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EDITOR'S COMMENT

While serving as U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia (1989–1992), Warren Zimmermann witnessed the beginning of that country's dissolution and tragic descent into violent nationalist conflict. In a compelling memoir that first appeared as an article in *Foreign Affairs*, the former ambassador explained how the Bush administration sent him to Belgrade with the mandate to support “at least loose unity while encouraging democratic development.” Not all U.S. politicians backed George Bush's policy. Senator Robert Dole and others in Congress believed that supporting unity bolstered the position of the autocratic Serbian Communist leader Slobodan Milosevic. Democracy could flourish, they argued, only if the republics were allowed to go their separate, nationalistically determined ways.

As it happened, unity was soon dealt a death blow. In a succession of republic-level elections held after the reformist prime minister of Yugoslavia, Ante Markovic, failed to win approval for a federal election, Yugoslavs “vented their pent-up frustrations by voting for nationalists who hammered on ethnic themes. . . . Ethnic parties won power in five of the six republics, all but Macedonia.” Disunion soon followed. But instead of bringing democracy and peace, it brought, at least to most of the former Yugoslavia, continued strongman rule, armed conflict, and “ethnic cleansing.”

In a larger sense, too, the Balkan debacle demonstrated the potentially disastrous consequences of even the noblest of foreign policy principles—in this case, the principle of national self-determination, first put forth by our own President Woodrow Wilson. A lively awareness of such complicated legacies lends special force and insight to Ambassador Zimmermann's contribution to this issue, a group portrait of the five larger-than-life figures most responsible for America's entry into the imperial game, beginning with the Spanish-American War. He brings the practitioner's experience to the business of scholarly reflection—another Wilsonian ideal, but one, we trust, with a far less ambiguous legacy.

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Detail from *Stone Patience* (1987), by Chuck Forsman, courtesy of the Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York, N.Y. Design by Adrienne Onderdonk Dudden.

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Searching for Consilience

The *WQ* is to be congratulated for calling attention to the problem of relativism ["Is Everything Relative?," *WQ*, Winter '98], but I am surprised by the editors' choice of participants in the symposium.

E. O. Wilson and his sociobiology seem to be presented by *WQ* as the best answer the intellectual world can offer to the problem. Paul R. Gross gives Wilson a resounding second while countering Richard Rorty's relativistic jabs at Wilson's universal determinism. The editors express reservations concerning Wilson's grandiose aspirations to define all things on the basis of genes, but propose ignoring that while accepting his particulars.

But aren't Wilson's work and his argument for "consilience" precisely a search for cosmic unity? To pick and choose from Wilson would seem to be very similar to Rorty's accepting Wilson's materialistic bias (reality is one big biological computer) while refusing to draw any consequences from it (nothing is determined by the way the computer works). To pick and choose without truly establishing the objective basis for choices— isn't that the problem of relativism?

More to the point, Wilson seems to be as much an ontological and ethical relativist as Rorty. His reductionist evolutionary determinism is just as relativistic and destructive of the truth about man, God, and Nature as Rorty's dogmatic, unprincipled pragmatism. On the basis of his own evolutionary psychology, wouldn't Wilson have to agree with Steven Pinker, who wrote in the *New York Times Magazine* (Nov. 2, 1997) that "brain circuitry," combined with "emotions that coax," excuses mothers who kill their newborns?

Wilson says that his work "rests ultimately on the hypothesis that all mental activity is material in nature." He draws out the consequences of this hypothesis, critical parts of which he rightly admits to be unproven, by proposing not-quite-certifiable forces (deterministic and evolutionary, within a mechanism involving genes, emotions, and "cultural" feedback) as the exclusive source of all individual and societal behavior. Thus he proposes a universal deterministic ethic à la Pinker and an

effective nihilism with regard to the ultimate status of the individual person and God.

Gross confirms that Wilson is a materialist, albeit of the type who says matter and spirit are the same uncertain, but determining, thing. Rorty affirms that he too is a materialist of this sort but objects to being pinned down by any universal rules, whether they be called materialistic or spiritualistic. Rorty is right in protesting Wilson's unproven deterministic rules, but he is wrong in being a materialist (or spiritualist) who ends up being just as deterministic in his proposals as Wilson.

Sadly, *WQ* has presented two similar forms of atheistic relativism as the only responses to the problem of relativism. Is this a sign of the myopia of today's dominant intellectual world, unconscious of logic and everything else because it exists under the cloud of two centuries of militant agnostic atheism?

I hope *WQ* will give voice to the rest of the world that speaks—and explains with scientific rigor—the liberating truth about the existence of God and His law, the true universals protective of man's dignity, which guide human beings freely to their transcendent perfection.

Rev. Lawrence A. Kutz
Washington, D.C.

I do not doubt that there are students, as well as adults, who are convinced that no one has the right to condemn the moral values of others, whether they be cannibals or Nazis or murderers. But it is as unfair to blame relativist philosophers for such a ridiculous view as it would be to blame absolutists for those who condemn everyone in the past, from Plato and Pericles to Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt, because they did not share our moral judgments about slavery or the equality of women ["The Many and the One," *WQ*, Winter '98].

Moral relativism recognizes that moral judgments are an inevitable part of human relationships, but it also recognizes that the standards against which we make our judgments are created by human beings living in a particular place at a particular time. Our "humanistic tradition," for example, is a product of the Western Enlightenment, and is not universal

Woodrow Wilson and His Circle

Robert W. Tucker

Europe on the Brink

Michael Portillo

C.J. Campbell: Running Out of Gas

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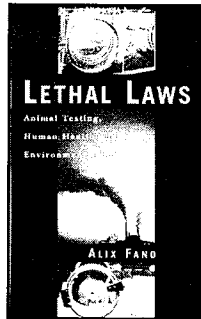
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in the same sense that the circulation of the blood is. Jay Tolson and other critics of relativism would, I believe, grant this obvious fact, but insist that our values are based on a nature that is common to all human beings for the pragmatic reason that such a pretense would give us greater confidence in convincing others of our values. But history gives us no evidence for this belief. Some of the most brutal dictatorships operated from a firm belief that their values were absolutely true, and yet they were defeated by democracies that never possessed such certainty. Pluralism about ultimate values has never prevented democratic societies from winning important battles against tyranny. And there is increasing evidence that democratic and other Enlightenment values, pervaded as they now are with relativism, are winning the hearts and minds of millions of people in nations where political and religious dogmas are seen as absolute.

*Lawrence Hyman
Ridgewood, N.J.*

Richard Rorty's reasoning is in many of its parts up to his high standards. But it seems to me that he now and then betrays an absence of

generosity that makes his essay a disappointing response to Edward O. Wilson's notion of concilience.

One naturally doesn't expect a self-proclaimed neopragmatist and nominalist of Rorty's ilk to agree with Wilson. But Rorty, as author of that most interesting perspectival approach to truth and reality that he calls final vocabulary, puts himself on dangerous ground and seems to vitiate many of his own premises when he dismisses Wilson's view of the correspondence theory of truth with "scorn." Reasoned doubt is a phrase I could have understood and sympathized with—but scorn? Surely, there's an element of self-betrayal in Rorty's use of so loaded a word. One begins to fear that for Rorty there might be, after all, only one absolute and TRUE final vocabulary and it is the Rortyan one.

*Thomas J. Cuddihy
Huntington Station, N.Y.*

The Not-Quite-Protestant Reformation

Dale F. Eickelman's "Inside the Islamic Reformation" [WQ, Winter '98] offers a stimulating but deeply flawed analysis of current developments in the Muslim world.

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First, it has long been known that fundamentalist Muslims are not uneducated provincials. Since 1980, when the Egyptian social scientist Saad Eddin Ibrahim published the results of his interviews with radical fundamentalists in Egyptian jails, we have known that they are typically youths "with high achievement and motivation, upwardly mobile, with science or engineering education, and from a normally cohesive family."

Second, Eickelman misunderstands the Protestant Reformation, which he presents only as "an effort to persuade people to understand and live by the basic teachings" of their religion. The enduring feature of the Reformation was to de-emphasize "works" (such as sacraments) in favor of "faith alone." Fundamentalist Islam moves in precisely the opposite direction, emphasizing the laws of Islam.

Third, Eickelman dismisses violent fundamentalism as a fringe phenomenon and focuses instead on some interesting and popular books. But those books have guided no governments or powerful opposition movements, whereas the allegedly fringe extremists (including such intellectuals as Ayatollah Khomeini, Hasan at-Turabi, and 'Ali Belhadj) have.

Let's call a spade a spade: the turn to Islam of the past quarter-century has been a catastrophe for Afghans, Pakistanis, Iranians, Sudanese, and Algerians especially, not to mention religious minorities across the Muslim world and the radicals' many Western victims. Like the left-wingers who once focused on the high literacy rates in the Soviet Union or the virtues of health care in Cuba, Eickelman shies away from the core evil of fundamentalist Islam and instead insists on displaying its alleged redeeming features. I regret that he does not see it as an ideological movement that thoroughly contradicts the values we as Americans hold dear; I wish he had condemned its aggressiveness and warned this country of its dangers.

*Daniel Pipes, Editor
Middle East Quarterly
Philadelphia, Pa.*

Dale Eickelman's article is very informative and timely. Unfortunately, it focuses almost exclusively on the general philosophical transformation taking place within Islam. But Islam's attitude on specific social issues is probably more important for most people who consider themselves Muslims.

Islam's two branches, Sunnism and Shiism, are separated by theological and institutional

differences. However, in a sociopolitical sense, Islam is undivided. It is a conservative monolith. If you happen to be a feminist, pro-choice, or gay, Islam has no place for you. In contrast, both Christianity and Judaism have liberal branches that welcome feminists, gays, and people who are pro-choice. The whole range of political or social views can be accommodated and represented. Since people who do not fit the mold of Islamic orthodoxy are excluded, many bright, talented, and intelligent people are forced to choose between atheism and conversion to other religions.

An Islamic Reformation is most likely to start in a country with an educated population, a high level of literacy, and a tradition of tolerance—a place such as Tatarstan, a secular republic within Russia with a population that is half Muslim, half Christian.

The problem with writers such as Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasrin is that they belong to a Westernized and educated elite that identifies itself with the West. They reject Islam instead of calling for its reformation. Reform-minded people in Tatarstan, by contrast, usually belong to the mainstream of society. Tatar religious reformers tend to be members of established and influential religious organizations and mosques.

To say that the Islamic Reformation is already taking place is premature. And it is a mistake to assume that relatively unprogressive Middle Eastern societies are becoming the epicenters of this profound social transformation.

Sabirzyan Badretdinov
New York, N.Y.

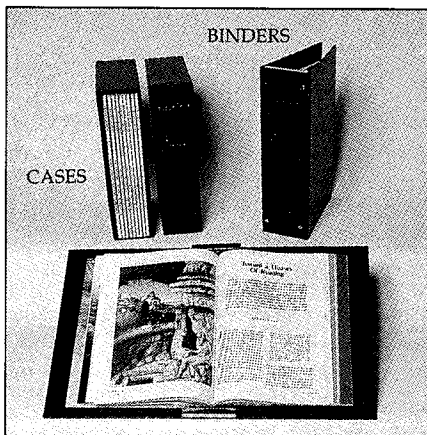
Crockett Controversy Continues

I read with both interest and dismay Michael Lind's article on the controversy surrounding the death of David Crockett. Lind concludes that the story of Crockett's execution on the orders of Mexican general Santa Anna following the Battle of the Alamo is more likely the product of the "contamination" of history by rumor than an accurate account with corroborating evidence. Unfortunately, Lind has contaminated his own argument. He confuses disparate documents while at the same time ignoring and misconstruing some of the most important corroborative data.

At the heart of Lind's argument is a paragraph written by Lieutenant Colonel José Enrique de la Peña, whose celebrated "diary" is the most prominent of the purported eyewitness accounts of Crockett's execution.



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Lind deems the paragraph critically important because in it, and thus ostensibly in the only major statement on the issue published during his lifetime, de la Peña described the Alamo executions but failed to mention Crockett by name. Lind identifies this paragraph as coming from *A Victim of Despotism*, a pamphlet published by de la Peña in 1839. The quoted paragraph, however, appears nowhere in the actual pamphlet, *Una Víctima del Despotismo*. Lind has actually quoted from a now-lost manuscript described by the Mexican editor who published a fragment of it in 1955 as an unpublished "hasty rebuttal" written by de la Peña in response to accusations made by Santa Anna against a rival. The absence of Crockett's name in an incomplete, unpublished, and apparently no-longer-extant manuscript written in the context of internal Mexican political rivalries is simply a nonfact. It proves nothing.

That Lind was ill-prepared to enter, much less to resolve, the debates over historical evidence that have been raging over the past several years, may also be seen in his handling of the most important single piece of evidence, the "Dolson letter."

George M. Dolson was a Texan officer who served as an interpreter at a prisoner-of-war camp for Mexican soldiers located on Galveston Island. On July 18, 1836, Dolson was asked to translate the statement of a Mexican officer who had witnessed the executions at the Alamo. The officer described Crockett's death, giving details of the scene that were confirmed the following year when Santa Anna's personal secretary, Ramón Martínez Caro, published an account of the incident (though Caro mentioned no prisoners' names).

The following day, Dolson wrote to his brother in Michigan, detailing the Mexican officer's story. Dolson's letter was reproduced in a Detroit newspaper in September 1836, but went unnoticed by historians until 1960. But Dolson's letter was not, as Lind claims, "the first American newspaper account identifying Crockett as one of the executed prisoners." That distinction belongs to another letter written from the same prisoner-of-war camp on June 9, almost six weeks earlier, and published anonymously in several American newspapers in the summer of 1836.

Lind concludes that the Dolson letter contains only "folklore"—its story an "erroneous rumor," one of dozens circulating in the months after the fall of the Alamo. Yet the strik-

ingly similar stories in the two letters include details of the killings not publicly revealed by Santa Anna's secretary until 1837. Their graphic content is hardly "folklore," and they offer strong corroboration of de la Peña's story.

Though Lind accuses Crockett's denigrators of having failed to read the testimony of their star witnesses, it is Lind who is guilty of this offense. He has used Carmen Perry's flawed translation (identified as such in the historical literature) of de la Peña's description of Crockett's death, and then drawn tainted conclusions from her errors. He has obviously not read *Una Víctima del Despotismo* in the original, nor compared the English and Spanish texts for accuracy. And in overlooking the Galveston letter of June 9, he has shown his unfamiliarity with widely known evidence.

Though there are other serious errors in Lind's piece, the flagrant lapses detailed above should caution his readers against uncritically accepting his conclusion that the story of David Crockett's execution at the Alamo can be dismissed as mere "folklore."

James E. Crisp

Department of History

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Raleigh, N.C.

Thank you and Michael Lind for bringing the controversy over Crockett's death and the alleged de la Peña "diary" to a larger audience.

There is a slight error on page 53 where Lind gives a description of the executions at the Alamo, allegedly by de la Peña, and cites *A Victim of Despotism* as the source. The passage cited is not from that document. It appears in one of the appendixes to Jesús Sánchez Garza's book *La Rebelión de Texas* and is attributed to de la Peña writing under the pseudonym "Scipion" in 1839. *A Victim of Despotism* does not mention Crockett, executions at the Alamo, or the Battle of the Alamo. However, Lind's point is still made and perhaps reinforced. Why wasn't Crockett mentioned in either of these documents as he is in the alleged "diary"?

Lind also could have mentioned that there is no record of the alleged de la Peña "diary" before 1955. In the process of it being published in Mexico and in the United States, it being acquired by John Peace and being placed at the University of Texas at San Antonio, there is no evidence that anyone ever took steps to authenticate it. Sánchez Garza's book was self-published in Mexico, so it never



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had to undergo the scrutiny of an editor or publisher. It contains erroneous information, such as the description of Travis's death. It contains passages that resemble those of other documents, and it contains anachronistic phrases such as "crimes against humanity."

William Groneman
Malverne, N.Y.

Michael Lind replies:

I am grateful to James Crisp and William Groneman for identifying several errors I made as a result of relying on secondary sources and too-hasty revision. As Groneman observes, my mistakes, inexcusable as they are, do not invalidate my assessment of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two sides in the debate about how David Crockett died at the Alamo.

As I argued in my essay, the greatest weakness of the execution theory is the absence of plausible firsthand accounts by Mexican participants that identify Crockett as one of the half-dozen prisoners executed after the Battle of the Alamo at Santa Anna's order. (As I noted, there has never been any doubt that the executions took place.) Even Professor Crisp, in conversation, admits that the account of the death of William Barret Travis in the controversial de la Peña memoir is unbelievable—a fact that undermines the credibility of de la Peña's account of Crockett's death.

Crisp wisely avoids relying on the de la Peña text in order to emphasize the Dolson letter, which I acknowledged to be among "the strongest potential corroborating evidence for the execution theory." Crisp can also make a case for finding corroboration in a letter from Galveston on June 9 first published in the *New York Courier and Enquirer* (which I accidentally misdated, on the basis of a reprint in a Kentucky newspaper last July). We have, then, two secondhand accounts of Crockett's execution originating in the Galveston prisoner-of-war camp more than three months after the battle—Dolson's account, attributed to Santa Anna's aide Colonel Juan Almonte, and an account by an anonymous American attributed to an unnamed Mexican officer.

When we turn to the firsthand 1837 account of the executions by Santa Anna's secretary, Ramón Martínez Caro, however, none of the executed prisoners are identified. Crisp claims that "though Caro mentioned no prisoners' names," Caro's account can be regarded as corroboration of the letters from Galveston. But this is a bit of a stretch. The fact of the exe-

cutions was familiar on both sides soon after the fall of the Alamo. The question is how the alleged Mexican informants would know one detail in particular—David Crockett's identity.

According to the accounts in the Dolson letter and the anonymous June 9 letter to the *Courier and Enquirer*, Crockett did not identify himself to his captors by speaking; he was identified by sight. Dolson writes: "Colonel Crockett was in the rear, had his arms folded, and appeared bold as the lion as he passed my informant [Almonte]. Santa Anna's interpreter knew Colonel Crockett, and said to my informant, 'the one behind is the famous Crockett.'" (The *Courier and Enquirer* letter does not explain how Crockett was identified at all.) Who was this interpreter who knew Crockett by sight? It cannot have been San Antonio mayor Francisco Ruiz, who later said that he found Crockett's body after Santa Anna ordered him to identify the garrison's leaders among the dead. Even if the Dolson letter is correct in every detail, the case for Crockett's execution rests on the ability of an unnamed Mexican interpreter to identify Crockett on sight and to point this out to Juan Almonte—who, curiously enough, never mentioned the incident in his diary of the Texas campaign or later during his long public career.

In his introduction to the recent edition of the de la Peña book, Crisp argues that the conclusion that Santa Anna knew that Crockett was among the prisoners is "not supported by the original text." In other words, Santa Anna did not know that Crockett was standing before him. Did Santa Anna's interpreter whisper his identification of Crockett to Almonte in a voice so low that Santa Anna did not hear him? If so, his failure to inform Santa Anna of Crockett's identity, while furtively spreading the news to others, would make this mysterious person the most incompetent interpreter in history.

Crisp objects to my description of this version of Crockett's death as "folklore." Perhaps I should have called it hearsay evidence, which appears extremely weak when compared to the eloquent silence on the subject of Crockett's execution in the accounts of the battle and its aftermath written by Almonte, Caro, Ruiz, and Santa Anna himself. If I were the lawyer for the prosecution, I would introduce the Dolson letter and the *Courier and Enquirer* account as Exhibits A and B, and I would call Professor Crisp to the stand as an expert witness. If I were the jury, however, I would find Santa Anna not guilty of the execution of David Crockett.

FINDINGS

Dread U.

Antioch College, which created a controversial “sexual offense prevention policy” in 1993, apparently did not check its reforming zeal at the boudoir door. David Grann of the *New Republic* (March 16, 1998), paid the Yellow Springs, Ohio, campus a visit after Antioch students disrupted the Clinton administration’s February national town meeting on Iraq. He found himself in a strange, politically correct dystopia. “You can’t just come here,” one irony-free protester tells him on the telephone. “You have to go through official processes to respect our school and our rights.”

Visiting Antioch, Grann discovers, “is a lot like getting into Iraq.” He is required to give 24-hour advance notice of his visit, and the school’s official “Survival Guide” requires that “media representatives” have an “escort” at all times. Bending the rule, he is taken to the campus security office, where “I am booked and processed and handed a big white sign which I’m supposed to wear prominently to warn people of my presence.”

Grann finds “public” meetings that are “closed to the media” and an intellectual environment closed to discussion. A student leader who declares that the United States wouldn’t consider bombing Iraq if its people were white Europeans is dumbfounded when Grann suggests that World War II offers some contrary evidence. A hush falls over the room. The student “pushes his face up close to mine. ‘Which side are you on, anyway?’”

The Antioch campus is divided into zones, reports Grann: “queer zones, womyn zones, quiet zones, smoking-tolerance zones. . . . Each zone is sacrosanct: a heterosexual, for example, is not supposed to enter the queer zone.” Everything reminds Grann of the school’s sex code, which requires verbal consent at every stage of a sexual encounter. “There is, it seems, in every human connection a

potential for danger, for violence, for annihilation. . . . Free love has turned into love of order.”

The Incredible Shrinking Cubicle

If the walls seem to be closing in on you at work, count it as another “revenge effect” of technology. Since 1980, office space per worker has actually increased, from 142 square feet to 155 square feet. But the size of offices themselves has shrunk. What ate the space? Technology, for one, writes Peter Linneman, a professor of real estate, finance, and public policy at the University of Pennsylvania, in the *Wharton Real Estate Review* (Fall 1997). All those computers and copying machines and videoconferencing facilities take up a lot of room.



The professionalization of office work has also had an impact, Linneman observes. Gone are the legions of clerks and secretaries occupying small pieces of office turf. Now there are more managers and relatively few support workers. Linneman explains it this way: “If formerly two support workers used 100 square feet each in conjunction with one professional using 200 feet, . . . now two professionals use 175 square feet each in conjunction with one support worker using 75 square feet, [and] average space per worker rises.”

Linneman expects office rents to soar in the next decade, but he doubts that office workers will lose any more space. People simply won’t work in certain environments. In fact, he points out, it would cost \$6,000 a year at most to carve out an additional 200 square feet of office space for a valued employee—a good negotiating point the next time the walls close in.

Articles of Faith

The mind abhors a vacuum, and into the one created by the expulsion of religion from the public schools has rushed “the environment.” With its own cosmology, objects of worship (the rain forests, the whales), and sense of the sacred, environmentalism is a faith that most Americans say they embrace. Whatever its virtues, however, it can’t pretend to be a religious system, as Robert Royal of the Ethics and Public Policy Institute argued recently in the institute’s *American Character* (Winter 1997). Royal quotes the novelist Walker Percy: “Show me a human being trying to live like an organism in an environment and I will show you one of the most screwed up creatures on Earth.” Still, public schools must look far afield to fill the religious vacuum, and as historian Walter A. McDougall suggests in the *American Scholar* (Winter 1998), the environment is not the only possible field: “If honestly taught, history is the only academic subject that inspires humility. Theology used to do that, but in our present era—and in public schools especially—history must do the work of theology. . . . Students whose history teachers discharge their intellectual and civic responsibilities will acquire a sense of the contingency of all human endeavor, the gaping disparity between motives and consequences in all human action, and how little control human beings have over their own lives and those of others.”

The Boss Canary?

Interviewed in *DoubleTake* (Spring 1998), rock superstar Bruce (“The Boss”) Springsteen also alludes to Walker Percy, citing him in explaining why, despite his fans’ displeasure, he often writes reflective songs about ordinary people. Springsteen says he shares Percy’s view of “the moral and human purpose of writing,” which the novelist explained “by using that analogy of the canary that goes down into the mine with the miners: when the canary starts squawking and finally keels over, the miners figure it’s time to come up and think things over a little bit. That’s the writer—the 20th-century writer is the canary for the larger society.”

Dress for Success

Clothes have been much on the minds of the editors of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* lately, and we don’t mean caps and gowns. They’re thinking about things like men in electric-blue polyester suits and, uh, well, taffeta dresses. The owner of that first bit of ’90s finery, University of Illinois English professor Michael Bérubé, quips in one article that “dressing fashionably in academia is like clearing the four-foot high jump.” And it’s clear from the article that even at that level there won’t be many contestants—the usual blend of indifference and snobbery (only *post-modern* polyester permitted) prevails. Another *Chronicle* article reports the emergence of a tiny transgendered professoriate—as well as the inevitable self-expressive subdiscipline, transgender studies. A debate to look forward to: how should transgendered profs, especially those who have undergone sex-change operations, be counted in affirmative action tallies?

From HOV to HOT

Pity the planners, who must watch as even their most elegant ideas find ways to go awry. Consider high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, a masterful plot to lure motorists into car pools, thus cutting traffic congestion and air pollution. Now it appears that HOV lanes are going the way of the monorail. One study shows that car-pooling declined by 19 percent during the 1980s, reports staff writer Ellen Perlman in *Governing* (Feb. 1998). The number of four-person car pools dropped by more than 50 percent. The states are pulling back; now two people in a car qualifies as “high occupancy” on some roads. In California, high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes are on the rise: pay a toll and nobody cares how many bodies you’ve got in your car. The planners sneer at these “Lexus lanes” and complain that HOV lanes were never supposed to be *added* to highways; they were intended to take over existing highway lanes, leaving solo drivers little choice but to car pool—a plan with perhaps too much master in its masterfulness.

AT ISSUE

Out of Bounds

The first time I saw the countryside I was six, and nauseous from the half-day drive to get there. The woods, the trails, the sky to the horizon, the pheasant in flight, the snake in retreat, the horse in motion, the chipmunks in and out of piled New Hampshire walls—all were novel, but they worked no magic. Why sit on a porch when you can sit on a stoop? I missed Brooklyn, and the familiar landscape of the neighborhood. This was perverse, no doubt, and showed ingratitude to the good parents who had saved all year to provide two weeks of absence from the city, but it was conclusive. Without being old enough to make an argument, I had taken a side in the enduring city versus country debate, and there I have remained ever since, on concrete.

Two thousand years ago, the Roman poet Horace gave the argument to mice, at the end of one of his *Satires*. A mouse from the city visits a mouse in the country and insists that life is too short to be spent in rustic deprivation. The city awaits, with its endless easy pleasures. The country mouse is persuaded and leaves home with his friend. The two crawl under the city wall—pass a decisive boundary between the old condition and the new—and enter a great house, where they nibble like kings on the remains of a fancy meal. It's all as promised, until barking dogs interrupt the dinner and scare the mice off their seats and out of their wits. "Who needs this?" cries the country mouse, in flight back to the fields.

The Horatian fable is a *locus classicus* for the debate, which was already old at the time. Country life is hard but simple and honest; the lush delights of the city are tasted at your risk. The city/country debate is not about geography, of course. It's about the values nurtured or denied by the geography and the patterns of association it entails. The physical separation between the two worlds is a ruse; neither can quite let go of the other.

Horace's philosophical mice, for example, borrow the diction of epic poetry and speak with a colloquial grandiloquence that is quite new to Latin literature. Poets don't show off like that for farmers. Horace's heart may side with the country, but his wit is of the forum. The matter is woods and streams; the manner is couches and baths.

The city and the country suggest disputants who face in opposite directions even as they lean back to back, in antagonistic support. Remove one, and the other totters. A New Hampshire house borrowed for summers 50 years ago had its own take on the grudging alliance. The house was so true to its origins that no plumbing breached the walls or floors. The out-facility fell short of a Dogpatch ideal, for it was reachable by covered portico, but it was out, all right, however pretentiously tethered. Yet even in that piney chamber—*et in Arcadia!*—the city and its wickedness staked a claim. *New Yorker* covers and *Esquire* art lined the interior walls, floor to ceiling. Was their consignment to that fundamental place a rough rustic judgment on city ways and lingerie and tuxes? Or were those vibrant, colored rows of leering, mustachioed Arnos and recumbent Vargas ladies a talisman against despair, windows on a better life elsewhere—dear God, anywhere?

The sentiment persists that the values acquired in the country and in small towns are superior to those acquired in a metropolis. Was that ever true? The values people fret about are not peculiar to geography. They do not reside in soil or stone. The bounds of a Brooklyn neighborhood at midcentury were drawn as narrowly and etched as clearly as those of a prairie village, and the values learned on a grid of streets needed no empty plain to endorse them. You lived in the neighborhood, not in New York City, which might as well have required a passport. The grocery store and the pharmacy were across



the street, the movie theater around the corner, Catholics on this side of the avenue, Jews in that building on the other. School and church were six blocks from home, and the library seven, at the outer perimeter of normal travel. Within a radius of perhaps fourteen hundred feet from where you slept, you made your acquaintance with the world, and from that careful, elemental circuit you drew values that were universal—about the stresses and satisfactions of social order, about friendship and loyalty (and mistrust and betrayal too), about irreconcilable beliefs, about the routine practice of generosity when no one had much of anything to share, about temptations in scale with opportunities.

The same Horace who set those mice in motion wrote elsewhere of human restlessness and of how we fool ourselves into thinking we will change our lives if we merely change the patch of sky we live beneath. We forget that character trumps geography. The playing field is not the city's streets or the country's expanse, but the mind, which makes its own landscape. The struggle with circumstance is first waged there, as Hamlet ruefully acknowledged when he was losing the fight: "I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams."

If the bounds between city and country ever were absolute, they surely are no longer. The dubious enthusiasms of the city now bleed inexorably into the farthest corners of the land—and are persuasive. These are not the innocent encroachments of old: small-town kids needing Broadway, farmers longing for a brush with big-town sin. Technology and its grand reach have ended the protections of distance. The technology sees no space. Beside barns and windmills and corrals, antennas once the size of moons, and now of dinner plates, suck the common culture from the air. Valleys once

the ideal concealment for UFOs are now the target of ISPs (Internet service providers). The rage to connect, to uplink and download, to surf though there's no sea, to peer at a screen's flat surface till it opens onto infinite contours, has closed the distance between any remote there and everywhere else. Important bounds are going, the ones that were never geographical—not the bridgeable distinction between urban and rural but the divide between virtues that enlarge life and values that diminish it. Consider, for example, how many Americans have been persuaded to accept celebrity itself as a credential and an accomplishment. It no longer matters that you are a fool—or a killer or a cheat—so long as you are, ah, a famous fool. In the creeping homogenization of values, and not the healthiest values at that, in the blurring of difference encouraged by the technology, lie danger and, worse, dullness.

We have banished former principles of division in American society, and good riddance to most of them—no tears for the grim once-and-for-all sorting by birth and color and belief and class. But for other lost distinctions perhaps we should feel regret. We have blurred the division between what is honorable behavior and what is not, for example, even as we have made it newly absolute through recourse to notions of "compartmentalized character." Character, it now seems, can be diced up, or julienned. This new tolerance, world weary and worldly wise, has Americans acting like cartoon Parisians. As folks now say, with shoulders shrugged, in Kansas, "*Eh bien*, things occur."

No longer inclined to discern, or to credit, the old social and moral borders, we are reluctant to draw the new. Have we forgotten that only out of bounds—set, respected, crossed, extended, abolished—can one make a measured life?

—James M. Morris

THE REVIVAL OF RURAL AMERICA

Something is stirring in the American countryside. The signs can be as subtle as a thickening of traffic on two-lane country roads or as startling as the sudden appearance of stark new subdivisions, retirement communities, and trailer parks on mountainsides and pastureland. Shiny, aluminum-clad poultry-processing plants, small factories, and Miracle Miles now dot many rural landscapes. After a century of decline, rural America is experiencing a sudden influx of people and wealth.



Half Dome and Mt. Rincon with California-style Houses (1987), by Roger Brown

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The Rural Rebound

by *Kenneth M. Johnson and Calvin L. Beale*

For most of the 20th century, the story of rural America was an epic of decline. American agriculture prospered, but mechanization and the changing economics of farming drove millions from the land. In the smaller towns and cities, economic opportunity dried up. The rural exodus was a dominant theme in American life and culture, distilled in images of the Okies' flight from the heartland during the 1930s and the great postwar African-American migration from the rural South to Chicago, Detroit, New York, and other northern cities, as well as in novels and films such as *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Last Picture Show*. In a sense, the roots of the decline go even deeper than the current century. In this land that long proudly called itself a nation of farmers, the rate of urban population growth actually began outstripping that in the countryside during the 1820s, the decade when John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson occupied the White House.

Now all of this may be about to change. A variety of powerful social and economic forces appears to be reversing patterns that have prevailed in the United States for a century or longer. They are pushing and pulling significant numbers of Americans into the areas beyond the metropolitan fringes. The first signs of rural turnaround came in the 1970s, when population in the nation's sparsely populated regions suddenly jumped 14 percent, lifted by an unprecedented influx of newcomers and returnees from metropolitan areas. While the news media were quick to herald this "return to the land," some scholars, skeptical that such long-standing trends could be so suddenly altered, dismissed the 1970s experience as a fluke. Then the devastating farm crisis of 1980–86, along with a wave of deindustrialization that hurt



New settlers arrive in Oregon

textiles and other rural industries, put a stop to in-migration. The rural population still managed to grow slightly, but only because rural women bore enough babies to offset out-migration and deaths. In rural America, the 1980s looked a lot like the earlier part of the 20th century: more people moved out than moved in.

But fresh evidence from the 1990s suggests that the 1980s were the anomaly, not the 1970s. Our research shows that between 1990 and 1996, the population of America's rural counties grew by nearly three million, or 5.9 percent. In July 1996, about 53.8 million Americans, or just over 20 percent of the U.S. population, lived in areas officially classified as "nonmetropolitan," here termed *rural*. (To qualify as metropolitan, according to criteria established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, a county must include an urban area with a population of at least 50,000. Surrounding counties within its orbit, as determined by factors such as commuting patterns, are also classified as metropolitan. There were 837 metropolitan counties in 1993, grouped in more than 300 metropolitan areas.) It turned out that once the unprecedented economic disruptions of the 1980s subsided, growth resumed in the countryside. During the first half of the 1990s, for example, rural areas enjoyed a faster rate of job growth than metropolitan areas did. The rural rebound is for real.

The migrants of the 1990s have settled in the Mountain West, the Upper Great Lakes, the Ozarks, parts of the South, and rural areas of the Northeast. Widespread population losses have occurred only in the Great Plains, the western Corn Belt, and the Mississippi Delta. The counties that have benefited least from the rural revival are generally those that have remained most economically dependent on the two most traditional rural pursuits, farming and mining.

What the United States experienced between 1970 and 1996—and is continuing to experience, according to recently released Census Bureau data—is population “deconcentration.” People are gradually moving away from larger, more densely settled places toward lightly settled areas. This is not simply a reversal. Americans are not returning to farming, nor even in very large numbers to small towns, much as some may dream of it. They are scattering across the landscape in “farmettes,” trailer parks, houses along country roads, and even in subdivisions much like those in suburban America. The new arrivals are a mixed lot: retirees, blue-collar workers seeking jobs in the new factories, “lone eagle” professionals using the new information technologies to conduct business from remote locations, disenchanted urbanites seeking refuge from urban life, and many others. For the most part, they are attracted to rural areas by a desire for what they see as a better way of life. Economic necessity was a powerful factor in the earlier rural exodus. Now economic and technological change is allowing many Americans to choose where they will live.

Early in the 20th century, a clear-sighted observer might have discerned the beginnings of the trend toward suburbanization that would, along with the rural exodus, define so much of national life in the ensuing decades. The emptying out of the countryside, the swelling of the cities, the rise of the suburbs, and the decline of the urban cores as centers of population and economic activity all define important parts of the economic and social history of the 20th century. Will deconcentration prove to be as powerful a force in the next century? A hundred years from now, will we see a nation of people and businesses dispersed across the landscape? It is simply too soon to tell. Nobody can predict how strong or long lasting the current of movement toward rural America will be. Yet no matter how far the current carries and what it may mean for the nation as a whole, it is already plain that rural America itself will, in some important ways, never be the same.

Rural America is a deceptively simple term for a remarkably diverse collection of places and things: vast swaths of plains planted in wheat and corn, auto plants scattered around the outskirts of towns strung along Interstate 75 in Kentucky and Ohio, ultramodern

> KENNETH M. JOHNSON is a demographer and professor of sociology at Loyola University in Chicago. CALVIN L. BEALE is senior demographer of the Economic Research Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the author of *A Taste of the Country* (1990). Copyright © 1998 by Kenneth M. Johnson and Calvin L. Beale.

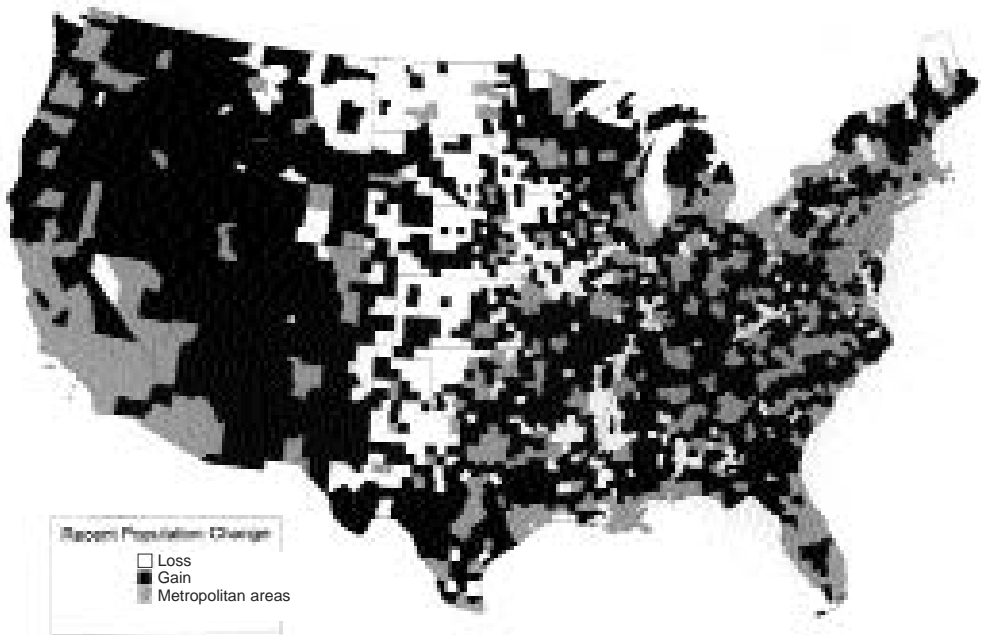


Corporate America is finding new homes in the countryside, especially as executive “lifestyle” preferences are weighed along with economic factors in deciding where to build plants and offices.

catalog distribution centers on former country lanes, small villages on sparkling northern lakes, the cool, mountainous timberland of the Pacific Northwest, and the flat and humid vastness of Florida’s Everglades. Certainly no single county among the 2,304 classified as nonmetropolitan in 1993 has felt the influence of all the powerful forces driving the rural revival. But most of the counties experiencing growth in the 1990s have one very important characteristic in common. Dickinson County, Kansas, is as good a place to look for it as any.

During the 1980s, this Great Plains farming county, with 515,000 acres of wheat, sorghum, and hay, the boyhood home of Dwight D. Eisenhower, was hit harder than most other rural counties by the farm crisis, with its soaring interest rates, overproduction, and falling crop prices. Despite its advantages—a county seat, Abilene, that is a service and retail center with 6,000 people, and an interstate highway that runs right through the county’s middle—Dickinson suffered a six percent population loss during the decade. Yet between 1990 and 1996 the county’s population grew by five percent. What happened? In 1994, the Russell Stover company gave the county an enormous lift when it opened a sizable new candy factory that employs some 600 workers making Whitman’s samplers, pecan delights, and other treats. Land was

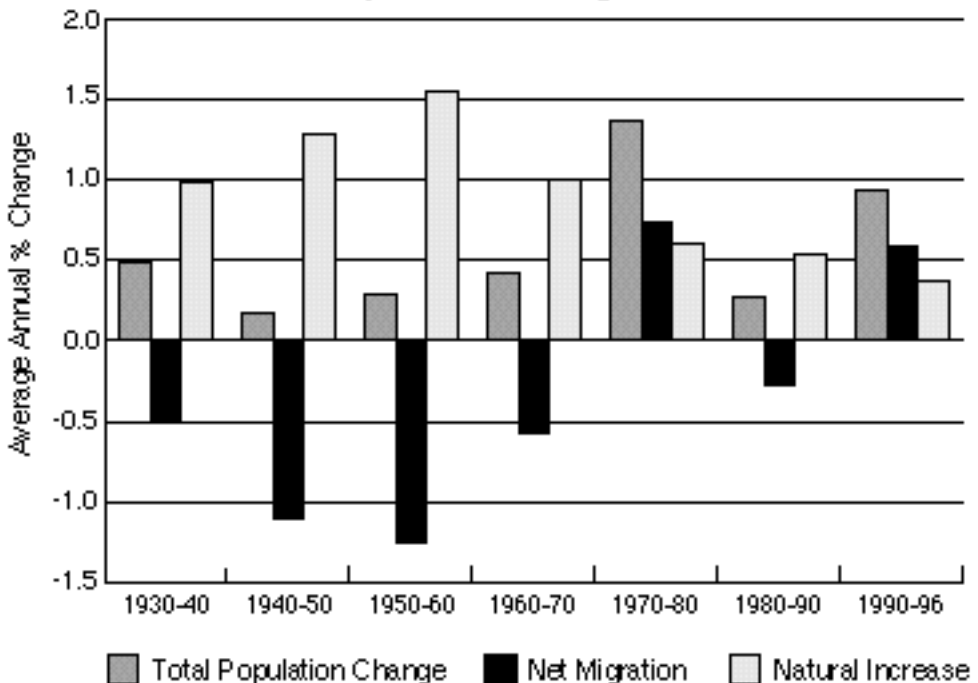
Where the Growth Is (Population Change in Rural Areas, 1990–96)



Source: Prepared by the authors from Census Bureau data

The benefits of the rural rebound are distributed unevenly. Places blessed with natural beauty—lakes, mountains, oceanfront—have attracted a disproportionate share of the recent rural migrants. The graph below emphasizes how unusual rural in-migration has been during the 20th century.

Rural Population Change, 1930–1996



Source: Authors' calculations from Census Bureau data

Behind the rural revival is a potent blend of economic, social, and technological forces.

cheap, the work force attractive, and access to I-70 easy. The city, county, and state governments all threw in tax incentives. Workers drawn by jobs at the Stover plant were joined by retirees from surrounding farms and small towns, attracted by the relatively superior diversions, services, and health care that Abilene offers.

What Dickinson and other growing rural counties have in common is net in-migration. Through much of this century, most rural areas that managed to increase their population did so on the strength of relatively high rural birthrates. Farm families and small-town residents simply had more children than their big-city cousins, and enough babies were born to offset the constant departure of working-age people for the bright lights and job opportunities of the cities. But over the last two decades, rural women have been bearing fewer children, as the trends that influenced their urban counterparts—rising levels of education and paid employment outside the home, as well as delayed marriage—have reached into the countryside. The fertility levels of the two groups are now virtually indistinguishable.* The areas that are growing now are doing so chiefly because fewer local people are leaving and more outsiders are choosing to move in.

During the early 1990s, rural America gained 1.8 million inhabitants through in-migration. Between 1990 and 1996, it enjoyed a higher rate of in-migration than the nation's metropolitan areas, 3.6 percent versus 1.8 percent. Only once before in recent memory has that occurred: during the population turnaround of the 1970s. This voluntary movement of people is the great unifying factor behind the revival of rural America during the past quarter-century.

Driving the revival is a potent blend of economic, social, and technological forces. Improvements in communications technology and transportation have sharply reduced the “friction of distance” that once hobbled rural areas in the competition with the great metropolitan centers for people and commerce. In practical terms, rural areas are now much less isolated than they were only a few decades ago. Satellite technology, fax machines, and the Internet are among the most familiar aids, rendering distance virtually irrelevant in the transmission of information. Other sources of change are less obvious. Decades of steady state and federal investment in roads and airports—building and widening of highways, runway paving, subsidies for equipment pur-

*This fertility decline, coupled with the aging of the rural population (which reduced the number of couples of childbearing age while increasing the number of older adults), left an estimated 600 nonmetropolitan counties with more deaths than births between 1990 and '96, the highest number in history.

chases—have also made an enormous difference. At the same time, congestion has increasingly vexed the nation's large metropolitan areas, reducing the value of one of the cities' great competitive advantages: proximity. Catalog retailer Lands' End is able to operate a huge national distribution headquarters in Dodgeville, Wisconsin, a small town west of Madison, in part because the state government upgraded U.S. Route 18-151 to a four-lane divided highway during the 1980s. In Michigan's Upper Peninsula and other once-remote places, Federal Express trucks now regularly deliver packages down long dirt roads. With the assurance that crucial parts and supplies can be secured overnight, small-factory owners can now set up shop virtually anywhere.

Such advances have freed businesses to light out for the hinterlands and all their perceived advantages: lower labor and land costs, the absence of unions, what many executives see as the superior work ethic of the rural labor force, and economic incentive programs offered by state and local governments.

Missouri's Mercer and Sullivan counties tell one tale of deconcentration. They adjoin one another near the Iowa border in the southern Corn Belt, where, thanks to poor soil and sloping terrain that promotes soil erosion, farm productivity lags behind that in the best midwestern farming areas. The land has never generated enough wealth to sustain a strong local economy. The result has been an extraordinarily prolonged population decline. Mercer County's population peaked at 14,700 in 1900 and then commenced a long and steady fall to only 3,700 in 1990—a devastating decline of three-fourths. Sullivan County lost 58 percent of its population, reaching 6,300 in 1990.

Then, in the early 1990s, an entrepreneurial area firm called Premium Standard Farms, armed with investment capital and encouraged by a strong market for pork, opened a large new hog-raising and pork-processing business. Premium has its headquarters building in Mercer County and a packing plant in Sullivan County. Vast numbers of hogs are produced in highly efficient confinement-feeding operations, slaughtered, packed, and shipped—all of which generates a large number of jobs. And the workers have come. Census Bureau estimates for Mercer County in July 1996 indicated that its population had spurted by 7.5 percent, while Sullivan had recovered by 5.1 percent. The result: a local housing shortage that has fueled residential construction and forced some workers to commute from other counties.

This kind of story is being repeated in various forms all over rural America, as business and industry expand and move into new areas, especially in the South and, more recently, the Midwest. Between 1985 and 1993, rural areas increased their share of the nation's manufacturing jobs from 20 percent to 23 percent. Indeed, since 1960, manufacturing has supplied more rural jobs than farming. It now accounts for about one-sixth of rural employment.

The roster of rural industries is varied, including poultry processors,

clothing manufacturers, auto parts makers, and manufacturers of computer equipment. Some of these enterprises are relatively small and self-contained, but others are big enough to generate considerable ripple effects. In the archipelago of auto assembly plants that Toyota and other carmakers have built along I-75, for example, the factories don't stockpile parts but use just-in-time manufacturing techniques that effectively require many suppliers to have their own plants less than 100 miles away. Workers at these plants then carry their paychecks home to communities perhaps as much as 60 miles distant, where the money may find its way to local retailers and other businesses.

One very special sort of “industry” has provided a surprising lift in many rural areas and small towns. More than 50 non-metropolitan counties that have rebounded from population losses in the 1980s have been helped by the boom in prison construction spawned by the nationwide crackdown on crime. In Tennessee's Lake County, a declining Delta cotton-farming area, a new state prison that opened in 1992 brought more than 1,000 inmates (whom the federal census counts as residents) and 350 jobs. Secure, well-paid prison jobs are highly prized by people in places such as Lake County, but it is questionable whether prisons will give rural communities a foundation for longer-term growth.

Important as economic and technological forces have been in fostering the rural revival of the past quarter-century, it would be a mistake to see them as the sole driving force. National prosperity, job growth, and the declining “friction of distance” have combined to give many more Americans the freedom to choose where to live, and it should come as no surprise that many prefer the countryside. Through the decades of exodus from the hinterlands to the cities—much of it more a matter of economic necessity than choice—many Americans retained a strong attachment to the rural ideal. It was this desire for a retreat from big-city strains and hazards, the desire to enjoy nature and live in a community where one can be known and make a difference, that made the suburbs grow, and now that technological and economic change allow, it may continue to benefit rural areas. In a 1995 Roper survey, for example, 41 percent (up from 35 percent in 1989) of those polled said that they would like to live in a small town or rural area within 10 years.

Among the most important contributors to rural growth are the most footloose people of all—retirees, who are free to go almost anywhere their pension and Social Security checks can reach them. They are drawn to areas in the Sunbelt, coastal regions, parts of the West, and the Upper Great Lakes, places that offer beautiful scenery or recreational attractions, from lakes to ski slopes and golf courses. Of the 190 rural counties classified as “retirement destination” counties (i.e. those with a history of large influxes of retirees), all gained population between 1990 and 1996, and 99 percent experienced net in-migration.

Most other rural migrants are still tied to jobs. They include older people who have cut back their work week and the growing number of

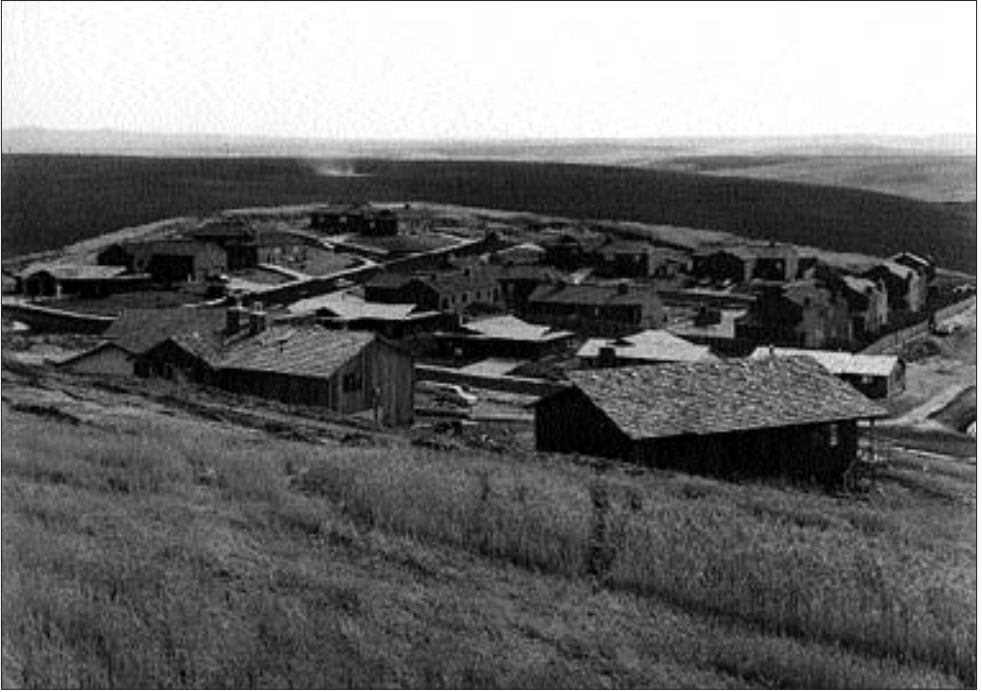
working-age people who have been freed by new communications technologies and changes in the organization of work to move far from major cities, or who perhaps need to show up at the office only a few days a week. Those are not primarily the “lone eagles” in pressed flannel shirts we see in magazine ads making multimillion-dollar deals by cell phone as they gaze at distant mountain peaks, but computer consultants, editors, and other middle-class workers. Still other rural migrants are returning to areas where they were born, now that jobs are available, wanting to raise their children in the kind of atmosphere they enjoyed as youngsters.

These sorts of people account for the rapid growth of 285 non-metropolitan counties we classify as “recreational” destinations. Included among these are forested lake counties of the North Woods, winter sports areas of the West, and the foothills of the Appalachians and Ozarks, where mountain vistas and golf courses abound. Ninety-three percent of them grew between 1990 and 1996, with a large majority (88 percent) enjoying net in-migration.

Chaffee County, Colorado, set in the Arkansas River valley and flanked by the high peaks of the Rockies, is a good example. The county suffered during the 1980s when a large molybdenum mine shut down—the metal is used in the fabrication of high-tech alloys for military aircraft and other products—taking a lot of good jobs with it. From 1990 to 1996, however, the population rose by 15.7 percent, thanks largely to the arrival of newcomers fleeing growing congestion and dense settlement in Denver and elsewhere in the Front Range of the Rockies. The county also attracted workers employed in the nearby resort towns of Vail and Breckenridge but forced out by rising real estate prices. Some of the more affluent Chaffee newcomers have launched new businesses or bought out older proprietors. A number of small-scale manufacturing plants have come on line: a toolmaker, a manufacturer of archery equipment, and an assembler of first-aid kits.

Recreation brings many to counties such as Chaffee, supplying a big share of jobs and income: motels, restaurants, and recreation provide jobs and attract visitors, whose dollars in turn create more jobs in construction, retail, and services. In Grand County, Utah, in the shadow of Arches National Park, the county government was more successful than local leaders had dreamed—and perhaps more than they had wished—when it decided to promote the area as a tourist destination for mountain bikers. Between 1990 and 1996, the population jumped by 18.2 percent, and restaurants, motels, and other businesses sprouted to serve the vacationers. Quite a comeback from the 20 percent drop in population Grand County experienced in the 1980s, when the uranium mines shut down.

The boundary between the nation’s metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas can be blurry at times. Some counties, though officially metropolitan, are hardly “close in.” Clarke County, Virginia, for



The small-town ideal remains, but reality for most newcomers to rural America consists of familiar suburban-style subdivisions and commercial strips.

example, is more than 65 miles from downtown Washington, D.C. There is no question that the rural revival owes some of its vigor to spillover effects from the rise of “edge cities” on the periphery of metropolitan areas. These quasi-urban agglomerations of office parks and shopping centers have made it easier for people to move farther from downtown districts, to places such as Clarke County and beyond, without severing their links to the metropolitan economy.

Indeed, more than 85 percent of the rural counties adjacent to urban areas gained population in the early 1990s, and 77 percent enjoyed net in-migration. Another tier of counties farther out also benefited from the arrival of metro-area workers willing to drive long distances to their jobs. Eventually many of these counties will also be absorbed, at least in official data, into metropolitan areas. But many commuters coming to rural America are traveling to other rural counties or to towns and cities that are too small to be classified as metropolitan but are nevertheless experiencing the effects of deconcentration.

Wolfe County, Kentucky, illustrates some of these complexities. Mountainous and thickly wooded, it lies three counties distant from Lexington, the nearest metro center. The county’s population fell by 2.9 percent in the 1980s as coal-mining jobs in the area were lost to mechanization, but the county benefits from the four-lane Combs Mountain Parkway, which permits residents to work an hour away in Lexington and in a new Toyota plant located yet another county distant. It has also attracted

a fair number of retirees—some returning home after having made lives elsewhere, some leaving the rawer Appalachian hill country to the east. In the 1990s, Wolfe County began growing again, with population up 13.2 percent between 1990 and '96.

Will success ruin rural America? It is already exacting tolls of various kinds in many rural communities. After decades of population shrinkage, revenue sources are limited and are not likely to grow as rapidly as the demand for roads, schools, and other services and infrastructure. And newcomers often demand not just a greater quantity of services but better quality as well. People coming from cities and suburbs with professional fire and ambulance corps, municipal sewage systems, and regular garbage pickup may not see much charm in volunteer fire departments and backyard septic systems. Newcomers may also retard change. Retirees lured to an area by low living costs and scenic beauty may not be sympathetic to pleas to increase spending on public schools.

While many long-time residents welcome the energy and enthusiasm new arrivals bring, others fear they will undermine the very “rural way of life” they seek. Some rural communities are already beginning to experience traffic congestion and even sprawl. The newcomers, moreover, have few ties to the traditional rural economy or way of life; they are in rural America but not of it. It is almost inevitable that they will change it.

The rural revival raises other questions of policy. Many remote rural counties that lost population during the 1980s also found it difficult to attract and retain doctors. The influx of newcomers, however, combined with the continuing aging of the established population, almost certainly increases the need for medical care. Yet federal programs designed to encourage physicians to locate in such underserved areas were cut back in the early 1980s.

A larger and longer-term question is whether the revival of rural fortunes will someday pose a threat to the health of cities. No one can see that far into the future, but it is at least possible to point out that it has not done so yet. The 1990s seem to have been as good for metropolitan America as they have been for the hinterlands. The cities remain the great economic engines that drive the American system, the command-and-control centers that direct the development of the economy, government, media, and the arts. They remain the source of the best economic opportunities and highest-paying jobs, magnets for immigrants and for people with strong appetites for cultural, social, and educational opportunities. They are the gateways to the increasingly important global economic system.

Some trends suggest that the rural revival may continue for a long time. The aging of the affluent baby boom generation suggests that there will be a plentiful supply of retirees well into the future. And the revolution in communications, the improvement of transportation, and the evolution of the organization of work are all unlikely to

be reversed. Yet the slowdown of the rural revival during the 1980s underscores the fact that such large changes seldom proceed at an even pace. A sour economy, for example, can undo a great deal.

America may, in any event, have entered a period of relative equilibrium, in which short-term demographic shifts are acutely sensitive to immediate changes in the economic, political, and social climate. Because rural America no longer enjoys the high fertility rates that traditionally fueled its population growth, its demographic prospects in coming decades will depend more than ever on the course of migration. The fate of rural areas will be linked more directly than before to national and global economic, political, and social forces—the forces that directly and indirectly influence the millions of individual decisions that people and businesses make about where to locate.

The problems and challenges that await a growing rural America are bound to be daunting. But whatever they are they will almost certainly be preferable to the challenges posed by isolation, exodus, and decline.

FURTHER READING

The transformation of rural America lends urgency to a number of new and old issues, from the persistence of rural poverty to the future of agriculture to the problems of growth and sprawl. These and other subjects are surveyed in three useful anthologies: **The Changing American Countryside: Rural People and Places** (Univ. Press of Kansas, 1995), edited by Emery N. Castle; **Rural and Small Town America** (Russell Sage, 1989), edited by Glenn Fuguitt, David L. Brown, and Calvin L. Beale; and **Rural Planning and Development in the United States** (Guilford, 1989), edited by Mark B. Lapping, Thomas L. Daniels, and John W. Keller. The two-volume **Encyclopedia of Rural America** (ABC CLIO, 1998) also offers a surprisingly accessible overview. **Migration into Rural Areas: Theories and Issues** (Wiley, forthcoming), edited by P. J. Boyle and Keith Halfacree, brings to light some signs of rural revival overseas.

The countryside is astutely observed in a number of more literary works, including **Bad Land: An American Romance** (Vintage, 1997), by Jonathan Raban, **Great Plains** (Penguin, 1990), by Ian Frazier, and **Praeryerth (A Deep Map)** (Houghton Mifflin, 1992), by William Least Heat-Moon. Eulogies for the vanishing rural way of life—now almost a genre of their own—include Wendell Berry's **Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture** (Sierra Club, 1996) and Victor Davis Hanson's **Fields without Dreams: Defending the Agrarian Idea** (Free Press, 1997), each dealing eloquently but in different ways with the disappearance of the family farm, and W. D. Wetherell's **North of Now** (Lyons, 1998). Two significant books on the rethinking of the meaning of wilderness and the natural world are Daniel B. Botkin's **Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the Twenty-First Century** (Oxford, 1992) and **Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature** (Norton, 1996), edited by William Cronon.

Keeping the Heart in the Heartland

by Rob Gurwitt

Over the last 40 years, the town of Garden City, Kansas, has twice collided head-on with the disruptive forces at large in the wider world. The first time was unsettling. The second changed it forever.

The first collision came in 1959, when a pair of drifters named Perry Smith and Dick Hickok wandered into Holcomb, a tiny settlement 10 miles to the west of Garden City. When they left, rancher Herbert Clutter, his wife, and two of their children were dead, brutally murdered in a botched robbery. There could be no plainer reminder that isolation is no insurance against the outside world. Even so, the after-effects probably would have been limited to the passing shock and some muttering about the need to lock doors had Truman Capote not installed himself at the Windsor Hotel, on Main Street in Garden City, and turned the incident into the best-selling book *In Cold Blood* (1965). Capote memorialized the area around Garden City as a land of “awesomely extensive” views, with “grain elevators rising as gracefully as Greek temples,” a land “more Far West than Middle West,” so lonely that even other Kansans call it “out there.”

Nearly four decades later, the murders’ effects on the town remain palpable. Today, just behind the door that leads to the interior of Garden City police headquarters on Ninth Street, you can find a display case holding a coil of the rope that Perry and Hickok used to tie up their victims, the boot whose print led investigators to the suspects, and the license plate off Hickok’s car. Over at the Finney County Library, reference librarians still handle more inquiries about the Clutter murders than any other subject.

Yet Garden City still managed to hold its rural self inviolate for some



Some things never change: the 1997 Beef Empire Days Parade on Main Street in Garden City

years after Capote's book appeared. It wasn't until 1980, in fact, that the big change came, and when it did there were no lurid events and ugly headlines involved. In December of that year, IBP, which began life as Iowa Beef Processors, opened the world's biggest beef-packing plant in Holcomb. For the meatpacking business, on the one hand, it was an important, though hardly earthshaking, event; it gave IBP the ability to slaughter, skin, gut, and cut up cattle on a massive scale, then ship the meat out in tidy boxes. Garden City, on the other hand, was utterly transformed. A slow-paced, contentedly remote agricultural and market town, it became almost overnight a more cosmopolitan, multiethnic, and thoroughly complicated place. From that day to this, it has been trying to regain its bearings.

Garden City's story is like thousands of others during the past few decades of uneven rural revival—a new plant, a new prison, an urban refugee longing for simplicity, a commuter's hunger for some greenery after the workday is done, and suddenly life in some small patch of rural or small-town America is very different. Rural communities have always been subject to distant forces, shaped by railroads or mining companies or commodities brokers, given or denied sustenance by the vagaries of distant bankers and markets. But in a time when drugs and gangs travel the interstate, when the latest videos can be had at the general store, and when a wheat farmer can buy his kids the latest cartoon show spinoff at the Wal-Mart every bit as quickly as a securities analyst half the continent away, remoteness has even less meaning than it once did. As the fortunes of places such as Garden City are tied more closely than ever to the same forces that affect cities and their sub-

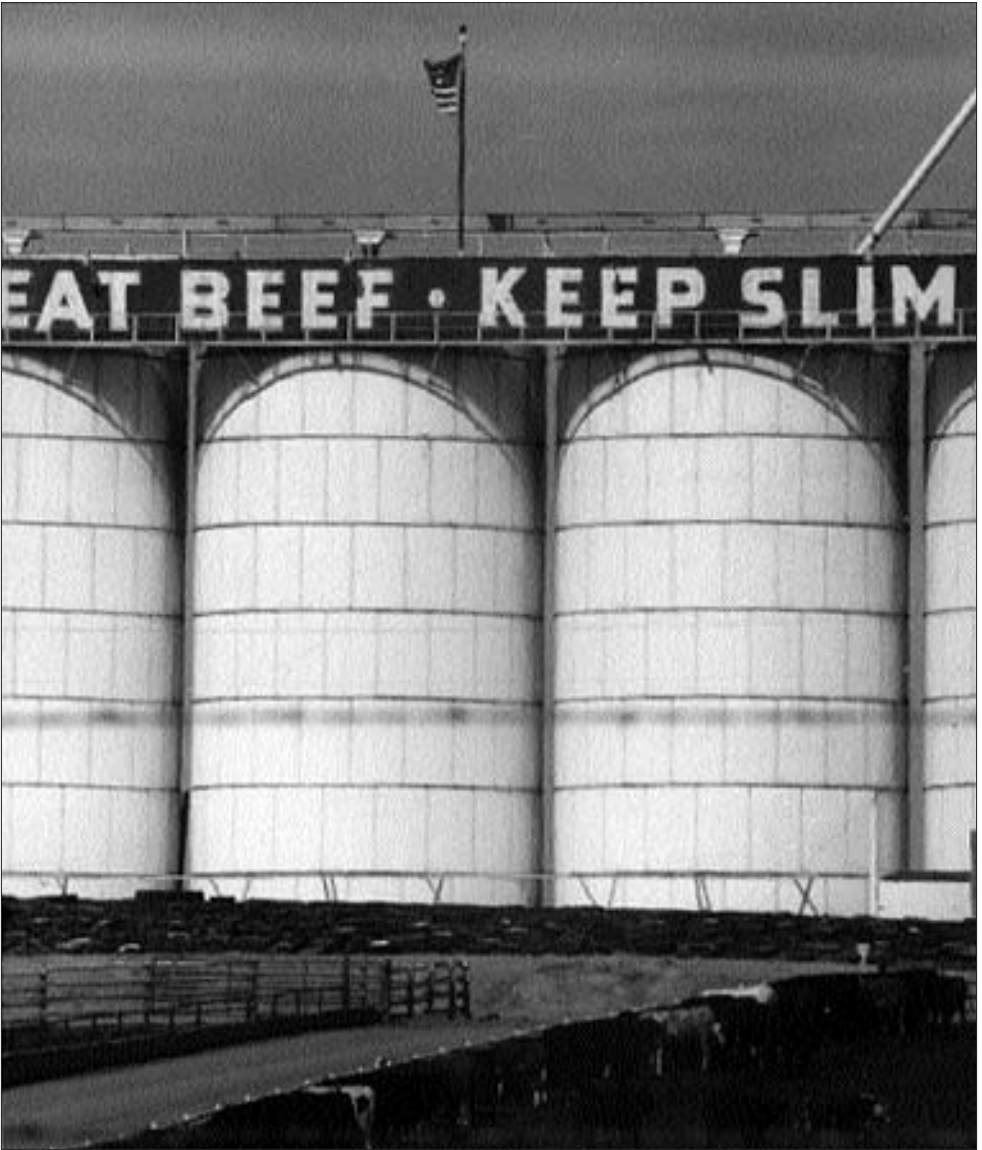
urbs, communities that were once secure and self-contained are finding themselves grappling with how to define themselves.

If Garden City is any guide, their greatest challenge lies less in the encroachment of mass culture than in the arrival of people who are quite simply different—who have different backgrounds, expectations, and ways of life. The newcomers may be upscale urbanites or middle-class retirees or factory workers or even the families of prisoners; what is beyond question is that they bring their own concerns and aspirations, and these can change a place just as surely as the arrival or departure of a major employer. Yet Garden City's experience suggests something else as well: that if these communities are subject to the increasing gravitational pull of the world beyond, they also retain certain native strengths, a sense of where they come from that is embedded in familiar landmarks, institutions, and habits of community life.

IBP's appearance in Finney County was a sterling example of the unforeseen consequences of progress. The county sits in southwest Kansas, in the vast, sparsely populated High Plains triangle formed by Denver, Colorado, Amarillo, Texas, and Wichita, Kansas. For much of the first half of the century, the county's economic fortunes were tied to ranching and sugar beets, which were grown in the area and processed at a factory in Garden City. But in the 1960s, farmers began tapping into the Ogallala Aquifer, the body of water that underlies a huge swath of the Southwest. Together with the arrival of center-pivot irrigation, this allowed them to turn the region's dry sandsage prairie into a fertile producer of corn, milo, and other feed grains. This, in turn, attracted feedlot owners, who began setting up large operations in Finney County and its environs to fatten up cattle before shipping them off to the slaughterhouse. Garden City became a cattle town. There are, today, something on the order of 200,000 head of cattle in Finney County alone, which explains the heavy aroma of cow dung that clings day and night to Garden City's air.

The rise of feed grains and feedlots over the course of two decades made the area perfect for IBP. For much of this century, meatpacking had been a largely urban industry, concentrated in Saint Paul, Kansas City, and the other great stockyard cities, shipping cattle in from far away and employing a work force that was, by the 1970s, for the most part skilled, unionized, and well paid. IBP, which got its start in the 1960s, broke that mold. Its strategy was based on the notion that it would be cheaper, in an industry with very tight profit margins, to butcher beef close to where it had been raised, on a disassembly line that used unskilled, nonorganized workers. The innovation revolutionized the industry, giving rise to huge plants that could handle several thousand head of cattle a day and driving the packers who couldn't shift gears out of business. Southwest Kansas became a center of this new approach: IBP's Finney County plant is just the largest of four that have

> ROB GURWITT is a senior writer at *Governing* and a contributing writer at *DoubleTake*. Copyright © 1998 by Rob Gurwitt.



A sign at a feedyard on the outskirts of town reminds passersby what matters most in Garden City.

located in the region—ConAgra’s Monfort division has one at the eastern edge of Garden City, Excel owns one in Dodge City, and National Beef runs one an hour’s drive to the south, in Liberal.

At the time the IBP plant opened, rural communities had not had a lot of experience with new facilities on this scale—the plant was to employ some 2,800 workers and slaughter 5,200 head of cattle a day—so Finney County didn’t really know what to expect. It seemed enough to know that it was getting a stable base for its economy and a steady source of jobs. What it hadn’t quite reckoned with was who would fill those jobs.

Meatpacking is not pleasant work; it’s bloody and smelly, and the method that IBP pioneered demands that the same cut be made thousands of times during a shift. Workers find their hands, arms, and backs constantly in pain, and serious injuries are not uncommon. The “trimmers” swing razor-sharp knives in close quarters, and the chain mail

The crowd that used to meet downtown after early morning Mass at Saint Dominic's now gathers at the McDonald's.

and masks they wear don't always protect them; meatpacking ranks among the most dangerous jobs in the country. For all this, an employee can make perhaps \$7 or \$8 an hour. But the work requires neither education nor skill, nor much command of English—just a willingness to work hard. Not surprisingly, there are many native-born Americans who don't want jobs like that. There are, however, a lot of immigrants who do.

And so Garden City and other meatpacking towns, from Dodge City and Liberal to Storm Lake, Iowa, and Guymon, Oklahoma, have become home to an astoundingly diverse population: Mexicans, Central Americans, Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian refugees, Somalis, Guatemalan Indians, even, in Garden City, a small group of German Mennonites from Mexico. In Garden City these days, Asian restaurants outnumber steak houses, and if you're looking for someone at lunch time, you're as likely to find that person at Pho Hoa One, an immensely successful Vietnamese noodle house just beyond downtown, as at one of the fast-food restaurants up on the Kansas Avenue commercial strip that runs through the northern half of town.

Yet surely as striking as Garden City's diversity and growth—it now has some 30,000 residents, almost double the figure in 1980, and about a third of the population is Asian or Hispanic—are the ways in which it has become subject to forces that not so long ago it could ignore, if it even knew about them at all. The competitive decisions of faraway meatpacking executives now have a direct impact on spendable income in town. Federal refugee policy helps determine who shows up looking for work. Garden City's police occasionally confront Asian gangs traveling from Wichita and even California at odd hours of the night. Even the fate of Mexican economic development matters in this corner of Kansas. As Donna Skinner, an administrator at the local community college, points out, "Once Mexico gets its economy and population under control, Mexican workers won't be coming up here, and when that happens, Garden City will be in a hell of a mess." In all of this, Garden City has as much in common with Wichita or Fresno, California, as it does with Dodge City.

To be sure, there is much about Garden City that would be familiar to old-timers. Life for many people in town still revolves around church and family. On summer nights, the ball fields over near the fairgrounds are packed with families watching their sons and daughters play baseball in their Bar-T and Western State Bank and Preferred Cartage Service T-shirts. You can still see friends and neighbors at the Friday night band concerts in Stevens Park. High school football still matters. And for sheer High Plains culture, nothing

can outdraw the yearly Beef Empire Days Rodeo.

There are also, of course, plenty of ways in which Garden City has changed over the years quite apart from its major employer and its demographic makeup. There was a time, at midcentury, when dozens of cafés and restaurants were sprinkled around downtown, serving bankers, lawyers, railroad laborers, farmers, sugar beet workers, and housewives. You could eat at Dinty Moore's, Sever's Café, or Mrs. Sessler's Diner, the Green Lantern, the Midway Cafe, the Blue Goose, the Ve-Dor. There was the Elite—usually called the “E-light,” to the dismay of visitors from more refined parts of the country—the coffee shop in the Warren Hotel, the fountain at Remick Drug, and, of course, the lunch counter in Woolworth's. All are gone. Most of the storefronts on Main Street are still occupied—although the grand old Windsor Hotel, the Waldorf of the Prairies, now stands empty except for a furniture store on its ground floor—but there is no question that Garden City's commercial heart has moved out to Kansas Avenue, to the Target, the Wal-Mart, the Western Auto, the Kentucky Fried Chicken and Dairy Queen and Sonic Drive-In.

For all of that, Garden City's community life is still intact. It's just that it now gets carried on in different places. The crowd that meets after early morning Mass at Saint Dominic's long ago forsook downtown; now it gathers at the McDonald's on Kansas. Recently, in fact, there's been a contest for tables with the Methodists,



At Garden City's Victor Ornelas Elementary School, students speak more than 30 languages and dialects. The school marks many ethnic holidays, including Tet, the Vietnamese new year.

who have also begun staking out McDonald's as their after-church turf.

The true test of the town's adaptability, however, came with the opening of the IBP plant. Suddenly, thousands of people were descending on the town looking for work; they slept in their cars, they camped out in the parks, they fought in the bars. Schools that had one or two immigrant children when they let out in June found themselves in September facing dozens of Southeast Asian and Hispanic kids who spoke no English and knew little of American society. Crime rates soared, and so did all sorts of other social indicators no one wants to see rise: alcoholism, drug abuse, child abuse, and domestic violence. Municipal and county officials, taken entirely unaware, discovered they didn't have the police, the social services, or even the infrastructure to deal with the town that Garden City was becoming.

It might all have fallen to pieces; certainly, other communities have come apart at the seams over less. But Garden City had some latent strengths to draw on. There was a widespread ethic, hardly uncommon in rural areas, that adversity is there to be overcome. As Pat Fishback, a long-time resident, puts it, "It's the ethic that says, 'So you had a bad wheat crop this year. Well, you just have to go on.'" There was a strong set of community institutions, particularly the town's churches. And above all, there was a small group of community leaders who were more than willing to take matters in hand, and who could have an impact in a place the size of Garden City that would have been lost in a city or even a large suburb. "As an anthropologist, I usually feel I have to wash my mouth out with soap when I talk about the 'great man' theory of history," says Don Stull, a University of Kansas professor who has been studying the impact of the meatpacking boom on the town. "But it's applicable to Garden City."

After the IBP plant opened, a handful of religious leaders—Monte Fey, the Presbyterian minister, Wayne Paulsen, a Baptist minister, and Levita Rohlmann, a former nun who still runs the Catholic relief agency in town—organized Garden City's churches and began working with municipal officials. They aimed not just to reach out to individual newcomers in need but to create institutions that could provide lasting help. They started a summer camp for immigrant children who needed help with English; they created the South East Asian Mutual Assistance Association, to help refugees deal with the society around them; and, along with the community college, they set up the Adult Learning Center, which rapidly became a place where immigrants could not only learn English but get practical advice and support in making a life for themselves in town. The schools set up English-as-a-second-language programs and began sending teachers out to the trailer parks and poorer neighborhoods to enlist students and pass out information about health care. The religious leaders weren't alone in their efforts. The police not only added officers but began teaching them about Southeast Asian, Mexican, and Central American cultures. The *Garden City Telegram* took it upon itself to track down and debunk the various ugly rumors about immigrants that occasionally swept through town. Garden City's response



The IBP plant

to the influx was not always what it might have been—Hispanics, for example, got less formal help than Southeast Asians did—but it was enough to get the town through its crisis years.

This is not to say that Garden City has become a multicultural paradise. True, you can find Southeast Asians and Hispanics living next to Anglos in middle-class subdivisions, as well as in the giant trailer park on the eastern edge of town. But they are neighbors, not truly part of the same social circles. There are barriers of language and culture, and many immigrant meatpackers are so busy working long hours and scraping to get ahead that they don't have much energy left for other things. (That same work ethic does, however, win them respect in the larger Garden City community.) Even among middle-class immigrants, there has not been much interest in civic affairs, although that may be changing; recently, a group led by a Vietnamese doctor wrote the city manager asking how they could become more involved in the public life of the town. Still, the most extensive intermingling takes place among the town's schoolchildren, and it's no less true for being a cliché that the next generation will tell whether Garden Citians develop the comfortable friendships that knit together most smaller communities.

If you were to wander into Tom's Tavern, the no-frills bar and restaurant a few blocks off Main Street where old Garden City likes to gather, it would be easy to get a heated argument going by asking whether the town is better or worse off for its new profile. There are plenty of people who complain about traffic and the fact that the town has been forced to triple the size of its police force over the years. And, as Don Stull points out, a lot of townfolk have yet to come to terms with Garden City's diversity. "There is bigotry and discrimination in Garden City, as there has been in every town," he says. "There's no doubt that there are people in town

who would like to see every Mexican and Vietnamese and Laotian gone, and it's clear that part of the reason the community as a whole is as accepting as it has been is because the new arrivals are taking jobs that most native Garden Citians don't want."

But there are also a lot of people who love what Garden City has become, who like eating ethnic food and are delighted that conversation in school corridors often concerns the latest Thai soap opera to arrive on videotape or the fact that a music lover can choose between the offerings of the venerable Garden City Concert Society and the bands from Chihuahua and Sonora states that now pass through. Garden City these days is cosmopolitan enough that sons and daughters who left for the cities in earlier decades are beginning to come back, and kids who go away to college now think seriously of returning home afterward. Because of its size and its experience, it has become the most important rural town in a three-state region, the host of the annual Five State Multicultural Conference, the place people from hundreds of miles around go to shop, visit the zoo and the Finney County Historical Museum, or learn about how their own communities might handle rapid demographic shifts.

Still, it is easy to make too much of change. There may be people with unaccustomed faces and languages on Main Street, but they are walking a familiar path. There are Laotian families, for instance, who began life in the United States in California, living on welfare, fearing that their children would get wrapped up in gangs, and watching as the traditional authority of parents was eroded by the mores of street life. They moved to Garden City seeking the same things that generations of native-born Americans have found in small-town life: a place where their children could go to school without fear of gangs or violence and where they could plant their own feet on the ground. A lot of families, having earned enough to put some money away, have since left, moving on to work that does not involve cutting up beef. But other families, Laotian, Vietnamese, and Hispanic, are choosing to stay in Garden City, buying houses in new subdivisions, starting businesses, and tentatively trying to become part of the community. If you ask the parents what they like about Garden City (and their kids what they don't like), the answers sound startlingly familiar: the peacefulness and comfortable rhythms of daily life in this still-small American town.

These are qualities, powerful and universal in their appeal, that are drawing so many different kinds of people to the American countryside. Simply by moving there in their present numbers, they are changing it, but they are not changing it beyond recognition. Not even close. As Donna Skinner says, "I go visit my kids in the city and you're bumper to bumper on the freeway for an hour just to go to a restaurant. Then I come back here, and I've got to say, 'You know, life's a piece of cake.'"



The Course of Empire: The Pastoral State (1995), by Sandow Birk

The Landscape of Disturbance

by Frederick Turner

Where is Arcadia in the 21st century? Ancient poets found it in the *Rus*, or countryside, in a pastoral place where the cultivated mingled with the uncultivated, or in sacred groves that were uninhabited but managed unobtrusively by eccentric sibyls or priests. In 18th-century America, the Founding Fathers found it

in the agrarian archetype of the virtuous small town, with its meeting-house and gentleman farmers with thumbed copies of Plato and the Bible on their shelves. This is an enduring ideal for Americans, as the work of late-20th-century writers such as Wendell Berry show. In the 19th century, the poets and painters found Arcadia in what they thought were wild landscapes—the Alps, the Lake District, the Rocky Mountains of Albert Bierstadt, the prairies of Frederic Remington. They did not realize that such landscapes were the product of the careful work of Swiss and Cumbrian farmers, of a continent full of Native American hunter-gatherers and gardeners of considerable ecological sophistication. To the Romantics, the human impact on nature was always a loss of innocence, a violation. Thus their attitude to Arcadia was elegiac, as they foresaw the encroachments of the city, the dark satanic mills. Twentieth-century poets such as T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound found Arcadia, by sardonic reversal, in the city, where the evening is laid out on the sky “like a patient etherized upon a table,” and where the faces in the Paris metro are like “petals on a wet, black bough.” In the 21st century, we will find Arcadia in a *Rus* that is both suburban and subrural, not so far away from the groves of the bucolic poets, of Virgil and Horace, Tu Fu and Li Po, Kalidasa and Hafiz, Miklós Radnóti and Boris Pasternak.

But this landscape will be a post-, not a pre-, technological one. It will be a landscape in which the technology is perfecting itself into invisibility, and where form has ceased to follow function but rather elaborates itself into new, delicate, intelligible structures that create new functions, functions that we suddenly recognize from the cultural past—a temple, a folly, a bower, a tomb. There are times when the present breaks the shackles of the past to create the future—the modern age, now past, was one of those. But there are also times, such as the Renaissance and our own coming 21st century, when it is the past that creates the future, by breaking the shackles of the present.

In North Texas, where I live, there is a strange zone of savannahs, residential real estate, and huge artificial lakes, very tangled and unkempt in places (and then suddenly tamed or as suddenly let go wild again), where a whole new ecology is evolving—plant and bird species from Louisiana, the eastern forests, the Gulf coast, the Yucatán. It must extend for hundreds of square miles around the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Each year I walk there I find a different dominant weed species, and huge flocks of birds. It is a *mélange* of original Texas prairie and low forest, ghost towns with little cemeteries, tract housing, sculpture parks and wildlife preserves, radio and TV towers, and the fantastical margins of the huge new lakes. Such landscapes are everywhere in America, but nobody sees them: they are what one passes through to get to Yellowstone. I have seen them around Oklahoma City and Tulsa

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We are torn between the postmodernist vision of the sublime technological landscape and the environmentalist wilderness.

and Atlanta and Columbus, Ohio, throughout central Florida, northern Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and the southern half of New England.

This half waste-dump, half theme-park place, this Disneyland of the incomplete, has its detractors. It is in doubtful taste; indeed, it is kitsch, for its irony is aimed not at itself but at the censoriousness of its critics. Friendly bikers customize their Harleys in backyards still heaped with dead leaves from last winter's flash flooding. A tiny garden of clubferns and dragonflies nestles in the mud-soaked foam rubber of a seat cushion lost from a boat in a fishing accident. A thousand white birds settle on the lake, or a gigantic blue heron, as massive as a pterosaur, lumbers up into the air. Coydogs, part coyote, part dog, howl there at night. It is a landscape not in harmony with itself, not like our conventional idea of nature. It is changing all the time. It is the domain of nonlinearity, of dissipative systems that flourish on the flow of decay, of perverse consensual fetishisms, of emergent structures and fractal depth; it is drawn by strange attractors rather than pushed by causes and laws. Only a new language, from the laboratories of chaos and complexity theory, can accurately catch its strangeness and aesthetic difficulty. And this hadean Arcady is often the domain of death, where the middle class goes to die.

Our distaste for the emerging *Rus* is an essentially modernist distaste. Modernist landscape plans, the cities of Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, always seem to lie stunned beneath an endless halcyon-blue sky. There are no puddles in the streets, no high winds and fogs and damp feet and wet dogs shaking themselves over the carpet. Our fundamental tastes in landscape are enormously influenced, often at second or third hand, by the landscape designers, by the Capability Browns and Frederick Law Olmsteds of the world, and at present we are torn between the postmodernist vision of the sublime technological landscape and the environmentalist wilderness. But a near-century of radical art in this continent, beginning with the Armory Show and cycling through expressionism, op, pop, and conceptual, has brought us full circle to where earthworks artists such as James Turrell have restarted the romance with landscape left unfinished by the Hudson School. And there is a new breed of landscape designers—including Julie Bargmann, Richard Hansen, Kristina Hill, Anuradha Mathur, Dilip da Cunha, Joan Nassauer, William Wenk, Billy Gregg, and Achva Stein—who are looking at transitional landscapes that include human beings and that are happily undergoing continuous change. They are redesigning—or, rather, gently retrofitting—old mining sites, city parks, whole suburban districts, freeway margins, residential areas, university campuses, museum grounds, and Governor's Island in New York harbor.

These designers don't, for instance, like underground drains, and often include surface rainwater in their landscaping. They like sophisticated low-tech systems of French drains, wet meadow bands, micro-prairie restoration, "wetland to be viewed from a lawn." This idea, of using runoff from streets, parking lots, runways and roofs, and treating what was a menace and a waste as a resource and a source of renewal, has the deepest implications. One of them is the notion that human waste itself is not the end of the world.

Such designers are willing to work with the tastes of people who like lawn ornaments, swing sets, outdoor barbecues, and neatly mown grass. The human "œconomy" is part of the ecosystem too. A similar spirit moves the New Urbanist architects and town planners, who don't mind making "sentimental" Currier and Ives gestures, because these are things that make people really want to come and live in their Seasides

and Celebrations. This approach marks an important transition in the role of the artist, from the Romantic/modernist hectoring genius to the wise servant of the people. Perhaps it will take a century for local middle-American suburbal tastes to refine themselves to the point that an average Mediterranean town has already reached. But there is no other way



Creating a new landscape: Denver's Harvard Gulch is part of the city's Urban Stormwater and Flood Control District.

of getting there than the slow way, and that way will have some very endearing eccentricities of its own that we will want to keep.

One of the key ideas in the new approach is the notion of disturbance. The root of the word is *turb*, the same *turb* that we find in *turbulence*. When midwestern restoration ecologists such as Robert Betz, Keith Wendt, and William Jordan realized not long ago that restored prairies could be as good as the real thing, some of them started to yearn for buffalo to stomp about in the grass and kill some of the existing vegetation, creating deep prints that would contain tiny puddles, and allow seeds of the rarer species to take root. This was disturbance.

True biodiversity seems not always to occur in stable and homogeneous habitats. Rather, it happens in places of varying degrees of disturbance, where there are many opportunities for biotic specialists to flourish. Many of the classic prairies and forests are the ones ravaged periodically by fire. The Amazon rainforest got its marvelous biodiversity over the millenniums through a series of catastrophic world climate oscillations between dry, cool ice ages and hot, wet interglacials. It is the wild swings of salt and fresh, wet and dry, storm and calm that make sea-

coasts so fertile a field of genetic experiment.

Cities and other human settlements, with their herbaceous borders, arboretums, roof gutters, sewers, warehouses, wharfs, market gardens, university horticulture departments, zoos, pet shops, and waste dumps are actually hotbeds of biodiversity. An entirely novel species of mouse has recently evolved in a small town in northern Italy, providing biologists a rare spectacle of species development. Steve Packard, a prairie restorationist, has been creating “oak openings” on waste lots in the suburbs of Chicago. Perhaps we are already becoming, if sometimes inadvertently, the breeders, gardeners and husbanders of nature, rather than the despoilers of it that we have often been.

We are undergoing a major transition in our basic cultural model of the human relationship with the rest of nature. To sum it up in a sentence, it is a transition from a heroic, linear, industrial, power-based, entropic-thermodynamic, goal-oriented model, to a tragicomic, nonlinear, horticultural, influence-based, synergetic, evolutionary-emergentist, process-oriented model. The heroic model postulates a human struggle with nature culminating in human victory, while the tragicomic model postulates an ongoing engagement within nature, between the relatively swift and self-reflective part of nature that is human, and the rest. The linear model imagines one-way causes and effects; the nonlinear model imagines turbulent interactions in which the initiating event has been lost or is at least irrelevant. The industrial model requires a burning; the horticultural model requires a growing. The power-based model's bottom line is coercion; the influence-based model's is persuasion and mutual interest. The entropic-thermodynamic model involves an inevitable and irretrievable expense of free energy in the universe and an increase of disorder when any work is performed; the synergetic-evolutionary model seeks economies whereby every stakeholder gains and new forms of order can emerge out of far-from-equilibrium regimes. The goal-oriented model imagines a perfect fixed or harmonious state as its end product, and tends paradoxically to like immortal, open-ended narratives; the process-oriented model knows that the function of an ending is to open up new possibilities, and it prefers beginning-middle-end narrative structures; it knows that nothing in the universe is ever perfect and immortal, and that death comes to everything.

The new rural settlers of America have the responsibility to create an artificial landscape as rich, satisfying, and deeply natural as the ones left to us by Roman, English, and French gentlemen when they created the classic landscapes of Tuscany, the Cotswolds, and the Loire. Perhaps one day there will be an American *Rus* as satisfying and apparently eternal as those are now. But meanwhile, for the perverse and the poetic, there may even be a special pleasure in the landscape of disturbance itself.

Jingoes, Goo-Goos, and the Rise of America's Empire

It was called "a splendid little war." Launched 100 years ago this spring, the short, decisive struggle with Spain set the United States on the path to empire. More lastingly, the author shows, the vision and policies of those who steered the victorious nation "foreshadowed the often awesome ambiguities of America's waxing and waning global involvements during the whole of the 20th century."

by Warren Zimmermann

In 1898, America's role in the world changed forever. A country whose power and influence had been largely limited to the continent of North America suddenly acquired a global reach that it would never relinquish.

The march of events behind this transformation has the staccato urgency of an old Movietone newsreel. On April 25, 1898, two months after the sinking of the USS *Maine* in Havana Bay, the United States goes to war with Spain over Cuba. On May 1, some 8,000 miles away in the Philippines, Admiral George Dewey destroys the Spanish fleet off Manila. On June 21, the U.S. Navy seizes the tiny, Spanish-held island of Guam, with its fine Pacific harbor, 1,000 miles east of Manila.

The zigzag pattern of conquest continues, from the Caribbean to the Pacific and back. On July 1, Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, attired in a brass-buttoned uniform just bought from Brooks Brothers, leads his Rough Riders in an exuberant charge—on foot—up San Juan Hill in eastern Cuba. Routing a poorly armed Spanish force, Roosevelt's troops take the heights overlooking Santiago Bay, where, two days later, the U.S. Navy wins the battle



for Cuba by capturing an entire Spanish squadron. On July 7, President William McKinley, exulting in the expansionist fervor, annexes Hawaii, under de facto control of American sugar planters since 1893. On August 13, Manila falls to Dewey. The next day, the U.S. Army takes control of the Spanish island colony of Puerto Rico after an efficient nine-day campaign launched almost as an afterthought to the action in Cuba. On December 10, by the Treaty of



The sinking of the USS Maine on February 15, 1898, took 260 American lives and helped spark the Spanish-American War. Yet no evidence has ever connected the Spanish with the fatal explosion.

Paris, Spain cedes to the United States the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico, none of which had been important prewar American objectives. Spain also renounces sovereignty over Cuba, which *had* been the principal U.S. objective, thus opening the island to American military rule.

And so, by force of arms, America in only a few months' time had gained territorial possessions on both the Atlantic and Pacific sides of its continental mass. Nor did imperial expansion end with 1898. In an 1899 division of Samoa with Germany, the United States acquired the strategic deep-water harbor off Pago Pago. A jagged line of bases, or "coaling stations" as they were called in the age of steam, now ran from California to Hawaii to Samoa to the Philippines. This chain of possessions made possible the extension of American political and economic influence to China—an opportunity Secretary of State John Hay's Open Door Policy of 1899 was designed to seize.* The new imperialism culminated in the linking of America's Atlantic and Pacific holdings via a canal across the narrow waist of Central America. President Roosevelt set this project in motion in November 1903, subverting the government of Colombia to produce an ostensibly revolutionary

*Hay's letter to European powers with established spheres of influence in China requested that they allow equal trade opportunities for all countries within their zones.

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Panamanian government willing to sign the requisite treaty.

By 1903, America's role in the world had been transformed. Throughout the 19th century the country had expanded steadily, but its growth had been overland—to the Hispanic south, to the sparsely populated west, even to noncontiguous Alaska. Now, however, the nation expanded overseas—indeed, all its new acquisitions were islands. This burst of offshore conquests, compressed into the last two years of the old century and the first three of the new, made the United States a genuine empire.

The United States would never again acquire as much territory as it did during those eventful years, but that half-decade marked a turning point in the way America related to the world. It gave Americans and their leaders self-confidence, a sense of their own power, and an abiding belief that they could shape international life according to their values. Thus, it foreshadowed the often awesome ambiguities of America's waxing and waning global involvements during the whole of the 20th century.

Some who played a direct part in the struggle against Spain were able to anticipate its consequences for America's rise to the status of an influential and assertive global power. Shipping out with the invasion fleet from Tampa to Santiago Bay in June 1898, Colonel Leonard Wood—soon to become military governor of Cuba—wrote to his wife: “Hard it is to realize that this is the commencement of a new policy and that this is the first great expedition our country has ever sent overseas and marks the commencement of a new era in our relations with the world.”

I

Why did America launch itself so abruptly upon an imperialist course? Wasn't this a nation that had taken to heart George Washington's admonition against “foreign entanglements,” a nation, moreover, that had spent most of the 19th century in an isolation guaranteed by two wide oceans and the protection of the British navy? No less a man than Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, a principal author of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, which asserted U.S. hemispheric authority, had said, “America does not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy.”

The answer is that this picture of isolation was never quite accurate. By the early 19th century, the United States was already a would-be imperialist power. President James Monroe soberly qualified his eponymous doctrine with careful limits on what the United States might do in the Western Hemisphere. But he also left his successors considerable leeway to define and defend American interests, a latitude they freely exploited. President James Knox Polk's victory in the Mexican War (1846–48) confirmed U.S. title to Texas and brought into U.S. possession territory that would become the states of Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. In a dispute with Great Britain over

the Venezuelan boundary, President Grover Cleveland's secretary of state, Richard Olney, asserted in 1895, "Today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition."

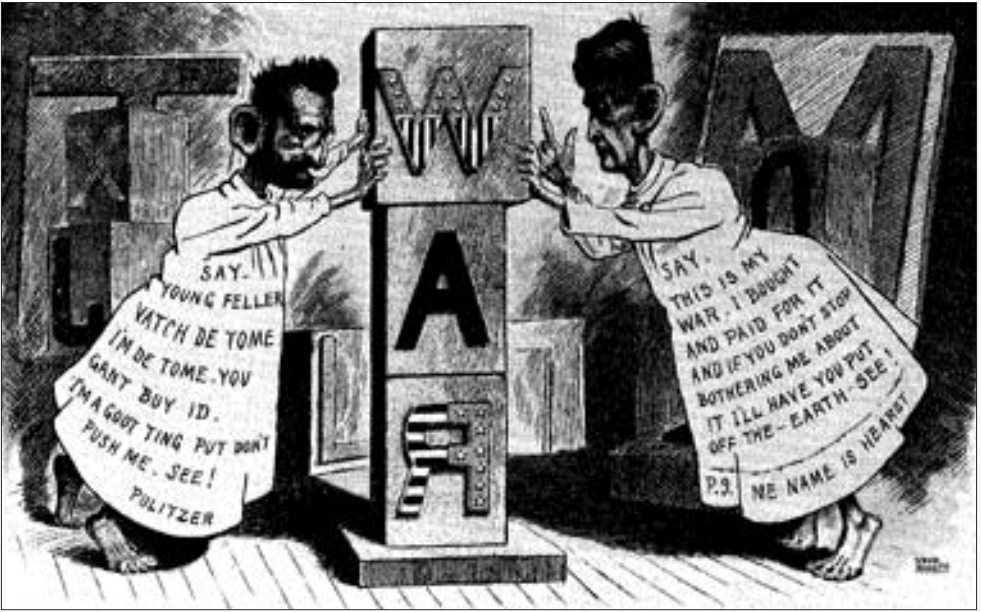
Cuba had long been a special attraction. No fewer than four American presidents before McKinley, beginning with Polk in 1848, tried to buy the island from Spain. The settlement of the Pacific coast also stirred President Polk to negotiate with Colombia to open the way for an isthmian canal. Secretary of State William Henry Seward, who acquired Alaska in 1867, also sought the Virgin Islands, as well as British Columbia and Greenland. President Ulysses S. Grant's efforts to annex Santo Domingo in 1870 got as far as a tie vote in the Senate. Canada was a perennial target of American imperialists; Theodore Roosevelt was not the first American president to cast covetous eyes on it.

The Pacific, for which no Monroe Doctrine existed, was not exempt from American designs. Hawaii, where Americans had fishing and missionary interests early in the century and lucrative sugar plantations later, was always considered the most delectable morsel. In 1842, the United States warned Britain off the islands, and in 1849 repeated the warning to France. A quarter-century later, the Grant administration sought a protectorate over Hawaii, and the administration of James A. Garfield pondered its annexation. Elsewhere in the Pacific, the United States struck a deal in 1872 with the king of Samoa for a naval base, but the agreement failed in the Senate. Interestingly, the Philippines, under the desultory rule of Spain, did not evoke much American interest throughout the century.

For the most part, America's early imperial gestures went nowhere. Clearly, something had changed during the last decades of the century to make the United States a more decisive player in the imperial game.

One change was the exhaustion of the territorial frontier after the Civil War, combined with a surge of wealth that made the United States the world's largest economy by the 1890s. These facts of historical geography and economics diverted restless energies overseas. Official attention to Cuba and Hawaii was largely stimulated by American sugar interests there. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge equated trade with territory: "We must not be left behind. . . . In the economic struggle the great nations of Europe for many years have been seizing all the waste places, and all the weakly held lands of the earth, as the surest means of trade development."

A second factor was a new sense of mission that dominated the latter part of the century, an idealistic fervor that partook equally of Darwin and God. In *Our Country* (1895), Congregationalist minister Josiah Strong outlined the true path to the 185,000 Americans who bought his book. Americans, he preached, are a "race of unequaled energy, with all the majesty of numbers and the might of wealth behind it—the representative, let us hope, of the largest liberty, the purest Christianity, the highest civilization. [Having] developed peculiarly aggressive traits cal-



Newspaper owners Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst compete in whipping up war fervor.

culated to impress its institutions upon mankind, [America] will spread itself across the earth. . . . And can any one doubt that this race, unless devitalized by alcohol and tobacco, is destined to dispossess many weaker races, assimilate others, and mold the remainder, until, in a very true and important sense, it has Anglo-Saxonized mankind?"

The Darwinian notion of racial competition fit nicely with the American doctrine of Manifest Destiny, by which the West had been conquered and the Indians subdued. The most enthusiastic proponent of both was Theodore Roosevelt, who took a racialist, if not exactly racist, view of history. "All the great masterful races," he claimed, "have been fighting races, and the minute that a race loses the hard fighting virtues, then . . . it has lost its proud right to stand as the equal of the best. . . . Cowardice in a race, as in an individual, is the unpardonable sin." Roosevelt's muscular philosophy led him to extol war in a manner that sounds particularly callow to those who look back through the smoke of two devastating world wars. "No triumph of peace," he went on, "is quite so great as the supreme triumphs of war."

Third, these moral and biological arguments were reinforced by the development of an American imperial strategy calling for a large navy, Pacific bases, an isthmian canal, and, above all, an assertive role for a growing world power bound for rivalry with Great Britain, Germany, and Japan.

Finally, the new imperialism was stimulated by a phenomenon that remains with us today—the influence of the press.

William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer realized that a war with Spain over Cuba would sell newspapers. Long before hostilities broke out, Hearst sent the artist Frederic Remington to Havana. Idle and bored, Remington cabled his boss, "Everything is quiet. There is no trouble here. There will be no war. I wish to return." In a famous reply,



U.S. troops celebrate news of the Spanish surrender of Santiago, Cuba.

Hearst cabled, "Please remain. You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war." In a way, he did. Hearst and his rival Pulitzer shamelessly invented Spanish atrocities against Cuban revolutionaries. And when the *Maine* blew up, Hearst's *New York Journal* sprang to accuse the Spanish. "THE WARSHIP MAINE WAS SPLIT IN TWO BY AN ENEMY'S SECRET INFERNAL MACHINE," it blared, though it had no evidence (and none was ever found) that the Spanish were responsible. When war was declared, Hearst took credit for it. "HOW DO YOU LIKE THE JOURNAL'S WAR?" one headline rhetorically exulted. The yellow press may not have been solely responsible for the war, but its soaring circulation figures suggest that it turned the American public toward intervention.

The last decade of the 19th century brought to a climax, and ultimately decided, a battle between those who urged American expansion and those who opposed it. The conflicting passions provided a valuable and sometimes eloquent debate over basic American traditions and values. Less benign were the calumny, insult, and invective that often marked the rhetoric. From the safe distance of his expatriate life in London, Henry James called Roosevelt "a dangerous and ominous jingo." (The word comes from a London music-hall ballad: "We don't want to fight/ But by Jingo if we do,/ We've got the ships, we've got the men,/ We've got the money too!") Roosevelt dismissed James as a "miserable little snob." His generic epithet for his anti-imperialist opponents was "goo-goos," a contemptuous reference to self-proclaimed advocates of "good government."

The role of powerful personalities working in opposition and in concert is often as important as that of impersonal forces in shaping world-historical developments. One way to understand the cause, consequences, and character of America's imperial breakout is to look closely

at the men most responsible for it. While a list of “jingo” would be long, five figures stand out: John Hay, secretary of state under McKinley and Roosevelt, and the only one of the five whose political career spanned the entire period between the Civil War and the Spanish-American War; Alfred T. Mahan, a naval officer and military philosopher of genius; Elihu Root, a New York corporation lawyer who, as secretary of war under McKinley and Roosevelt, was responsible for the administration of the Philippines and Cuba; Henry Cabot Lodge, the devious junior senator from Massachusetts, for whom American imperialism was close to a sacred creed; and Theodore Roosevelt himself, who towered over even these giants in his intellect, energy, and determination.

These five could fairly be called the fathers of modern American imperialism. Coming together at a critical period of American history, they helped to shape it. For that, they bear comparison with a later group, the “wise men” who, working around President Harry Truman, helped to shape American policy during another hinge period, the early days of the Cold War in the late 1940s and early ’50s.

All of the earlier group were of the same generation, except for the precocious Roosevelt. All were easterners, except Hay. All were members of the Republican Party, and all, except Mahan, were active in it. As avid students of English history, they shared an admiration for Britain’s military power and imperial grandeur. All except Root were notable authors. Roosevelt wrote 38 books, Lodge 50; Mahan was the author of a military classic on the influence of sea power; Hay was a poet, a best-selling novelist, and co-author of a popular biography of Lincoln. They were also mutual admirers and good friends who enjoyed each other’s company at work and at leisure. Roosevelt, with his capacity for friendship and his love of ideas, was the catalyst: close to each of the other four, he was largely responsible for bringing them together.

II

John Hay, the oldest of the five, was born in Indiana in 1838, the son of a doctor who moved his family to Warsaw, Illinois, when John was three. An artistic and sensitive boy, Hay graduated from Brown as class poet and then joined his uncle’s law office in Springfield as an apprentice. It was there that he had a life-defining piece of luck—the lawyer who occupied the office next to Milton Hay’s was Abraham Lincoln. When Lincoln was elected president a year later, he took Hay, age 22, to Washington as a junior assistant. Hay worshiped Lincoln, and in middle age paid the martyred president a scholarly tribute by devoting 10 years to an authoritative biography written in collaboration with fellow White House aide John Nicolay.

Hay had a protean career as a diplomat, journalist, and writer. He served in Paris, Vienna, and Madrid before becoming ambassador to

the Court of Saint James. A prolific contributor to journals, he was also for a time editor of the *New York Tribune*. He won fame with a collection of uplifting poems called *Pike County Ballads*, first serialized in 1871. The quality of its western-dialect doggerel was, as even a small sample shows, uniformly dreadful:

He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing,—
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a going to be too hard
On a man that died for men.

Hay also wrote a popular novel, *The Breadwinners* (1883), defending law and order, property, and capitalism against the strikes and riots of the immigrant working class.

Despite his social conservatism, Hay was a modest and vulnerable man, whose lifelong bouts of depression made him doubt his own worth. He formed a decades-long Damon and Pythias friendship with the broody intellectual Henry Adams, whose political views were far more liberal than his own. The two were inseparable, taking joint vacations in Europe and even building neighboring houses on



John Hay

Washington's Lafayette Square. Hay's wit was a prime attraction at Adams's power breakfasts, though Hay, unlike Adams, was not a snob. He kept broad political company, including, as Adams noted, "scores of men whom I would not touch with a pole."

Hay did not become secretary of state until September 1898, after the Spanish had been defeated in Cuba and the Philippines. He was thus an implementer rather than an initiator of the new imperialism. Though an imperialist, he was a reluctant one. As the

American navy steamed to victory in Santiago and Manila bays, Hay from the embassy in London wished Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Filipinos autonomy or independence, not colonization by the United States. A letter to Theodore Roosevelt containing the famous phrase, "It has been a splendid little war," can actually be read as cautionary, since he added, "[The war] is now to be concluded, I hope, with that fine good nature, which is, after all, the distinguishing trait of the American character." Only weeks later, he praised Andrew Carnegie for an article attacking imperialism. But Hay was an Anglophile, and the spectacle of Britain's decline probably moved him toward his eventual acceptance of a kind of imperialism. "The serious thing," he wrote to Adams in 1900, "is the discovery—now past doubt—that the British have lost all skill in fighting; and the whole world knows it, and is regulating itself accordingly."

III

Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840–1914) was a brilliant misfit in an organization with little tolerance for misfits. Of impeccable military lineage, he was the son of the dean of faculty at West Point and an Annapolis graduate himself. He preferred writing and research to sea duty, provoking one superior officer to call him a “pen-and-ink sailor.” Yet it was on a cruise to France at the age of 23 that he discovered the idea that shaped his life’s work. The French army’s occupation of Mexico City convinced Mahan that the Monroe Doctrine was no stronger than the capacity of a U.S. fleet to support it. He had not thought of himself as an imperialist until the mid-1880s. He had opposed colonies precisely because they would require a large military establishment. But the logic of his analysis—first in lectures at the Naval War College, then in books—made him the primary philosopher of imperialism. “I am an imperialist,” he said, “because I am not an isolationist.”



Alfred Thayer Mahan

Mahan’s great work, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783* (1890), remains a masterpiece of clarity, analysis, and fine prose. Its thesis is that a great nation must be a strong sea power, and that this requires “a wide-spread healthy commerce and a powerful navy.” The hero of Mahan’s book was Great Britain, but the intended audiences were American politicians and the barnacle-encrusted U.S. Navy, which was still configured for coastal defense rather than control of the sea-lanes. Mahan issued a picturesque warning: “Having . . . no foreign establishments, either colonial or military, the ships of war of the United States, in war, will be like land birds, unable to fly far from their own shores. To provide resting-places for them, where they can coal and repair, would be one of the first duties of a government proposing to itself the development of the power of the nation at sea.”

Mahan saw Hawaii and the Philippines as two necessary “resting places.” He also favored an isthmian canal to join the three American seaboard: the Atlantic, the Gulf, and the Pacific. The “piercing of the Isthmus,” he argued, would expose “the defenseless condition of the Pacific coast.” Though an Anglophile, Mahan understood the potential threat from Britain, as well as from Germany and Japan. Here one can see a circular argument: America needed a large navy to contest its rivals at sea; it needed a canal to join its coasts and its fleets; it needed colonies in the Pacific to protect the canal and a bigger navy to protect the colonies. Thus did one act of imperialism beget another. Mahan, a devout Christian,

believed deeply in the morality of his doctrines. He held that the United States had an obligation to expand so that its civilization, culture, and religion could be spread abroad for the benefit of the more backward nations.

This austere, introverted naval captain—after retirement he wrote a book about his spiritual development—was no self-promoter. He needed an agent, and he found one in Theodore Roosevelt. The two met in 1887, when Roosevelt came to lecture at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. Roosevelt had in fact preceded Mahan in arguing in print that the United States needed a stronger navy. In his book *The Naval War of 1812*, begun at Harvard and published in 1882 when he was only 24, Roosevelt contended that the United States had won the war because of the quality of a navy that had since been allowed to decline. Roosevelt praised *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* to his cosmopolitan intellectual coterie, inadvertently ensuring that it became a required text in the rival navies of Germany, Japan, and Great Britain. Thus Mahan became the dominant strategist not just of the American navy but of many of the major navies of the world.

IV

Elihu Root (1845–1937) enjoyed the early career of a conventionally brilliant member of the minor eastern establishment. His colonial forebears had moved from Connecticut to Hamilton, New York, where his father, Oren (known as “Cube Root”), taught mathematics at Hamilton College. Elihu graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Hamilton, attended law school at New York University, joined the Union League and a fishing club on Martha’s Vineyard, and bought a summer house in Southampton. As a young lawyer representing big corporations, he had the pushiness and arrogance of one to whom everything came easy. In a case against “Boss” William M. Tweed, the judge suggested that Root, a junior member of the defense

team, spend more time with his conscience. This fastidious lawyer had a steel-trap mind, remarkable organizational ability, and a capacity for ruthlessness. Even his friend John Hay commented on his “frank and murderous smile.”

Root also had keen political instincts. He backed Theodore Roosevelt, 13 years his junior, for the New York State Assembly when Roosevelt was 23. He supported Roosevelt again in 1886, when he ran unsuccessfully for mayor of New York City, and worked closely with him when he was New York City police commissioner in 1896. In 1898,



Elihu Root

when Roosevelt ran for governor of New York, Root established the candidate's New York residence against claims that he had moved to Washington. Roosevelt, like others who valued Root's services, saw him as a lawyer who showed clients how to do what they wanted to do, not what they were prevented from doing. Root was not above special pleading, however. Solicitous of E. H. Harriman, J. P. Morgan, and other captains of industry whom he represented, he talked the new governor out of radical reforms that would have upset the business and financial communities.

Root, like Hay, was a grudging imperialist. Following the sinking of the *Maine*, he wrote to a friend, "I deplore war. I have earnestly hoped that it might not come. I deny the obligation of the American people to make the tremendous sacrifices which it must entail. . . . I prefer that we should not do it; I don't think we are bound to do it; I would prevent it if I could." But being above all a pragmatist, Root supported the war once it was joined. He accepted President McKinley's offer of the War Department in July 1899 for the purpose of administering the islands taken from Spain. "So I went to perform a lawyer's duty upon the call of the greatest of all our clients, the Government of our country."

The sleek career trajectory of this consummate organization man, together with his stern and disciplined work habits, made him difficult to like and sometimes even to take seriously. Gore Vidal, alluding to Root's distinctive bangs, dismissed him as "an animated feather-duster." His portraits in the New York headquarters of the Council on Foreign Relations, which he helped to found, and in the Metropolitan Club, of which he was the president, certainly make him look like a dandy.

President Roosevelt, however, did not underestimate him. Roosevelt called Root "the greatest man that has arisen on either side of the Atlantic in my lifetime, . . . the brutal friend to whom I pay the most attention." The compliment was not all hyperbole. Root grew in his job, combining mental acuity, directness, and managerial genius with a sense of fairness in the governing of America's new colonial subjects.

V

Of the five men considered here, Henry Cabot Lodge (1850–1924) was the one who most deserved the title of "jingo." The scion of two patrician Boston families, he earned undergraduate and graduate degrees at Harvard and joined its faculty under the protective wing of Henry Adams, then a professor of medieval history. He was an obsessive writer and published biographies of Alexander Hamilton, Daniel Webster, and George Washington before he was 40. He was also a determined politician, who lost three elections in Massachusetts before winning a seat in Congress in 1886 and then being elected to the Senate in 1892. Lodge's experience in politics, both winning and losing, helped



Henry Cabot Lodge

make him the supreme political tactician of his time.

Lodge seems to have had two personalities—one for his closest friends and one for others. To Henry Adams, his lifelong friend, he was “an excellent talker, a voracious reader, a ready wit, an accomplished orator, with a clear mind and a powerful memory, . . . English to the last fibre of his thought—saturated with English traditions, English taste—revolted by every vice and by most virtues of Frenchman and German.” Others found him frigid, crusty, aristocratic, intransigent (Mark Hanna, the Ohio Republican Party boss, called him the stubbornest man he had ever met), narrow-minded, conspiratorial, and (according to President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard) “degenerated.” One of his fellow senators compared him to the soil of Massachusetts—“highly cultivated but very thin.” To everyone, he was tenacious.

Lodge may have come to his view of the world through his family. He was the heir to a shipping fortune, and his wife was the daughter of an admiral. From the platform of the Congress, he spoke out early and often for the annexation of Cuba and a permanent naval presence in Hawaii, and he conspired with Roosevelt for the seizure of the Philippines. He wrote in 1895, “From the Rio Grande to the Arctic Ocean there should be but one flag and one country. . . . Every consideration of national growth and national welfare demands it.” Lodge was driven by the conviction of America’s superiority and its right to “conquest, colonization, and territorial expansion.” His views were more than a little bigoted. His activism in the Congress against new immigrants was directed mainly against Chinese, Italians, Russians, and Eastern Europeans. “We are at this moment,” he claimed, “overcrowded with undesirable immigrants.”

Henry Cabot Lodge was, in a sense, Theodore Roosevelt’s bad angel. The two had similar social and intellectual backgrounds, sharing Harvard and the Porcellian Club. Lodge taught Roosevelt at Harvard, and they collaborated in the progressive wing of the Republican Party. They co-authored a book for juveniles, *Hero Tales from American History* (1895), full of derring-do and violence. Their devotion to imperialism was identical and fierce, and they plotted strategy together. So close were they that, when Roosevelt became president, Lodge cut a separate entrance in his house on Massachusetts Avenue so the president could enter unobserved. Still, the two were profoundly different. Lodge’s secretive nature contrasted with Roosevelt’s openness and ebullience. And Lodge’s bigotry, unlike Roosevelt’s racialism, was unleavened by an innate largeness of spirit.

VI

Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919) was close to Mahan, Hay, Root, and Lodge, and he admired all four. But for all his contradictions, he was a bigger man than any of them. It is striking how early and often he was spotted for greatness—by family friends, Harvard cronies, politicians, and cowboys. His extraordinary memory, his multiple enthusiasms, his supreme self-confidence, and his unbounded energy made him a force of nature. He is “pure act,” said Henry Adams, who was no act. Roosevelt held major positions at startlingly early stages of his life: minority leader of the New York State Assembly at 24, U.S. civil service commissioner at 31, New York City police commissioner at 36, assistant secretary of the Navy at 38, governor of New York at 40, vice president and president of the United States at 42.

Roosevelt was born in New York City, son of a well-to-do importer who devoted much of his leisure to helping wayward children. As a boy, “Teedie” developed many of the traits that, with his storied energy, were to make him a forceful political leader. He mastered a variety of subjects; he loved manly sport; he had a snobbish sense of superiority and, with it, his father’s charitable commitment; he was confident of his rectitude; he loved to preach and write. At 18, he published the first of his 38 works, a scientific catalogue on summer birds of the Adirondacks. At Harvard he boxed, joined the most fashionable clubs, and graduated in 1880 in the top 15 percent of his class.

So blessed was Roosevelt with success that it is easy to forget the handicaps he overcame. He was blind in one eye, yet was a prodigious reader and author. He was sickly and asthmatic, and his heart was so weak that his doctors feared that his compulsive exercising would kill him. He bore with stoicism the immeasurable tragedy of losing, at 25, his wife and his mother on the same day. He had great qualities of courage and determination. He was an unabashed self-promoter, but, then, there was much to promote. He was a genuine reformer in the New York assembly and a real hero on San Juan Hill. He had enemies and rejoiced in them; some of them thought he was crazy. McKinley’s man Mark Hanna tried to block him from the vice-presidential nomination in 1900, wailing, “Don’t any of you realize that there’s only one life between that madman and the Presidency?”

Roosevelt came to his imperialist views through the expansive energy of his character and his particular understanding of



Theodore Roosevelt

American history. Like Mahan, he was a big-navy man; like Hay, he was an Anglophile who believed that America had to replace a faltering Britain in maintaining the balance of power. In *The Winning of the West* (1889), his stirring account of America's territorial expansion, he showed indecent contempt for the rights of Indians: "The most righteous of all wars is a war with savages, though it is apt to be also the most terrible and inhuman. The rude, fierce settler who drives the savage from the land lays all civilized mankind under debt to him." Then, shifting to a global canvas: "American and Indian, Boer and Zulu, Cossack and Tartar, New Zealander and Maori,—in each case the victor, horrible though many of his deeds are, has laid deep the foundations for the future greatness of a mighty people."

With views such as those, it was only a step to the two principles that guided Roosevelt during his first foreign-policy assignment at the Navy Department. First, he believed that the spread of the more advanced peoples (preferably English-speaking) over the less advanced benefited mankind as a whole. Second, he maintained that when American interests clashed with those of another state, the former had to be defended. Roosevelt did put some limits on his imperial rapacity. To Carl Schurz, a dedicated anti-imperialist, he wrote, "Unjust war is dreadful; a just war may be the highest duty." And in theory, if not always in practice, he took a moderate view of the Monroe Doctrine. He saw it as an "Open Door" in South America: "I do not want the United States or any European power to get territorial possessions in South America but to let South America gradually develop its own lines, with an open door to all outside nations."

Roosevelt rejected "imperialism" as a description of his approach. He tolerated "expansion." The word he preferred was "Americanism." The author of heroic tales of America, the doer of heroic deeds, he saw his country as truly beneficent toward the lesser nations. Even before he came into positions of policy responsibility, he would sit in the Metropolitan Club with his allies Mahan and Lodge and plan ways for the United States to wrest the imperial baton from ineffectual, corrupt, unworthy Spain. Long before he became president, Roosevelt was the most influential advocate of America's new imperialism.

VII

This new imperialism was certain to arouse strong opposition from those convinced that it betrayed American traditions or sold out American interests. The anti-imperialists were a collection of idealists, businessmen such as Andrew Carnegie, trade unionists such as Samuel Gompers, writers such as Mark Twain, prominent members of Congress, and even some racists. Their most powerful advocate was Grover Cleveland. In his first inaugural address, in 1885, he stated baldly, "I do not favor a policy of acquisi-

tion of new and distant territory or the incorporation of remote interests with our own.” Inaugurated for the second time in 1893, President Cleveland withdrew the treaty annexing Hawaii that his predecessor had submitted to the Senate. In 1895, he kept the United States from taking sides in the Cuban insurrection against Spain. But Cleveland’s influence was limited to the years he was in office. In 1897, McKinley succeeded him and brought Roosevelt, Hay, and Root to positions of power.

The spiritual leader of the anti-imperialists was a remarkable figure, Carl Schurz. Like Carnegie, Schurz was not born an American. A native of Prussia, he emigrated to the United States at 23, having been a student activist in the European revolutionary movements of 1848. Schurz established a political base in the Midwest as the chief spokesman for German Americans. He was a friend of Lincoln’s, a Civil War major general who fought bravely at Second Manassas and Gettysburg, a U.S. senator from Missouri, and secretary of the interior under President Rutherford Hayes. A tall, imposing man with a full beard and absolute moral conviction, Schurz excelled as an orator and journalist. He opposed every move by the imperialists on Hawaii, Cuba, and the Philippines, causing Roosevelt to attack him as a “prattling foreigner.” He invoked with passion and eloquence an American heritage into which he had not been born. He feared that empire would undermine the foundations of democracy, subjugate foreign peoples against their will, and necessitate a large permanent military establishment. “My country, right or wrong,” Schurz proclaimed. “If right, to be kept right; and if wrong, to be set right.”

Schurz was a founder of the Anti-Imperialist League, launched with heavy symbolism in revolutionary Faneuil Hall in Boston in 1898, following the victory over Spain. The league’s members represented the highest-minded of the anti-imperialists, graduates (as most of them were) of Harvard and Yale. They pointed out that the U.S. Constitution contained no provisions for vassals, and they made ominous references to the fate of imperial Rome. Their influence, however, was limited to some of the better universities and men’s clubs along the eastern seaboard.

For varying reasons, American business and American labor tended toward anti-imperialism. Steel baron Andrew Carnegie’s opposition to expansion combined his pacifist leanings with his belief that war was destructive to commerce. Labor leader Samuel Gompers focused on the need to exclude low-wage Asians, an argument still used in the U.S. labor movement against Mexicans. Other anti-imperialists were openly racist. “Are we to have a Mongolian state in this Union?” asked Representative John F. Fitzgerald, John F. Kennedy’s grandfather, on the floor of the House. Few anti-imperialists, however, were consistent in their beliefs. The venerable George Frisbie Hoar, senior senator from Massachusetts and the most eloquent anti-imperialist in Congress, had supported the annexation of

Hawaii. Even Schurz, that model of rectitude, had once advocated the annexation of Canada and expressed doubt that Cubans or Filipinos were capable of American-style self-government, not being up to the standards of the “Germanic races.” William Jennings Bryan, Democratic candidate for president in 1896 and 1900 and an anti-imperialist, alienated the bankers and lawyers at the core of the movement by making silver the key issue in the 1896 campaign. Bryan blurred his image further by signing up for active duty in the war against Spain.

The force of anti-imperialism, and its variety, showed that the imperial style was not unanimously acceptable to the American people. Some of the dissidents’ arguments—especially those contrasting imperial activity with America’s core values—were revived much later, during the Vietnam War, and even retain relevance today. Yet for all their passion, the enemies of the new imperialism seemed old-fashioned and out of touch. They looked back to a mythic American past, while Roosevelt and his friends laid claim to a bountiful future. Indeed, there were significant age differences. Schurz was 69 in 1898; Senator Hoar was 72; Andrew Carnegie was 63. By contrast, Hay was 60, Mahan 58, Root 53, Lodge 48, Roosevelt 40, and Albert Beveridge, the imperialist firebrand in the Senate, only 36. The anti-imperialists were on the losing end of historical change. McKinley’s re-election in 1900 weakened them mortally, and Roosevelt’s election in 1904 destroyed them as a political force.

VIII

From 1898 to 1903, Roosevelt, Lodge, and Mahan were involved in virtually every action that transformed the United States into an imperial power. Hay and Root came to Washington after the initial surge of conquest, but they helped carry it forward even as they sought to temper its excesses.

McKinley’s election in 1896 brought to the presidency an affable Civil War veteran—usually known as “Major McKinley”—whose greatest virtue was the ability to get along with people. McKinley had few strong views on anything, including imperialism. He began by opposing it. “We want no wars of conquest,” he said in his inaugural address in March 1897, “we must avoid the temptation of territorial aggression.” But Henry Cabot Lodge persuaded McKinley to take Roosevelt, at the time New York City police commissioner, as assistant secretary of the Navy. Roosevelt, Lodge, and Mahan already knew what they wanted: Cuba, the Philippines, and Hawaii. The Cuban revolution against Spain gave them their chance.

The father of the revolution was José Martí, a Cuban intellectual who lived 14 years of his short life in the United States and organized the insurrection from New York City. Martí admired America’s individualism but hated its materialism; the last thing he wanted was an American takeover of Cuba. “Through the independence of

Cuba,” he said, “it is my duty . . . to prevent the USA from spreading over the West Indies and falling with added weight upon other lands of Our America.” After landing in Cuba with an invading force, Martí was killed on the first day of the Cuban revolution—May 19, 1895. He was 42. His successors were less distrustful of American motives, and Hearst used their information and misinformation to wage his newspaper war against Spain.

When McKinley took office, Cuba was already a major source of tension between the United States and Spain. The president exerted diplomatic pressure to force the Spanish, with some success, to behave less brutally toward the Cuban insurrectionists. After the *Maine* blew up on February 15, 1898—under circumstances that today appear to have been accidental—Roosevelt railed at McKinley’s lack of reaction: “The President has no more backbone than a chocolate éclair.”

On February 25, in a breathtaking act of insubordination, Roosevelt took advantage of the Friday afternoon departure of his boss, the elderly Secretary John D. Long, to put the entire U.S. Navy on a war footing. While the secretary went about some medical errands, Roosevelt instructed Admiral George Dewey in Hong Kong to attack the Philippines in the event of war. McKinley kept looking for a diplomatic solution; he offered to buy Cuba from the queen of Spain for \$300 million (40 times what the United States had paid for Alaska); she found the price too low. War became unavoidable.

Roosevelt’s stroke was brilliant. Though the Philippines had never been a bone of contention with Spain, Roosevelt and his coconspirators understood their strategic value as a base and as a naval stepping stone to the Asian continent. Dewey’s lightning attack in Manila Bay, followed by the naval victory at Santiago Bay in eastern Cuba and the almost unnoticed annexation of Hawaii that same summer, accomplished in a few short weeks most of the imperial agenda of Roosevelt, Lodge, and Mahan. Roosevelt’s own exploits on San Juan Hill, in a campaign in which the Americans had the advantage of the Spaniards in both manpower and firepower, made him a national hero. Four months later, he was the governor-elect of New York; two years after that, the vice president-elect.

Despite the intense American interest in Cuba throughout the 19th century and the urgings of General Leonard Wood, the military governor from 1899 to 1902, the victors of Santiago Bay made no plans to annex the island. Roosevelt, Lodge, and Secretary of War Root all opposed annexation. But Root insisted on permanent installations (including the naval base at Guantánamo Bay) and the right of American intervention in the case of anarchy or threat by another power. He argued: “The trouble about Cuba is that, although technically a foreign country, practically and morally it occupies an intermediate position, since we have required it to become a part of our political and military system, and to form a part of our lines of



Datto Piang, King of Mindanao, poses with American officers and administrators. Though paternalistic governors, Americans brought schools, land reform, and a new political system to the Philippines.

exterior defense.” (President John F. Kennedy could have quoted this sentence verbatim to Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev in October 1962.) After military government ended in 1902, an American civilian government presided until 1909, when Cuba gained its independence.

The United States shared basic objectives with anti-Spanish revolutionaries in both Cuba and the Philippines. Yet the Americans managed to alienate both. The cause in each case was the American unwillingness to concede power. In Cuba the rebels were barred from the surrender ceremony at Santiago and from the subsequent peace conference. The American soldiers, who were mostly southern, did not get along with the insurrectionary forces, who were mostly black. Ironically, the greatest negative effect on U.S. interests may have come not from the antipathy of the Cuban rebels but from the hostility of one Spanish soldier who had been transferred to Cuba from Spain at the time of the war. Angel Castro hated the

Americans for having prevented the Spanish army from defeating the rebels. No doubt he vented his hostility in front of his son Fidel, born in 1926.

In the Philippines the American invaders earned even greater enmity among the local population. There the occupying force fought Filipino revolutionaries for nearly four years, from 1898 to 1902, in a war that cost 200,000 (mostly civilian) Filipino lives. The Philippine revolution against Spain began in 1896. It was led by Emilio Aguinaldo, of middle-class Spanish-Chinese background, who wanted to create an independent government on the American model. Aguinaldo allowed the Americans to persuade him not to attack Manila before they landed their troops. His trust was misplaced; Dewey cut him out of the surrender ceremony. To Aguinaldo, the American occupiers became indistinguishable from the Spanish, and he decided to fight them.

Thus did the United States alienate and destroy a revolutionary movement that had taken its values from America's own struggle for independence. Roosevelt and Lodge—in their determination to annex the Philippines, in their blindness to the desires and rights of its people, and in the face of McKinley's dithering and the American public's apathy—were the fathers of this unnecessary war. Aguinaldo was captured in March 1901, and Roosevelt, as president, proclaimed military victory in July 1902. Independence did not come to the Philippines until 1946, but at least the revolutionary leader lived to see it. In 1960, the man whom Elihu Root had called a “Chinese half-breed” and who was now at 92 his country's national hero, received from the American ambassador to the Philippine Republic, Charles Bohlen, the sword he had been wearing when he was captured by the American army.

IX

Americans like to pretend that they have no imperial past. What was done in their name in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, the Philippines, and Panama—all in the space of five years—proves them wrong. American acquisitiveness may have been less extensive than the global foraying of Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal, but it was just as indifferent to the interests of local populations. After the flush of conquest, however, some restraints were exercised that were unique, or at least typically American. For this, most credit must go to Elihu Root.

Root was charged by President McKinley, and later by President Roosevelt, to establish a civil society in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. In Cuba he had competent administrators, and they turned the island over to its people in 1909 in better economic and political shape than they had found it. With Puerto Rico, Root hesitated to impose a wholly American system on a Hispanic population; so he preserved traditional Spanish civil law. He also instituted a

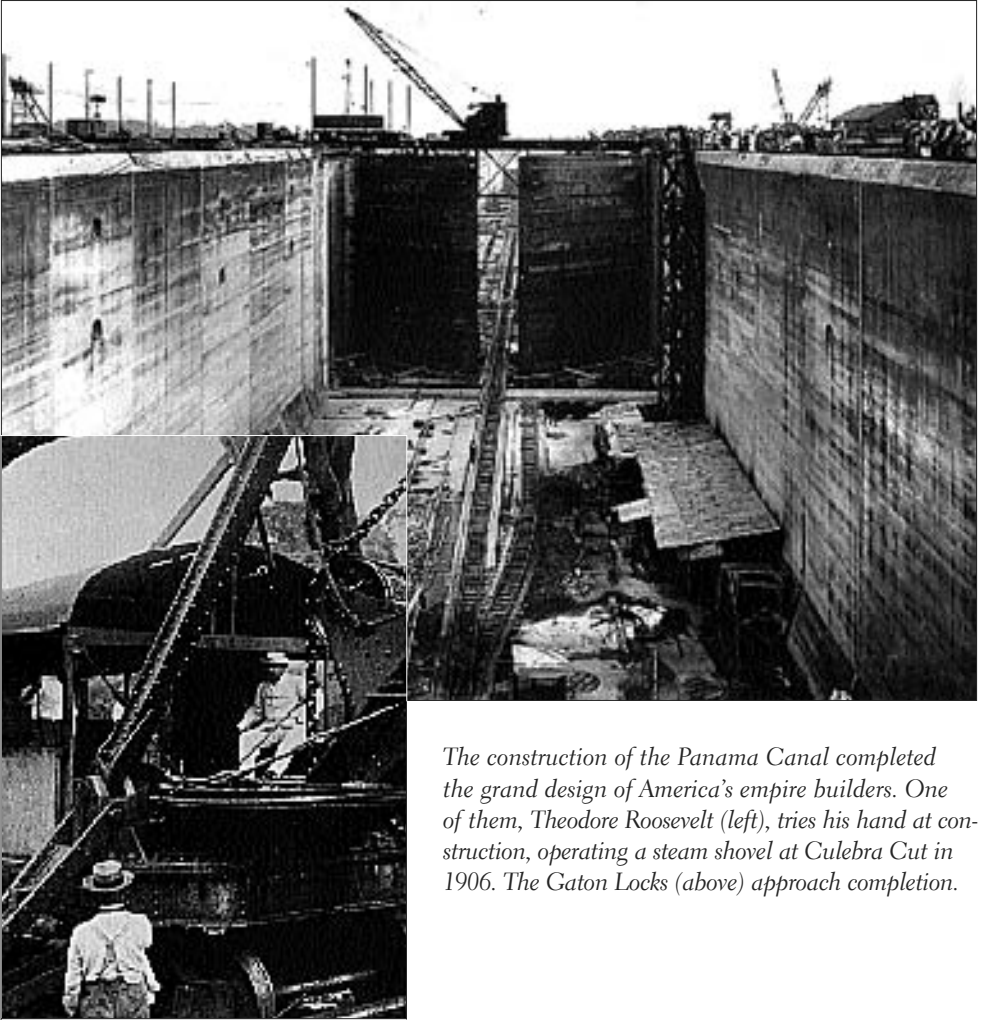
financial reform ensuring that locally generated revenues would be used locally, and he won large appropriations from Congress for education on the island. While he opposed independence and statehood, he ensured considerable self-government for Puerto Rico, ending the military administration in 1900 and establishing an elected house of delegates. In the Philippines, Root had an inspired civilian governor—William Howard Taft, an Ohio judge who had never been seen on the imperialist enterprise. Under the umbrella of American sovereignty, Root and Taft developed a political system providing for broad local powers, the rule of law, and individual freedoms. It was paternalistic, but it produced in 1907 the first elected legislature in Asia. Under Taft's leadership, Americans initiated land reforms and built roads, ports, hospitals, and schools. The Philippines, as a result, soon had the highest literacy rate in Southeast Asia.

Secretary of State Hay, like Secretary of War Root, was a mixture of jingoism and moderation. On one hand, Hay's negotiations with the British in 1901, voiding an earlier agreement that had made any isthmian canal a cooperative enterprise, produced a treaty giving the United States exclusive rights to build, control, and fortify the canal. His treaty in 1903 with the newly installed puppet government of Panama delivered a 10-mile-wide canal zone to the United States. On the other hand, Hay tried unsuccessfully to limit U.S. gains in the Philippines to a coaling station, and his sympathetic approach to the Philippine insurgents, had it prevailed, might have tempered and shortened their conflict with the U.S. Army. Hay's open door for trade with China was two-sided: though it extended U.S. imperial interests through the Pacific, it was a tacit renunciation of territorial claims on the Asian mainland.

Even Roosevelt was capable of restraint and reflection. After absorbing Cuba and Puerto Rico, he showed little appetite for other Caribbean possessions. Speaking of the island of Santo Domingo, he said, "I have about the same desire to annex it as a gorged boa constrictor might have to swallow a porcupine wrong-end-to." And he came to see the annexation of the Philippines as an economic and military mistake. Anticipating a Japanese threat in Asia, he warned that the Philippines would become "our heel of Achilles if we are attacked by a foreign power." The fall of the Philippines to Japan in 1942 confirmed his prescience. America's leading jingo came to advocate early independence for his most notable acquisition.

X

In the taking of colonies, America was no different (except in scale) from the major European powers engaged in the late-19th-century struggle for empire. In the administration of its acquisitions, however, America's record has been largely positive. Hawaii has become a state. The Philippines were promised, and



The construction of the Panama Canal completed the grand design of America's empire builders. One of them, Theodore Roosevelt (left), tries his hand at construction, operating a steam shovel at Culebra Cut in 1906. The Gaton Locks (above) approach completion.

finally received, independence, and relations between the two countries remain close. Puerto Ricans consistently voted for close ties with the United States, with no significant popular sentiment for independence. Theodore Roosevelt's America became a classic imperialist power, but it went on to become a moderate and generally effective colonial governor.

The five-year period in which America became an imperial state unleashed forces that have affected its entire subsequent history. For the first time, the United States had used its armies overseas. With two smashing naval victories, it had proven the value of a powerful navy. With the republic on the way to becoming a global military power, Americans were coming to believe, with Roosevelt, that the world was interdependent and that America must play a major role in it. In entering on the world stage, America had exercised its peculiar propensity to join narrow interests with messianic goals, to combine raw power with high purpose. The events and debates of 100 years ago have left their mark on American leaders and their actions ever since.

Woodrow Wilson, contrary to common belief, was as much an acolyte as an adversary of Theodore Roosevelt. An interventionist in both word and deed, Wilson supported the annexation of the Philippines and Puerto Rico and believed that the United States should not hesitate to export its values. As president, he continued Roosevelt's policy of intervention in Latin America, initiating occupations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic that lasted 19 and eight years respectively.

America's preoccupation with stability in Latin America—one of the key reasons for the war with Spain over Cuba—carried into the post-World War II period, as is shown by the actions of several successive U.S. presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower's CIA-backed overthrow of a leftist Guatemalan government in 1954; an abortive effort by John F. Kennedy to dispose of Cuban president Fidel Castro in 1961; a brief occupation of the Dominican Republic by Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965 to forestall a leftward trend; the participation of Richard M. Nixon's CIA in the ouster of leftist Chilean president Salvador Allende in 1973; Ronald Reagan's invasion of Grenada in 1983; the capture of Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega in 1990 during the administration of George Bush; and the expulsion of a Haitian military dictatorship by Bill Clinton in 1994 to return an elected president to office and to curb the flow of refugees bound for the United States.

All of these examples reflect the mixture of moralism and self-interest that characterized Theodore Roosevelt's approach to the hemisphere. In more than a few cases, repeated use of American muscle stirred resentment within Latin America and prevented the establishment of normal relations. President Jimmy Carter's achievement of a treaty in 1977 to relinquish the Panama Canal, which won justifiable praise in Latin America, stood clearly outside the Rooseveltian tradition.

The acquisition of Hawaii and the Philippines in 1898 strengthened American interests in Asia during the decades before World War II. In fact, that war began for the United States as an Asian war, with the Japanese attack on Hawaii. In its ideological focus and its projection of American military power, the postwar strategy of containment, designed to curb Soviet (and Chinese) aggression, was a classic extrapolation of the imperialism of 1898–1903. Almost all the American soldiers killed during the Cold War died in Korea and Vietnam—a sober reminder of Asia's importance to U.S. policy as well as of the benefits and risks of overseas wars. The Vietnam War in fact bore an eerie resemblance to the war against the Filipino insurrectionists. In both conflicts, American troops fought homegrown nationalists, though in the Vietnamese case the nationalists were heavily supported by foreign powers. And, in both, significant U.S. casualties, combined with reports of atrocities committed by Americans, weakened public support for the U.S.

commitment as the war dragged on. But victory in the Philippines averted a backlash against military actions abroad; defeat in Vietnam caused one. Since the fall of Saigon in 1975, American presidents have been wary of extensive ground engagements.

The five who created the first genuine American imperialism worked together in a way seldom seen in American history. Roosevelt's missionary zeal and breadth of vision, Mahan's rigorous development of a strategy for making America a great power, Root's conscientiousness and good sense, Hay's combination of loyalty and questioning, and Lodge's masterful ability to win support of the Congress—all of these elements, taken together, contributed crucially to America's entry upon the world scene. They also mirror most of the policy contradictions that have marked U.S. policy in the 20th century: the idealism and the cynicism, the cultural arrogance and the humanitarian impulse, the intended and the unintended consequences of globalism, the extension of American domestic values abroad at the expense of some of those values at home. Roosevelt believed that "our chief usefulness to humanity rests on our combining power with high purpose." Twentieth-century American foreign policy has been conducted between those poles, often, but not always, with success.

With the hindsight of 100 years, it seems clear that the actions of Roosevelt and his friends helped to change the way America has viewed the world and acted in it. One of Roosevelt's Harvard professors, William James, who detested the imperialism practiced by his former pupil, wrote of 1898: "We gave the fighting instinct and the passion of mastery their outing . . . because we thought that . . . we could resume our permanent ideals and character when the fighting fit was done." But the fighting fit did change our ideals and our character. Today, for better or worse, we still live with the consequences—and under the shadow—of the imperial actions taken a century ago.

A New Italian Renaissance?

A movement to dismantle Italy's elaborate corporatist state is under way in Rome, but the outcome is far from certain.

by John Hooper

Via Po, a broad, cobbled thoroughfare that runs a few hundred yards from the ancient city walls, is one of Rome's more up-scale shopping areas, featuring boutiques, furriers, jewellers, and designer leatherware stores. It is a prime site in other ways as well, being the address of the German embassy, the headquarters of the Italian soccer federation, and the walled residence of the papal nuncio. Yet tucked in amid the fancy stores and important offices, one can also find a plumbing supply store, a tacky giftwear emporium, and a basement pasta factory.

Among other things, the heterogeneity of Via Po bears witness to a highly effective, though not immediately visible, form of protectionism. Had they been left to the mercy of market forces, stores such as the one selling pipe joints and rubber washers would long ago have been driven away.

Right now, however, the storekeepers of Via Po and the surrounding streets are in a state of shock.

One Friday last January—without warning—the Italian government's center-left cabinet approved a measure officials had been preparing in great secrecy, a law that, if approved by Parliament, will



Celebrating the victory of the center-left Olive Tree coalition in April 1996, young Romans hold up a poster—curiously, in English—proclaiming the reformist ambitions of leader Romano Prodi.

strike at the very foundations of a monumental bureaucratic structure that has safeguarded the way of life of Italy's family storekeepers for more than half a century.

Within broad limits, the law will allow stores to open and close when they like. At present, their hours are determined by the city council, which also decides—in the case of those that sell food and drink—when their owners are permitted to go on vacation. Even more subversively, the new law will allow storekeepers to offer *what* they like.

“With this new law,” said one shopkeeper, “even someone who didn’t know how to read or write could just open a store.”

For the moment, anyone who aspires to open a store in Italy is faced with a kind of commercial commando assault course. First, you have to get a license. And since new licenses are rarely issued, you normally need to buy one from someone who is going out of business. (Until the announcement of the government’s new measure, there was a flourishing “gray market” in these permits, with its own brokers and tariffs.) Nor will just any license do. You need one for the kind of merchandise you want to sell, and if you are eccentric enough to want to sell more than one sort of merchandise, you will need more than one license. If, for example, you propose to offer your customers underwear *and* outerwear *and* linen *and* such things as needles and thread with which to mend the rest, you will need four different permits. In a middle-class neighborhood such as the one around Via Po, that would cost you about \$100,000.

Licenses for supermarkets and department stores are even more strictly rationed than others because, for almost 50 years, the Christian Democrats, who were in every Italian government from the late 1940s to the early ’90s and whose ideology was inspired by Roman Catholic social thought, made a conscious effort to preserve the family store as a redoubt of family values. One result is that, in the whole of Rome, there is not a single outlet comparable to France’s Galeries Lafayette or Spain’s El Corte Inglés.

Regulation per se has also helped sustain the little family retail business. A store can be run entirely by one family if it has limited hours. It can also get away with closing down altogether at lunchtime and for vacations because competing outlets are all forced to do the same. Only 30 percent of store assistants in Italy are from outside the family that owns the business. In France and Germany, the comparable figures are 79 and 85 percent. Not surprisingly the Italian arrangement has had a huge impact on employment patterns. Italy is a nation virtually without “shop girls,” which helps to explain why, for example, in the south only eight in every 100 women between the ages of 15 and 24 had a job in 1995.

The regulation ordeal continues. For once you have succeeded in obtaining your licenses to sell certain goods, you must get them registered with the city council (a process that usually takes several months and costs yet more money), then apply—and pay—to take an exam. “In

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One goal of Italy's corporatist arrangement has been to protect the family business. Here, grandfather and grandson take a break from their store duties to hone their soccer skills.

two parts," says my neighbor, Gabriella Capponi, jabbing a finger at the counter for emphasis. "Written and oral."

Signora Capponi works in as typical an Italian family business as you will find—a hardware store just off Via Po, higher than it is wide and festooned to the ceiling with everything from welding masks to natural sponges. It gives employment to Signora Capponi, her husband, and his mother and father, who bought it in 1958 when they moved to Rome from a village on the Mediterranean coast.

Signora Capponi's father-in-law, Giovino Paradiso, still cannot believe that the state would really allow people to become storekeepers without taking an examination. "Knowing what to do is important too," he said to me, breaking off from counting out steel hooks. "With this new law, even someone who didn't know how to read or write could just open a store."

The maze of regulation surrounding the retail sector explains more than just the heterogeneity of Via Po. It explains why new products have such difficulty reaching the market in Italy. Try locating a computer store in an Italian city and you will discover that, for the most part, computers and their accessories are sold either by mail order or from warehouses in industrial zones miles from the center. Heavy regulations also explain why shopping in Italy is such an inconvenient nightmare. Someone wanting to buy a ladder, overalls, and cleaning liquid not only has to visit three different stores but also must make sure that none of these visits overlaps with any of the stores' two-hour lunch breaks, which themselves rarely coincide.

As Italy's prime minister, Romano Prodi, warned, the implications of

the liberalization of the retail business are “enormous.” But, potentially at least, they go beyond even its direct and indirect effects. If we are to believe Prodi, who is also a professor of economics at the University of Bologna, this is merely the first move in a campaign by his government to liberalize the whole of society. In uncharacteristically brutal fashion, he declared, “We are going to take this country apart piece by piece.”

That is fighting talk. But then, what lies ahead of Prodi is a battle of epic scale. Italy, more perhaps than any other country in Europe, has a particular way of doing things that encompasses and transcends both the conventional political division between Left and Right and the economic polarization between corporatism and free-market ideology.

In the Anglo-Saxon world, it is the habit to think of confrontation and bare-clawed competition as fundamentally positive, essentially invigorating—and to be slightly perplexed when others fail to see matters the same way. Britain and America have both created bipolar democracies based on winner-take-all, first-past-the-post electoral systems. English-speakers tend also to favor conflictual economic arrangements such as free trade and free markets. And almost any nation that has been influenced by English common law has an advocatorial system of court procedure, with the judge not actually judging but holding the ring in which two sides fight it out in front of a jury.

Until very recently, Italy had none of these things. Indeed, it had close to their antitheses. Its extreme form of proportional representation ensured an intensely multipolar variety of democracy, which vested huge power in the parties but ensured that no one party could, in practice, garner enough votes or seats to form a government by itself. Moreover, a specifically Italian quirk prevented any real alternation of power. Because one of the nation’s parties, the Italian Communist Party (PCI), was considered unfit for government, it was left to the others to form an endless succession of subtly varying coalitions. All of them—of necessity—included the largest of the noncommunist parties, the Christian Democrats.

Thus, beneath an appearance of incessant change, there was actually considerable continuity. Arguably, too much. For instance, the Interior Ministry, the key to power in Italy because of its control of the police, part of the secret services, and many of the most sensitive archives, was headed continuously by a Christian Democrat from the late 1940s to the early 1990s.

Over the same period, Italy developed an unusually “social” form of capitalism. One of its characteristics was a high level of public ownership. Vast areas of the economy that had been taken over by the state under Italy’s fascist dictator, Benito Mussolini, were allowed to remain in public hands. Then, yet more were added. By the mid-1980s, the state, through its holding corporations, owned around a thousand firms that accounted for a third of total industrial sales. The corporatist thinking that had imbued Mussolini’s regime also lived on in the continuing organization of professional people

into Ordini (Orders) empowered to cartelize their respective areas of the economy. Most of the rest of the working population was just as rigorously organized within a web of employers' associations and trade unions that at the national level acquired an automatic right to be consulted on the shaping of economic policy. The strength of the communist movement, meanwhile, encouraged a proliferation of cooperatives, particularly in the center and north of the country.

The counterweight to all this “socialization” was the existence of a highly successful private sector. But even here, Italy was idiosyncratic and a long way from the individualistic Anglo-Saxon model because of the predominance of family businesses. One of the more striking aspects of Italy's economy today is how many of the larger corporations are still family-based and, to a greater or lesser extent, family run. Fiat is one example. The Berlusconi family's media and property empire is another.

The judicial system similarly reflects an emphasis on group values rather than individual rights. The defense begins each case with several disadvantages. Chief among these is the fact that the prosecutor, who has carried out a detailed investigation before the trial and concluded that the defendant is guilty, is as much a representative of the perceived interests of society as the judge or judges. The prosecutors are not attorneys but are themselves judges who belong to the same corporate body as the officials presiding over the court. Thus, a prosecutor's task is not so much to defeat an adversary as to get his or her own conclusions endorsed by a colleague who is also expected to act on behalf of the collective good.

For the most part, Italy's nonconfrontational practices served it well for decades. Italians and non-Italians alike might complain of the disorganization, but they could not dispute some remarkable achievements—several decades of relative political stability and an equivalent period of strong economic growth that, by the start of the 1990s, had given Italy a greater gross domestic product (GDP) per capita than Britain or, indeed, Kuwait. An important reason these preferences worked is that they offered solutions to at least two specifically Italian concerns.

One was the experience of dictatorship under Mussolini. A political system that, by its very nature, ensured that no one individual or party could gain control of society was as good a guarantee as any that the country would not slip back into totalitarianism. The “chaos” of Italian politics, with its revolving-door governments and interminable crises and melodramas, can even be seen as a thoroughly healthy reaction to the “order” imposed by Il Duce.

The other concern—felt unevenly in Italian society, perhaps, but very keenly in the Vatican and by successive U.S. administrations—was the immense power of communism in a country that had been consigned to the Western sphere of influence in the postwar agreements. Throughout the Cold War, the PCI was the West's most heavily voted-

for communist party. One of the effects—and purposes—of a highly “social” form of economic organization was to undercut the Marxists and make it impossible for them to claim that the working class was a helpless victim of exploitation. Indeed, there can be times—particularly when faced with some mind-numbingly senseless official restriction, or the power of the unions as demonstrated by their latest strike—when the foreigner in Italy can be forgiven for thinking it avoided communist rule only by making itself into a passable imitation of the old Soviet Union.

For some time, though, it has been clear that Italy’s anti-Darwinian, Catholic-corporatist way of doing things is no longer working. Politically, it was manifest in the collapse in the early 1990s of the old, party-dominated system known as the *partitocrazia*. Even the mighty Christian Democrats were swept away. Economically, it has been discernible in a less-than-sparkling performance over recent years. By the middle of this decade, Italy’s much-publicized *sorpasso*—its overtaking of Britain in the table of average output—had been quietly reversed. The European Union’s latest comprehensive figures, which are for 1995, put the United Kingdom’s GDP per capita at 14,358 European currency units (Ecus), just ahead of Italy’s 14,245.



The anecdotal evidence of relative decline is even more compelling. Visitors arriving at Rome’s Fiumicino Airport may feel—not surprisingly, since they are arriving in the world’s fifth industrial power—that they need not bring currency or travelers’ checks. A Spanish

friend made this mistake. He set off with a pocket full of credit cards, expecting to be able to raise cash at the Rome airport. And remained penniless. Only some of the Italian banks’ automatic teller machines recognize cards other than their own, and they are frequently out of operation, usually for *assenza di collegamento* (want of connection), whatever that means. In the end, our friend was forced to hire a car with his credit card just to get to the city center.

On the way, he passed a very elegant bridge on the right side of the road. What he, and hundreds of thousands of other tourists, failed to spot was that it leads from one field full of sheep to another field full of sheep. It is another of those monuments—a lesser, though poignant, one—to the trillions of squandered lire that have gone toward building

up a national debt that is 125 percent of the nation's GDP.

Once in Rome, he—like many of our guests—was struck by its beauty but also by its neglect. The motorist arriving in the city by way of the Via Ostiense, which is the most popular route, travels along a patched-up highway on which the pedestrian crossings are scarcely visible. It is divided by an untended strip of grass and trees, and the crash barriers on either side of it are smashed and dented. It has to be one of the most unimpressive entrances to any city in the developed world.

Fortunately, the car rental agency gave our friend a full tank of fuel. Apart from the fact that the vast majority of gas stations are closed for lunch and on Sundays, even on major roads into Rome, there are several days of the year when they are closed because of strikes by the pump attendants. What is more, quite a few gas stations still do not accept the usual internationally recognized cards.

But then this is a country in which the number of people who own a Visa card is lower than in Turkey. The unacceptability of plastic money is less obvious to the tourist. Restaurants and hotels have been forced to adapt to this odd foreign quirk. But in everyday life, cash is still the normal means of transaction, and you need to carry a lot of it at all times.

It has become customary to talk about a nation's problems in terms of its leanness or flabbiness, but what Italy is suffering from at the moment is more like structural arthritis. It is not life threatening. Whatever happens, Italy will continue to be a relatively prosperous country. But it is being slowed down by a progressive stiffening of the joints.

If, for example, this article were a letter from Rome, you might never have seen it. As I was sitting down to write, my bank statement arrived from Gibraltar. It had taken 29 days to get here from the mouth of the Mediterranean. You can do the journey more quickly on a sailing boat.

As we approach 2000, Italy—a member of the G-7 group of the world's economically most advanced nations— still does not have a mail service that can deliver letters quickly and reliably. Spokespersons for the Italian mail service claim that 85 percent of letters sent from the provinces to the cities are delivered within three days, but few of us who live here believe them—and, in any case, they are giving us no assurances about the remaining 15 percent.

Some weeks ago, a kidnap victim sent a desperate plea to a TV station. The envelope took 11 days to get from a village near Arezzo in Tuscany to Milan, 240 miles away. The chairman of the Italian mail was entirely unabashed. He blamed the fact that the kidnapers, while remembering to include the amputated lobe of their victim's right ear, had failed to use a postal code.

The mail is one of the best examples of the problems facing Italy. The reason the service is so poor is that, for decades, it was treated

not as a vital part of the nation's economic infrastructure but as an important aspect of its welfare provision. Under the old system, it became the tradition for parties to give out jobs in the mail service to poor but politically loyal southern voters. Since the jobs themselves were quite understandably regarded by their occupants as rewards rather than challenges, the mail service became a stronghold of bureaucratic obscurantism, petty corruption, and the worst sort of hairsplitting trade unionism.

What has attracted attention to Italy more than anything in recent years has been the campaign against corruption that began in 1992 and acquired the generic name of Tangentopoli (the word for “kick-back” in Italian is *tangente*). Thousands of business executives and party officials were jailed in an apparent frenzy of virtue. Much of the subsequent reporting on Italian affairs has dwelt on the drive to clean up public life after a half a century of corrupt *partitocrazia*.

Tangentopoli was undoubtedly important. But six years on, it is clear that it was an early symptom of something less visible yet much more significant for Italy's long-term future—a shift away from Italy's collaborative traditions toward the Anglo-Saxon model. This is the real revolution, though its progress up to now has been faltering and its outcome is far from certain.

Tangentopoli did not stamp out graft, but it did undermine the particular form of graft on which Italy's old political order depended for its survival. Since World War II, all political parties have needed huge sums of money to pay for their ostentatious presence in society. Those that were able to get a share of power raised funds by levying unofficial commissions at every level of government, from the village to the state, on a vast array of public contracts. (The first Tangentopoli inquiry looked into a bribe for the right to clean a retirement home.) To be able to pay such *tangenti*, the firms that secured the contracts inflated their prices. The fact that the state was paying more than it needed to for nearly everything it commissioned or bought was among the main reasons why its debts kept increasing. It has been calculated that between 1980 and 1992, \$20 billion was paid out in bribes, a sum that accounted for about 15 percent of all that the state owed.

But—and this was the stroke of genius—the debt was financed by means of bonds that were made available to ordinary Italians at very attractive rates of interest. The most popular of these bonds were—indeed are—known as BOTs (for *buoni ordinari del tesoro*, or “common treasury bonds”). They became a central part of the personal financial planning of millions of ordinary Italians who, with a wry wit, came to be known as the “BOT people.” The orchestrators of corruption thus succeeded in giving millions of their compatriots a direct interest in the survival of graft, by turning the cost of venality into lucrative fixed-interest securities.

What brought this experiment in politico-economic alchemy to such an explosive conclusion remains a matter for debate. One explanation

Said one Italian observer, “Ours is a servile race, incapable of self-government, which is looking to Europe for salvation.”

puts it down to the end of the Cold War. Accordingly, Italians realized they could no longer count on being saved from their excesses by the United States and other European countries fearful of a communist takeover. Another explanation is that it was the onset of a recession: firms were simply unable to pay the 10 to 15 percent markup that they had paid with ease during the booming 1980s. There is an element of truth in both of these arguments.

But even more important than either, in my view, was Italy’s commitment to join a single European currency. The agreement on currency convergence signed in the Dutch town of Maastricht six years ago meant the merry-go-round had to stop. It made participation in the new arrangements conditional on, among other things, a low budget deficit and modest government borrowing. So there could be no more *tangenti*.

But why did Italy sign on? The answer, I believe, lies in the nature of Italy’s relationship with “Europe.” It should never be forgotten that this is a country severely lacking in self-confidence. It has only been a unified state for 128 years, and before that, for well over a millennium and a half, it was fractured and vulnerable. German, French, Spanish, and Austrian armies tramped over the peninsula, reducing vast swaths of it to servitude for centuries at a time. The Italians share with the Irish, the Norwegians, and the Dutch the relatively unusual historical experience of having been the colonial subjects of other Europeans.

That means that an institution such as the European Union (EU), which guarantees Italy the same status as its erstwhile colonial masters, is one that holds a peculiar appeal to Italians. Diplomats in Rome will tell you privately that Italian civil servants show little concern for the detail of European projects. They do not, like the British, French, or Germans, draw up detailed position papers, scrupulously weighing the pros and cons. What is important is belonging and participating, and this can sometimes mean the government will go along with initiatives that are not necessarily to the country’s advantage.

Then, too, the EU imposes on Italy from the outside the kind of discipline that Italians find so hard to impose on their country from within. That may sound patronizing, coming from a foreign observer, but Italians themselves are much less tactful. The veteran commentator Indro Montanelli put it this way not long ago: “Ours is a servile race, incapable of self-government, which is looking to Europe for salvation.”

The most evident implication of the Maastricht treaty was that the administration had to stop overspending—and not just on *tangenti*. Thus,

two of the outstanding themes in Italian politics over the past six years have been the need to prune back Italy's irregular, and in some respects lavish, welfare provision, and to sell off loss-incurring state industries. Three separate attacks have now been launched on the welfare state, each of which has trimmed entitlements and saved money. From 1994 to 1997, meanwhile, the Italian treasury sold off more than \$20 billion in assets.

Italy may not have been able to reduce its debt by much. But it has been able to slash its budget deficit to within a whisker of the three percent of GDP demanded at Maastricht. And if it can succeed in getting the lira dissolved into the new euro, it faces the enticing prospect of being able to pay off what it owes at the sort of interest rates traditionally associated with low-inflation, strong-currency nations such as Germany.

Monetary union, however, calls for a discipline that goes beyond the containment of public spending. There is not much point in all of the countries in the union enforcing tight fiscal restraint if, every few months, one of the biggest among them is alarming the currency markets by plunging into a government crisis. Hence, the third dominant theme in Italian politics at present: the need for constitutional reforms that can deliver stable government.

In 1993, Parliament approved a characteristically Italian compromise whereby 75 percent of the seats in the lower house would be allocated to single-member constituencies and the remaining 25 percent would be filled on the basis of proportional representation. That arrangement has succeeded better than anyone had a right to expect. In two successive elections, it has given working majorities to, first, the Right, and then the Center and Left. But in both instances, the core of the administration was at the mercy of a difficult ally whose parliamentary strength rested on proportional representation—the separatist Northern League, in the case of Silvio Berlusconi's right-wing cabinet that ran the country for seven turbulent months in 1994, and the hard-line Communist Refoundation, in the case of Romano Prodi's coalition of the Left and Center that took office two years ago after a spell of nonparty administration by the stop-gap cabinet of Lamberto Dini. The Northern League brought down Berlusconi's administration in 1994, and Communist Refoundation came within an ace of felling Prodi's government last autumn. It is clear that a more rigorous solution is required, and last June a committee of both houses of the legislature completed work on a draft constitution to be put before the full Parliament later this year.

The Tangentopoli investigations, welfare cuts, and constitutional reform can all then be seen as part of a single, immense package designed to limit the damage Italy could do to the euro. It is an indication of the depth of Italian "Europhilia" that up to now very little has been said about the damage the euro could do to Italy.

By sacrificing their currency, the Italians will, of course, be sacrificing the right to devalue it. Nor will it be possible any longer for the lira to depreciate on international markets against the currencies of the other nations in the union. Yet devaluation and, more recently, depreciation have been choice weapons in the armory of successive Italian governments—a way of enhancing the competitiveness of Italian business whenever the going got tough.

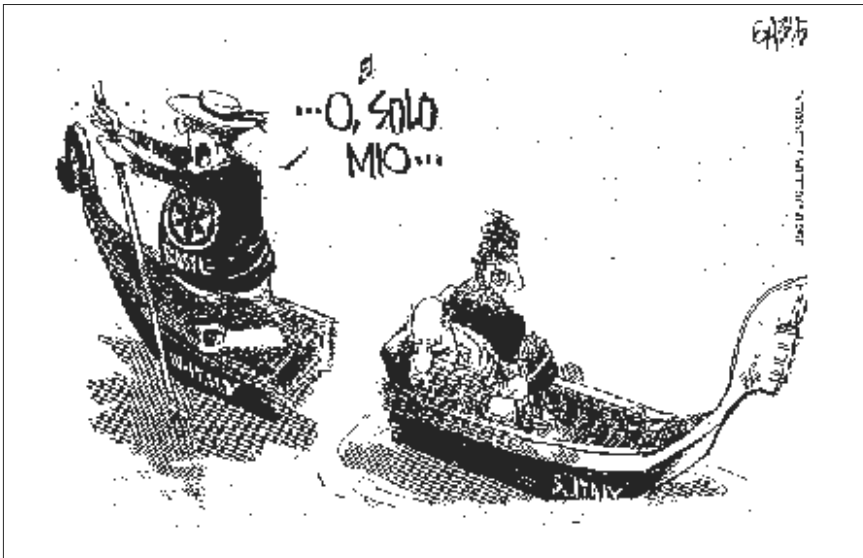
This is where Professor Prodi and his new shop law come in—if, as he claims, it is the first step toward a far more ambitious program of deregulation. Such a program would certainly help the Italian economy as a whole get in shape for what is going to be a straight fight with the Germans, the French, and others. Prodi has said his next target will be the professions. But already one of his ministers has submitted to Parliament a bill that would shake up Italy's civil service by decentralizing the state and giving the regional and local authorities much wider powers to deal with areas such as protection of the environment, zoning, roads, and transportation.

That, in turn, could be a step, however modest, toward resolving the other historic challenge facing Italy—how to stay united. The very inadequacies that have to be made good if Italy is to make a success of European monetary union are those that have driven many in the more advanced and prosperous regions of the country to dream of secession.

Umberto Bossi's Northern League represents an arguably unique form of nationalism. It is certainly not the first regional nationalist movement to have grown up in one of the richer parts of the state from which it intended to secede; nor is it the first to have been motivated by the perceived failure of a backward capital to understand the problems of an advanced region. The Basque and Catalan movements in 19th-century Spain are textbook examples. But Bossi may well be the first regional nationalist leader to make such a case without any recourse to ethnic, cultural or linguistic differences. The inhabitants of his imagined republic of "Padania," stretching from the French to the Slovenian frontiers, would have no common history, culture, or language (other than Italian).

In its most thoughtful form—not often heard from Bossi himself, who is a born rabble-rouser—the League's argument is not that northerners are innately different from southerners, but that the Piedmontese, Lombards, Venetians, and others have been made different by their more rapid economic progress. They therefore need a different, "lighter" form of government. They do not, for example, need as many handouts, but they do require an advanced infrastructure.

The League's view is that the north, by itself, would be able to hold its own in the proposed monetary union—not surprisingly, since an independent Padania would have the highest GDP per capita in the EU. What the League questions is how it will fare as a part of Italy, weighed down—as the League sees it—by the exactions and inefficiency of "Roma ladrona" (Rome the she-thief).



Will European monetary union add to pressures that are already threatening to divide Italy?

There is another issue, though. Might not the reality of monetary union split Italy even more decisively than at present? Could it be that the north will swim, and get yet richer, and that the south will sink, and get yet poorer? It is one thing to imagine Milan as part of the same economic area as Lyons or Frankfurt; it's quite another to think of Catania or Naples having to compete with, say, Malmö.

Much will depend on Italy's ability to change and adapt. The track record so far is patchy. Reforms have been introduced. But all too often they have been tentative in the extreme. The legal system is a case in point. It remains substantially unchanged despite years of discussion among politicians. The prosecuting magistrates have had their powers of arrest and imprisonment somewhat curbed, but they have still not been given a separate status that would put them on a par with defense lawyers rather than judges.

Foreigners often make the mistake of assuming that, because Italians are so dynamic, vivacious, and energetic, they are also highly flexible. Though this may be true of individuals, it is not true—except superficially—of the culture as a whole. In Giuseppe di Lampedusa's *Leopard*, the Prince of Salina utters one of the most oft-cited remarks in Italian literature. "We want things to change," he says, "so they can stay as they are." The line is so frequently quoted because it reflects so succinctly the character of Italian life—the frantic, hectic, and not infrequently melodramatic activity disguising an underlying continuity. In other words, it expresses what happens every few months when the country appears to lurch from government crisis to government crisis.

Change is viewed with great suspicion and tradition honored with tenacious respect in Italy. This is apparent in the Italians' attachment to family and respect for age. Indro Montanelli is, at 88, Italy's

most respected commentator. The chairman of Fiat is about to step down at 75, having been handed the job by the legendary Gianni Agnelli when he too reached 75.

A deep conservatism is equally apparent in dozens of little ways that are not obvious to the casual visitor—the Italians’ reluctance to try foreign food or wine, their attachment to a very traditional, voluptuous, notion of female beauty, not to mention the unexpected formality of Italian forms of address. “Good morning, Accountant,” says the waiter in my local bar to a customer as he comes in for his cappuccino. “Good morning, Engineer,” he says to the next.

Italy may have undergone an economic revolution, but what is obvious to anyone who lived through the late 1960s and early ’70s in the Anglo-Saxon world is that it has yet to undergo a social one. This is still a country in which the working man “knows his place” and signals that knowledge by, for example, addressing anyone he suspects may have a university degree as *Dottore*.

The coalition that keeps the present government in power is as good an example as any of the Salina principle in action. Strip away that government’s postmodern title—the “Olive Tree”—and what you are left with is an alliance between what remains of the two biggest

Foreigners often make the mistake of assuming that, because Italians are so dynamic, vivacious, and energetic, they are also highly flexible.

parties in the old order of things. Its main components are a group of the more progressive, and honest, Christian Democrats and the PCI’s successor party, the Democrats of the Left. Professor Prodi is a former chairman of the mightiest of all of Italy’s state holding corporations. His deputy prime minister, Walter Veltroni, was once editor of the Communist Party organ, *L’Unità*.

Just how much of the government’s commitment to free-market principles is born of necessity and how much of conviction can be hard to discern. The grasp among individual ministers of what liberalization represents can certainly seem shaky. Not long ago, a plan was announced to lighten the burden on government by divesting it of responsibility for the issuing of license plates and driving licenses, the examining of drivers, and the inspection of automobiles. And to whom was it proposed to give these duties? To none other than the Automobile Club of Italy, which already has a thoroughly ambiguous function as the body that both represents Italy’s drivers and issues them their vehicle licenses. It would be difficult to imagine a better example of corporatist thinking at work—the offloading of a state function onto a parastatal body formed around a vested interest.

If the Olive Tree administration does succeed in carrying out a liberal revolution, it will be profoundly ironic not just because the regime's component groups have a history of antipathy to confrontational arrangements such as the free market but because that is the very thing they have in common.

One way of looking at the Olive Tree is to see it as a posthumous realization of the hopes of the late Communist leader, Enrico Berlinguer. His dream was of an "historic compromise" between Italy's two dominant parties. In a passage from his *Austerity—An Opportunity to Transform Italy* (1977), quoted in Paul Ginsborg's *History of Contemporary Italy* (1990), he noted that the PCI and the Christian Democrats shared a commitment to saving the country from, among other things, "unbridled individualism, senseless consumerism [and] economic disorder."

What Berlinguer correctly identified as common ground was the concern of the Roman Catholic Church—and hence, at least in theory, the Christian Democrats—with the negative side of individualism. That concern still constitutes a powerful force in Italian society, quite powerful enough to ensure that it does not follow the Anglo-Saxon societies into a set of arrangements based on the competition among individuals.

Among the people one might imagine to be most fully committed to such arrangements is the governor of the Bank of Italy. Last June, the current occupant of the post was invited to contribute to a debate at the University of Bologna on competition and values in the market and society. Among other things, Governor Antonio Fazio had this to say:

In Italy, the values of the Catholic church have always been an important point of reference for society and individuals. They are profoundly rooted in civil society and are reflected in the prevailing concept of social justice. These values are developed in the social doctrine [of the Roman Catholic Church] beginning with the [papal encyclical] *Rerum Novarum* and ending with *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, taking in—I refer only to certain high points—*Quadragesimo Anno*, *Populorum Progressio* and *Laborem Exercens*. I identify with that doctrine and vision of the world.

Alan Greenspan would not, one suspects, have said quite the same.



The rebuilt Cathedral of Christ the Savior

THE FUTURE OF CORPORATISM—II

The Rise of Moscow, Inc.

*Russia's capital city is thriving these days, but the
force at work is not neomarket capitalism.*

by Blair A. Ruble

Moscow at night glitters as never before. The Russian capital—850 years old last year—is vibrantly alive, almost pulsating with energy. To take an evening walk through the Garden Ring boulevards that define the city's center, as I did last fall, is to be in the midst of a vast swarm of Muscovites, scurrying hither and yon. Some are heading for the theaters, others are checking out the latest fancy

stores such as Benetton and Galerie Lafayette, still others are just strolling about, pausing now and then in the chill night air to watch one of the various street performers. Mayor Yuri Luzhkov has seen to it that virtually every building facade, every urban surface, is well-scrubbed or freshly painted—and brightly lit. Very brightly. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of spotlights and streetlights have been installed by Luzhkov's government to display the new Moscow to best effect. And the sight is indeed impressive. In its central districts, Moscow can be compared to the downtowns of the great cities of Europe—something that could never have been said truthfully before, at least not since 1913.

Mayor Luzhkov's renovations are not mere blandishments—what the Russians call *pokazukha*—tacked on to impress the visitors at last year's extravagant (\$60 million), three-day celebration of the anniversary of Moscow's founding. His administration has made substantial improvements to the city's infrastructure—its roads, bridges, sewer and water systems, and telecommunications. And, perhaps most significant, the Moscow economy is now sustaining a small but growing middle class, with white-collar Muscovites now working as computer specialists, lawyers, accountants, and secretaries, often for foreign companies. Crime remains a serious problem—kidnappings and assassinations by rival businessmen, in particular, remain common—but official figures indicate that homicides and thefts declined markedly last year. Walking around Moscow last fall, I had much less fear for my safety than I did four or five years ago. If the Russian capital can stay on its present course, it seems bound eventually to take its place among the world's leading cities.

Hopeful analysts might interpret Moscow's recent progress as a triumph of market reform. Indeed, an observer who remains within the Garden Ring boulevards might easily conclude that Russia is becoming a "normal" country. But even in Moscow, as in Russia as a whole, the reality beneath the glittering lights is far more complicated. One need only ride the Moscow metro a few stops beyond the Garden Ring to see the crumbling high-rise buildings and potholed streets, vivid testimony to what the dynamic mayor has so far been unable to fix. Moreover, his impressive accomplishments turn out to have relatively little to do with neoliberal market principles. Instead, they represent the ascendancy of an imperial urban corporatism that might well undermine Russia's transformation into a true free-market democracy.

The man responsible for the new Moscow is a short, stocky, 61-year-old carpenter's son and native Muscovite who, before turning to city government, made his career as a manager in the Soviet chemical industry. Yuri Luzhkov graduated from the Moscow Institute of the Oil and Gas Industry in 1958, then worked for six years at a plastics research facility before being elevated to a high position in the Soviet Union's Ministry of the Chemical Industry. He was a Communist but never in the party's top

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Mayor Yuri Luzhkov cuts the ribbon to open the Moscow Stock Exchange last year.

ranks. In 1987 he entered the city government, eventually becoming head of the Moscow City Council. In August 1991, Luzhkov staunchly supported Russian president Boris Yeltsin against the hardline Communists whose attempted coup spelled the end of the Soviet Union. That same year, Luzhkov was elected deputy mayor on a ticket headed by Gavriil Popov, a Yeltsin ally. When Popov resigned in 1992, Yeltsin intervened to name Luzhkov mayor by decree, thus sparing him from having to compete in an election demanded by the City Council. His performance over the next four years so impressed the city's voters that they returned him to office in 1996 by a landslide, a 90 percent majority.

Clearly, Muscovites appear to like the new Moscow that their tough, autocratic mayor has given them.

The origins of Moscow's urban corporatism lie in a bitter, 18-month battle Luzhkov waged with national economic reformers over control of the city's privatization programs. The mayor maintained that privatization chief Anatoli Chubais (now first deputy prime minister) and his "reform" team were systematically undervaluing the public assets slated for privatization. The municipal government then owned about two-thirds of the property in the city, with the Russian government owning the rest. In an intense campaign begun in August 1993, Luzhkov and his administration argued that privatization of real estate and local enterprises should be placed entirely in the hands of local authorities. By February 1995, the battle was over: Luzhkov had secured a decree from Yeltsin proclaiming, in effect, that, unlike the rest of Russia, Moscow would set its own privatization rules.

Luzhkov's city government now could assess the assets of Moscow's enterprises at a higher level than was standard everywhere else, and it

The influence of Luzhkov's Moscow, Inc. extends well beyond the city limits.

could keep effective title to all of its real property in the city, with the right to grant long-term leases (up to 49 years). These two powers enabled the city government to micromanage land use and to manipulate rents and prices—and, together with the taxing power, to generate the vast sums of money Luzhkov has used to renovate his city. Thanks to his victory over the reformers, the municipality became the senior partner in all local economic activity. “Moscow, Inc.” was born.

By late 1995, increased income, unmatched elsewhere in Russia, was starting to flow into Moscow's municipal coffers. In 1996, the city government took in \$7 billion, according to official figures reported by the *New York Times*. Income from real estate alone was more than \$300 million (an amount that was expected to triple last year). But most of the city's revenues—\$6 billion in 1996—came from corporate, personal income, and value-added taxes. Luzhkov got some of this revenue as a result of an odd provision in Russian tax laws. All enterprises were obligated to pay their taxes through the jurisdiction in which their headquarters were located. For most large firms, that meant the nation's capital. Thus, Russia's massive energy sector paid taxes in and to Moscow, not to governmental entities in distant production regions. Though Yeltsin ordered an end to this practice in late 1997, Luzhkov, not surprisingly, is fighting the change.

In a Russian era of declining economic performance, loosely enforced tax laws, and disintegrating infrastructure, Luzhkov has succeeded in creating a government with the resources to *act*. In all of the country's 89 regional and local jurisdictions, this is a unique distinction. Like Chicago under the first Mayor Richard Daley, Moscow under Luzhkov is a “city that works.” And as in Daley's Chicago, not all the deals made are above board. Indeed, corruption in Moscow is rampant and blatant. Along with the official flow of money into Moscow's City Hall is an underground stream of informal payments in kind and cash. But whatever the sources of their newfound wealth, Luzhkov and his colleagues—to their credit—have put a lot of it back into the city, in the form of construction and infrastructure improvements. Indeed, they are transforming the face of Moscow.

In Russian society today, there are deep divisions over the very meaning of *Russia*, and Luzhkov seems to grasp that an ideological void needs somehow to be filled. One of post-Soviet Russia's most aching questions is what and who is “ours” (*nash*), and what and who is “not ours” (*ni nash*). More than any other Russian politician (with the possible exception of Yeltsin), the populist Luzhkov has understood how to draw political sustenance from such heartfelt issues. Perhaps his most audacious construction project is the rebuilding, in the center of Moscow, not far from the Kremlin, of the gold-domed Cathedral of Christ the Savior. The original cathedral, built in the 19th century to commemorate Russia's victory over Napoleon, was

destroyed by order of Stalin in 1931. The reconstruction, not yet complete, has already cost \$200 million. But Luzhkov is convinced of the project's worth. "I believe that the cathedral will become a source of comfort for society," he has said. Besides restoring old churches and cultural symbols, Luzhkov (like regional and municipal leaders elsewhere in the country) has erected new monuments, such as the Victory Memorial on Poklonnaya gora (Moscow's "Hill of Salutation"), which was completed on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Luzhkov has spent lavishly in support of the arts and culture in Moscow, tried to revive ailing "rust-belt" manufacturers (such as the Zil and Moskvich auto companies), launched public works projects to pump money into the pockets of the dispossessed, and, in general, given the impression that Moscow can "work" for all of its residents, at least all who are "real" Muscovites.

But just who among the 10 million people of Moscow is a "real" Muscovite, and who is not? Or, once again, who is *nash*, and who is *ni nash*? Luzhkov's administration continues to enforce the Soviet-era residential permit (*propiska*) system based on birth, marriage, and employment, even though the Russian Federation's 1993 constitution forbids any restrictions on where people can live. Local police are notorious for forcing out of town any people whose features suggest that they come from the Caucasus region. And a November 1997 municipal decree threatens local firms with severe fines for hiring unapproved "foreigners." Meanwhile, from all those "real" Muscovites who owe their jobs and opportunities to the city government, the mayor and his colleagues demand, in return, obeisance.

Thus, Luzhkov has given Moscow what amounts to a corporatist municipal economy, in which the line between public and private remains obscure—a municipal socialism far more flexible than its heavy-footed Soviet predecessor. Wealth is generated through alliances with municipal agencies, while independent small-scale entrepreneurs are sometimes systematically undermined in their pursuit of profit. Luzhkov's bright lights are hardly beacons signaling the arrival of a market economy.

The influence of Luzhkov's Moscow, Inc. extends well beyond the city limits. At least 80 percent of all private capital in Russia today is in Moscow's banks and other financial institutions. "Bank capital is like a swarm of honeybees that takes off looking for a place to settle down," Luzhkov has observed. "We have succeeded in having it settle in Moscow." The success is easily explained. Most of the banks in Russia today got started with the assets of one or another Soviet ministry or state enterprise—and most of the institutions' headquarters during the Soviet era were located in Moscow. In the early 1990s, insiders often bought the state assets at fire-sale prices, or else acquired them through various political or bureaucratic maneuvers.

Luzhkov has had some dramatic dustups with the city's financial barons, but his and their interests are intertwined, and he has more or less made his peace with them. Since regional leaders and entrepreneurs elsewhere find that they need to secure investments from Moscow, many Russian regions

are slowly but surely being drawn into the orbit of Luzhkov's Moscow, Inc. Moscow banks take over nascent local financial enterprises, Moscow moguls gain control over regional and local newspapers and electronic media, and Moscow's mayor gives support to candidates running in other areas of the country.

On occasion, however, Luzhkov and Moscow, Inc. have overplayed their hand. After a hotly contested 1996 mayoral election in St. Petersburg, in which Vladimir Iakovlev, then, in effect, the deputy mayor and widely perceived as "Luzhkov's man," defeated the internationally known incumbent, Anatoli Sobchak, Luzhkov flew to the former czarist capital with a planeload of other Moscow officials to survey the conquered territory. The independent-minded and sometimes

haughty Petersburgers were quite insulted. Almost as soon as Luzhkov's plane left the tarmac for the trip home, local leaders rushed to establish closer ties with the World Bank and other international lending agencies.

From the very first free elections in St. Petersburg (then Leningrad), in 1989, voters there have demonstrated again and again that they constitute the most liberal electorate in Russia. Everywhere else, the opposition to the August 1991 coup attempt was far less than it appeared at the time, but in

Leningrad, a third of



An Estée Lauder boutique is among the many fancy shops in the new Moscow.

the city's five million people turned out in Palace Square. August 1991 was a genuine revolutionary moment in that city. It is noteworthy that most of the members of First Deputy Prime Minister Chubais's current "reform" team have many common ties to St. Petersburg.

Other Russian cities have also evinced enthusiasm for market reform and democracy. Ekaterinburg (population 1.4 million), for instance, has displayed—in its enthusiasm for free speech, elections, and reform politics—an almost primal democratic impulse. Nizhnii Novgorod (population 1.4 million) continues to be worthy of reform "poster child" status. Nizhnii

Novgorod shows the tremendous effect that a reform leader such as its former governor Boris Nemtsov—now a deputy prime minister under Yeltsin (and a possible future presidential candidate himself)—can have. The Volga River city, in what was one of the more militarized parts of the Soviet Union, has been a leader in promoting small businesses, such as bakeries and food processors. In fact, the investment climate of Nizhnii Novgorod and vicinity is so favorable that Bank Austria in 1996 ranked it third in that category among Russian cities, behind Moscow and St. Petersburg.

On a per capita basis, however, the small, but reform-minded northwestern city of Novgorod Veliki (population 250,000)—a competitor to Moscow until Ivan the Terrible virtually wiped it out in the 15th century—might have benefited more from the events of the last decade than any other metropolitan area in Russia. The investment climate has been made so attractive that in 1995 alone, new foreign investment soared from \$2.8 million to \$44.7 million. The biggest new project in town is a \$151 million factory built by British chocolate giant Cadbury-Schwepps.

But it is in St. Petersburg that the commitment to market reform and democracy is strongest. That city has developed the most market-friendly strategy for regional development in the country, adopting tax breaks and various other laws and policies to encourage investors. Even so, St. Petersburg is still struggling to attract the capital it needs to jump-start the local economy. Small-scale entrepreneurial activities have provided some sparks, but the engine really has yet to turn over. Moscow financiers generally refuse to help, preferring Luzhkov's rules to market principles. And international investors remain focused on Luzhkov's city, mesmerized by the dynamic mayor and his bright lights. Foreign investors have poured billions of dollars into Moscow in recent years, \$4.6 billion in 1996 alone.

While St. Petersburg has tried to resist the allure of Moscow, Inc., many local leaders elsewhere have succumbed. Luzhkov recently established an association of some 1,200 Russian mayors, a move that simultaneously facilitates the forging of economic ties with Moscow and creates a base of support for his possible presidential bid in 2000. The imperial mayor and the imperial metropolis are reaching out to the historic central Russian hinterland for sustenance.

In the end, it is the rough-hewn Luzhkov's brightly lit Moscow, the new Moscow, the home base of Moscow, Inc. that is lighting up post-Soviet Russia. His city, the corrupt but gritty "city that works," seems at times almost an elemental force of nature, crude but powerful. It is Moscow—not the more reform-minded, more decorous St. Petersburg—that mesmerizes. And it is Moscow, perhaps, that is defining Russia's future.

Dressing for the Dance

For decades, the masters of modern dance gradually pared down the traditional elements of the art—costume, music, even movement itself. They also pared down their audiences. Today, our author writes, dance is fitting itself out in a new set of clothes and hoping to renew itself as a more popular art form.

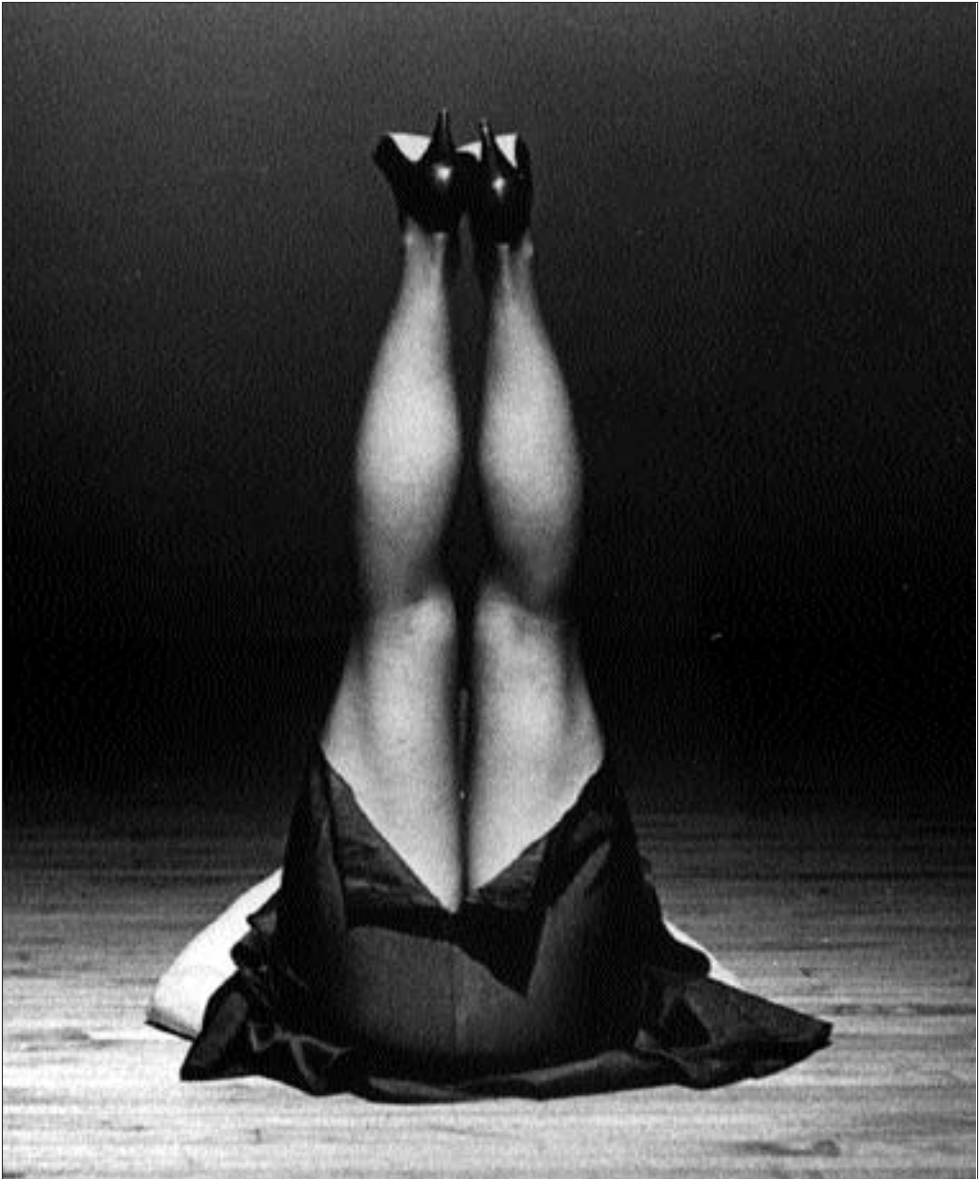
by Joyce Morgenroth

In the intimate performance spaces of New York's eclectic downtown concert dance scene, audiences can expect to find politics mixed with their art. In her dance, *Sarah*, choreographer Ann Carlson, wearing a strapless dress and high heels, symbolically upends traditional notions of femininity by turning herself upside down and sticking her ladylike heels up in the air. Christine Doempke, dancing in combat boots, presents herself as strong and awkward, casually disregarding the usual expectations of dancerly grace. Mixing wit and social commentary, these dancers communicate not only by how they move but by what they wear.

The use of costumes as social statements is probably as old as dance performance itself. In the 17th century, the lace conspicuously displayed by aristocratic dancers in the royal courts of western Europe reflected their privileged role in society, just as since the 1960s dancers in elastic-waist pants and T-shirts—or, on occasion, wearing no clothes at all—have announced the coming of sexual equality and freedom from formal social constraints.

Dance costumes also reflect the changing role of theatrical dance within society. Once integral to the functioning of aristocratic regimes, dance now often aims to subvert the political status quo. Rejecting the aristocratic aesthetic underlying the European dance tradition, American concert dance since the turn of the century has broken free from the inherited values of decorum, virtuosity, expressivity, and beauty. This impulse unites Isadora Duncan's sandaled and loosely draped reaction against pointe shoes and tutus at the beginning of the century, Martha Graham's angular, percussive denial of ballet's lyricism a few decades later, and Merce Cunningham's withdrawal from narrative and separation of music from dance beginning in the 1950s. It continues in the Judson Dance Theater's rejection of virtuosity and even basic dance technique during the 1960s, and soon thereafter in the minimalists' ultimate questioning of the very urge to move.

Yet by repudiating elegantly turned-out positions, soaring leaps, and multiple pirouettes, by giving up narrative and doing away with glamorous costuming,



In Sarah, Ann Carlson uses a pair of high heels and black dress to comment on one vision of femininity.

modern dance not only parted ways with classical ballet but abandoned the qualities that for centuries had attracted audiences. Trying to escape from aesthetic assumptions associated with wealth and inherited privilege, and hoping to forge an aesthetic better suited to a democratic and pluralistic society, the new American dance instead ended up producing inaccessible work that excluded the general public. While the elegantly attired courtiers of prerevolutionary France had a captive audience of court aristocrats, 20th-century American dancers cultivated an audience

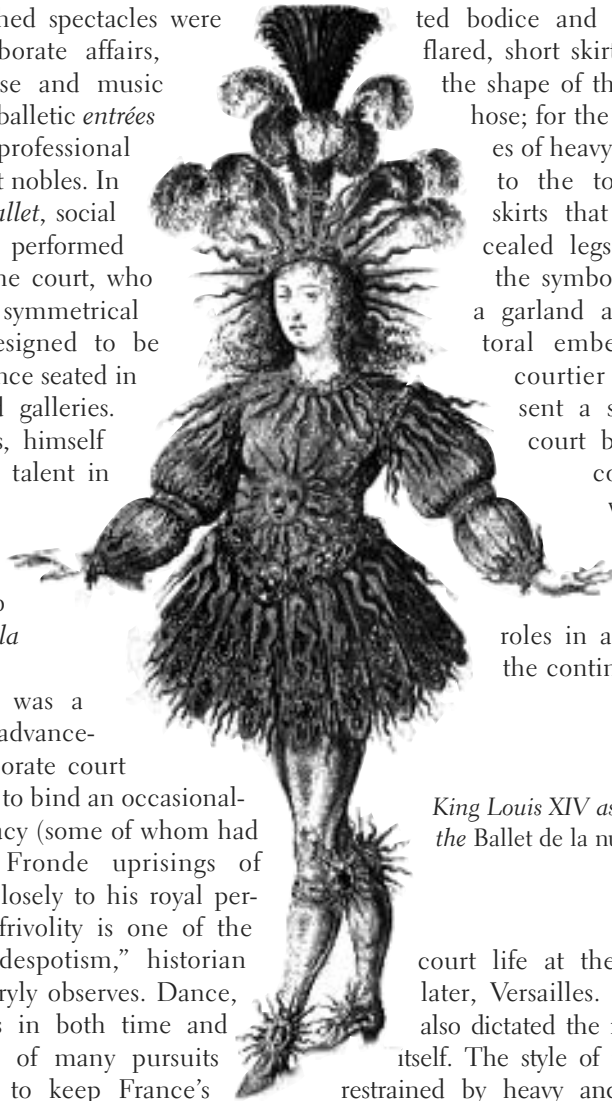
among the *artistic* elite in order to survive. Taking to the dance floor in well-worn sneakers, the Soho dancers of the 1960s might not have traveled so far as they probably have believed from their 17th-century forebears in fancy heeled pumps.

Ballet and modern dance grew out of courtly traditions that germinated in Renaissance Italy and flowered in the court ballets of King Louis XIV in 17th-century France. Although based on the social dances of the court such as the *gavotte*, the *courante*, and the *gigue*,

these choreographed spectacles were much more elaborate affairs, with spoken verse and music interspersed with balletic *entrées* performed by professional dancers and select nobles. In the final *grand ballet*, social dance steps were performed by members of the court, who traced detailed, symmetrical floor patterns designed to be seen by the audience seated in the court's raised galleries. The young Louis, himself renowned for his talent in dance, came to be known as "the Sun King" after he played Apollo in the *Ballet de la nuit* in 1653.

Dancing well was a prerequisite for advancement in the elaborate court life Louis created to bind an occasionally restive aristocracy (some of whom had joined in the Fronde uprisings of 1648–53) more closely to his royal person. "A solemn frivolity is one of the sound tools of despotism," historian André Maurois dryly observes. Dance, with all its costs in both time and money, was one of many pursuits Louis cultivated to keep France's aristocrats preoccupied. "As a matter of policy, Louis forced magnificence upon all," Maurois writes. "He drained everyone by making luxury honorable, and thus reduced the courtiers to dependence upon his bounty for their existence." In both form and content, the court ballets served a variety of political purposes. It was no accident that in the *Ballet de la nuit*, Louis's sun arrives—accompanied by Honor, Grace, Love, Riches, Victory, Fame, and Peace—in time to drive away thieves looting a burning house (symbolizing France). It was said to be the king's favorite role.

Dancers wore costumes in the style of court dress: for the men, a coat with a fit-



ted bodice and a *tonnelet*, or flared, short skirt that revealed the shape of the legs in their hose; for the women, dresses of heavy fabric tailored to the torso with full skirts that entirely concealed legs and feet. By the symbolic addition of a garland and other pastoral embellishments, a courtier might represent a shepherd in a court ballet. In such costumes one was both a shepherd and a count, playing roles in a ballet and in the continuing drama of

King Louis XIV as Apollo in the *Ballet de la nuit*

court life at the Louvre and, later, Versailles. The costumes also dictated the forms of dance itself. The style of movement was restrained by heavy and cumbersome clothes that restricted the mobility of limbs and torso. The shoes, like the normal footwear of the court, had flexible soles which allowed for small springing steps, but the raised heels worn by both men and women limited the possibility of jumping.

When Louis stopped performing in the 1660s, he raised the prestige of professional dancers, once restricted to comic and grotesque parts in court entertainments, by allowing them to assume noble roles. He also gave his approval to several new academies that sped the rise of professional dance, beginning with the short-lived Académie Royale de Danse, launched in 1661. It was soon

> JOYCE MORGENROTH is associate professor of dance at Cornell University and the author of *Dance Improvisations* (1987). Copyright © 1998 by Joyce Morgenroth.

followed by the Académie Royale de Musique, which took up residence in the Paris Opéra and became the home of opera-ballet, in which dance and sung drama were mixed. Performances were open to the paying public, but aristocrats and aristocratic sensibilities still dominated. Yet with a new professional class of dancers performing on public stages, further divergence of stage dancing and court social dancing, and of performer and spectator, was inevitable.

A formal school for the training of dancers opened at the Paris Opéra in 1713. Beyond the practice rooms, dance was also being codified in print, notably in Pierre Rameau's *Dancing Master* (1725), which described and illustrated correct posture, the five turned-out positions of the feet, and proper execution of dance steps.

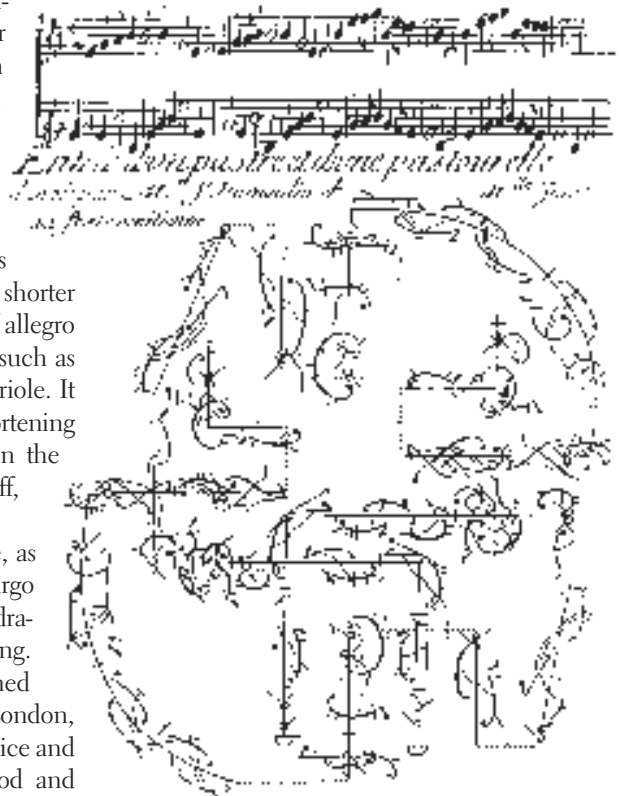
Innovations in dance costume inevitably accompanied these changes, and they were heralded by two rival star ballerinas—the two Mariés. Marie Camargo, debuting in Paris in 1726, quickly won acclaim for her apparently effortless and brilliant technique, and especially for her *entrechats*, jumping steps in which the feet are crossed several times in midair. She was the toast of Paris. To make it easier for her to perform these difficult steps—and for the audience to see and appreciate them—Camargo shortened her skirts a few inches. Widely imitated, the shorter skirt eventually permitted an array of allegro techniques—brilliant jumping steps such as the now-familiar *jeté*, *sauté*, and *cabriole*. It also inaugurated the progressive shortening of the ballerina's skirt, which led, in the 20th century, to the now-familiar stiff, hip-length tutu.

Camargo's great rival, Marie Sallé, as reserved in her personality as Camargo was effervescent, was known for the dramatic, expressive quality of her dancing. In 1734, she arranged and performed her own version of *Pygmalion* in London, giving up the panniered skirt and bodice and the elaborate hairstyles of the period and wearing instead a simple muslin dress over her corset and petticoat, with her hair arranged loosely. Sallé had all of London clamoring for tickets to *Pygmalion*, but it

would require nothing short of a real revolution before such radical changes in costuming could take hold.

The expressive style found its most eloquent advocate in the dancer and dancing master Jean-Georges Noverre. Reacting against sterile movement and declaimed narrative, he argued emphatically in his *Lettres sur la danse et les ballets* (1760) for a form of dance in which the movement itself could reveal human emotions. To allow for this change, Noverre called for an end to the stiff *tonnelets* and the elimination of masks that hid the natural emotions of the face. The particular style of movement he espoused included mimed sequences that we today would find stilted and melodramatic, but Noverre's broader principles would powerfully influence the story ballets of the next century.

The great transition in dance began with the French Revolution. With the end of the court's dominance, dance became more accessible to the people, its popularity helped in an odd way by the system of cen-



These choreographic notations by Louis Pécour were published in 1712, at a time when dancing masters were codifying their art.

sorship in revolutionary Paris. The censors allowed ballet more freedom than theater, considering movement less potentially subversive than words. The boulevard theaters that had proliferated in Paris didn't carry the prestige of the Opéra, but they charged less for admission and attracted a much larger audience, featuring revolutionary displays and ballets with stories revolving around farmers, merchants, and other ordinary members of the bourgeoisie. Costumes reflected the rejection of aristocratic standards. The body was given great freedom in light, flowing fabrics, and in one fashion for female dancers, even more constraint was abandoned with the exposure of a single breast. The aesthetic of the court was being replaced by the aesthetic of the people.

The emerging architecture of public theaters encouraged new kinds of choreography. While at Versailles and other royal courts the dancers had usually been surrounded by an audience on three or four sides, sometimes seated in raised galleries, dancers now performed on a raised stage, separated from their audiences and framed by a proscenium arch. Instead of watching from surrounding raised galleries, the audience now faced performers frontally and on roughly the same plane. This perspective gave jumps, turns, and large gestural movements greater importance. With the prevailing use of soft, flat-heeled shoes and light fabrics, dancers were able to perform brilliant pirouettes and leaps.

The new emphasis on vertical posture and airborne movement provided a fertile context for the Romantic aspirations of early-19th-century artists. In story ballets such as *La sylphide* (1832), choreographed by Filippo Taglioni, fairies, sylphs, and other fantastic creatures tempted humans from their real lives into fantasies of otherworldly happiness. Ballerinas captured the ethereal quality of their characters by dancing on the tips of their toes and wearing net and gauze. Period prints of ballet dancers show an exaggeratedly small and tapering foot. In the pointe shoes that developed during this period, the vulgar, useful foot almost vanished entirely. In its place was the illusion of an elongated leg and only a

most tenuous connection to the ground.

Over the years, pointe shoes were made with increasingly reinforced toes and shanks, giving greater support to the dancer's foot. The supported pointe shoe also constricted the foot, creating an impression of delicacy but giving the foot a narrower and less flexible base when flat. As in the Chinese tradition of foot binding, women were meant to appear as dependent, aesthetic beings existing for the pleasure of men. Despite the fact that women were center stage in ballet, it was men—whether they were the male ballet masters, librettists, and choreographers who created the ballets, or the influential male patrons who admired the physical beauty of the ballerinas—who determined the aesthetic. Reviews and articles written at the time by prominent writers such as Théophile Gautier focused as much on the physical charms of the leading dancers as on their artistic interpretations, fanning the passions of competing male balletomanes who argued vehemently for either the ethereal quality of a Marie Taglioni or the sensuality of a Fanny Elssler. In the world of 19th-century ballet, influential men were admitted backstage to meet the dancers and seek their sexual favors. Starring ballerinas took as lovers those with money, good looks, or power, and were themselves able to wield power as a result.

It is hard for us today to grasp the extent of ballet's popular appeal during its Romantic heyday. Dance critic Jack Anderson tells how Ralph Waldo Emerson blissfully compared his admiration for Elssler to religion; when she performed in Washington, D.C., Congress adjourned for a day.

But ballet in the second half of the 19th century suddenly slipped into decline, especially after the death of major French choreographer Arthur Saint-Léon and several of Paris's more promising ballerinas. The best European dancers and ballet masters gravitated toward Russia, where the art had enjoyed strong royal patronage since the reign of Catherine the Great a century earlier. A succession of European choreographers and teachers developed what is still known as the Russian style,

which emphasized the grand “presentation.” The greatest of these masters was Marius Petipa, who served the Imperial Ballet in St. Petersburg for more than 50 years, first as a dancer beginning in 1847 and then as ballet master, creating such classic works as *Don Quixote* (1869) and *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890). Given the renewed aristocratic patronage, it is hardly surprising that dance returned to the classical aesthetic. (However, Moscow’s taste in ballet was less aristocratic than St. Petersburg’s, a difference reflected even after the Russian Revolution in the styles of the Moscow-based Bolshoi Ballet and the more classically oriented Kirov Ballet in Leningrad.) Petipa’s methodically plotted arrangements of the corps de ballet harkened back to the floor patterns of the early French court spectacles. In his classical ballets such as *Swan Lake* (1895), ballerinas wore full, multilayered net skirts topped by tight-fitting bodices that more closely resembled the formal court dress of the 17th century than the filmy Grecian styles of the Romantics.

This step backward was followed at the turn of the century by a great leap forward. Isadora Duncan, claiming inspiration from the movement of ocean waves off the coast of her native California, envisioned a new dance in which the woman’s body would be uncorseted and her feet planted firmly on the earth. Sandals or bare feet—considered scandalous innovations in some circles—allowed for more natural movement and permitted Duncan to express a spirituality connecting earth and heaven. As she became a celebrated public figure in Europe after appearances in Budapest and Berlin in 1903 and ’04, she also became a spokeswoman for her own version of feminism. She publicly rebelled against marriage and against the aesthetics of ballet, including the constricting and painful pointe shoes. The dancer of the future, she declared in a famous lecture in 1903, “will dance not in the form of a nymph, nor fairy, nor coquette but in the form of woman in its greatest and purest expression. She will real-



Isadora Duncan in a 1903 dance pose as Iphigenia, who in Greek legend was sacrificed so that the Greeks could sail on Troy

ize the mission of woman’s body and the holiness of all its parts.” She would possess “the highest intelligence in the freest body.”

In advocating a personal exploration of movement, Duncan was a crucial forerunner of modern dance. And while she completely rejected ballet, with its orchestrated and formalized ensembles, she nevertheless inspired changes in its form. Her performances in St. Petersburg early in the century left a deep impression. While the Imperial Ballet became increasingly fossilized, a young Russian choreographer for Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, Mikhail Fokine, was encouraged by Duncan’s ideals to pursue the search for more natural and expressive movement in ballet. Arriving in Paris in 1909, the Ballets Russes excited all of Europe with a performance of *Prince Igor* that had the audience storming the stage to



Nijinsky and a frieze of nymphs in a 1912 performance of Afternoon of a Faun

embrace the dancers. Fokine was soon succeeded as company choreographer by Vaslav Nijinsky, whose angular and sexually suggestive *Afternoon of a Faun* in 1912 outraged many dance aficionados and provoked *Le Figaro* to pronounce it “loathsome”—which, of course, only stirred more public interest.

The Ballets Russes was very much a part of the early-20th-century avant-garde, performing to the music of Igor Stravinsky, Maurice Ravel, and Claude Debussy, and enlisting the likes of Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Georges Braque to design sets and costumes. Its innovative choreographers introduced new ideas about dance that did not depend on the turned-out legs and pointe shoes that had been indispensable to 19th-century ballet. Yet despite the fabulous success of the Ballets Russes, its influence did not survive the brilliant impresario Diaghilev, who died in 1929. Virtually all of the ballets seen today throughout Europe and America come from the earlier Romantic and classical traditions.

With the decline of the Ballets Russes, much of the innovative energy in dance flowed from modern dance, with its emphasis on individual movement and expression—a dance form that took root, not surprisingly, in the United States. It was in America, land of automobiles, jazz, and women’s suffrage, that women finally took on the central role of choreographer and, in doing so, created an entirely new form of concert dance. The modern dance pio-

neers of the 1930s and ’40s, notably Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey, repudiated ballet’s aristocratic roots, its notions of femininity, and the emblematic satin slipper that represented constraint and emphasized beauty, lightness, and delicacy. They strove instead to reveal the struggle against gravity. Graham, for example, built her technique around the principles of “contraction” and “release,” including movements of violent intensity, exuberance, and percussiveness. Often giving up shoes altogether, these innovators choreographed and danced works about woman as pioneer, as leader, as passionate being—mythic, heroic, and powerful—and used costumes befitting such characters. Instead of portraying sylphs, they chose Clytemnestra, Joan of Arc, and the archetypal matriarch as their subjects. They danced barefoot (or in the most elemental of slippers) for control, economy, and immediacy, and for liberation from a physically painful masquerade of femininity.

The next generation carried the revolt against tradition even further, inaugurating what the dance world now calls postmodernism. Inspired by the Zen ideas of composer John Cage and choreographer Merce Cunningham in the 1950s, dancers increasingly emphasized spareness and an intellectual, almost theoretical approach to movement. Accordingly, costumes were pared down—jeans, underwear, skin. Dance moved away from music, character, and story—the very elements that had provided the foundation for Isadora Duncan and

other modern dance pioneers. In the 1960s, Yvonne Rainer, one of the Judson Dance Theater's most influential choreographers, heralded a new mood in dance, saying "NO to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make-believe no to the glamour and transcendency of the star image." Dance was not a display of virtuosic technique, Rainer and others insisted, it was "movement." Anyone could do it. In fact, the simplicity of an untrained body was preferred to the affectations of a trained one. Dancers performed simple tasks: sitting, walking, carrying mattresses. The sneaker became the performance shoe of choice precisely because it was ordinary footwear.

But the more unpretentious dance aimed to be, the more elitist it became. Invariably, it alienated traditional audiences and appealed more to artists and intellectuals interested in the art's social and political content. Had dance come full circle? Like the Sun King's 17th-century aristocrats, avant-garde dancers in the 1960s donned costumes self-consciously drawn from their "real" life; both made political and artistic statements addressed to an exclusive audience. Even the performance spaces of postmodern dance bore a resemblance to the early court theaters. The Manhattan lofts, galleries, and churches that hosted avant-garde dance companies put performers and audience in close proximity, and sometimes even restored audiences to their former places in raised galleries along the sides.

In the past two decades, there has been a movement away from the austere process of paring down that figured so prominently in early postmodern dance. Now the byword is "inclusion." Embracing nondance movements, popular dance styles such as break dancing, as well as rigorous dance technique, contemporary dance has been willing to encompass even ballet, its long-standing archenemy. The old distinction between ballet and modern dance has been blurred by a series of breakthroughs, some of them already decades old. George

Balanchine, a veteran of the Ballets Russes who helped found the New York City Ballet in the 1940s, created a 20th-century American ballet so well crafted that even skeptical modern dancers took an interest in it. Beginning in the 1970s, modern dance icons such as Twyla Tharp and Mark Morris choreographed for major ballet companies such as the Joffrey Ballet and the American Ballet Theatre. And during the past 20 years, Kirov-trained ballet star Mikhail Baryshnikov, one of the great dancers of the century, has crossed over to modern dance.

The new dance has established no single direction for itself, and too often in contemporary dance (and its sometime-sibling, performance art) autobiographical or political "authenticity" substitutes for craft, technique, and inspiration. But some modern dancers, such as Morris and Trisha Brown, have rediscovered theatricality, musicality, and a rough-and-tumble athletic virtuosity. There is also a renewed appreciation of costume, a turn marked in Tharp's *Sue's Leg* (1975), in which the dancers appeared in replicas of their well-worn rehearsal clothes—but replicas wittily created out of elegant satin and jersey materials by designer Santo Loquasto. Very often, today's dancers wear costumes ironically, donning prom dresses and thrift shop castoffs as a way of putting distance between themselves and what they wear and of commenting on the audience's expectations. Yet they are still wearing costumes, and they are still providing an element of theatricality and interest that was until recently virtually banished from dance.

How far the postmodernist rummaging in the neglected trunks and closets of dance heritage will go, and how widespread it will be, remain unclear. But showing once again that the old can be made new, the contemporary pastiche of the traditional and the avant-garde recently acquired an interesting new source of possibilities and a new emblem: the split-sole sneaker made for pointe work, already being worn by both ballet and modern dancers.

CURRENT BOOKS

The Culture of Success

THE WEALTH AND POVERTY OF NATIONS.

By David S. Landes. Norton. 597 pp. \$30

by A. J. Bacevich

My aim in writing this book," David Landes announces at the outset of this richly rewarding study, "is to do world history." As bold as that goal might be, the author's real ambition is larger still. Persuaded that the growing gap between rich and poor poses "the greatest single problem and danger facing the world of the Third Millennium," he plumbs history to locate the origins of that predicament, explaining why some peoples prosper while others languish in seemingly inescapable backwardness and poverty. This in turn obliges him to examine the processes of economic development and modernization across several centuries.

Yet the author, a noted historian and professor emeritus at Harvard University, has a further purpose as well. *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* mounts a withering attack on scholarly fashions such as dependency theory, orientalism, and multiculturalism. Rather than honest modes of analysis, in the author's view, these tend to be exercises in blame-laying and moral self-approbation, in which "motive trumps truth" and "audiences know the answers in advance." Preferring "truth to goodthink," Landes skewers the canons of today's academic avant-garde as so much bunkum. He also contends that the venerable Marxist typology of exploiters and exploited—whatever its value as a device to legitimize political agendas—offers no real capacity for understanding why some are rich and others poor. Politics or ideology alone cannot explain the complex process of development.

The author's inquiry into that process is panoramic. Landes is interested in Big Change—and readers who confuse "Big" with the latest eruption of scandal in

Washington may find the expansive scope of his narrative disorienting. For Landes, the Cold War is a mere blip on the radar screen of history. Several hundred years of European colonialism qualify as no more than "a passing phenomenon." This is history rendered as the product of vast impersonal forces and punctuated throughout with the author's own sweeping (and pungent) pronouncements.

The wide swath cut by such an approach underpins the author's central contention: development is above all a function of culture. Indeed, in separating winners from losers in the pursuit of modernity, "culture makes all the difference." Nations that have acquired wealth and power are those in which curiosity and scientific innovation flourish; in which personal values such as self-discipline, self-denial, and initiative are widespread; and in which government protects property, nurtures the entrepreneurial spirit, and respects the primacy of the market. In the end, "everything depends on the quality of enterprise and the technological capability of the society."

Landes supports his case with a region-by-region survey that begins with the Age of Exploration and concludes with the present day. The interpretive framework to which that survey adheres is unabashedly Eurocentric. Credit for devising the concept of modernization—the ideas, arrangements, and institutions that have made the systematic creation of vast wealth possible—belongs to Europe. "The very notion of economic development," Landes asserts, "was a Western invention." Those who argue to the contrary—who insist, for example, that ancient Chinese, Egyptian,

or Aztec technological achievements matched or surpassed those of Europe, or that the West rose to economic and political primacy only through deception and skullduggery—simply delude themselves.

While the title of Landes's book recalls the Adam Smith classic, the content owes much to the equally famous analysis by Max Weber. To explain Western dominance, Landes revives the Weberian thesis of the Protestant ethic as the foundation of modern capitalism. The Protestants of northern Europe, England, and eventually North America embraced universal literacy, which is critical to the creation of a skilled and motivated work force. They scrapped the traditional concept of time as a cyclic phenomenon, devising a linear model more amenable to disciplined and routinized economic activity. They labored tirelessly to bend nature to human needs and, in matters large and small, to decipher how the world worked. "The heart of the matter," observes Landes, lay in the creation of "a new kind of man—rational, ordered, diligent, productive." Moreover, efforts to inculcate these qualities became self-perpetuating: successive generations of believers judged one another by conformity to commonly recognized standards of behavior.

To measure the impact of Protestant values on Europe's capacity for development, one need look no further than to those nations where resistance to the Reformation was most determined. In Catholic Spain, for example, Protestant rationality and diligence smacked of subversion. When Iberia led the way in opening the New World, the result was disaster for all concerned. Instead of facilitating development, empire gave rise to obsessions with gold and exposed an ugly penchant for rapacity. Spain's foray into the Americas led it to exhaustion and bankruptcy. For Latin Americans, the chief cultural legacies of Hispanic rule were an attitude of collective impotence and a "morbid propensity to find fault with everyone but oneself." Development in the region lagged accordingly.

Where Protestants settled the New World, the results were radically different.

Colonists from Holland and England were not notably gentler in their treatment of the indigenous population. (Landes does not blink at the human toll resulting from the arrival of the Europeans—for Native Americans "it was apocalypse.") But their aim was not simply plunder; the New World offered an opportunity to do new things in new ways, and the role of technology was central to the enterprise.

More important even than Europe's move into the New World was the onset of the Industrial Revolution, led by Great Britain in the latter part of the 18th century. Others (including the young United States) copied and built on the British formula and spent a century or more feverishly trying to catch up. The Industrial Revolution produced wealth on a scale hitherto undreamed. But its indirect effects were greater still: it "transformed the balance of power," "revolutionized the social order," and "as much changed ways of thinking as doing things." The Industrial Revolution divided humanity into two camps: winners and losers. "It begat multiple worlds."

Landes takes pains to emphasize that "it was not resources or money that made the difference." Geography is not destiny. Nor is it "want of money that holds back development." In his view, "The biggest impediment is social, cultural, and technological unreadiness—want of knowledge and know-how. In other words, want of the ability to use money."

A comparison of late-19th century China and Japan helps Landes illustrate the critical role of culture. Viewing outsiders with contempt and clinging obdurately to a rigid if superficially harmonious social order, China, for all its size and the richness of its history, epitomized the concept of a nation culturally ill equipped to modernize. In contrast, once the Meiji Restoration had cleared away the undergrowth of samurai culture, Japan—like England, a nation possessing only a modest stock of natural resources—quickly emerged as the economic powerhouse of Asia. According to Landes, "The Japanese were learners because they had unlimited aspirations." Japan even evolved a Calvinist work ethic—"one does not have to

be a Weberian Protestant to behave like one.”

Ibero-America has been burdened with slights and grudges, nursed since the days of formal and informal foreign domination. Until recently, China has been held back by the belief that the barbarians surrounding the Middle Kingdom had little to offer other than tribute. Much of the contemporary Islamic world, according to Landes, suffers from these and other maladies. Like Spain at the height of its empire, the oil-rich countries of modern Islam have been “cursed by easy riches and led down the path of self-indulgence and laziness.” Lacking a skilled and ambitious work force, mistrusting techniques that derive from the hated West, even the wealthy nations of the Arab world seem all but doomed to slide back into poverty once the oil runs out or the developed world devises a cheap alternative energy source.

An even greater impediment to modernization in Islamic nations, according to Landes, is the unequal status accorded women. In his view, traditionalist societies will never be able to compete with societies that draw from the full pool of talent. Landes suggests that the ultimate effect of gender inequity is to demoralize men. “One cannot rear young people in such wise that half of them think themselves superior by biology, without dulling ambition and devaluing accomplishment.”

Thus, barring some unlikely cultural transformation, the Islamic world will fall further behind, a prospect that does not bode well for the rest of us. “Failure hardens the heart and dims the eye,” Landes observes. Particularly in the Middle East, losers seek consolation in religious fundamentalism and bloody confrontation. In nations built on the concept of male privilege, “violence is the quintessential, testosterone expression of male entitlement.”

Tenacity, technological know-how, and a knack for using money to make money: in the Middle East, in the tattered remnants of the former communist bloc, above all in Africa, cultural arrangements that give these values short shrift point toward an ever-widening gap between the developed and underdeveloped worlds. If Landes has little patience

with explanations that saddle a putatively exploitative West with responsibility for this trend, neither is he sanguine about the prospects of aid from the outside world correcting the problems of the underdeveloped world. Outsiders can do precious little.

His conclusion is a bleak one. We live in a postimperial age in which sovereign states claim a nominal equality, and an age of technological marvels that are ostensibly available to all humanity. But both of these claims of equality are fictions. The reality is that those who have solved the riddle of how to generate wealth are getting wealthier still. Those who remain baffled by that problem stagnate, and in so doing fall ever further behind.

In his most unsentimental moments, Landes seems to suggest an outcome that is bleaker still. Those who have adapted their culture to the imperatives of modernization may have purchased some measure of material comfort, but at a heavy cost. Being rich has not made these nations virtuous. “Other things being equal,” Landes notes, “it is the rich who poison the earth.” Those poisons are themselves cultural as well as material. The new methods devised to create wealth have necessarily destroyed the old, sweeping aside much that is good and humane. Only when we acknowledge the existence of these poisons do we confront the true dilemma of modernization: “change or lose; change and lose.” The choice is not a happy one.

Yet recognizing that the choice may well be inescapable clarifies the dilemmas of the present age. It offers an antidote to the utopian claims offered by the noisy prophets of globalization and universal democracy who promise simple solutions to the world’s problems. Among its many other virtues, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* provides a compelling reminder that our problems have no easy solution and that whatever solutions we devise will give rise to problems of their own.

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Marching through '64

PILLAR OF FIRE:

America in the King Years, 1963–65.

By Taylor Branch. Simon & Schuster. 746 pp. \$30

by David J. Garrow

Pillar of Fire is the second volume of Taylor Branch's projected three-volume history of the American black freedom struggle during the 1950s and 1960s. Ten years ago, Branch published his first volume, *Parting the Waters*, a richly detailed account of the civil rights movement that covered the years 1954–63 in 922 pages of text. Ending with the aftermath of John F. Kennedy's November 22 assassination, *Parting the Waters* was intended to be the first of two volumes that would carry the story forward until Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination on April 4, 1968. But Branch changed plans, expanding his history from two volumes to three. *Pillar of Fire* covers the movement's history from December 1963 until February 1965 in 613 pages of text. Or, to be more precise, about 419 pages of text, for the first 194 pages are devoted to recapitulating much of the 1962–63 history that the author comprehensively treated in *Parting the Waters*.

Should *Pillar of Fire* be evaluated by itself, or should it be assessed in tandem with *Parting the Waters*? As King often said, most "either-or" questions—this one included—are best answered with "both-and" responses. Comparing *Pillar* with *Parting* raises two questions: why devote almost one-third of *Pillar* to a reprise of *Parting*, and why allocate 400-plus pages to essentially just 1964,

when all of 1954 through 1963 merited "only" 900? In the author's defense, his readers—whether or not they read *Parting the Waters* a decade ago—deserve some recapitulation, and 1963 and 1964 almost inarguably were the crucial years of the civil rights movement.

Still, Branch and his editors might have had it right the first time: two comprehensive volumes might have been ideal, while adding a third one in the middle may result in a badly misshapen trilogy. The necessary recap could have been handled in 40 pages rather than 190, and a more selective treatment of the events of 1964 might have aided readers. There's another possible answer: even if three volumes *are* better than two, should not the middle volume have ended in August 1965—following the Selma, Alabama, protests, and passage of the landmark Voting Rights Act—rather than six months earli-



January 1964: President Lyndon Johnson meets with civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr. (center, front), to discuss his war on poverty.

er, when the Selma campaign was just beginning? In any event, the price for covering relatively little of the movement's history in *Pillar of Fire* will be paid by the author himself, for he will have a *very* tall order and a *very* long book on his hands when he tries to cover the period February 1965 through April 1968 in his final volume. If only for Branch's sake, let's hope that volume three doesn't expand into volumes three and four.

But enough about the strategic pitfalls of a multivolume work. Reviewing *Parting the Waters* for *Dissent* 10 years ago, I wrote that Branch was "a careful and trustworthy interpreter" of the movement's history. The breadth of his accomplishment in *Pillar of Fire* more than verifies the accolade. Other movement historians viewed *Parting the Waters* critically or dismissively (Charles Payne wrote that Branch "tells a good story, but not always the one that happened"), but Branch's missteps in *Pillar of Fire* are so few and generally so inconsequential (e.g., the air base outside Selma was Craig Field, not Clark) that the academic carping ought to be held to a minimum. That's especially appropriate in light of *Pillar of Fire's* two most substantive achievements: Branch's attention to grassroots activists in Mississippi and his full-scale integration (no pun intended) of Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam into civil rights movement history.

One of the most notable strengths of *Parting the Waters* was Branch's detailed treatment of the work that Robert P. Moses and other young staff members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee undertook in Mississippi. *Pillar of Fire* continues that story, and Branch rightly stresses both the extent of physical violence that movement workers encountered in the South's most dangerous state and the deep political disappointment they experienced when their challenge to the all-white "regular" Mississippi delegation at the 1964 Democratic National Convention was turned aside by the

forces of Lyndon B. Johnson.

President Johnson is, along with King, Malcolm, and Moses, one of the four dominant figures in *Pillar of Fire*, and the recent release of hundreds of LBJ's secretly recorded telephone conversations allows Branch to present Johnson's role in this history with unprecedented precision and detail. Those tapes fully justify Branch's verdict that LBJ at times could be a "manic, unstable president," and Branch's rendition of how Johnson manipulated the 1964 convention's rejection of the Mississippi challengers is important and top-notch history. (Many of LBJ's more significant 1963–64 recorded conversations are presented in Michael R. Beschloss's valuable volume, *Taking Charge* [1997], but Beschloss's book is understandably selective, not comprehensive. Any good historian wanting to mine the Johnson recordings will, like Branch, have to do his or her own research at the Johnson Library in Austin, Texas.)

The close attention Branch devotes to the Nation of Islam (NOI) and the emergence of Malcolm X as a national figure is perhaps the single most important virtue of *Pillar of Fire*. The NOI and its corrupt and reclusive leader, Elijah Muhammad, have been accorded little attention in most "civil rights" histories, in large part because Elijah believed that his followers should keep themselves apart from political protest. That was only one of several important reasons why Malcolm X, the NOI's top spokesman in the early 1960s, began to chart his own independent course, and Malcolm's official break from the NOI and Elijah in March 1964 turned out to be one of the decade's more momentous events. Malcolm's assassination at the hands of NOI gunmen 11 months later, in February 1965, was the most tragic reflection of how Elijah's NOI bore more resemblance to an organized-crime family than to anything involving the Islamic faith. Had Malcolm lived, and had his political evolution been allowed to continue, he might well have emerged as the dominant African-American voice of the late 1960s.

Branch's treatment of Malcolm is far from worshipful, but *Pillar of Fire* makes superb use of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's copious surveillance files on Malcolm and the NOI that have been publicly released under the Freedom of Information Act. Branch also deserves kudos for undertaking some valuable interviews with onetime NOI members, particularly the late Yusuf Shah, who as "Captain Joseph," Malcolm's ostensible deputy in the NOI hierarchy, may have known more about Malcolm's assassination than he ever chose to reveal.

Pillar of Fire thus has tremendous richness and strengths, but it has shortcomings too. One notable flaw is Branch's oddly noncommittal treatment of King's private activities, which attracted the secret, prurient interest of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover and other officials. The full story of the Bureau's extensive electronic surveillance of King—both wiretapping his telephone conversations and bugging some of his hotel rooms—has been public since 1981. While Branch adds no new details to the story, he surprisingly abstains from discussing how King's activities should (or should not) influence our view of him.

Drawing on FBI agents' memories, Branch recounts one crucial recording that captured disparaging sexual comments King made while watching a television broadcast of President Kennedy's funeral—comments that the FBI immediately passed along to Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy. The author's rendition differs in significant detail from my own understanding of that recording, but a far more significant problem is posed by Branch's unsupported interpretation of King's remarks. Branch contends that "King's outburst," as he calls it, stemmed from a "hidden fury" that King had toward President Kennedy because of JFK's underwhelming executive response to the September 1963 Birmingham, Alabama, church bombing that killed four young girls.

No evidence at all suggests that King felt any "hidden fury" toward Kennedy.

A full appreciation of King's often-lascivious private sense of humor supports a far more benign interpretation of his off-color remarks: the taped comments, whatever they precisely were, stemmed from King's enjoyment of dirty jokes, not from any "unguarded rage" toward the late president. Branch's explicit refusal to plumb the matter more deeply—he adds that "its causes are too personal for the scope of this history"—suggests that this is not a matter the author has pondered carefully.

Pillar of Fire has other, smaller lacunae as well. Some important movement activists, such as Bayard Rustin (whose most important essay Branch erroneously dates to 1964 rather than 1965), receive insufficient attention.

But the most serious challenge *Pillar of Fire* poses to a reader is the number of stories it serves up. Someone who already knows the history can cope, but anyone not fully familiar with the entire cast of characters may often feel overwhelmed. For example, in one eight-paragraph sequence, Branch jumps from the defeat of Massachusetts governor Endicott Peabody to LBJ's campaign schedule to student protests in Berkeley to NOI violence in Boston to FBI reports on violence in Mississippi to King's appearance at a conference in Georgia. Not all of these topics necessarily merit inclusion, but even if they did, more sustained accounts and fewer abrupt transitions would make *Pillar of Fire* far more digestible.

Taylor Branch deserves our plaudits for a rich, valuable book, but *Pillar of Fire* tells only a relatively small portion of the author's larger story. By choosing to postpone a disproportionate amount of King's story and the movement's history to his third volume, Branch has set for himself a far more difficult challenge than he has had to face in either *Parting the Waters* or *Pillar of Fire*.

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History

SPACE BETWEEN WORDS: The Origins of Silent Reading.

By Paul Saenger. Stanford Univ. Press.
480 pp. \$49.50

At the outbreak of World War II, the historian Lynn White, Jr., alerted his fellow medievalists to a curious fact. For all the otherworldly concerns of the people of the Middle Ages, they were generally better practical innovators than the ancient Greeks and Romans. Even the “Dark Ages” showed a steady advance over the Roman Empire, and 10th-century serfs lived better than the proletariat of Augustan Rome. Documenting the impressive accomplishments of medieval society in agriculture and mining, wind power and waterpower, shipbuilding and road construction, White and his successors have shown that medieval religion, far from inhibiting technological change, encouraged it in ways unthinkable in slaveholding antiquity.

In *Space between Words*, Saenger makes a richly learned contribution to our reinterpretation of medieval innovation. A curator of rare books and manuscripts as well as a historian, Saenger is equally at home in the arcane lexicon of paleography (the study of historical scripts), the daunting terminology of contemporary neuroscience, and the psychology of reading. His theme seems specialized and technical, but it is nothing less than the reinvention of reading: how the arrangement of letters on a page, and our techniques for interpreting them, began to take their present form well over a thousand years ago. Saenger does for medieval mental software what White and others did for the hardware of daily life, discovering that habits we take for granted were early and profound innovations.

Late Romans and the Church Fathers nearly always read aloud. They had to. They were interpreting highly inflected Latin, written without standardized word order and without breaks between words. Understanding a passage required *praelectio*, a spoken recitation. (Silent reading was apparently unusual enough to be noticed, and Saenger argues that it probably entailed mumbling rather than true silence anyway.) The goal of Roman literacy was not gathering information quickly from a text; it was giving an elegant oral performance, if only a private one.

Writing amid economic depression and

war, White recognized that vital innovations appear in times of crisis. Saenger’s work confirms this insight. It was Irish and English monks during the troubled seventh and eighth centuries who first prepared manuscripts with a form of word spacing. Copying rapidly, as a present-day keyboard transcriber would, they established the first fixed sentence orders in Latin. Gradually they introduced new forms of books still used by countless readers: alphabetical glossaries, interlinear translations, pocket Gospels, and vernacular texts. In promoting sacred Latin texts to non-Latin speakers, they stimulated new reading habits, notably the ability to recognize entire words as patterns.

As word separation spread slowly through Europe, it changed culture subtly but powerfully, especially in the 12th and 13th centuries. Once inaudibility prevailed, authors’ works grew more personal, private, occasionally erotic. Scholastic Latin, intended for silent analysis in larger units of thought rather than for declamation, valued clarity and precision over sonority. Mathematical notation grew more abstract, preparing the way for Arabic numerals. By the late Middle Ages, books were available on a scale unknown in antiquity, and university students were expected to bring copies of texts to their lectures and follow along silently. When librarians installed costly reference books, they chained them to tables (just as their successors safeguard computer equipment); in such close quarters, silence became the rule.

While admirers of McLuhanesque epigrams should look elsewhere, Saenger writes clearly and directly, and his insights into the cultural practices behind now-obscure scribal conventions enrich the archaeology of the written word. It is fitting that as some monastic orders take to the Internet, their early medieval predecessors emerge as pioneers of a first information age.

—Edward Tenner

THE LAST APOCALYPSE: Europe at the Year 1000 A.D.

By James Reston, Jr.
Doubleday. 299 pp. \$24.95

In A.D. 1000, Otto III, the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, paid a visit to Charlemagne’s



tomb. Otto had Apocalypse on his mind, and, considering himself Emperor of the Last Days, he felt the need to pay tribute to the man who had established the Kingdom of Christ in Europe. To Otto, the end of the world, as predicted in the Bible, seemed to be at hand. Nations were at war, and royal courts were rife with corruption. The Holy See was a chaotic and debauched institution, and the population of once-glorious Rome had shriveled to some 50,000 souls. Plague was rampant, and a 30-year-old famine had driven many peasants to cannibalism. The great city of Constantinople had recently been ruled by an ugly, foul-smelling dwarf. Even Charlemagne's royal descendants—Charles the Bald, Charles the Fat, and Charles the Simple—had seemed to presage nothing but inevitable decline. Otto wanted to spruce things up, and so, after opening Charlemagne's tomb, he dressed the great king's 200-year-old corpse in white and ordered that it be given a manicure and a new gold nose. Charlemagne had to look just right for the Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

The Horsemen never came, of course, but Reston, a journalist and author, contends that there was indeed an apocalypse a thousand years ago, and that it came in the form of "a process rather than a cataclysm." Christian Europe early in the 10th century was threatened from all sides: Islamic Spain was ascendant, pagan Vikings were terrorizing the continent,

and ruthless Magyar horsemen were arriving from the east. Yet by the end of the century, these threats had subsided and the borderlands of Europe had been securely Christianized, almost as if by magic. "No more dramatic change can be imagined," Reston argues. "Christianity in 999 A.D. represented civilization and learning and nationhood against the darkness of heathenism, illiteracy, and chaos."

In writing what he calls "a saga of the millennium a thousand years ago," the author paints surprisingly vivid pictures of such figures as Norway's Olaf Trygvesson, Denmark's Svein Forkbeard, England's Ethelred the Unready, Poland's Boleslav the Brave, Spain's Al-Mansor, France's Gerbert of Aurillac, Constantinople's Princess Theophano, and Germany's Otto III. Reston's goal is to tell the story of the "concatenation of [millennial Europe's] dramatic personalities and battles and social forces," and he does so admirably, even if his conclusions seem somewhat suspect at times. (Did the downfall of the Moors in Spain, for example, *really* represent the triumph of "learning" over "illiteracy?" Did the sudden Christianization of the edges of Europe *really* culminate "in peace and tranquility?")

Reston avoids drawing parallels between the end of the last millennium and the end of our own, but it's impossible not to find at least one lesson here. "In considering the millennium," he observes, "people are looking for apocalypse in the wrong place." Those expecting a cataclysm in 2000, in other words, are likely to be disappointed—but the changes we're living through may prove every bit as apocalyptic as those of a thousand years ago.

—Toby Lester

**RECONSTRUCTING AMERICA:
*The Symbol of America in
Modern Thought.***

By James W. Ceaser. Yale Univ. Press.
292 pp. \$30

"Men admired as profound philosophers," Alexander Hamilton observed in *The Federalist*, "have gravely asserted that all animals, and with them the human species, degenerate in America—that even dogs cease to bark after having breathed awhile in our atmosphere." Ceaser, a political scientist at the

University of Virginia, traces anti-American thought from those 18th-century philosophers, including the Count de Buffon and Cornelius de Pauw, to the 19th-century French racialist Arthur de Gobineau, the German intellectual Oswald Spengler, and, finally, the post-modern theorists Martin Heidegger, Alexander Kojève, and Jean Baudrillard.

These America haters, Ceaser argues, rely on nonpolitical theories of causation, often fatalistic and biological (though not always racialist) ones, leaving little room for the machinery of democracy. By contrast, traditional political science—exemplified for the author by *The Federalist* and Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*—eschews determinism and stresses moral and ethical choices based on the empirical study of politics. The author leaves no doubt where his sympathies lie: "It is time to take [America] back from the literary critics, philosophers, and self-styled postmodern thinkers who have

made the very name 'America' a symbol for that which is grotesque, obscene, monstrous, stultifying, stunted, leveling, deadening, deracinating, deforming, rootless, uncultured, and—always in quotation marks—'free.'"

Gracefully written and provocative as it is, Ceaser's volume falls short of reclaiming America from its critics. The author dismisses critiques of the nation as self-evidently preposterous, undeserving of serious analysis. Instead of refuting anti-American ideas, he disparages their intellectual parentage and moves on. Ceaser also ignores the critical thought of writers such as Richard Weaver and Albert Jay Nock, who do not fit easily into his thesis. Still, it is difficult to dispute his contention that the United States is better served by thinkers who aim to understand its political machinery than by those who deride the nation as a vast, homogenizing Disneyland.

—Solomon L. Wisenberg

Religion & Philosophy

CONFESSIONS OF A PHILOSOPHER:

A Journey through Western Philosophy.

By Bryan Magee. Random House.
496 pp. \$25.95

"Life . . . hurled fundamental problems of philosophy in my face," the author declares, somewhat melodramatically, in this appealing intellectual autobiography. A former philosophy professor who calls himself "a commentator rather than a player," Magee wants to persuade the educated lay public that philosophical problems deserve our contemplation and that the writings of philosophers, even the "heavy going" ones, merit our attention. This is not Magee's first attempt to stimulate interest in philosophy; he also created two widely admired programs for the British Broadcasting Corporation, *Men of Ideas* and *The Great Philosophers*.

What most interests Magee is the nature of nonscientific knowledge, especially knowledge derived from art. What, he asks, do we learn from art, given that "the creation of, and response to, authen-

tic art are not activities of the conceptualizing intellect?" Drawing on Schopenhauer, Magee argues that art is a kind of "direct experience"—an experience that cannot be put into words—that brings meaning to our lives. Blending the sensibility of the aficionado with that of the philosopher, Magee deems music the most meaningful of the arts: it creates "an alternative world, and one that reveals to us the profoundest metaphysical truths that human beings are capable of articulating or apprehending, though of course we are not capable of apprehending them conceptually."

Magee's ideas about "direct experience" are not completely clear. What is a metaphysical truth that cannot be apprehended conceptually? Moreover, the book's autobiographical elements can be distracting—or, occasionally, banal, as when Magee dwells on the "existential challenge" of his midlife crisis. But at its best, *Confessions of a Philosopher* is a compelling guide to some perennial problems of philosophy.

—Stephen Miller

Arts & Letters

THE ARGONAUTIKA.

By Apollonios Rhodios.

Translated, with introduction, commentary, and glossary, by Peter Green. Univ. of California Press.

474 pp. \$60 cloth, \$14.95 paper

Seven centuries separate Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* from Virgil's *Aeneid*. The Roman epic of the first century B.C. is almost as distant from the Greek epics as we are from Chaucer. Yet these three poems, too often carelessly lumped together, define what even the most curious contemporary reader is likely to know

of the Greco-Roman epic tradition. Between Homer's age and Virgil's, epic poetry continued to be written, but time and chance, the most absolute of critics, called the shots, and these poems are almost entirely lost. What survives—with one great exception—is in tatters: titles, fragments, traces of what did exist, hints about what might have existed. The exception is *The Argonautika* of Apollonios Rhodios, from the middle of the third century B.C.,

an account of Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece and the beginnings of his ill-fated dalliance with Medea. The poem was sufficiently strong to influence Roman poets hundreds of years later, and, in *Medea*, Virgil found one model for his Dido.

In rough outline, the story is simple enough. Wicked King Pelias sets the young Greek prince Jason an impossible task to block his succession to the throne: bring back the Golden Fleece from Kolchis, at the eastern edge of the Black Sea. Jason assembles a crew of heroes from throughout Greece and sails on the god-built *Argo*. Books I and II describe the voyage out, up through the Hellespont and along the southern coast of the Black Sea. Book III is an extended treatment of the stay in Kolchis (in modern Georgia) and Medea's passion for Jason; in antiquity this was the most famous portion of the poem. Book IV sends the heroes home, by a new route that takes them across a goodly part of Europe and the Mediterranean.

The legend of the *Argo's* voyage was already familiar to Homer and probably originated in accounts of ancient Greek maritime exploration and commercial advance. (Achilles is, charmingly, a baby in his mother's arms in *The Argonautika*, watching the ship depart.) Apollonios the poet breathed life into the traditional story, even as Apollonios the scholar (he was head of the library at Alexandria) sorted out the details of its many, and often contradictory, episodic strands. The process of finding causes and explanations was a supremely

Alexandrian preoccupation, and inquiry into the roots of custom and ritual and geographical oddity crowds the poem. Apollonios set all the panoply of myth in a realistic landscape, as if the legend were history, and he gave the characters the emotions of individuals in whom his first audience would have had no difficulty recognizing themselves.

Apollonios's tale of grand adventure—of meddling gods and compromised heroes, of harpies, giants, dragons, perilous seas, magic, passion, and betrayal—is now as accessible to the English-reading public as it will ever be, thanks to a splendid new edition by Peter Green, a professor of classics at the University of Texas. His verse translation, using a stress line of the sort Richmond Lattimore developed for his translations of Homer, is lucid, engrossing, and fast moving, adjectives that do not necessarily apply to the original Greek. Hundreds of pages of additional materials frame the translation—an introduction up-to-the-minute in its scholarship, a commentary on all four books of the poem (which scholars will value as highly as lay readers), a glossary of names, and, blessedly, a set of maps. For English-readers, the wind to Kolchis now blows fair, and with something like the force Apollonios himself once conjured for it.

—James M. Morris



*DIANA & NIKON:
Essays on Photography.*

By Janet Malcolm. Aperture. 212 pp.
\$29.95

The adage has it that a picture is worth a thousand words, but the essayist Janet Malcolm manages deftly to reverse that assertion—indeed, to make the reader in some instances quite wary of a given photographer's intentions and work. For many years in the pages of the *New Yorker*, Malcolm has displayed a talent for getting to the bare bones of the matter, and, not rarely, a brusque impatience with the received pieties that go unexamined. In a sense, photography itself has become one of those pieties, its supposed "truths" an easy bromide, gladly accepted as a means of avoiding life's complexities, not to mention our own inclination to protect ourselves from recognizing those complexities by seeing only what suits our (psychological, social, economic) convenience. As in our dreams (those nightly visual productions that hint at meaning rather than directly express it), the photographer has intentions, assumptions, that inform his or her work, but they are not necessarily out on the table—hence an indirection that can be misleading, if beguiling, in a medium popularly regarded as not only a place of artistry but a repository of the real.

It is that tension between the aesthetic and the documentary that preoccupies Malcolm. She moves knowingly from one photographer to another, so that we meet, through her eyes, at once appreciative and skeptical, the work of well-known masters such as Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Steichen, Robert Frank and Walker Evans. She asks us to look at others, more controversial—Diane Arbus, inevitably, as well as Richard Avedon, William Eggleston, and Sally Mann. She does so with language, naturally, but she also presents picture after picture so that we can follow her line of reasoning against the evidence of what William Carlos Williams called "the thing itself." That phrase, a statement of a poet's hard search for a rock-bottom truth, gets at what Malcolm is trying to indicate and illustrate—the ambiguous nature of photographs, with their claim of objectivity pulling against the photographer's desire to summon metaphors and assert ideas, propositions, ideologies.

Like Susan Sontag, Malcolm emphasizes

this appropriative or manipulative side of photography, even as she, like Sontag, fails to acknowledge a similar aspect of her own kind of work. Perhaps she assumes that the reader knows of such an inevitability in writing, whereas she worries that in the case of the photograph many of us are unwittingly seduced by the easy availability of an image that seemingly begs only for a nod of recognition. We enjoy all those "tricks" momentarily (photographers are everywhere in this modern bourgeois life), but our hearts are untouched, and we are lonelier for the nature of the experience. Finally, a callousness comes with exposure to endless passing fancies.

The best part of this book—ironically, revealingly—is Malcolm's writing about literature. When she analyzes Henry James's story "The Real Thing" (1893), she tells us more about illusions and our constant reliance on them than she does in her many earnest, serious-minded efforts to figure out what particular photographic images intend for us to feel, notice, or think. In that regard, she keeps reminding us that photography itself is hard to describe, or define, no matter its singular reliance on a technological gadget with picture-making properties. More so perhaps than a novel or a work of demanding criticism such as this book, the meaning of a photograph varies with the viewer, confirming Nietzsche's observation that "it takes two to make a truth."

—Robert Coles

ANY DAY.

By Henry Mitchell. Indiana Univ. Press.
272 pp. \$24.95

Newspaper columns tend to take on a musty air soon after reaching hardcover. The *Washington Post* columns of the late Henry Mitchell are a rare exception. Mitchell's gardening pieces have already appeared in book form—*The Essential Earthman* (1981) and *One Man's Garden* (1992)—and now, five years after his death, comes a collection of musings from his weekly column, "Any Day."

The author emerges as a reflective and altogether decent man, clear eyed but uncynical, drawn over and over to such seemingly archaic topics as honor, virtue, and integrity. "Nothing infuriates some people more than the concept that one is too good to cheat," he observes. "They think

everybody is born a bastard and that nobody should give himself airs about being better than the average run of folk." Elsewhere he muses on our innate tendency toward self-deception in matters of righteousness: "We'll all go to our graves as irrational as the day we were born, and the best we can do is watch out whenever our personal interest seems to coincide with celestial virtue." Of the essayist E. B. White, Mitchell reflects, "His work was civil and polite; he either had no gift of vitriol or else never felt any." The same could be said of Mitchell, a graceful and gracious observer of the human condition.

—Brian Gross

THE WORK OF POETRY.

By John Hollander. Columbia Univ. Press. 318 pp. \$29.95

In his postcard from Parnassus, *Their Ancient Glittering Eyes* (1992), the poet Donald Hall recounts a Harvard tribute to T. S. Eliot. Asked afterward if he had sat next to the guest of honor, a Junior Fellow told Hall: "I couldn't. John Hollander was sitting on both sides of him." In the 23 essays contained in *The Work of Poetry*, Hollander sits alongside, around, on, and over the great poets and their compositions.

Hollander's vigilant approach can be seen in the essay "Of Of: The Poetics of a Preposition," in which he writes that "the immense variety of ad hoc uses of *of* in idiomatic English helps destabilize its precise operation in certain phrases." Taking Hollander at his word, one can interpret "the work of poetry" as meaning not only the toil that informs composition but the work *belonging* to poetry, as if it were an autonomous enterprise. This second, self-reflective stance is borne by Hollander's insistence on poetry as a metaphor for reali-

ty, particularly in his essay "Dreaming Poetry." He discusses the infinite capacity of poets to editorialize on the work of past practitioners. "We cannot talk about our feelings," he contends, "without talking about talking about them, without pointing out the peculiar ways in which we must use language to tell the truth."

Hollander's several essays on poetic origin seem merely an extension of Harold Bloom's doctrine of misreadings, whereby a poet misconstrues the poem of a predecessor, then pens a rebuttal. Reflecting a critical stance common to the period in which these essays were written (1977–97), Hollander imports jargon from the uncertainty-principle school of literary theory, with ruinous consequences for his clarity. "Poetry is the soul of indirection," he writes. But indirection kills an essay. When Hollander performs a close reading on a specific text, the results are more fruitful, as in his fine essays on Robert Louis Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verses*, the obscure American poet Trumbull Stickney, and the Victorian poets George Meredith and D. G. Rossetti.

"I've always been something of a moralist," Hollander acknowledges, and these essays convey several lessons and lamentations. One is that memorization, once an essential poetic discipline, has become a lost art. Another is that graduate writing workshops neglect rigorous analysis of the poetic form: "There is no useful conventional terminology for the description, taxonomy, and analysis of different modes of free verse." The reader is likely to profit from such concrete observations a good deal more than from Hollander's murky musings on indeterminacy. For the latter, consult a French linguist.

—Sunil Iyengar

Contemporary Affairs

THE LAST BARBARIANS: The Discovery of the Source of the Mekong in Tibet.

By Michel Peissel. Henry Holt. 320 pages. \$27.50

Michel Peissel would have been world famous in an earlier century, but he is an explorer at a time when, as he writes, "most people think explorers are old-fashioned or

completely obsolete." In *The Last Barbarians*, his 15th book, he makes a triumphant case for the explorer, weaving history, geology, and politics with candid revelations of the yearnings and ambitions that have carried him to some of the remotest places on the planet.

A fluent Tibetan-speaker with more than 37 trips to the Himalayas behind him,

Peissel discovered in his reading that the source of the Mekong River had never been established. (The French explorer Dutreuil de Rhins, leader of an 1894 expedition up the Mekong, was shot to death by Tibetan tribesmen in a dispute over stolen horses before reaching the source.) Mindful that success would bring little glory or money, and that an intransigent Chinese bureaucracy would make securing travel permits anything but easy, he was spurred on by his respect both for the Mekong (Asia's third-longest river, originating in Tibet, crossing China, India, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, and ending at a delta in Vietnam) and for Tibet's ecological primacy as the riverhead of Asia, the source of the Yellow, Yangtze, Salween, Mekong, Bramaputra, Irawaddy, and Ganges rivers.

The author is painfully witty in describing the hell of innumerable days in a Land Rover, referring to himself as "strictly what you might call a foot and horse man" who is trapped with a driver, two companions, and a humorless and unenthusiastic Chinese guide. At an outpost, they barter for porters and horses. Then, after a 15-day journey, they reach the object of their quest, the headwaters of the great Mekong—which prove to be not a stupendous glacier, like the source of the Ganges, but a mere trickle from a patch of red soil. "We had discovered the source of the Mekong, an act as banal as it proved to be magical. There was little or nothing to see. The true importance of our discovery was all in the mind, for we had reached one of those rare sacred places where myth and reality meet."

Crossing the vast Tibetan highlands back toward civilization, where he confronts the ugly reality of the Chinese military occupation (in place since 1950), Peissel ruminates on whether technology has divided man from nature and robbed us of willpower, curiosity, and wonder. His mission has become an exploration of the conflict between the civilized and the nomadic: "There is nothing organized society fears more than the intrusion of smart, carefree, gutsy, horseback-riding 'barbarians'." Once more Peissel has proved that even in the age of the satellite and the Internet, there are yet many things about our planet that remain unknown.

—Maura Moynihan

*CONFEDERATES IN THE ATTIC:
Dispatches from the
Unfinished Civil War.*

By Tony Horwitz. Pantheon.
399 pages. \$27

What strange historical passions could induce a gainfully employed and coherent-sounding young waiter to spend his weekends and much of his income pursuing a "hardcore" experience of the Civil War, a quest that involves sleeping in battlefield ditches, eating authentically wormy period grub, and studying old photos to perfect his imitation of a bloated Confederate corpse? Play-acting aside, what still-vivid historical memories provoked a black teenager to shoot and kill Michael Westerman, a white father of newborn twins in Guthrie, Kentucky, whose pickup truck displayed the Confederate flag?

The "unfinished Civil War" described by journalist Tony Horwitz runs the gamut from hobbyist fervor to deadly violence, across a vast middle stretch of more familiar manifestations of historical awareness—books, movies, tourist reconstructions, associations of Confederate veterans' sons and daughters, debates over the teaching of history and the symbols of the Confederacy. Horwitz, a long-time *Wall Street Journal* foreign correspondent and author of two previous books, returned from nine years abroad to find his country plunged into the rediscovery of a war that had fascinated him as a child. Having missed such watershed events as the Ken Burns documentary, the movies *Glory* and *Gettysburg*, and the fight over whether to build a Disney theme park near Manassas battlefield in Virginia, he hit the road, seeking to find out what stokes this continuing hunger to revisit a war that ended 133 years ago.

Horwitz's book offers a lively map of the "continuing war's" various campaigns, but their meaning remains elusive. He finds, not surprisingly, that for many adherents the Civil War obsession spills beyond the standard motives of the amateur historian—regional pride, genealogy, escapism—into wider, still-raging issues of civil rights and race. Some of the people he talks to are clearly in full flight from modernity: the Klan members, the sweet lady in North Carolina who tells Horwitz she has enrolled her cat in the first chapter of *Cats of the Confederacy*. Others, it is clear, are simply

engaging in their version of good clean fun by dressing as Civil War soldiers and taking part in battlefield “re-enactments.”

Bouncing from the contested history of the Confederate prison camp at Andersonville, Georgia, to the debate over whether Richmond, Virginia, will raise a statue to the black tennis player Arthur Ashe, Horwitz at times seems a bit lost in the implications of a topic that, followed to its limits, would touch most of the major preoccupations and battlefields of contemporary American culture. Mostly, though, he steers a wobbly but illuminating course between high seriousness and high camp, faithfully reflecting the peculiarly American way of constructing a shared history.

—Amy E. Schwartz

CLASS STRUGGLE:
What's Wrong (and Right) with America's Best Public High Schools.

By Jay Mathews. Random House.
304 pp. \$24.50

Venturing inside America's elite public high schools, Mathews finds fabulous teachers, students with heart-stopping talents, and parents willing to bear any burden in exchange for Ivy League admission letters for their children. He also discovers a darker side to these schools: the middling students—those who are bright but not brilliant, as well as those with learning disabilities or language problems—tend to receive mediocre educations.

The fault lies less with teachers and administrators, Mathews contends, than with the overly zealous parents of the superior students. A superb education for their own children is not enough; the parents also insist that the schools set their offspring apart from the masses. So when administrators try to expand advanced-placement classes or to mix the gifted with the average, these parents

balk. And they usually prevail. Mathews, an education reporter at the *Washington Post*, reveals that elite public schools are structured, to an alarming degree, by pressure for even more elitism.

Class Struggle is principally set at suburban New York's Mamaroneck High School (which Mathews studied for three years), with occasional vignettes from elsewhere. With a journalist's wiles, the author extracts self-revealing comments from students, parents, principals, and others. We eavesdrop on the teachers who stealthily try to soften the edges of a relentless tracking system, the parents who spar to retain the privileges and prerogatives of their gifted children, the school board member who crafts a Machiavellian plot to save an excellent but ornery physics teacher. In a field plagued by abstraction and jargon, Mathews stresses character and conflict with a novelist's sure touch. His engaging, economical book shows how overweening parental ambition perverts even the best public schools.

—Harriet Tyson

TWILIGHT ON THE LINE:
Underworlds and Politics at the U.S.-Mexico Border.

By Sebastian Rotella. Norton.
320 pp. \$25

A book blurbed by Bruce Springsteen (“Rotella's passionate reporting on the street kids of San Diego led me to write ‘Balboa Park’”) may not immediately inspire scholarly confidence. Is this yet another pop dramatization of a complicated policy issue? The fear is unfounded. Rotella, who covered the U.S.-Mexico border for the *Los Angeles Times* from 1991 to 1996, reveals the violence and tragedy unfolding in a region at once very close and very far away. Some of the events he recounts have made headlines. But most Americans, including most elites, have yet to come to grips with them. This evenhanded book will help.

Rotella begins by portraying the dangers endured by the hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens who continue to stream into the United States. Not least among the perils is mistreatment at the hands of the criminal rings that smuggle people across the border. As Rotella points out, long-thriving smuggling rings have become even more profitable recently, thanks to American efforts to stem



illegal immigration: fees have jumped from about \$350 to as much as \$1,000 per person for the trip from Mexico. While most immigration researchers have yet to factor smuggling into their analyses, Rotella wisely places it at the center of his account.

Rotella argues that the much-publicized border fence has not so much stopped the influx as redirected it to remote parts of the border where no fence has been built. Still, Rotella acknowledges that the fence has imposed order on what was verging on a Hobbesian state of nature. As recently as the early 1990s, the nightly scene a few minutes from downtown San Diego was one of border bandits robbing, raping, and murdering migrants. And the migrants, massed by the hundreds waiting to make their move, were themselves known to assault U.S. Border Patrol agents.

The violent heart of Rotella's account begins with the 1988 murder of a crusading Tijuana journalist and continues with the 1993 assassination of Cardinal Posadas of Guadalajara. In late February 1994, two Mexican drug traffickers with ties to the presidential campaign of Luis Colosio, presumptive successor to President Carlos Salinas, were shot while driving on Interstate

5, 75 miles north of Los Angeles. Days later, a machine-gun battle between federal and state police in a middle-class Tijuana neighborhood left five dead. Three weeks after that, presidential candidate Colosio was assassinated, apparently by a lone gunman, in a shantytown outside Tijuana. In April, the reform-minded chief of the Tijuana police was gunned down. And in January 1997, the special prosecutor investigating that murder was assassinated at his home; four gunmen riddled his body with more than 120 rounds and then ran over it with their van.

The link between these bloody events is of course the drug trade, specifically the battle among rival clans to control the lucrative U.S. market. In typically incisive fashion, Rotella asks whether the drug smugglers may be connected to the alien smugglers. His answer is no, at least not yet. But to read this remarkable book—all the more remarkable for its complete avoidance of moralizing, invective, sensationalism, and off-the-cuff policy prescriptions—is to feel confident that should this precarious situation change, Rotella will be the reporter who brings us the news.

—Peter Skerry

Science & Technology

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL:
*The Life and Times of the Man
Who Invented the Telephone.*

By Edwin S. Grosvenor and Morgan Wesson. Harry N. Abrams. 304 pp. \$45

This dramatically laid-out volume opens with a full-page blowup of a Victorian photograph. Fourteen-year-old Aleck Bell, book in



hand, leans pensively against a garden urn. The volume closes with a small head shot: Bell 65 years later, an old lion with fierce eyebrows and snow-white beard. This slightly blurred final image packs a surprise. It is not a photo but an early electronic facsimile, wired to New York from Cleveland over an experimental line in 1924.

The bracketing makes a biographical point, for Bell's career epitomizes the mentality that produced the technological leap. Thinking the unthought-of round the clock, he invented not only his world-transforming telephone but a metal detector, an early version of the iron lung, and a "photophone" that sent sound by light waves, preceding Marconi's wireless by 18 years. He built a hydrofoil driven by two 350-horsepower engines that zoomed to a world-record 70 miles per hour. Neck and neck with the Wright brothers, he and some partners constructed a powered air-

craft that flew 150 times without crashing. He conceived the idea of implanting radium in tumors to shrink them, founded the journal *Science*, experimentally bred ewes with extra nipples so they could suckle more offspring, and pondered global warming, which he named the “greenhouse effect.” The list goes on—not to mention that, as the son of one deaf woman and the husband of another, he considered his true life’s work to be the education of the deaf.

So innovating a life deserves a first-rate biography, and it has one: Robert V. Bruce’s *Bell: Alexander Graham Bell and the Conquest of Solitude* (1973). Although Grosvenor and Wesson do not change the contours of Bell’s career as Bruce mapped them, their text and captions provide a well-told, brief life of the inventor. They draw fresh material, too, from Bell’s huge correspondence, and they expand matters that Bruce treated in passing, especially the social effects of the telephone. But what sets apart their artbook-like volume are its 400 illustrations. More than half of them published here for the first time, they make an eye-popping pictorial commentary on Bell’s life and times. Many come from the thousand family photographs tucked in nooks and crannies of the Bell family home in Nova Scotia (Grosvenor is a great-grandson of Bell) or from 3,000 unpublished images of the phone industry in the early 20th century taken by the photographer Morris Rosenfeld.

Whether intimate or public, these unfamiliar illustrations have the spellbinding interest of the just-unearthed past. Here is the cabalistic-looking glove Bell used to teach a deaf boy, imprinted at fingertip, thumb, and palm with letters that could be touched to spell words. Through the window of a diving helmet we see the face of Bell’s adventurous wife, Mabel, as she prepared to descend underwater off Nassau. And, of course, everywhere the telephone. Early prototypes, some in glowing color plates: Bell’s “multiple harmonic telegraph,” his “liquid variable-resistance transmitter.” The succession of wrinkles and improvements: the first dial telephones, first nickel-in-slot pay phones. The transforming presence of the telephone on the American scene: a male operator seated at the San Francisco Chinatown switchboard, earphones braced over his long pigtail; a

hole-digging crew on the transcontinental line, working across the Nevada desert—in a covered wagon. And pervading all, the embryonic present. An early ad for the Bell system shows a long row of houses with open doors, and proclaims how, in connecting them, the telephone “provides a highway of universal communication.”

—Kenneth Silverman

NUMBER SENSE:
How the Mind Creates Mathematics.

By Stanislas Dehaene. Oxford Univ. Press. 274 pp. \$25

Where do numbers come from? Do they exist outside human beings, or did humanity invent them? Do they somehow exist beyond space and time, as one of my old neo-Platonist philosophy professors intimated? Are numbers the specifications for the architecture of the universe? In this engaging book, French psychologist Dehaene maintains that numbers originated with humans. He argues for the existence of a rudimentary “number sense,” encoded by evolution into the genes and brains of humans and many other animals. Using this innate sense, humankind has developed mathematics—a cultural creation much like literature, architecture, or art.

Studies have found that rats, chimpanzees, and pigeons have a built-in “accumulator” that allows them to keep rough track of a limited number of objects, usually about three. Human babies have the same ability, which is subject to the same limitation. But humans soon pass beyond this rudimentary skill and learn to estimate, compare, count, add, and subtract. As indicated by new forms of neurological imaging such as the PET scan and MRI, these skills reside in the inferior parietal region of both cerebral hemispheres. The parietal lobe is also where the neuronal circuits for sound, sight, and touch appear to come together; in this regard, “number sense” may be more than mere metaphor.

To support his mathematics-as-human-invention thesis, the author shows how numbers have been created through intellectual effort. The most primitive languages have words for numbers only up to three. Dehaene traces the development of number notation, which enabled our ancestors to name and to count ever higher. Each

advance, he observes, showed “a small but consistent improvement in the readability, compactness, and expressive powers of numerals”—as in the shift from Roman numerals to base-10 Arabic numerals.

Physicist Eugene Wigner famously marveled at the “unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics in the natural sciences.” The efficacy of abstract mathematics in describing natural processes has led many thinkers to conclude that the universe must be constructed along mathematical lines. Dehaene, however turns this argument on its head when he asks, “Isn’t it rather our mathematical laws, and the organizing principles of our brain before them, that were selected according to how closely they fit the structure of the universe?” In other words, bad mathematics and bad mathematicians have been ruthlessly eliminated by the forces of cultural and natural selection. “Is the universe really ‘written in mathematical language,’ as Galileo contended?” asks Dehaene. “I am inclined to think instead that this is the only language with which we can try to read it.” In this book, he goes a long way toward persuading the reader that he is right.

—Ronald Bailey

ABOUT FACE.

By Jonathan Cole. MIT Press.
223 pp. \$25

Life begins with the face. A baby learns to distinguish its mother’s countenance from others within days of birth, then begins imitating her expressions. Through mimicry, the baby gradually discovers how to interact. Cole, a neurophysiologist who teaches at the University of Southampton in Great Britain, suggests that “the face is

perhaps most important in the first weeks and months of life.”

Cole also explains how evolution has refined the primate visage. From the simple respiratory function of cold-blooded vertebrates to the primate’s finely controlled matrix of muscles, the face has advanced to permit greater expression. When primates stood upright, the face became more visible. Instead of having to use the whole body for physical expression, creatures could manipulate a smaller palette, which offered communicative advantages: “The face was more private, allowing communication to be directed at groups or even individuals, and it may have been more eloquent, allowing the development of a different, more refined, sort of body language.”

In addition to signaling emotional states, facial expressions influence them. Researchers have found that when we smile or laugh, we feel happier. In a case study recounted in the book, a man’s personality grew less vibrant as his Parkinson’s disease progressed and he lost the use of facial muscles. His voice grew monotonous; his emotional range shriveled. When physical therapy revived some of the muscles, his voice and his personality were reanimated as well.

Although Cole’s compassion and curiosity always show through, *About Face* never quite coalesces. Lacking his friend Oliver Sacks’s deft touch, the author over-relies on long quotations and neglects descriptive detail. Still, the book includes many thought-provoking, poignant moments. In one, a man who lost his eyesight in middle age laments that he can no longer tell if his wife is smiling. “There’s no doubt that the loss of the face is a profound loss,” the man says. “A deeply dehumanizing loss.”

—Polly Bates

POETRY

Pablo Neruda

Selected and introduced by Edward Hirsch

Pablo Neruda was born Neftalí Ricardo Reyes y Basualto in 1904 in Parral, central Chile, and he died in 1973, shortly after the coup that ousted Salvador Allende. He took the pseudonym “Pablo Neruda” as a teenager to conceal the publication of his first poems from his disapproving father, and he later adopted the name legally. He never knew his mother, who died one month after he was born.

And that's where I'm from, that
Parral of the trembling earth,
a land laden with grapes
which came to life
out of my dead mother.
(“The Birth”)

Neruda always linked womanhood to the regeneration of earth and the cyclical processes of nature. It was one of his most emotionally motivated, earnestly held associations.

Neruda grew up in the frontier town of Temuco in southern Chile. He was shaped by the deep solitude, luxuriant nature, and endless rain of his childhood. “My father is buried in one of the rainiest cemeteries in the world,” he wrote. He adored his stepmother, whom he called *la mamadre* (the more-mother), and wrote his first poem for her. At 14, he brought his poems to Gabriela Mistral, who said, “I am sure that here there is indeed a true poet.”

Neruda's professional life began early. He moved to the capital city of Santiago and published his first collection, *Book of Twilights* (1923), and then, astoundingly, *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* (1924), which instantly catapulted him to fame and is still loved throughout Latin America. It is the first authentic poetry in Spanish that unabashedly celebrates erotic love in sensuous, earthly terms. He explained it by saying, “Love poems were breaking out all over my body.”

Neruda benefited from a tradition among Latin American governments of subsidizing authors through appointments to the foreign service. In Burma, his first post, he began to write the harsh, ferociously surreal poems that would bloom into the three disconsolate volumes of *Residence on Earth*. Robert Bly has called them “the greatest surrealist poems yet written in a Western language.” Neruda served in various consular positions in Ceylon, Java, and Singapore, in Buenos Aires, where he first became friends with Federico García Lorca, then in Barcelona and Madrid, where he also became friends with Raphael Alberti and Miguel de Hernández. This remarkable poetic fraternity was blown apart by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

Neruda was deeply marked by the war—he wrote fiery poems denouncing the fascists and directed any number of political and cultural organizations to aid the Republican cause in Spain.

Neruda had a vision of unalienated man, of justice and equality. On the night of his father's death in 1938 he began *Canto general* (*General Song*), which by the time it was published in 1950 had grown into 340 poems arranged in 15 sections. The heart of the epic is “The Heights of Macchu Picchu,” his meditation on the Inca fortress hidden for centuries in the Andes Mountains. He vowed to make the stones speak on behalf of those who had built and labored on it. What started out as a poem about Chile eventually grew into a poem that delineated the full geological, biological, and political history of South America. It became a comprehensive song, a general chant, a Whitmanian epic of the New World, a mythification of America.

Neruda was a communist and over the years wrote a lot of weak, didactic poems denouncing Western imperialism. In his *Memoirs*, completed just a few days before his death, he called himself “an anarchist,” and that seems closer to the truth. “I do whatever I like,” he said. Nonetheless, his social and political commitments were crucial to his work, part of his vision of humanity.

Neruda was elected senator for the Communist Party in Chile in the mid-1940s. He campaigned for Gabriel González Videla, who became president in 1946 and whom Neruda later denounced. He was accused of disloyalty, and a warrant for his arrest was issued. He went into hiding in Chile, then fled to Argentina, and finally traveled to Italy, France, the Soviet Union, and Asia. Throughout this period he was writing love poems—*The Captain's Verses*, *100 Love Sonnets*—for Matilde Urrutia, who became his third wife.

Neruda returned to Chile in the mid-1950s, and his productivity continued unabated until the end of his life. He published three books of elemental odes, joyously celebrating daily life. He became a faculty member at the University of Chile, worked intensively on the 1970 presidential campaign for Allende, and later became the Chilean ambassador to France. He received the Nobel Prize in literature in 1971.

Ill with cancer, Neruda retired to his beloved house in Isla Negra, Chile, where he wrote *Isla Negra, A Notebook*, a kind of autobiography in verse that explores his landscape, his roots, his deepest experiences. This is supplemented by his splendid *Memoirs*, as well as by eight books of poems published posthumously.

Neruda remains an immense presence in poetry. His work contained multitudes, like that of his great predecessor Walt Whitman, and sometimes, like Whitman, he contradicted himself. But his overall achievement is stunning. He was destined to become a wondrous love poet, the singer of an endlessly proliferating nature, an important poet of political conscience. He was a great Chilean poet, a great Latin American writer, and, finally, a great poet of the Americas.

Body of a Woman

Body of a woman, white hills, white thighs,
you look like a world, lying in surrender.
My rough peasant's body digs in you
and makes the son leap from the depth of the earth.

I was alone like a tunnel. The birds fled from me,
and night swamped me with its crushing invasion.
To survive myself I forged you like a weapon,
like an arrow in my bow, a stone in my sling.

But the hour of vengeance falls, and I love you.
Body of skin, of moss, of eager and firm milk.
Oh the goblets of the breast! Oh the eyes of absence!
Oh the roses of the pubis! Oh your voice, slow and
sad!

Body of my woman, I will persist in your grace.
My thirst, my boundless desire, my shifting road!
Dark river-beds where the eternal thirst flows
and weariness follows, and the infinite ache.

Translated by W. S. Merwin

From 100 Love Sonnets

Maybe nothingness is to be without your presence,
without you moving, slicing the noon
like a blue flower, without you walking
later through the fog and the cobbles,

without the light you carry in your hand,
golden, which maybe others will not see,
which maybe no one knew was growing
like the red beginnings of a rose.

In short, without your presence: without your coming
suddenly, incitingly, to know my life,
gust of a rosebush, wheat of wind:

since then I am because you are,
since then you are, I am, we are,
and through love I will be, you will be, we'll be.

Translated by Stephen Tapscott

"Body of a Woman," from *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* by Pablo Neruda, translated by W. S. Merwin, Translation copyright © 1969 by W. S. Merwin. Used by permission of Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Putnam Inc.; "Nothing But Death", from Neruda and Vallejo: *Selected Poems*, edited by Robert Bly © 1971, 1993 by Robert Bly. Reprinted by permission of Beacon Press, Boston; No. XII from *Canto General* by Pablo Neruda, edited/translated by Jack Schmitt, Copyright © 1991 Fundacion Pablo Neruda, Regents of the University of California; From *100 Love Sonnets* by Pablo Neruda, translated by Stephen Tapscott, Copyright © 1986 by the University of Texas Press. By permission of the University of Texas Press; "Ode to My Socks" from *Selected Odes* of Pablo Neruda, translated by Margaret Sayers Peden, © 1990, University of California Press.

Nothing but Death

There are cemeteries that are lonely,
graves full of bones that do not make a sound,
the heart moving through a tunnel,
in it darkness, darkness, darkness,
like a shipwreck we die going into ourselves,
as though we were drowning inside our hearts,
as though we lived falling out of the skin into the soul.

And there are corpses,
feet made of cold and sticky clay,
death is inside the bones,
like a barking where there are no dogs,
coming out from bells somewhere, from graves somewhere,
growing in the damp air like tears or rain.

Sometimes I see alone
coffins under sail,
embarking with the pale dead, with women that have dead
hair,
with bakers who are as white as angels,
and pensive young girls married to notary publics,
caskets sailing up the vertical river of the dead,
the river of dark purple,
moving upstream with sails filled out by the sound of
death,
filled by the sound of death which is silence.

Death arrives among all that sound
like a shoe with no foot in it, like a suit with no man in it,
comes and knocks, using a ring with no stone in it, with no
finger in it,
comes and shouts with no mouth, with no tongue, with no
throat.
Nevertheless its steps can be heard
and its clothing makes a hushed sound, like a tree.

I'm not sure, I understand only a little, I can hardly see,
but it seems to me that its singing has the color of damp
violets,
of violets that are at home in the earth,
because the face of death is green,
and the look death gives is green,
with the penetrating dampness of a violet leaf
and the somber color of embittered winter.

But death also goes through the world dressed as a broom,
lapping the floor, looking for dead bodies,
death is inside the broom,
the broom is the tongue of death looking for corpses,
it is the needle of death looking for thread.

Death is inside the folding cots:
it spends its life sleeping on the slow mattresses,
in the black blankets, and suddenly breathes out:
it blows out a mournful sound that swells the sheets,
and the beds go sailing toward a port
where death is waiting, dressed like an admiral.

Translated by Robert Bly

From *Canto general*

XII

Rise up to be born with me, my brother.

Give me your hand from the deep
zone of your disseminated sorrow.
You'll not return from the bottom of the rocks.
You'll not return from subterranean time.
Your stiff voice will not return.
Your drilled eyes will not return.
Behold me from the depths of the earth,
laborer, weaver, silent herdsman:
tamer of the tutelary guanacos:
mason of the defied scaffold:
bearer of the Andean tears:
jeweler with your fingers crushed:
tiller trembling in the seed:
potter spilt in your clay:
bring to the cup of this new life, brothers,
all your timeless buried sorrows.
Show me your blood and your furrow,
tell me: I was punished here,
because the jewel did not shine or the earth
did not surrender the gemstone or kernel on time:
show me the stone on which you fell
and the wood on which you were crucified,
strike the old flintstones,
the old lamps, the whips sticking
throughout the centuries to your wounds
and the war clubs glistening red.
I've come to speak through your dead mouths.
Throughout the earth join all
the silent scattered lips
and from the depths speak to me all night long,
as if I were anchored with you,
tell me everything, chain by chain,
link by link, and step by step,
sharpen the knives that you've kept,
put them in my breast and in my hand,
like a river of yellow lightning,
like a river of buried jaguars,
and let me weep hours, days, years,
blind ages, stellar centuries.

Give me silence, water, hope.

Give me struggle, iron, volcanoes.

Cling to my body like magnets.

Hasten to my veins and to my mouth.

Speak through my words and my blood.

Translated by Jack Schmitt

Ode to My Socks

Maru Mori brought me
a pair
of socks
knitted with her own
shepherd's hands,
two socks soft
as rabbits.
I slipped
my feet into them
as if
into
jewel cases
woven
with threads of
dusk
and sheep's wool.

Audacious socks,
my feet became
two woolen
fish,
two long sharks
of lapis blue
shot
with a golden thread,
two mammoth blackbirds,
two cannons,
thus honored
were
my feet
by
these
celestial
socks.

They were
so beautiful
that for the first time
my feet seemed
unacceptable to me,
two tired old
fire fighters
not worthy
of the woven
fire
of those luminous
socks.

Nonetheless,
I resisted
the strong temptation
to save them
the way schoolboys
bottle
fireflies,

the way scholars
hoard
sacred documents.
I resisted
the wild impulse
to place them
in a cage
of gold
and daily feed them
birdseed
and rosy melon flesh.
Like explorers
who in the forest
surrender a rare
and tender deer
to the spit
and eat it
with remorse,
I stuck out
my feet
and pulled on
the
handsome
socks,
and
then my shoes.

So this is
the moral of my ode:
twice beautiful
is beauty
and what is good doubly
good
when it is a case of two
woolen socks
in wintertime.

Translated by Margaret Sayers Peden

THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

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A Summons to National Greatness?

A Survey of Recent Articles

President Bill Clinton has put commerce at the center of U.S. foreign policy, hoping, as Douglas Brinkley, a professor of history at the University of New Orleans, points out in *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1997), to be remembered as “the free trade president and the leading architect of a new world economic order.” Critics such as Lawrence F. Kaplan, a Fellow at the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, find this return of the “dollar diplomacy” of the 1920s deeply disquieting. “The defects of commercial diplomacy—its lack of strategic underpinnings, its tenuous moral legitimacy, its disjunction from anything resembling a truly national interest—have been apparent for decades,” he writes in *Commentary* (Feb. 1998).

But what sort of foreign policy do the critics want? In a much-noted op-ed essay in the *Wall Street Journal* (Sept. 15, 1997), William Kristol, editor of the *Weekly Standard*, and David Brooks, a senior editor—harkening back to the nationalism of Theodore Roosevelt and Alexander Hamilton—urge a conservatism of “national greatness” as a tonic for both domestic and foreign affairs. At home, this would mean using federal power “to preserve and enhance our national patrimony—the parks, buildings, and monuments that are the physical manifestations of our common heritage.” It would also mean, as they explain in an Ethics and Public Policy Center *Unum Conversation* (1997, No. 5), using government in “a limited but effective way” to address crime and other social problems, as Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has done in New York City. Abroad, say Kristol and Brooks, national greatness conservatism means following “a neo-Reaganite

foreign policy of national strength and moral assertiveness.” Kristol and Robert Kagan, a contributing editor of the *Weekly Standard*, spelled this out in more detail in *Foreign Affairs* (July–Aug. 1996). America’s international role, they said, should be one of “benevolent global hegemony. Having defeated the ‘evil empire,’ the United States enjoys strategic and ideological predominance. The first objective of U.S. foreign policy should be to preserve and enhance that predominance by strengthening America’s security, supporting its friends, advancing its interests, and standing up for its principles around the world.” That would require, among other things, a \$60–\$80 billion increase in defense spending.

Historian Walter A. McDougall, editor of *Orbis* (Winter 1998), is appalled by this proposed worldwide crusade. “Benevolent hegemony” is an oxymoron, he says. “Such a self-conscious, self-righteous bid for global hegemony is bound to drive foreign rivals into open hostility to the U.S. and make our allies resentful and nervous.” Kristol and his colleagues, McDougall says, ignore the historical record: “U.S. diplomacy has been most successful when it weighs in *against* would-be hegemonies such as Germany and the Soviet Union [in order], as John F. Kennedy said, ‘to make the world safe for *diversity*.’” But Kristol and Kagan would have us arrogate to ourselves a hegemony for the purpose of making the world over in our image.” Promoting democracy to thwart the designs of an aggressive dictatorship is very different, McDougall points out, from “turning some authoritarian country *into* an enemy because it is laggard in

embracing American values.” While agreeing that the United States “must play a leading role in the world, affirm its values without apology, and recommend them to all mankind,” he objects to “premature, imprudent crusades.”

Moreover, argues Robert D. Kaplan, the author of *The Ends of the Earth* (1996), democracy is not necessarily a good thing for a society. “Hitler and Mussolini each came to power through democracy,” he observes in the *Atlantic Monthly* (Dec. 1997). “Democracies do not always make societies more civil—but they do always mercilessly expose the health of the societies in which they operate.” In 1994, some 22,000 American soldiers were dispatched to Haiti with the avowed purpose of “restoring democracy.” But, notes Kaplan, only five percent of eligible Haitian voters participated in the election in April 1997, “chronic instability continues, and famine threatens.” The lesson, he says, is “that democracy emerges successfully only as a capstone to other social and economic achievements,” including the development of a middle class and stable civil institutions.

“Without doubt, people around the world thirst for freedom and authentic self-government,” observes Andrew J. Bacevich, executive director of the Nitze School’s Foreign Policy Institute, writing in *First Things* (Mar. 1998). “Equally without doubt, the obstacles to satisfying that thirst loom large. When it comes to nurturing the spread of democratic institutions, none of the three areas in which the United States today is especially dominant—military might, mastery of the so-called information revolution, and the ‘soft power’ of pop culture and lifestyle—are likely to be decisive. In the end, values will count most.”

And there is the rub, Bacevich adds. “Americans are no longer quite sure what they ought to believe or what their nation stands for. As the sludge of multiculturalism seeps from the academy into everyday life, national identity becomes a cause for remorse or self-flagellation rather than a source of inspiration, collective self-confidence lapses, and moral certitude gives way to doubt and bewilderment.” Conservatives, he says, “would do well to defer any crusades abroad until they have turned the tide in the culture war at home.”

The “epic” of America, as understood by

Americans, has shifted focus in recent decades, observes Nathan Glazer, a professor of education and sociology emeritus at Harvard University and coeditor of the *Public Interest* (Winter 1998). The story once emphasized “the newness, the vastness, the openness of America—the freedom thereby granted Americans.” The newer narrative, whether told from an optimistic or a pessimistic point of view, stresses racial and ethnic diversity. Indeed, “the one grand epic has been succeeded” by many smaller stories—and Americans wonder if their nation is being shattered into a multitude of fragments, Glazer says. “We face no great tyranny, and our will in facing even small tyrannies is not strong. We are now doubtful about our capacity to improve the lives of other people. . . . Of course, we can live without an American epic. But that does diminish us.”

Virginia I. Postrel, editor of *Reason*, and James K. Glassman, a Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, writing in the *Wall Street Journal* (Sept. 25, 1997), will have none of this “gloom and doom” about cultural disarray or decadence. They see the cry for “national greatness” as “a kind of wistful nationalism in search of a big project” in the wake of the Cold War. Likening it to William James’s famous call for a “moral equivalent of war,” Postrel and Glassman contend that “it’s one thing to pursue genuine national interests through foreign policy, quite another to cook up grand schemes just to give government something to do and citizens something to rally around.” National greatness may be something like happiness—most often found when not pursued for its own sake.

What idea should inform U.S. foreign policy? Neither “national greatness” nor “neoliberalism,” argues Bacevich, but realism, in the tradition of Reinhold Niebuhr, Walter Lippmann, and Hans Morganthau. “For the realist,” says Bacevich, “the obligation of a great power is not to embark upon crusades but to pursue its interests. If defined with sufficient breadth and imagination, those interests will likewise respond to the minimal requirements of others, permitting the creation of an equilibrium that, however precarious, may approximate peace. Indeed, only then can the expenditure of power be said to satisfy the truest interests of the United States itself.”

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Who Stunted the Welfare State?

“Bargaining for Social Rights: Unions and the Reemergence of Welfare Capitalism, 1945–1952” by Michael K. Brown, in *Political Science Quarterly* (Winter 1997–98), Academy of Political Science, 475 Riverside Dr., Ste. 1274, New York, N.Y. 10115–1274.

America’s distinctive system of job-related social benefits has more than once tied reformers in knots—most recently as they struggled to help the 31 million working-age Americans lacking health insurance. Strangely, argues Brown, a political scientist at the University of California, Santa Cruz, it was labor unions and liberals favoring comprehensive government welfare who brought the private job-based system into being.

After World War II, labor unions, actively aided by President Harry Truman and liberal Democrats, pushed for the creation of a universal, cradle-to-grave public welfare state. Yet, Brown points out, the labor movement also proceeded to undermine this campaign by pushing hard for health insurance, pensions, and paid vacations in negotiations with private employers. Why did they do this? Some historians say it was because conservative opposition to an expanded welfare state was too strong, especially after the Republicans gained control of Congress in the 1946 elections. Brown, however, contends that the unions mainly feared for their own survival in the face of a strong anti-union drive by business.

“Organized labor emerged from the war as a formidable social force in American society,” he notes. With their ranks increased by six million since 1939, unionized workers in 1945 made up 30 percent of the nonfarm labor force. Business, however, had not yet accepted this new reality. Though some top executives urged that corporations provide social benefits to employees, most were either openly antiunion or dedicated to confining collective bargaining to wages, hours, and conditions of employment, Brown says. As a result, “the very terms of collective bargaining,” not just the size of paychecks, were

often at issue in labor negotiations and strikes between 1945 and 1950.

The fiery John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers led the way for labor, with a successful demand in 1945–46 for a company-funded union health and welfare fund, and company pensions for miners. Confronted with the prospect of mechanization and job reductions, the union needed such benefits to hold its members. In 1947, both Philip Murray’s United Steel Workers and Walter Reuther’s United Auto Workers then put fringe benefits on the bargaining table.

In 1947, the Republicans’ Taft-Hartley Act banned the closed shop, posing a powerful threat to organized labor. No longer could union membership be made a condition of employment. But unions could cement the loyalty of the rank and file with a health and welfare fund, whose benefits “were typically tied to the firm and hence the union.” Such fringe benefits “provided the virtual equivalent of a closed shop,” Brown notes.

At congressional hearings in 1948, Brown says, businessmen such as Charles Wilson of General Motors “lobbied furiously” to have collective bargaining over health and welfare funds outlawed. But before Republicans could oblige, the National Labor Relations Board ruled in the 1948 *Inland Steel* case that private pensions were equivalent to wages and thus within the scope of collective bargaining. In 1949, when a Truman-appointed fact-finding board charged with settling a crippling national steel strike rejected the union’s wage demands, but accepted its pension and health insurance demands, the last corporate resistance shattered. But labor’s victory came at a price: loss of union locals’ enthusiasm for national reform.

Country Club Democrats

“Party Hoppers” by Paul Starobin, in *National Journal* (Feb. 7, 1998), 1501 M St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Sighting “limousine liberals” in places such as Manhattan and Los Angeles has long been easy, but now, it seems, their numbers have

multiplied in wealthy enclaves throughout the land. A *National Journal*-commissioned analysis shows that over the last five presidential elec-

tions, increasing numbers of voters in 100 of America's richest communities have been leaving their "natural" Republican home behind and voting Democratic.

From 25 percent of the vote in these mostly suburban communities in 1980, writes Starobin, a staff correspondent for *National Journal*, the Democratic share steadily climbed, reaching 41 percent in 1996. Nationwide, in contrast, the Democratic vote over the same period went up by only eight points (to 49 percent). The new Democratic rich are a diverse lot, he says, taking in not only aging yuppies who work in "creative" fields such as advertising but also corporate executives, wealthy "pro-choicers," affluent Asian Americans, and others.

"The towns where Democrats have improved their performance range from Los Altos Hills in northern California, a new-money haven for the tycoons of Silicon Valley, to Fox Chapel on the outskirts of Pittsburgh, an old-money enclave for the titans of the steel industry and their progeny," Starobin writes. Many of these towns are filled with doctors, lawyers, and other professionals.

The voting analysis was done by the National Committee for an Effective Congress, a 50-year-old Democratic consulting firm founded by Eleanor Roosevelt and other liberals. The 100 communities were randomly chosen from a list of the 261 in the 1990 census that had a per capita income above \$30,000 (which is more than twice the national average).

In some towns, such as Amberly, Ohio, an exclusive suburb of Cincinnati, Starobin notes, "recent Democratic inroads undoubtedly

reflect the return to the party's fold of Jews who in 1980 deserted Jimmy Carter for Ronald Reagan. . . . But Democrats also made strides in towns long known as preserves of polo-shirt Protestantism—such as Darien and New Canaan in southern Connecticut." In Darien, which has a large Episcopalian population, the Democratic vote increased from 18 percent in 1980 to 31 percent in 1996.

"These days, the most reliable GOP voter is a Southern white male" whose drink of choice is beer, not Bordeaux, Starobin points out. Indeed, the party's cultural shift in its "center of gravity . . . from the country club to the stock-car track" has driven some of the rich away. Many wealthy Protestants, especially in the North, "just don't identify with the new, lower-middle-class, culturally conservative Republicans and the kind of leadership that they want to provide," observes James Davison Hunter, a professor of sociology and religious studies at the University of Virginia. The same may also increasingly be true for wealthy Catholics, adds Starobin. In Wilton, Connecticut, with a large Catholic population, the Democratic presidential vote went from only 22 percent in 1980 to 39 percent 16 years later.

Not all Democrats are heartened by their party's inroads among the wealthy. Jeff Faux, president of the liberal Economic Policy Institute in Washington, views it as a reflection of Democrats' neglect of their "natural base": the working class.

Maybe so. But Starobin concludes that the "historic bond" between the GOP and America's upper crust has been severed. "The rich," he says, "are up for grabs."

A Man's Game?

"Knowing and Caring about Politics: Gender and Political Engagement" by Sidney Verba, Nancy Burns, and Kay Lehman Schlozman, in *The Journal of Politics* (Nov. 1997), Journals Dept., Univ. of Texas Press, 2100 Comal, Austin, Texas 78722.

Is national politics more or less a "guy thing"? Could be. Political scientists Verba, Burns, and Schlozman, of Harvard University, the University of Michigan, and Boston College, respectively, report—with some obvious discomfort—that their research shows that women tend to be less interested than men in national politics, and to know less about it.

In personal interviews conducted in 1990 with 2,517 people, 38 percent of the men, but only 29 percent of the women, said they were "very interested" in national politics. Some 36

percent of the males said they enjoyed political discussion, but only 26 percent of the women did. Of the 59 percent of men and the 55 percent of women who read a daily newspaper, 40 percent of the men, but only 24 percent of the women, said they paid "a great deal of attention" to national politics.

Not surprisingly, given that disparity in interest, the men were better informed about politics—though they hardly qualified as political savants. Out of 10 political questions asked, they got an average of only 5.1 correct,

but the women got only 4.2. More than two-thirds of the men could name one of their U.S. senators, while only slightly more than half of the women could. Asked whether the federal government spends more on the National Aeronautics and Space Administration or on Social Security, two in five men knew the correct answer (Social Security), but fewer than one in five women did. In all, men did better on nine of the 10 questions. The lone exception: naming the head of the local school system, which 30 percent of the women could do, compared with 27 percent of the men.

Indeed, when it came to *local* politics, the sexes seemed about equally engrossed: 22 percent of the men and 21 percent of the women were “very interested.” Of those who read a daily newspaper, 36 percent of each sex reported paying “a great deal of attention” to local politics.



When candidates like these U.S. senators are on the ballot, does women’s interest in politics grow? The authors’ data say: maybe.

Does it matter that women take less of an interest than men in national politics? The authors say that aside from voting, it makes women slightly less inclined than men to work in political campaigns or get actively involved in politics in other ways—and that, they fear, may mean that public officials pay less heed to “their concerns, preferences, and needs.”

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Too Proud to Listen

“An Inner Circle of One: Woodrow Wilson and His Advisers” by Robert W. Tucker, in *The National Interest* (Spring 1998), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 540, Washington, D.C. 20036.

The presidency’s lonely burden of decision has been portrayed so often that it’s almost a cliché. “The buck stops here,” as Harry Truman said. But never was a president more isolated than Woodrow Wilson was during the fateful years of U.S. neutrality in World War I, writes Tucker, a professor of political science emeritus at Johns Hopkins University.

“Wilson’s neutrality policy enjoyed widespread support,” Tucker writes, “because his own waverings and uncertainties reflected those of the American people.” But had he made greater use of his advisers to clarify his own thinking, he might have led the country sooner to decisive action, whether to stay out of the war or to intervene. “Wilson’s unwillingness to seek advice, his disinclination to hear what was unwelcome to him, and, even more, his penchant for taking an immediate dislike of those who told him what he did not wish to hear, were traits recognized by all who served him,” Tucker observes. He did not allow much

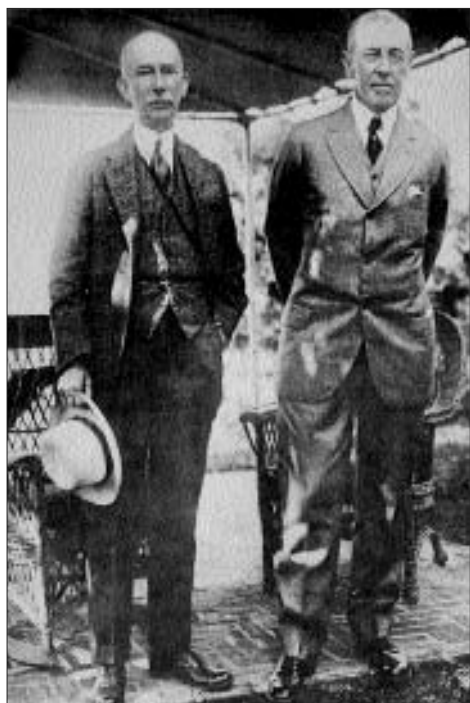
“give and take” over policy.

Wilson’s inner circle of foreign policy advisers was small, seldom more than three or four people. They included Colonel Edward House, who held no official position, William Jennings Bryan, the secretary of state, and Robert Lansing, the counselor to the State Department.

Wilson considered Bryan, the great populist orator and former presidential candidate, whom he had appointed for political reasons, an unsatisfactory secretary of state. Tucker agrees that Bryan was inept, but points out that he advocated positions—U.S. mediation of the conflict, and the idea of a peace without victory—that Wilson himself would later take. Moreover, Bryan, alone among Wilson’s advisers, “saw almost from the start” that the administration’s continued insistence on neutral rights would likely lead to war with Germany.

Like the pacifist Bryan, Wilson “wanted above all else to remain out of the war,” Tucker

says. Had he listened to his secretary of state, he probably “would have been far more hesitant to take positions from which retreat would



Colonel House (left) complained that Wilson would not devote “sufficient time” to foreign affairs.

later prove so difficult.” But in February 1915, when Germany declared a war zone in the waters around Britain and Ireland, Wilson demanded that Germany respect the rights of neutrals. In May, after a German submarine sank the British ocean liner *Lusitania*, killing 128 Americans, the United States demanded that Germany abandon its U-boat attacks. Bryan resigned on principle, believing that Wilson’s course would lead to war. (Wilson privately denounced Bryan’s position on neutrality as “moral blindness.”)

By late spring of 1915, Lansing, now the secretary of state, had privately concluded that the United States would have to enter the war if Germany gained the upper hand. By the summer, House had concluded that U.S. involvement was all but inevitable, and fumed at Wilson’s wavering policy and failure to improve military readiness. “If we were fully prepared, I am sure Germany would not continue to provoke us,” House confided to his diary.

But “never once did Lansing reveal his true position to the President. . . . House was only slightly more direct,” Tucker writes. Dissimulation remained necessary even after Germany’s January 1917 declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare. “Only Wilson’s decision for war in March,” the author notes, “would bring that necessity to an end.”

The Sex Bomb

“The Sexual Behavior of American GIs during the Early Years of the Occupation of Germany” by John Willoughby, in *The Journal of Military History* (Jan. 1998), Society for Military History, George C. Marshall Library, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Va. 24450–1600.

Now that the Soviet Union is a thing of the past, sex often seems to be the U.S. military’s chief foe. But it’s not the first time top commanders have had to face this enemy. During the first few years of the occupation of Germany after V-E Day, writes Willoughby, an economist at American University, “the apparently unrestrained sexual activity of the American GI” spawned anti-Americanism and threatened U.S. efforts to build a new democratic German nation.

At first, the high command tried to prohibit all fraternization between Americans and Germans. But that proved impractical. On June 8, 1945, General Dwight Eisenhower declared that the ban did not apply to German children. Before long, the GIs had a new greeting for their girlfriends: “Good day, child.” The army gave up and permitted relatively unregulated fraternization. In October the Allied

Control Council, representing the United States and the three other occupying powers, lifted all but a few restrictions on soldiers’ relations with Germans.

Fresh from foxholes and front-line combat, thousands of miles from home (and exercising less self-control than their British counterparts), the American GIs found willing *Fräulein* without difficulty. “The women of Berlin are hungry, cold, and lonesome,” a writer named Walter Slatoff reported in the *Nation* in May 1946. “The GIs have cigarettes, which will buy food and coal. The GIs have food—chocolate, doughnuts (taken in large quantities from the Red Cross Clubs). . . . And the GIs provide a kind of security and meaning in an otherwise meaningless city.” But these relationships bred resentment among the Germans, exacerbated by the sometimes crude, drunken, or criminal acts of the occupiers.

The generals took steps to bring their troops under control. They let it be known that crude public behavior would not be tolerated. On the sex front, the army in 1946 let soldiers bring their wives to Germany to live as dependents. Also, the relatively few GIs in serious relationships with German women were allowed to marry. The strong dose of domestic bliss helped

to settle things down. Still, many young, unmarried soldiers remained, with no shortage of impoverished *Fräulein* willing to accommodate them. But the German economy noticeably improved in 1948, and the next year, the relatively independent Federal Republic of Germany emerged. The sex threat to German democracy was over.

A High-Tech Boomerang

“The ‘Velvet’ Revolution in Military Affairs” by John Arquilla, in *World Policy Journal* (Winter 1997–98), World Policy Institute, New School for Social Research, 65 Fifth Ave., Ste. 413, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Among defense specialists there is much talk of an information age “revolution in military affairs,” and many of them urge the United States to rush to accelerate it. Arquilla, a professor of defense analysis at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, argues that a little caution is in order.

The revolution is marrying long-range precision weapons to advanced targeting and information management technology. Detailed information from satellites, ground sensors, and other devices will guide “smart” weapons such as ballistic missiles that drop dozens of guided submunitions, or “bomblets,” on the soldiers and tanks below. Sounds easy, but Arquilla warns that the new reality might well prove *less* advantageous to the United States.

Other governments, as well as terrorists, he points out, are likely to be able to replicate whatever innovations the United States devises. Many of the new advanced-information technologies can be purchased off the shelf. If each side has equal information about the other, the edge goes to “the side that can stay put and hide,” Arquilla says, rather than the one that “must try to seize territory or insert forces upon some distant shore.” Adversaries who can’t match U.S. war-fighting technologies can simply avoid conventional warfare

and instead opt for guerrilla fighting or tactical nuclear weapons.

The U.S. military today is in much the same position as the British Royal Navy was during the 19th and early 20th centuries, Arquilla contends. “It was clear that naval affairs were being revolutionized by the shift from sail to steam, from shot to shell, and from wood to steel. Yet the faster Britain moved ahead in naval technology, the faster its maritime mastery was eroded.” The new fleets of the industrial age required large, complex logistical support facilities, which hindered far-flung operations. Regional powers, such as Japan, were correspondingly strengthened. But by carefully timing “the introduction of innovations,” Arquilla says, the British were able to extend the useful life of their existing ships and weapons, and thus slow the inexorable decline of British sea power.

The United States today, with no obvious challengers, and with unmatched military power, should not be “so hell-bent on the immediate pursuit of revolutionary change,” Arquilla concludes. While technological advances seem inevitable, the British example shows that “there is often benefit in timing their introduction strategically.”

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Regulation, More or Less?

A Survey of Recent Articles

It was a landmark event of sorts last year when specialists from think tanks on three distinct points on the ideological spectrum found themselves in agreement on the

urgent need for regulatory reform, and issued a joint pamphlet making their case.

“The problem is not simply that current expenditures mandated by regulation are

large—on the order of \$200 billion annually for environmental, health, and safety rules alone,” said the specialists from the Brookings Institution, Resources for the Future, and the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), in excerpts published by *American Enterprise* (Nov.–Dec. 1997). It is, rather, that much of that spending is ineffective. “More intelligent policies could achieve the same social goals at much less cost, or more ambitious goals at the same cost.” For instance, a gas tax might have been a much more efficient way to reduce fuel consumption than imposing fuel-economy standards on Detroit.

Robert E. Litan, director of economic studies at Brookings, Robert W. Hahn, a resident scholar at AEI, and their colleagues said they were not for or against regulation per se, but believe that specific regulations should be judged by their individual costs and benefits. They also complained that Congress frequently does not let regulatory agencies consider costs when promulgating new rules. It also frequently “specifies the technical means for achieving regulatory goals instead of letting consumers and firms decide” how best to meet them efficiently.

In a special issue of *Brookings Review* (Winter 1998) on regulatory reform, guest editor Pietro S. Nivola notes that estimated regulatory costs declined in constant dollars between 1977 and 1988, “as the economy realized tens of billions in savings from deregulation of the transportation and energy industries and from the Reagan administration’s concerted efforts to curb costly new regulations.” Since then, however, costs have been on the rise. “A profusion of new rules and legal liabilities increasingly bore down on business decisions about products, payrolls, and personnel practices,” writes Nivola, a Senior Fellow in the Brookings Governmental Studies Program. “By the mid-1990s these costs were approaching \$700 billion annually—a sum greater than the entire national output of Canada.”

Much of this regulatory activity, Nivola says, is political “pork” in a new guise, an “off-budget spoils system” devised by Washington politicians to serve favored interests in an era of fiscal constraints. “For instance,” he writes, “rules that have encouraged the use of ethanol (a fuel made from corn) are a kind of pork for corn farmers.” At costs of up to “billions of dol-

lars per cancer prevented,” the Superfund toxic waste cleanup program has produced one clear winner: lawyers.

In their joint statement, Hahn, Litan, and their colleagues urged, among other things, that Congress give back to the states responsibility for overseeing local matters such as waste disposal and safe drinking water. But wouldn’t the states “race to the bottom” as they competed to attract businesses? Mary Graham, a Fellow at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government, says in *Brookings Review* that “overwhelming” evidence shows that business decisions on location or expansion are seldom influenced by state environmental programs. Some states, she points out, “lead in economic growth and environmental protection,” while other, often relatively poor states “lag behind in both.” Since the 1970s, state politics and public attitudes have become much more sensitive to ecological concerns. The federal government, she suggests, should set clear national goals, give states flexibility in meeting them, and concentrate its oversight “wherever states are weakest.”

The nation’s rapidly changing financial markets are also ripe for a “more flexible approach,” argues another *Brookings Review* contributor, Steven M. H. Wallman, a Senior Fellow at the think tank and a former commissioner at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Regulation needs to become “more ‘goal-oriented,’ with regulators articulating broad goals and allowing market participants to determine how best to satisfy them.” To general satisfaction, the SEC, for example, has done just that in allowing firms to make obligatory communications with investors electronically. But more far-reaching reform is needed, Wallman says. Traditionally, financial institutions have been regulated by agencies tailored to their particular kinds of business: the SEC oversees securities firms, banking regulators deal with banks. But these institutions are diversifying, and banks, for example, are taking on some functions of brokerage houses, and vice versa. Eventually, Wallman believes, the government will need to reinvent its regulatory institutions.

Not all the *Brookings Review* scholars champion drastic regulation overhauls. Thomas E. Mann, director of the

Was Marx Right?

One hundred and fifty years after *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), it is obvious that Marx and Engels got a lot wrong. But they also got some important things right, says Shlomo Avineri, a political scientist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, writing in *Dissent* (Winter 1998).

While they were among the first to appreciate capitalism's immanent radicalism, they were obviously wrong when they asserted that as capitalism developed, its social tensions would grow more extreme and its classes more polarized. Almost the precise opposite came to pass. . . .

Still, although polarization did not, as a rule, take place within advanced industrial societies as Marx and Engels predicted, something quite like it did occur on the global level: the widening gap between industrialized and less-industrialized lands is a consequence of the very integration of the latter into the globalized economy. Third world populations have become integral parts of a world market, as both (low-paid) producers and consumers. Instead of an internal polarization between capitalists and proletarians there is an external one between "capitalist" and "proletarian" nations.

So polarization has been exported from and universalized by the industrialized nations. If Marx and Engels's analyses are mostly invalid for the advanced nations today, they have been vindicated by the facts of globalization—the sweatshops of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with their child labor, their horrendously unsanitary working and living conditions, and their lack of minimum-wage laws and basic social welfare networks. Here, then, are the successors of the sweatshops of London's East End or New York's Lower East Side.



Brookings governmental studies program, comes out against a congressional proposal to deregulate campaign finance while mandating disclosure of contributions to candidates for federal office. The proposal, he says, "is less a solution to the clear shortcomings of the existing regulatory model than a fanciful exercise in wishing those problems out of existence." He favors "muddling through the complexity of the present system."

And there still are some problems that cry out for *more* government regulation, contends Nurith C. Aizenman, formerly an editor at the *Washington Monthly* (Oct. 1997) and now with the *New Republic*. She warns, in particular, of "the recent massive increase in the volume of hazardous materials streaming across our nation's highways and railroads." Rail transport of "hazmats" jumped 27 percent between 1990 and 1995. In 1995 alone, there were 12,712 incidents involving hazardous materials released from trucks and 1,330 such incidents involving railcars.

Overwork is a major cause of accidents. In 1994, a propane truck crashed into the column of an overpass near White Plains, New York, igniting the propane and propelling the gas's container through the air onto a nearby house, which was quickly engulfed in flames. The driver died and 23 others were injured. What caused the accident? The driver dozed off at the wheel. He had been driving continuously for 35 hours.

Though truckers can be legally required to work only 10 hours, they are paid by the mile, not by the hour, Aizenman says, and "trucking companies routinely—and knowingly—put them on schedules that make a mockery of the law." When the Federal Highway Administration "bothers to conduct [safety] inspections," she writes, "it tends to favor the velvet-fist-in-the-velvet-glove approach." The Federal Railroad Administration, which oversees rail safety, is hardly more rigorous. Much more regulation is needed, Aizenman unfashionably concludes.

Show Me the Productivity!

“The Computer and the Economy” by Alan S. Blinder and Richard E. Quandt, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (Dec. 1997), 77 N. Washington St., Boston, Mass. 02114;
“Where’s the Productivity Growth (from the Information Technology Revolution)?” by Donald S. Allen, in *Review* (Mar.–Apr. 1997), Federal Reserve Bank of Saint Louis, Public Affairs Dept., P.O. Box 442, St. Louis, Mo. 63166-0442.

The supposedly oh-so-efficient information age is here, with all its many marvels, from desktop and laptop computers to cell phones and pagers. Oh yes, the Internet, too. Between 1970 and 1995, investment in information-processing equipment increased 12.5 percent a year—but business’s output per hour rose only 1.5 percent annually. Where’s the payoff? Economists Blinder and Quandt, of Princeton University, and Allen, of the Federal Reserve Bank of Saint Louis, serve up some answers.

Yes, the official figures understate the growth in productivity, especially in the service sector, they say. But that is not the whole problem. While investment in computing and related equipment is rapidly growing, it still accounted for less than 10 percent of gross business fixed investment in 1996—not enough, say Blinder and Quandt, to “revolutionize economy-wide productivity—although it could well have dramatic effects in some sectors.”

In some industries that have invested heavily in information technology, productivity

has mushroomed in recent decades, rising an average of between 4.2 percent (steel) and 6.3 percent (railroads) a year. But, notes Allen, automotive repair shops increased investment in information technology by a whopping 24.4 percent a year between 1972 and 1994—but reaped annual productivity growth of only 0.1 percent!

Some factors cited by Blinder and Quandt may help to explain such disappointing results. New, more powerful computing machines keep appearing, as do new and updated versions of software programs. Just keeping up demands vast amounts of money and training time—which diminishes productivity. Moreover, they note, some activities made possible by computers—such as playing electronic solitaire, surfing the Web, and endless e-mailing—themselves reduce productivity.

It may well be decades, the authors say, before all the economic benefits of information technology are realized. “The presence of a computer on a desk,” Allen observes, “does not mean that it is used to its full potential.”

NAFTA-Action Report

“Has NAFTA Changed North American Trade?” by David M. Gould, in *Economic Review* (First Quarter, 1998), Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, P.O. Box 655906, Dallas, Texas 75265-5906.

Debate about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) usually focuses on how many jobs it has sent speeding down to Mexico, where the average wage is one-fifth that in the United States. But the more basic question, argues Gould, an economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, concerns the agreement’s effect on the total volume of trade. That is what ultimately determines the impact on American employment and living standards.

In 1994, the year the accord took effect, U.S. trade with Mexico grew nearly 10 percent. But with the 1995 peso crisis, U.S. imports from Mexico increased nearly 25 percent and exports dropped 11 percent. U.S. exports have since resumed their rapid growth.

But this sort of superficial look at the ups and downs of U.S.-Mexico trade is misleading, Gould says. Factors other than NAFTA—such as changes in national income, exchange rates, and trade with other countries—also influence commerce. Trying to control for those other factors, he calculates that NAFTA hiked U.S. exports an average of about 16 percentage points a year between 1994 and 1996, for a cumulative benefit of about \$21 billion. The agreement also appears to have increased U.S. imports, he says, though this is far from certain.

Shouldn’t Americans hope that trade agreements boost exports and cut imports, thus presumably expanding jobs at home?

No, says Gould. Increases in exports and imports both shift resources to industries that reflect a nation's "comparative advantage" (i.e., the ones it is better at) and away from

industries that do not. That increases national prosperity. "By this criterion," the economist concludes, "NAFTA has been a success for the United States and Mexico."

SOCIETY

The Tumult over Tenure

A Survey of Recent Articles

Long a sacred cow in academia, tenure lately has come under challenge as never before. Some conservatives, appalled by the stifling orthodoxy of "political correctness" they say "tenured radicals" have spread over so many campuses, think that abolishing tenure might help to remove the blight. Some college administrators, eager to make their institutions more "entrepreneurial" and "competitive," dream of being able to get rid of unproductive professors more easily. And many junior scholars, noting the dubious demands of some of their tenured elders and struggling for scarce jobs in an increasingly grim academic job market, question the worth of the tenure system.

The traditional justification for granting lifetime job security to professors (after a probationary period of up to seven years) has been to protect those with unpopular opinions. Tenure protects academic freedom, said the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Association of Colleges in their classic 1940 statement on the subject. "Tenure and the academic freedom it assures—as distinct from general First Amendment liberties—impose a collective standard of responsibility that AAUP has historically championed, making the faculty as a whole 'guardian of academic values,'" writes John D. Lyons, editor of *Academe* (May–June 1997), the AAUP's magazine.

Some critics doubt that academic freedom

is still in danger of assault from outside the academy. "When the socialist movement was developing and the general public tended to be more conservative than the professoriate, university teachers were definitely in danger of being ideologically suspect and losing their jobs," says John Higham, an emeritus professor of history at Johns Hopkins University, in an interview with *Johns Hopkins Magazine* (Sept. 1997). "Tenure arose to cope with that situation, and it did. After the failure of McCarthyism, the threat to college teachers' independence gradually faded. We don't have that kind of ideological warfare today."

Today, the threat to academic freedom comes from *within* the academy, according to

critics of "political correctness" such as Jerry L. Martin and Anne D. Neal, president and vice president, respectively, of the National Alumni Forum. Participants in a symposium in *Academic Questions* (Fall 1997) on the state of academic freedom, they note that more than 384 colleges and universities "have speech codes or sensitivity requirements that threaten academic freedom," and that political harassment of individual professors at odds with the prevailing orthodoxy is common.

To those individual professors, however, the guarantee of tenure often seems very valuable. "The price we pay for the privilege of tenure has always been high, because



"The barbarians are at the gate, friends, and for lack of tenure."

tenure inevitably provides a shelter for political and religious agitators who insist on teaching what is manifestly untrue and unscholarly,” Mary R. Lefkowitz, a professor in the humanities at Wellesley College and author of *“Black Athena” Revisited* (1996), comments in the symposium. “But the premium must be paid, because tenure also protects those of us who are prepared to challenge the latest trends of academic orthodoxy, within disciplines and in the university curriculum.”

Tenure may protect established scholars, John Silber, chancellor of Boston University, observes in *Academic Questions*, but the nontenured faculty are left exposed. They are at the mercy of “doctrinal orthodoxy as defined by the senior professors of a department,” who tend to decide who does and does not get tenure. The infringement by the tenured on the intellectual rights of the nontenured, in Silber’s view, “represents by far the most serious and most frequent violation of academic freedom in our colleges and universities.”

Jon Wiener, a historian at the University of California at Irvine and a contributing editor of the *Nation*, worries about a different danger. “The greatest threat to the teaching of unpopular ideas today,” he maintains in *Dissent* (Winter 1998), comes

from administrators who have embraced “the logic of the market” and “the inexorable trend toward staffing colleges and universities with part-timers, adjuncts, and instructors.” These untenured teachers are now “almost half the faculty at four-year colleges.” In Wiener’s view, collective bargaining is “the best way to defend college teachers—at least at public colleges—against politically motivated firing” by administrators aiming to satisfy the market.

Paul A. Cantor, a professor of English at the University of Virginia, also worries about administrators, though for a different reason. Without tenure, administrators would inevitably have a bigger say in hiring and firing. “[As] wrongheaded as my [academic] colleagues may at times have seemed to me,” Cantor writes in *Academic Questions* (Winter 1997–98), “they came across as positively Solomonic in comparison with the university administrators I have known over the years. . . . Some critics of tenure think that abolishing it will provide a means of bringing to bear the less radical views of society as a whole on the academy,” he observes. “But the more likely outcome would be to give new power to a subset within the academy, namely the educational establishment—perhaps even the education school establishment—which is generally more radical than the academy as a whole.”

Are All Cultures Equal?

“Cultural Relativism as Ideology” by Dennis H. Wrong, in *Critical Review* (Spring 1997), Yale Stn. Box 205416, New Haven, Conn. 06520.

Scratch a modern “multiculturalist,” and you get (among other things) what has long been known as a “cultural relativist,” that is, one who regards all cultures as morally equal. Yet the anthropological doctrine of cultural relativism originally had a quite different meaning, maintains Wrong, an emeritus professor of sociology at New York University.

“The term *culture*, in something approximating the modern sense,” he writes, “was originally an expression of German nationalism and was deployed against the universalism of the French Enlightenment.” Denying there was any single story of human progress, Germans insisted “that different peoples developed their own unique ways of life that could only arbitrarily be measured against a

common standard. Therefore, despite the economic and political ‘backwardness’ of German society, German culture was not necessarily inferior to that of France.”

It was only “a short step from acceptance of the irreducible variety of cultures” and the rejection of a common human nature, Wrong says, to the theory of races that later became the basis of Nazi ideology. But in the ivory tower, he observes, culture became the ruling idea among German historians. When the pioneering German-born anthropologist Franz Boas (1858–1942) emigrated to America in 1886, he brought this German tradition with him. The rise of the Nazis later discredited racial theories, and shifted intellectual opinion decisively in favor of the view of Boas and others that cul-

ture, not race, shapes human customs and institutions. This view was popularized by Boas's student Ruth Benedict (1887–1948), in her 1934 book *Patterns of Culture*—a paperback bestseller in 1946. She attempted to illustrate what came to be known as “cultural relativism” (though she called it “cultural relativity”).

Against the backdrop of the crimes of Hitler and Stalin, Benedict's book (and especially a sentence in it about “equally valid patterns of life”) stirred intense debate about cultural relativism's implications for moral judgment. Wrong believes that Benedict did not mean to imply that any and all patterns of life are equally valid morally. “The original cultural relativism of Boas and his students did not entail the eschewal of any and all moral judgment,” he says. Their cultural relativism meant that the culture in which individuals had been reared since infancy invariably shaped or determined their

actions. But just because the actions of cannibals, headhunters, and other *individuals* should be viewed in the context of their cultures, that did not preclude “a comparative evaluation of different *cultures* and the conclusion that some were more desirable than others.” Making such evaluations was not the work of scientists *qua* scientists, however, since moral judgments were then regarded as outside the fact-oriented realm of science.

Today's multiculturalists, in contrast, go so far as to call into question even factual knowledge, Wrong points out. They “are usually epistemological as well as cultural or moral relativists.” But he does not believe that the current multiculturalist vogue will last long. “The very stress on supposedly irreducible cultural differences may express an uneasy awareness that they are not very great and that . . . they are likely to diminish,” thanks to intermarriage and integration into the larger American society.

Reinventing Cities

“Shrinking Cities” by Witold Rybczynski and Peter Linneman, in *Wharton Real Estate Review* (Fall 1997), Wharton Real Estate Center, Univ. of Pennsylvania, 313 Lauder-Fischer Hall, Third Floor, 256 S. 37th St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104-6330.

America's aging big cities need to accept the fact that they are shrinking, and set about planning to make smaller better. So contend Rybczynski and Linneman, professors of real estate and urbanism, and of real estate, finance and public policy, respectively, at the University of Pennsylvania.

The usual response of urban areas faced with a declining (and increasingly poor) population, the authors say, has been to raise taxes, thus making the city even less attractive. Another oft-proposed solution—regional government—is politically impractical, even leaving aside probable constitutional difficulties.

Mayors and urban planners should emulate Venice, Vienna, and Glasgow, Rybczynski and Linneman maintain. Though their populations peaked long ago (in the 17th century, in the case of Venice), they are still good places to live. “A city that has irretrievably lost large amounts of its population,” say the authors, “needs to examine ways to redesign itself to become more compact, and perhaps even smaller in area.”

Many cities have strong outlying parts, and some have strong centers, they note.

“Between these areas lies a complex web of decrepit housing stock, abandoned industry, and strong neighborhoods.” What can be done? In some cases, they suggest, empty tracts could be turned into parks and recreation areas. New York City, owner of 20,000 vacant lots, is considering asking private corporations to pay for converting empty land into parks and playgrounds, in return for the right to use the space for advertising. Some vacant land may have commercial possibilities. In downtown Chicago, a developer recently built a golf course on 30 vacant acres near the convention center. Or perhaps large tracts could be consolidated and sold to the U.S. Department of the Interior for the creation of urban greenbelts. Another, more drastic idea: selling large tracts (of, say, 100-plus acres) to private developers to create independent “suburban” municipalities, with their own schools and governments.

Rybczynski and Linneman concede that significant reforms will provoke massive resistance. But for New York and other “shrinking cities,” they believe, there is no realistic alternative.

Bowling with Government

“The Tocqueville Problem” by Theda Skocpol, in *Social Science History* (Winter 1997), 905 W. Main St., Ste. 18-B, Box 90660, Durham, N.C. 27708-0660.

“Nothing strikes a European traveler in the United States more,” Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in *Democracy in America* (1835–40), “than the absence of what we would call government or administration.” Conservative champions of civil society often cite the French visitor’s famous work to show that local voluntary associations only flourish with a minimal national government. But, argues Skocpol, a professor of government and sociology at Harvard University, today’s conservatives miss, as Tocqueville himself did, how closely the civic vitality of the early United States was connected with the national government.

“The remarkable size and reach of the U.S. post office gives the lie to any notion that ‘government’ and ‘administration’ were ‘absent’ in early America,” Skocpol writes.



For the folks lined up to get their mail in Thomas Waterman Wood’s *The Village Post Office*, and for most citizens in antebellum America, the post office was the federal government.

Whereas France had only four post offices for every 100,000 inhabitants, and Great Britain 17, the United States had 74. “The postal system,” she points out, drawing on historian Richard John’s *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (1995), “was the biggest enterprise of any kind in the pre-industrial United States,” and for most Americans, it was the federal government. The 8,764 postal workers in 1831, and the 14,290 a decade later, constituted more than three-fourths of all federal employees, and most were part-time post-

masters in towns scattered throughout the countryside.

Tocqueville, traveling by stagecoach through remote areas of Kentucky and Tennessee, was astonished by the “circulation of letters and newspapers among these savage woods.” Indeed, Skocpol adds, his travels “might not have been possible had not many U.S. stagecoach companies been subsidized through Congress so that mail could be carried to small communities and representatives could travel home to remote districts.”

The relative safety, speed, and reach of the federal mail greatly facilitated commerce in the early United States, of course, but the postal system “was even more important for U.S. civil society and democratic politics,” Skocpol says. Congressmen and senators could communicate freely by mail with their constituents, and “citizens, even those in the remotest hamlets, could readily communicate with one another, monitoring the doings of Congress and state legislatures as well as those of local governments. Voluntary associations soon learned to put out their message in ‘newspaper’ format to take advantage of the mails.” By encouraging communications among citizens, she observes, the antebellum postal system helped to draw them into “passionate involvements” in regional and national political campaigns and in moral crusades, such as the temperance and abolitionist movements.

The government’s encouraging role did not end then, Skocpol says. Her preliminary studies suggest that large grassroots voluntary associations, such as the American Legion and the United Auto Workers (UAW), are especially likely to be formed during times of intense national political activity—World War I in the American Legion’s case, the New Deal in the UAW’s. During the 19th century and, to a lesser extent, the 20th, it seems, national politics and government, far from smothering civil society, encouraged it.

PRESS & MEDIA

Precious Things Considered . . .

Garrison Keillor, the wry man from Lake Wobegon who hosts public radio's *Prairie Home Companion*, takes an unusual swipe at another pillar of public radio in the *Nation* (Jan. 5, 1998). Keillor's popular show is distributed by Public Radio International, while *All Things Considered* is distributed by a competitor, National Public Radio (NPR).

All Things Considered made its reputation on news reporting during the Watergate episodes. They produced a generation of excellent reporters. . . . They've mostly been overshadowed by what I consider to be rather precious commentators, people reminiscing about their childhoods and interviews with artists and writers who one sort of gathers are friends of the reporters. . . .

Radio has a real obligation here, and I think that All Things Considered has seriously failed this obligation in recent years. I think the program has for one thing utterly failed to report on the Republican revolution for control of Congress that has absolutely turned politics upside down in this country. This is not a minor phenomenon. I don't know if the reporters at NPR simply don't know Republicans, or they don't know how to talk to them, or what. But this is a crucial story. It goes on under their noses. To ignore that and to do little audio documentaries about old ballplayers and celebrate Paul Robeson's birthday and do a documentary on maple syruping in Vermont is just perverse.

. . . And Defended

In the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Nov. 14, 1997), Richard Ohmann, a professor of English emeritus at Wesleyan University, explains the appeal of public radio.

Public radio has become central to the culture of a particular socio-economic group—the professional-managerial class, or “P.M.C.” Public radio not only reflects key interests of this group, but also serves as part of the cultural tissue that holds its members together, helping—along with other ties, such as higher education, suburban living, marriage within the group, and a well-knit set of stylistic preferences in language, dress, exercise, and so on—to define the P.M.C. as a class. . . .

Above all, this “we” attracted by NPR's chosen mode of address—cultivated, fastidious, cool—is a group tolerant of complexity, eager for explanation, curious, intellectually versatile. Presumably, NPR, by crediting us with those qualities, flatters our sense of worth and identity. Needless to say, those qualities have practical value as well, having been part of our education and having come into play in the work that more explicitly defines the P.M.C.: investigating, planning, managing, negotiating, designing, creating.

NPR staff members . . . think of themselves as sharing the same qualities and values as their listeners, whom they describe less as an audience than as part of their “community.” And why not? Staff members hold mainly non-technical, often Ivy League, degrees. They earn incomes comparable to those of their listeners, live in similar neighborhoods, read the Times. They work with words and ideas. Hence, this circuit of cultural production and reception is an exchange chiefly within the P.M.C.

Clicking on Profits

“Profits in Site?” by Scott Kirsner, in *American Journalism Review* (Dec. 1997),
8701 Adelphi Rd., Adelphi, Md. 20783-1716.

Newspaper and magazine publishers “are beginning to see evidence that the Web isn't a complete charity case,” reports Kirsner, a

Boston-based freelance writer. Some, such as Gannett's *Florida Today*, which runs the *Space Online* Web site, have even broken

into the black. While the 12,500-circulation *Griffin* (Georgia) *Daily News* and some 120 other papers have shut down their Web sites, larger publishers, with the financial resources to be patient, are optimistic.

Forrester Research, a Cambridge, Massachusetts, consulting firm, expects publishing on the Web to be “a tough slog” until 2000. But then it should become profitable, with on-line advertisers (up to 75 percent of them, *national* advertisers) spending a projected \$4.5 billion a year. By 2002, estimates another firm, Jupiter Communications, annual online advertising should reach \$7.7 billion.

Today, Kirsner says, the bulk of most Web publishers’ income comes from three types of advertising: display, classified, and sponsorships. To have their ad graphic displayed 500,000 times on the *New York Times on the Web* site, for instance, advertisers pay \$20,000, or \$40 per 1,000 “impressions.” But that way of charging advertisers may be becoming obsolete, Kirsner says. In 1996, Procter & Gamble arranged to pay for its display ads on the Yahoo! search service according to how many times users clicked on the ads *and were delivered to a P&G site*—not just how many times the ad was shown. An even more frightening development, from an on-line publisher’s point of view, is that some Web sites have begun selling ads on

a “pay-per-transaction” basis: advertisers only pay if visitors to the site actually buy something.

To forge stronger long-term relationships with advertisers, “and perhaps to distract them from the new payment models,” observes Kirsner, some online publishers “are offering both sponsorship packages and ‘co-branded’ areas—essentially ‘advertorial’ custom publishing products.” The *New York Times*-owned *Boston Globe Online* has an “Emerging Business” area sponsored by Fleet Bank. *Florida Today’s Space Online* made sure it had the Kennedy Space Center and other sponsors aboard before its launch.

Web publishers are also running classified ads, long a big moneymaker for newspapers. *Boston Globe Online* expects classifieds to bring in as much as 35 percent of its revenue this year, up from less than five percent in 1996.

Though Web surfers are accustomed to free access, subscriptions are another potential source of revenue. The *Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition*, for example, derives more than 20 percent of its revenue from subscriptions. Other on-line publishers are also experimenting with subscriptions. Indeed, while there are some signs that the World Wide Web may become a paying proposition, “experimentation” is still the byword.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Putting Down the Puritans

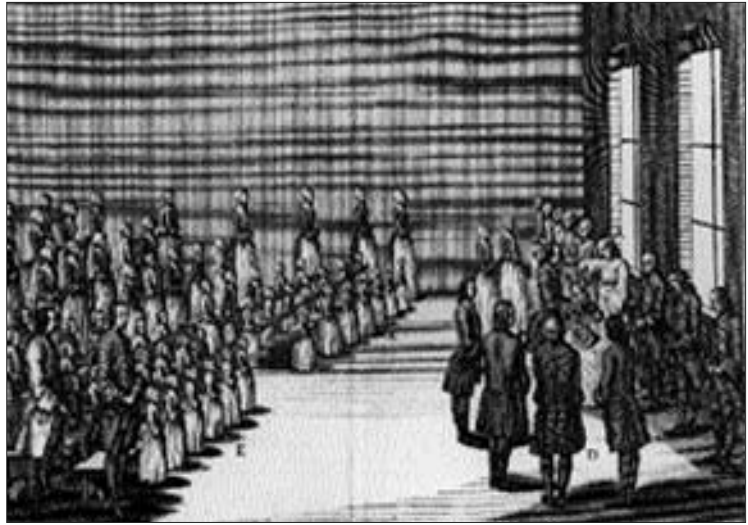
“The Post-Puritan Paradigm of Early American Religious History” by Charles L. Cohen, in *The William and Mary Quarterly* (Oct. 1997), Box 8781, Williamsburg, Va. 23187-8781.

Starting in 1933 with the publication of *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts, 1630-1650*, and continuing with such classics as the two-volume *The New England Mind* (1939-53), historian Perry Miller put the Puritans of 17th-century New England on the scholarly map. Without quite intending to do so, Miller turned them into the archetypal Americans, the elect of God with a special mission to create a New Jerusalem. In recent years, however, historians stressing the varieties of colonial religious experience have challenged the idea that the Puritans were all that important.

“In Miller’s tale,” notes Cohen, a profes-

sor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, “the New England saints designed an impressive intellectual edifice grounded on the covenanted relationship between themselves and God only to lament its buckling as succeeding generations failed to reproduce the founders’ piety. [Jonathan] Edwards [1703-58] salvaged the scheme by modernizing an outmoded metaphysics with the enlightened harmonies of Isaac Newton and John Locke, and revivalists spread the Puritan dynamic of sin and redemption to south and west. By the Revolution, the New England mind had become America’s.”

The Puritans claimed a pre-eminent place in historians' thinking in part because colonial New England left an unmatched abundance of literary materials. But revisionist historians—proponents of the new social history, written from the “bottom up”—are not content with such “elitist” testimony. Borrowing techniques from the behavioral sci-



Among the sects active outside New England in the mid-18th century were the Moravians (here, at a baptism), concentrated in Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

ences, they have used data from sources such as court depositions and inventories to paint a picture of the unlettered multitudes.

Challenging Puritanism's significance, the revisionists portray the middle or southern colonies “as somehow more typical of subsequent American social and institutional evolution,” Cohen writes. They even question the Puritans' influence in New England, suggesting that the region's “social arrangements derived more from inherited patterns of English agriculture, law, or custom than from religious or ecclesiastical practice.” And they point out that there were other religious forces at work in colonial America: Anglicans, Lutheran pietists, Jesuit missionaries, and a variety of sectarians.

Summarizing what he calls the “post-Puritan paradigm,” Cohen says there is agreement that a turning point in American life came around 1680, after a period

of declining piety. But then “the most enduring American religious patterns coalesced, not in the pious sobriety of Puritan New England . . . but in the earnest if stolid fabrication of ecclesiastical institutions throughout Anglo-America” between 1680 and 1820. The two leading revisionist historians—Jon Butler, author of *Awash in a Sea of Faith* (1990), and Patricia U. Bonomi, author of *Under the Cope of Heaven* (1986)—differ on the pace of America's “Christianization.” Bonomi contends that churches and churchgoing grew steadily during the 18th century, Cohen says. Butler sees 18th- and 19th-century Americans as less pious—and more open to occult practices.

Though the revisionists have shown that the Puritans of New England were far from being the whole story, Cohen concludes, they go too far in minimizing their importance. A coherent, comprehensive portrayal of early American religious life has yet to emerge.

The Lord's Judgment

“Lord Acton's Ordeal: The Historian and Moral Judgment” by Perez Zagorin, in *The Virginia Quarterly Review* (Winter 1998), One West Range, Charlottesville, Va. 22903.

The English historian Lord Acton (1834–1902) is today best remembered for his dictum, “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Behind those famous words, though, argues Zagorin, an emeritus professor of history at the University of Rochester, was a conception of

the historian's duty so stern, and a moral code so absolute, that few historians have been able to go along with him.

John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton was both a lifelong Roman Catholic and a lifelong liberal (in the 19th-century sense of the term), who feared the state as the chief threat

to liberty. Though his projected magnum opus on the history of liberty never saw the light of day, the ideas he expressed in his many essays, reviews, and lectures, as well as his notes and letters, continue to fascinate students of politics and history.

Acton's archival research and enormous historical reading forced him to conclude "that Catholics had committed many great evils for the sake of what they considered the higher interests of the church," notes Zagorin—evils that included the religious murders of the Inquisition and other authorized agencies of persecution. "Catholic historians and controversialists, moreover, had repeatedly distorted, concealed, and falsified the truth for pious reasons."

History persuaded Acton to strongly oppose the doctrine of papal infallibility entertained by the Vatican in the mid-19th century. "A man is not honest who accepts all Papal decisions in questions of morality, for they have often been distinctly immoral," he stated. The Vatican Council of 1870 nevertheless adopted the dogma. To avoid excommunication, Acton made some equivocal statements about the doctrine. But he came away convinced that Catholic churchmen and apologists of his day "were all too often

willing to disregard morality and to falsify or ignore the truth," Zagorin says, and this only fortified Acton's conviction that a historian must render moral judgments.

In the past, historians had to be sympathetic and impartial, Acton believed. Each age, he wrote, was "worthy of study [and] to be understood for its own sake, for the way in which it has met its problems, and its share in the suffering of mankind—not as a stepping stone to the present." At the same time, however, Zagorin says, Acton held that moral principles, based on the permanent, generally acknowledged standard of the sanctity of life, were everywhere and always the same. Murder, as the worst crime, provided what Acton called "our basis for measurement." Thus, after subjecting historical evidence and testimony to rigorous cross-examination, Zagorin says, "the conscientious historian" had the duty to make a moral judgment, one that "belongs to the domain of objective facts and becomes a part of historical science."

Most historians, in contrast, have not deemed it "proper as a rule" to make moral judgments, Zagorin says. Unlike Lord Acton, they believe "that they possess neither the power nor authority to speak as the voice of History and pronounce its verdict for all time."

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

30,000 Tons beneath the Sea

"Burial of Radioactive Waste under the Seabed" by Charles D. Hollister and Steven Nadis, in *Scientific American* (Jan. 1998), 415 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017-1111.

When it comes to the disposal of nuclear waste, many Americans seem to prefer to bury their heads in the sand. A repository has been under development at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, for more than a decade, at least in theory, but no construction has begun and state officials and residents remain adamantly opposed to the facility. It may never open for use. Yet more than 30,000 metric tons of high-level radioactive waste now lie in temporary storage at U.S. nuclear power plants, and every year brings another 2,000 metric tons. Add to that at least 50 metric tons of excess plutonium, and hundreds of tons of highly



To gather data on conditions deep below the sea floor, European researchers have used devices such as these torpedo-shaped "free fall penetrators," laden with instruments.

enriched uranium taken from dismantled nuclear weapons.

Hollister, a vice president of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, in Massachusetts, and Nadis, a science writer, have a different solution to the problem of radioactive waste: bury it beneath the ocean floor.

Marine scientists have identified broad zones of suboceanic terrain in the Atlantic and Pacific that have remained geologically inert for tens of millions of years in the dark and frigid depths. Three or so miles below the surface, note the authors, lie vast mudflats, with a clay-rich blanket, hundreds of meters thick, above the underlying rocky crust. Present evidence, they say, “suggests that mobile, multicellular life-forms inhabit only the top meter or so of the abyssal clays,” and that below that there are no organisms capable of transporting radioactive substances up to the sea floor. Employing technology that has been in use in the petroleum industry for decades, canisters of radioactive waste could be lowered into cylindrical shafts drilled hundreds of

meters deep in the thick sediment, well below the ocean floor.

The canisters themselves would last only a few thousand years at most, but “the muddy clays, which cling tenaciously to plutonium and many other radioactive elements, would prevent these substances from seeping into the waters above,” the authors say. Scientists have concluded from experiments that plutonium would not migrate from a breached canister more than a few meters, even after 100,000 years. Burial of the radioactive waste in the sediments “would most likely buy enough time for the radioactivity of all the waste either to decay or to dissipate to levels below those found naturally in seawater.”

Yes, more research is needed, but there has never been a serious challenge to sub-seabed disposal on technical or scientific grounds, Hollister and Nadis say. Persuading the public is another matter, of course, but sub-seabed burial, the authors observe, has at least this advantage: it won’t produce “not in my backyard” (NIMBY) opposition.

Wet Planets

“Surfing the Solar System” by Michael Milstein, in *Air & Space* (Dec. 1997–Jan. 1998), 370
L’Enfant Promenade S.W., 10th Fl., Washington, D.C. 20024.

Plain old water has long been regarded as one of Planet Earth’s distinctive possessions. But as astronomers in recent years have taken a closer look at the rest of the solar system and beyond, free-lance writer Milstein reports, “they are arriving at the conclusion that Earth is really not that special after all. Water . . . turns up almost everywhere.” [Including the moon, scientists announced in March.] Most of the extraterrestrial H₂O is in the form of ice, but—it increasingly seems—not all of it.

The sun long ago burned off most of the water and ice from the inner planets nearest to it, and most of the solar system’s water now “resides in the frigid outposts beyond the asteroid belt” that separates Mars and Jupiter, Milstein writes. “The gas giants of the outer solar system—Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune—are still loaded with the stuff, although under such astounding pressures and mixed with such a noxious stew of other compounds that it’s a stretch to think of it as water.”

However, Europa, one of Jupiter’s moons, may be a different story. Photographs taken by the Galileo spacecraft “show cracked ice plates that almost surely have slid apart,” indicating, Milstein says, that the visible surface “is probably no more than a frozen shell floating atop a massive global sea.” Tidal heating—generated by Jupiter’s gravitational pull, first strong as the moon nears the planet, then loosened as it moves away—could explain why the water doesn’t freeze. “Other moons, too, show external signs of liquid interiors,” Milstein adds.

Although Mars, which may once have had oceans as huge as Earth’s, probably “still has pockets of groundwater beneath its arid surface,” notes Milstein, Europa may offer what planetary geologist Jeffrey Kargel of the U.S. Geological Survey calls “the best chance that we have” to find an ocean resembling those on Earth. For that reason, the author says, more and more researchers are coming to believe that “Europa is more likely than Mars to hold signs of primitive life.”

Cash and Carry Science

“Scientists Who Fund Themselves” by Jon Cohen, in *Science* (Jan. 9, 1998),
1200 New York Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

With research grants harder to get these days, some scientists have discovered a different way to pay for their laboratory work: they dig into their own pockets.

Such self-funding researchers are still a small minority, reports *Science* writer Cohen, but their number is growing—and not all of them are wealthy. Take biologist Robert Summers, of the State University of New York at Buffalo, who studies the developmental biology of sea urchins. He is not a rich man, but about 10 years ago he saw the handwriting on the wall. “I just realized that if I wanted to continue,” he told Cohen, “I’d have to beg, borrow, steal, and scrape—and spend my own money.” Last year alone, he estimates, he kicked in some \$10,000.

Scientists underwriting their own work is nothing new. When modern science began in the 17th century, it was largely a pursuit of rich amateurs. Self-funding remained common in the United States until World War II, when levels of government support for scientific research soared. In recent years, however, with the Cold War over,

Washington’s enthusiasm for funding research projects has diminished. To keep their research going in the absence of sufficient support from the National Science Foundation or other grant givers, self-funding scientists draw on their own salaries or pensions or other sources of income; some channel their outside consulting income into their labs. And a fortunate few are able to rely on family wealth.

Self-funding has definite advantages for scientists. It saves them months of work on grant applications, and frees them to depart from the more fashionable lines of research favored by conservative peer reviewers. But these advantages, Cohen notes, can also be drawbacks. Writing a grant application can help a researcher to clarify his thinking about his project, and peer review can provide useful feedback. For universities, there is a further disadvantage, since they claim a portion of all faculty grants as “overhead.” In fact, some self-funders have seen their labs shut down because they failed to satisfy their parent institution’s hunger for that kind of cash.

Power from Outer Space

“Beam It Down” by Martin I. Hoffert and Seth D. Potter, in *Technology Review* (Oct. 1997),
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Bldg. W59, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

In the 1970s, Czech-American engineer Peter Glaser proposed a novel solution to the oil crises: “geosynchronous” satellites (rotating with the Earth, some 22,000 miles above the equator) could use photovoltaic cells to convert sunlight into electrical current, then transmit it via a microwave beam down to Earth. Glaser’s proposal was imaginative, but it had a few problems, not least that, with the satellites at that altitude, the receiving antennas on the ground would have to be about six miles in diameter. Not surprisingly, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Department of Energy soon lost interest.

Today’s revolution in telecommunications, write Hoffert and Potter, physicists at New York University, could give Glaser’s idea an unexpected lift. By early in the next century, swarms of low-altitude communications satellites will be orbiting the globe. Teledesic Corporation, a

joint venture of Microsoft chairman Bill Gates and cell phone tycoon Craig McCaw, alone plans to spend \$9 billion to launch 288 communications satellites. They will use microwave beams to relay voices, video images, and data to locations around the world.

Why not equip the satellites with solar collectors and use the same microwave beams to carry electrical power? say the authors. “By piggybacking onto these fleets of communications satellites—and taking advantage of their microwave transmitters and receivers, ground stations, and control systems—solar power technology can become economically viable.” The new satellites have other advantages. They will orbit only a few hundred miles above the Earth’s surface, so the receiving antennas can be much smaller (and less expensive) than in Glaser’s scheme. The solar collectors also can be much smaller—only a few hundred meters

across instead of more than six miles.

A network of solar power satellites, the authors contend, could supply enough electrical power “to satisfy the needs of the human race through the next century.” They admit, however, that they have a lot of convincing to

do in the United States. Although Japan’s Ministry of Technology and Industry has already sponsored the design of a prototype orbiter, solar power satellites were not even mentioned in a recent U.S. National Academy of Sciences study of energy alternatives.

ARTS & LETTERS

The Coward’s Art

“Echo and Narcissus: The Fearful Logic of Postmodern Thought” by David Bosworth, in *The Georgia Review* (Fall 1997), Univ. of Georgia, Athens, Ga. 30602–9009.

What are the forces that drive the postmodern sensibility? asks novelist Bosworth, author of *From My Father, Singing* (1989). “Why in our time (to cite just some of the signal shifts in value enacted by postmodern thought) has parody replaced parable, sign replaced symbol, repetition replaced originality, monologue replaced dialogue, and the celebrity replaced the hero?”

Much of the art and thought since World War II exhibits, to one degree or another, “either mechanical mimicry or obsessive self-absorption,” Bosworth contends—and these “recall, with eerie exactitude, the fates prescribed for Echo and Narcissus.” The nymph Echo, in punishment for deceiving a god, is condemned never to speak an original word again, while the handsome youth Narcissus, as a curse for coldly rejecting the love of others, is made to fall in love with his own reflection. “The one unable to express herself, the other unable to see beyond himself, each is estranged not only from reciprocal love but from any form of intimate exchange,” writes Bosworth. “Each is destined to pine away in a perpetually punishing loneliness.”

What is now called the “postmodern” sensibility, he notes, emerged during the 1960s with the arrival of pop art. Andy Warhol, the pop art eminence and “most influential visual artist of the last 50 years,” chose Echo’s imposed fate, Bosworth points out. “The very model of Echo’s form of ‘servomechanism,’ Warhol copies the world and then copies his copy again and again. An exact replica of a soup can becomes a hundred replicas (‘100 Campbell’s Soup Cans’) which then become ‘200 Campbell’s Soup Cans.’ A photographic copy of the Mona Lisa is then multiplied into four copies (‘Four Mona Lisas’) which then become a frame arrayed with 30 copies, six by five.”

Warhol provides the most extreme example, but milder versions of postmodern Echo abound and can be found in virtually every area of contemporary culture, Bosworth says. In music, for instance, there is “the rise of minimalism and New Age soporifics with their mechanical repetition of simple melodies and rhythms.”

Postmodern Narcissus also has become ubiquitous, Bosworth says. In literature, autobiography and memoir have become more popular than fictional narrative; in philosophy, “an extreme relativity verging on solipsism, the denial that there is a knowable truth beyond one’s own thoughts,” has become fashionable. In the visual arts, “various forms of exhibitionist self-portraiture” have come into vogue. The internationally acclaimed photographer Yasumasa Morimura, for instance, photographs the figurative paintings of such past masters as Rembrandt and van Gogh; then, through computer imaging, he substitutes his own face for each of the characters’ faces within the frame. “I express Rembrandt’s theme better than he did,” Morimura has boasted.

“The need to make the outside world disappear by masking its existence with reflections of one’s Self . . . when considered along with the opposite yet complementary need to make one’s Self disappear by reducing one’s own expressions to mere reflections of that world (the total self-effacement of Warhol’s tape recorder, his *choosing* to become Echo in her cave), would seem to suggest a deep fear of reality,” writes Bosworth. “Or rather, a deep fear of *knowing* reality.”

“Most of postmodern art’s favorite strategies—repetition, collage, opacity, parody—are strategies of concealment rather than conveyance,” he observes. “Most of the

claims of the criticism implicitly allied with that art—that language can only refer to itself, that there is no objective reality—are trying to insist that the mind *is* its own place and so, in some sense, safe. . . .

“Yet like echolalia and narcissism, the

pathologies it mimics, postmodern logic,” Bosworth warns, “can supply only the opposite of what it would advertise: instead of immunity, ignorance; instead of real mastery, the fantasy of triumph that only ignorance allows.”

The Eurocentric Error

Michael Lind, a contributing editor of *Harper's Magazine* (Feb. 1998), on the sources of post-World War II America's misguided infatuation with European culture:

For a generation of American literary academics, the most influential postwar literary critic was not Edmund Wilson or F. O. Matthiessen, both of whom wrote brilliantly about American literature, but Lionel Trilling. To my mind, it is odd enough that T. S. Eliot, a St. Louis native who had converted himself into a cartoon of an Englishman, and Ezra Pound, an Idaho-born professor who had transformed himself into a Mediterranean fascist, were held up to my classmates and me [at the University of Texas at Austin in the late 1970s]—in lieu, I suppose, of real Europeans, whose native tongues made them less accessible to American audiences—as the fonts from which all literary wisdom flowed. But Trilling taught a generation to prefer E. M. Forster to Nelson Algren and Matthew Arnold to H. L. Mencken. He offered the children and grandchildren of immigrants to American slums from Dublin, Warsaw, and Salerno the cheap illusion of belonging to the Victorian or Edwardian gentry. He was the Ralph Lauren of American letters.

O Pioneer?

“The Prosaic Willa Cather” by James Seaton, in *The American Scholar* (Winter 1998),
1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Once put down by modernists as an outdated expression of Victorian genteel culture, the fiction of Willa Cather (1873–1947) is now enjoying a revival. Her chief champions are feminist literary critics, who have been busily reinterpreting her work in terms of her identity as a woman and (putatively) a lesbian.

Though the feminist approach at least has people reading Cather again, it is unlikely, argues Seaton, an English professor at Michigan State University, to long sustain her reputation as the major writer and cultural critic that she is. For Cather's status to be secure, he maintains, “the search for the origins of her opinions must give way to a renewed attempt to understand the significance of the view of the world achieved when those opinions become transmuted into novels, short stories, and essays.” Whereas feminists look, for instance, to Cather's supposed lesbianism to explain why

romantic love between men and women in her fiction leads to disillusion and death, while friendship nourishes and protects, Seaton sees something else at work, something linked to “her affirmation of organized religion and ordinary family life.”

O Pioneers! (1913), a Cather novel set in the Nebraska prairie of the late 19th century, may seem to lend itself to a political reading. Emil Bergson and Marie Tovesky Shabata become lovers, only to be shot a few hours later by her husband, when he finds them asleep together under a white mulberry tree. Yet Seaton says that it is not simply heterosexual attraction that led the lovers astray but an unbridled “spirituality that defies human nature.” She, according to the novel, was in search of “perfect love,” and he, of “rapture . . . without sin.”

“In contrast to such romantic spirituality,” writes Seaton, stands organized religion, which, throughout Cather's fiction, figures “as

a rock anchoring the changing aspirations and hopes of individuals to a larger order.”

Whether in the 19th-century Southwest of *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927) or in the 17th-century Quebec of *Shadows on the Rock* (1931), Seaton says, Cather is not trying to satisfy an appetite for the exotic. Instead, the glimpses the novels offer of the religion or the art of a past culture bring home “the continuing importance of everyday life, of the meaningfulness of the constant daily

efforts to concentrate upon and order an otherwise chaotic existence.” Art and religion in Cather’s fiction emerge from daily life “as continuations and deepening of everyday routine.”

In Cather’s art, Seaton concludes, one can make out “the hidden connections between grand moral principles and seemingly trivial choices, between everyday life and high art.” And, in the end, the high art includes Cather’s own.

Farewell, Miss Fremstad

“An American Singer” by Peter G. Davis, in *The Yale Review* (Oct. 1997), Yale Univ., P.O. Box 208243, New Haven, Conn. 06520-8243.

Her career was cut short when she was in her prime, and the 15 recordings she made were disappointing artistically as well as technically, but Olive Fremstad (1871–1951) has never been entirely forgotten by opera aficionados. The first homegrown American opera singer of “true incandescence,” she had “a vocal and physical presence of such charismatic witchery as to drive audiences wild,” writes Davis, author of *The American Opera Singer* (forthcoming).

The daughter of a Norwegian physician and preacher and his Swedish wife, the singer was born in Stockholm and emigrated with her family to Minnesota about a decade later. A proficient pianist by the age of 12, she served as her father’s musical assistant as he traveled up and down the state in a horse-drawn wagon with a portable organ to conduct prairie revival meetings. Decades later, notes Davis, some of the Scandinavian settlers who had attended those services still “recalled the vivid effect of Fremstad’s voice” when she sang hymns. Venturing to New York when she was 19, Fremstad studied and saved enough money for the essential trip to study in Europe. She made her debut at the Cologne Opera in 1895, and at New York’s Metropolitan Opera in 1903.

Fremstad was the Met’s first Salome (in Richard Strauss’s opera of that name), and “her graphic

portrayal of the biblical teenager’s sensual lust scandalized more than one Met patron,” writes Davis. The opera was withdrawn after the first performance. Fremstad’s commitment to realistic detail was so great that she visited a morgue to use an actual human



Olive Fremstad gave “color and passion and personality” to Wagnerian heroines such as Brünnhilde, wrote Willa Cather.

head to rehearse the scene in which Salome holds aloft the head of John the Baptist. Novelist Willa Cather called her “a great tragic actress.”

Alas, the highly paid singer was every bit the prima donna, refusing, for example, to rehearse the day before or after a perfor-

mance. In 1914, Met director Giulio Gatti-Casazza finally ousted her. She was 43 and “at the height of her powers,” notes Davis, but nothing was the same after that. In 1920, she begged to return to the Met, but Gatti refused. Olive Fremstad never sang in public again.

OTHER NATIONS

Tibet at a Turning Point

“The Dalai Lama’s Dilemma” by Melvyn C. Goldstein, in *Foreign Affairs* (Jan.–Feb. 1998), 58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

With the recent appearance of the film *Kundun*, dramatizing his early life, the Dalai Lama appears to have won over Hollywood. But that may be of scant help to the 63-year-old spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists as he deals with a growing dilemma. Committed to nonviolence, he is being forced to choose between making concessions to China and giving at least tacit sanction to a campaign of organized violence against Chinese rule in Tibet. Some militant Tibetans already favor such a campaign; in 1996, there were three bombings in the capital, Lhasa. The Dalai Lama’s only other choice, contends Goldstein, director of the Center for Research on Tibet, at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, is to sit back as his Himalayan homeland is changed beyond recognition.

Beijing, which has rebuffed the Dalai Lama’s recent efforts to arrange talks, is pouring economic development funds into Tibet and flooding it with thousands of Chinese entrepreneurs and laborers. Of the “several hundred thousand” residents of Lhasa, at least half, Goldstein says, now are non-Tibetan. Although the newcomers are expected eventually to return home, Tibetans fear that the character of their sparsely populated land is being altered forever.

The roots of the conflict run deep. Formally part of the Manchu-ruled Chinese Empire during the 18th and 19th centuries, Tibet functioned as a quasi-independent

theocracy under a Dalai Lama after the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1912. But that changed once the Communists came to power in China in 1949. China invaded Tibet in 1950, forcing the current Dalai Lama to recognize Chinese sovereignty. After an independence uprising was crushed in 1959, he fled to India, followed by 80,000 Tibetans. Secret talks with Beijing in 1982 and 1984 proved fruitless. The exiles



This Chinese guard is not the only outsider in Tibet today, as thousands of Chinese entrepreneurs and laborers have flooded in.

demanded a Western-style democracy for Tibet, while the Chinese insisted that the Communist Party remain in control. “Complicating matters,” notes Goldstein, “was the exiles’ demand for the creation of a Greater Tibet that would include . . . ethnic Tibetan areas in western China, most of which Tibet had lost in the 18th century.”

After the Dalai Lama launched his campaign for international support in 1987, Beijing was put on the defensive, Goldstein notes. There were protests in Lhasa, and some led to riots. In the belief that events were going his way, the Tibetan leader reject-

ed an overture from Beijing in 1989; then, after another riot broke out in Lhasa, Beijing imposed martial law, adopted a new hard-line policy, and accelerated a program of rapid economic development.

Now it is the Dalai Lama who is on the defensive. His past successes at attracting support in the West “look more and more like Pyrrhic victories,” Goldstein says. The temptation will be strong for him to give a tacit nod to organized violence by Tibetan militants. But, in Goldstein’s view, the exiled leader should opt instead for concessions and compromise.

Why France Ended Its Draft

“Towards the Army of the Future: Domestic Politics and the End of Conscription in France”
by J. Justin McKenna, in *West European Politics* (Oct. 1997), Frank Cass and Co. Ltd.,
Newbury House, 900 Eastern Ave., London IG2 7HH, England.

France is the country that invented the idea of a “people’s army” (during the French Revolution), and military conscription has been in use there since 1905. Yet now, France is phasing out the draft and shifting to an all-volunteer force, writes McKenna, a political scientist at George Washington University.

For decades, the so-called “Gaullist consensus” on French defense policy has been in effect, he notes. In 1964, in the belief that Americans—their assurances to the contrary notwithstanding—might well prefer to fight a conventional war in Europe rather than respond with nuclear weapons to a Soviet attack, President Charles de Gaulle opted for an independent nuclear force (*force de frappe*). As a result, McKenna notes, the French army came to be viewed as, in effect, merely “a ‘trip wire’ for the use of tactical nuclear weapons.”

During the Cold War, the French derived “tremendous political power” on the international scene from their limited nuclear force, McKenna writes. At home, conscription and national military service became “an easy way to involve the citizen in national defense, without really investing conventional forces with strategic or political importance.”

But the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany sharply reduced the military role of nuclear weapons, shifting the emphasis to conventional arms, McKenna observes. The 1991 Persian Gulf

War made that point clear to Jacques Chirac and other French leaders. Out of a supposedly “combat-ready” army of 280,000, as well as the 47,000 troops of the Force d’Action Rapide, the French were able to muster only 12,000 troops for service in the gulf. Britain, by contrast, was able to raise three times that number from its professional force of only 160,000. The problem: French law prevented the government from sending conscripts overseas unless they volunteered, and then-president François Mitterrand refused to ask Parliament to lift the restriction.

Chirac’s plan for the professionalization of the armed forces, unveiled after his election to the presidency in 1995, aroused no strong opposition. Although service in the military was traditionally a French rite of passage, many now saw it as “a waste of time”—and avoided actual military service. Highly educated conscripts, often from the upper crust, increasingly were sent on nonmilitary duty (*service civil*), serving overseas as *coopérants* (junior executives) for French corporations, and getting paid far more than the average draftee.

The transition to a leaner, all-volunteer military force is due to be completed in 2002. But the French tradition of mandatory service to the nation will not be entirely dead. Starting that year, McKenna says, young men and women will be obliged to attend an annual “citizen’s rendezvous,” lasting no more than a week, to imbibe “basic republican values.”

Dreaming of Europe

After four years of war in the former Yugoslavia, the United States had to come, once again, to Europe's rescue. French thinker André Glucksman, writing in *New Perspectives Quarterly* (Fall 1997), explains why united action still eludes the continent.

The return of the Americans is very paradoxical, especially in light of the fact that in 1999 the Europeans are preparing to launch a common currency, the euro. Both economically and militarily, France and Germany certainly possess the wherewithal to rise to challenges such as Bosnia. But they lack the mentality—the shared cultural ground—required for a common political agenda. . . .

The strategy of integrating through the euro, a good thing in itself, was conceived as a project for “this side” of Europe when the Wall came down in 1989. It didn't then, and doesn't now, take into account either the eastern or southern frontiers of that part of Europe tied together by a common currency. For 10 years we have spoken of the euro without elaborating some strategy that takes into account the changed historical circumstances and the new challenge.

This challenge must be met on the cultural level. So far, the requisite cultural dialogue has happened only between Germany on the one hand and the former [German Democratic Republic], the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary on the other. . . .

In contrast, the French live happily on in their cafés, oblivious to the dangers that exist on the other side of the fallen wall. Worried about economic competition and immigrants, they instead seek to put up new walls, not just around France but around Western Europe as a whole. Rather than remembering catastrophe, the French only remember the dream of victory over fascism. And it is a dream because—despite the fact that Charles de Gaulle gave them the right to dream—the victory was not theirs, but that of the U.S., England, and the Soviet Union.

Russia's Collapsing Military

“Disarmed and Dangerous” by Anatol Lieven, in *The New Republic* (Dec. 22, 1997), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Though the war in Chechnya is over, the casualties in the demoralized and ill-equipped Russian military continue to mount—inflicted by the enemy within. In 1996, 1,071 soldiers were murdered, mostly by other soldiers, and 543 committed suicide. The Russian navy admitted there were at least 32 suicide attempts that same year, many successful, among the officers of the Northern Fleet, which includes most of Russia's nuclear-armed submarines.

While the weakened state of its military may seem like good news to Russia's neighbors and to the West, Lieven, a correspondent for the London *Times* in the former Soviet Union from 1990 to 1996, warns that “the more anarchic the Russian military becomes, the more of a destabilizing factor it may be, both inside Russia and in the Eurasian land mass that Russia dominates.” Though politically quiescent so far, the officer corps could be tempted to take a decisive hand in the event of an extraconstitutional power struggle, and a force too weak to defend Russia

could contribute to a dangerous power vacuum in the neighborhood. Even worse, officers who are not paid regularly are more likely to peddle nuclear weapons to rogue states and terrorists.

The infamous practice of *dyedovshchina*—a form of exploitation far surpassing hazing in its cruelty—is largely to blame, Lieven says, for the wave of murders, suicides, and nervous and physical breakdowns in recent years. Lacking enough effective noncommissioned officers, even those officers with a will to do so have been unable to control the abuses. “The weakest element in our army,” one general says, “is the sergeants.”

There has been some talk in Russia of reform—of downsizing and professionalization. But the transition to a professional force of 1.2 million would require the equivalent of almost a 40 percent increase in the 1997 military budget. President Boris Yeltsin's advisers, Lieven says, reportedly greeted the reform idea with mockery, deeming it “an absolutely preposterous notion given Russia's present fiscal circumstances.”

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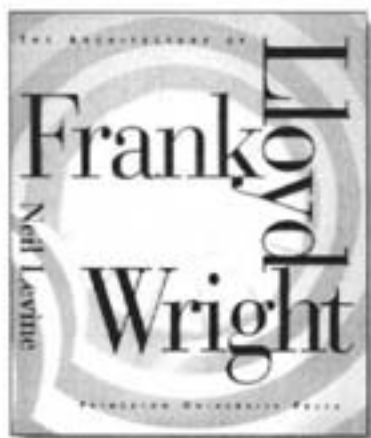
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