if necessary, to protect the Russians in the Baltics and elsewhere. Though Estonia and Latvia, after gaining their independence, moved to restrict the rights of their Russian minorities, they did so peacefully, by legislative or administrative means, and most of the local Russians reacted calmly "and did not join the hard-line Soviet loyalist movements which opposed Baltic independence," Lieven notes. In Ukraine and Kazakhstan, the governments did not take any measures against their Russian minorities. And—despite the bluster of ultranationalist political figures such as Vladimir Zhirinovsky—the Russian government, Lieven says, for the most part has not encouraged Russian secession movements in the other republics.

But "as Russia loses its role and its self-perception as the leader of other nations," Lieven fears, it could "develop a new form of patriotism which is not pluralist and multi-ethnic but one which is resentful, closed, and ethnically-based." If that happens, he warns, it could well prove "a disaster for the whole region."

The Unwelcome Wedding Guest

"Dowry Deaths in India" by Paul Mandelbaum, in *Commonweal* (Oct. 8, 1999), 475 Riverside Dr., Rm. 405, New York, N.Y. 10115.

Every year in India, some 6,000 newly wed brides—and perhaps as many as 15,000—are murdered or driven to suicide in disputes over their dowries, reports Mandelbaum, a journalist and novelist. Modernization, far from reducing the toll of "dowry deaths," seems to be pushing it higher.

As in the past, most Indian marriages today are arranged by parents seeking "a suitable match within an appropriate range of subcastes," Mandelbaum reports. But with more Indians migrating to the cities or abroad in search of opportunity, the families involved in a match are less likely to have known each other previously. Increasingly, the marital arrangements are made blindly, through brokers, classified ads, and Internet services. And, in a corruption of ancient Hindu customs, Mandelbaum says, the brides and their families now "feel compelled to buy their

way into a marriage alliance with 'gifts' of cash, jewels, and consumer goods" for the in-laws, with the amount often rising with the groom's apparent prospects. A groom who works for the privileged government bureaucracy, for instance, may be able to command a dowry worth $100,000 or more.

In a typical dowry death, Mandelbaum says, a new bride is harassed by her husband and in-laws, who insist that the goods promised or delivered are insufficient. Often, it is the status they confer rather than the goods themselves that the husband and his family crave; sometimes, the conflicts are really not about the dowry at all but about underlying problems in the marriage too intimate for open discussion. Eventually, the harassment leads to the young woman's death, often disguised as an accident.

In the mid-1980s, in response to pressure from feminist groups and the news media, Parliament altered the criminal code, Mandelbaum writes, "plac[ing] the burden of proof on the accused in any situation where a bride dies unnaturally during the first seven years of marriage, if a history of dowry harassment can be shown."

Yet dowry deaths have spread. Once "mostly confined to the corridor connecting Punjab, traditionally a very patriarchal and violent part of northwest India, to Delhi and, further east, Uttar Pradesh," areas with a high incidence of such murders are now found in half the country, Mandelbaum notes.

Many Indians view divorce with alarm, and Hindu parents tell their married daughters not to return home. In a typical case of dowry death, Veena Das, a sociologist at Delhi University, told Mandelbaum, "The girl has gone to her parents repeatedly and says she wants to come back, but the parents refuse to take responsibility for her."

Africa's 'Soft Authoritarianism'

"Africa" by Marina Ottaway, in *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1999), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1779 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

A new generation of leaders has begun to emerge in Africa, but its members are not committed to democracy. Indeed, they are "extremely suspicious of popular participation and even more so of party politics," writes Ottaway, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Instead, she says, these new leaders—including Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni, Eritrean president Isaias Afwerki, Ethiopian prime minister Meles Zenawi, and Rwandan vice president Paul Kagame, all of whom came to power by winning a civil war—are intent upon building a strong government, maintaining security and stability, and promoting economic development.

They believe, she says, "in a mixture of strong political control, limited popular participation, and economic liberalization that allows for a strong state role in regulating the market—South Korea, Taiwan, and even Singapore are viewed as models to be emulated." In other words, what used to be described as "soft authoritarianism."

The instability of Africa today, argues Ottaway, results from the weakness of the independent states left behind by the European colonial powers, exacerbated in recent years by economic decline. "The authoritarianism of many African governments, coupled with their incapacity to project power throughout their [own] countries, has provided a fertile breeding ground for armed opposition movements" in such places as Angola, Somalia, Burundi, Chad, and Senegal.

It is appealing to think that the failed African states could revive themselves by embracing democracy and the free market, says Ottaway, but it is also unrealistic. "Elections and economic reform do not cause domestic armed movements to disappear, nor do they prevent conflicts in decaying neighboring states from spilling over borders."

With the Cold War over and French influence in Africa waning, the political order imposed by the colonial powers is truly at an end, Ottaway observes. Determining a new balance of power among the states, one that can be sustained without outside intervention, will probably entail conflicts. "Conflict is probably an intrinsic part of an African renaissance and not necessarily a sign of the so-called coming anarchy."

Tibet's Struggle

"The Question of Tibet" by A. Tom Grunfeld, in *Current History* (Sept. 1999), 4225 Main St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19127.

The Hollywood-enhanced international campaign the Dalai Lama has been waging in Tibet's behalf since the mid-1980s "has clearly been a failure for those it was intended to help," contends Grunfeld, a historian at the State University of New York's Empire State College.

The campaign for Tibetan independence has played into the hands of the Chinese hard-liners, Grunfeld claims. While the 64-year-old exiled Nobel Peace Prize-winner himself has indicated since 1988 a willingness to compromise with Beijing, the continuing campaign in the West seems to confirm the hard-liners' view "that the Dalai Lama is not to be trusted and that Westerners want to break up China." Congressional hearings featuring the Dalai Lama, pro-independence rock concert benefits, and Hollywood's cinematic (and other) contributions to the cause have resulted, ironically, Grunfeld avers, in "a greater threat to Tibetan culture inside Tibet."

Hollywood tried to assist the Dalai Lama's campaign with a 1997 film on his early life.

The repression there by Chinese authorities continues, Grunfeld notes. "Beijing has outlawed pictures of the Dalai Lama, welcomed ethnic Chinese migration into Tibet, increased security personnel at Tibetan monasteries, inhibited religious practices, and forced monks and Tibetan officials to undergo 'patriotic' retraining." More than 600 Tibetans, many of them clergymen who demonstrated against Chinese rule, are being held as political prisoners. Animosity between Tibetans and the ethnic Chinese pouring into Tibet (who soon may outnumber the indigenous inhabitants) is growing.

Yet since the Dalai Lama fled into exile in 1959, Tibet has undergone dramatic changes, the author points out. "It has roads, schools, hospitals, and a Tibetan middle class; the overall material well-being of the people has increased, especially in urban areas. [The capital of] Lhasa supports two Internet cafés, along with karaoke bars and discos. Religion is widely practiced, albeit with restrictions. Tibet is no longer closed, with some 50,000 tourists visiting annually. The Chinese Communist Party has thousands of Tibetan officials and Tibetan members, and Tibetan recruits serve in the Chinese military."

The Dalai Lama knows that complete independence is an unrealistic goal, and that he must continue to seek a compromise with Beijing, Grunfeld says. Last April, the Tibetan religious leader said that he is prepared to use his "moral authority with the Tibetan people so they renounce their separatist ambitions." Autonomy within the Chinese state (with the return of the Dalai Lama) would be the "best guarantee" of the preservation of Tibetan culture, he declared. Though this stance is unpopular with "many Tibetan exiles and their followers," Grunfeld says, a compromise with Beijing is Tibet's best hope. Both sides would benefit, in his view—but will they both agree with him?

Research Reports

Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions

"Creating a Digital Democracy: The Impact of the Internet on Public Policy-Making."

Foundation for Public Affairs, 2033 K St., N.W., Ste. 700, Washington, D.C. 20006.
28 pp. $30. Author: *Tom Price*

Will the Internet prove to have as profound a political impact as television? Price, who covered politics in Washington and Ohio for 20 years for Cox Newspapers, interviewed 41 "opinion leaders" from Congress and elsewhere to get a preliminary picture.

"The most dramatic evidence to date of the Internet's power to shape public policy," he writes, is supplied by the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines, which in only five years persuaded more than 100 governments to sign a comprehensive anti-mine treaty. Faster than mail, more efficient than the telephone, e-mail served as the communications link for 1,400 activist groups in more than 90 countries. But the main work—persuading governments—was done by "old-fashioned, person-to-person lobbying," Price notes.

"The Internet clearly boosts the effectiveness of activist groups...," he writes, "because it enables them to mobilize their members and sympathizers much more efficiently." Last March, in the face of more than 250,000 adverse comments, most via e-mail generated by the Libertarian Party's Web site, federal regulators withdrew a proposed banking rule some considered intrusive. [More recently, e-mail helped activists organize protests at the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in late 1999.]

"If you have an abiding interest in a narrow problem, you now have a much greater capacity to track what's being said about the problem or what's going on with regard to the problem than you ever had before," observes Andrew Kohut, who directs the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. "People are now bonded together in communities that were very loosely knit or did not exist at all 10 years ago."

This is not only for the better, in his view. "It's [also] for the worse in that 10 years ago, if you were a screwball who believed a whole set of wacky ideas, you felt relatively isolated—you now have the means of connecting with hundreds if not thousands of like-minded screwballs."

While the increased "diversity of voices . . . seems quite appealing, it may contribute to gridlock," notes Bruce Bimber, a political scientist at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Though all U.S. senators and, at last count, 94 percent of House members have Web sites, most of the legislators, Price says, believe the ease of e-mail encourages constituents to send "poorly thought-out, dashed-off notes that aren't worth the electrons they're written on." Consequently, e-mails do not rank as high in their eyes as phone calls, letters, or personal visits. The Internet revolution is touching them, he says, chiefly through their aides, who spend less time "trudging from office to office in search of documents and to deliver communications." A wealth of governmental information is available online, including the *Congressional Record*, bills, and roll call votes, as well as vast amounts of material from the executive branch.

The "grassroots power" of the Internet makes it a potentially useful tool for candidates, as it clearly was, Price notes, in Jesse Ventura's successful gubernatorial bid in Minnesota in 1998. Nearly all major-party statewide candidates that year had Web sites, as did 57 percent of candidates in competitive U.S. House races. However, one study found that the congressional winners that year were only slightly more likely to have Web sites than the losers.

Though the Internet increases citizens' opportunities to influence public policy, it is not prompting the average American to become more politically active, Kohut told Price. As more Americans go online, the proportion of Internet users interested in politics is going down. The Internet's impact may be, Price concludes, to heighten political activity—"but only [among] the minority who truly care about politics."

"The Ladd Report"

Free Press, 1230 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020. 315 pp. $25.

Author: *Everett Carll Ladd*

Is America a victim of civic rot? Are Americans "bowling alone" in political scientist Robert Putnam's famous phrase? Not according to Ladd, who, until his recent death, was head of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut. "Civic America is being renewed and extended, not diminished."

Yes, PTA membership, for instance, fell from a high of 12.1 million in 1962 to a low of 5.3 million in 1981, but it has since climbed by about 1.7 million; more important, the PTA decline was *not* due to any lessened parental involvement in school affairs. Rather, large numbers of local parent-teacher groups, many wanting to keep the dues for local use, left the national PTA during the 1960s and 1970s.

Levels of church membership and participation remain high. In a 1997 Gallup survey, 67 percent said they belonged to a church or synagogue. In another survey that year, 58 percent said they did volunteer work, up from 44 percent in 1984. Philanthropy has also increased.

Many older civic organizations, such as the Elks and the Lions Clubs, have lost ground, Ladd acknowledges. "But groups have always come and gone, for many reasons." Lots of new ones have emerged. Environmental organizations, for example. And contrary to Putnam's conclusions, Ladd says, membership in such groups does not mean merely writing checks. On just one weekend in 1996, Sierra Club members in the Los Angeles area were taking part in 23 hikes, three bicycle trips, a bird-watching walk, two two-day camping trips, and various other activities.

"All sorts of contemporary developments . . . rightly trouble us," concludes Ladd. "Nonetheless, the argument that national confidence and social trust are in retreat simply finds no support in any body of systematic data."

"Speed Doesn't Kill: The Repeal of the 55-MPH Speed Limit."

Cato Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. 24 pp. $6.

Author: *Stephen Moore*

When Congress repealed the mandatory 55 mph federal speed limit in December 1995, consumer advocates, the insurance industry, and federal officials made dire predictions about the loss of lives that would result: 6,400 additional highway deaths a year were widely projected. The actual results have been far different, reports Moore, director of fiscal policy studies at the Cato Institute.

Although 33 states raised their speed limits in the ensuing months, the number of U.S. highway fatalities in 1997 was only 150 higher than in 1995. More significant, says Moore, the traffic death rate fell to a record low: 1.6 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. Moreover, injuries were down 66,000, from 3,465,000 in 1995. The injury rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled dropped from 143 in 1995 to 133 in 1997, the lowest rate ever recorded.

"Some attribute the decline in injuries and fatalities to air bags, increased use of seatbelts, better roads, and safer cars," Moore notes. But the number of crashes, while rising in absolute terms between 1995 and 1997, fell as a percentage of miles traveled. Also, 277 fewer pedestrians were killed, suggesting that drivers did not become more inclined to drive recklessly.

The 33 states that raised their speed limit had a 0.4 percent increase in fatalities between 1995 and 1997—not much larger, Moore says, than the 0.2 percent increase in the other 17 states.

Though the insurance industry had argued that repeal of the nationwide limit would lead to more accidents and higher insurance rates, says Moore, claims and insurance premiums dramatically *declined* in 1997 and 1998.

In isolated cases, he acknowledges, higher speed limits have led to more deaths and injuries. Texas, for example, upped the 55 mph limit on 59,000 miles of noninterstate roads, and the number of crashes soared by 45 percent. But that only suggests that speed limits should be lowered on certain roads, Moore says, not nationwide.

Wilson Center Digest

Summaries of recent papers and discussions at the Wilson Center

"Borders and Ethnicity—Solutions in the Balkans."

A panel discussion, Oct. 28, 1999, moderated by Martin C. Sletzinger, director of East European Studies. Principal speaker: *Gale Stokes*

The past decade's warfare and "ethnic cleansing" in the former Yugoslavia are not the radical departure from the European norm that some would like to think. On the contrary, argued Stokes, a historian at Rice University, the brutal efforts to redraw state borders in the Balkans along ethnic lines fall squarely in the "grand" European tradition. [Stokes's essay, "Containing Nationalism: Solutions in the Balkans," in *Problems of Post-Communism* (July–Aug. 1999), prompted the panel discussion.]

Building on the powerful ideas of popular sovereignty, equity, and liberty, introduced by the French Revolution, nationalists in 19th-century Europe decided that the sovereign people were "we who recognize each other by some historical, religious, cultural, [or] linguistic characteristics," Stokes said. Moreover, "we the people" were "all equal in our we-ness"—and different from "those who are not us." Historically, nationalists seeking rights for their people have "routinely trample[d] on the rights of those who are not part of their nation."

For nationalists, Stokes explained, freedom is a matter not of individual rights but of "the community—we." And a community becomes free by creating an independent state that is recognized as authentic by other states. That "is the only way that all of these notions created by the French Revolution fit together in the nationalist redaction of them."

Creation of such independent states has been "a fundamental trend of European history, ever since the French Revolution," he said. Think of the unifications of Italy and Germany, and the creation of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania in the late 19th century; World War I, from which emerged "all of those new states in . . . what we used to call 'Eastern Europe'"; the population exchanges among Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey in the 1920s; and the "major readjustments" after World War II. "Poland is moved over 150 kilometers to the west, 'cleansed,' if we think of it in that way, of its minorities, the most horrendous example of which [being the mass murder of] its Jews." From these violent events (with perhaps 50 million lives lost in the world wars), he observed, came "more or less ethnically homogeneous states," including Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria.

Despite all the violence, Europe has managed to achieve periods of stability, first for at least 30 to 40 years after the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and then, in a much bigger way and more securely, in the decades since World War II. Stability was achieved, Stokes said, through the creation of "buffering mechanisms" such as the International Monetary Fund and the European Union. Today, when European nations find themselves in conflict, he observed, they "send their negotiators off to Strasbourg or Geneva or Brussels with their cell phones and laptop computers, and they fight it out with faxes." The alternative, Stokes suggested, is "World War III."

In the long run, he believes, the only solution for the Balkans, and for Eastern Europe in general, "is to find a way for those peoples to enter into those buffering mechanisms. And, of course, it is happening, in places like Poland, the Baltics, and the Czech Republic"—but not yet in the Balkans, particularly the former Yugoslavia. Multiculturalism cannot be imposed there, in his view, but only approached indirectly. "By that I mean the new boundaries of the states need to be drawn along ethnic lines, so that those people can create their own entry into the buffering mechanisms."

Offering a different view, panelist John R. Lampe, a historian at the University of Maryland, argued that redrawing borders along ethnic lines would present enormous problems. Macedonia, for instance, "is a multiethnic state or it's no state." The key to a solution, he said, is to encourage the peoples of Southeastern Europe to develop "multiple identities," as Western Europeans have done since World War II.

Before that can happen, however, contended panelist Andrew Michta, a political scientist at Rhodes College, "a process of ethnic consolidation" needs to take place, so that democratic institutions can become sufficiently well-established to let "minorities feel secure." The question, he said, is "How do we get there?"

"Professor Stokes may well be right historically and even predictively, but it just doesn't form a decent basis for a policy prescription," said Daniel P. Serwer, director of the Balkans Initiative at the United States Institute of Peace and a member of the audience. "What you're talking about in redrawing borders is war, ethnic cleansing, and unacceptable behavior by our own troops, if need be."

"I feel very fortunate that I do not have . . . to make policy decisions," Stokes responded. "Because I think you're right: we cannot be inhumane, whatever our historical understanding might be."

"Population, Urbanization, Environment, and Security: A Summary of the Issues."

A paper written for the Wilson Center's Comparative Urban Studies Project. Author: *Ellen M. Brennan*

Growing "megacities" (with more than 10 million inhabitants) once loomed as a major global problem. But growth "has been slowing down, in some instances quite dramatically," reports Brennan, chief of the UN Population Division's Population Policy Section.

Mexico City, which had 11 million people in the mid-1970s, is a case in point. The United Nations and World Bank then projected a population of 27 to 30 million by 2000. But the megacity was under 17 million in 1995, with only 19.2 million now projected for 2015.

Ten of the world's 14 megacities are in developing countries, and a dozen more cities are expected to reach "mega" status within the next 15 years—to give Asia a total of 16, Latin America four, and Africa two. Africa has the least urbanized population (only a little more than a third), and the fastest urban growth (4.4 percent annually); city dwellers are expected to be in the majority by 2030. In Latin America, almost four out of five people now live in cities. Asia, though only a little more than one-third urbanized, has nearly half the world's urban population.

Environmental degradation in many developing-country megacities is growing worse, Brennan notes, with most rivers and canals in them "open sewers." But the "mega" size is not necessarily the problem. Megacities such as Tokyo "are seemingly well managed and, therefore, not too large." What the developing world's megacities urgently need, she says, is good management and economic growth.

"Civil Liberties in Wartime"

An excerpt from remarks by Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist concerning the forced relocation of people of Japanese descent during World War II, at a Director's Forum, Nov. 17, 1999. (For full text, see http://www.wilsoncenter.org/NEWS/speeches/rehnquist.htm)

The Supreme Court reluctantly upheld this program during the war, but the judgment of history has been that a serious injustice was done, because there was no effort to separate the loyal from the disloyal. As often happens, the latter-day judgments, in my view, swing the pendulum too far the other way. With respect to the forced relocation of Japanese Americans who were born in the United States of Japanese nationals—and were therefore United States citizens—even given the exigencies of wartime it is difficult to defend their mass forced relocation under present constitutional doctrine. But the relocation of the Japanese nationals *residing in the United States—typically the parents of those born in this country—stands on quite a different footing. The authority of the government to deal with enemy* aliens *in time of war, according to established case law from our court, is virtually plenary.*

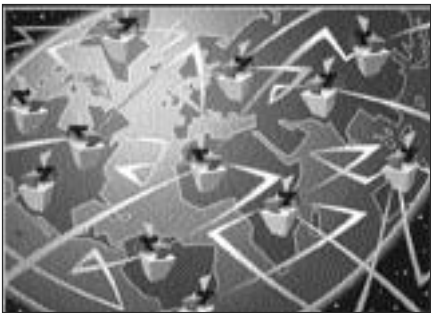
CURRENT BOOKS

Evolution's Hidden Purpose

NONZERO:
The Logic of Human Destiny.
By Robert Wright.
Pantheon. 544 pp. $27.50

by Francis Fukuyama

Robert Wright's previous book, *The Moral Animal* (1994), presented a highly readable overview of evolutionary psychology, the controversial attempt to apply the principles of evolutionary biology to the study of the human mind. In *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny*, Wright attempts something far more ambitious: he extends the evolutionary story both backward and forward in time, arguing that human cultural evolution can be understood as an outgrowth of biological evolution, and that it should eventually lead humankind to higher levels of cooperation on a planetary scale. If this sounds like a tall order, it is—but Wright does an astonishingly effective job of finding directionality in history, not just over the past few thousand years but over the almost four billion years since the beginning of life on earth.



The "nonzero" of the book's title comes from game theory, in which games either have zero-sum outcomes, where one player's loss is another's gain, or non-zero-sum outcomes, where both players can gain (or both can lose). Wright argues that what he calls the "logic of nonzero-sumness"—that is, the gains that result when individuals solve problems through cooperation—is the driving force in history. History, in other words, can be understood as the gradual widening of non-zero-sum outcomes. This applies not just to human cooperation, but to all forms of life from the first emergence of organisms out of stranded DNA. But that is getting ahead of the story.

Fans of *The Moral Animal* will particularly appreciate the first half of *Nonzero*, in which Wright does for contemporary anthropology what the earlier book did for evolutionary psychology. As he explains, cultural anthropology for much of the 20th century has been subject to a high degree of political correctness, a trend that began with the seminal figure of Franz Boas. Reacting against the rampant social Darwinism of the early 20th century, Boas, an anthropologist at Columbia University, argued that there was no such thing as cultural evolution in which "primitive" peoples were gradually replaced by more highly civilized ones. Boas thus attacked the assumption, common in his time, that white northern Europeans stood at the top of a cultural hierarchy. With his students Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, he launched an ultimately successful campaign to purge "ethnocentrism" from the social sciences.

While the motives of these early cultural relativists were understandable, and indeed laudable, the view that there is no way to distinguish between, say, the Inuit and the Babylonians is, on the face of it, absurd. Human societies can be differentiated, Wright argues, not so much by their level of technology as by their degree of non-zero-sumness—that is, their degree of social com-

plexity and the types of collective-action problems they have been able to solve. Thus, there are huge differences even among hunter-gatherer societies. The Shoshone of the Great Plains scarcely achieved a level of social organization higher than the family, while the Indians of the northwestern Pacific Coast (famous for the potlatch) developed something close to a government. The differences in social structure might be attributed to the much richer environment of the Pacific Coast, but Wright takes some pains to argue that human evolution, both biological and cultural, is not necessarily driven by exogenous shocks or stimuli from the outside environment. Human beings are intelligent and creative to the extent that competition among them will produce innovation and change. There is no such thing as an "equilibrium" social order to which humans will revert if left undisturbed by their environment. Human beings would eventually have tired of arcadia and changed it into something else.

Wright goes on to show how the complexity of human societies grew through the sequential solving of non-zero-sum cooperative problems, first in the extraction of resources from the environment (for example, through big-game hunting and later through trade), and then as a result of external pressures from zero-sum competitions with other human societies. Modern anthropological data support the truth of Kant's insight into humankind's "asocial sociability": human cooperation is driven in many instances by the need to compete with and often fight other human groups. Or as Hegel argued, in the remorseless logic of history, war is an essential component of human progress because it stimulates the development of modern institutions. This process, if not inevitable, seems highly probable: Wright shows that many of the great milestones in cultural evolution, such as the invention of agriculture, actually occurred several times in widely separated parts of the globe.

Wright extends this evolutionary picture to the present, where human societies are organized into nation-states and have filled the planet with webs of interdependence. He argues that writers (such as journalist Robert Kaplan) who see incipient chaos lurking in every ethnic or religious conflict have missed the larger picture of growing human cooperation. The logical outcome of this process is ultimately some form of global governance, as human beings try to solve non-zero-sum cooperative problems on the largest possible scale—problems such as environmental destruction, disease, and terrorism. While some conservatives may take offense at what seems like soft-headed one-worldism, Wright does not build this elaborate theoretical structure in order to argue for world government. Rather, he points out that global governance can take many forms, including ones already in existence, such as the World Trade Organization or the International Monetary Fund, that seek to increase gains from international cooperation.

The most speculative (and therefore the most interesting) part of *Nonzero* is the final third, in which Wright argues for the continuity between biological and cultural evolution. What we understand today as an individual organism is in fact a cooperative interaction among cells, one that was itself the result of countless game-theoretic confrontations between single-cell creatures over the eons of evolutionary time. Indeed, this happened below the cellular level: outside the nucleus of every human cell are mitochondria that, biologists theorize, were at one time freestanding bacteria; like human beings assimilating into a foreign society, they eventually found it in their self-interest to join forces with the host cell. No one would deny that there is a fundamental difference between biological and cultural evolution, but the latter can be seen from this perspective as nature's discovery of the most effective way of achieving the end of adaptation.

The fact that evolution, both biological and cultural, so relentlessly seeks ever-higher levels of complexity leads inevitably to the question of whether this process is purposive and teleological. The fact of directionality does not prove, as the deists argued, that an anthropomorphic God must have built this

elaborate machine and set it in motion. But, as Wright argues, it is at least not crazy to wonder whether a process apparently so at odds with the increasing entropy predicted by the Second Law of Thermodynamics might be more than a random accident. And he argues that modern science, by explicating this process, has not eliminated its mysteriousness. The origin of consciousness in particular is a weak point in the evolutionary account of human life: "What's interesting—and underappreciated—is that you could reach the [conclusion that science can't illuminate all the dimensions of existence] if you *accept* the hard-core scientific view that consciousness is an epiphenomenon lacking real influence. After all, if consciousness doesn't *do* anything, then its existence becomes quite the unfathomable mystery."

And this mysterious consciousness is the seat of the emotions and everything that makes life worth living. Wright is not arguing for the necessity of religious explanations for this mystery, and I suspect he would be unhappy if creationists pounced upon his conclusions to justify their views. He argues instead that the hard-science account of evolution should increase our level of wonder at the process rather than demystify our understanding of it.

It is hard to know where to begin in critiquing an argument of such sweep and complexity. As someone who himself has argued that history is both directional and teleological, I am in broad sympathy with Wright's aims, however much I might quibble with particular aspects of the argument. I will make just one point about the way in which Wright's views are and are not relevant to any near-term issue in politics and economics.

Wright sometimes implies that game theory gives us a unique non-zero-sum solution to any problem of social cooperation. This is not true: most games are fraught with so-called multiple equilibria, with any number of stable outcomes possible. The outcome that the players ultimately arrive at is often arbitrary and less than socially optimal. This is true even in the simplest prisoner's dilemma game, where the equilibrium solution for a one-shot game dictates cheating your partner. The number of possible solutions multiplies rapidly when the players are ones with complex "utility functions"—that is, multiple and often incommensurate goals, such as wanting both economic efficiency and egalitarian wealth distribution. A dictatorship and a constitutional democracy can equally solve the cooperative problem of supplying necessary public goods, yet the difference between the two types of regime holds enormous consequences for people.

From the perspective of any sufficiently long time scale—the four billion years of evolutionary history or the millennial scale of cultural history—there is clear directionality and progress toward non-zero-sumness. But on any time scale that matters to human beings, such as a decade or a generation, societies can get stuck in all sorts of socially suboptimal situations. Indeed, economists have argued that China was caught in a "low-level equilibrium trap" for the better part of a millennium, one that kept Chinese society from advancing much past Malthusian conditions.

What politics is all about is not generic non-zero-sum solutions to cooperative problems, but rather *what kind* of non-zero-sum outcome we want to live under. This means, among other things, that Wright's broad theory gives no support to his short-run policy preferences for particular forms of global cooperation. We may get to planetary governance eventually, but only as the result of nuclear war, environmental collapse, and devastating global epidemics—and then it may take the form of a giant police state.

None of this should detract from a final judgment that Wright has written an extraordinarily insightful and thought-provoking book. The idea that there is directionality and purpose to history is one that has come and gone, and now may be coming again thanks to the elegant synthesis he has produced.

> Francis Fukuyama, *Hirst Professor of Public Policy at George Mason University, is author of* The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order *(1999).*

The Peripatetic Pope

WITNESS TO HOPE:
The Biography of Pope John Paul II.
By George Weigel.
Cliff Street Books/HarperCollins. 992 pp. $35

by James Morris

Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Kraków was a man of great physical vigor—a skier, hiker, kayaker—when he was elected pope in 1978 at age 58 (and took the name John Paul II to honor his several immediate predecessors). In his years leading the world's billion Roman Catholics, he has declined into age and infirmity, the natural process hastened by a would-be assassin's bullets in 1981, by the subsequent near-fatal complications of infection, by falls and weakened joints and operations, by the onset of Parkinson's disease, and perhaps by the harsh criticism he has endured from Catholics and non-Catholics alike. But age has not dulled his wit. In 1994, George Weigel tells us, after the pope moved slowly and painfully to his presiding place before an assembly of bishops, his first words were Galileo's defiant insistence on the Earth's orbit around the sun: "Eppur si muove"—"And yet, it moves."

The incident is a throwaway event in this massive biography, and yet it is an emblematic moment for the perpetually mobile John Paul, next to whom Marco Polo was a shut-in and Magellan a day tripper. No human being has ever spoken to so many people in so many different cultural contexts—hundreds of millions of men, women, and children in person and through the media. The numbers for some of those occasions defy comprehension: International World Youth Day in Manila in 1995 drew between five and seven million people, which Weigel calls "the largest human gathering in history."

Popes were not always so public and peripatetic. As recently as the middle of the 20th century, Pius XII, who was pope from 1939 to 1958, defined a different standard. In photos and newsreels he looked dour, stern, and remote, the prince of a shadowed Vatican. His successor, John XXIII, broke the mold of that papacy. John's reign (1958–1963) and the term of John F. Kennedy partially overlapped. Though decades apart in age, the two were twin media darlings—a bouncing president after one who had seemed all bore, a cuddly pope after one who had seemed all bone.

The Kennedy legacy dissipated like smoke. Not so John's

impact. The Second Vatican Council, which he summoned in 1962, initiated a process of openness and adjustment—and dissension—in the Catholic Church that persists to this day. John Paul II believes that Vatican II, which he attended when he was Bishop Karol Wojtyla, was a transforming event in the life of the church, and that the teachings of the council, correctly understood, will situate the church for the new millennium. Correct understanding, alas, has been tinder for reformers and traditionalists alike. The intellectual, philosophical, and theological fires continue to burn, in the brush if not in the forest. To some Catholics, this pope is the council's champion; to others, its Judas.

The conventional criticism of John Paul II, especially within the Catholic Church, is that he is an authoritarian who has slowed reform and, by identifying the Church with the papacy, muted Vatican II's call for greater collegial responsibility. From other quarters there are complaints that he has failed to restore the theological, organizational, and pastoral discipline in the church that eroded after Vatican II; that he has governed as an outsider in the Roman Curia; and that he will leave behind an administrative apparatus insufficiently attuned to the teachings of his pontificate and to its interpretation of Vatican II.

And, oh yes, that he is a misogynist (to those who know him, a confounding charge), whose views on sex are hopelessly retrograde. When many of the world's Catholics, American Catholics in particular, ignore the church's teaching on birth control, or observe it grudgingly, why has this pope not recognized popular sentiment and changed the rules? Because he is neither pollster nor politician. Rather than alter the church's position, John Paul II sought to redefine its grounds through a new theology of the body, rooted in a conviction that sexual activity reflects the divine activity of human creation. Dissenters were unimpressed. The theologians can have their say on the arcane niceties of Trinitarian procession, but on sexual matters experience trumps ingenuity.

Weigel, a Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C., counters the criticism of John Paul II with what he regards as the man's great achievements: a renovated papacy, the full implementation of Vatican II, the collapse of communism, a concern for the moral well-being of the free society, a passion for ecumenism and for reaching out to other faiths, and the personal example of a life so nobly lived as to have changed innumerable other lives. While this most visible and active of popes has provoked the most disparate assessments, Weigel stakes out no middle ground. The Catholic Church can name no living person a saint, so John Paul II is not yet up for canonization, but Weigel's formidable book is an implicit argument that his turn should one day come.

Access can be a blessing and a bane to a biographer, and Weigel had access. The pope asked him to write the biography and cooperated to ease his task. But there was no attempt, we are told, to dictate the contents. This is not an authorized biography; its reverence derives from the painstakingly assembled and considered evidence. Let those who would take a different view of John Paul II be as persuasive in minimizing his achievement or in ascribing other motives to his actions as Weigel is in his enthusiast's account.

Weigel's John Paul II is a philosopher, an intellectual, and a mystic, a man drawn to the cloistered life of the Carmelites who finds himself instead, in this age of the ubiquitous camera and the radiant pixel, a celebrity. He governs a church that he means to be not authoritarian but authoritative, and neither liberal nor conservative but evangelically confident about eternal truths. "He can only be grasped and judged," writes Weigel, "if one approaches him and accepts him for

what he says he is: a man of faith, whose faith is who he is."

In the first third of the book—its most absorbing pages—Weigel takes John Paul through a series of profoundly shaping experiences: education and friendship (the pope remains close to old friends from his student days); the horrors of war and Nazi occupation and the bravery of clandestine resistance (Wojtyla was part of an underground theater movement that used drama, the word, to save the Polish cultural tradition from Nazi eradication); the insidious, dispiriting decades of communist domination; a bishopric at age 38; a cardinal's hat at 47; the papacy at 58. The biographer describes a man at ease with the physical world, with scientific inquiry, with human relations, with culture and the imagination—when young, this pope wrote plays and poems and journalism and even considered becoming an actor.

The actions of John Paul II flow from beliefs he held many years before his papacy: the world has been forever sanctified by the person of Jesus Christ, whose life was the defining event of human history; men must be allowed to seek the truth and to live lives of dignity and freedom; religious freedom is the fundamental freedom; culture, not politics or economics, is the driving force of history. This pope has no specifically political agenda. Yet he has done more than anyone else to force the end of communism, not by attacking it directly but by insisting that cultural and social conditions must respect fundamental human freedoms. Communism could not pass the test. When individuals in communist bloc countries began to live openly and defiantly in the freedom John Paul proposed, communism was made to see its true face, and, like Medusa in sight of herself, it expired. Subjecting capitalism to the same test, he declares that economic freedom must be "circumscribed within a strong juridical framework which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality and sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious."

Weigel eventually provides a tally sheet on the externals of John Paul II's papacy—pilgrimages, audiences, linear feet of encyclicals and other teachings—that is at once humbling and, because it uses the world's criteria to measure what in its true worth is beyond calculation, a little jarring. Weigel notes that the pope has canonized 280 new saints. The astonishing figure reflects John Paul's generous belief that sanctity is more common than we may think, and perhaps within reach.

The criticisms that can be made of Weigel's book—it is too long; its narrative is sometimes clogged with repetitive incident (the accumulating papal journeys reduce Weigel to calling sections of the book "Asia, Again" and "Central America, Again"); it is too indulgent of its subject and too dismissive of his critics; its embrace of history and theology and politics, in the world and (much trickier) in the Catholic Church, is impossibly ambitious—are dwarfed by the scale of its achievement. Crammed with facts and events and evidence, it is a singular example of the virtues of old-fashioned, documented, sturdily chronological biography.

America may not be the best vantage from which to judge John Paul II, who presides over a universal church in which Americans enjoy no special privilege. We're not Number One, and this pope will not pretend that we are, or court us with approbation. His courage rebukes anemic hope and halfhearted allegiance; his generosity of spirit shames our saturating materialism. There is no other figure of comparable moral stature in the world today, when heroism is a local phenomenon at best and too much belief barely has surface purchase. In a world of "whatever," John Paul's is the faith that confounds pliant men.

> James Morris *is director of publications at the American Enterprise Institute.*

The Quest for Quarks

STRANGE BEAUTY:
Murray Gell-Mann and the Revolution in Twentieth-Century Physics.
By George Johnson. Knopf. 434 pp. $30.

by Gregg Easterbrook

Who was the top scientific mind of the late 20th century? Many would name Stephen Hawking—unmistakably an important thinker, but within the world of science his achievements are seen as somewhat overstated, at least relative to the publicity he receives. Others might say Stephen Jay Gould or E. O. Wilson, but both are renowned for writings and cogitations rather than discoveries. Some would suggest the late physicist Richard Feynman, one of the pioneers of "quantum electrodynamics," and others the physicist Steven Weinberg, architect of the "electroweak" theory of subatomic interaction. James Watson and Francis Crick, the biologists who discovered the double helix, would be considered, as would the geneticist Joshua Lederberg. So much is going on in science that there could be many more candidates, all working at the same time.

Then there is the physicist Murray Gell-Mann. In 1963 he theorized the existence of the quark; he and the physicist Yuval Ne'eman independently developed the Eightfold Way, a sort of Periodic Table of Elements for the subatomic world. Gell-Mann won a Nobel Prize in 1969, and many would name him the postwar era's best theorist, wide ranging and consistently brilliant. His times, theories, and occasionally insufferable ego are the subject of *Strange Beauty*, a fascinating, skillfully composed, and entertaining biography by the science writer and *New York Times* contributor George Johnson. If the quirks of quarks are your interest, *Strange Beauty* is a book for you.

Gell-Mann, the child of Austrian Jewish immigrants, was a prodigy who enrolled at Yale University at age 15; he would show gifts in mathematics, languages, and other fields. (The household arrived in the United States as Gelman: Murray's father changed the spelling to give it an aristocratic timbre.) Heading to graduate school at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the late 1940s, Gell-Mann was drawn into the domain of elementary particle physics, at the time a subject of public and intellectual fascination. The atomic bomb had just been exploded, the hydrogen bomb was not far behind, and the atom was seen as the gateway to the next age.

Albert Einstein had revolutionized the way people thought about the largest aspects of the cosmos; Niels Bohr and others then revolutionized thought about the smallest aspects, the quantum world. Einstein's ideas regarding light and gravity were easier to swallow than quantum thinking, which holds that the closer you look into the subatomic realm, the fuzzier and less certain everything becomes. In the 1910s and '20s, Bohr, Werner Heisenberg, and others spun out theories holding that the smallest subatomic units were neither wave nor particle, impossible to fully know, popping in and out of existence, seeming to rely on nonsensical infinities, in the end barely even there.

By the time Gell-Mann arrived on the scene, large particle accelerators—"atom smashers"—were being built as part of a quest to quantify exactly what resided in the subatomic world. Some nations funded particle accelerators in the belief that the machines would produce information of military value. To researchers, though, learning about reality at levels far smaller

than the electron was always a pursuit whose "sole purpose was intellectual," rooted in "imaginary realms of pure abstraction," Johnson writes. To Gell-Mann, there was no pure intellectual pursuit more engaging than discerning what matter itself is composed of. Thinkers had been obsessed with that question at least since the Greeks.

Add to that an intense rivalry among researchers of the early postwar period. Theories about the inner realm of matter were flying in all directions, and competing physicists were acutely aware that academic fame and even public celebrity would come to those who explicated the enchanted quantum realm. The young Gell-Mann, Johnson reports, was hooked both by the scientific challenge and the intellectual Super Bowl aspect. He dove in and quickly distinguished himself, winning important faculty assignments and working with many of the great postwar physicists, among them Feynman and George Zweig, who shared with Gell-Mann the initial postulation of the quark.

Strange Beauty is at least as much a history of postwar physics as it is a biography. (The title refers to the properties of quantum units, beautiful yet so outlandish that Gell-Mann named an important quantum phenomenon "strangeness.") Johnson provides several fun tidbits. One is that Gell-Mann spent years saying quarks should be understood as mathematical constructs, not actual things—then the particles were actually discovered, confounding those who had predicted them. Johnson also reports that even scientists say the best thing about quark theory is its name. In addition to echoing the wonderful bagatelle "three quarks for Muster Mark" in James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, *quark* means "nonsense" in German slang.

Johnson orders his story around the progression of theories and discoveries in quantum thinking, providing an extraordinary wealth of detail on such recondite topics as particle parity, mathematical renormalization, isospin, and quantum chromodynamics. He documents the contentions of postwar physics well and seems to possess a near omniscient sense of which researcher was thinking what in which year.

He tries to render the science accessible with metaphor. Explaining, for instance, how the electrons of an atom almost mystically reflect the expected conservation of charge, he deftly writes, "It is as if all the people on the earth were free to set their clocks any way they wished, but an invisible field would arise twisting the hands on the dials ensuring it is always three hours later in New York City than in Pasadena." Still, many readers will find that *Strange Beauty* tells more about the details of particle physics—especially about early ideas that were rejected—than they care to know. Other excellent books, such as Charles Mann and Robert Crease's *Second Creation* (1983), have already covered much of the same ground.

As an abstract intellectual matter, it is amazing that human beings are able to survey structures far smaller than electrons, to devise rules about them (rules that seem true, based on current knowledge), and to predict how they will behave in linear accelerators. Paeans and even poems have been written to the esoteric nature of the smallest building blocks of matter: how they manifest as everywhere and nowhere, seem to come out of emptiness, and at the ultimate level seem to be distilled from pure nihility.

But is the universe really composed of nothing, or are there merely limits on our ability to conceptualize incredible smallness? And even if the universe is made of nothing, how does that help us comprehend our lives? Bricks in your home may be fashioned from probability packets that came from a "dense vacuum," in the delightful Big Bang phrase, and that are composed primarily of spinning nothing. But if one of those bricks hits you, it still knocks you out; the universe acts plenty tangible, solid, and certain. Based on what has been found to date, quantum physics is about as useful as medieval hermeneutics. Maybe it's time to demythologize particle physics, dropping it out of the category of

mind-bending and into a lesser standing of "interesting, but. . . ."

Johnson alludes to this, noting that particle physicists of Gell-Mann's generation sought "truths so wispy and subtle that it was never entirely clear whether there was any substance to them at all." He notes as well that Gell-Mann himself scorns many abstract claims about physics as "quantum flapdoddle." One such idea is the postulation, based on a literal reading of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle and seriously entertained by some researchers, that the universe would stop existing if we weren't here to look. The Uncertainty Principle holds that particles only snap into a fixed location when observed: if unobserved, the components of the firmament would seem obligated to cease having fixed locations, and then the universe couldn't exist. Maybe this means God keeps the universe in existence by observing it, but maybe it means there's a lot of flapdoddle in physics.

In the 1980s, Gell-Mann shifted his attention from particles to "complexity theory," an attempt to understand how elaborate phenomena (biological cells, the mind) can arise out of interactions of relatively simple rules. Gell-Mann was a founder of the Santa Fe Institute, which studies this emerging discipline. One of the goals of complexity theory is to figure out why there is life instead of inanimacy. It's not clear that complexity thinkers will attain any breakthroughs, and they are often derided by "hard" scientists as dreamers who have drunk too much wine while watching New Mexico sunsets. (When chaos theory and complexity theory became fashionable at around the same time, orthodox scientists scoffed at them collectively as "chaoplexity.") But the potential of complexity theory is great.

For some reason, Johnson, who lives in Santa Fe and knows the work of the institute well, devotes nearly all his attention to Gell-Mann's first career in physics, saying little about his second. Nascent though it is, complexity theory has the potential to be much more relevant to human lives than quantum theoretics. Complexity might help us learn how biology began and why sociological structures develop. It might even tell us not just what the universe is made out of, but whether it has a purpose and a destiny. Still only 70, Gell-Mann has turned his dazzling mind to this subject, and we can hope that he will find something of sufficient value to merit a *Strange Beauty* sequel.

> Gregg Easterbrook *is a senior editor of the* New Republic *and author of* Beside Still Waters: Searching for Meaning in an Age of Doubt *(1998).*

Conscripts to Adulthood

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE AMERICAN TEENAGER.
By Thomas Hine. Bard/Avon. 322 pp. $24

READY OR NOT:
Why Treating Children as Small Adults Endangers Their Future—and Ours.
By Kay S. Hymowitz. Free Press. 292 pp. $25

by A. J. Hewat

There is a moment at the beginning of each of these books when you wonder whether to keep reading. Thomas Hine, arguing that parents should give teenagers more rein, mentions that he doesn't have any children. Kay Hymowitz, arguing that parents should exert more control, lets fall that her young daughter

Homecoming *(1995), by Bo Bartlett*

wrote a story in which the mother was "not very dependable" because she was "a writer . . . always dreaming about [her] book." Let that be the chance for an adult exercise in amused compassion, a moment to reaffirm that—statistics and scholarship notwithstanding—when it comes to the messy affair of raising children, we're all just guessing.

Hymowitz, a scholar affiliated with the Manhattan Institute and the Institute for American Values, has written widely on the subject of child rearing and education. Her prescription runs along fairly established lines of neoconservative thought: parents, take back your children—eat meals together, turn off the TV, cultivate and enforce good habits, and, above all, protect your kids from a culture hellbent on making them grow up too fast.

Hine, the former architecture and design critic for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, takes a more iconoclastic approach to what is for him a new subject. Having reached the awful clarity of 50, he was provoked into writing this book, he says, by "a certain exasperation" with his generation. How is it that these former revolutionaries "seem to have moved, without skipping a beat," from blaming their parents to blaming their children for violent crime, civic apathy, and other social problems? Why, he asks, do we expect our children to embody abstinence, forbearance, and other virtues that we ourselves rarely practice?

Both writers take as their point of departure the perception that American youth is in crisis. As Hine phrases this widespread belief: "Everything seems to be crumbling. . . . Ideas and institutions that appeared true and eternal seem to be under siege, and what is taking their place seems empty or even evil." To Hine, these views demonstrate that the pace of social change has driven Americans to hysteria. To Hymowitz, by contrast, such perceptions are articles of faith.

Hymowitz traces our troubles back to the 19th century, when, paradoxically, methods of child rearing improved. In the early 1800s, ministers, intellectuals, and educators began framing "a republican childhood" to prepare the young for citizenship. Parents were encouraged to spare the rod, give more time for play, teach personal and civic morality. During this epoch, society "embraced the goals of freedom and individuality" without quashing the all-important authority of parents. But gradually, and perhaps inevitably, Americans began to lose sight of two crucial principles: that youth's individuality must be shaped, even "constructed"; and that American egotism must be countered by grounding in a common culture. The idealism of early educators devolved into demands for greater equality between parent and child. Told she cannot not play at a friend's house, the modern child cries: "It's a free country!"

Hymowitz blames "those who help shape our understanding of children," including "psychologists, psychiatrists, educators, child advocates, lawmakers, advertisers, and marketers," for promoting the belief that children are "capable, rational and autonomous . . . endowed with all

the qualities necessary for entrance into the adult world." This belief, which Hymowitz calls "anticulturalism," was spurred on by educator John Holt and other "liberationist thinkers" of the 1960s and '70s. It has lately gotten a boost from unwelcome quarters—conservative public officials who propose to extend capital punishment to minors.

In chapters treating development from infancy to postadolescence, *Ready or Not* aims to show how anticulturalism has deformed youth and parenthood in recent generations. Hymowitz shakes her fist at child specialists who advocate no-pressure parenting, and marvels at the endurance of dubious educational approaches such as "whole language reading" and "learner-centered math." Her chapter on sex yields predictably appalling examples of misguided academic exercises: students told to yell out "penis!" and "vagina!" in class; Massachusetts students told to masturbate as a homework assignment.

Most disturbing to Hymowitz are the legal "freedoms" extended to young people. By making it difficult for schools to discipline children, the government has "legalized child neglect." Extending First Amendment protections to teenagers (to the extent of allowing them, say, to wear Ku Klux Klan armbands) has "had the effect of bestowing high moral purpose on adolescent obsessions and making the already difficult tasks of training teenagers' judgment and refining their sensibilities seem quaintly irrelevant." At the same time, teenagers are being made "legally responsible for behaving according to norms they have yet to internalize."

The outcome of enforced early maturity, Hymowitz believes, is that youth-deprived children and teenagers extend their childish ways into their twenties and thirties. From boomers on down, adults are dressing in jeans, sneakers, and baseball caps, watching action-packed dinosaur movies, throwing themselves Halloween parties, and fussing over their food.

Hine sees many of the same problems but feels more sanguine about young people's ability to mature against all odds. In his view, adults have demonized and marginalized young people, placing them at the mercy of a battery of bureaucracies and sending them mutually exclusive messages: "Teenagers should be free to become themselves. They need many years of training and study. They know more about the future than adults do. They know hardly anything at all. They ought to know the value of a dollar. They should be protected from the world of work. They are the death of culture. They are the hope of us all."

The very word *teenager*, Hine points out, was coined in the mid-20th century to describe an age group that had suddenly become attractive to marketers and social reformers. Teenagers were "a New Deal project, like the Hoover Dam." No longer simply younger versions of adults, teenagers became a thing apart, not-quite-sane creatures "beset by stress and hormones."

To Hine, the greatest single thing ailing young people today is not parental abnegation but the loss of cohesive social and economic roles. In a spirited, often less-than-scholarly narrative, he describes the range of activities, good and ill, that were once open to children and adolescents. Colonial children farmed and gardened. Out-of-wedlock pregnancies were as common in mid-18th-century America as they are now. Boys began military training as early as 10. Apprenticeship was the most common form of education, and schooling tended to occupy short, intense periods of people's lives when there was nothing more useful to do. During the 19th century, American youth worked in factories, mills, and mines. That legendary western figure from New York's lower East Side, Billy the Kid, killed his first man at 12.

Today, by contrast, young Americans are being segregated in mass detention camps for learning—supposedly to enhance later earning power. Newt Gingrich's brilliant description of high school as "subsidized dating" correlates with Hine's suspicion that no one has figured out anything better for young people

to do—and that young people sense it. Like the word *teenager*, high school is essentially a 20th-century invention. Neither of them began to go seriously awry until 1959, when the boomers arrived. A report by James Bryant Conant, a former president of Harvard University, advocated larger, more standardized schools. Quantity, as is its wont, overwhelmed quality.

Even minimal participation in the economic mainstream now requires more years of education than ever before. Yet tomorrow's jobs, Hine believes, will likely demand knowledge and expertise but not much schooling. During the high-tech employment boom of the mid-1990s, several top companies began recruiting people not yet out of high school to work at the forefront of innovation. The kids were able to do the job.

Hine concludes that while it may have been rational, convenient, and even lucrative to consign young people to a protracted childhood, that won't work much longer. In his view, it's time to offer teens a wider range of choices, letting them "coordinate work opportunities with education," "drop in and out of school without stigma," and "try something new and unlikely—and . . . fail at it—without being branded a failure for life."

Hine shares Hymowitz's concern that children are being rushed into adulthood. But he believes that children want to grow up as fast as they can, and that the next generation of teens, having been raised on a diet of advertising, violence, and abundance, will help to shape our culture, for better or worse. Hine thinks we should fret less about what teenagers are doing and more about what we've done to create their subculture. He wants us, as a nation and as parents, to extend rights and obligations according to an individual's signs of maturity, not simply according to age. He doesn't think it's reasonable to try to prevent teenagers from having sex. Forget celibacy, he says; instead, train kids to view serious commitment as a prerequisite to sex.

"The young," he concludes, "persist in wanting to do what their strong bodies make them capable of doing: acting independently, working hard, having sex and families, and making lives." His prescription—to give young people more life options—seems more realistic than Hymowitz's wish to slow the process down.

>A. J. HEWAT *is associate editor of the* Litchfield County Times *in New Milford, Conn.*

History

REFLECTIONS ON A RAVAGED CENTURY.
By Robert Conquest. Norton. 317 pp. $26.95

When a wise and sharp-edged historian of some of our era's greatest traumas reflects on the century as a whole, one should pay attention—especially if that historian also happens to have been involved in public life and is a fine poet besides. Conquest's *Reflections on a Ravaged Century* is short on warmth and fuzziness. Its few understatements are all meant ironically. But Conquest offers a view of our predicament that merits the attention of anyone seeking to look ahead.

For Conquest, ideas count. (His commitment to this notion seems almost quaint when a large part of academia is devoted to the proposition that they don't.) During the 20th century, a kind of "ideological frenzy" seized European minds and gave us communism and fascism, which he correctly sees as related.

"Idea addicts" in Germany, Russia, and elsewhere produced movements that devastated minds and whole countries. The West *had* to struggle against Hitler and Stalin. If anything, Conquest argues, Western policies during the Cold War were too timid, not too bold.

The book's discussion of these points is far richer and more challenging than any telegraphic summary can convey. Conquest is able to draw on his own pioneering research on Stalinism, research that was once bitterly condemned in the West for overstating the death toll under Soviet rule—and therefore the moral deficits of Soviet communism—and is now attacked in Russia for understating it. One also hears the voice that advised Margaret Thatcher during her rise to power, and that encouraged Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson to stand up to the Soviets during the 1960s and '70s. In the face of all those who have written off postcommunist Russia as hopelessly authoritarian and corrupt, Conquest shows great patience. Three-quarters of a century of communism left a "legacy of ruin," he writes, which accounts for the absence of any sense of individual responsibility among Russians, let alone of an honest and selfless political class.

As stimulating and provocative as they are, these sections merely set the stage for Conquest's larger argument: that there is a sure antidote to the ideological passions and the surrender to abstractions that have shattered our century. This antidote is to be found in Europe's consensual tradition, which includes the civic ideal of compromise that enable societies to enjoy a "culture of sanity." British institutions and the British empirical tradition epitomize these ideals, but they have spread to America and to many other peoples who earlier followed very different approaches.

So change is possible. We can do better in the future, and the key is education—but what Conquest sees in this area plunges him into dyspeptic foreboding. It is not enough, he argues, simply to believe passionately in the Good: "To congratulate one's self on one's warm commitment to the environment, or to peace, or to the oppressed and think no more, is a profound moral fault." Any education that brings students only this far is ipso facto faulty in a moral sense. The goal of education is not to fill students with dogmas disguised as ideas, much less to turn them into self-deceiving and hence dangerous "experts." Rather, it is simply to foster thinking, which entails a knowledge of history and an appreciation of human folly, including one's own.

Reading Conquest, one wonders whether we have learned anything from the disasters that befell Europe earlier in this century. But perhaps even this doubt should be more tentatively expressed, in keeping with Conquest's larger argument in this honest and admirable volume.

—*S. Frederick Starr*

DUEL:
Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr and the Future of America.
By Thomas Fleming. Basic. 446 pp. $30

Historians have been hard put to explain just what led Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton to their fateful encounter on a grassy ledge near the Hudson River in 1804. Why did Burr, the vice president of the United States, insist on the fatal "interview"? And why did Hamilton, who now professed to oppose dueling and whose own son had been killed in a duel three years earlier, take part—and throw away his first shot? Was the one man bent upon murder and the other on suicide? Historian and novelist Fleming offers an ingenious, complicated, and plausible explanation in a narrative that affords a superb view of the early republic and its flawed leaders.

The pretense for Burr's challenge was a published letter, belatedly brought to his attention, reporting that Hamilton had stated an unspecified "despicable opinion" of him. At last, exclaimed Burr, here was "sufficiently authentic" proof to enable him to act against his longtime adversary. But *despicable* was mild compared with what (Democratic) Republican editors had called the apostate Republican Burr; and if authenticity was what he required, Fleming points out, an earlier published report "that Hamilton had called Burr a degenerate like Catiline would surely have done as well or better than this single word." Hamilton had played little role in Burr's recent defeat in the election for governor of New York. "If Burr's purpose was to exact revenge for losing the election, his only logical target was Mayor DeWitt Clinton" of New York City.

Fleming says Burr challenged Hamilton because "he was a soldier, competing for the same role Burr was now seeking—the Bonaparte of America." Having lost the governor-

ship (and with it, any chance of running as the Federalist candidate for president in the fall against incumbent Thomas Jefferson), Burr thought that a triumph in the field of honor over Washington's heir, Hamilton—a triumph that could consist merely in securing a retraction—would help him realize the dream he had begun to entertain: armed conquest of Texas and Mexico.

Hamilton, meanwhile, was "a man riven by conflicting emotions and necessities." A humble apology was sure to be made public, destroying whatever influence he had in the New York Federalist Party. With Yankee Federalists threatening to secede from the nation in response to the Louisiana Purchase and Virginians' perceived political hegemony, apologizing might also destroy Hamilton's chances to lead a New England army. And it "would certainly disqualify him as the leader of a national army if Napoléon . . . headed across the Atlantic to regain France's colonial empire."

Hamilton had lately turned to Christianity and may have believed, wrongly, that a Christian must abjure self-defense. Fleming thinks Hamilton was unconsciously seeking to atone for having advised his 19-year-old son, facing a duel with a Jefferson supporter whom the youth had carelessly insulted, to throw away his first shot. In addition, the historian suspects that Hamilton hoped his death, if it occurred, would destroy the hated Burr as a political and military leader. Fleming expertly tells how the gripping drama played out.

—Robert K. Landers

ORPHANS OF THE COLD WAR: America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival.

By John Kenneth Knaus. PublicAffairs. 398 pp. $27.50

Blending history and memoir, *Orphans of the Cold War* vividly recounts a fascinating, hitherto unknown tale of American covert actions in Asia. In 1950, with the State Department still reeling from the victory of the "Chi-Coms" (as the Maoists were called) a year earlier, China invaded Tibet. The United States sought a United Nations resolution condemning the invasion, to no avail. "If it struggled in the diplomatic sphere," writes Knaus, "the United States showed no signs of hesitation when it came to the secret war for Tibet." He speaks with some authority, having been one of the Central Intelligence Agency officers who trained Tibetan soldiers in guerrilla warfare at Camp Hale, Colorado.

Contrary to what has been called "the Shangri-la Syndrome," the Tibetan people are not mystical pacifists. For centuries they were among Central Asia's fiercest warriors, maintaining a huge empire and even holding the Mongol hordes at bay. In the mid-1950s, when the Chinese imposed "democratic reforms"—a plague of raids, pillaging, and public torture—the Khampa of eastern Tibet (some of whom became Knaus's students at Camp Hale) united in an armed rebellion, which won early victories before being crushed by the superior force of the Chinese. Until the early 1970s, CIA-trained Tibetan guerrillas raided their homeland from bases in Nepal. In 1961 one such foray provided the CIA with classified Chinese documents revealing the famine and chaos of Mao's Great Leap Forward, a debacle of social engineering that cost 40 to 60 million lives.

But the Kissinger Doctrine reversed the policy of isolating Communist China, and the United States stopped aiding the Tibetan guerrillas. Wangdu, the charismatic guerrilla leader, was killed in an ambush by Nepalese troops just miles from India, where he had been offered sanctuary. Some soldiers did escape to India, but many were shot or committed suicide, and others languished in prison cells for years. Tibet was sealed behind the Iron Curtain, largely forgotten until the Dalai Lama won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. Knaus hopes that the growing international interest in Tibet will help bring about a negotiated resolution.

The author makes no pretense of being dispassionate. "When the U.S. government first became involved with Tibet in 1951," he writes, "its commitments contained a measure of the idealism that was part of the Truman Doctrine of assisting free peoples. . . . The men . . . [chosen] to carry out this program quickly made common cause with the Tibetans. It was not 'their' war they were fighting, it was ours, and we wanted them to win it." We owe Knaus a measure of gratitude, for his work in the field and for writing this engaging book about a tragic Cold War episode.

—Maura Moynihan

ROSTENKOWSKI:
The Pursuit of Power and the End of the Old Politics.
By Richard E. Cohen.
Ivan R. Dee. 311 pp. $27.50

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Power in Dan Rostenkowski's America.
By James L. Merriner.
Southern Illinois Univ. Press. 333 pp. $29.95

On May 28, 1985, Dan Rostenkowski, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, delivered a nationally televised address on tax reform. It was an unlikely excursion into media politics by one of America's last big-time machine politicians. Invoking his boyhood in a Polish working-class neighborhood on Chicago's northwest side, he urged viewers to "write Rosty." The appeal produced an avalanche of mail in Congress, paving the way for the greatest legislative triumph of Rostenkowski's congressional career, the 1986 tax reform act.

Nine years and three days after his "write Rosty" speech, a federal grand jury indicted the Illinois congressman on 17 counts of corruption. While the charges were pending, Rostenkowski lost his House seat and the Democratic Party lost control of Congress. He later pleaded guilty to two of the counts and served 17 months in prison.

Though they make their exploratory incisions from different angles, two new biographies largely succeed in getting to the heart of Rostenkowski's political life. Cohen, *National Journal*'s congressional correspondent, writes from a Capitol Hill vantage point, whereas Merriner, formerly the political editor of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, brings a hometown perspective. As their subtitles reflect, both books concentrate on Rostenkowski's power, how he got it, how he used and abused it, and how he lost it.

Like his father, a long-time alderman and ward boss, Rostenkowski thrived in the Chicago Democratic machine. He won election to the Illinois legislature at 24. A few years later, he persuaded Mayor Richard J. Daley to send him to Congress. He was young enough to serve for decades, Rostenkowski said; he could rise in seniority, maybe even become Speaker, and dispense plenty of federal largesse to Chicago.

At 30, he won election to the House of Representatives. While always bringing home plenty of bacon, he proved a formidable fighter in the legislative arena. As Ways and Means chairman—a position he assumed in 1981—he championed the committee's reputation and its bills while enhancing his own prestige and power. He never sought the speakership, which both books ascribe to his machine-conditioned expectation of rising by reward, not competition.

While paying tribute to Rostenkowski as a superb legislator, both books use his story to illuminate larger themes. Cohen concentrates on the passing of the old politics, both in Chicago and on the Hill. Rostenkowski was particularly vocal in opposition to the "reformers" and their ethics restrictions, which made it more difficult for him to support his family and lifestyle. He ignored the rules he didn't like, and eventually he paid a high price. Merriner provides a harder-edged depiction, with tales of backroom bribes, curbside shootings, and sweetheart stock deals. He uses Rostenkowski's rise and fall to argue that big government and big media create titanic figures and then destroy them, a weaker thesis than Cohen's. The two books should be read together for the most accurate measure of this fascinating yet imperfect politician.

—Don Wolfensberger

"THIS IS BERLIN":
Radio Broadcasts from Nazi Germany.
By William L. Shirer. Introduction by John Keegan. Overlook Press. 450 pp. $37.95

If journalism is the first draft of history, William Shirer (1904–93) lived long enough to produce a second and third version as well. A CBS correspondent in Europe in the 1930s, he published his *Berlin Diary* in 1941, achieved international fame in 1960 with *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, and revisited the Nazi period in *The Nightmare Years* (1984), the second volume of his wide-ranging memoirs.

Shirer brought a sharp, journalistic eye to his work, and he was fond of quoting Thucydides on the paramount importance of firsthand testimony. Although many of the dispatches in *This Is Berlin* lack a distinctively personal element—he was working under intense censorship—they still provide insights into the period that preceded the onslaught of total war. The Berlin depicted in these pages is a city where much of daily life proceeds at a seemingly normal pace. A play—cowritten by Mussolini, no less—opens to full houses. In the bookstores, *Vom Winde Verweht* (otherwise known as *Gone with the Wind*) dominates the best-seller lists. Then, in November 1939, we learn that the Winter Olympics have been postponed.

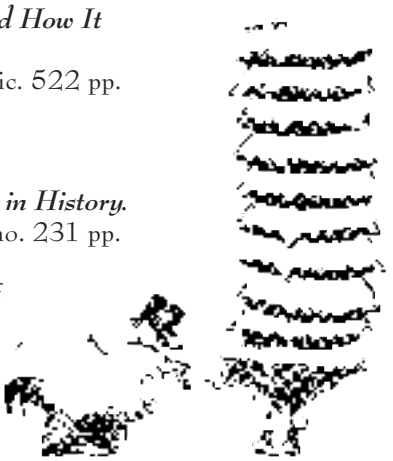
Forced to rely on repetitive official dispatches, Shirer can only hint at events happening behind the façade. Unable to travel to conquered Poland, he describes newsreels showing Jews in forced labor units. His terse listing of the day's executions—for theft during the blackout or, as in the case of one Polish farmworker, for "immoral conduct"—must have given his listeners some inkling of the truth about the regime.

By mid-1940, Shirer had come to doubt that he had a worthwhile role to play in Berlin. Although he had tried to convey his skepticism about Nazi misinformation through changes of intonation and colloquialisms, he soon found that his every word was analyzed by a censor sitting at his elbow. With the Gestapo sniffing at his heels, the time had come to return home.

—*Clive Davis*

UNCOMMON GROUNDS: The History of Coffee and How It Transformed Our World.
By Mark Pendergrast. Basic. 522 pp. $30

THE DEVIL'S CUP: Coffee, the Driving Force in History.
By Stewart Lee Allen. Soho. 231 pp. $25



Thought to be the stuff of Satan and insurrection, coffee has been lambasted throughout history. In the 17th century, Turkish sultan Murad IV banned it for fear that it made subjects disloyal, while King Charles II complained that British coffeehouses were breeding "false, malicious, and scandalous reports." Two books—an encyclopedic volume by Pendergrast and a playful romp by Allen—suggest that Murad and Charles were right about coffee's potency. With only a little facetiousness, the authors assert that coffee brought about the French Revolution, the poverty of Latin America, and most everything in between. They muster a surprisingly compelling case for their overcaffeinated thesis.

Pendergrast, author of *For God, Country and Coca-Cola* (1994), recounts the story from the berry to the last drop. Folklore has it that an Ethiopian goatherd named Kaldi discovered coffee sometime before the sixth century A.D., when his animals "danced" after nibbling the red berries. By the 16th century, the bean had conquered Turkey, where "a lack of sufficient coffee provided grounds for a woman to seek divorce." In the succeeding two centuries, coffee replaced beer as the drink of choice in Europe. Wired Frenchmen started getting revolutionary ideas; contented beer drinkers, Pendergrast suggests, would never have stormed the Bastille.

The author is especially detailed in mapping coffee's role in the United States. Competition among coffee roasters, he shows, spurred innovations in advertising, shipping, and technology, from brand-name recognition to vacuum-packed bags, which then found applications in other industries. Developments in coffee also paralleled societal shifts. Coffeehouses spread during the 1920s, when Prohibition shut down bars and sent Americans searching for new places to socialize. Postwar consumerism fueled the rise of instant coffee, and the hedonistic 1970s spawned a new appreciation for exotic, gourmet coffees. *Uncommon Grounds* is exhaustive but not exhausting, with anecdotes easing the reader through its 522 pages.

Written in the style of a travel journal, *The Devil's Cup* tells as much about the author's adventures as about coffee. Most of his time is spent in the Old World, where he sometimes manipulates or overstates for the sake of entertainment: "The entirety of 20th-century philosophy is simply the result of penny-pinching Parisians [in cafés] falling prey to a dementia born of boredom, caffeine, and pomposity." Amusing at first, the self-conscious cleverness ultimately wears thin. *Uncommon Grounds* provides a more full-flavored account of how the coffee bean has changed the world.

—Justine A. Kwiatkowski

Arts & Letters

GEORGE ELIOT:
The Last Victorian.
By Kathryn Hughes.
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 384 pp. $30

It must be almost impossible to write a boring biography of George Eliot (1819–80). Everything about her tantalizes, seduces, lends itself to narrative: the wise and sweeping authorial voice of the novels, the woman behind it who lived scandalously and fought in the thick of the headiest intellectual battles of her day, the dramatic landscape of the battles themselves and the underpinnings they furnish for today's wars over science and religion. There is no trouble about sources, since the subject left a wealth of self-revelatory letters, along with copious testimony from her great love, George Henry Lewes, and a wide circle of other indefatigably expressive Victorians. The novels, despite having been mined by critics for everything from class struggle to Orientalist bias, hold up pluckily under further discussion; the life remains satisfyingly complex even after having provided the jumping-off point for imaginative excursions on other topics, such as Cynthia Ozick's novel *The Puttermesser Papers* (1997), whose protagonist pursues a comically poignant quest to replicate Eliot's love life.

In this sprightly page-turner, Hughes, a lecturer at several British universities, has come up with what she sees as a fresh way to write of Eliot—or, more accurately, of Mary Anne Evans, the flesh-blood-and-brain woman behind the lifework. Little in the book is altogether new, but there is no sense that the author is rummaging among arcana, or pursuing tangential lines of inquiry somehow missed by other biographers. This is true even though *George Eliot: The Last Victorian* lists a dozen other full-length lives of Eliot in its bibliography and is the third one to appear in three years.

Hughes aims to trace Evans the woman, her emotional makeup, and the kinds of support she sought in friendship and in love. Hughes's theme—of early family rejection and lifelong vulnerability—is, she concedes at the outset, one that long dominated views of Eliot, based on the testimony of the much younger man she married at the end of her life, John Cross. But despite the use to which it has been put over the years by condescending critics, Hughes argues, the pattern accords with Eliot's behavior and with her own views of herself.

That story starts with the coldness of Mary Anne's mother and the breaking of the young woman's treasured companionship with her older brother Isaac, a kinship she idealized in sonnets and limned more accurately in the relationship between Maggie and Tom Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860). A succession of passionate epistolary friendships with older women followed, and, later, crushes on intellectual men who did not love her back, notably liberal philosopher Charles Bray, biblical scholar Charles Hennell, and *Westminster Review* editor John Chapman (with whom Hughes contends Evans had an affair).

Treading gingerly but gamely on the awkward ground of Evans's marked physical unattractiveness, Hughes draws a persuasive portrait of an insecure and intense woman (the word *bluestocking* is used a bit too often) whose search for love finally ends with the odd little man, George Henry Lewes, who gave her the devotion and companionship she needed to become George Eliot. Hughes suggests nicely how Evans's growing intellectual maturity gave her the groundedness to break with society in deciding to live with Lewes, who was legally barred from divorcing his wife because he had accepted her child by another man as his own.

Why Eliot was "the last Victorian" is never made clear, and her caution in regard to women's rights and other progressive causes,

though mentioned, does not receive full attention. But any path struck through a forest this big is bound to miss some areas. Hughes's book comes across as modest in its ambitions, and it is the better for it.

—*Amy Schwartz*

THE HOME PLACE.

By Wright Morris. Introduction by John Hollander. Univ. of Nebraska Press. 200 pp. $12

Little fanfare marked the death of novelist and photographer Wright Morris in 1998. The man whom literary critic Wayne Booth hailed in 1980 as "one of America's three most important living novelists," and whose photography was given a retrospective at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1992, died largely forgotten, in his 88th year. "His books are his memorial," his widow said at the time. Now, at the urging of Morris's friend Saul Bellow and others, the University of Nebraska Press has reissued one of his most significant books: his 1948 "photo-text," *The Home Place*. Though not his most polished volume—*The Works of Love* (1951) and *Plains Song: For Female Voices* (1980) vie for that honor—*The Home Place* may be Morris's most adventurous, pairing photographs and fiction to create a new genre.

In *The Home Place*, Nebraska-born writer Clyde Muncy returns to his Uncle Harry and Aunt Clara's dilapidated farm, where he had spent summers as a boy. The story is plainly autobiographical: in 1942, Morris visited his Uncle Harry and Aunt Clara's farm (he returned in 1947 to photograph it), where he had spent two childhood summers. The book's drama comes from the crystallization of memory, as a physical place is transformed into a remembered place. Documentary photographs face each page of text, demonstrating the reality of what the novelist imagines, and leaving the reader/viewer in a limbo between fact and fiction that is Morris's comment on the problems of memory—and a rebuke to the propagandistic New Deal photography that turned its Dust Bowl subjects into sentimental heroes.

For Morris, as for many authors, home and family were bottomless subjects. The Nebraska relatives in *The Home Place* repeatedly tell Muncy that they are all connected by behavior and blood, even "small-town expatriates" like him. Not long before Morris returned to the farm in 1942, his father died (his mother had died in childbirth), attenuating his connection to the home place. Morris's redolent photographs of the place would be his home thereafter, to which he returned in subsequent books of fiction, photo-text, and memoir.

The Home Place has been a difficult project to get right. Nebraska last reprinted it in 1968, with cropped pages and photos in some printings that, Morris complained, were "as pale as phantoms." The pages have been restored to their proper size in this edition, and the photographs reshot from the best available reproductions, but these improvements are undercut by the use of a flat, matte-surface paper that makes the photographs look like photocopies. The Proust of the plains does not yet have a proper memorial, but perhaps it is fitting that his meditation on memory should resemble a faded artifact.

—*Stephen Longmire*

ARTHUR KOESTLER: The Homeless Mind.

By David Cesarani. Free Press. 646 pp. $30

The story of the postwar New York intellectuals has been told in a number of histories and autobiographies and even a film, but the saga of their European counterparts, who were on the frontlines of the intellectual battle against communism, has not received as much attention. Perhaps the most intriguing member of this cohort was the journalist and novelist Arthur Koestler (1905–83). A brilliantly talented Hungarian Jew and lapsed communist, he is most famous for *Darkness at Noon* (1940), the novel that helped explain communism's powerful hold on intellectuals.

Koestler was born in Budapest to a middle-class Jewish family. After dropping out of the University of Vienna, he linked up with the leader of revisionist Zionism, the charismatic Vladimir Jabotinsky, whom he later called "the first political shaman in my life." He

went on to work in Berlin as a journalist for the famous Jewish Ullstein publishing house, until Nazi influence grew and he was forced out. Along the way, he traded his Zionism for communism.

Touring Russia in 1932, Koestler was shaken by what he saw, but he did not summon the courage to break with the party until 1938, when the third and final show trial was conducted in Moscow. The trial of Nikolai Bukharin, a leading Bolshevik, would serve as the basis for episodes in Koestler's contribution to the anthology *The God That Failed* (1950). Koestler went on to play a leading role in the battle against communism in the late 1940s, when the Soviet Union enjoyed high moral standing among many Western intellectuals. Measured against that act of courage, the late-life obsession with the paranormal that dismayed so many of Koestler's admirers seems a mere foible.

Cesarani, director of the Institute of Contemporary History and Weiner Library in London, has a weakness for glib psychological theories (Koestler's restlessness stemmed from his Jewish ancestry; "guilt was inscribed on his personality"; he was "forever in search of his father"). But the biographer has certainly done the necessary spadework, including extensive digging through archives. There is much to learn here about Koestler's event-filled life.

—Jacob Heilbrunn

Religion & Philosophy

FOR COMMON THINGS: Irony, Trust, and Commitment in America Today.
By Jedediah Purdy. Knopf. 226 pp. $20

It is with trepidation that someone approaching 50 opens a book on politics by a 24-year-old. Trepidation and a little guilt, knowing the responsibility my self-indulgent generation bears for debasing our culture and politics over the past quarter-century. But *For Common Things* proves reassuring rather than dismaying, a demonstration of the human capacity for moral self-renewal.

Purdy protests eloquently against the ugliness and cynicism of public life. He takes his stand against the manipulative language and symbols in politics; against the neglect of our common public space; against the pervasive inauthenticity of our media-driven existence; against the overwhelming posture of "irony" that, he shrewdly argues, has come to dominate contemporary social life (nicely exemplified in the sitcom *Seinfeld*). Echoing the communitarian and civil society movements, though in terms quite striking and often original, he argues for a rededication to civic life based on a bold, even openly naive reaffirmation of political hope. "If we care for certain things," he writes, "we must in honesty hazard some hope in their defense."

Are we hearing, at last, the stirrings of a new cohort, a successor to the famously shallow Generation X? It is tempting to think so, but Purdy may not typify his age group. He was raised and home-schooled in rural West Virginia by parents who, in his father's words, sought "to pick out a small corner of the world and make it as sane as possible." Although Christian fundamentalists dominate today's home-schooling movement, Purdy's parents seem to be secular, liberal, and utopian minded enough to carve out an "intentional" lifestyle in the Appalachians. From home-schooling, Purdy went on to three of the country's most elite educational institutions: Philips Exeter Academy, Harvard, and Yale (where he now studies). In between, there were breaks for environmental activism in West Virginia and a trip to newly democratic Central Europe, both discussed here.

Not even the finest education could explain the grace of this young writer's prose, whose quiet rhythms echo the arcadian music of his childhood and hark back to the way language was used before the information age. "What has so exhausted the world for us?" he writes. "For one, we are all exquisitely self-aware. Around us, commercials mock the very idea of commercials, situation comedies make *being* a sitcom their running joke, and image consultants detail the techniques of designing and marketing a personality as a product. We can have no intimate moment, no private words of affection, empathy, or rebuke that we have not seen pro-

nounced on a 30-foot screen before an audience of hundreds. . . . Even in solitary encounters with nature . . . our pleasure . . . has been anticipated by a thousand L.L. Bean catalogues, Ansel Adams calendars, and advertisements."

Despite a few weak spots—he too hastily dismisses sincere conservative forms of civic activism, and his treatment of religion is superficial—*For Common Things* is the work of an unusually perceptive social observer. If one wishes to see the world through the eyes of a very intelligent 24-year-old, this is an excellent place to begin.

—*Patrick Glynn*

Science & Technology

THE UNIVERSAL HISTORY OF NUMBERS:
From Prehistory to the Invention of the Computer.
By Georges Ifrah. Translated by David Bellos, E. F. Harding, Sophie Wood, and Ian Monk. Wiley. 633 pp. $39.95

In 1937, archeologists in Czechoslovakia unearthed a 30,000-year-old wolf bone with 55 notches carved into it. A caveman had used the bone to count something (nobody knows what), but he would have been at a loss to say how many notches he had made. Other than perhaps 1 and 2, numbers hadn't been invented. There was no word for 55; like the numbers 6, 78, and 203, it was too large to have an individual name. It was "many."

Humans got by with "1, 2, many" for millennia. Even in the 20th century, the Siriona Indians of Bolivia used the word *pruka* to describe any number greater than 3. Luckily, though, humans have a built-in calculator, which gave rise to number systems based on 5, 10, and 20. In the Ali language of Africa, the word for 5 means "hand" and the one for 10 means "two hands." When each value was associated with an individual word, numbers were born.

In *The Universal History of Numbers*, Ifrah, a former math teacher, traces the tortured past of our Arabic system, which denotes each number by a combination of 10 symbols. It started in Babylon, was carried to India by Alexander, was captured by the conquering Arabs a millennium later, and reached Europe during the 13th century, where it was promptly banned. Westerners were so suspicious of Arabic numerals that Pope Sylvester II, an early advocate of the system, was accused of selling his soul in order to borrow Muslim magic. In 1648, papal authorities cracked open Sylvester's tomb to ensure that Satan wasn't in residence.

Ifrah also describes the evolution of number systems that failed. Early in the first millennium A.D., the Mayans developed a system that was much more advanced than medieval Europe's—it had a zero, which was unknown in the West until after the Spanish conquest in the 16th century. But Mayan civilization mysteriously collapsed in the 10th century, leaving others to discover zero for themselves.

The Universal History of Numbers is less narrative history than reference work. In the middle, Ifrah interrupts the text with a 70-page alphabetical list of Hindu number concepts. The book also bears little anecdotal filigree. For instance, the author explains that the British Court of Exchequer kept records on wooden tally sticks, but he doesn't tell what happened when the government ended the practice and tried to get rid of the sticks in 1834: the tally stick bonfire got out of control and burned down Parliament.

Despite its lack of flourish, this is a highly satisfying volume, none the worse for having been translated from the French. It will give the same pleasure to math and history buffs that a fine dictionary gives to philologists.

—*Charles Seife*

MEANING IN TECHNOLOGY.
By Arnold Pacey. MIT Press. 264 pp. $27.50

Pacey, who teaches at Britain's Open University, has long been one of the most learned and humane scholars of technology. He made his reputation with a series of wide-ranging works, including *The Maze of Ingenuity* (1976), *The Culture of Technology* (1983), and *Technology in World Civilization* (1991). In popular usage, the word *technology* has become synonymous with computerized devices and software; for Pacey, technology

and its related sciences are human endeavors spanning centuries and continents.

In the remarkable *Meaning in Technology*, he argues that technology expresses the aesthetic drives of its creators and users. Machines, for example, have characteristic tempos and sounds, and many automobiles and motorcycles are tuned acoustically for a pleasing effect. And, just as musicians develop tactile relationships with their instruments, scientists, engineers, and artisans often can understand and diagnose conditions by touch. Some aircraft radio repair technicians during World War II developed a kind of empathy toward the electronics equipment the worked on that enabled them to find problems without full testing. Technology, Pacey argues, unites ears, eyes, and hands.

Machines and structures also unite people. *Things* bear meanings for society. The design of bicycles and aircraft incorporates ideas about who is going to operate them, and how. Will the devices be unforgiving but powerful, rewarding strength and precision but treating weakness and misjudgment harshly? Will they require authoritarian, top-down control for safe operation, or will they promote cooperation among smaller communities? Do they draw on our innate playfulness? Are they available equally to girls and boys, women and men?

If music is Pacey's central metaphor for scientific and technological creation, the garden exemplifies human works in the natural world. The human transformation of the landscape, he shows, goes beyond anything required by the body's simple need for nourishment and shelter. This change is not always harmful to nature, either. Preserves and other artificial microhabitats (he could also have mentioned England's remaining hedgerows) support higher densities of species, including some rare ones, than their "natural" surroundings. To many engineers, bridges and roads can enhance the beauty of landscapes.

The strength of this book, its catholic approach to technology, is also a limitation. Too little space is devoted to the central scientific and engineering trend of the new century, the rise of electronic networks—and to the fortunes being made from them. Many great inventors of a hundred years ago, notably Thomas Edison, lived for innovation rather than for profits. Even the engineers and scientists of the old military-industrial complex, which Pacey sees as a source of Faustian temptation, were generally interested less in wealth or military power than in opportunities to pursue elegant work with ample resources. Salaries, in those days before stock options, were merely comfortable.

Do today's technological entrepreneurs pursue new meaning in the products they create? Or does the prospect of rapid wealth make values—not to mention basic business ethics—a luxury? More broadly, does the present Internet embody the "people-centered" technology that Pacey advocates and many of its pioneers had in mind, or does the driving competition of electronic commerce substitute staring eyeballs and clicking fingers for engaged minds? Pacey does not ask these questions directly, but he gives us the right tools for answering them.

—Edward Tenner

THE UNDISCOVERED MIND: How the Human Brain Defies Replication, Medication, and Explanation.

By John Horgan. Free Press. 336 pp. $25

Horgan's last book whipped up a small storm. *The End of Science* (1996) argued that various sciences, their big problems either solved or insoluble, have hit the wall. Scientists protested, conferences convened, pundits pondered, and the storm passed. Nevertheless, one protest registered on the author, who was then a writer at *Scientific American*. Neuroscientists denied that their science was stymied by the brain's "sheer complexity." The mind sciences were not ending, they insisted, but just beginning. Chastened, Horgan set out to write *The Undiscovered Mind*.

Along with neuroscience, the book focuses on the fuzzier sciences that study the mind by trying to control its problems, recount its evolution, or reproduce it in a machine. The mind sciences, Horgan says, haven't ended. They just don't get anywhere, and in one chapter after another, he knocks them down. The genetics of behavior can't explain the mind's motivations. Psychoanalytic, psychological, and pharmacological therapies can't cure the mind's malfunctions. Neuroscience can't put systems of neurons together and explain the mind's capabilities. Evolutionary psychology can't account for the mind's predilections.

Artificial intelligence can't reproduce the mind's complexity. And the loose confederation of mystics who study consciousness barely make sense.

Horgan's writing is vivid, intelligent without being jargony, and personal without being condescending. The amount of research he has done on the mind sciences—which barely communicate with one another—is impressive. And the reader can't help but share his impatience with studies on ill-defined subjects, theories that are not only unverified but unverifiable, endless debates over the relative importance of heredity and environment, and highly educated people who want to test psychoanalytic theory with artificial intelligence or explain consciousness using quantum theory. "When it comes to the human brain," he writes, "there may be no unifying insight that transforms chaos into order." The reader can't help but share that suspicion.

Another thing the reader can't do—at least this one can't—is fully trust Horgan's assessment. He says his goal is to redress his earlier message that the mind's complexity overwhelms neuroscience. Yet this book's message, extended to the rest of the mind sciences, is exactly that. Another goal, he says, is to look at the mind sciences with the proper mix of hope and skepticism, and thereby "protect us from [our] own lust for answers while keeping us open-minded enough to recognize genuine truth." But the book details plenty of grounds for skepticism and none for hope.

Let's assume that the stated goals are window-dressing, that Horgan set out to look for the limitations of the mind sciences, and that he found what he looked for. We distrust scientists who reach conclusions this way. We should distrust science writers who do too.

—Ann Finkbeiner

Contemporary Affairs

THE BIG TEST:
The Secret History of the American Meritocracy.
By Nicholas Lemann. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 406 pp. $27

In *The Promised Land* (1991), Lemann analyzed poverty and race by looking at the "great migration" of American blacks after World War II. Now he analyzes class and race by looking at college admissions tests and affirmative action. Like his earlier book, *The Big Test* is full of valuable insights.

A staff writer at the *New Yorker*, Lemann goes back to the roots of the dreaded SAT (originally the Scholastic Aptitude Test, then the Scholastic Assessment Test). The test originated in Harvard University president James Bryant Conant's desire to transform the university's undergraduate body from an aristocracy of birth to an aristocracy of intellect. The author chronicles the 1948 creation of the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the parent of the SAT, which has tried to perform the mutually inconsistent functions of monitoring the test and marketing it. He also recounts the inevitable appearance of an industry that helps students—those who can afford it—boost their test scores, despite early protestations that this was impossible; the research on the correlation between test scores and socioeconomic status, aborted because it would necessarily entail delicate social judgments; and the short, unhappy life of the Measure of Academic Talent, which adjusted SAT scores based on the student's family background, but only for internal consumption in the ETS research department.

In Lemann's account of the SAT, this tool designed to eliminate the class system has simply spawned a different but equally rigid hierarchy. He argues that the test (and its graduate school siblings), by directing some young people to the top universities, determines admission to elite status much too early, and does so based on childhood education rather than adult performance. And elite status, once conferred, tends to adhere. He would substitute a more protean system in which "the essential functions and the richest rewards of money and status would devolve to people only temporarily, and strictly on the basis of their performances; there would be as little lifelong tenure on the basis of youthful promise as possible. . . . The purpose of schools should be to expand opportunity, not to determine results."

Conant discovered a letter in which Thomas Jefferson sounded a meritocratic note,

embracing the "pure selection of . . . natural aristoi into the office of government." (In another context—and in a phrase that Conant said he would never be so tactless as to quote—Jefferson proposed that "20 of the best geniuses . . . be raked from the rubbish and be instructed at the public expense.") Replying to Jefferson's letter, John Adams wrote: "Your distinction between the aristoi and the pseudo aristoi will not help the matter. I would trust one as soon as the other with unlimited power." In Lemann, Adams's healthy skepticism lives on.

—*Adam Yarmolinsky*

DOUBLE DOWN:
Reflections on Gambling and Loss.
By Frederick and Steven Barthelme. Houghton Mifflin. 198 pp. $24

IN NEVADA:
The Land, the People, God, and Chance.
By David Thomson. Knopf. 330 pp. $27.50

Frederick and Steven Barthelme were no ordinary gamblers. They were college professors and writers who blew an inheritance from their father—some quarter of a million dollars—in a riverboat casino at Biloxi, Mississippi. The Barthelme brothers knew what they were doing while they were doing it, and, in *Double Down*, they describe the process with extraordinary insight and humor.

They liked gambling for what it is—an escape into another world where, sometimes, magic things happen. "Early on," they write, "you notice that winning and losing are not so different. . . . The dizzying adrenal rush is much the same whether the chips come back to you or go in the dealer's rack. . . . It's not whether you win or lose but that you *play*." They discovered that they liked their fellow gamblers, too. "We found that we understood these gamblers better than we understood the men and women at the university, people who—full of purpose and high sentence and often considerable charm—seemed curiously reduced when it came to vision and possibility." (Love that Miltonic "high sentence"!)

Double Down ends, surprisingly, not with the ruin of the rake's progress, but with the casino's blundering and accusing the Barthelmes of cheating—and that on a night when they had lost more than 10 grand. (The charges were later dropped.) Still, the casino's obstinacy has helped produce this fine addition to the literature of gambling, a moving celebration of the urge to take a chance.

In Nevada allows Thomson to zoom his camera over the length and breadth of this casino-laden state, a place situated "on the edge, on the wire, a bit off to the side" of America, yet profound in its influence on the whole country. An English-born film critic and historian (and a very good one), Thomson conjures up myriad movie stories, as if pitching for funds to make an art film. His extended description of Frank Sinatra, allowing his music to "just issue forth like long narrative lines, telegraph lines in the desert," is worth the price of admission alone. And Thomson is especially revealing about the nuclear side of Nevada: the drama, the testing, the fallout—a more fearful movie script about the biggest gamble of all.

In Nevada is an evocative (if sometimes overwritten) tribute to the desert beauty of Nevada and the author's fascination with Las Vegas. As with some movies, Thomson writes, we might have been better off without them, but can you take your eyes away from the sight?

—*David Spanier*

REPUBLIC OF DENIAL:
Press, Politics and Public Life.
By Michael Janeway. Yale Univ. Press. 216 pp. $22.50

Reading this book, I kept thinking of Stephen Blackpool, the worker-hero of *Hard Times*, Dickens's 1854 rebuke of the early industrial age. "Tis a muddle," the poor soul says toward the beginning of the novel, establishing what will become his sad mantra. "Tis just a muddle altogether, an' the sooner I am

dead, the better." As Janeway unspools his thoughtful but ceaselessly gloomy interpretation of our times, the goal seems to be to plunge the reader into Blackpoolian despair.

Janeway, a professor at Columbia University's graduate school of journalism and former editor of the *Boston Globe*, believes that just about everything in American public life has turned dead rotten. In the old days, the time between World War II and the 1970s, the government and the Washington press "did business about the great issues of the day in an atmosphere of great trust." Yes, the country faced awful problems, but national "unity" and "coherence" made the problems seem tractable.

Then public life fell apart. Politics and the press, which, working in concert, had helped knit together the broad American community, became unrecognizable. "By the late 1990s, the combination of structural decay in American governance and politics and populist nihilism about both hung over the country like a toxic cloud." As for the future, the author glumly anticipates "more of the same."

Janeway buttresses his argument with extensive citations from academic studies, polls, journalism, fiction, and other sources, always marshaled in just-so fashion. In one passage, for instance, he calls on poet William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1947) and philosopher Sissela Bok's *Secrecy* (1982) to evoke the mixed motives and feelings of journalists who cover politicians' private lives. He is a master of subtle distinctions—his nuances have nuances—and his skill in making fine points sets him apart from the usual exegetes of the grand public narrative.

But Janeway's nuances are all in service of a thesis so unrelentingly pessimistic that one wonders how a gray-area connoisseur ever came to embrace it. Eulogizing the newspaper business, he barely mentions the fact that newspapers—and journalism itself, perhaps—are being reborn on the Internet right now, which is as much a cause for hope as for despair. Though Dickens killed off Stephen Blackpool, the Industrial Revolution wound up being not half bad for humankind. One wants to ask Janeway: couldn't the same be said of our times?

—*William Powers*

CONTRIBUTORS

Clive Davis, who writes for London's *Times* and *Sunday Times*, was writer-presenter of a BBC Radio profile of William L. Shirer, "Live from Berlin," in 1994. **Ann Finkbeiner** is a science writer who teaches at Johns Hopkins University. **Patrick Glynn** is associate director and Scholar-in-Residence at George Washington University's Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies. **Jacob Heilbrunn** is a writer in Washington, D.C. **Justine A. Kwiatkowski** is assistant editor of the *Wilson Quarterly*. **Robert K. Landers** is senior editor of the *Wilson Quarterly*. **Stephen Longmire** is a fellow at the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., and an adjunct professor at Georgetown University. **Maura Moynihan** is author of *Masterji and Other Stories*, a collection of tales from the Indian subcontinent. **William Powers** is media critic for *National Journal*. **Amy Schwartz** writes about cultural issues for the *Washington Post*. **Charles Seife**, a reporter for *New Scientist* magazine, is author of the new book *Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea*. **David Spanier**'s books include *Easy Money: Inside the Gambler's Mind* (1988) and *Welcome to the Pleasuredome: Inside Las Vegas* (1992). **S. Frederick Starr** is chairman of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University. **Edward Tenner**, author of *Why Things Bite Back: Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences* (1996), is a visiting researcher at Princeton University. **Don Wolfensberger**, director of the Congress Project at the Woodrow Wilson Center, is author of the forthcoming book *Congress and the People: Deliberative Democracy on Trial*. **Adam Yarmolinsky**, the Regents Professor of Public Policy in the University of Maryland system, is coeditor of *Rethinking Liberal Education* (1996).

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Kathy Read, *Publisher*

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From the Center

It is with great enthusiasm and pride that I give the readers of the *Wilson Quarterly* a status report on the past year from the Board of Trustees' perspective.

When I was sworn in as chair last February, I felt strongly that the Board should focus on four goals, and, working with Vice Chair Steven Bennett, we have made great strides toward achieving them in the months since.

Our first priority was to ensure that only the best and brightest people are associated with the Center, with diversity playing a key role. I am pleased to report that for the first time in the Center's history, a woman, Jean Hennessey, serves on the Board's Executive Committee. President Clinton has meanwhile appointed two new Board members, Nancy Zirkin, of the American Association of University Women, and Carol Cartwright, president of Kent State University.

We have also broadened and expanded the Wilson Council, the advisory group to the Board. New members include former secretary of commerce Barbara Franklin and Anastasia Kelly, senior executive vice president and general counsel of Sears. Finally, a minority-owned firm is now part of the team that manages the Center's financial resources.

Our second priority was to dramatically expand those resources. That goal is being accomplished through the leadership of Fred Bush, who has worked with the Board in creating a development and outreach program that has attracted many accomplished individuals to the Wilson Council, including Joseph Gildenhorn, the former U.S. ambassador to Switzerland, former secretary of state George Schultz, John Foster, of Foster Management Company, and John Manning, of Boston Capital Corporation.

Our third priority was to work closely with our dynamic director, Lee Hamilton, and to support his vision for the Center. That vision is for the Center to foster outstanding research and to create programs that attract the participation of leading figures from around the world. In the past year, the Center has welcomed, among others, Mikhail Gorbachev, Newt Gingrich, and Secretary of Commerce William Daley.

Our fourth priority was to maintain the Center's nonpolitical, bipartisan character by continuing to serve as a welcoming forum for a variety of public figures, such as former secretary of state James Baker and the Reverend Jesse Jackson.

We have come a long way in a very short time. Because of the caliber of the people serving on the Board and Council, I am confident that the Center will enjoy new successes as an important institution that shapes the dialogue about leading issues.

One of those issues—whether the United States should pay its dues to the United Nations—recently energized the Board, and as chair I felt compelled to speak out.

Earlier in this century, President Woodrow Wilson saw that it was in our national interest to create a world organization for the peaceful resolution of conflict, and his dream became a reality when the United Nations was chartered in 1945. It has been credited with settling 172 regional conflicts, among many other accomplishments, from helping to limit nuclear proliferation to assembling the coalition that opposed Iraqi aggression in the Persian Gulf. Ahead lie new challenges: the Balkans, the India-Pakistan dispute, and the Iran-Iraq conflict. There are perhaps 32 regional conflicts now under way that have the potential to disrupt global stability. And new nations are being born at a rapid pace. America cannot lead the way in resolving all conflicts; now more than ever we need the United Nations. Global stability is our ultimate national security and economic interest.

Many of those in Congress who opposed paying our UN dues disagreed with the United Nations' stance on abortion and birth control. I am sensitive to the gravity of these issues. Yet there will be few opportunities to reasonably debate them if the world is allowed to descend into endless conflict.

Our country was fortunate to have Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright and UN Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke leading the successful fight for funding. Working with Ambassador Holbrooke on this issue was personally very gratifying.

By withholding its financial support from the United Nations, the United States played into the arguments of some foreign critics that it is arrogant, controlling, and moving toward isolationism. To others it appeared that the United States was saying, "Do as we say, not as we do." As Congress recognized in the end, that was a signal we could not afford to send to the world.

Joseph A. Cari, Jr.
Chair of the Board of Trustees