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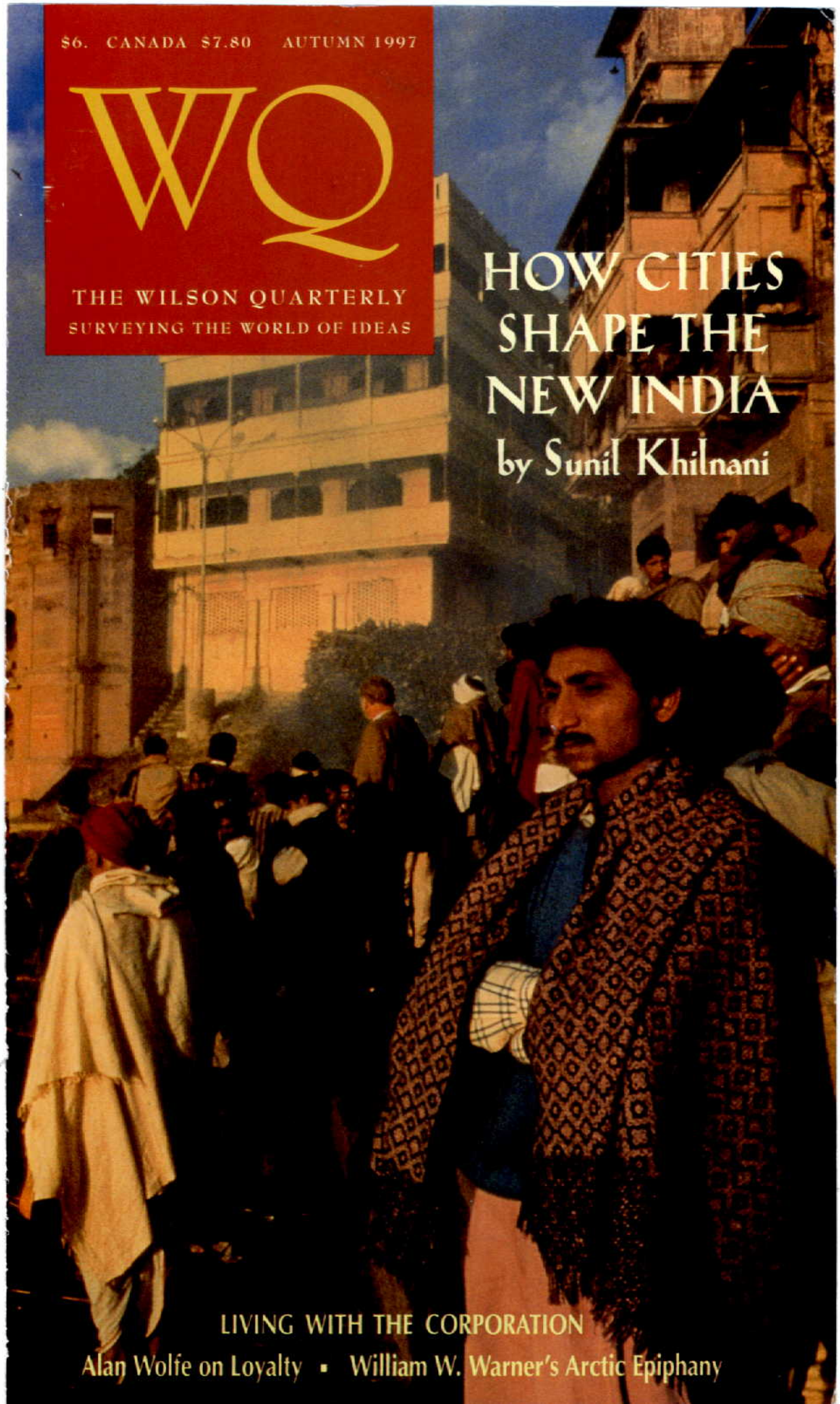

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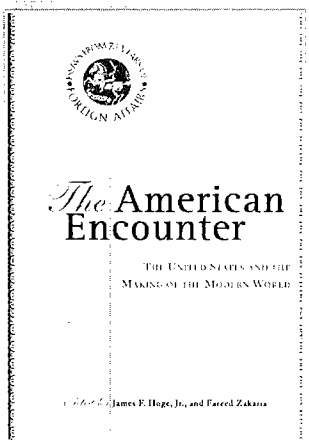

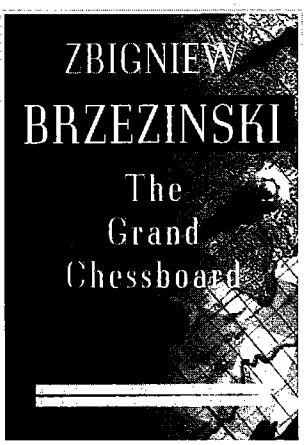

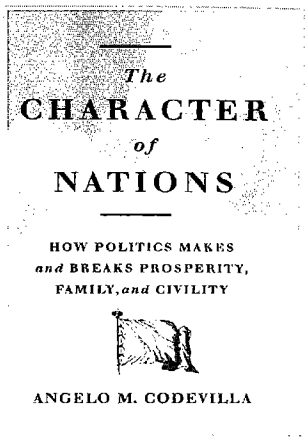

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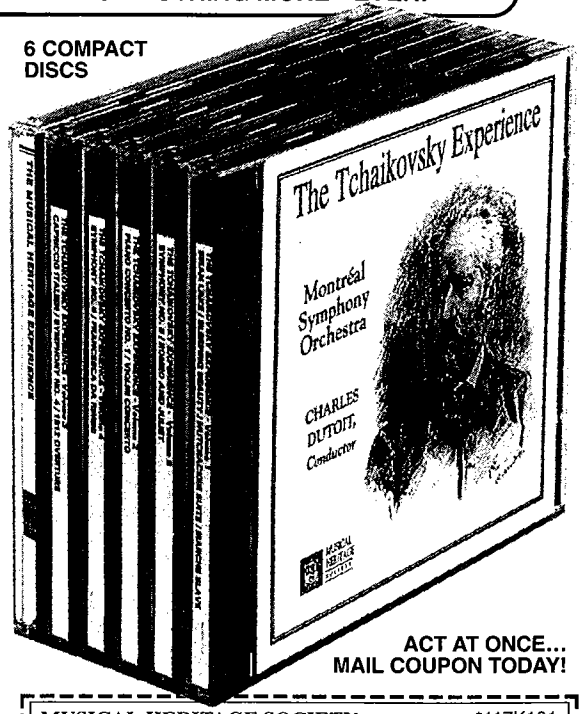

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Editor's Comment

The state of American institutions was always one of the prime concerns of the *WQ*'s founding editor, Peter Braestrup, whose sudden and unexpected death on August 10 we are sad to announce (see p. 4). That concern has remained at the forefront of the *WQ*'s editorial agenda over the years, and is clearly evident in this issue's look at an institution that Americans misunderstand and vilify almost as much as they rely upon it: the corporation.

During the post–World War II period, criticism of this important institution has undergone a significant, and revealing, change. To the social critics of the late 1950s and early '60s, the corporation was a paternalistic, conformity-enforcing organization; spiritless and spirit crushing, it created the "organization man" and contributed to the rise of the "lonely crowd." Such criticism had real consequences, visible, among other places, in the youth movement of the 1960s.

In recent years, social analysts have taken a very different line of attack. Now the corporation is faulted for not being paternalistic enough—for being ruthlessly indifferent to anything but the profit motive. Concern that the corporation remain, or become, an all-providing "nanny corporation" is voiced in many corners.

As historian Morton Keller observes in this issue, the public character of these private institutions has been a matter of intense debate for more than a century. Today we depend on corporations not only to create jobs and wealth but to provide health insurance, collect taxes, contribute to charity, and implement policies such as affirmative action. A new awareness that even the largest corporations can be surprisingly fragile has made us reluctant in recent years to ask more of them. But as J. Bradford De Long points out, that, too, is likely to change.

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COVER *Burning Ghat on the Banks of the Ganges*, Benares, 1992, photograph by Raghu Rai/Magnum Photos, Inc. Design by Adrianne Onderdonk Dudden.

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Peter Braestrup
1929–1997

Peter Braestrup, the founding editor of the *Wilson Quarterly*, was a man who made "prime" seem properly defined by whatever age he happened to be. His sudden death on August 10 of a heart attack, at the age of 68, was therefore almost as difficult to credit as it has been to accept.

Peter first came to the Wilson Center as a Fellow, in 1973, in order to complete his two-volume book *Big Story* (1977), a definitive and critical account of how newspapers and television misreported the Vietnam War's 1968 Tet offensive. He was something of an extraordinary presence at the Center—a journalist (*Time*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*) amid academics, deeply knowledgeable about history and the social sciences, and notable for his gruff candor and a sense of humor that thrived on robust expression, whether as player or spectator. He was also a military man (first lieutenant, U.S. Marine Corps; badly wounded during the Korean War) in an antimilitary age; when greeting a visitor he would sometimes draw himself calmly to attention, ramrod straight, an act impelled by equal measures of habit, respect, and amusement. After the idea of a Wilson Center magazine was broached by the Center's then-director, James H. Billington, Peter not only oversaw the grueling process of the *Wilson Quarterly*'s launch but also defined its mission—as "the newsmagazine of the world of ideas," a collaborative effort by scholars and journalists—and impressed upon it a very personal stamp. What was then called the "Periodicals" section of the magazine, for instance, reflected Peter's eclectic reading habits, and his earnest curiosity. The "clusters" of two or three articles about a particular country in any given issue reflected his dissatisfaction with the way the world outside the United States was portrayed in the press and in academe.

He had wide experience of that world—his career as a foreign correspondent took in Europe, Africa, and Asia—and it colored his outlook and his talk. Indeed, his conversation was flecked with an unusual assortment of phrases and terminology. Sometimes notes would be written in the clipped language of a reporter's telegramese: "Advise soonest copywise." When overwhelmed by trivia, he complained of being "nibbled to death by ducks." The desk from which Peter operated was as unkempt as he himself could sometimes be, its contents thematically unified by an overlay of used pipe cleaners and loose tobacco.

"Mentoring" was the kind of word, smacking of psychobabble, that would prompt Peter to remove his pipe and contort his face in exaggerated pain. But he was, in truth, one of the greatest mentors, as a score of Braestrup alumni around the country—reporters, editors, publishers—can attest. The staffs he assembled at the *WQ* consisted largely of editors who were young and green and probably, in Peter's eyes, a little soft, and whose work he edited and re-edited and edited once more, often with the editor standing there watching. Typically Peter used a heavy No. 1 pencil, and he never used an eraser, even on his own words. He didn't like erasers, he said, because they destroyed the record of your mistakes.

Craftsmanship, though, was the lesser part of his tutelage. What Peter also imparted were values. His experience of Yale and of his beloved Marine Corps, not to mention of two great national newspapers, reinforced a belief in the profound utility of institutions, even when flawed—they, and families, are the main ballast a society has. He was impatient with the segmentation of so much of public discourse into mutually unintelligible enclaves. He eschewed journalistic self-importance (and kept a boxful of paperback copies of Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop*, which he gave away as vaccine or antidote). His tolerance of cant was nonexistent. He was always asking, "What's the contrary argument?"

It was a straightforward credo for a straightforward man. When Peter answered the phone, it was with a single word—"Braestrup"—whose sound evoked a whole sensibility. And it still does.

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The Root of All Corruption

Gil Troy's entertaining and enlightening romp through the history of money and politics in America ["Money & Politics: The Oldest Connection," *WQ*, Summer '97] is a welcome corrective to the high-minded, hyperbolic rhetoric that dominates contemporary commentary on campaign finance practices. Viewed from this historical perspective, the 1996 campaign practices that are the subject of Senator Fred Thompson's hearings do not measure up to America's great money-and-politics scandals. Troy correctly notes that the recent media fixation on scandal has done more to undermine trust in government than to purify our politics.

Unfortunately, he carries his argument too far— by suggesting that any efforts beyond disclosure to regulate the flow of money in elections are doomed to fail. In so doing, he implicitly embraces a libertarian utopia of an unregulated political marketplace, in which citizens in the voting booth provide the only restraint on the influence of economic power in politics.

More nuanced lessons can be drawn from his historical account. Soft money was a serious problem in 1996; it can be banned if at the same time parties are freed to assist their candidates as they choose with hard (regulated) money. Free television time for candidates and parties would slow the money chase and increase the amount and quality of information available to voters.

Thomas E. Mann
The Brookings Institution
Washington, D.C.

Having read your essay suggesting that money is viewed as the corruption of politics, I cannot understand why you or anyone gives credence to this meretricious argument. Blaming money for the actions of corrupt politicians is the same as blaming oxygen for the fires at Dachau or guns for the shooting of James Brady, when savages are responsible.

Where is your call for justice? Why all this pedantic analysis of campaign finance reform or these pernicious proposals to modify our democratic process? When the Democratic National Committee blatantly raises money illegally, the correct response is to bring it to justice. What is confronting us is not *how* to prevent corruption but how to keep the Democrats from distracting Congress while it investigates this corruption and punishes the perpetrators.

Michael R. Smith
Gaithersburg, Md.

On Romania

In his witty and perceptive description of two (royalish) weddings and a funeral in modern-day Romania ["A Balkan Comedy," *WQ*, Summer '97], William McPherson makes a darker point. "Romanians," he writes," still seem very confused on this matter of fundamental importance. It's time they made up their minds on what treason is and who the traitors were."

That confusion was greatly in evidence in press and official reactions to a series of "Dispatches from Romania" that Mr. McPherson recently wrote for *Slate* magazine (*www.slate.com*). As McPherson notes, the effects of the election last November of the reformist government of Emil Constantinescu can already be seen in a new optimism, a booming stock market, and cleaner streets. Yet, other indications are more problematic. The countries included in the first wave of NATO enlargement have made and are making serious efforts to cleanse their governments of the old secret police and to reform their structures. Romania has not, at least not yet.

In his *Slate* articles, McPherson described that country's obsession with NATO entry. But the desultory efforts to

reform the intelligence services must be one of the main reasons why Romania was not included in the first wave of NATO enlargement.

Jodie T. Allen
Washington Editor, Slate

William McPherson is a knowledgeable observer of Romania. He is right to point out that Nicolae Ceauşescu was not primarily a corrupt tyrant who looted his country. Ceauşescu had big ideas about how to modernize Romania and turn it into a first-rate power. But like other communist plans, his program led to failure because its economic, social, and psychological premises were wrong.

Unfortunately, by providing us with many grotesque anecdotes, McPherson perpetuates the idea that Romania's troubles are the product of its quirky national elites and their historical continuity. But actually, there is not much support for the monarchy, and practically none for a return to communism. The much maligned Iliescu regime carried out some (though not enough) reforms and did not impose itself as a new dictatorship the way postcommunist leaders in other countries have tried to do. It avoided exacerbating a deadly ethnic conflict with Hungarians, and it did not fall into the catastrophic policy paralysis that occurred in Bulgaria. Nevertheless, it did not do enough, and the Romanian electorate behaved entirely rationally in 1996 when it opted for a more market-oriented, open government. An analysis of the voting shows that the younger, more educated, and more urban parts of the population—that is to say, the more enlightened—went overwhelmingly for Constantinescu. Extremist parties scored very poorly. This is the real Romania. Most of the people McPherson described are irrelevant in Romania. As long as we understand that, we can enjoy his well-told stories.

Daniel Chirot
University of Washington
Seattle, Wash.

William McPherson's essay was a heartening sign that former East European countries, and especially those (Romania and Slovenia, Slovakia and Bulgaria) that failed to make the NATO grade in July, have not completely slipped out of public sight. McPherson's mosaiclike depiction of Romania past and present succeeded where many more conventional treatments have failed. I perfectly recognized the country I covered for the *Observer* for two years after Ceauşescu's execution but knew well between 1986 and 1992.

As I begin researching a book on Christian Orthodoxy in Europe, a project that entails taking a close look at not just Romania but Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, and Russia, I see that these countries demand of students of their history and politics a leap of sympathetic imagination as huge perhaps as that demanded by Islamic countries, or China or Japan. The Christian Orthodox tradition, which parted company with our Western Roman Catholic (and later Protestant) one in 1054, looks deceptively similar in its religious manifestations but quite different when viewed as a cultural phenomenon.

The new NATO line replaces and almost exactly mirrors the old Iron Curtain. Romania may be Orthodox, but its Latin language has often tugged it westward, away from its Slav neighbors. Romanians desperately wanted to be allowed to join NATO, and there were plenty of good strategic arguments why Romania deserved to be included in the first wave of new entries. NATO strategy aside, there was, I believe, a perilous underestimation of the leap Romania was so courageously willing to take across that almost 1000-year-old schism line, out of the Byzantine Orthodox mindset with its scorn for Western-style democracy and our understanding of human rights. President Emil Constantinescu was not exaggerating when he warned that the time to make that leap into NATO was now, while his government (of a kind Romania has never before had) was new and popular, because later might be too late.

Victoria Clark
London

William McPherson's ironically titled "A Balkan Comedy" is a fascinating jour-

ney into the melancholy depths of contemporary Romania. I have just returned from my own journey there and can attest to the knotty complexity of this continuing mystery. Romania's commentators now are involved in a puzzle-contest to see who can put together more pieces and come up with the greatest absurdity. Among them, McPherson is a prince. This being said, I must also admit that his choice of characters and anecdotes left a slightly bitter aftertaste. McPherson chose to associate with some necessarily loathsome relics of the Ceauşescu regime and the nouveau riche crooks who are their successors. Prolonged exposure to this basement of degraded community leads all too easily to the evident foulness he describes. McPherson is right to dismiss the demonization of the Ceauşescus as propaganda of a new *nomenklatura* (at least until 1996) and to wonder at the pervasiveness of the underground connections through which most Romanians survive. He is also rightly amused at the extraordinary marriages of convenience between (ex-) communists and (former) royalists, between (ex-) managers of factories and (new) capitalists.

The picture, however, is far from complete if one fails (as McPherson does) to cast at least one sympathetic eye on the genuine love of culture, pleasure, and plain joie de vivre of most Romanians. It is true that some of these traits may be partly responsible for the mess in which Romanians find themselves. (Hence, McPherson's own endless congress with his characters over vodkas, scotches, and cigarettes.) Young people are absent from this particular essay, but they are the best hope for some happier ending to the Balkan Comedy. In Bucharest I listened to a world-class Romanian satirical rock group called Sarmalele Reci (Cold Stuffed Cabbage), whose lyrics had the same bitter intensity, anger, and poetry expressed in the protest songs of the 1960s in America. All that McPherson (rightly) finds hopelessly Byzantine and unwholesome in Romania is plainly, directly, and intimately revealed in these lyrics. My own vision of Romania is that a TOTAL UNDERGROUND ECONOMY drives everyone and everything. The need for the reforms that Constan-

tinescu's government has proposed is extremely urgent. Seven years too late, the situation is quite desperate. Any hesitation now will lead to greater disasters. Some commentators, including former presidential candidate and literary critic Nicolae Manolescu, think that it's already too late.

McPherson's journalism agrees with Manolescu's diagnosis. I'm not so sure. I think that Romanians can save themselves somehow, through some kind of rocking self-satire combined with entrepreneurial zeal. (Oh, and privatization, justice, and a new respect for the law!) Meanwhile, there are 20,000 wild dogs in Bucharest, left over from Ceauşescu's "building" program. They've got to be good for something. Nobody interviewed THEM.

Andrei Codrescu
New Orleans, La.

Rescuing Art

David Levi Strauss's fine article, "Rescuing Art from Modern Oblivion" [*WQ*, Summer '97], emphasizes the friction between Leo Steinberg and the art history establishment. While justified, this emphasis obscures Steinberg's historic importance for his chosen discipline.

Steinberg's work brilliantly elucidates an issue central to art history since its inception: how is it that art has a history? Before him, scholars routinely saw past art as a fixed ground for subsequent production. In magnificent articles on Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* (1973) and Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* (1975, 1980), Steinberg shows that the pictorial responses of later artists provide telling evidence about these seminal masterpieces. Art has a history because new productions necessarily change how earlier art is seen and what lessons it teaches, even as earlier art establishes the criteria for subsequent artists to understand what art is and what artists do. It has taken two decades, but art historians are beginning to acknowledge that art lives through history in the responses it generates.

Steinberg stands out in art history as an engaged intellectual. In a field prone to internecine squabbling, he carries on a dialogue with great thinkers of the past, even as he disputes with his contemporaries. Never satisfied with arguments that rest on reputation, authority, or consensus, he makes intelligent readers *see* what is at stake and thereby reveals how art and art history are relevant to thought and life.

Jack M. Greenstein
Professor of Art History
University of California, San Diego

Absolutely

Please allow me to add a few comments to the excellent piece by James Morris entitled "Absolutely" ["At Issue," *WQ*, Summer '97].

My distaste for and fear of Absolutes are entirely democratic, but for the sake of brevity I will confine my comments to their manifestation inside religion.

Most people avoid striking a fanatical relationship with religion; they intuitively shy away from absolutes, sensing the larger truth that imperfection is inherent in human affairs—that half-measures, com-

promises, and gropings toward perfection are the strength and beauty of the human family. Such good people know that one does not really love mankind when one expects too much from it.

But absolutes lie at the core of Christianity, and it is there that the weak, those who hate the self, find their home. Religion is not a matter of God, church, or holy cause. These are but accessories. The source of religious preoccupation is in the self, or rather the reflection of the self. Dedication is the obverse side of self-rejection.

Those for whom a central idea is the most important aspect of existence already have one foot mired in the pathology of fanaticism. Their truth is never seized by doubt, and that is the first condition for the abdication of the human.

Everywhere the passionate, who have all the earmarks of fugitives running from their crippled selves, are casually pressing our awe buttons, and cheapening the experience of human life. They are responsible for an unprecedented infantilization of the population and the resulting primitivization of the social structure. In truth, our culture functions best at room temperature.

James Scofield
Olympia, Wash.

Poetry Criticism

I am compelled to write deploring the incredible waste of eight pages of treasured *Wilson Quarterly* space on as pathetic a subject as May Swenson ["Poetry," *WQ*, Winter '97], a "poet" of whom I'd never heard and who, as far as I know, has never written one unforgettable line—my criterion for qualifying *as* a poet. This from one who can recite nine-tenths of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* verbatim. But the unintelligible, pretentious, kindergarten-geometry gibberish perpetrated by Swenson and lauded in Anthony Hecht's article is bound to madden any sound mind that sees it.

Edwin B. Weissinger
Dade City, Fla.

Corrections

Due to an editorial error, we reported on page 37 of "Rescuing Art from Modern Oblivion" [*WQ*, Summer '97] that Leo Steinberg emigrated to the United States in 1938. He emigrated to the United States in 1945. In addition, we failed to credit Lisa Miller for the photograph of Mr. Steinberg that appears on page 35. We regret both the error and the oversight.

Due to a production error, we neglected to publish the following copyright line in conjunction with George Grosz's *The Agitator*, on page 129 of the Summer '97 *WQ*: **Copyright © 1997 Estate of George Grosz/Licensed by VAGA, New York, N.Y.**

A survey in "The Periodical Observer" (*WQ*, Spring '97, p. 131) mistakenly referred at one point to a Ph.D. in theology as "a doctor of ministry degree," which is a different sort of degree. The question at issue was whether a Ph.D. in theology involves academic research, or whether, as some critics maintain, it consists mainly of professional training. As a result of the mistake, the view of Barbara DeConcini, executive director of the American Academy of Religion, was misrepresented. Her position, and that of her organization, is that "the Ph.D. is a research doctorate," and ought to be recognized as such. The doctor of ministry degree (D.Min.), she says, is "the professional doctorate."

Findings

Book bind: How could something so good be so bad? That's one question posed by the rise of book superstores, those sprawling, Shakespeare-and-cappucino emporiums that have proliferated in recent years. From less than 100 in 1991, their number grew to 788 last year. Detractors who disdain the commercialism of Barnes & Noble, Borders, and other superstores are loathe to admit it, but they have been a boon in many places, bringing top-of-the-line bookstores to a much larger population than before.

The drawback, it seemed, was that the superstores were growing at the expense of the independents, those usually smaller shops where books are more likely to be treated as treasured objects. But an article in the 125th-anniversary issue of *Publishers Weekly* (July 1997) casts doubt on that view. There's no question that the independents are suffering an alarming decline. Their share of the book market fell from 32 percent in 1991 to only 18 percent in 1996. But the chains' market share grew only from 22 to 25 percent. One reason: even as they launched superstores, they shut down many smaller mall-based stores such as Waldenbooks. It turns out that many other competitors have snatched away pieces of the independents' business, including book clubs, warehouse and discount stores, and on-line booksellers.

The publishing industry's recent woes, according to the *New York Times*, have led some in the industry to the radical conclusion that it is publishing too many books: more than 58,000 trade titles last year. They're probably right. But we're afraid it's not all those Elvis books they have in mind.

Bye-bye beavis: MTV: Music Television has announced the cancellation of its infamous *Beavis and Butt-head* show, in which two snickering cartoon protagonists explored the far reaches of odium. "Attitude is over," MTV president Judy McGrath explained to *Forbes* (Sept. 8, 1997). Today's "post-Generation-X" youth, now college age or younger, she says, aren't into negativity. "Now parents are cool. Kids want to marry younger and stay home instead of going out to clubs," McGrath believes. To this pinch of '50s retro add a dash of '60s: "The kids are hyperaware that their parents may have sacrificed everything for their jobs, and they don't want to fall into that trap."

In a 1996 survey cited in *American Demographics* (Aug. 1997), 86 percent of 18-to-29-year-olds said that a good marriage is part of the good life. Not only does that represent a 14-point jump above the 1991 level, but it puts the youngsters solidly ahead of their elders on the issue of matrimonial bliss. What next on MTV, Ozzie and Harriet touring America in a Volkswagen bus?

The princess test: Almost exactly 15 years before Princess Diana died in a Paris car crash, *USA Today* made its newsstand debut with a page-one lead story about another royal death in a car wreck: "America's Princess Grace dies in Monaco," the headline said. Media critics sneered at "McPaper" for practicing "junk journalism" and exploiting celebrity culture, notes James McCartney in *American Journalism Review* (Sept. 1997). His point is that *USA Today* is much improved. Maybe so. But the establishment news media's treatment of Diana's death suggests how close the mainstream now comes to the early McPaper's worship of celebrity. Of course, there was plenty of tut-tutting among the media superstars over those dreadful paparazzi. But where did all those candid photos and images of Diana's wrecked car in *Time* and *Newsweek* and on the networks come from? The good, gray *New York Times* devoted an astounding 240 column-inches to Diana on the day of her funeral. TV and print journalists congratulated themselves for having the decency not to show photos of the dying Diana in her car. Yet.

Even the universities got into the act. Only a few days after Princess Diana's death, conference organizers at one university in Washington, D.C., were busy pro-

moting a session of voyeurism with an academic twist. The title: "Who Killed Diana?: The Paparazzi in All of Us."

PULL THE PLUG!: Seldom does a solution to a major social problem suggest itself as plainly as the one that jumps from this item in the *Economist* (July 5, 1997): "A study by Roper Starch, a consultancy, found that 32 percent of six- to seven-year-olds have a television in their own room, as do 50 percent of eight- to twelve-year-olds and 64 percent of thirteen- to seventeen-year-olds."

By the time the average American child graduates from high school, the article notes, he has spent 20,000 hours watching TV. Time spent in the classroom amounts to only 11,000 hours.

RED ME: Maybe there's more to those vanity license plates than you thought. At the Light and Dust site on the World Wide Web (http://www.thing.net/~grist/l&d/grumman/egrumn.htm), writer Bob Grumman explores the delights of minimalist poetry, a genre he says has its origins in 1920s dadaism.

Grumman's survey begins with what must be considered an epic of the genre, by George Swede:

M SS NG
Thiief!

Then there is jwcurry's masterpiece of brevity: a letter "i" in which the dot is formed by a thumbprint.

The survey proceeds through several varieties of minimalist poetry (infra-verbal, pluraesthetic, etc.) before arriving at Grumman's favorite, by Aram Saroyan:

lighght

Most readers dismiss the extra *gh* as either trivial or obscure, Grumman observes. He thinks otherwise: "By putting it into his word, Saroyan brings us face-to-face with the ineffability of light, a mysterious substance whose components are somehow there but absent, as 'ghgh' is there (and delicately shimmering) but unpronounced in the word, 'lighght.' And he leaves us with intimations of his single syllable of light's expanding, silently and weightlessly, 'gh' by 'gh,' into . . . Final Illumination."

MONTY PYTHON DOES PC: Imagine a university with a long history as a home to "progressive" thinkers, from W. E. B. DuBois and refugees from Hitler's Europe to the contemporary Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm. Imagine that it now has a "gender studies program" and a course catalogue bristling with the most up-to-date appurtenances of race theory, queer theory, and postcolonial studies. Imagine that 17 percent of its full-time faculty are minority-group members. Now guess who's started shooting at it.

The institution is the New School for Social Research, in New York's Greenwich Village, and its antagonist is no florid-faced conservative but a band of left-wing students and professors who call themselves the Mobilization. Last spring, reports Eyal Press in *Lingua Franca* (Aug. 1997), the Mobilization had the "white supremacist" New School in an uproar, twice detaining university officials against their will.

The immediate cause of the controversy was the university's decision not to grant tenure to M. Jacqui Alexander, a visiting professor in the gender studies program, with larger questions about affirmative action also involved. Three separate departments voted against recommending tenure for Alexander, a woman of Caribbean origin. She had written several articles but no books.

"Despite the group's identity-based rhetoric and practice," Press writes, "many of the Mobilization's own members happen to be white, while many of its critics are not." The Mobilization even criticized another group as "true to the mandate of hegemonic white power in its efforts to undermine and condemn the legitimate struggles of marginalized people for justice."

"Monty Python does PC" is how James Miller, director of the New School's Committee on Liberal Studies, sums up the Mobilization's campaign. Laugh track, he might have added, not included.

At Issue

Where's the City?

As an object of study, the city is back. During the past decade or so, scholars concerned with such matters as the global environment, social equity, and sustainable development have turned their attention to the city. Yet most of our thinking about the subject—particularly our reflections on the city as place—has failed to keep pace with the changes in urban form that are taking place all around us.

Those changes are huge and ever accelerating. All over the world, more and more people inhabit cities or their sprawling interconnected communities. The number of "one million population cities" increased from 11 in 1900 to 105 in 1990, and is expected to reach 248 by 2115. If current projections hold, a billion souls will be added to Asia's cities within a generation, and Latin America long ago joined the ranks of the world's regions with majority urban populations. Given such realities, there is no way to address the world's ills, or its challenges, without considering their urban dimensions.

The extent to which social scientists have focused on the city in recent years is impressive. Analysts have examined urban family structures, the role of women in urban communities, the informal urban economy, and interethnic relations in urban settings, as well as more purely technical issues of public transportation, urban infrastructure, and municipal governance and finance. It is difficult to imagine an aspect of urban life that has not come under minute inspection, except—oddly—the city itself.

This was not always so. A large and impressive body of scholarship once took the city as a subject in its own right. The grand debates of a century ago focused on specific cities such as London, New York, and Chicago, and were carried on by the likes of Ebenezer Howard, Robert Park, Jane Addams, and Patrick Geddes. All of these observers of urban life wrote of cities as distinct and distinctive organisms, examining them both as seats of civilization and culture and as sites of human degradation. Until recently, however, the attempt to come to terms with the city in all of its dimensions seemed quaintly outmoded.

As scholars begin to recognize the need for more synthetic approaches to urban problems, they are also starting to see the necessity of making a place for "place" in urban analysis. Those efforts need not deny the importance of other approaches centering on families, economic development, or environmental disasters. Both kinds of approaches are required if scholars are to grasp what is peculiar about the urban experience, and if politicians and planners are to come up with strategies for improving the lives of city dwellers.

WQ

Place, of course, is inescapable. Few would question the need to take the physical aspects of place into account when planning infrastructure. It would be folly to build the same road system for a city in the mountains and one on the plains, or to excavate for subterranean services in a permafrost region, an earthquake zone, or a swamp.

Yet place has another significance, namely cultural, and it is at least as important. It is the point at which universal macrotheory—be it economic or engineering—meets local reality. The economic realities of Tokyo, Manhattan, and São Paulo may be converging, but someone trying to accomplish a specific task—buy a house or apartment, bury a relative, find a job, plan a wedding—still needs to know how these great cities differ from one another. Such distinctions are not merely national, for Tokyoites, Manhattanites, and Paulistas may be more similar to one another than to their countrymen and countrywomen from rural communities. It is difficult to specify precisely how the urban

cultures of these communities vary; yet they do. And those differences matter, even in negotiations so trivial as hiring a cab.

During the past 20 years, enlightened bureaucrats and planners in national ministries and development agencies have begun to recognize the futility of top-down, national urban and housing planning. An emerging consensus among such people favors difference and accepts the inadequacy of universal solutions, particularly for something so constantly changing as a city. While there can be no definitive solution to a specific city's problems, this consensus holds, there can be different approaches to minimizing difficulties and maximizing opportunities. The challenge is to spotlight strategies for urban success without reducing them to simplistic "how-to" recipes.

Unfortunately, too many national governments and international organizations, including the World Bank and the United Nations Centre on Human Settlements, ignore this wisdom and continue to champion "best practice" solutions for all urban challenges. Sadder yet, this official reliance on "best practices," and the concomitant disregard for the particulars of time and place, comports all too well with the dominant academic approaches to urban issues. There still appears to be too little room for imaginative scholarship in a world that demands immediate "solutions," however specious they may be. So, within the academy, the city too often remains an object of battle about gender, poverty, or people with disabilities, rather than a subject in and of itself. Where, one might ask, is the city anyway? Where is its "I"?

Cities and places have distinct identities, their "I's". The Czech novelist Ivan Klima expressed this point more eloquently than scores of social scientists when he wrote, "A city is like a person: if we don't establish a genuine relationship with it, it remains a name, an external form that soon fades from our minds. To create this relationship, we must be able to observe the city and understand its peculiar personality, its "I", its spirit, its identity, the circumstances of its life as they evolved through space and time." But mere ego is not enough to describe what makes a special place special. Cities also have their own unique souls.

A city's soul may be rooted in a compulsive impatience with rules, as in Osaka; or in the trust placed in the nonlinear, as in Istanbul. It may consist of concupiscence, as in Rio de Janeiro; or of the accomplishments of high art, as in Florence and Prague. St. Petersburg is a special place not only because of its great architecture, bathed in muted northern light, but because of the sad dignity of its residents. "This is the city where it's somehow easier to endure loneliness than anywhere else," said one of St. Petersburg's native sons, Joseph Brodsky, "because the city itself is lonely." Loneliness may define a place even as it defies social-scientific analysis. There are also cities in which history asserts itself—such as Cairo, Jerusalem, and Rome. Yet character and soul are not merely products of age. Late-19th-century Chicago proclaimed a distinctive soul of commercial cupidity well before it was 50 years old.

How does one quantify soul, heart, spirit, or even place? How are they "objectified," "gendered," or "unpacked"? We have a far easier time talking about the city in the abstract than in confronting the actual city in all its glory and shame. The result is that we barely know the city at all. This yawning breach in our thinking about urban life must be filled even as we seek to establish pragmatic solutions to existing urban problems. Sunil Khilnani, in his examination of India's various and distinctive cities as engines of modernization and political change (p. 16), steps boldly into that breach. So, elsewhere, do Theodore Bestor in his writings on Tokyo, Mike Davis in his work on Los Angeles, and Brian Ladd in his recent book on Berlin. Yet we need many more such imaginative approaches to the cities of the world. We need to think more about what makes a place a place—and to do so by considering both material and nonmaterial factors. Only by heading in this direction will we finally bring the soul into our discussion of the city.

—Blair A. Ruble

India's Theaters of Independence

Even before India gained independence 50 years ago, such cities as Bombay, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, and New Delhi served as powerful engines of change. Since 1947, those cities and many others have become home to a quarter of all Indians—"dramatic scenes of Indian democracy," our author argues, "where the idea of India is being disputed and defined anew."

by Sunil Khilnani

In that eternal city of the imagination, novelist R. K. Narayan's Malgudi, things began to happen after August 15, 1947:

> For years people were not aware of the existence of a Municipality in Malgudi. The town was none the worse for it. Diseases, if they started, ran their course and disappeared, for even diseases must end someday. Dust and rubbish were blown away by the wind out of sight; drains ebbed and flowed and generally looked after themselves. The Municipality kept itself in the background, and remained so till the country got its independence on the fifteenth of August 1947. History holds few records of such jubilation as was witnessed that day from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. Our Municipal Council caught the inspiration. They swept the streets, cleaned the drains and hoisted flags all over the place.

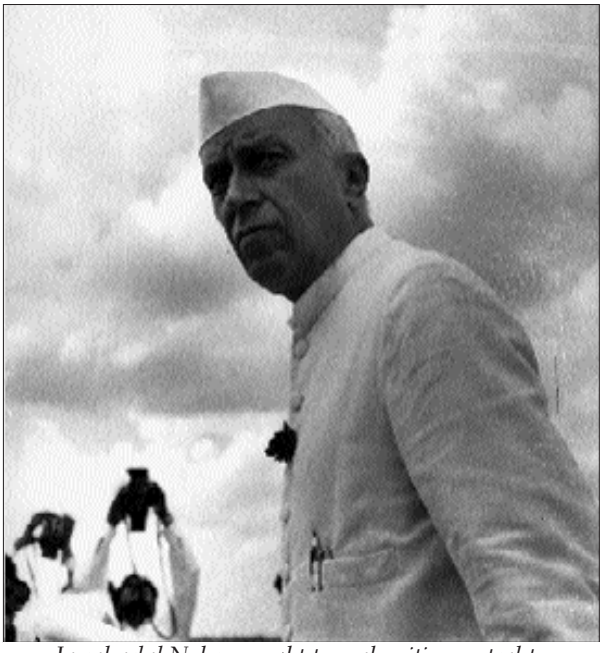
But the nationalist enthusiasm of the Municipal Council was not so

cheaply expended. No sooner had the celebrations ended than the chairman decided that more had to be done to make Malgudi truly free and patriotic:

> He called up an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council, and harangued them, and at once they decided to nationalize the names of all the streets and parks, in honour of the birth of independence. They made a start with a park at the Market Square. It used to be called the Coronation Park. . . . Now the old board was uprooted and lay on the lawn, and a brand-new sign stood in its place declaring it henceforth to be Hamara Hindustan Park. The other transformation, however, could not be so smoothly worked out. Mahatma Gandhi Road was the most sought-after name. Eight different ward councillors were after it. . . . There came a point when, I believe, the Council just went mad. It decided to give the same name to four different streets. Well, sir, even in the most democratic or patriotic town it is not feasible to have two roads bearing the same name. The result was seen within a fortnight. The town became unrecognizable with new names . . . a wilderness with all its landmarks gone.

The Municipal Council's appreciation of the principles of rational urban cartography was undoubtedly impaired by an unusual excess of commemorative zeal, but similar second baptisms were sweeping through cities across India. Despite the ambivalence of nationalists toward the city—it was, after all, the theater where India's subjection to the British

A commercial sign in Calcutta acknowledges the city's radical extremes.



Jawaharlal Nehru sought to make cities central to India's political and economic life.

colonists was most graphically and regularly enacted—they could not turn their backs on it. They had to move into and inhabit the colonial cities, and dedicate them to their own desires and historical remembrances—it was here, in the streets of the city, that the memory of even that most stern censor of the modern city, Gandhi, was immortalized.

Since the nationalization of the streets and parks began in 1947, India's cities have changed utterly. They have become the bloated receptacles of every hope and frustration reared by half a century of free politics and exceedingly constrained and unequal economic progress. More than a quarter of all Indians live in cities, some 250 million people, and it is estimated that by 2010 the figure will exceed 400 million, giving India one of the largest urban populations in the world. In legend and in fact India may still be a land of villages, but no Indian can today avoid the cities. Their very exclusivity, and the spreading rumors of their opulence, have made them almost impossible to resist.

What has brought Indians to the cities, or what has at least brought cities to their attention, is their economic dynamism. All the enticements of the modern world are stacked up in the city, but it is also here that many Indians discover the miragelike quality of this modern world. This experience has altered beliefs, generated new politics, and made the cities dramatic scenes of Indian democracy: places where the idea of India is being disputed and defined anew.

The major cities of contemporary India are either directly the creatures of colonialism or ripostes to it. They are discontinuous with India's own rich history of urban life, for the British, even as they sometimes plagiarized this history, saw India as a tabula rasa on which they could reinvent the city. The British Raj created a masquerade of the modern city, designed to flaunt the superior rationality and power of the Raj but lacking productive capacities. The modernity of the colonial city had a sedate grandeur to it, but it remained external to the life of the society.

> Sunil Khilnani *is senior lecturer in politics at the University of London's Birkbeck College and is the author of* Arguing Revolution: The Intellectual Left in Postwar France *(1993). This essay is adapted from* The Idea of India, *to be published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc. in 1998.*

After 1947 India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, set out to recreate the city as not only the symbol of a new sovereignty but an effective engine to drive India into the modern world. The urban world created by this nationalist imagination is certainly no façade—as the country's vibrant and sometimes overwhelming metropolises attest. Yet India's cities have not quite fulfilled the nationalist expectations. Their modernity is not of a pure and happy kind, but a split and discontented one, full of darker, mixed potential. They have become spawning grounds for contrary conceptions of what India is: on the one hand a hyperbolic parochialism, on the other a bleached cosmopolitanism, both far distant from the tolerant Indian cosmopolitanism that the nationalist elite had proposed. As it did in the first half of the 20th century, the city continues to make the politics of India, but a politics far from what was intended and imagined in the early days when the street signs were so exuberantly and confusingly nationalized.

* * * * *

The colonial city arrived in India in two distinct stages. The founding during the 17th century of the ports of Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay, dedicated to commercial extraction and the exhibition of wealth, linked India more closely than ever to the globally expanding economies of northern Europe, and established an enduring relationship of subjugation and uneven exploitation between these economies and the subcontinent itself. If the fort and government house formed one central axis of these cities, another ran through the wharves and docks. The second stage of the cities' formation began in the late 19th century, when the British built the more schematic cantonment cities, laid out as military encampments but made of brick and stucco rather than canvas. This stage culminated with the decision in 1911 to build the grandest of modern imperial cities, New Delhi—a monument to the display of power and order.

Throughout India, the British colonial city kept its distance from—and looked askance at—the existing cities. Places such as Murshidabad, Fyzabad, or Patna all might have picturesque architectural merits, but otherwise were best avoided. To the colonial eye, they were places of melancholy decay and flabbergasting squalor. The British desire to announce new-gotten wealth through conspicuous and freshly painted buildings, airy confections set in emerald parks ("an entire village of palaces" was how an awestruck visitor described Calcutta's grand British residential enclave of Chowringee early in the 19th century), found no match in the crumbling masonry, miasmatic air, and labyrinthine disorder of India's urban neighborhoods and bazaars. This view of the precolonial city was in time formalized into a more elaborate, academically glorified contrast between the Western and the Indian, or "Asiatic," city. The latter, with its superstition, primitive and uncertain commerce, despotism, religious passions, and caste-ridden bonds, became a foil

against which to contrast the virtues of European rationality, industrial capitalism, civic government, secularism, and individuality.

But one can find in precolonial India vivid examples of cities that do not quite fit the easy dichotomies. The commercial center of Ahmedabad in the west is an exceptionally intriguing and neglected case. It was here, in the shadow of industrial smokestacks, that Gandhi launched his Indian political career on his return from South Africa in 1915, building his "Satyagraha Ashram" on the banks of the Sabarmati River. This is perhaps the only example of an Indian city modernizing on its own terms, without being dragooned through a phase of colonial modernity. Ahmedabad had a long history of self-generated prosperity, reliant neither on the patronage of a court nor on the exploitation of the surrounding countryside but on a tradition of textiles and manufacturing. Its history also showed considerable independence in the management of its affairs.

Ahmedabad was not an independent city-state (no Indian city ever was); nor did it have formal authorities like a municipal government with territorially defined powers. From its founding early in the 15th century, it did, however, possess powerful mercantile and artisanal corporations and guilds. These corporations, or *mahajans* (whose membership crossed lines of sect and caste, sometimes even of religion), used their commercial powers to constrain interference by external political authorities. Hindus, Jains, and Muslims lived within Ahmedabad's walls, but there was little history of violent religious conflict. The city's prosperity, as well as its religious pluralism, was manifest in an architectural tradition of public buildings: fine mosques and mausoleums, Jain and Hindu temples, all sustained a civic tradition that continued into the 20th century.

Most striking of all was Ahmedabad's response to the commercial challenge of British rule. Unlike other wealthy commercial cities on the subcontinent (nearby Surat, or Murshidabad and Dacca in the east), it did not decline with the emergence of the new port cities of Bombay and Calcutta. It flourished in the 19th century, and its textiles easily competed with European rivals in the international market. The city maintained its local cultures, language, and dress, and showed little taste for European products, although this changed slightly in the late 19th century, when some *seths*, rich merchants, began to wear socks and moved out of their carved wooden *havelis* in the old walled city to large, English-style stucco mansions set in the greenery of Shahibagh, north of the city. Uniquely, Ahmedabad turned its mercantile wealth into industrial success, and did so with no noticeable British investment and little disturbance of its cultural habits. That Ahmedabad, in its own unflashy way the first modern city created by Indians, could generate new productive wealth through its traditions of textile manufacturing and maintain its cultural character, was precisely why Gandhi adopted it as a home—and vital source of funds—for his new nationalist politics. (It was an Ahmedabadi *seth* who once muttered about how much it cost to keep the Mahatma in poverty.)

The Islamic legacy lives on in the monumental architecture of Ahmedabad, one of the great economic urban centers of precolonial India.

For all the "untraditional" aspects of a commercial and political center such as Ahmedabad, cities in precolonial India were undoubtedly very different from their European analogues. In 18th-century India, large cities could be found in all regions, linked to the countryside through smaller towns—*qasbahs* or *ganjs*, as they were called in the north—which acted as cultural and economic conduits. The intensity of contact among the cities was subject to varying historical rhythms: greater when empires flourished, lesser when they declined.

Precolonial cities were specialized. Besides commercial and economic centers such as Ahmedabad, Surat, and Cochin, there were destinations of religious pilgrimage such as Benares, Puri, and Madurai, which expanded and contracted in size in keeping with the religious calendar; and political and administrative cities such as Delhi and Agra, their ascendancy and decline hitched to the fate of dynasties. The conjunction of commercial and economic wealth with political and administrative power, typical of Europe's major cities, was rare in precolonial India. Colonial ports such as Calcutta were the first such examples.

Internally, too, Indian cities were distinctively arranged on the basis of neighborhoods of work and residence, and segregated by small-scale castes, sects, and religious communities. Indeed, the movement of people and goods among cities followed avenues of caste: a migrant arriving in a new city would search out fellow caste members. Merchants, while often trading over long distances and by means of sophisticated accounting practices, would truck with members of their own community. The most notable case was the caste community of the Marwaris, who from their

Mahatma Gandhi chats with Lord and Lady Mountbatten before a sovereignty conference in 1947.

homes in Rajasthan built extensive commercial networks all over India.

Urban political or social associations were nothing like the "public" bodies that began to appear in 18th-century Europe. These European "societies" were in principle universally accessible to all individuals with common interests, but in Indian cities association was sanctioned by denser criteria of lineage, caste, and religion. Religious conflict was restrained, not, as later nationalists liked to suppose, by a genuinely "composite" culture founded on an active and mutual respect among practitioners of different religions, but by routine indifference, a back-to-back neglect, which on occasions such as religious festivals could be bloodily dispensed with.

Social relations in these cities were neither impersonal nor governed by contractual arrangements of right and obligation. Social groups certainly performed duties for one another—for example, the wealthy would bestow charity on the poor and on religious mendicants—but such obligations were not enforced by public law or authority. That really was the crucial difference. These cities were not governed by publicly known rules that applied uniformly to all their residents and that a single authority could enforce.

And that was precisely what colonialism wished to change. The British Raj lived in the city, in compounds of its own creation external to the society over which it ruled. It molested the existing cities, the "old" or "Black" town, and constructed new ones. Impelled by the desire for greater security in the wake of the 1857 uprising, which briefly threatened British rule in the north, the colonial power disseminated its idea of the city with new vigor in the second half of the 19th century. The three port cities of Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay were already well-developed mercantile centers by the time India was absorbed into the British Empire and imperial rule proclaimed in 1858. The distinction between European and Indian "towns," which had initially been characteristic of them, had softened with time.

But by the late 19th century a more focused concern with defense,

sanitation, order, and, above all, the display of the new imperial power overshadowed other considerations. India's cities fell prey to a fashion sweeping through other metropolises across the globe—Paris, Prague, Berlin, New York, Buenos Aires. Vast areas of the old cities were demolished. In Delhi, which had retained a strong sense of its precolonial habits and styles, the stately Mughal Red Fort was turned into a squalid barracks, its watercourses converted into watering troughs. Railway lines were struck through the central areas of the city. Ghalib, Delhi's greatest poet, made these observations in 1865:

> Let me tell you the Delhi news. . . . The gate to Bara Dariba has been demolished. The rest of the Qabil Attar Lane has been destroyed. The mosque in Kashmiri Katra has been leveled to the ground. The width of the street has been doubled. . . . A great monkey, strong as a lion and huge as an elephant, has been born. He roves the city demolishing buildings as he goes.

New cantonment cities were constructed, more than 170 of them, dotted around the country and linked by railway, roads, and telegraph into a new geography of command. Their site plans varied little, strictly segregated into European and Indian sections, with the former in turn divided between the military and civil lines—where the civilian authorities and notables lived. "The European station," wrote one observer,

> is laid out in large rectangles formed by wide roads. The native city is an aggregate of houses perforated by tortuous paths. . . . The Europeans live in detached houses, each surrounded by large walls enclosing large gardens, lawns, out-offices. The natives live packed in squeezed-up tenements, kept from falling to pieces by mutual pressure.

The civilizing ambitions of the British Raj were routinely rehearsed in the city, but the rectangular securities of the European station did not mesh with any Indian conception, and Indians played little part in defining the meanings of the city. There was no prolonged duel, as in Britain or France, over what a city and its purposes should be, no jostling between crowds and the state that gave a political sense to the public squares or boulevards. The colonial conception was imposed.

Moreover, the only Indians who adapted to this imposition were the elites and middle classes, who by the early decades of the 20th century had grown to a substantial presence in the cities. They aspired to the glistening fruits of modernity tantalizingly arrayed before them—streetlights, electric fans, tree-lined streets, clubs, gardens and parks—and they willingly emulated the behavior and acquired the self-restraining habits of the modern city dweller. But to the poor, to migrants from the countryside, to the destitute, the British idea of a modern city was meaningless; it never reached them.

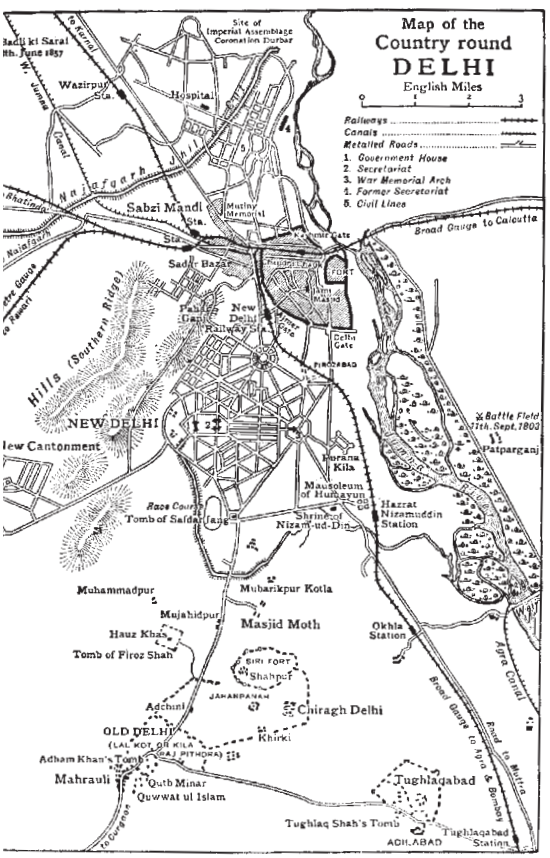
This stand-off was evinced by a trait that has repeatedly struck the eye accustomed to the modern city, a characteristic that nonplused colonials and that present-day visitors have ceaselessly fretted over: the stance that residents of Indian cities appear to take toward waste—refuse, excreta, death. Benares, for instance, seemed to the Western eye defective in its reluctance to rationalize social life by quarantining activ-

ities in different parts of the city. Death was at the very heart of Benares, not banished to its edges but mingled with its daily business: corpses were cremated on specified ghats, the great stone ledges descending to the Ganges, which were the city's most important common spaces. Benares seemed, to the foreign eye, indifferent to the need to constitute itself as a city of public arenas, with distinct borders between public and private acts, the hygienic and the nonhygienic.

By the latter half of the 19th century, British perceptions of Indian urban life were preoccupied by its filth. Earlier, the British had been most discomfited by the infernal and sickening climate, but now the Indian city itself was threatening—and required control. This way of seeing the Indian city developed into an entire sensory response, and it became the natural nationalist mode of perception, too. Gandhi, describing in his *Autobiography* his first visit to Benares, could not hide his dismay:

> I went to the Kashi Visvanath temple for darsham. I was deeply pained by what I saw there. . . . The approach was through a narrow and slippery lane. Quiet there was none. The swarming flies and the noise made by the shopkeepers and pilgrims were perfectly insufferable. Where one expected an atmosphere of meditation and communion, it was conspicuous by its absence. One had to seek that atmosphere in oneself. . . . When I reached the temple, I was greeted at the entrance by a stinking mass of rotten flowers. . . .

The British obsession with drainage and sewerage systems was matched by more elevated concerns. An empire, unlike a trading company, had to announce itself to its subjects by grander means than shopfronts. Until the 1870s, the British had not directed much energy to displaying their authority—there had been the notorious "flag matches," designed in the wake of 1857 to suppress any thoughts of sedition, but otherwise there was little parading about in public squares. The abolition and desanctification of Mughal symbols of power and legitimacy after the 1857 rebellion left a vacuum. The British response was to pirate the Durbar, which in Mughal hands had been a sophisticated, courtly ritual of political exchange and fealty between emperor and subjects.



The first Imperial Durbar,

held in 1877 at Delhi, formally proclaimed Queen Victoria Empress of India, or "Kaiser-i-Hind." This ceremonial pantomime was justified to the more austerely utilitarian mood in Britain with the claim that it pandered to the Indian need for awesome spectacles of authority. As the viceroy, Lord Lytton, put it in 1876, "the further East you go, the greater becomes the importance of a bit of bunting." The site where the beguiling streamers were draped was northwest of the Delhi cantonment, in a purpose-built Durbar city, a five-mile arc of tents accommodating 84,000 people. The Durbar itself was an absurd mixture of medals, manipulation, and Teutonic drum-rolls: at its climax, the viceroy arrived on horseback to the "March" from *Tännhauser*. Such performances changed the ways in which authority was thereafter displayed on the subcontinent, and the idea lives on in the Republic Day parades staged by the Indian state every January 16, the most vivid—and ironic—ceremonial vestige of the Raj. At the third such Durbar, in 1911, George V, with Napoleonic modesty, first crowned himself emperor and then announced the transfer of the Indian capital from Calcutta to a proposed site at Delhi.

The new capital at Delhi, built on a site south of Shah Jahan's 17th-century Delhi and completed in 1931, was the summation of British efforts to hoist the imperial pennant on Indian territory. The coastal governing cities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras had not been built by a single driving vision: their fitful styles—classical, Indo-Saracenic, Gothic—reflected wavering ideological and aesthetic intentions. New Delhi was the pristine thing. Delhi's attraction was both its rich historical associations as the seat of past imperial overlords and its provision of a virgin space on which the marshaled layout of the canvas Durbar city could be engraved permanently into the rocky Indian landscape, the chosen site where a late-imperial idea of power could be entombed. But New Delhi also had to illustrate a rational modernity.

The design of the new capital, plum of all imperial commissions, was entrusted to that architectural Hector, Edwin Lutyens, and the more retiring Herbert Baker. The city they built was spread out as a spacious kaleidoscope of broken hexagons and triangles, pivoting on large roundabouts. The central axis, Kingsway (today's Raj Path), took in the mammoth War Memorial Arch, sloped up to the focal point of the city, the acropolis on Raisina Hill, swept past the Jaipur Column, and came finally to rest at Lutyens's pièce de résistance, the Viceroy's House. The two blocks of the Secretariat, designed to be "the place of government in its highest expression," were left to Baker. The Council Chamber, now India's Parliament, an afterthought necessitated by the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919, which extended the Raj's reliance on indirect rule, was apologetically tucked away in a corner below the hill.

New Delhi was a sublime fantasy of imperial control over the boundaries and definition of urban space. Its hexagonal grids were demarcated into segments for "gazetted officers," European "clerks," and Indian "clerks," and distance from the central acropolis was gauged by rank—the quarters for Indian clerks were placed farthest from the center (this

The Viceroys' House in New Delhi

in a city of marooning distances and without public transport). Residential protocol was maintained by that essential document of colonial social decorum, the *Warrant of Precedence*.

New Delhi's calibration was not merely horizontal. Lutyens, obsessed with the city's physical elevation, was determined to define what he called a "line of climax." The houses of the junior Indians ("thin black") had to be physically lower and sited below the elevation of the houses of junior Europeans ("thin white"), and these in turn were placed below those of senior Europeans ("rich white"), which rose stirringly to the viceregal dome. This sensitivity to altitude explains something of Lutyens's rage during his famous "gradient quarrel" with Baker. So eager was he to acquire the actual summit of the hill for his construction that he surrendered the original—and lower—site chosen for the Viceroy's House. The result was a shock: the massive plinth of the building, set further back, according to Lutyens's instructions, had in fact become invisible from the point at the foot of the hill where subjects were enjoined to gaze expectantly up at it. All they saw was a disembodied dome.

City is perhaps too strong a term for what was built. New Delhi was besotted with being a capital rather than a city—it was a grand capitol complex with an attached residential campus. The modernity that New Delhi was designed to incarnate certainly impressed some. "The Viceroy's House is the first real vindication of modern architecture. . . . It is really modern. My admiration for Lutyens is unbounded," gushed the travel writer Robert Byron, when he visited the city in 1929. But it

was a modernity that erased every trace of its location. Lutyens gave New Delhi a single, aloof link, Minto Road, to what was now dismissed as the "old" city of Delhi, and he broke all connection with Delhi's river, the Jumna. "Those who claimed to be modern in Delhi," Nirad Chaudhuri noted, "had nothing to do with the river." The superb ruins, tombs, and monuments of Delhi—the Purana Quila, Humayun's tomb (doubtless the most perfect Mughal dome after the Taj Mahal), the more florid mausoleum of Safdarjung—all were pinioned by Lutyens's axial layout and turned into follies on the imperial estate.

Colonialism, changing the status of the city in India as it did, created new instruments of rule that altered India's urban textures. Greater and more regular contact between elites in the cities, not to mention administrative techniques such as a decennial census (introduced in a limited form in 1871), helped to unify the country: individuals and groups living in far corners of the country could now conceive of themselves as members of a single, large community.

This made it possible for the first time to imagine a common nation of Indians. But the enumeration and classification of individuals into categories of caste and religion, and the introduction by the Raj of electorates divided along communal lines, also solidified exclusionary identities. Unlike in Europe, where city air was expected to loosen the stifling social bonds of traditional community and to create a society of free individuals, in India the cities organized by the Raj's policies reinforced contrary tendencies. Religious and caste groups, paradoxically, began to emerge as distinct blocs and to conflict with one another in the city itself.

The colonial imagination also rearranged urban interior spaces, driven by a desire to create a new public arena where behavior could be regulated by administered rules. The city henceforth had its "Instructions for Use," which were successfully communicated to—and championed by—the Indian elites and middle classes, in the face of wider Indian indifference. Men such as Nirad Chaudhuri fully understood that space within the modern colonial city was arranged as carefully as the inside of a bungalow or an English garden. But to his daily despair in Delhi, his fellow Indians failed abysmally in their comprehension:

> One ineradicable habit all Indians have is to take a shortcut to their destination whatever the risk to themselves or others. One striking illustration of this habit was provided for me. There was a bus stop just outride Mori Gate, and not more than twenty yards from it was a public convenience. But the passengers never went so far. They urinated on a tree nearby, and the poor tree died at the end of six months. In northern India men are never able to resist a wall or a post.

* * * * *

Since the colonial city was both emphatically the site of India's subjection, the place where it was most regularly harassed by its rulers, and also an object of Indian craving, housing the promises of modernity, Indian nationalist attitudes toward it were ineradicably ambivalent. Nationalism was the politics of an urban educated elite that

presumed itself entitled to negotiate with the British and speak on behalf of the country's villages. For the early nationalist generations, independence meant being free to emulate colonial city life; it promised the opportunity to take up addresses in the residential sanctuary of the civil lines, to create a world where public trees would flourish unabused.

Beginning in the 1920s, Gandhi worked ceaselessly to disturb this desire to emulate. He reversed priorities and embraced the very values the colonial imagination rejected. Drawing upon romantic Western beliefs about the Indian village and the virtues of craft production, Gandhi promoted the idea of the village as a counter to the colonial city. He composed his own pastorale, and used it both to disrupt the order and regularities of the colonial city and to ridicule the hollow mimicry of the Indian elites and middle classes. He brought the nationalist idea from the city to the villages, and through the long foot marches he took across the countryside, his *padyatras*, he constructed a new topography of India, defined not by the railway tracks that linked cities but by routes that connected villages.

But Gandhi himself acted both in the city and in the villages. Indeed, until his retreat to the ashram at Sewagram in the mid-1930s, his regular scene of action was the city. His audience was found here, and it was his incomparable ability to mobilize the urban classes that explained his initial successes. He recognized the extent to which the British Raj was a creature of its cities, and knew how little they meant to the lives of most Indians. If the cities could be paralyzed through nonviolent Satyagraha ("truth-force"), the Raj itself would be broken.

Gandhi's politics of the city carefully spliced together two strands. He conducted a high politics of parleying with the British, and, equally, he devised an everyday, colloquial politics that brilliantly captured the colonial city's alien and commanding spaces for nationalist purposes, that defied and mocked colonial rules of public behavior. Gandhi did this with a mixed armory. He invented, for example, a sartorial ensemble—the dhoti, shawl, cap, and staff—that conjured up the village and that he wore in the public territories of the Raj. When Gandhi, dressed in this way, strode past the liveried Rajput guards and into the sparkling Viceroy's House in 1931 (just completed to Lutyens's designs) to meet Lord Irwin, he punctured the starched sanctity of British imperial pomp. Gandhi's decision to live in ashrams—communal quarters, situated often on the margins of cities—and to renounce the private chambers of city life continued this confutation of colonial priorities. Most important, he invented ways in which Indians could occupy and act in the public spaces of the Raj. After Gandhi, nationalist politics was no longer confined to debating chambers, nor did it skulk in the clandestine rooms of terrorism; it poured out onto the streets and *maidans*, or open spaces, in visible defiance of colonial rules, in crowds that literally allowed people to see themselves as a collective body. Before the mass presence of the moving image,

Evening prayer: a scene from Old Delhi

Gandhi pioneered a potent theatrical use of processional marches and public meetings.

India's colonial cities had few places where crowds could assemble. There were wide streets, *maidans*, parks, monuments, racecourses, and sports grounds, but the public square, that essential no man's land of popular gathering and protest in Western cities, had been avoided in the architectural design of colonial cities. Gandhi's mass public meetings became defiant nationalist inversions of the rules and gentilities of the colonial public meeting—they were announced by impertinent flyers urging Indians to attend the next "Public Meeting and Bonfire of Foreign Clothes." Mulk Raj Anand's novel of the mid-1930s, *Untouchable*, evokes the excitement of this nationalist desecration of the colonial city in its tumultuous closing scene: the cricket oval, emblem of imperial civilization, becomes a meeting place for a vast crowd, a microcosmic India: "Men, women and children of all races, colours, castes and creeds, were running towards the oval . . . to meet the Mahatma, to pay homage to Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi."

It was obvious to Gandhi that colonialism had to be defeated in its modern fortress, the city, but the point of this victory was not simply to move into the citadels of the departed British. Freedom for Indians meant the freedom to reject the city and to recoup India's enfeebled civilizational powers in the sanctuary of its villages. But, in contrast to the Gandhian insistence that "the blood of the villages is the cement by which the edifice of the cities is built," other nationalists saw different meanings in the simple opposition between village and city. For

instance, B. R. Ambedkar, leader of the untouchables, mocked what in his view was the oppressive Gandhian fantasy of a free India based on the camaraderie of the ancient village: "The love of the intellectual Indians for the village community is of course infinite if not pathetic. . . . What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness, and communalism?"

Nehru, though marginally less scathing about the village, was equally unambiguous in his commitment to the city. This attachment was not based on a desire to ape the colonial conception: he wrote bitterly of the division of the Indian city between the neglected "densely crowded city proper" and the placid civil lines inhabited by the English and upper-middle-class Indians, on which no expense was spared because "nearly all the Big Noises and Little Noises live in the Civil Lines." And he spoke freely of his dislike for the "official-ridden city of New Delhi" and its spiritless, colossal display of colonial modernity: "the Governmental structures of Delhi are not all very beautiful to look at, although some of them are obviously meant to impress." Nor did Nehru intend, in choosing the city, a rejection of India's past. He was drawn, aesthetically and sentimentally, to the old, to Old Delhi rather than New Delhi: "There is the spirit and the genius of an ancient city, where almost every stone tells you a story, where history is embedded even in the dirty lanes. . . . it has a definite and positive atmosphere which you can feel in your bones." Nehru's appreciation of the city came from his understanding of modernity, and from a distinction he drew between inauthentic modernity, represented by the colonial city, and a genuine, productive, and universal modernity, which India should not reject. The city was the indispensable hub of a modernizing process that would spread beyond its enclaves and through the whole society.

By the time the British were packing their trunks to leave India, the emulative will of the Indian middle classes had, despite Gandhi's strictures, made the colonial centers very passable editions of modern cities. The Indian elites had carved out their own spaces of recreation and leisure—parks, cricket grounds, clubs—the streets were reasonably clean, coffee houses and restaurants served English menus. The lower and poorer orders were ghostly presences—they came in at dawn, did their jobs, and melted away into the obscurity of their shacks beyond the middle-class colonies. "Illegal" hawkers and vendors were regularly and successfully cleared from the streets by officers of municipalities that were often already in the hands of nationalist politicians—a result of the Raj's economizing preference for indirect rule.

The partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 introduced the first serious strains into this urban world. It imported a new threat into the public spaces of the modern city. In the past, religious conflict had been restricted to the "old" parts of the city; now it stalked through every street. And it brought into the cities, with unparalleled speed, large numbers of uprooted people. In a society where there was very little spatial mobility (in 1931 less than four percent of Indians lived outside the

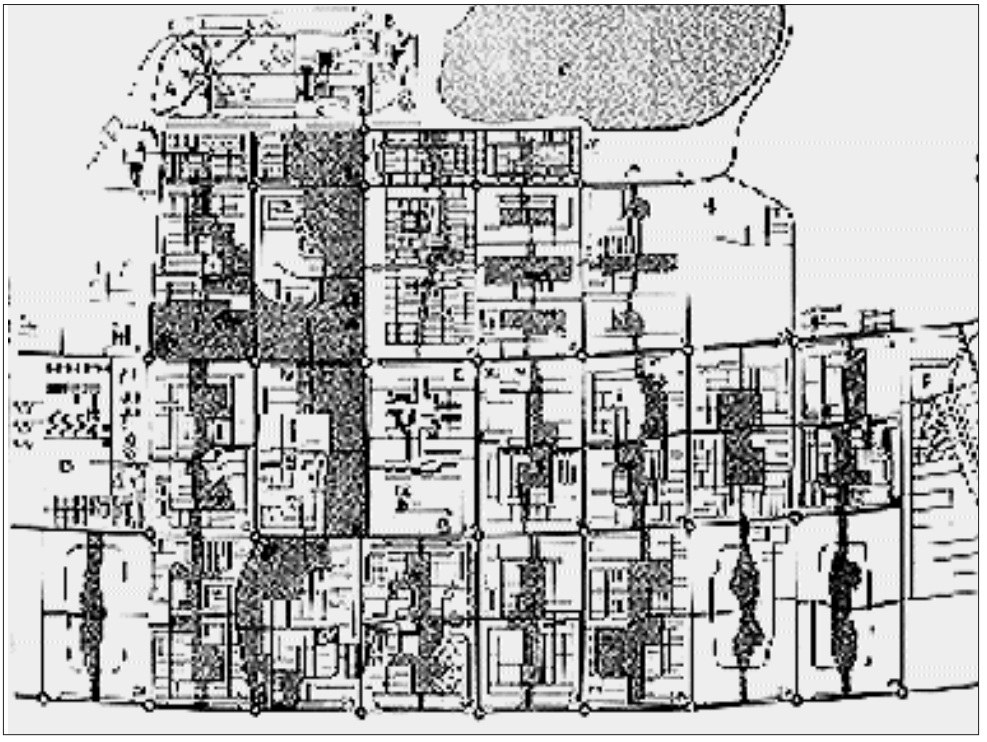
state or province of their birth), Partition unleashed the largest transfer of population in human history. Within a very few months, around 15 million people crossed the new borders (in 1951, 7.3 million refugees were registered in India, and in 1952 the Pakistan census counted 7.2 millions *muhajirs*, or refugees), and more than half of the refugees from Pakistan to India settled in urban areas. Between 1941 and 1951 the population of India's cities, swollen also by the war and the effects of famine, grew by over 40 percent. Delhi became a Punjabi city; Calcutta had to absorb hundreds of thousands of refugees from East Bengal; Bombay's Muslim elite was decimated.

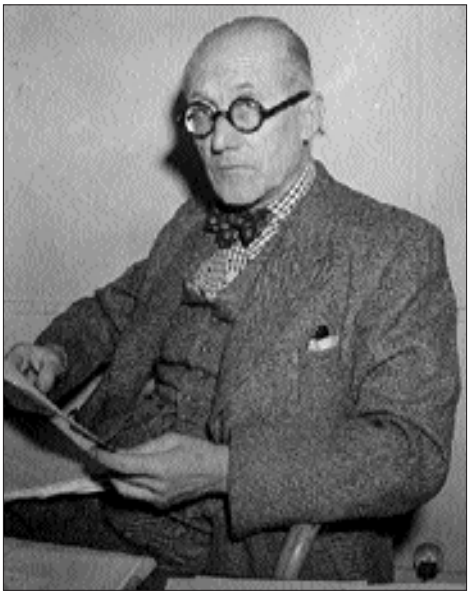
The problems of resettlement, economic provision, and public order posed severe difficulties for both the state and the cities. Refugees were housed in temporary encampments that became permanent, ramshackle colonies. The poorest haplessly took up whatever empty space they could find along roads or railways lines, on vacant land, or in parks. One definitive trait of the future history of India's cities was established: a steady, irresistible flow of political and economic refugees, settling wherever they could, necessarily oblivious to the niceties of the intentions behind pavements, parks, or traffic roundabouts.

This was the immediate background to the building of Chandigarh, the new capital of the province of Punjab built after the old capital, Lahore, was awarded to Pakistan. Nehru saw the construction of Chandigarh, largely completed by the end of the 1950s, as a way to renew the Indian conception of the city and to display an Indian modernity distinct from and free of the colonial version. Like his British predecessors, he was attracted by the possibility of starting again, of constructing on an empty field a generous architectural proposition of the new India. The result was a monumental city, a glorious stage set where tableaux of state might be enacted but lacking everyday politics. Chandigarh was a city of politicians, bureaucrats, and administrators. Built after the waves of post-Partition migration, it was spared inundation by the poorest and most abject—though today it has its slums, and the city's real politics occurs in them and the populous slum villages that surround the city proper.

As designed, Chandigarh lacked any of the productive capacities of modernity. Le Corbusier, its architect, was insistent that it must be solely a seat of government, not of industry and manufacture: "One must not mix the two," he stipulated in his eccentric and imperious manual, *For the Establishment of an Immediate Statute of the Land*.

If New Delhi belongs in an imperial portfolio of Durbars and imperial progresses, Chandigarh belongs in a nationalist album, with the Constitution and the five-year plans. Although a provincial capital, Chandigarh from its inception had the status of a national project. Nehru took a personal interest in it, and it was generously funded by the national government. The site was desolate but spectacular: 400 kilometers north of New Delhi, on a plain that sloped slowly, beneath wide blue skies, toward the Himalayan foothills. "The site chosen," Nehru explained, "is free from existing encumbrances of old towns," which would make the new city "symbolic of the freedom of India, unfettered by traditions of the





The Swiss-born architect Le Corbusier around the time he received his commission to design the city of Chandigarh, characterized by its rigid geometrical plan (see detail above) and its austere modernist architecture (opposite page)

past . . . an expression of the nation's faith in the future." But Chandigarh was also, and ultimately most decisively, the fantasy of its architect.

Twice in the 20th century, India has been visited by architectural megalomaniacs: Le Corbusier began work on Chandigarh barely 20 years after imperial New Delhi was completed to Lutyens's plans. When two Indian civil servants arrived at his Paris apartment in the winter of 1950 and invited him to design the proposed city, he was privately ecstatic. "It is," he noted in his diary, "the hour that I have been waiting for—India, that humane and profound civilization," which hadn't "yet created an architecture for modern civilization," had now turned to him.

In his design, Le Corbusier remained blithely unencumbered by any understanding of the world he was building for. His role was that of the prophetic artist, and he played it to perfection. The initial plan was outlined after a bare glimpse of the site, a few days after his arrival in India

and with Lutyens's redstone megaliths lodged in his mind. (He had come via New Delhi.) Maxwell Fry, a collaborator on the project, remembered the moment: Le Corbusier held the crayon in his hand and was in his element. "Voilà la gare," he said, "et voici la rue commerciale," and he drew the first road on the new plan of Chandigarh. "Voici la tête," he went on, "et voilà l'estomac, le cité-centre."

Devoted to authority, Le Corbusier saw himself as a modern-day Colbert, and in Nehru he believed he had found his very own Sun King. Whenever he stumbled across some local obstacle to his ideas, the regular refrain in Le Corbusier's notebooks was a simple injunction: "Write to Nehru." Engaged in what he saw as a pharaonic project (working in India seemed to teach him "the advantages of slavery in high and noble works of architecture"), he preened himself for the role: "Be implacable, whole, haughty, in charge. Make demands."

Le Corbusier was, to be sure, an odd choice as democratic India's first architect. But the sheer audacity of his conception, and of Nehru's com-

mitment to it, is revealing. The design of Chandigarh expressed one aspect of Nehru's idea of a modern India: the sense that it must free itself of both the contradictory modernity of the Raj and nostalgia for its indigenous past. The rationalist, modernist strain in Nehru's thinking here obliterated the attachment to the heritage of an Indianness rooted in the past. Chandigarh boldly divested itself of history, rejecting both colonial imagery and nationalist sentimentalism or ornament. The literal, utilitarian names of its axial avenues (Madhya Marg, Uttar Marg—Central Avenue, North Avenue) recount no nationalist history (no ubiquitous Mahatma Gandhi Road here). It has no nationalist monuments, because Le Corbusier specifically banned them. The city's radical meaning lay in its cultural unfamiliarity, its proposal of the new. It refused to concede anything to its location, and acted as a kind of shock to India's built environment. Moreover, in celebrating a wholly alien form, style, and material, it aspired to a neutrality equally resistant to

the claims of any and all cultural or religious groups.

Chandigarh cheerfully ignored a topic that had troubled both nationalists and some of the British: the idea of an Indian "national style," endlessly debated in the early decades of the 20th century by men such as E. B. Havell, Ananda Coomaraswamy, and the Tagores, Rabindranath and his cousin Abanindranath. Chandigarh's evasion of historical tradition generated its own stories, which struggled to give the place cultural resonance. Hence the forced claims of architects and architectural historians that its design had originated in the figure of the primeval man (*purush*), or was based on the principles of the Vastushastra, the ancient Indian science of architectural construction; or that its buildings refer to the Dewan-e-Khas at Fatehpur Sikri, or to Hindu temple complexes. These attempts to make it recognizable, to locate it in India, all miss the point. Chandigarh's deliberate renunciation of a national style was itself a gesture of acknowledgment that political authority in India now had to face outward too, that its sovereignty had to be internationally recognizable: its purpose was to place India in the world.

Yet if Chandigarh echoed anything on the Indian landscape, it was New Delhi. It reproduced the same fetishism of the capitol. The capitol complex, conceived of as the "head" of the city, was placed at the highest, northern end of an irritatingly even plain, striving like Lutyens's acropolis for maximum elevation. For Le Corbusier, the capitol had to be defended from the rest of the city: "Hide all construction of the city," he instructed. He referred to the buildings to the south, where the city stretched, as "l'ennemi," to be screened off by bunkerlike mounds. Today, these serve literally as military fortifications, patrolled by armed guards who defend the embattled symbols of the state in Punjab. The capitol was intended to be a composite of four related buildings, arrayed around a central square: Secretariat, Legislative Assembly, High Court, and the Governor's Palace. The latter was Le Corbusier's response to Lutyens's Viceroy's House, and although it was more restrained, Nehru thought it too delusively grand for a mere provincial officer of a democratic state, and it was never built. The immense square plaza, intended as a public space, survives today as a desolate concrete pavement where no one passes, let alone congregates.

Chandigarh's disposition of residential space also mimicked New Delhi's pomposity. The residential area was divided into 30 neighborhood blocks, or "sectors," all organized in a repeating pattern. The sectors were graded by the strict ranks of administrative hierarchy and were also internally differentiated: houses were identified by plot number, and the lower the number, the larger the plot. Every Chandigarh address thus encoded fairly precise information about its owner's standing in the bureaucratic and economic hierarchy.

Chandigarh never achieved the cosmopolitanism it craved. Instead of ruling, enlightening, and modernizing its society, this city of the future became a museum piece in need of protection from its own violently quarrelling citizens and the ravages of the climate. Its vacant, eerily ordered center was ignored by the teeming and disorganized expansion of the industrial townships of Panchkula and SAS Nagar (which fall within the boundaries of the

city), whose economic dynamism helped to make it one of India's fastest growing urban regions during the 1960s and '70s. In that sense, it could claim a certain success. But Chandigarh failed to produce a society of secular individuals or a modernist politics. Drawn into the vortex of Punjab's politics, it was turned into a cipher in a battle of communal identities.

* * * * *

It hits you on the head, and makes you think. You may squirm at the impact but it has made you think and imbibe new ideas, and the one thing which India requires is being hit on the head so that it may think. . . . Therefore Chandigarh is of enormous importance."

So Nehru explained Le Corbusier's modernist hammer to his compatriots, trying also to reassure himself. Chandigarh spawned additional provincial "concept" capitals in the1960s and '70s: Otto Koenigsberger's Bhubaneshwar, Bhopal, and Gandhinagar—the latter the one that most aspired to Chandigarh's image, a cruel concrete homage to Gandhi, which displaced Ahmedabad as the capital of the western state of Gujarat. These new cities were left to the mercies of chief town planners and their engineers at the local branches of the Public Works Department, or PWD, as it came to be universally known in India.

Nehru also animated the construction of industrial cities, steel towns such as Bhilai ("a city designed by a pencil stub and a six-inch plastic ruler. It was all parallel lines,"' recalled one writer who grew up there), Rourkela, and Durgapur, pure, utilitarian grids laid out in bleak locations, industrial cantonments that managed to rise to a certain novel provincial cosmopolitanism. They brought together engineers, doctors, and technicians from all over India, aching with dietary frustrations, and each invariably had a colony of Soviet, German, or British experts, sweatily cursing their exile.

But Nehru was no Atatürk of modernism. If one impulse in Nehru's idea of the city aspired to break abruptly with the past, another was to treasure historical continuity, the layering of cultures, and the mixture and complexity that this layering nurtured. No colonial Indian city exemplified this mixture with finer sophistication than Bombay. It was also, unlike so many other colonial centers, a city of real productive and commercial wealth, historically the powerhouse of Indian economic modernization.

Bombay in the years after 1947 was an exception within India as a whole, an island unto itself. It was free from the heavy lumber of government bureaucracy, untroubled by the economic ideas radiating from New Delhi, devoted to amassing money and to burning it up in extravagant neon signs. It had long been much more than a mere colonial entrepôt and, in contrast to Calcutta, boasted a class of native industrial capitalists. Partition shook Bombay's settled cosmopolitanism. The departure to Pakistan of men such as Mohammed Ali Jinnah weakened the Muslim presence; it marked the beginning of the decline of the Parsee community—champions of Indian public life—and it brought tens of thousands of refugees into the city. But Bombay continued to be

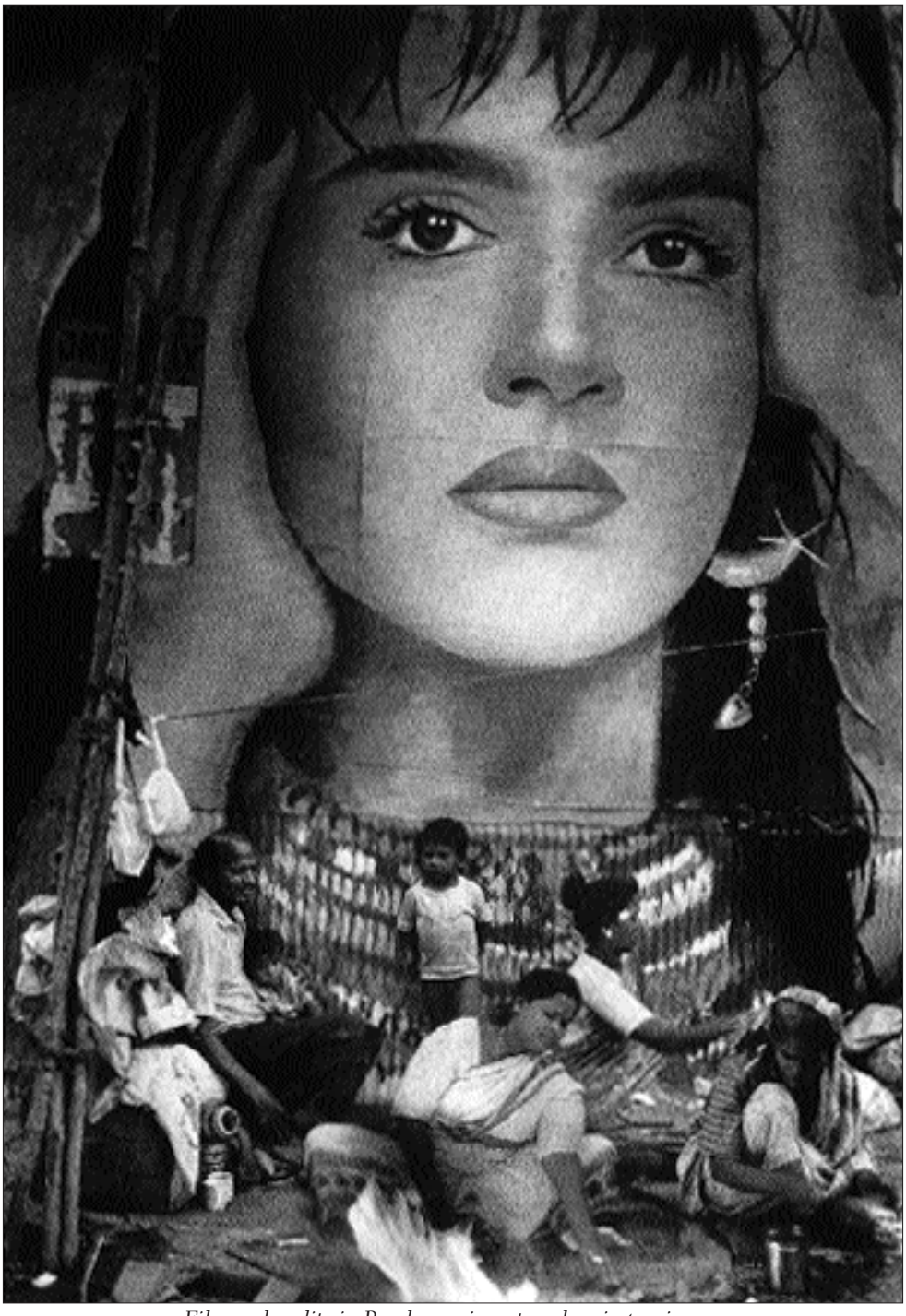
India's commercial and cultural capital, and soon became permanently lodged in the popular imagination as a totem of modern India itself.

What put it there was cinema. Most Indians had some visual image of Bombay: its cavernous tropical-Gothic railway station, Victoria Terminus; the seductions and brutalities of its criminal underworld; its pavements; its skyscrapers; the unforgettable sweep of the Necklace; Marine Drive. In the Hindi cinema of the 1950s, Bombay stood for a certain idea of India. A generation of actors such as Raj Kapoor and Guru Dutt, and radical scriptwriters such as K. A. Abbas, staged and sang a nationalist vision of India that was recognizably Nehru's own. In films such as *Awaara*, *Shri 420*, and *CID*, the city was portrayed as at once a place of bewilderment and exploitation, and an enticing and necessary destination brimming with opportunities. They conveyed its brashness and its impersonality, but also its emancipatory anonymity and the kindness of strangers it fostered. The stories were usually told through the eyes and sensibility of a Chaplinesque "common man," a vagabond or tramp happily endowed with an educated lower-middle-class sensibility, who struggles against the authority of tradition and the corruption of wealth, picking his way through Bombay's traps and bewitchments. Such films dramatized in a diffuse but evocative way a democratic, outward-looking, and secular nationalist sentiment, and affirmed the city as the most likely place to cultivate it.

But Bombay's own history since the 1950s has belied this picture—for this most modern, prosperous, and cosmopolitan of India's cities developed a different politics, an inflammatory parochialism in conflict with the nationalist ideal. Its political itinerary has traced the contradictions in India's economic development—which has delivered fabulous wealth to a very few, and has beggared most. Bombay's politics has been woven out of such contradictions, in a society enlivened by democratic sentiment.

Bombay's wealth flowed both from commerce and from its being the earliest industrial center in India. Its capitalists in the decades before 1947 tried to shape the choices of Congress Party nationalism and after 1947 maintained close—if, during the era of planning, somewhat tense and ambivalent—relations with the state. With the decline of planning and its conversion in Indira Gandhi's hands into an instrument of selective allocation and pacification based on economic controls and licenses, industrialists and politicians drew even closer together, their relationship based on buying and selling industrial licenses. Bombay's industrialists (and film stars) became an essential source of political funds for governments and parties in New Delhi, and from the 1970s contacts between them and New Delhi's political jobbers flourished.

Bombay's reputation as a city of industrial free enterprise and competition is shot through with irony. In fact, most of the industrial wealth amassed there in recent decades has benefited from monopoly licenses purchased in return for electoral finance and housekeeping money for the high politics of New Delhi, while the city's industry itself has become increasingly inefficient, a perverse monopoly capitalism sheltered from international and domestic competition. The old heart of Bombay's organized industry, textiles, declined steeply in the late 1970s,



Film and reality in Bombay: migrant workers improvise a home under the poster of an Indian movie star.

and the balance of employment shifted toward the uncertainties of the service economy, to the formal world of finance and banking, and to informal jobs in the workshops and homes of the city's slums.

Bombay's different types of wealth have colonized different parts of the city. The enclaves of the rich—the old commercial and industrial money set amidst the gardens of Malabar Hill, the opulence of the film world emblazoned on Pali Hill, and the newer profession-

al wealth stacked up in the ugly towers of Cuffe Parade—where all the amenities are concentrated, are set apart from the slums. But Bombay's congestion makes it impossible for the rich to flee the poor, and the contrasts of lifestyle are vividly adjacent (the population density in the city, at around 17,000 per square kilometer, is about 14 times greater than London's), though the congestion is unequally distributed. Far away from the spacious lawns and tea ceremonies of the Willingdon Club and the Bombay Gymkhana—secured on 99-year leases at one rupee a year—more than half of Bombay's population, between five and six million people, lives in slums squeezed into about eight percent of the land area. The residents of the slums are workers and the members of the educated lower-middle class, not the very poorest, who exist as they can on the pavement, in segments of sewage pipes, under flyovers—perhaps some 700,000 of them. The slums have received little from the Indian state in the way of even basic facilities, and budget allocations for urban development have always been minute.

The result is a city that blisters with the aspirations, disappointments, and anger of the poor and the lower-middle class. Condemned to desperate conditions, they have had to put up with governments and politicians who chatter in the language of equality while acting and conniving in quite opposite ways. In Nehru's picture of Indian politics, democracy would in time enable the disadvantaged to pursue their own interests. Social conflict would center upon a struggle between rich and poor, as the poor came to organize for themselves and press for better terms. Yet this anticipated democratic struggle against poverty and inequality has no more emerged in India's modern cities than in its villages. The poor are now acting in politics as never before. They have understood that elections can be used to chastise and deliver small advantages: an electricity connection, a water tap, an access road. But even in the cities, where traditional bonds of community have loosened, a society of individuals banding together to pursue their several purposes through interest-based associations—the Edenic image of the liberal West—has not emerged. Urban economic inequalities and social diversities have given rise to politically devised communities of religion and caste. These proudly particularistic groups rarely ask the state to accord universal rights and provisions so as to bring about better treatment for all; instead, they insist on privileges and protections to be given exclusively to their own community, while others are neglected.

The frustrations of the poorer groups have not produced solidarities of class. The wide range of technologies deployed in India's efforts to industrialize, the local economies of labor and reward, and the ties of neighborhood and residence in a city such as Bombay—all have fragmented and differentiated the working poor and made it very difficult for them to sustain class associations. Nor have strong class ties evolved through consumption patterns. At the upper end of the social scale, a pan-Indian urban elite is able to glide sveltly through any hotel lobby in the land, but the consumption habits of the urban poor do not allow for a nationwide pattern to emerge. People living in a *chawl*, or slum, might club together to buy a

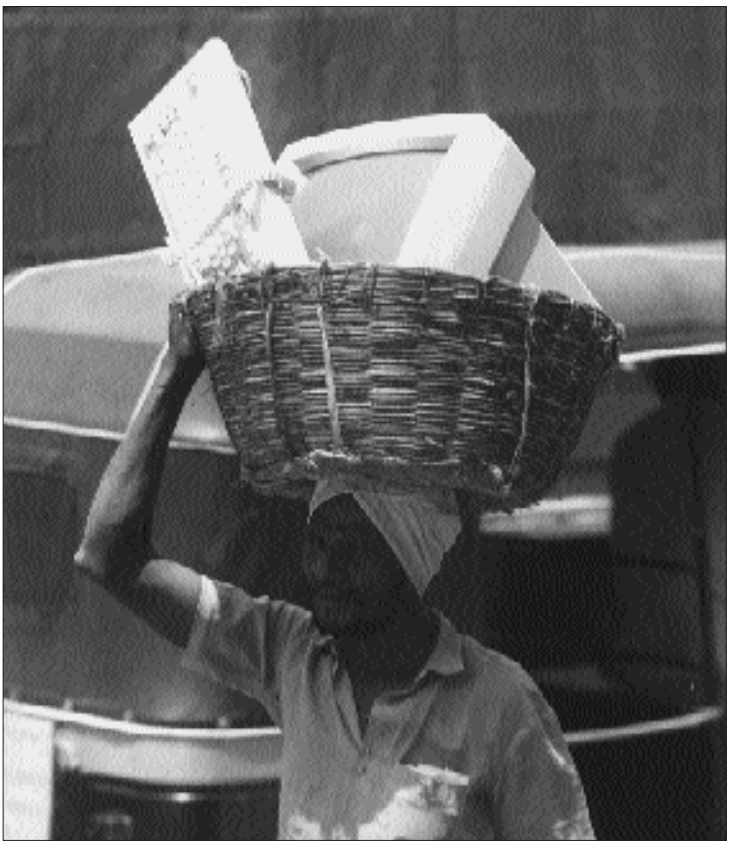
television and install a satellite or cable television connection. But this is hardly a sign of secure affluence, contrary to the view from Malabar Hill or Cuffe Parade ("See how well these servants are doing these days!"). All it represents is the assertion of an equal right to consume images.

Bombay has had its periods of active trade-union and labor politics, but the possibilities of interest-based solidarities have been further vitiated by the populist turn in democratic politics engineered by the dominant party, Congress. Whenever hints of such organization arose—as occurred, for example, in the late 1960s, when communist influence increased in the labor unions and city politics—local Congress politicians swiftly snuffed them out. Provincial Congress members gave the party an iron grip over the politics of Bombay and Maharashtra by systematically invoking caste and Maratha identity—based on the rural connections of workers—to mobilize the poor and lower-middle classes along vertical links of clientage, which secured electoral victories in the high politics of provincial assemblies and national parliaments. But this high politics, limited for most people to the sporadic experience of elections, was indifferent to the daily concerns of poorer groups. They were increasingly restive, undeferential, and unwilling to remain excluded from the politics of the capital city and from some share in the wealth so ostentatiously displayed around them.

The rise in Bombay of the Shiv Sena movement should therefore hardly occasion surprise: it expresses a deep potential within modern Indian politics and employs all its existing idioms. The Shiv Sena, the "army of Shivaji," took its name from a 17th-century Maratha warlord who fought successfully against the Mughals. It was founded in the mid-1960s as an anti-immigrant party dedicated to protecting employment and educational opportunities for Bombay's Marathi-speakers—about 40 percent of the population, generally in lower-level jobs. It has learned from the nationalism of high-caste Hindus, from the populism of Congress, from communist and Hindu extremist organizational methods, from the cinema and popular press, and above all from the streets.

It too wishes to make the city afresh, and it has internalized the nationalist faith in the magic of names so deeply that it has not only retitled Bombay's parks and streets but has renamed the city itself, as Mumbai. The Shiv Sena's initial successes derived from an ability to develop a quotidian politics with local goals, the achievement of which gave its supporters a direct sense of efficacy, but it also mastered the skills of high electoral politics. Its early targets were Tamils from the south—"all the lungiwallas" who, it asserted, were "criminals, gamblers, illicit liquor dealers, pimps, goondas, and Communists." Its real animus, though, was neither moral nor cultural but, rather, a resentful belief that southern migrants to Bombay, privileged by their command of the English language, had monopolized the better-paid clerical and lower-management jobs.

But the objects of Shiv Sena's enmity have proved changeable. To build electoral majorities from the poor and the lower-middle classes, it gravitated toward a basic line of religious difference, and in the 1980s turned against Bombay's Muslims, who account



In Bangalore, part of India's new Silicon Valley, a laborer carries a new computer to a customer across town.

for 15 per cent of the city's population. It translated into local urban political terms the polemics that were entering the national arena, and it climbed on the back of Hindu nationalist politics by striking an alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1984. This parasitic relation to national politics and the central state is characteristic of the regional imagination Shiv Sena represents: it does not threaten the national state but depends upon it.

The regular energies of the Shiv Sena, however, went into the routines of mundane politics, and it made little pretense of connecting to the distant narcissism of New Delhi. It exploited the democratic sentiment released by Indira Gandhi's electoral strategies, broke open the corrupt corridors of local politics, and encouraged entry by the lower-middle class and the poor. During an era when the organizational structure of the Congress Party was collapsing, the Shiv Sena drew its strength from an extensive network of "informal" politics, typical of cities such as Bombay. It established *shakhas*, or local branches, youth clubs, and *mitra mandals*, or "friendship associations," male fraternities supposedly inspired by the idea of individuals associating voluntarily on the basis of shared interests. These associations were captured by the Shiv Sena and used to propagate an anti-individualist, communitarian language, and a bowdlerized Marathi culture among

the young. Celebrating youth and action, the party is famed for processions led by posses of young men with attitude on motorcycles.

The Shiv Sena has built its reputation on its provision of real cultural, medical, and educational services to Bombay's poor and lower-middle classes. But it should not be confused with the Salvation Army. Its services and rewards are distributed with fierce selectivity and presume the permanent exclusion of segments of the city's residents. Determined to win support by polarizing Bombay's citizens into majority and minority communities, the Shiv Sena has perfected techniques of brutal violence: throughout the 1980s it instigated riots on the outskirts of Bombay and in other Maharashtrian cities, always targeted precisely at Muslims and their property. And in December 1992 and January 1993, it carefully orchestrated riots directly after, and related to, the destruction of the Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodhya by Hindu militants aspiring to construct a Ram temple in its place. During the January riots, for instance, Shiv Sena members and activists circulated through Bombay —in another bitter irony of Indian democracy—with electoral registers that enabled them to identify Muslim households to attack, a pogrom that imitated the actions of Congress Party members in New Delhi during the anti-Sikh violence of 1984. As in Delhi in 1984 so in Bombay in 1993; retraction of police protection for the victims revealed the extent to which this arm of the Indian state had been communalized.

After independence, Bombay had embodied most richly India's nationalist expectations of the city. Bombay, it was hoped, would fulfill the potentials immanent in—but also distorted by—the colonial city. Freedom would bring national economic development, a democratic politics of interests, an egalitarian urban form, and a cosmopolitan culture of individuals. "In Bombay all Indias met and merged. In Bombay, too, all-India met what-was-not-India . . . what was beautiful in Bombay was that it belonged to nobody and to all"—that old nationalist dream of Bombay, and the sense of its end, suffuses Salman Rushdie's lament for the city in his novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995). That vision has been surpassed by the history that the nationalist ideal itself set in motion, but the challenge to it is not a simple contrary one that rejects the city in favor of some other ideal such as the village.

The political imagination of a movement such as the Shiv Sena shares with the nationalist movement the ambition to have a modern, rational, clean, and functional city. But Shiv Sena differs entirely in its idea of the India in which such a city can exist. Its provincial, partial idea of the nation does not envisage a fragmentation or disruption of India's political unity, it does not demand substantially greater autonomy from the center, and it is committed to the idea of a strong state. Nor does it challenge India's democratic nature. On the contrary, it thrives on the spread of democratic sentiment throughout Indian society. The difference lies in its conception of the cultural substance and units that constitute India. The Shiv Sena visualizes India not as a land of cosmopolitan miscegenation but as a hierarchical grid that contains

internally homogeneous communities, each insulated from the others. This idea seeks to efface Bombay's cosmopolitanism, to annex its modernity and distribute the benefits of it to one, closed community.

* * * * *

By the 1990s, the Indian city had entered a new, postnationalist stage. The established cities had deviated from what had been anticipated of them. Their economic inequalities and their political opportunities had sharpened contradictions and had produced more partial, if more intensely held, conceptions of what a political community was. The old contrasts between the city and the village, or the colonial city and the nationalist city, had ceased to hold. The city in India was being reinvented once again, in contrasting models. An aggressive small-town India was surging across parts of the country, impelled by rural economic surpluses. This new urban type, in limbo between city and village, proudly proclaimed its vernacular cultural and political tastes. Simultaneously, the entry into India of new forms of economic capital, owned by transnational corporations, was driving forward a new professional upper class, mobile, ambitious, and in search—as its colonial and nationalist predecessors had been—of unsullied ground on which to set its imprint.

Since the 1960s, parts of rural India had experienced considerable economic development and had accumulated surpluses. The sources for this new affluence varied: the "Green Revolution" in agricultural productivity in the north, a "White Revolution" in dairy farming in the western regions, and in the south remittances from emigrants working in the Persian Gulf states. Money was invested in small industries and in properties in provincial cities and small towns. In the north, some of the fastest growing areas in the 1980s and '90s were provincial cities such as Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Ludhiana, Meerut, Muzzafarnagar—built-up sprawls stretching along the national highways deep into the countryside, blurring distinctions between village and city.

India has more than 200 cities with populations of more than 100,000, and these are the homelands of India's "new middle classes," who no longer gaze enviously at the distant metropolitan cities, whose horizons are not shaped by ideas of Bombay or New Delhi—cities that, if anything, they resent and disparage. This is the India of ZEE TV and cable television, more rawly and frankly consumerist than the nationalized Doordarshan, which transmit an arresting linguistic hybrid of Hindi and English. Most big-city opportunities for consumption are available in these new towns: Maruti car sales rooms, hotels and fast-food restaurants, shops selling Reeboks and Proline, Titan watches, and Videocon electronics.

But surfaced roads, pavements, streetlights, parks—all those essential tokens of modernity that excited the colonial and nationalist imaginations—are barely to be seen here. The streets are nameless, absolving those who pass along them of even a token historical memory. The conceptual sense of a "city" is weak. There are few civic amenities, no urban form, no effective police authorities. And these localities' scale—smaller

Tinsel chariots were part of L. K. Advani's efforts to whip up popular support for his Hindu nationalist party.

than the metropolis, with its potential to generate anonymity and impersonal relations between strangers—has fostered new and distinct kinds of social relations, neither modern nor traditional. Ties of kin and caste remain strong but operate on a more expansive terrain than in the village, and have acquired a thinner, more instrumental form.

The sensibilities of these provincial towns have begun to impose themselves upon India's national politics. These towns are electorally important, and they have become sites of sharp contests as parties try to establish majorities. The absence of any neutral arm of the state to police and to provide protection, especially in regions such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, has left this essential responsibility to the discretion of politicians and men who command armed gangs, which gives these towns a culture of violence. The conflicts have taken one of two forms. On the one hand, upwardly mobile intermediate castes, successful middle peasants, and "bullock capitalists" who maintain properties in and strong connections with their villages, have made these cities the heartlands of a vigorous caste politics, encouraged by the partial implementation of the Mandal Commission's proposals on reservations. On the other hand, these cities have also become recruiting grounds for the BJP's Hindu nationalists. The BJP's brand of televisual religion is attuned to the desires of these cities' inhabitants, and the mobilization of their votes has become an essential element in the party's strategy.

L. K. Advani's *Rathyatra* of 1990, for example, a chariot procession that covered more than 10,000 kilometers, took in dozens of such cities. As the *rath*, a tinsel chariot erected on a Nissan utility vehicle, rolled across the plains from town to town—sparking violence and riots wherever it went—signs were put up declaring that these towns had been "captured" and were now part of a "Hindu state." In a reversal of the Gandhian idea of a *padyatra* linking the villages, Advani's *Rathyatra*

hoped to spread a sense of Hindu unity across the country by connecting the new towns.

In contrast to the garbled modernity of these northern towns, a quite different trend is represented by the city of Bangalore. The capital of the southern state of Karnataka and the most Anglicized city in India, Bangalore was established as a British cantonment early in the 19th century. During the colonial period, Bangalore fell within the princely state of Mysore and was not given to bursts of nationalist enthusiasm. There was no wholesale repainting of street signs after independence, and Queen's Road, Kensington Road, St. Mark's Road, Brigade Road, and Cubbon Park are all still there. The city has long been solidly middle class, and the colonial layout has kept its shape well. Bangalore has its slums, but they are fewer and less evident than in other Indian cities. The city is, however, sharply divided between the northern cantonment areas, primarily Tamil, and the poorer Kannadiga areas in the south of the city. Its climate, parks, and greenery made it a retirement destination for civil servants and military officers. In addition to its physical attractions, its educational and scientific resources made Bangalore a choice site, in the 1950s, for several large state-owned defense and communication industries. It became an established center of scientific research and developed a wide technological base. Since the 1970s it has experienced rapid growth, and new Indian middle and upper classes have emerged. They are based not on the traditional sources of wealth in independent India—control of land, bureaucratic office, or industry—but on professional and technical skills. Unable to break into the exorbitantly priced property markets of a city such as Bombay, these highly internationalized and entrepreneurial classes—many of whose members possess qualifications from America, not from the old elite educational metropolis of Britain—have adopted Bangalore as the strongest alternative incarnation of Indian modernity.

These new classes have been sustained and given substantial economic power by the arrival in India, especially after economic liberalization began in 1991, of foreign capital and multinationals: Hewlett-Packard, Asea Brown Boveri, Agfa, and IBM have all been attracted to Bangalore as a source of cheap skills. These companies have transformed the wage structure of the Indian professional world. They are able to offer Indians in their late twenties salaries not reached even at the retirement points of Indian public-enterprise salary scales. Bangalore is the gateway for this new international private capital, which until the 1990s played a minute role in India's insulated economy.

There is nothing in India that could withstand the economic power of such corporations; they are potentially irresistible. But the Indian social classes that depend upon them are simultaneously very vulnerable and without any economic allies. Indeed, to bureaucrats, businesspeople, and industrialists, these professional classes are galling parvenus. Their internationally franchised tastes make them ready targets for moralizing politicians and cultural nationalists. For their part, these new classes have horizons that are

unconstrained by the territorial frame of the nation-state: they pride themselves on their international mobility, and are quite prepared to forsake the shopping malls of Bangalore—Big Kidskemp, Fifth Avenue, Barton Centre, all still with a somewhat ersatz air about them—for the real thing in Singapore (or wherever) should the opportunity arise. Bangalore has become the capital of non-resident India. Like the Indian politicians, industrialists, and film stars who choose to use the banking facilities of Vaduz and Zurich, these new classes too have a secessionist understanding of the idea of India.

Bombay and Bangalore: each is an avatar of the contrary potentialities of India's modernity, each manifests an exhaustion of the nationalist imagination. They have spawned ideas of India at sharp variance with Nehru's. To an adherent of the Shiv Sena in Bombay, defining oneself as Maharashtrian, or Hindu, seems to deliver more direct benefits. Indianness has become an instrumental choice, a less advantageous identity. Likewise, to the young M.B.A. or software expert in Bangalore, India is merely one stopping place in a global employment market.

India's cities are hinges between its vast population spread across the countryside and the hectic tides of the global economy, with its ruthlessly shifting tastes and its ceaseless murmur of the pleasures and hazards of modernity. How this three-cornered relationship develops over the next decades will decisively mold India's future economic, cultural, and political possibilities. The demographic drift across the world is unstoppably toward the urban: more than half the global population will soon live in cities. Yet India, in this as in so much else, will remain something of an exception. Despite the vast absolute numbers that continue to cram its cities, most Indians will still make their lives on the land. The contradiction runs deep. Will India's cities, bolstered by—but also subject to—the dynamism of global capital, come to direct the country's economy, to manipulate opportunities in their favor and make the culture in their own image? Or will the countryside be able to turn to its advantage the democratic power of its numbers, enter the state that resides in the metropolis, and bend it to its own purposes and hopes? How much longer can India's cities remain a modern veneer, by turns glittering and blistered, over the contradictory life of its society?

On Loyalty

Some critics complain that Americans have made a fetish of Polonius's pompous admonition, "To thine own self be true," forsaking loyalties to family, community, and faith in the name of personal freedom. Yet in the modern world, the author says, the ancient virtue of loyalty imposes different obligations—and many are striving to fulfill them.

by Alan Wolfe

Americans profess to love loyalty, even as they design institutions that actively discourage it. Corporations, professional sports teams, and universities bestow the biggest rewards on those most willing to move elsewhere. Young people are encouraged to serve their country with promises of benefits to be obtained when their tours of duty are over. Term limits leave politicians with no strong reasons to be loyal to the electorate—and vice versa. Whatever the theory, the practice could not be clearer: the loyal, when they are not the losers, are the suckers.

If ever a virtue were designed to be honored in the breach, it is loyalty in a society that worships the market in economics and freedom in politics. Loyalty, after all, is more a feudal virtue than a capitalist one, evoking images of knightly chivalry and codes of *omertá*. Not only was the United States created through a singular act of disloyalty, it has been continually replenished by immigrants willing to break bonds of family, faith, and country. The largest mutual fund company in the United States calls itself Fidelity, but it grew only by weaning its customers away from their old-fashioned Christmas club accounts at the local savings bank. You do not build a country on the values of mobility, entrepreneurship, and dissent by placing too high a premium on loyalty.

The wonder is that critics have been bemoaning the lack of loyalty—"the central duty amongst all duties," as the philosopher Josiah Royce called it—since the United States was founded. Often there was good reason to do so. "My country right or wrong" cannot serve as a moral injunction if, as during the Civil War, the question is which country is mine. Open societies, as we discovered during the Cold War, are indeed likely to find enemies within. Religious pluralism encourages multiple loyalties. Hyphenated Americans have at least two. Global capitalists often have none. Precisely because it values loyalty so rarely in practice, America must pay fervent homage to it in theory.

Perhaps that explains why Americans seem to be experiencing one of their periodic loyalty panics. "Thanks to the decline of old money and the old-money ethic of civic responsibility," the late Christopher Lasch wrote in 1995, "local and regional loyalties are sadly attenuated today." Lasch

Chelsea, Massachusetts, 1987

pointed the finger of blame at upwardly mobile professional elites, whom he portrayed as "turning their backs on the heartland and cultivating ties with the international market in fast-moving money, glamour, fashion, and popular culture." Not only have these elites contributed to a gap in local loyalties, but their lifestyle contributes to a decline in national loyalty as well. "It is a question," Lasch wrote, "whether they think of themselves as Americans at all. Patriotism, certainly, does not rank very high in their hierarchy of values."

Lasch is not the only critic to accuse Americans of insufficient appreciation of loyalty. William Bennett's *Book of Virtues* (1993), a blockbuster effort to invoke a lost world, includes loyalty as one of the virtues he hopes we can recover. Social critic Barbara Dafoe Whitehead writes that we are living in a "divorce culture," in which loyalty to spouse and children is severely tested by the siren calls of self-fulfillment and liberation. There are other criticisms. The problem with our politics, according to many political scientists, is that we no longer have parties and political machines capable of imposing discipline by rewarding loyalty. By focusing too much on the bottom line, business consultant Frederick Reichheld claims, American companies are losing the advantages of what he calls "the loyalty effect," the benefits to be obtained by being faithful to customers, employees, and investors. And by concentrating on race and ethnicity at the expense of loyalty to the country as a whole, according to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., we risk the "disuniting" of America. Left or Right, the lament is persistent: a society that neglects loyalty will either self-destruct or be unable to offer its members anything worth living—or dying—for.

Still, one wonders whether accounts of a current loyalty crisis are fully justified. Knowing that they live in a society dedicated to freedom, the critics are quick to soften the stringent requirements of loyalty. Don't get me wrong, Whitehead assures her readers: "We must assume that divorce is necessary as a remedy for irretrievably

broken marriages." Aware that champions of competitive market capitalism will dismiss loyalty as idealistic and impractical, Reichheld stresses that "loyalty-based management is a rational, viable strategy for generating cash flow, profits and growth." Bennett writes that loyalty "is very different from being a rubber stamp. Loyalty operates on a higher level than that."

No claim on behalf of loyalty is put forward without somebody else making an equal and opposite one on behalf of freedom. The marital bond? Defending individual freedom, the Cato Institute's David Boaz is more sympathetic to feminists and gays who challenge marital ties than he is to Christian conservatives who celebrate them. Indeed, Boaz questions whether the state should be in the business of recognizing marriage ties at all. John M. Hood, of the John Locke Foundation, thinks that corporations serve the public interest best by single-mindedly pursuing profits without worrying about loyalty to their workers and customers.

All of which suggests that lamenting loyalty lost is the wrong way to frame the right issue. Clearly the critics have touched an important nerve: in their haste to leave marriages, religions, firms, jobs, workers, cities, and one another behind, Americans give themselves over to spirals of discontent. Loyalty is an important virtue because honoring it establishes that there is something in the world more important than our immediate instincts and desires. When we are loyal, we stay put, determined to fight for improvements in the situation we are in rather than leave it for some imagined alternative. Whatever freedom we may lose in so doing, we gain that grounding in reality that comes from confronting, rather than escaping, what makes us unhappy.

But it is also true that in America one can never pose the question of loyalty without qualifications. In a society as diverse and decentralized as the United States, there always will be, and there always should be, many outlets for loyalty. And in a society as committed to individualism as this one, any plea for loyalty that does not allow for voluntary choice is likely to be ignored. If we are ever to have loyalty, it will not be of the traditional kind. Loyalty must be recast in terms compatible with liberal and capitalist values or there will be no compelling conception of loyalty at all.

II.

Josiah Royce, whose 1907 lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston were published as *The Philosophy of Loyalty* the following year, was among those rare students of the subject who understood the necessity of recasting the problem of loyalty in individualistic terms. The Harvard professor was contemptuous of utilitarians who posited that human beings coolly weigh the costs and benefits to the self before acting. "Loyalty," as he put it, "never means the emotion of love for your own cause, and never means merely following your own pleasure, viewed *as* your private pleasure and interest." But if Royce shares little with contemporary libertarians, he also sounds remarkably unlike contemporary communitarians, or at least those of conservative stripe. Using a term that jars the modern ear, Royce insisted that, to be loyal, an individual must find his own "cause" and then seek to honor it in his own way. The traditionalist whose fidelity consists in following a cause defined by someone else is not loyal, in Royce's philosophy.

For Royce, we live inescapably within a paradox: "I, and only I, whenever I come to my own, can morally justify to myself my own plan of life. No outer authority can ever give me the true reason for my duty. Yet I, left to myself, can never find a plan of life. I have no inborn ideal naturally present within myself. By nature I simply go on crying out in a sort of chaotic self-will, according as the momentary play of desire determines." Our only hope of dealing with this paradox lies in the principle of being loyal to loyalty. If you are loyal to a cause whose effect is to make

> Alan Wolfe *is University Professor and a professor of sociology and political science at Boston University. His latest book,* One Nation, After All, *will be published by Viking Penguin in January.*

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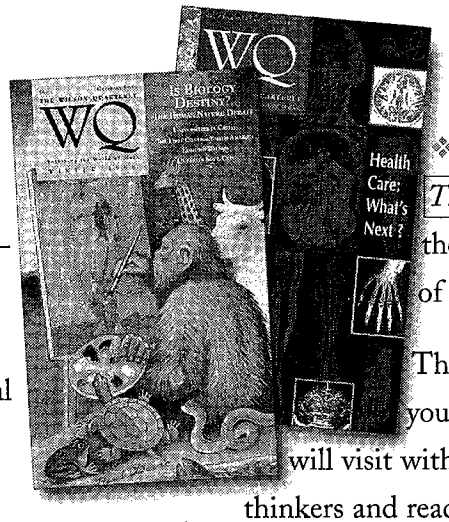

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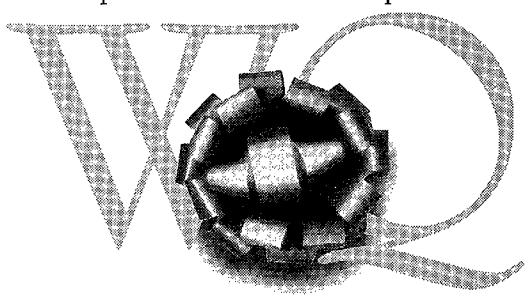

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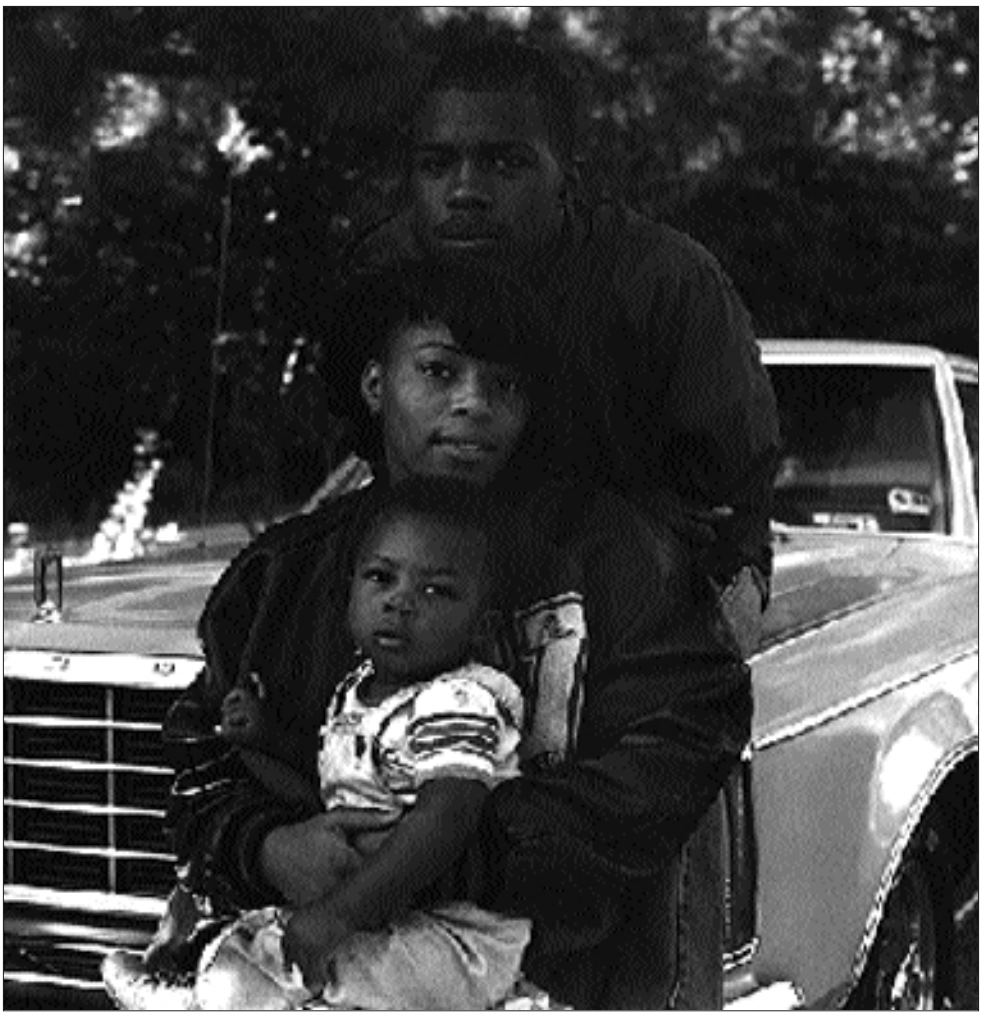


Vance County, North Carolina, 1988

it impossible for other people to be loyal to their own cause, you fail to honor that principle. Your duty lies in committing yourself to actions that result in "a maximum of increase of loyalty amongst your fellow-men."

In hindsight, Royce's formulation appears hopelessly archaic. His praise of the samurai warrior as the embodiment of loyalty, read after the world's 20th-century experiences with Japanese militarism, hardly seems compatible with his defense of individualism. When Royce tells his readers to avoid Hamlet's problems—"Have a cause; choose your cause; be decisive"—he sounds as if the aesthetes of Boston needed to be persuaded of the manly virtues. "Missing in Royce is [a] sense of tragedy," Columbia University law professor George Fletcher rightly noted in his book *Loyalty* (1993). Too much of the Emersonian self—that unreal idealist whose individualism never seems tied to actually existing human beings—pervades Royce's book. And his attempt to explain such classic metaphysical puzzles as the nature of truth, morality, or consciousness by reducing them to problems of loyalty is especially unconvincing.

Yet Royce offers a promising approach to loyalty nonetheless. In his lectures, he deals with what he calls "small American problems," and one of them is the same problem to which Barbara Dafoe Whitehead addresses herself. "Fidelity and family devotion," Royce wrote, "are amongst the most precious opportunities and instances of loyalty." Because they are, "faithlessness can never become a virtue."

Some writers in 1907 were already beginning to argue in favor of liberalizing divorce laws, and Royce argued that concern about an increase in divorce was justified. But that does not necessarily mean we should go back to tradition. "If the patriarchal family must pass away or be profoundly altered, surely we would not gain thereby unless there were to result a new family type, as rich in appeal to our human affections and our domestic instincts as the old forms ever were."

Contradicting those who blame the passing of a world more steeped in loyalty on the rise of a new concern with the self, Royce warns against making sharp moral judgments. The philosophy of loyalty suggests to him that so long as someone is committed to a capacious cause, we have no right to pass judgment on that individual's choice. It is right and proper to criticize another person for lacking loyalty to anything. But if that person "is unquestionably loyal to something, to his country or to his profession or to his family, I may criticize his expression of loyalty. . . . [b]ut my right to judge the choices of my fellow is . . . very limited." Loyalty to marriage, it follows, can take many forms—sometimes, presumably, even divorce.

Yet it also follows that if one is contemplating leaving a marriage, one cannot rightly do so without finding a substitute loyalty to serve in its place. Giving up on a marriage should not mean giving up on loyalty. Divorce sought in the name of hedonism or economic gain would, by this logic, be condemned. Fathers who, in leaving a marriage, also neglect their obligations to their children could rightly be criticized for disloyalty, while those who, after divorce, redouble their efforts in behalf of their children could not. Although Royce obviously did not address himself to our current concern with gay marriage, one presumes that a married person who discovered his homosexuality after marriage would be loyal if he sought a divorce to find a faithful partner of his own sex, but not if he sought divorce to explore his new sexual orientation with many partners.

Royce's thoughts, like those of the other pragmatists, seem more pertinent to our times than to those in which he wrote; his approach promises to steer a middle way between accusations of blame on the one hand and on the other a kind of postmodern insistence that no loyalty counts more than any other. Still, the question remains whether his flexible understanding of loyalty, rather than offering us a way to allay our loyalty panics, is merely an attempt to avoid hard decisions.

III.

At first glance, debates over the importance of loyalty seem to be debates over the nature of modernity itself. Should we, like people who lived in traditional societies, make loyalty the pre-eminent virtue? Or should we instead value modernity and with it the capacity to break ties we view as oppressive? One of the advantages of Royce's formulation is that it shifts the terms of this increasingly stale debate. Being loyal to loyalty suggests that it is not the presence or absence of loyalty that matters but rather what we are loyal to.

From this perspective, premodern societies can be defined as those that minimize the number of outlets for loyalty. If a temporal ruler also embodies the faith, one can be loyal to secular and divine authority in the same act. When ethnic ties and national ties overlap, conflicts between larger and smaller loyalties are eliminated. Arranged marriages were designed to preclude conflicts between the family one was leaving and the family one was forming. By keeping the objects of loyalty few, traditional societies encouraged the heartfelt sincerity with which professions of loyalty were asserted: devotion inevitably flags as it spreads to more objects.

Of course, premodern societies knew conflicts among loyalties. Antigone was torn between honoring the dead and heeding her uncle; the Bible poses one loyalty dilemma after another. Yet these competing loyalties do not pose quite the same problems as does our modern proliferation of loyalties. A society that can reduce its objects of loyalty to as few as possible—and then makes it crystal clear which loy-

alties are most to be honored—calls upon individuals to exercise strict self-control. Explaining why he was attracted to Sir Thomas More as a subject, Robert Bolt wrote (admiringly) in his preface to *A Man for All Seasons* (1960) that More—"supple, humorous, unassuming and sophisticated"—was "set like metal, . . . overtaken by an absolutely primitive rigor, and could no more be budged than a cliff."

While Thomas More was a determined man, it was not up to him to decide what to do; God's commands, not his individual wants and desires, determined his course of action. And that is precisely why the kind of loyalty he demonstrated is not modern. For us, the choice is not between loyalty and disloyalty but between competing ways of being loyal. Each of our choices is morally compelling; we can act only by making our own tentative, provisional, and reversible decisions about which loyalties count most. We experience loyalty panics not when loyalty is lacking but when there is too much of it, or at least too many outlets for its unambiguous expression.

One can, of course, respond to such a situation by arguing that choices between multiple loyalties are specious: there being only one God, truth, or source of authority, we must, when faced with situations of multiple loyalties, find the wherewithal to do what is right. E. M. Forster hoped that he would have the courage to be loyal to his friend rather than his country, an entry, wrote critic Roger Kimball recently, "in the great competition for making the most morally fatuous remark of the 20th century." But whether one believes Forster's sentiments noble or, in Kimball's words, "preening infatuation that is at once naive and pernicious," both the novelist and his critic pose the problem in a remarkably anachronistic way. Most of us feel the ties of both friendship and patriotism. The question is how we balance them, not how we choose between them.

Consider the tribulations of Whittaker Chambers, so recently brought to life in Sam Tanenhaus's gripping book, *Whittaker Chambers: A Biography* (1997). What makes Chambers interesting to us today is the degree to which he was *not* like Sir Thomas More. Traditional loyalists, unwavering in their commitments, are noble in their choices. We admire them, if we admire them at all, for their lack of doubt, their refusal to accept that what might seem like a conflict of loyalties is any conflict at all. But however heroic such determination seems in traditional guise, it is out of place in modern clothing. The whirlwind around Chambers swept up a cast of characters, such as Elizabeth Bentley, who testified against former members of the Communist Party with as much single-minded dedication as Antigone. Their simple choices have no resonance in our world, and partly for that reason they have never been portrayed in novels, or even been the subjects of interesting biographies.

On August 2, 1948, Whittaker Chambers, informing his boss Henry R. Luce of *Time* that he was about to receive a subpoena to testify about his former activities as a Communist, offered to quit his job. "Nonsense," Tanenhaus quotes Luce as responding, "testifying is a simple patriotic duty." Actually, in Chambers's case it was anything but. He had been active in espionage work in the Communist Party underground in the 1930s, but by 1937 he knew he would have to quit. Nonetheless, the only step he took before World War II to tell his story was to offer an account to White House aide Adolf Berle, who made little progress interesting anyone in the Roosevelt administration in it. Aside from that effort and a briefing he gave to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1942, Chambers took no active steps to reveal what he knew. Even in the years after World War II, when his knowledge of Communist activity became a national issue, Chambers held some information back. He was, Tanenhaus writes, "a cautious informant, still uneasy about betraying one-time accomplices and exposing himself to punishment."

Chambers's Dostoevskian dark streak discourages easy explanations of his decisions, but surely Tanenhaus is right to stress the erstwhile Communist's misgivings about betraying people to whom he was once close. Testifying before a closed hearing of the House Committee on Un-

American Activities in 1948, Chambers spoke of Hiss as "a man of great simplicity, with a great gentleness and sweetness of character." Chambers and Alger Hiss were usually pictured as opposites: the suave, well-connected, aristocratic Hiss versus the unkempt and ill-bred Chambers. But Tanenhaus emphasizes the remarkable similarity of their backgrounds: both products of families with a tendency toward suicide and tragedy, both born outside the upper classes but with pretensions to rise, both relying on powerful patrons—Luce for Chambers, John Foster Dulles in the case of Hiss—to advance their rise.

Understanding their similarities, it becomes possible to understand why Chambers appeared as tortured as he did. Self-made men propel themselves through the world by cultivating connections, making friendships, forming emotional bonds. Of course they have a loyalty to their country, one that demands that they reveal the names of those who conspired against it and lied about it persistently after. Most of us, however, do not choose our country, not, at least, in the same way we choose our friends. For Chambers to honor his loyalty to America, he had to turn his back on the loyalties he had forged in the course of his tumultuous life. Premodern heroic loyalists were never asked to do that; aristocratic, secure in their status, certain of their beliefs, they served their loyalties with scant regard for spouses, friends, and underlings. "Have patience, Margaret, and trouble not thyself," Robert Bolt has Sir Thomas More say to his daughter as he faces his execution. Were I, like More, forced to sacrifice my life, or even my job, by refusing to sign an oath that violated my conscience, my first thought would be: who will pay for my daughter's college education?

Although their backgrounds were similar, Hiss, unlike Chambers, convinced the world that he was the patrician. That helps explain why, from a modern perspective, the tragic hero in this case was Chambers, not Hiss. Aristotle's rules of tragedy require the hero to be of noble birth, but modern conflicts of loyalty emerge out of the pushes and pulls of everyday life. Surely Hiss must have thought that his unbending efforts to achieve what he considered integrity would help him win his struggle with Chambers in what Hiss called in the title of his apologia "the court of public opinion." But Chambers anticipated the modern condition of torturous confessions of internal conflict. After Oprah Winfrey and Rikki Lake, Hiss comes across not only as a liar but, because he lacked introspection, as false to his internal self.

Spreading your loyalty around, rather than concentrating it in one place with certain conviction and unshakable faith, will never be the noblest way to fulfill the obligations of loyalty. Such a strategy can seem an escape from tough choices (although Chambers, finally, made them). Tentative expressions of loyalty among competing outlets, if taken to mean that our loyalties are equivalent, will fail as a moral injunction, for we cannot put our duties to our golfing buddies on the same plane as those to our children. And there will be times when having too many loyalties will be worse than having fewer; sometimes we express our sense of loyalty to others as a way of meddling in their affairs when we ought to stop poking around in other people's business.

Still, the notion of loyalties as broad on the one hand and provisional on the other does serve as the most practical answer to the question of which loyalties to honor when there are all too many people, institutions, and practices to be honored at once. Practical answers, of course, are never perfect answers. But this one at least reminds us of why the loyalty question is such a hard one. It is not because it is hard to do the right thing; it is because the right thing is hard to find. Caught among their families, their jobs, their country, and their changing beliefs, who wouldn't, like Whittaker Chambers, be cautious about choosing loyalty to one at the expense of disloyalty to all the others?

IV.

When loyalties are multiple, education in loyalty cannot be viewed solely as the transmission of timeless truths. To possess character, people need not only an emphasis on being loyal but an under-

standing of the need to make and remake what loyalty is. "The requirements of the spirit of loyalty," Royce wrote, "are in one sense perfectly stern and unyielding, while in another sense they are and must be capable of great freedom of interpretation." Not all those who decry our contemporary lack of loyalty understand this. What seems missing in their approach is not only a supple philosophy of loyalty but a sufficiently realistic psychology of loyalty.

Crucial to the story of loyalty lost is a theory of human nature. Modernity, runs this theory, offers all too many opportunities for shallow gratification. The requirements of loyalty, by contrast, are not easily fulfilled; "real loyalty," writes William Bennett, "endures inconvenience, withstands temptation, and does not cringe under assault." In such an account, loyalty is a virtue of the will. Knowing what is right is merely the first step; one must also have the courage to act on the basis of what is right. A loyal person must triumph over his own nature.

Expressed in this way, loyalty becomes, like courage, very much a military virtue, its ideal proving ground the battlefield. Loyalty "shows itself most clearly when we are operating under stress," Bennett points out. Not only is it true that only remarkable people can be genuinely loyal, but they can be so only under remarkable conditions. We expect the other virtues—compassion, friendship, honesty, perseverance—to reveal themselves in the course of everyday life. But loyalty is reserved for higher circumstances. To prove our loyalty, we first have to be tested, and the more severe, unusual, and demanding the test, the more loyal we are if we pass.

All of which may be true; but if so, then why compile a book of virtues designed to be read by ordinary people leading ordinary lives? There are loyalty tests we face in everyday life. Asking people to adhere to heroic standards of behavior when the situations they face involve mundane choices, though intended as good advice, may well be bad advice. At best, all it does is induce guilt. At worst, it encourages people to believe that the tests are more demanding than they really have to be, in that way providing an indirect justification for failing them. And when the test is failed repeatedly, the disloyalty we wind up explaining away outweighs the loyalty we encourage.

A good test of the tests involved in modern-day loyalty involves, once again, the question of loyalty to spouses and children. Barbara Dafoe Whitehead points out that the ideal of the nuclear family was once governed by a norm of permanence. As the anthropologist David Schneider defined that norm, it went like this: "A spouse is for better or worse, for the long run, and the quality of the loyalty (or love) is enduring without qualification of time or place or context." Such an ideal could not survive the culture of what Whitehead calls "affective individualism." Once we came to accept that the standard for judging our actions ought to be whether they contribute to our personal happiness, marital permanence, and with it loyalty and a sense of obligation to others, went by the wayside. Now, governed by norms of personal fulfillment, we lose the ability to invest in children—and therefore the future. To make ourselves whole again, we must "repeal the language and ethic of expressive divorce." Whitehead concludes that "a serious and sustained effort at divorce prevention" would send a message to couples, especially husbands, "to be more vigilant about the maintenance and care of their marriages." Then we might come to appreciate that "there might be greater honor attached to marriage as a human pursuit requiring struggle, intention, and work."

I have no quarrel with the way Whitehead frames the problem, and I especially agree with her concern that a society too quick to sanction divorce is in serious trouble. But the way she implores people to work harder at marriage implies that, at present, they do not. Whitehead's evidence of Americans' fecklessness is actually rather thin. She relies, through most of her book, on citations from divorce manuals written by therapists and social workers, many of which are predictably blind to the demands of loyalty. Yet it does not follow that because people buy such books they act out the advice they contain. Despite high divorce rates, real people are as unhappy about the divorce

Chicago, Illinois, 1996

culture as Whitehead. They know that personal fulfillment can be a shallow goal, that a better future for their children requires sacrifice on their part, and that one has to try one's hardest to stick out the worst moments in a marriage. Most people do not, like Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, have to be initiated into tests of their character; they experience marriage as a test of their commitments every day of their lives.

Whitehead is not a conservative, but her treatment of divorce reminds us that conservatives rarely understand how conservative most Americans really are. Americans are not, as so many conservatives assume, fleeing from their loyalties to one another by giving themselves over to dubious nostrums premised on therapeutic ideals of self-fulfillment, morally bankrupt conceptions of value relativism, or unsatisfying versions of secular humanism. Quick to scold people for what they lack, critics of our loyalty deficit rarely acknowledge what people already have.

We could make a great deal more sense of the problems around us, including the problem of marriage, if we viewed people as predisposed to prefer present commitments to future possibilities. Of course it is true that a society in which marriage vows are not taken seriously is a society with a loyalty problem. But we should also recognize that loyalty-dependent institutions, including marriage, have sources of resilience. One state, Louisiana, recently put into place a procedure that allows couples who are about to marry to elect a more binding commitment. Those who choose this commitment are permitted to divorce only under certain conditions (e.g., in the event of adultery or abandonment) and only after a separation of two years. Changes such as this may herald a retreat from the divorce culture. Disloyalty in the culture does not mean disloyalty in the people. Americans may be trying to remake loyalty in new ways, and if we dismiss their efforts as insufficiently rigorous or pain inducing, we fail not only to do them justice but to acknowledge the necessity of finding a concept of loyalty relevant to the modern world.

V.

If one agrees that American society fails to appreciate loyalty but also thinks that conceptions of loyalty must take individualism into account, how should loyalty be advanced? Royce offers a possibility. To create a deeper sense of loyalty, he wrote in 1907, we have to face "the problem of educating the self-estranged spirit of our nation to know itself better." Royce proposed a strategy for achieving this goal. Interestingly enough, the path he advocated stands as the exact opposite of the one America chose to take.

It might seem obvious that the way to cultivate loyalty to the nation is to encourage people to think nationally. Royce disagreed. Provincial, rather than national, loyalties ought to be emphasized, he suggested. "The tendency to the centralization of power in our national government," he wrote, "seems to me . . . a distinct danger. It is a substitution of power for loyalty." Royce was quite taken by the energy and dedication to community Americans manifested at levels below the national state symbolized by Washington, D.C. Born in Grass Valley, California, the child of parents who were lured west by both God and gold, Royce held up as a model of loyalty "that spirit which has originated, endowed, and fostered the colleges and universities of our Western towns, cities, and states, and which is so well shown throughout our country in our American pride in local institutions of learning."

Local institutionalism, for Royce, was the starting point, not the goal, of education in loyalty. It is not "the old sectionalism" that he advocated but "a new and wiser provincialism." In line with pragmatist thinking, Royce was looking for institutions close enough to people that they would directly experience the pride of belonging. Once they experienced that, they could appreciate the possibility of broadening their loyalties from the provincial to the cosmopolitan.

Understood this way, loyalty is not a duty codified into rules. It is a practice cultivated through experience. We cannot be loyal to abstractions called God, country, and family. We can be loyal only to particular religious ideals, actual families, and specific societies worthy of the loyalty they demand. A good society will not propound an ideal of loyalty and then ask that institutions conform to it. It will instead build on the institutions already in existence to uncover an ideal of loyalty proper to them.

Such a pragmatic approach to loyalty may seem naive at a time when provincial institutions seemingly are being undermined by the centralizing forces Royce noted, as well as the newer globalization of capitalism and culture. Yet in a paradoxical way, globalization, by increasing economic insecurity, makes more valuable the security that comes from attaching oneself ferociously to institutions closer to oneself. That is why companies are responding to intense competitive pressures by refocusing on employee and customer loyalty. It may also explain why we have started asking whether the institutions of civil society—from bowling leagues to charities—can survive. It may even account for a recent decline in the divorce rate. So long as we are human, we will always be somewhat provincial. Royce's truth is that we make our loyalties out of the raw material at hand, and that we will always do so no matter how distant the forces that seem to control our lives.

There is a sense of generosity and optimism in Royce's thought that would, if added to our current debates about loyalty, improve not only the tone but also the efficacy of such discussions. We should never forget that as much as we value loyalty to God, family, and nation, we cannot allow loyalty to trump every other consideration without sacrificing what makes us modern, democratic, and free. And we should never take the virtues of modernity, democracy, and capitalism to such lengths that our loyalties will be only to ourselves. We have to trust people to find their own sense of loyalty, even when we believe they do not value loyalty enough, because if they do not find it, no one else will find it for them.

LIVING WITH THE CORPORATION

No American institution provokes a wider range of reactions than the corporation. It is a source of jobs and wealth, an object of loyalty, and an engine of economic and technological creativity. It is also a disruptive social force and a powerful influence in American culture and politics. Our authors explore a long and complicated relationship.

The Making of the Modern Corporation

by Morton Keller

The large business corporation has a firm place in the American imagination as the dark repository of private power. There are no more reliable villains on TV or in movieland than these shadowy, soulless, omnipresent institutions and the faceless, greedy men and women who serve them. And yet today as much as ever before, corporations are accepted as the driving engines of our economy, as the places where most of us work. It sometimes seems that corporations in America are what lying was to the English schoolgirl: an abomination unto the Lord, but an ever-reliable friend in time of trouble.

The corporate charter was invented in medieval Europe. For centuries, incorporation legitimated a variety of public institutions and semiprivate enterprises, rather than private businesses. It found receptive soil in the American colonies, and during the early years of the Republic became a widely accessible instrument of economic growth. Yet from early on there was a tension between the public character and private purposes of corporations.

As the term *corporation* became a synonym for big business after the late 19th century, corporations increasingly became the subject of political debate and the target of legislation and regulation. But to an extent that is not generally appreciated, many of the challenges posed by the corporate form have been handled in the nation's courtrooms rather than in the political arena. In part, this is simply because corporations are creatures of the law. But turning the corporation to public purposes without impinging on its proven ability to create wealth (which is, in fact, another public purpose) has proved also to be a very delicate task—one of many such tasks that Americans have relied heavily upon the courts to carry out.

To understand what corporations are, it is necessary first to have some idea of where they came from. The idea that certain kinds of institutions—towns, guilds, schools, hospitals—should have a charter from some higher authority that grants them defined privileges dates from at least the Middle Ages. Early charters were vari-

In 1721, William Hogarth memorably satirized England's South Sea Bubble, one of the world's first bouts of speculative fever in corporate shares.

ants of the basic feudal contract that linked lords and vassals in medieval society; if for individuals, then why not for institutions?

Out of this experience came the idea of chartering commercial ventures as well. During the 16th and 17th centuries, English entrepreneurs sought royal charters for all sorts of ventures, including trading outposts in the Baltic, Russia, and Ireland, and then "plantations" in the New World.

Most of these early chartered ventures were joint-stock companies, composed of investors who pooled their assets for a single enterprise. The Dutch East India Company of 1602 is often accounted the first true stock corporation, with a permanent fund of capital. The great advantage here was that in the (not unlikely) event of failure, the participants' liability was limited to the amount they had invested. This made it easier to amass the large capital pools these early overseas ventures required.

So the early modern corporation emerged to meet the financial and organizational needs of the Age of Discovery. But charters also served the power-aggrandizing monarchs of 17th century England, such as James I. By establishing the principle that corporations were legal entities created by the Crown, the king not only asserted his authority over them but was in a position to grant monopolies and other perquisites to his favorites.

But the royal stamp of approval, too freely given, encouraged rampant speculation, much as U.S. government deposit insurance in the 1980s encouraged American savings and loan societies to overextend themselves. The inevitable end came in 1720 with the ruinous collapse of

the South Sea and Mississippi "bubbles," rampages of speculation in the shares of two companies established to launch commercial ventures in the New World. Parliament's Bubble Act of that year put an end to almost all corporate chartering for commercial purposes in England for the rest of the 18th century.

That long hiatus, coming as it did during the seedtime of the Industrial Revolution, strengthened what was already a strong inclination in England to rely on partnerships rather than corporations as the preferred form of business enterprise. Partnerships made sense in a tightly knit, hierarchical society, where extensive and complicated bonds of personal relationship defined the social structure and controlled the major sources of investment capital.

The Bubble Act applied also to the American colonies, which faced the added difficulty of trying to launch commercial ventures in the face of a British imperial policy that reserved the profits of more sophisticated forms of enterprise to the mother country. The Philadelphia Contributionship for Insuring Houses from Loss by Fire (1768) was the only chartered business corporation in colonial America, acceptable because of the socially useful nature of its business.

Nevertheless, incorporation turned out to be as American as apple pie. Every colony had a royal charter by the eve of the Revolution. Colleges, charities, New England towns and villages, churches, and quasi-public enterprises such as wharves and mills eagerly sought charters of incorporation from colonial assemblies.

Independence opened the floodgates to innovation in many realms of American society, not least the launching of commercial ventures. No longer did a hostile king or parliament threaten their legitimacy. And a new structure of state and national government now existed that could create, define, and limit incorporation.

An important early statement on the place of the charter in the American system of government was John Marshall's decision in the *Dartmouth College* case (1819). Could New Hampshire unilaterally alter the terms of Dartmouth's pre-Revolution royal charter? Marshall (and a dutifully unanimous Supreme Court) said no: Dartmouth's charter was a contract, and hence came under the protective wing of the Constitution's clause barring the impairment of contract.

This ruling seemed to suggest that incorporated bodies would enjoy a high level of immunity from state interference. New York judge James Kent said soon after the *Dartmouth College* decision that it "did more than any other single act . . . to throw an impregnable barrier around all rights and franchises derived from the grant of government; and to give solidity and inviolability to the literary, charitable, religious and commercial institutions of our country."

But to say that a charter was the same as a contract challenged the

> Morton Keller *is Spector Professor of History at Brandeis University. He is the editor of* The Encyclopedia of the United States Congress *(1995) and the author of several books, including* Regulating a New Economy: Public Policy and Economic Change in America, 1900–1933 *(1990).*

assumption in English common law that a corporation was free to do everything that it was not explicitly forbidden to do. Instead, American courts took the view that a corporation could do only what its charter—granted by the state legislature, that republican tribune of the people—explicitly said it could do. In other words, a charter was not an open-ended grant of authority but a specific and limited authorization to take on a particular task: an approach well suited to a republic dedicated to the principles of limited and representative government.

There was more. By saying that corporate charters were contracts, not grants, the Supreme Court stripped away any implication that corporations enjoyed the special favor of the chartering authority. It thus enabled the charter of incorporation to become a widely accessible instrument in the contract-dominated market economy of the 19th century.

The benefits of the corporate device quickly became evident. Incorporation's limited liability reduced investor risk, thus making it easier to attract the relatively large and unaffiliated American investing public. And a corporate structure made it easier to bring in professional management. These were important advantages in a scattered, diverse society, so unlike the tightly interconnected world of business and capital in England.

The spread of corporations also democratized—or, more accurately, republicanized—commercial enterprise by bringing it within the framework of American government. Charters came not from an unaccountable sovereign but from popularly elected state legislatures. At the same time, the semiofficial status of corporate charters eased the access of companies—and their competitors—to the new nation's legislatures and courts.

In the heady days of the early and mid-19th century, American corporate chartering expanded as never before. Schools and colleges, medical and agricultural and charitable societies, churches, towns, and cities barraged state legislatures with charter requests. The number of business corporations soared. By 1817 some 2,000 had been chartered, and this was just the beginning. Turnpikes, canals, bridges, banks, ferries, steamboat and insurance companies, and railroads were the most conspicuous recipients. New York alone granted about 500 turnpike charters between 1797 and 1847.

The prevailing view was that there was no important difference between purely commercial and quasi-public enterprises. Each in its own way benefited the young republic. It was not difficult to believe that banks, bridges, canals, turnpikes, railroads, and insurance companies played a public role, and to accept the fact that they often got special privileges, such as monopoly rights for a period of years, when they were chartered.

But as the economy grew, these privileges came under fire. Some critics were rising entrepreneurs who sought to compete with existing enterprises, while others voiced a more general resentment that these "artificial creatures" should be so favored by the state. "Corporations have neither bodies to be kicked, nor souls to be damned," went a common complaint of the time.

Widespread sales of corporate shares like those above to the general public was a uniquely American practice, speeding the rise of corporations.

The depression of the late 1830s and early '40s, which led to massive failures of canal and railroad companies, cleared the way for new ideas about the scope and meaning of incorporation. One result was easier access. By the mid-19th century, legislatures were passing general laws designed to make incorporation as cheap and easy as possible. No longer was it necessary to secure a legislative act. Now one filled out a simple form and paid a small fee. Incorporation became almost a perquisite of American citizenship, like voting or going to school. This democratization of what had once been an instrument of privilege made the corporation a form of economic organization more widely used in the United States than anywhere else in the Western world. In New York, for instance, more than 4,700 manufacturing firms were chartered between 1848 and 1866.

At the same time, the ability of the state (if it so chose) to regulate corporations was reinforced. The Supreme Court's *Charles River Bridge* decision (1837) set the tone. Writing for the majority, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney refused to let the privileges granted to an 18th-century Massachusetts bridge company block the construction of a second bridge nearby, even if the effect of the new enterprise was to destroy the economic advantage of the old one. The promise of economic growth lay not in the guarantee of old privileges (as Marshall had suggested in the *Dartmouth College* case) but in a process of "creative destruction" in which existing charter rights were narrowly interpreted in their duration and impact, and legislatures were empowered to foster economic change at the expense of vested corporate interests.

States that freely granted the gift of incorporation were ready to regulate or limit what they created. A number of them (including New York in its 1846 constitution) forbade subsidies or favors of any form to railroads and other corporations. While the courts remained sensitive to

the sanctity of property and contract, they tended to interpret corporate charters narrowly; in effect, to say to a company that wanted to go beyond its prescribed powers, "Have you got it in writing?" It was common for corporate charters to include a reserve clause allowing the legislature to amend them at any time. And by the 1850s, the "police power" to regulate the safety, health, morals, and welfare of the people had come to be accepted in American law as a broad justification for economic regulation.

This, then, was the ambiguous status of the business corporation in the mid-19th century, on the eve of the rise of big business. The corporate charter had evolved into a readily accessible instrument for a vibrant entrepreneurial society. Simply and cheaply attained, stripped of its traditional exclusionary or monopoly character, it was an essential handmaiden of economic growth. But at the same time, the corporation had an aura of threatening economic power to which government was expected to respond.

The first corporate body to evoke such fears was the Second Bank of the United States. But it died in 1832, when President Andrew Jackson vetoed the bill rechartering it. Next came the railroads. By the mid-19th century they had become the nation's first big business, a new and frightening source of unchecked power. In the early 1870s E. L. Godkin of the *Nation* observed, in his usual portentous way: "The locomotive is coming in contact with the framework of our institutions. In this country of simple government, the most powerful centralizing force which civilization has yet produced must, within the next score years, assume its relations to that political machinery which is to control and regulate it."

Popular anxiety over corporate power peaked at the turn of the century with the movement against "the trusts." In the late 1870s, John D. Rockefeller's attorney Samuel C. T. Dodd figured out a way for Standard Oil to absorb competitors without running afoul of its Ohio charter, which forbade it from holding the stock of other companies. The stock of Standard Oil and the companies it absorbed was turned over to a Rockefeller-dominated board of trustees, which issued trust certificates in return. A trust was not a corporation, and thus no state laws were broken.

Only about 10 trusts were launched during the 1880s. But the potential for more such mergers, and the fearsome business practices of the Standard Oil combine, made the trust a lightning rod for public concern over corporations and big business. The author of an 1883 law journal article wondered, "The Standard Oil has grown to be a more powerful—corporation, shall we call it? or what? for this is one of our questions—than any other below the national government itself." A number of states passed antitrust laws, and in 1890 the Sherman Antitrust Act, which outlawed "every contract, combination in the form of trust or otherwise, or conspiracy in restraint of trade or commerce," swept through Congress.

But this legislation hardly eased the growing national concern over big business. In its early years, the Sherman Act proved to be difficult to administer. The Supreme Court, in the *Sugar Trust* case (1893), severely limited the impact of the law by ruling that although the American

Sugar Refining Company controlled more than 90 percent of the nation's output, it could not be attacked under the Sherman Act. Why? Because sugar refining was part of the manufacturing process, a concern of the chartering state; the federal government's authority applied only after the company's product began moving in interstate commerce.

At the same time James B. Dill, another creative corporation lawyer—it was soon after this that Finley Peter Dunne's Mr. Dooley observed that what looked like a stone wall to the ordinary man was a triumphal arch to the lawyer—came up with a new legal device that nicely removed the remaining constraints on corporate consolidation. Dill's invention was the holding company: a corporation whose sole reason for being was to possess the stock of other corporations.

What to do about state laws that forbade corporations from doing this? That was easy: get a state or two to ease that restriction, and then interstate competititiveness would do the rest. Delaware and New Jersey soon obliged in response to intensive corporate lobbying and became the legal homes of many of America's largest corporations. The result, said one observer, was that "the conduct and condition of [a corporation's] business are treated as private and not public affairs."

This legal-legislative transformation went hand in hand with a new judicial perception of the corporation. In its *Santa Clara* decision of 1886 the Supreme Court held, en passant, that a corporation was a person under the Fourteenth Amendment and thus was entitled to the guarantees of due process and equal protection that the amendment afforded to the nation's citizens. This quiet change sculpted a constitutional safeguard of the rights of newly freed slaves into a potent instrument for use against state taxation and regulation.

It is not surprising that large American corporations felt free to go on a consolidation binge around the turn of the century. From 1898 to 1902 there were 2,653 mergers, with a combined capitalization of $6.3 billion. Within a few years an economy dominated by large, consolidated railroad, coal, steel, tobacco, oil, and dozens of other giant firms—the world of the 20th century American economy—had come into being.

Europe was creating its own economic megaliths at the same time: Great Britain saw 198 mergers during 1898–1900. But very different political, economic, and strategic realities prevailed there. Partnerships continued to be the rule in Britain (though they enjoyed limited liability and other corporate goodies). And English courts saw nothing wrong with—indeed, encouraged—firms entering into cartel agreements on prices and production. As an observer of the time put it, "Combination has been accepted without regulation in England because the entire English social system is a series of closed groups." Nothing of this sort was legal in the United States.

The popular American response to the rise of big business was colored by very different social realities. American historical memory did not include sentimentalized feudal-aristocratic traditions of patriarchal oversight, or guilds that were part of a traditional social order, or a tradition of class conflict. Rather, the most powerful economic creeds were

A century ago, the growing economic and political power of big business alarmed many Americans. An 1886 cartoon targets corporate influence in Congress.

individualism and self-reliance; enterprise was not to be cosseted but was to be left alone by the state. The growing diversity of early-20th-century American life—with manufacturers, merchants, farmers, railroads, shippers, retailers, consumers, unions, lawyers, judges, economists, journalists, and politicians pushing their interests and jockeying for position—served only to strengthen this fluid social environment.

In theory, Americans could draw on several different policy responses to the rise of big business. One was public ownership of public utilities. Another was federal incorporation (and therefore oversight)—sometimes sought by industry leaders themselves, who saw in it protection from burdensome state supervision. Yet a third was general federal regulation of

industrial prices and services: the creation of an interstate trade commission to parallel the railroads' Interstate Commerce Commission.

But these alternatives failed to suit the national temperament—or to fit the prevailing realities in American politics and government. Public ownership of utilities was tried in a few places, but the opposition of private interests and public suspicion of politician-run enterprises kept it marginal. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft proposed federal chartering, without success. And while the Federal Trade Commission was created in 1914, it did little more than try to block false and deceptive advertising.

What developed instead was a heavily judicial and highly nonideological system of mixed state and federal oversight, dominated by the federal courts. The number of antitrust suits varied from presidential administration to administration. But in the last analysis, antitrust policy was not set by elected officials or the government bureaucracy. It was set by the Supreme Court.

What was the character of that judicial policy? At first, reluctance to use the Sherman Act to strike down large combinations. Then, influenced in part by political and public opinion, a growing readiness to order the dissolution of combines that clearly violated the letter and spirit of the Sherman Act, culminating in the *Standard Oil* and *American Tobacco* decisions of 1911. In these cases, the Court set down a "rule of reason" for judging when combinations and bigness passed over the invisible line from efficiency to monopoly—and it ruled that both companies had done so. But the decisions made it plain that it would be the *Court*, and not an administrative or political agency, that would decide when that line had been crossed.

There were other forms of corporate regulation besides court-driven antitrust policy, but none were very satisfactory. Insurance companies, banks, and securities markets were subject to state regulatory systems—all notable for their inadequacy. Railroads, regulated by the Interstate Commerce Commission since 1887, were involved for decades in an intricate, politically charged, and terribly costly regulatory drama.

The newer public utilities—gas and electric, bus and streetcar and telephone companies—operated in yet another distinct regulatory environment. They were expected to provide a constant flow of a necessary service, and by their very nature they were monopolies, or nearly so. To deal with them, the states resurrected the old regulatory device of licensing. Public service or utility commissions issued "certificates of public convenience and necessity" to the companies under their supervision: a new form of corporate oversight. But often these commissions were "captured" by the utilities they regulated.

None of these problems reduced the ubiquity of the corporate form of business organization. Big business was only the tip of the American corporate iceberg. The vast majority of corporations were small enterprises, remote from the regulatory world of antitrust or utilities regula-

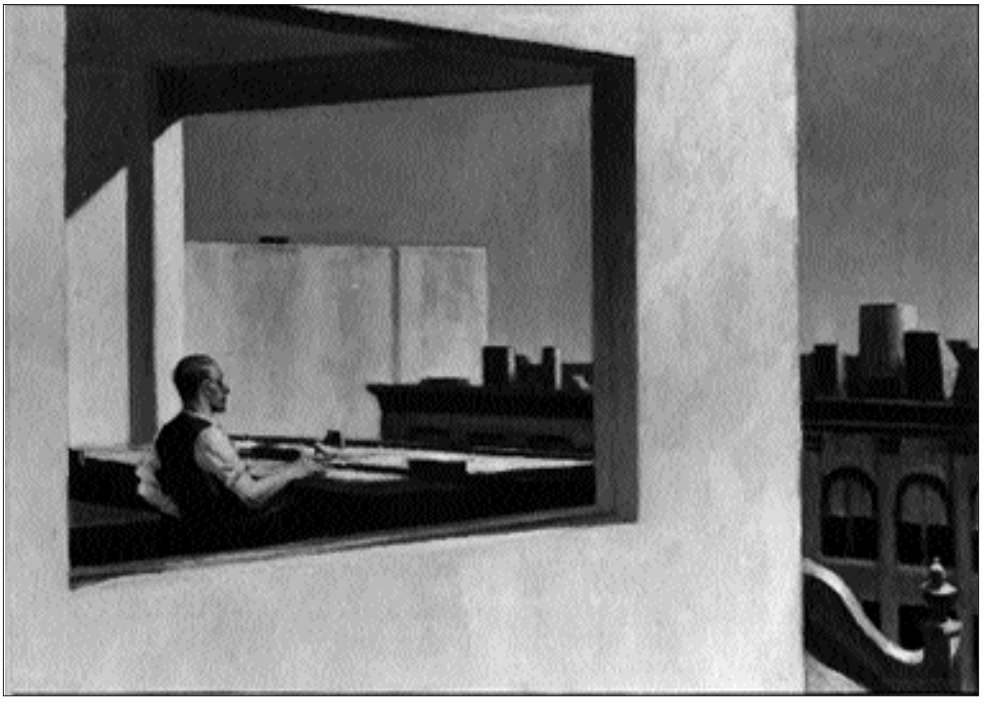
tion. Easy access to the corporate form was now a century old, and taken for granted. There were more than 340,000 corporations in 1916 and 516,000 in 1931, when they controlled some 30 percent of the nation's wealth and accounted for four-fifths of business income. No one worried that hundreds of thousands of farmers, shopkeepers, and small manufacturers availed themselves of the liability and, increasingly in the 20th century, the tax advantages of incorporation.

What did continue to concern courts, legislatures, and (intermittently) the public was how to restrict the corporation's potential for economic and political power while not crippling its potential for economic growth. This involved, first of all, an assault on the late-19th-century legal doctrine that a corporation was the equivalent of a person. That doctrine was the source of some of the more controversial judicial decisions of the early 20th century. It allowed corporations to claim Fourteenth Amendment immunity from much state taxation, and to beat back some attempts to regulate wages and working conditions. Companies argued with some success that the states had no right to interfere with the contracts that they as "persons" entered into with their workers.

Not until the 1930s did the Supreme Court finally come to accept that both the federal government and the states should have considerable regulatory authority over corporations. Congress then passed laws severely limiting the ability of employers to secure court injunctions against strikers and guaranteeing collective bargaining. Corporate taxation increased significantly during the New Deal and World War II. Big business came once again, as in the Progressive era, to be treated as what in fact it was: not a collection of legal "persons" more or less free to do what they would, but a potent American institution.

The decades since the 1930s have not fundamentally altered the place of the corporation in American life. Antitrust now, as throughout the 20th century, ebbs and flows with the forces of politics and the economy. Comparing the breakup of Standard Oil in 1911 and of AT&T a decade ago gives one an overpowering sense of *déjà vu*. The anticorporate strictures of Ralph Nader and other latter-day critics stand in a tradition that has its roots in the early 19th century. True, there is far more regulation of corporations today, including rules on environmental and occupational safety and health. And modern liability law makes companies much more subject to consumer and bystander damage suits than in the past. Yet big business today has as secure a place in American society as at any time during the past century.

One feature of large corporations has been a continuing source of trouble: the separation of ownership and control. Until the 20th century, ownership rested in relatively few hands—though rarely in the hands of only one proprietor, such as Henry Ford—and owners were able for the most part to exercise effective control. But as companies grew bigger, and stockholders more numerous (4.4 million in 1900, an estimated 18 million in 1928), the separation of control from ownership loomed ever larger. In 1927 and 1929 leading New York corporation lawyers revised Delaware's statutes, already hospitable enough to make that state the home of 70,000 firms, further



The move from farm and factory to white-collar work in corporate offices brought a major cultural shift, suggested by Edward Hopper's midcentury painting.

strengthening the hand of management against stockholders.

The Modern Corporation and Private Property (1932), by lawyer (and later New Deal brain truster) Adolf Berle and economist Gardiner Means, addressed the ownership-control problem in much the same way as, a generation before, Louis D. Brandeis's *Other People's Money* (1914) focused on corporate consolidation and size. Could stockholder-owners who were not actually responsible for the operation of a firm justly claim all of its profits? And given the impossibility of oversight by masses of stockholders, how could non-owner managers be counted on to maximize profits and secure the health of the company, rather than seek perquisites and power for themselves?

Berle and Means's larger point was that corporations were social as well as economic institutions and thus subject to public accountability. It took the Great Depression and the New Deal to bring about significant reform, though nowhere near as comprehensive as many corporate critics wanted. The Securities Act of 1933 and the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 imposed strict new rules on stock issues and securities trading, and required full disclosure of executive compensation. State securities laws were also tightened.

But the gap between stockholders and management persisted. Stockholders continued to be regarded more as investors than as owners—and, indeed, it is hard to see how any other assumption could work. "Faith in publicity," the sovereign Progressive remedy (along with antitrust) for corporate ills, has remained the guiding spirit of corporation law reform. In times of corporate profitability (that is, pretty much since the Great Depression), criticism of the management-stockholder

relationship—like criticism of corporate size—tends to be muted. Even today's excessive stock options, golden parachutes, and other arrangements that avaricious managers secure with the help of complaisant directors elicit more indignation than action. Of course, an economic catastrophe could very well change that.

Two very different impressions emerge from the long history of the corporation in the United States. One is that the corporate form has been extraordinarily useful as a way of giving legal (and public) standing to economic or social ventures. Whether in regard to a covenanted New England town in the 17th century, a colonial college in the 18th century, a bank or a railroad company in the 19th century, or the biggest of big businesses in the 20th century, some form of incorporation has been a sine qua non. It guarantees public standing or limited liability, helps attract capital, or gives managers relatively free scope to operate.

No less striking is the halting and uncertain, slow and limited record of the state and of public opinion when it comes to subjecting corporations to significant government control. The usual explanation is that big business wields enormous political power. No one would deny the existence of that power, but it seems an insufficient explanation. Corporations seldom form a united political front, and big business is often vulnerable to adverse public opinion. The antitrust movement of the early 20th century, the New Deal, and the continuing strain of populist hostility to big business are all evidence of that. In American politics, an aroused public that knows what it wants usually can get its way.

It is revealing that the area in which modern corporations have been most vulnerable to public control is liability law. Customers or bystanders who suffer harm from a company's products, even if the harm was impossible to anticipate, now routinely win multimillion-dollar judgments against corporate giants. It is no accident that this is an area, like antitrust, that is the particular responsibility of the courts. Corporations to a considerable degree are legal creatures, and it is the law, more than politics or government, that seems best able to trace the bounds between their private rights and public responsibilities.

Much of the corporation's relative immunity from broad political assault exists because it has been able to lay claim to the status—and the legitimacy—that comes from being an old, massive, generally successful American institution. The corporate device is used by middling farmers and entrepreneurs as well as gargantuan businesses. And despite highly publicized episodes of downsizing, many big companies still command the loyalty of their managers and workers. Corporations, as has so often been observed, are social as well as economic institutions, and the attractive power of the corporate culture should not be underestimated. Most of all, corporations, especially large ones, have been able to deliver the economic goods. For all their very evident faults and inadequacies, as long as they continue to do that, their place in American society seems assured.

From Beast To Beauty

by J. Bradford De Long

Early in 1996, Secretary of Labor Robert Reich was full of frustration, an activist in an administration recently convinced that the age of bold new government initiatives was over. The growing cost of Social Security and Medicaid, combined with the need to service a bloated national debt, ensured that there would be no money available for the ambitious programs Reich favored in worker training and other fields. In his memoir, *Locked in the Cabinet* (1997), he says he concluded that if the government had to do less, then private corporations should have to do more. "Corporate social responsibility," an idea that had been kicking around for decades, would be harnessed to policy. Corporations, Reich believed, ought to be given incentives—and obligations—to invest in their employees' skills, to share fat profits with their workers, to invest in their communities, and to hire and train poor people. "Why not reduce the corporate income tax on companies that met some specified minimum responsibility to their employees and communities, while raising it on those that didn't?" Reich asked himself.

As Reich tells the story, President Bill Clinton's influential secretary of the treasury, Robert Rubin, hated the idea. So did others inside and outside the Clinton administration. Reich's plan to enforce corporate social responsibility was branded "inflammatory" or worse. Reich was quickly squelched: his exclusion from the inner economic policymaking loop was whispered around Washington, he says. His themes were not picked up in presidential speeches. And White House aides quietly told their reporter contacts that Reich had "gone off the reservation," and would soon be muzzled.

Reich's opponents had strong arguments on their side. When the Clinton administration took office, investment in the U.S. economy—both private investment by corporations and public investment by the government—was anemic. Low investment means low productivity growth, higher unemployment, and stagnant real income and wage levels. Congress had already rejected Clinton's proposal to increase public investment in infrastructure and technology. So the administration had taken a different tack, betting that deficit reduc-

What a difference a few decades make: corporate leaders like Microsoft's Bill Gates (on screen) and Apple's Steven Jobs have become national heroes.

tion would induce the Federal Reserve and financial markets to lower interest rates, triggering a surge of private investment.

In fact this economic strategy did, through some skill and considerable luck, generate a strong recovery. Net private investment was a relatively paltry $160 billion in the year before Clinton took office—an amount that would boost the gross domestic product by only $200 per worker per year. Today net private investment approaches $400 billion (in 1992 dollars), generating two-and-a-half times as much growth. But "business confidence" is fickle. Whatever the particular virtues or vices of Reich's scheme, talk of sweeping new mandates on corporations could well have provoked a disastrous collapse in private investment, doing vastly more harm than any good the measures might have accomplished.

Nevertheless, it is striking that Reich's ideas attracted so little support. Nearly everyone in the first Democratic administration since Jimmy Carter's lined up on Robert Rubin's side. In fact, Reich's call for an emphasis on corporate social responsibility, and especially his demand for an end to "corporate welfare," seemed to have more resonance inside the Republican Party, with people such as commentator and onetime presidential hopeful Pat Buchanan, who had roundly denounced "big corporations in New

York," and Representative John Kasich (R.-Ohio), chairman of the House Budget Committee and an ardent foe of various federal subsidies for business.

By the spring of 1996, as Reich's failure illustrated, the governing center of the Democratic Party had committed itself to the position that America's corporations were fragile entities that needed to be supported and nurtured, not controlled. They were too fragile to bear the burden of being required to provide additional benefits to employees. This marked a sea change in American politics.

At least since the turn of the century, the center of the Democratic Party had emphasized the need to control the growth and power of the modern corporation. In the 1910s, Woodrow Wilson and Louis Brandeis roundly denounced monopolists and financiers. At times Franklin D. Roosevelt sounded similar notes, as in his famous inaugural address of 1933, in which he denounced "the money changers" who had "fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization." In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the Keynesian wing of the economics profession argued that corporate monopoly had become the major source of unemployment and needed to be fought with greater government spending to boost demand and more aggressive antitrust policies. In the 1970s, Jimmy Carter came close to declaring U.S. oil companies public enemies when they swelled with profits created by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil embargo of 1973. And even Bill Clinton, before sliding into his 1992 "campaign mode," had lambasted corporations that brutally "downsized" lower-level employees while letting the rare displaced executive drift gently to earth in a golden parachute.

What happened? Why do today's New Democrats and other reformers sound so much like Eisenhower Republicans? Robert Reich's dilemma in 1996 suggests one answer. A government without the ability to bankroll large new initiatives is a weak government. President Clinton put it bluntly in his 1996 State of the Union speech: "The era of big government is over." A strong interventionist state, such as the one that shaped the post-World War II "mixed economy," has a sure sense of the economic rights of its citizens and of the benefits and investments in people that it wishes to provide. It does not beg corporations for charity, exhort them to take care of the communities and suppliers that depend on them, or provide marginal incentives for the private provision of social welfare. The fact that Robert Reich was forced to resort to such strategies, not to mention that they fell completely flat, is a reminder that the American interventionist state has passed the peak of its strength. The federal government's spending may increase in the future—the rising cost of Social Security and Medicare practically guarantees that—but it is highly unlikely that it will undertake any important new missions,

> J. Bradford De Long *is professor of economics at the University of California, Berkeley. He was deputy assistant secretary of the treasury during 1993–95. He is working on an economic history of the 20th century.*

even if, like Reich's scheme, they require only modest sums of money. A weak government has to be tentative in everything it does.

An even more important constraint on reformers is the new (and somewhat belated) recognition that the American corporation and, by extension, the entire U.S. economy are not as invulnerable as they once seemed. During the 1960s American corporations bestrode the world, challenging their rivals in Europe to modernize or disappear. They could still scoff at Asia as a continent of gimcrack industries.

This easy economic success had cultural consequences. Socialists such as Michael Harrington, in *Toward a Democratic Left* (1968), could see a steady reduction in the number of college students seeking corporate careers as a hopeful sign. It never crossed his mind that the profitability of America's corporations and the liberal spending initiatives he sought to promote were Siamese twins: continued political support for liberal initiatives would last only so long as corporate America continued to deliver rising living standards. Nor did the cultural critics who excoriated the corporation as a deadening, conformity-inducing weight on society appreciate how much they owed to affluence, which helped create the receptive audiences that greeted their indictments. During the 1960s and '70s, widespread disdain for all things corporate encouraged politicians not to worry much about the health of American business.

In any event, the idyll did not last. For reasons that nobody fully understands, corporate productivity growth slowed dramatically after the 1973 OPEC oil embargo, and American living standards began to stagnate. According to official statistics (and there is a controversy here: official statistics may understate economic growth by about one percent per year), the median wage of male workers grew by 2.3 percent annually in the two decades before 1973, and by only 0.2 percent per year in the two decades after 1973.

That unpleasant development was accompanied by a number of shocks that slowly changed Americans' attitudes toward the corporation. Beginning in the 1970s, they were continually reminded that corporations that once seemed as solid and eternal as mountains could in fact go bankrupt. In the late 1970s, Chrysler, one of the Big Three and a pillar of the U.S. economy, did go bankrupt in all but the legal sense: no one would loan the corporation the money to pay the interest on its existing debt. Only a government bailout saved the company. In the early 1980s, General Motors as we know it survived only because the Reagan administration wandered far enough from its free-trade ideological roots to negotiate stringent "voluntary" restrictions on imports of Japanese cars. Since then, the list of big name-brand American corporations that have foundered or drifted to the edge of bankruptcy (and sometimes beyond) has lengthened, including even IBM, the very embodiment of the solid paternalistic corporation of yore, and, more recently, Kmart, AT&T, and Apple Computer.

Globalization contributed to the new awareness of corporate fragility. Global markets are neither as far advanced nor as destructive as

many politicians and pundits seem to believe—the dollars that American consumers send overseas eventually return to the United States, either to purchase U.S. goods or to finance construction or some other investment. But the fear of globalization probably has deeper roots, in the nation's shocked post-1973 recognition that its days as the world's unchallengeable number-one economic power were over.

The 1980s also reminded Americans of another threat to corporate stability: Wall Street. In their classic book *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* (1932), Adolf Berle and Gardiner Means planted the seed of the image of corporation managers as arrogant crews of self-perpetuating oligarchs with no regard for the preferences of the formal "owners" of the corporation, the shareholders: shareholder insurrections at corporation annual meetings almost inevitably failed. By the mid-1980s, executives faced a new challenge to their power. The market in high-yield "junk" bonds created by financier Michael Milken suddenly gave people who had previously been shut out of the capital market because of the riskiness of their enterprises the ability to raise large sums of money. Some of these people used the money to "grow" existing businesses. But the high-yield market also spawned a new breed of Wall Street shark capable of buying up, taking over, and often dismantling corporations that were badly managed. Profitable lines of production were sold off to competitors, while others were closed or slimmed down.

The takeovers were sometimes little more than financial jujitsu by sharp operators, and they were almost always painful. Economists Andrei Shleifer and Lawrence Summers argued that the takeovers were motivated in large part by a desire to break promises both explicit and implicit that corporations had made to workers, customers, suppliers, and other "stakeholders" in the corporation's ongoing businesses. Yet as economists Steven Kaplan and Jeremy Stein showed in a major study in *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (May 1993), at least the first half-decade of the merger and acquisition boom (1981–86) probably was a needed corrective to corporations grown lazy and unresponsive to markets and stockholders. Subsequent mergers and acquisitions, they concluded, appeared to have less of an efficiency-increasing economic rationale.

Somewhat paradoxically, the growth of what economists call "the market for corporate control" through mergers and acquisitions made the paychecks of top managers much bigger even as it reduced their job security. Their jobs were increasingly at risk because Wall Street applied new pressure for rapid improvements in corporate bottom-line results. Their pay ballooned in part because no one is in a better position to aid or thwart a corporate takeover—or lead an effort to take the corporation private—than a firm's top managers. Takeover suitors and antitakeover boards alike are willing to pay dearly to secure these executives' loyalty.

A Corporate Balance Sheet

(All numbers for 1996 unless otherwise noted)

Number of U.S. corporations (1994): 3.1 million

Percentage of workforce employed (1994) by corporations: 62

Percentage of workforce employed by Fortune 500 corporations in 1996: 15
in 1980: 20

Number of employees of Fortune 500 corporations: 20.4 million

Total revenues of Fortune 500 corporations: $5 trillion

Gross domestic product (1995) of Italy: $1.1 trillion

New corporations formed: 790,569

Business failures: 71,811

Average total compensation of 500 top corporate CEOs: $5.8 million

Percentage increase, 1995–96: 54

U.S. median family income (1995): $34,076

Percentage increase, 1994–95: 2.7

Number of employed workers lacking health insurance: 23 million

Percentage of those employed by firms with fewer than 100 employees: 49

Percentage of Americans aged 45–54 in same job for 10 or more years: 47

Percentage of Americans "somewhat" or "completely" satisfied with their job: 86

Percentage of Americans who think workers have not received a fair share of economic recovery's benefits: 65

Profits of U.S. corporations in 1996: $736 billion
in 1991: $411 billion

Federal income taxes paid by corporations: $171 billion
by individuals: $656 billion

Estimated annual federal subsidies for corporations: $28–65 billion

Estimated annual cost to corporations of federal regulations: $667 billion

Total corporate PAC contributions in 1995–96 federal cycle: $78.2 million

Contributions by all other PACs: $139.6 million

Philanthropic contributions by corporations: $7.4 billion

Number of shareholder resolutions on corporate governance and social policy voted on by shareholders: 399
Number approved: 0

Percentage of outside directors on Fortune 500 boards of directors in 1997: 82
in 1979: 69

Amount corporations spend (1994) on management consultants: $15 billion

Amount Americans spend on self-help books: $462 million

Sources: 1,2 U.S. Department of Commerce; 3,4,5,6 Time-Warner, Inc., Fortune 500 Group; 7 *World Development Report, 1997*; 8 U.S. Department of Commerce; 9 Dun & Bradstreet Corp.; 10,11 "Executive Pay Report," *Business Week* (April 21, 1997); 12, 13 U.S. Census Bureau; 14, 15 Employee Benefit Research Institute; 16 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; 17, 18 CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup poll, Aug. 22–25, 1997; 19, 20 U.S. Department of Commerce; 21,22 U.S. Internal Revenue Service; 23 U.S. Congressional Budget Office, Cato Institute; 24 Center for the Study of American Business; 25, 26 U.S. Federal Election Commission; 27 *Giving USA 1996*; 28, 29 Investor Responsibility Research Center; 30, 31 Korn Ferry International; 32 *The Witch Doctors: Making Sense of the Management Gurus* (1996), by John Micklethwait and Adrian Woolridge; 33 industry estimate

Anticorporate sentiment grew during the 1960s. In 1969, picketers at Dow Chemical's annual meeting protested the corporation's production of napalm.

All of these forces—bankruptcy, globalization, Wall Street—served as constant reminders during the 1980s and afterward that the market system has real teeth. The modern corporation, once seen chiefly as a great, lumbering beast, was now exposed as highly vulnerable to internal disorders, eager competitors, and hungry predators.

We can see this shift in mental attitude toward the American corporation by looking at the transformed image of General Motors on the American left. In the 1960s, General Motors was seen as bad: it exploited workers and consumers, collected obscenely large profits, made cars that were "unsafe at any speed," and even hired private detectives to snoop into the private life of a lone critic, Ralph Nader. By the end of the 1980s the leading critic of General Motors was no longer Ralph Nader but Michael Moore, the director of the film *Roger and Me*. General Motors is still bad: its principal crime, however, is not that it makes billions of dollars a year in profits but that it *loses* billions, and so shuts down all its plants in Flint, Michigan, throwing thousands of employees out of work.

Even in its somewhat diminished state today, General Motors remains the largest industrial corporation in the United States, with 700,000 employees, sales of some $169 billion annually, and profits

in a relatively good year (such as this one) of more than $7 billion. Does this seem a fragile creature? Critics of Nader's era would have scoffed. "GM can take care of itself," they would have said. Critiques such as Moore's raise another kind of issue entirely: shouldn't the government make sure that corporations do not suffer ruinous losses?

This brings us to another change, in addition to the decline of government and the end of the myth of corporate omnipotence, that the 1980s wrought. At the beginning of the decade, utopia for many people on America's political left was located somewhere near Sweden. But when Sweden suffered the same enervating combination of inflation, unemployment, and sluggish economic growth as the rest of Europe during the 1970s and '80s, the location of utopia shifted to the Pacific.

The swift rise in the prestige of the Japanese model cannot be understood without recognizing that it occurred while the governments of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher were both claiming that the cause of the economic malaise in their countries was meddling big government. Only a return to a form of capitalism red in tooth and claw would deliver faster economic growth. Searching for a rebuttal, some social thinkers looked to East Asia, where Japan and other countries had achieved phenomenal growth rates. In those nations, government and business worked very closely together. Americans described the Japanese "partnership" of business and government simply as "Japan, Inc." Dozens of books—including *Minding America's Business* (1982), by Reich and Ira Magaziner, Chalmers Johnson's *MITI and the Japanese Miracle* (1982), Ronald Dore's (excellent) *Flexible Rigidities* (1986), and James Fallows's *Looking at the Sun* (1994)—argued that the East Asian economic model showed that the Reagan-Thatcher embrace of laissez faire was misguided: the fastest growth occurred where governments did play a powerful role in the economy.

Hence the temptation to say that the old adversarial relationship between government and corporations in the United States was harmful, that the two needed to work more closely together. The economy would grow faster, it was argued, if government adopted industrial policies similar to Japan's. That particular prescription, with its threat of a suffocating government embrace, horrified much of the corporate world, but if one had to sum up the intent of Japanese industrial policy in a phrase, it would be "Have the government do nice things for large industrial corporations."

In a peculiar reversal, then, an intellectual quest that began as a left-wing critique of Reagan's "miracle of the marketplace" culminated in a reformist romance with the corporation. The Left's new notions, combined with the public's growing awareness of the fragility of even the largest enterprises, have helped to make the corporation in the public imagination less a beast and more a beauty than at any other time in recent history.

That is not to say that the corporation has somehow been completely unfettered and freed of criticism. Regulations still pour out in *The Federal Register*. The old-style "economic" regulation by agencies such as the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Civil Aeronautics Board has been greatly reduced. But health, safety, and environmental regulations by agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency continue to increase, and continue to have overwhelming political support.

Legislators still impose new obligations on corporations. The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, for example, required employers to provide, sometimes at considerable expense, "reasonable accommodation" to employees with disabilities. And Bill Clinton's first legislative initiative was the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, which requires corporations to give employees time off to care for sick relatives.

Moreover, while Robert Reich's ambitious scheme to shape corporate behavior came to naught, more narrowly targeted efforts at control have made more of an impact. In product liability lawsuits, American juries severely punish corporations when there is any hint that they cut corners on product safety, whether it is Ford's failure to spend more money to keep the Pinto's gasoline tank from exploding or McDonalds' routinely keeping its coffee at flesh-scalding temperatures. Large jury awards in product liability cases may not do much to alter the distribution of wealth (and many awards, such as the one in the McDonald's case, are reduced or thrown out on appeal after the initial headline-grabbing judgment), but they loom large in the consciousness of insurance companies and corporation managers. Overall, U.S. corporations spend about $1.4 billion every year defending themselves against product liability lawsuits, and far larger sums in judgments and settlements.

The "shareholder rights" movement, meanwhile, has been attempting to make corporations openly confront issues such as environmental protection, worker safety standards, and executive pay, albeit with little success. The corporate world itself has pursued some modest reforms. There has been an effort to put more outside representatives on corporate boards of directors, and many large investors are taking a more active role in the oversight of corporate management.

It may be a measure of Americans' overall willingness to leave corporations to their own devices that the issue that most agitates the public appears to be executive pay. By the end of the 1980s, the average chief executive officer of a large American company received 20 times the salary of the average manufacturing worker—more than twice the relative pay of top managers in Canada, France, or Germany. The widening gap between the pay of CEOs and others is important, but mostly as a symbol: highly paid CEOs are only a tiny fraction of the population, and so drastic reductions in CEO compensation would have little impact on income inequality

The revolt of the cubicles: the grim humor of the enormously popular Dilbert cartoon strip captures the mood of resentment in the era of downsizing.

in the United States. And indeed, the public's concern is selective. It is outraged when CEOs are paid millions even as they preside over the "downsizing" of thousands of employees. But the heads of growing, entrepreneurial companies—such as Netscape and Microsoft—are immune from such criticism: they are culture heros.

Public opinion prompted Congress to act in 1993, barring corporations from deducting salaries of more than $1 million from corporate income taxes. It was a symbolic gesture. Assessing the measure recently in the *New York Times*, Yale University law professor Michael Graetz concluded that it "was really designed to not have any real effect and . . . just as intended, it had no effect."

What distinguishes all of these attacks against and proposed limitations on the power and role of the American corporation is that they are narrowly focused. While Ralph Nader and the *Nation* can still be relied upon to deliver the old-time anticorporate religion, we lack a critique of the role of the contemporary corporation with anything like the comprehensive reach of the Progressive-New Deal tradition.

One effort in recent times is the argument exemplified by William Hutton's *The State We're In* (1996). Hutton, editor of Britain's *Observer*, calls for a corporation governed in the interest not of shareholders alone but of all "stakeholders." The "stakeholder society" has become a prominent part of the political language of British prime minister Tony Blair's New Labor Party (though it is not yet clear what difference it will make for policies).

In its essence, the idea is a very old one, a concept at the heart of the New Deal. Corporations have certain responsibilities to the communities in which they operate. Employees have an obvious stake in the corporation. Suppliers who have invested in capacity, or customers who have assumed that a corporation would continue to supply them with a valued component, all have something to gain by the success and good-faith behavior of corporations, and all have something to lose by corporate failure or the breaking of implicit contracts and commitments.

Conservatives argue that market competition will ensure the protection of stakeholders' interests. Corporations that do not treat their workers (or suppliers, or customers) fairly, in this view, will soon find that these stakeholders have voted with their feet for some other cor-

poration. To impose more formal obligations on shareholders, moreover, would be to reduce the corporation's ability to compete and, in the long run, to hurt the stakeholders as well. Reformers have had less confidence in the market's power to safeguard stakeholder interests. New Dealers, for example, created the National Labor Relations Board and imposed on corporations the vaguely stated but powerful legal mandate that they "bargain in good faith" with recognized unions. Abroad, New Dealers experimented further: the post–World War II "co-determination" system that gave West German union representatives full seats on the country's corporate boards of directors was strongly encouraged by the American Occupation.

Conservatives complain that such attempts to give nonowner stakeholders formal voices in corporate affairs are illicit: they confiscate and redistribute the private property of shareholders. Yet the government gives shareholders the extremely important privilege of limited liability—they gain the profits of the corporation if it does well, but are not liable for the losses if it goes bankrupt. Shouldn't some shareholder obligation or responsibility be required in return?

The only reasonable answer must be "perhaps": we don't know enough to strike the right balance between the voice of shareholders interested in efficiency, innovation, and profits, and the voices of other stakeholders. During the 1980s, shareholders made two major gains in different fields at the expense of stakeholders: the private-sector union movement virtually collapsed, and the growing "market for corporate control" amplified shareholder power. If—as advocates of laissez faire believe—the economy suffers large losses in efficiency from corporations' taking nonshareholder stakeholder interests into account, then the reduction in nonshareholder stakeholder voice in the 1980s should have been accompanied by a burst of rapid economic growth. But economic statistics show no sign that these reductions led to a more efficient and more productive economy. And the rapid increases in income inequality in the 1980s suggest that they may have had substantial social costs.

The case is not conclusive. Aggregates mask important details. Many other factors affected the pace of economic growth in the 1980s, complicating assessments of the impact of changes in corporate governance. There is reason to think that the assertion of stakeholder rights can be economically disastrous. For example, no one disputes that the economic performance of the British industries nationalized in the late 1940s (and then denationalized under Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s) was abysmal.

The stakeholder point of view provides a language in which to talk about corporate governance, not a comprehensive program or set of settled conclusions. This is just as well. A Clinton administration that arrived in office aiming to pile on new mandates, attack global oligopoly, and launch a campaign of rhetorical warfare against the man-

agerial class would not have presided over an economic expansion like the one of the past few years. There is a sense in which the policies pursued since 1993 by the administration are the very skillful playing-out of a weak deal.

Yet the near-universal obeisance paid today to the importance of a "good business climate" is not necessarily healthy. A polity has its own ecology. Intellectual and ideological variation is the source of adaptability. And adaptation is necessary when conditions change, as they always do.

Perhaps change will arrive in the form of crisis. Perhaps it will come in the form of economic success: as large government budget deficits shrink and real interest rates fall, economic growth may well accelerate. More certain prosperity could shift the focus of political concern away from making the economy grow faster to figuring out how to better distribute the economic pie. Some obvious problems present themselves. We know that America's corporations give their workers less training than corporations in other industrial countries. The gap between managerial and worker pay is far wider in the United States than elsewhere—and far wider than it used to be here. We know that U.S. corporations are not shouldering as large a share of the nation's social-insurance missions—such as employer-sponsored health insurance and defined-benefit pension plans—as they once did. When Richard Nixon was president, seven out of 10 Americans received health insurance through their employer. By 2000, that proportion will likely fall to five out of 10.

In the 1930s, the United States was able to respond quickly to the Great Depression in large part because the Progressive critique of the economic order had developed as part of the nation's political ecology since the Gilded Age. The ideas had been discussed, refined, and even experimented with at the state level for decades. So at least some of the flaws in such policies had been worked out.

The fact that our national political ecology now lacks such a living, breathing body of ideas should be a matter of concern to all friends of democratic capitalism.

A Short Journey to the Unknown

Naturalists often head off into the wilderness half in quest of a transforming epiphany. William Warner journeyed to the top of the world for quite different reasons, but what he encountered there was nothing short of extraordinary.

by **William W. Warner**

Authors who write about nature often seem to experience dramatic visions—epiphanies, we might better call them—in which the individual is revealed as a vital element in nature's grand design for the planet Earth. Annie Dillard, for example, has seen a cedar tree in her backyard burning with lights, "each cell buzzing with flame." Rick Bass sits on a rocky hilltop overlooking lush green fields of mint and "feel[s] my soul cutting down into the bedrock." So strong is this feeling, in fact, that he comes to believe he is as one with the rock. "I, too, am becoming the earth," Bass declares. The Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan finds a large colony of flamingos wading in a Yucatán lagoon and describes the sight as "a vision so incredible and thick and numinous [that] I know it will open inside my eyes in the moment before death when a lived life draws itself out one last time before closing forever and we are drawn to these birds the way fire pulls air into it."

Those who have had similar epiphanies usually feel tempted to write about them, often at great length. I have not. Quite simply, it is because I have yet to experience the state of transport that gives birth to such moments of ecstatic vision. Perhaps this will always be the case, since my moments of deepest reflection and inner calm are habitually interrupted by such commonplace thoughts as whether or not I left the dog locked outside in the backyard or paid the overdue gas bill. But I have experienced one moment, one brief and precious moment, when I came very close to a transcendental vision, brought

The tiny village of Grise Fiord remains the northernmost permanent settlement in North America.

on by an uncommonly barren but dramatic landscape. It is perhaps worth the telling, especially for those readers who, like myself, await their first epiphany from the world of nature. So, too, is the journey to the place where it occurred, which, as the expression has it, was well off the beaten path.

My near-epiphany took place on Ellesmere Island, the most northern and one of the largest islands in Canada's Arctic archipelago. I had gone there—it is now almost 30 years past—after spending six years of foreign service assignments in the tropics, without ever seeing so much as a flake of snow. There thus welled up in me an irrational urge to strike out for the north. Not just anywhere in the north, that is, but to the northernmost possible lands of the Western Hemisphere, as I had already done with the southernmost.

More particularly my thoughts centered on the small town of Grise Fiord, which at 76°24' north latitude can lay claim to being the northernmost Eskimo habitation in North America. Neighboring Greenland, it is true, has a sprinkling of Eskimo villages near Thule, some 75 miles farther north, but Greenland is not generally considered part of North America by those who ponder such matters. (Politically correct nomenclature now requires that we say *Kalaallit Nunaat* for Greenland and *Inuit* for Eskimo, but I wish to remain faithful to the usage of yesteryear, at the time of my visit.) More interesting than such considerations, however, was the

promise of finding the nesting grounds of the rare ivory gull and the possibility of viewing the narwhal, the primitive whale with a long and spirally twisted tusk which is in fact a grossly elongated canine tooth. Best of all, I was told that Arctic char, a spirited game fish that is in fact closely related to our North American brook trout, inhabited the lakes, rivers, and fiords of Ellesmere. As an ardent fly fisherman, I became obsessed with the thought of being the first to take this handsome trout on a fly at the northern limit of its range.

The journey to Grise Fiord was a long one, even by the aviation standards of the time. By far the longest leg came first, from Montreal to Resolute on Cornwallis Island via Frobisher Bay, aboard the now defunct Nordair, once hailed as "the workhorse of the Arctic." Getting into one's assigned seat was an adventure in itself, entailing a climb over boxes of machine parts, a barred crate containing two growling huskies, and a small mountain of mail sacks piled up in the center aisle and forward seats. These discomforts aside, the flight I booked in mid-July was a good one, blessed with fine weather and the Arctic's stunning visibility, unmatched in more temperate latitudes. I therefore unfolded my National Geographic map of northern Canada, spread it out on my lap, and watched it come alive from my window on the starboard side of the aircraft. Such landmarks as the peninsula on the southwest corner of Baffin Island that bears the foreboding name of Meta Incognita, the vast Foxe Basin, the Barnes Ice Cap, the narrow and icebound Fury and Hecla Strait, and Somerset Island all passed under us, as though the landscape was being slowly unscrolled on a modern day computer screen. Finally, there were the barren grounds and snowfields of Cornwallis Island, 600 miles north of the Arctic Circle and at the time the site of the North Magnetic Pole (it has since moved approximately 250 miles to the north), as well as the town of Resolute, which was then the scene of feverish prospecting for oil and precious metals.

Two days later, after a number of false starts with various bush pilots, I found passage to Grise Fiord on a twin-engine Otter with balloon tires carrying a disassembled Caterpillar tractor, tents and other camping gear, two petroleum geologists, an elderly Eskimo woman recuperating from tuberculosis, and a taciturn pilot. First stop was nearby Devon Island, where the pilot made several passes over some gravel beaches before opting for a moderately level field a mile or so inland. Here we left the Caterpillar tractor and the two geologists, who seemed visibly displeased with their new surroundings. The pilot then invited me to sit up forward in the copilot's seat, and the Eskimo lady began to cackle with pleasure when she learned that I, too, was bound for Grise Fiord, which she made very clear was her home. In this manner, we headed north and east to Ellesmere.

If the trip to Resolute had been spectacular, the shorter trip from Devon Island to Grise Fiord was unforgettable. Somewhat to my surprise I found Jones Sound, the body of water separating Devon and Ellesmere Islands, to be icebound clear across its 70-mile expanse. Thick as it was, however, the ice was covered with a mosaic of melt pools. The water in these surface

> William W. Warner, *a former assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, is the author of* Beautiful Swimmers: Watermen, Crabs and the Chesapeake Bay *(1976), which won the Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction;* Distant Water: The Fate of the North Atlantic Fisherman *(1983); and* At Peace with All Their Neighbors: Catholics and Catholicism in the National Capital, 1787–1860 *(1994).*

pools combined with the ice beneath them to produce an exquisite array of blue-to-green gradations, much like the refractions seen at the waterline of floating icebergs which are so hard to describe. (Or paint, as the noted 19th-century landscape artist Frederick Church admitted after two trips to Labrador for just such a purpose.) There were also wide leads, or open passages, where the sun sparkled on blue water, in marked contrast to the dazzling white of the ice. Here the ice edges, still three to four feet thick, showed the strange inner blue that is so characteristic of high-density ice forms.

Coming closer to Ellesmere we found good numbers of plump seals at the edge of each lead, their bodies stretched out on the ice in every imaginable posture. But at first sight of the Otter they dove quickly and gracefully back into the water, one after another, like so many Esther Williams aquabelles in a Hollywood spectacular. My pilot companion now broke his silence to smile and say that he had seldom seen such a fine summer day or, for that matter, so many fat seals. He then went out of our way to search for more leads and to show me the hanging glaciers that mark the northeastern coast of Devon Island. Shortly after getting back on course, we passed a majestic, twin-spired iceberg still locked in the sea ice and probably grounded as well. I turned and twisted in my seat to keep it in view as long as possible. "That's your drinking water supply," the pilot said, without further explanation.

He then banked the plane very sharply to starboard. I turned around and saw that we were lining up for a final approach to a rough dirt and crushed-rock landing strip, carved out of the slope of a thousand-foot mountain. After hitting the strip hard and taking one or two bounces, the Otter came to a halt. We had arrived at Grise Fiord.

As I waited for my duffle bag to emerge from the plane's tail section, a young man whose English revealed a faint trace of far-distant lands welcomed me and asked me as politely as possible what had brought me as far as Grise Fiord. Lacking a better answer, I told him I was interested in Arctic wildlife in general. My welcomer said I had come to the right place and introduced himself as Bezal Jesudason. He told me he was in charge of Grise Fiord's power generator and that I was welcome to stay in his house, which had an extra room for visitors.

As we drove off in a battered Land Rover, Bezal told me he had come to the Arctic from a long way away—from India's southern province of Madras, in fact—and that he liked very much the challenge of living in the far north. Very soon we were in sight of the town, the principal feature of which was a row of about 20 small, box-shaped houses. Each of them faced south along the shore of Jones Sound, not far from a gravel beach where large blocks of ice were jumbled helter-skelter by the rise and fall of the tide. There was also a warehouse or two, a school, and a cooperative store with a front porch that looked to be the town's favorite gathering place. Beyond that I saw only two larger houses, each with second stories. One of these was Bezal's. The other, he told me, belonged to the Canadian government's settlement manager.

That afternoon, after Bezal and I had a short walk, a native named Akeeagok came to visit. Bezal offered him tea and cookies, as Eskimo visiting protocols demand on such occasions. Akeeagok ate his cookies and drank his tea in a silence punctuated only by lip smacking and grunts of satisfaction. I broke the silence by asking about the possibilities of char fishing. Akeeagok remained silent and frowned. After what seemed like a long time he shook his head and said, no, it was not possible. The best char fishing was in a lake, still frozen, across the fiord after which Grise Fiord was named, which was also frozen. I then asked about the ivory gull nesting sites. Another silence followed, after which Akeeagok, with the help of Bezal, said that that, too, would be impossible. No one would now want to take the long trip over the sea ice to reach them. A question about narwhals elicited what I first thought was a more favorable response. Akeeagok at least smiled and made hand signals to imitate the narwhal's long tusk. Yes, indeed, he said, the narwhal was a very

strange animal. But, no, now was not the time to see it. That would come later, when larger leads and more open water permitted some boat travel.

After our guest left, it began to dawn on me—very slowly, I confess—that Akeeagok's long silences and hesitant answers probably meant that all those limpid aquamarine melt pools on the dazzling white sea ice I had seen from the air might prove the undoing of all my plans on the ground. Could it be that the prevailing ice conditions made travel by Skidoos, as the natives called their snowmobiles, too difficult or, more precisely, too wet, though the ice was certainly still strong enough?

Yes, Bezal said, it was unfortunate, but all the things I wanted to do were only possible during "ship time," as it is called in the high Arctic, when Jones Sound was largely ice free and there was enough open water for boat travel. Sometimes this happened in July, to be sure, but August was more the rule.

That night I found it difficult to get to sleep. I worried about what I was going to do for the rest of my stay and found myself bothered by the daylight that streamed through the window of Bezal's extra room all night long—not merely light enough to see, but the full light of a sun that dipped almost imperceptibly in a shallow arc above the mountainous horizon. I watched little children playing at all hours, throwing stones in a stream. A man sat smoking on the porch of the co-op. No one, it seemed, was going about any business or purposeful activity. As I would later learn, summer in the high Arctic is but one long day, when clock time and diurnal rounds are on hold and largely forgotten.

In the days that followed I took short walks along the shore of Jones Sound, visited with Eskimos in their small, government-provided "matchbox" houses, and attended a native square dance where my various missteps produced small gales of high-spirited laughter. I also learned that Grise Fiord was considered one of the best "hunting towns" that the Canadian government had built in recent times to resettle and house formerly nomadic Eskimos who did not want to enter the white man's wage economy. This was because Grise Fiord, previously the site of a lonely Royal Canadian Mounted Police post, had good populations of ringed and bearded seals, two species that remain in the high Arctic the year around, not to mention seabirds, fish, and a relatively high number of polar bears.

By the fifth day of my visit, however, I had a strong urge to strike out beyond town on some kind of excursion. Obviously, it would have to be by land, and I thought that perhaps I could reach a large ice cap that my National Geographic map showed coming close to Grise Fiord from the north. There was no telling how far it might be—five, 10, or 15 miles—judging from such a small-scale map of the Canadian Arctic. But at least it was an objective.

I set off, therefore, with Bezal's good wishes and a knapsack stuffed with sandwiches, a precious orange, and a small tin of apple juice. There would be no problem with the weather, Bezal thought, since one sun-filled day had followed another all week long. This was to be expected, moreover, because the high Arctic is in fact a desert with annual precipitation of less than three or four inches at the latitude of Grise Fiord. Much of what does occur in the form of snow tends to remain, however. Thus summer snowfields, ice caps, and glaciers.

My route at first took me along the shore, where I passed the body of a ringed seal sighted and shot amid great excitement during the square dance five days earlier. The fact that it lay there untouched gave me pause. What of the popular image of the Eskimo and other native Americans living in harmony with nature, I wondered, taking only what they need? Any further thoughts on this subject were suddenly dispelled, however, by the demonic howling of about a dozen sled dogs, all huskies both in name and size. As in many Eskimo communities, the dogs were tethered on the outskirts of town by wire traces which ran along a stout cable. The ferocity of their growls and their teeth baring was intimidating, to say the least. I began to run, I must confess, when it

looked as though the loop of one of the wire traces might unravel. There are few Eskimo communities that have not lost a little child when this happens or, what is more common, when children venture too close as they taunt the dogs by throwing pebbles and stones.

The wolflike calls of the huskies stayed with me for a long time as I headed inland along the course of a gurgling brook that ran down a broad valley from a distant snowfield. Bezal had told me the brook supplied the town's drinking water, and I soon came upon a rubber intake hose and a small electrical pump. But for most of the year the pump could not be used, when the brook was stilled by solid ice. Then came the much more difficult task—Bezal sighed when he described it—of hitching up the cargo sleds of the Skidoos and going out to the twin-spired iceberg I had seen from the air. Once there you had to chop away at the berg, fill the cargo sleds with blocks of its thousand-year-old ice, and take them home for melting. This was the "drinking water supply" of the Otter pilot's cryptic remark. It tasted very good, Bezal had assured me.

Gradually the valley ahead grew steeper and the hiking more difficult. As far as the eye could see, the ground was covered with broken rock—a vast sea of rocks, or *Felsenmeer*, in the apposite German term used by Arctic scientists. Brown was the prevailing color of this sea, however, shading from the pale tan of cocoa powder to the light brown of natural mahogany. It seemed devoid of any plant life, or so I thought, at least, until I came to the nearest large snowfield. There, close to the edge of the snow, were two bright, yellow Arctic poppies growing between the rocks. I had first seen such poppies on Cornwallis Island, where it is said that, along with the flowering saxifrages, they literally push up through the snow with the first melting temperatures. Be that as it may, the sight of the hardy little poppies lifted my spirits. I bent down to cup my hands around them and gently blew on them, as though a few seconds of my warm breath could possibly spur their growth. A useless gesture, perhaps, but understandable.

After drinking some of the snowfield melt water, I trudged on. One hour later I reached a ridge and looked behind me. There were no more familiar landmarks. Jones Sound, the winter water-supply iceberg, the little town of Grise Fiord—all were hidden by intervening ridges or the general lay of the land. As I continued to climb, the footing became more difficult. Ahead of me was a steep talus slope with larger and sharper-edged rocks. It was no longer a *Felsenmeer*, a sea of rocks, I thought to myself. Better, a *Felsensturm*, a storm of wildly jumbled rocks and small boulders where any misstep might mean a sprained ankle or bruised shin. As I began to have doubts about the wisdom of continuing, a jaunty little snow bunting, one of only five species of perching birds that come as far north as Ellesmere, flew by and landed on a rock not far ahead of me. It was clearly a male, dressed in his peak mating plumage of black and white. He bobbed up and down on the rock, looking at me and chirping in what seemed a very inquisitive manner. It seemed almost as though he were asking me what I was doing so high up in the barren domain that was his private mating ground. He then flew to the top of the next ridge, where he began to sing melodiously. I decided to follow.

"A smooth, swelling skyline of pure white, high up against a clear blue sky, is often a land traveler's first view of an Arctic ice cap: it is a quintessentially Arctic sight." So reads an Arctic guidebook in my library. The description is exactly what I saw from the top of the next ridge—the blinding white of a huge, shallow-domed mass of ice set against a blue sky, dotted only with a few puffy-white fair-weather clouds.

At last I had reached it, or so I thought, since it did not look to be far away. How interesting it would be to examine close at hand! Would the ice cap be advancing, or spreading outward along its periphery, spawning what are known as outflow glaciers? (An ice cap is essentially a mass of ice lying on relatively level ground; the weight of accumulating snow on its underlying layers of ice will force the cap to expand outward in tongue-shaped

lobes that may become moving glaciers when they reach downhill terrain.) Or would it be retreating, sending out torrents of melt water from its scalloped tongues? I continued my climb at double time.

A half-hour later I had climbed the talus slope, but the ice cap seemed as distant as ever. Ahead of me was a narrow snowfield leading up a more gentle incline. The easy footing it provided was a merciful relief, but the farther up I walked on the granular snow, the more I became uneasy. Below me a faint rushing and rumbling sound came from deep down under the snow, a sound I had heard once before, on the summit cone of New Hampshire's Mount Washington on a hike in June. Undoubtedly, it was a subsurface melt-water stream, but I could not see an outlet anywhere along the lower edge of the snowfield. Perhaps the water was backing up behind an ice dam or a ridge in the permafrost ground. No doubt it would eventually break out from under the snow, somewhere down the slope. I therefore walked more carefully, stepping gingerly, one foot after another.

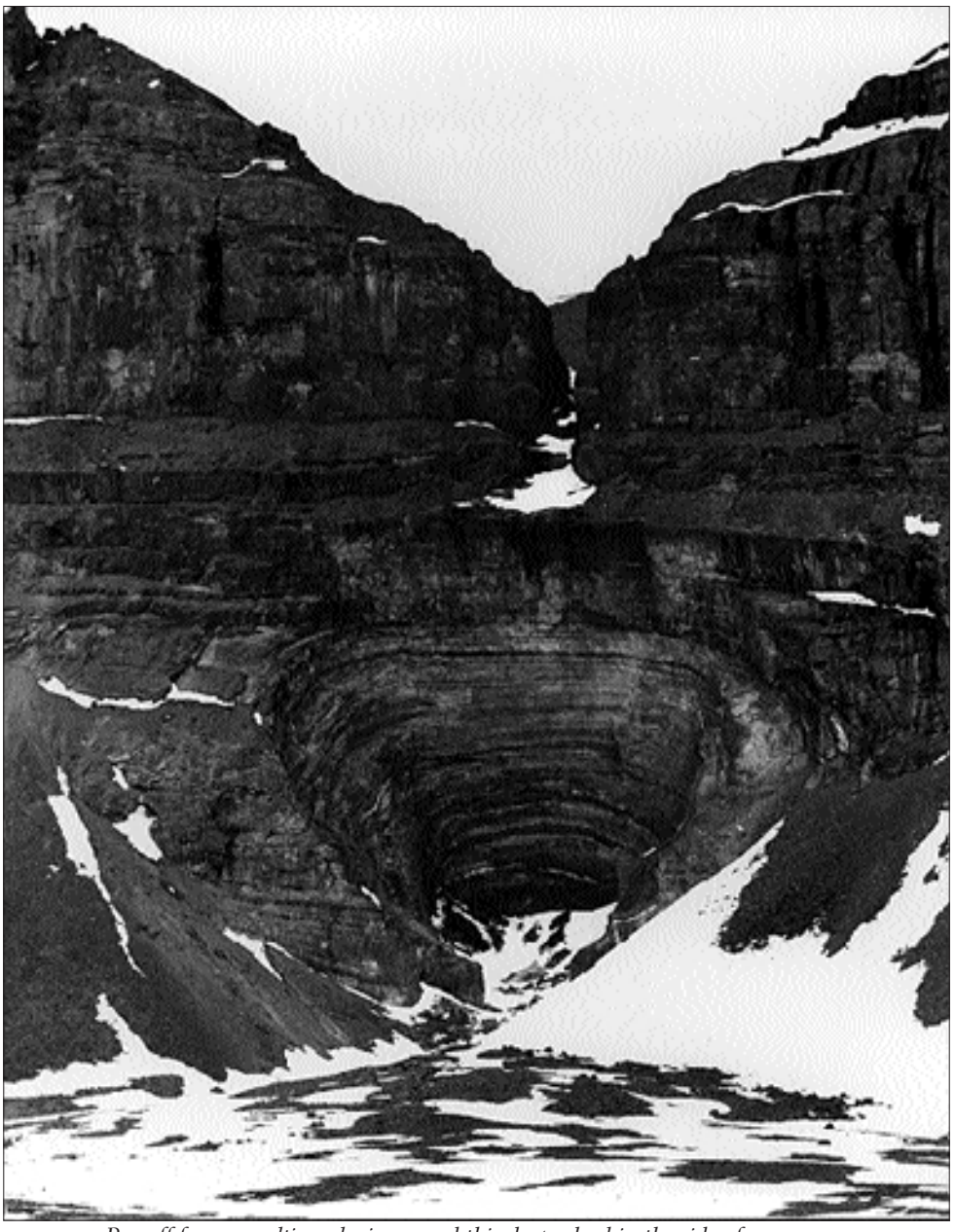
The end of the snowfield brought me up to a U-shaped saddle between two mountains that might well have been formed by a hanging glacier in geologic time. The ice cap was no longer visible, blocked by the steeper side of the saddle which I knew instinctively was beyond my ability. I sat down, tired and discouraged, convinced I had picked a bad route. Any close encounter with an ice cap might have to wait another day.

Presently, after catching my breath and examining the contents of my lunch bag, I looked out from my perch at the edge of the saddle. Spread before me was a great valley, a vast basin six or seven miles in its longest dimension, surrounded by low mountain ranges. It seemed a land to itself, completely hidden and cut off from the surrounding terrain. Only the monochrome light tans and browns of its rock fields were the same, interrupted here and there by snow patches and small ice caps on some of the surrounding mountains. What struck me first was the silence, a vast and enveloping silence that was almost palpable, broken only by small whispers of wind. I therefore closed my eyes and "listened to the quiet," as a yoga teacher had once instructed me. Almost immediately a sense of calm and well-being came over me.

When I opened my eyes again the thought came to me that perhaps I was the first human being to view the valley, or at least to have set foot on the exact spot where I had found such excellent vantage. Spread before me was what seemed to be a sterile land, not yet touched by any plant or animal succession. There were no bright-yellow poppies or blue saxifrages pushing up through the rocks or snow. There were no birds, no songs of snow buntings or larkspurs, nor gulls or other seabirds flying overhead. There were not even any mosses or lichens to be found on the rocks near where I sat. Why, therefore, would any Arctic foxes or other animals climb up to this barren land, much less the Eskimos who hunt them?

Yes, it was entirely possible! I could be the first to see this land, this unknown valley. I half-closed my eyes in meditation and felt such a strong sensation of lightness and power that I thought I might actually levitate. At the same time, some uncommonly wild and preternatural images raced through my mind. Very clearly it came to me that I was witnessing the land at the dawn of creation. Snatches of half-forgotten biblical phrases came quickly to mind. On the third day . . . Let the waters divide . . . dry land . . . God called it earth . . . and saw that it was good. And here this dry land called earth was laid out before me for my sole and private contemplation! In the sheer exuberance of the moment I decided to take possession of the valley in the manner of a Spanish conquistador. Cupping my hands around my mouth, I shouted at the top of my voice, "I CLAIM THIS LAND IN THE NAME OF GOD AND THEIR SOVEREIGN MAJESTIES—!"

Suddenly a frightening noise came from above me. It sounded as though freight trains were rattling down the U-shaped valley behind me, passing close by. Rather than levitating, I now felt myself sinking



Runoff from a melting glacier carved this deep whorl in the side of a crevasse.

down and trying to hide behind a large boulder. When I dared to peer out from my perch, I saw what looked like a small tornado picking up rocks as large as grapefruits and whirling them in the air. Within seconds, a smaller one—call it a good-sized dust devil—followed in its wake. Their noise and aftermath echoes seemed to continue for a long time as the two twisters danced their way down into the valley, their trails marked by spirals of rock dust. At the same time, a cold draft of air blew down from above. What in the world was happening, I wondered, on such an otherwise calm and clear day?

There was no time to think. Now my senses were assailed by the sound of rushing water, and I looked down to see a depression in the snowfield somewhat like the first signs of a crevasse running downhill from the center of the field. Sure enough, a stream of gushing water now surged from the lower end of the field. What was worse, the water seemed to be following my exact route of ascent, gaining volume all the while.

The signs were all too clear. I had defiled this untouched land with such a foolish and vainglorious act. More, I had broken the Second Commandment. Now the heavens were speaking. Quickly, I munched half a sandwich, stuffed the

other half in the pocket of my parka, and started my descent, humbled and contrite.

Of the trip down, I prefer to say very little. What stands out in my mind is that I had to cross the newborn melt stream not once, but three or four times. As a consequence, since I had gone in over the top of my felt-lined Sorel boots, my feet were numb from the ice water. When I walked fast or almost ran downhill trying to warm them, I risked several tumbles. It was necessary to slow down and use caution, I realized, cold feet or no.

By the time I approached the coast, I was more than glad to be greeted by the snarling huskies and, not too much later, to arrive at Bezal's in time for tea. I remember how happy I felt in dry socks and warm slippers, laughing and wolfing down the tea and cookies. Akeeagok was there to offer me a guttural welcome, and he and Bezal both laughed when I tried to tell them the events of the day, punctuated by my best efforts at sign language. Soon the chairman of Grise Fiord's recreation committee, an Eskimo named Pijamini, dropped by with a friend to announce another square dance in the recreation hall that night. He and his friend seemed greatly amused as I tried to excuse myself by an elaborate pantomime of climbing a high mountain and then descending, footsore and weary, with an aching back.

After a splendid supper with Bezal, who had proven such a good friend, I looked out from my bedroom window. The sun was only beginning the slow parabola of its descent and the air was still so clear that when I looked out over the sea ice, still dotted with the exquisite blue-green melt pools, I fancied I could see clear across Jones Sound to the loom of the land on Devon Island. Later that night, I stopped packing for the flight out the next day to look out the window a number of times. Little children were staying up all hours, throwing pebbles in the stream or playing hopscotch. Older men were sitting on the co-op porch, smoking as before. Presently, people from different parts of town started converging on the recreation hall, like iron filings to a magnet. It was not really night, I had to remind myself, just another moment in the one long day that is the high Arctic summer.

I remember going to sleep gratefully, thinking God was in his heaven and all was right with the small world of Grise Fiord. It had been a good trip, after all, no matter the absence of ivory gulls, fishing, or the chance to see narwhals.

In the long years since, I have learned two truths.

The first is that the strange little twisters that scared me away from the hidden valley may have been by-products of what meteorologists call katabatic, or "downhill," winds, from the Greek *katabasis*, meaning "descent." These occur when cold air, always heavier than warm, sinks close to inclined ground and picks up speed as it goes down. If the cold air passes over ice caps or glaciers, it quickly becomes still colder, and therefore heavier, until it bowls down the mountain at extreme speeds. If the katabatic winds meet warmer air rising uphill (as would certainly have been the case from the sun beating down on the light-brown rock fields of the hidden valley), the two opposing air masses clash and shear. They are then apt to produce vorticity, in the language of meteorology, meaning anything from the little eddies of dust devils to the spinning vortexes of death-dealing tornadoes.

The other and more important truth is that it is unwise to claim or even think of the land God called earth as one's private or exclusive domain. I have therefore never done so again. Nor do I any longer await the kind of transcendental event or ecstatic vision other writers have experienced. That sparkling day in the hidden valley, close by an Ellesmere ice cap, was event enough for me. And, best of all, the vision of it remains bold, clear, and as starkly beautiful as ever.

Current Books

Wrestling with God

GOD AND THE AMERICAN WRITER.
By Alfred Kazin. Knopf.
288 pp. $25

by Amy E. Schwartz

At last summer's University of Mississippi conference honoring the centennial of William Faulkner's birth, I happened to be waiting for a shuttle bus alongside a Faulknerian from Portugal and a Hawthorne specialist from Japan. "Maybe you can answer a question for me," said the Faulknerian to the Hawthornian. "We in Portugal find this American Calvinism very confusing. Would it be right to say the Presbyterians are Calvinists? They are the same as Protestants, no?" The Japanese scholar replied, "I don't know, exactly. I find it confusing too."

Illus. from Herman Melville's Moby Dick

Alfred Kazin, alas, was not with us at the bus stop. Had he been, aside from answering the question, he would have been pleased at such direct evidence for his view that American literature is the last place to look for an explanation of religious orthodoxy. In his deeply informed and passionate *God and the American Writer*, which, coincidentally, begins with Hawthorne and ends with Faulkner, the distinguished critic argues that America's greatest writers, "these strange minds"—the quotation is from Emily Dickinson—are as far as possible from endorsing any sort of "official" religious belief. Instead, they slug it out with the Deity from a position of autonomy, almost one of equality.

In the introduction, Kazin declares that his interest lies "not in the artist's personal belief but in the imagination he brings to his tale of religion in personal affairs." This turns out to be only half true. The author proves to be curious about a collective literary experience of God in the United States, which invariably requires reference to a writer's own beliefs. And as the half-guilty disclaimer makes clear, he knows that any such description requires inference and ventriloquism. It risks becoming reductive or, worse, manipulative—pressing the complex writer's complex beliefs into shapes that the lover of the work finds congenial.

In this regard, Kazin's lifetime literary intimacy with the figures he treats here—he dealt with most of them at length in his *On Native Grounds* (1942) or *An American Procession* (1976), or both—poses dangers. It is hard not to suspect that his fondness for a writer sometimes tempts him to see doubt or conflict where there is none, to overdraw the parallels between the religious thought of a Harriet Beecher Stowe (to take one case in which a stretch seems most painfully obvious) and the restless, relentless struggles

over religion expressed so vividly in Kazin's own published journals. A few writers whom Kazin admires display in these pages just the sort of certainty that he considers outside the major American tradition. Saul Bellow falls in this category; so, more famously, does Flannery O'Connor, whose celebrated exchange with Mary McCarthy on the subject is duly noted. (McCarthy had told O'Connor that as a lapsed Catholic she considered the Host a symbol, to which O'Connor replied, "Well, if it's a symbol, to hell with it.") Kazin quotes O'Connor wistfully—if only this were the American experience, this conviction!—but sticks by his belief that theological and moral sparring is the American writer's more traditional earmark.

Kazin seeks to rebut claims that American literature or culture has historically reflected a religious orthodoxy, or that Americans—especially their great writers, "standing a bit apart"—have ever done less than build their God from scratch, whether confidently or with agony. His thesis fits intuitively with Americans' traditional if now bitterly contested self-image as a people of pioneers and immigrants, trusting to an internal compass, lighting out for open territories, starting again and again from scratch. But the view against which Kazin defines this distinctively American quest—those groups of artists more tightly immured within a religious tradition, or more overwhelmed by the remains of one—is evoked only by scattered references to non-American poets and novelists: now Tolstoy, now Stevie Smith or Amos Oz. "I don't think it can be said of Faulkner what Tolstoy said to Maksim Gorki: God is the name of my desire," he observes. "That is not the way really good American writers today think or talk about religion, if they ever do." (The comment is a fair reflection of the book's intimate, offhand, yet peremptory style.)

At many points in *God and the American Writer*, Kazin appears to be arguing fiercely against some larger cultural sensibility, one whose particulars he never quite identifies but which has something to do with the rise of conservative politics and its effort to inject Christianity into the public sphere. After discussing Abraham Lincoln's humility and anguish, for example, the author declares: "Religion was to him a matter of the most intensely private conviction. Did he suspect that a wholly politicized religion would yet become everything to many Americans?"

Kazin's independent thinkers essentially fall into two categories. In one category are those who, insouciantly and self-assuredly, create their own systems of belief: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, William James (the "natural believer"), and even Thomas Jefferson. Cameo portraits of such figures, rather than analysis, carry Kazin's argument here. When James, feeling the pull toward belief, finds he has no idea what sort of a God could compel it, he works until he comes up with one. Emerson, an ordained minister, declares to his flock that he cannot believe in the Incarnation or transubstantiation, and takes off to preach the new spiritual framework of transcendentalism. Walt Whitman's God in the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1855) "comes a loving bedfellow and sleeps by my side all night," though by the 1881 edition this has been made less explicit.

None of these freewheeling thinkers give any impression of seeing their spiritual projects as problematic. Of course, as Kazin notes, none of their innovative versions of God and religion attained much popularity or permanence, either—not even Jefferson's—though Emerson attracted disciples and Whitman was "for awhile almost a religion in England."

By contrast, the torments of the doubters—Kazin's second category—came to reflect not just the American but the entire modern experience. Nathaniel Hawthorne engaged in internal dialogue with his Puritan ancestors, wondering in the preface to *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) what they would think of so frivolous and insubstantial a figure as a writer of stories. Herman Melville, whose widow at his death could find no buyer for his extensive library of theology, struggles like the raving Ahab to "strike through the

mask" at the "inscrutable thing" that infuriates him. Ahab is mad, but Melville is no surer of what lies behind the veil—only of its intensity. He writes to Hawthorne, whom he idolizes, that "I feel that the Godhead is broken up like the bread at the Supper, and that we are the pieces." Having created Ahab and been rebuffed by the reading public, Melville trails miserably around the Holy Land searching for meaning, which he packs into the unreadable poem *Clarel* (1876). His inability to leave God alone is mirrored in Mark Twain, who is so obsessed and infuriated with God that he pens declaration after declaration of his beliefs—God, yes, religion, no—but is unwilling to permit publication of the openly antireligious musings in *The Mysterious Stranger* (1916) until after his death.

For Kazin, Emily Dickinson manages to combine the struggling mode with the serene transcendentalist one, "absorbing a tradition without having to obey it," and telling a correspondent that "it is true that the unknown is the largest need of intellect, although for this no one thinks to thank God." A Dickinson quotation serves as the book's epigraph: "We thank thee, Father, for these strange minds that enamor us against thee."

Dickinson's importance is matched for the author by that of another key figure: Lincoln, depicted as a doubting man, facing the mutually exclusive but passionately held convictions of North and South about the will of God, forced to build a conception of his own. This vision of Lincoln is evidently fundamental to Kazin's idea of the book. In his published journals and in a 1996 preface to the 20th-anniversary edition of his *An American Procession*, Kazin talks about a book he is working on called *The Almighty Has His Own Purposes*—a phrase from Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address—which has become *God and the American Writer*. In this preface, Kazin suggests that slavery and the Civil War, more than any other factors, are responsible both for Americans' deep religiosity and for their inability to accept any theological answer as final. "On this terrible subject," he writes of slavery, "all true and ancient believers outdo the Biblical Jacob—they wrestle with Him forever."

This idea, though elegant, has problems, and the book's change of title may reflect their belated surfacing. The trouble is not the inclusion of Lincoln (or Jefferson) in the procession of American literary writers; this is hardly unprecedented, though it does produce complexities. (For all its eloquent reflections on divine will, Lincoln wrote the Second Inaugural to fulfill a public end, not a private vision.) The problem lies elsewhere. To begin with, the view that American theological independence flows from slavery, or from agony over the competing certainties about slavery, contradicts and in some ways trivializes Kazin's category of unconventional but confident writers—those who hold their ground before orthodoxy, whose self-assurance is the wellspring of their religious enthusiasm, and whose insistence on calling God as they see him is bound up in what is most American about American life.

Does the Second Inaugural show a would-be believer in agony before a divine will that seems unfathomable? Kazin draws our attention to a key sentence: "If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him?"

Faith versus doubt does not seem exactly the right framework here. Lincoln's analysis of the moral situation is entirely consistent with a religious view of history. And, having asked the question, Lincoln famously answers it: "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by anoth-

er drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

These words—magnificent and familiar—do not support Kazin's notion that the Civil War threw faith radically and irremediably into doubt. Instead, they support another of his arguments: that the American tendency to moral assurance, especially in the hands of a great creative intelligence, could respond to unprecedented American travails such as slavery with a gripping and individual theology.

Kazin tries too hard to tie race, the moral struggle that looms largest in American history, into the very different question of why Americans, set free of compulsion, stick enthusiastically to God and religion. Some writers who agonized over the slavery question did experience it as a challenge to their views of the nature of God, but others did not. One of Kazin's weaker moments is his attempt to complicate Stowe's theology in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) into "a continuing Christianity all her own," merely because she saw that the organized church had fallen short.

It seems finally somewhat reductive of religion to argue that the urgency of its appeal can be felt only in times of public moral crises that rise to the awful heights of the Civil War. So high a standard for God wrestling also keeps Kazin from seeing anything akin to his writers' questing sensibilities in today's public discussions and expressions of faith that so infuriate him. Were American religion, then or now, radically public and conventional, the space would be much reduced for the kinds of bold theological excursions honored in this book. Fortunately, Kazin's own analysis offers ample evidence that such is not the case.

>Amy E. Schwartz *writes about cultural issues for the* Washington Post.

What to Make of China?

THE GREAT WALL AND THE EMPTY FORTRESS.
By Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross. Norton. 352 pp. $29.95

THE COMING CONFLICT WITH CHINA.
By Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro. Knopf. 245 pp. $23

by Anne Thurston

American perceptions of China have traditionally alternated between distaste and adulation. The pendulum has swung again. Deeming the scenario "unlikely but not unimaginable," veteran journalists Ross Munro and Richard Bernstein devote an entire chapter of *The Coming Conflict with China* to a chilling scenario: in 2004, China blockades Taiwan; soon the missiles are flying. Taiwan asks for help, and the United States steps in. "And," predict Bernstein and Munro, "no matter how we intervene, there's going to be a good chance of some kind of direct shooting war with China." Such an outcome is not in China's interests, but "it is in the interests of the ruling clique." The China of Bernstein and Munro is to be feared and contained.

For those seeking the certainty of a new cold war, China offers easy prey. The country has the world's largest standing army, fastest-growing economy, and biggest population. Its annual trade advantage over the United States has passed $40 billion. Its government promotes an assertive, often anti-American nationalism. China undertakes corporate espionage against the West; this year's congressional hearings probed (to no avail) for evidence of political meddling as well. But while there's ample ground for wariness, the present hysteria (a term increasingly invoked by China scholars) is hardly justi-

fied. The swinging pendulum reveals less about China than about us.

China has never been easy for Americans to understand. Even the facts sometimes seem contradictory. In sheer size, the Chinese economy is one of the top three in the world—yet the average per capita income is less than $1,000 a year, and more than a quarter of the country's 1.3 billion people live, by World Bank standards, below the level of poverty. China may become a major global power early in the next century, but today it is perhaps the weakest of the four powers in Asia (behind the United States, Russia, and Japan). Although the Chinese people now enjoy their greatest freedom in nearly 50 years, Americans will not soon forget the pictures of tanks rolling into Tiananmen Square. China falls well

below the major powers in technology, standard of living, educational level, military might, and political values. And what of that massive army? In *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress*, Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross quote military specialists who call the People's Liberation Army "the world's largest military museum" and "a junkyard army." China is a complicated place.

Notwithstanding such complexities, we must get it right. American relations with China will be critical to global politics and the prospects for peace and prosperity in the 21st century. As Nathan and Ross point out, "No global problem can be solved without China." And, they stress, we cannot understand China without taking account of its past. *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress* examines China's legacy—as the Middle Kingdom and purveyor of civilization and culture, and, beginning some 150 years ago, as an empire beleaguered by foreign powers. Chinese nationalism, the authors argue, is powered by contradictory feelings of pride and humiliation. These feelings generate soul-searching among intellectuals and leaders alike about why China is weak and how it can become strong, how it can reclaim lost territory, and how it can regain a leading position in the world. Sovereignty is the preeminent concern. China's first objective, the authors write, is to "restore and maintain territorial integrity." In their view, "PRC diplomacy seeks to reclaim the lost regions of Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, to block outside support for separatist movements in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia, and to deter invasion and military pressure on all fronts by building up the capacity for internal security and border defense."

Far from being irrational, Nathan and Ross argue, China's international behavior represents reasonable strategic steps in a long-standing quest for security. In this light, the country's actions become defensive rather than aggressive. Treating its security concerns as genuine, the authors argue that China, as well as its neighbors, can be secure only when the nation joins a world system that it has a hand in shaping. Nathan and Ross are not alarmed over China's rise. To them, any attempts at containment would be foolhardy; a new cold war would be a "needless mistake."

Nathan and Ross do raise questions about the future of China's foreign policy. Noting all the official positions Jiang Zemin has conferred on himself, they point out that such titles are neither necessary nor sufficient to retain power in China. Whatever his office, Jiang will not become a new supreme leader like Mao

Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. Instead, his power will depend on his ability to retain the support of the generals. Factional politics may continue to dominate, and China's ability to carry out a coherent foreign policy may be challenged in the years to come. If so, China's dissatisfactions with the world beyond its borders could be magnified, and with them the challenges to Western diplomacy. Nonetheless, Nathan and Ross conclude that American policy toward China must be built on cooperation, not conflict. They suggest that the United States work to integrate China into multilateral institutions, including the World Trade Organization. To promote continued political liberalization in China and stable U.S.-China relations, they counsel expanding educational and cultural exchanges with China as well.

Bernstein and Munro, by contrast, recommend preparing for the worst. After acknowledging that war is unlikely, they proceed to offer prescriptions that would push China to the wall—reducing the trade deficit, suspending most favored nation status, continuing to deny China membership in the World Trade Organization, supporting Radio Free Asia, and funding "various Chinese groups living in the West who publicize Chinese human rights violations and who themselves strive to form the nucleus of a democratic movement in China." This, they argue, will "prevent China from becoming the hostile hegemon that could interfere with American pursuit of interest in Asia." In truth, such efforts at containment would surely increase the peril. *The Coming Conflict with China* would become self-fulfilling prophecy.

An honest debate about such matters is impossible, Bernstein and Munro contend, because of the powerful China lobby, dominated by the American business establishment and committed to an omnipotent China. In truth, as others have noted, countervailing views are voiced by human rights organizations, the right-to-life movement, organized labor, and environmental groups. In describing the factors influencing American policy, Bernstein and Munro ably explore the link between economic self-interest and the public pronouncements of such "old China hands" as Henry Kissinger. But the two authors neglect the media's tendency to oversimplify and sensationalize complex topics, and its implications for America's China policy.

Reading these two books together demonstrates the difficulty of achieving a new consensus on that policy, now that the old consensus lies shattered by the end of the Cold War and the tragic suppression of protesting Beijingers in 1989. The Middle Kingdom's entry onto the world stage marks a historic shift and a challenge to statesmanship. But to argue that the United States must gird itself for conflict is decidedly premature.

> Anne Thurston, *a former Wilson Center Fellow, is the author of* Enemies of the People *(1987) and* A Chinese Odyssey *(1992), and collaborated with Li Zhisui, Mao's personal physician, on* The Private Life of Chairman Mao *(1995).*

The Good News About Race

AMERICA IN BLACK AND WHITE: One Nation, Indivisible.

By Stephan Thernstrom and Abigail Thernstrom. Simon & Schuster. 640 pp. $30

by James Patterson

To many Americans—including such specialists as Andrew Hacker, in his widely discussed *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal* (1992)—race relations in the United States seem altogether dismal. Recent developments, notably the racial polarization of opinion over O. J.

Simpson, appear only to confirm such pessimism. In a deeply researched and powerfully argued book, *America in Black and White*, Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom resist this tide of gloom. Seeking to update the 1944 classic *An American Dilemma*, in which Gunnar Myrdal wrote of the potential for racial harmony in the United States, the authors declare that the nation is "no longer separate, much less unequal than it was, and by many measures, less hostile."

The Thernstroms bring strong scholarly credentials to their work. He is a Harvard University professor who has done pioneeering work in social history; she is a social scientist at the Manhattan Institute and the author of a book on affirmative action and voting rights, *Whose Votes Count?* (1987). They open *America in Black and White* by looking at race relations in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, "three decades of amazing change." Readers familiar with developments during these years may find little that is new or surprising here, but the authors cover the ground because, in their words, "the voices of racial pessimism" often downplay or misrepresent the period. "The racial problems of today are in fact not the same as those of yesterday," they assert, "and we cannot address them with a clear head unless we understand the difference."

The authors wring two important lessons from postwar history. First, considerable progress was made, especially in white attitudes toward black people, *before* the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954 and the civil rights struggles of the 1960s. Second, this progress resulted from broad social forces, notably economic growth and the northward migration of blacks in the 1940s and '50s, and not from the actions of public officials or judges.

In the second part of the book, the authors examine social, economic, and political trends since the 1960s. Here they take note of the many ways in which progress has slowed since the 1970s—mostly a period (until recently) of unimpressive economic growth. They present reams of statistics documenting race-based differences in income, crime, and family organization. They also highlight the gaps in testable cognitive skills that continue to separate black and white students. As in the historical section, though, the Thernstroms have other points to make. They hold that many of the gains achieved by blacks between the 1940s and the '60s have been maintained or amplified. African Americans have experienced rising real incomes, declining residential isolation, higher interracial marriage rates, falling poverty and high school dropout rates, much greater representation in higher education, and dramatic increases in political participation and officeholding. The Thernstroms challenge the pessimistic Kerner Report of 1968, whose authors, appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, "appear to have been so traumatized by the ghetto riots during the long, hot summers of 1965–1968 that they had deluded themselves into thinking that the condition of African-Americans in the United States had been deteriorating rather than improving since World War II."

The Thernstroms also question theories that purport to explain the high poverty rates of African Americans. Liberal scholars such as William Julius Wilson contend that structural economic forces have wiped out industrial jobs and devastated inner-city areas. But to the Thernstroms, the culprits are the escalating rates of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and the chaotic family lives of a subset of poor black people in the cities. The authors are equally critical of the liberal formula that poverty causes crime. Between the 1960s and the '80s, they note, poverty fell while the crime rate rose. In the Thernstroms' view, "The connection between breaking the law and poverty was never very close and has been getting weaker."

In the final section of the book, the authors assess public policies concerned with race and arrive at a dim view of

most of them, especially affirmative action in employment and education. They laud black scholars such as Shelby Steele and Thomas Sowell who criticize set-asides, busing, quotas, and other liberal efforts to promote race equality. "Race-conscious policies," the Thernstroms emphasize, "make for more race-consciousness; they carry America backward."

This summary of *America in Black and White* may make it sound like yet another conservative tract on American race relations. And at times the authors do come out from behind the cover of social science to disclose their conservative convictions. They write, for example, that Denver's experiment with court-ordered busing was "an unmitigated disaster," and that the Supreme Court's *Griggs* decision (1971) limiting the use of standardized tests in hiring was the "opening chapter in a dreary story of judicial creativity and confusion." In one of many meaty footnotes (these make fascinating reading), the Thernstroms criticize writers who charge critics of welfare and affirmative action with "symbolic racism." But it would be an error to treat this book only as political point-scoring. The Thernstroms have accumulated an immense amount of data, which they present with clarity and precision.

Why did rates of crime and out-of-wedlock pregnancy grow so rapidly in some black communities in the 1970s and 1980s? Why the disorder and disrespect for learning that seem to afflict some urban schools? In considering these controversial topics, the Thernstroms avoid such terms as "black culture" or "culture of poverty." Instead, they look to problems in the home environment of many poor black children. But that explanation raises questions of its own. Why are those home environments so dismal in an ever more affluent society? Should we take into account the fact that feelings of *relative* deprivation might sharpen in such a society? (The authors say little about such feelings, emphasizing absolute gains.) Why, as the Thernstroms note, do most ethnic groups move up the socioeconomic ladder faster than African Americans? Did people such as Daniel Patrick Moynihan have a point in stressing the long-range consequences of those experiences—involuntary migration and slavery—unique to the history of African Americans? How much truth is there to the argument that James Baldwin and others used to highlight: that many American blacks tend toward self-hatred, which leads to failure? These matters are huge and often incendiary, and the Thernstroms, as social scientists, understandably treat them gingerly.

Despite such reticence, *America in Black and White* is a notable addition to the lengthy shelf of books dealing with contemporary race relations in the United States. While narrower in scope than *An American Dilemma*, it offers a hardheaded and well-informed accounting of our problems. Conservatives will welcome much of it, but liberals, too, will do well to think about the dubious consequences, many of them unintended, of government-directed social engineering since World War II. The Thernstroms have given us a tightly argued, richly documented, provocative book—scholarship of a very high order.

> James Patterson, *a former Wilson Center Fellow, teaches history at Brown University and is the author of* Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974 *(1996).*

Religion & Philosophy

THE END OF TIME:
Faith and Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium.
By Damian Thompson.
Univ. Press of New England.
392 pp. $26

QUESTIONING THE MILLENNIUM.
By Stephen Jay Gould.
Harmony Books. 192 pp. $19.95

For the writer bent on having a say about the coming end of the millennium, the most difficult task is confronting a thousand years of human history in a single, comprehensible book. The field is already strewn with failures.

But in *The End of Time*, we have our first true success of the genre. The former religious affairs correspondent for London's *Daily Telegraph*, Thompson brings just the right mix of strengths: historian, biblical scholar, essayist of international breadth, and keen observer of current events. He seems equally at home in the 11th and the 20th centuries, equally comfortable in America, Europe, and Asia, and equally conversant with the arcana of Catholic theology and the menace of the American militia movement. More important, he has a good and true angle of attack. He realizes, rightly, that the magic—and the confusion—of the turning of the millennium lies in the blunderbuss concept "apocalypse." He sets out to trace the anxiety over the End Time from its origins in the Greek word (meaning "to unveil"), through its mysterious treatment in the Book of Revelation, to the chimerical "terrors" of A.D. 1000, and right into the head of David Koresh and his ATF-provoked immolation at Waco.

The result is a superb overview of the nature of apocalyptic thinking and its importance to human behavior. The analysis provides insight into and context for the disturbing millennial events of recent vintage, and helps us prepare for the next two years, when even crazier events may take place.

By contrast, Gould's modest little book offers far less. With a patronizing reference to his "wry" bemusement at "millennium madness," the Harvard University biologist begins with a breathtaking dismissal. "I will eschew, absolutely and on principle, the two staples of *fin de siècle* literature, especially of the apocalyptic sort inspired by a millennial transition," he declares, referring to the prognostication and the anxiety that often arise at century's end. "I regard these subjects as speculative, boring and basically silly." Rather, as an "empirically minded scientist," he focuses on a current staple of talk shows and tabloids: whether the third millennium after the Nativity begins in 2000 or 2001. This is the single most boring question of this extraordinary anniversary. With so much of interest before us—the mysteries of Revelation; human behavior through the ages; a thousand years of human history, prophecy, and fear and anxiety—Gould's dry, mathematical concentration trivializes the event and deflects us from far richer questions.

—James Reston, Jr.

IN PURSUIT OF PRIVACY: Law, Ethics, and the Rise of Technology.
By Judith Wagner DeCew.
Cornell Univ. Press. 208 pp.
Cloth $39.95, paper $15.95

In the Supreme Court's right-to-die decisions last June, not one justice treated assisted suicide as a "fundamental right" deserving the same constitutional protection as marriage, procreation, and abortion. This outcome was not foreordained. Only five years ago, a majority of the Court declared, in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992), that "at the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." The constitutional right to unravel the mystery of life, we now know, does not include a right to seek help in ending it.

Although DeCew finished her book before the recent decisions, there's no doubt she would have found them dismaying. A philosophy professor at Clark University, she advances a notion of privacy even more expansive than that set out in *Casey*. Surveying legal and philosophical approaches to privacy, DeCew rejects narrow definitions based on such justifications as keeping personal information secret or preventing state interference in "particularly intimate and personal choices." Instead, DeCew deems privacy "a cluster concept" that includes one's interests in maintaining independence, controlling information, and forming relationships. In her view, the state should breach this broad sphere of privacy only when absolutely necessary.

DeCew is most successful when applying her theory to such policy debates as that surrounding Caller ID (which, as she notes, discourages not only telephone stalkers but also anonymous calls to drug treatment centers and shelters for battered women). She is on weaker ground when she takes on the Supreme Court. By focusing almost exclusively on the substantive protection that the Court gives privacy, and applauding or attacking rulings on that basis, DeCew glosses over the more significant jurisprudential debate of the past 30 years: *who* should craft our law on privacy, elected legislators or appointed judges? To DeCew, it's a task for the courts. But as this year's right-to-die cases have shown—and not for the first time—many in the judiciary believe otherwise.

—Arnon Siegel

Arts & Letters

BURNING THE DAYS.
By James Salter. Random House.
384 pp. $24

"We are each of us an eventual tragedy," writes James Salter near the end of his elegant, moving memoir. Salter uses memory to convey a sense of the mortality common to all lives. He might as well have called the book *Loss*, for that is the quality that rules these recollections. Things fall away; the closest friends of a moment, or of years, drop from sight, and their fate is often a matter of hearsay or conjecture only. One by one, individuals who touch Salter's life—the famous (Irwin Shaw, Robert Phelps, Roman Polanski, Sharon Tate) and the private—assume a place in the same stern process of fading attachment.

Salter was born in 1925 and grew up on Manhattan's East Side. He attended West Point, as had his father, and graduated in 1945, just as World War II was ending. For the next 12 years, he was a pilot in the air force, and his war was the Korean War. When he left the military, it was to pursue a full-time writing career, as a screenwriter (*Downhill Racer* is the best of his films) and as the author of a volume of short stories and five novels, at least two of which, *A Sport and a Pastime* (1967) and *Light Years* (1975), have the feel of classics. The fiction is not extensive, but it is extraordinarily accomplished.

Salter's recurrent theme, in this memoir as in the novels, is the fall from grace in all its guises—the diminishment of physical beauty and mental vitality; the accommodation of talent to craft; the fragility and inevitable severing, willful or inadvertent, of personal ties; the surrender of moral authority. But coming before the loss are aspiration and occasional glory, and they too shape the remembered life: "To write of someone thoroughly is to destroy them, use them up. I

suppose this is true of experience as well—in describing a world you extinguish it—and in a book of recollection much is reduced to ruin."

Salter's memoir divides into two parts. A rough chronology is discernible in the first, to the end of his fighter pilot's career—"the great days of youth when you are mispronouncing foreign words and trading dreams." But chronology never calls the shots, and time in this book, as in Salter's best work, does not order lives so much as it undoes them. The pages on flight ("we dropped from the sky into distant countries") and on the meaning of heroism and comradeship are superb, in a class with the aviation books of Saint-Exupéry. Of the astronauts Virgil Grissom and Edward White, who died in an accident at Cape Canaveral in 1967 and whom Salter knew, he writes: "Over the threshold they stepped, into their sepulcher. The capsule had become a reliquary, a furnace. They had inhaled fire, their lungs had turned to ash."

The book splits as the life does. From the air the author falls to earth and undertakes a life of celebrity, in a world of deals and maneuvers and compromise: "I was a *poule* for 10 years, 15. I might easily have gone on longer. There was wreckage all around, but like the refuse piled behind restaurants I did not consider it—in front they were bowing and showing me to the table." Much of this life is lived in France, which Salter adores, and Italy, and the book celebrates the reality of an image Americans had of Europe in the '50s, '60s, and '70s. This is not the efficient latter-day Europe of Brussels but the worldly-wise continent of Fellini and Antonioni, of Cannes and the Via Veneto, of cafés and parties till dawn, easy passion, practiced enervation, and irresistible clichés—fast drives in open cars on narrow coast roads above the glittering sea. From the "vertical civilization" of Europe, old and deep, Salter hoped to learn what he might hope, what he should do, who he was. In the end he gives up the screen for the book: "It is only in books that one finds perfection, only in books that it cannot be spoiled. Art, in a sense, is life brought to a standstill, rescued from time. The secret of making it is simple: discard everything that is good enough." In this book, Salter has kept only what is very good indeed.

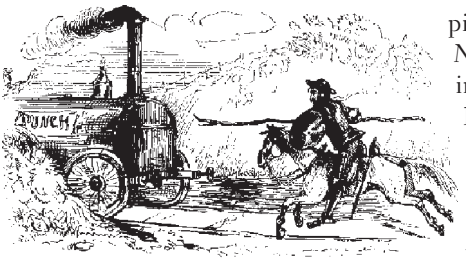
—James M. Morris

PUNCH: The Lively Youth of a British Institution, 1841–1851.

By Richard D. Altick. Ohio State Univ. Press. 762 pp. $60

"Who knocked up Jerry Hall?" ran the headline on a midsummer edition of *Punch*, the satirical British weekly and dentist's waiting-room accessory raised from the dead under new management last year, some four years after declining revenues forced its closure. Which tells you all you need to know about Mr. Punch's sense of late-1990s humor.

Long gone are the days when the magazine was the alternative journal of record for the Victorian ruling class. Those days gave the world Charles Pooter, the long-suffering hero of that comic masterpiece *The Diary of a Nobody*, first serialized in the periodical in 1888. While Pooter was recounting his misadventures in suburban north London, *Punch*'s celebrated cartoonist John Tenniel (who drew the classic *Alice in Wonderland* illustrations) evoked the drama of Bismarck's fall from power in the oft-reproduced sketch, "Dropping the Pilot" (1890). Shaped by an editorial board that at one point included William Makepeace Thackeray, *Punch* commanded attention. In spite of its frequently condescending view of the United States, the magazine's American admirers included Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.



In his history of *Punch*'s first decade, Altick, a professor of English at Ohio State University, recounts how the magazine covered issues as varied as the monarchy, the Irish question, the railway boom, early consumer advertising, capital punishment, and the Victorian equivalent of blockbuster fiction (memorably parodied in Thackeray's series, "Prize Novelists"). He also charts *Punch*'s steady progress from outspoken radicalism to a more measured liberal humanitarianism, succinctly defined by John Ruskin

when he spoke of Mr. Punch's ideal of perfection as "the British Hunting Squire, the British Colonel and the British Sailor."

The great problem with this study (originally prepared for a 1991 London symposium to mark the 150th anniversary of *Punch*'s launch) is, as Altick frankly admits, that topical humor so often remains rooted in time and place, inaccessible to subsequent generations. A two-line squib that prompted hearty laughter over a glass of port in 1841 may require pages of sober exegesis for modern readers. Altick's unremittingly conscientious approach to the task at hand will probably deter the Anglophile general reader, but the wealth of social data, incident, and drawing-room gossip creates a formidably detailed mosaic of Britain's age of empire.

—Clive Davis

Contemporary Affairs

DISUNITED STATES.
By John D. Donahue. Basic Books.
256 pp. $25

In 1939, only one in eight Americans said he or she trusted the state governments more than the federal government. Today, three-fifths of Americans subscribe to that sentiment. In *Disunited States*, Donahue, a political scientist at Harvard University, assesses one of the more broadly accepted tenets of current conventional wisdom: that "devolving" federal power to the 50 states will improve American governance. Donahue is skeptical.

To be sure, devolution has benefits. States tend to be smaller and closer to those they govern (though not as small or close, Donahue suggests, as is widely assumed). Moreover, the states can serve as laboratories for policy reform, at least if they are willing to learn from their neighbors (which is not always the case, as Donahue shows). States can also promote diversity and choice. In the battle to attract families and businesses, New Hampshire keeps its taxes low while neighboring Vermont offers socially liberal policies.

But that battle sometimes goes too far. Donahue recapitulates the stunning string of concessions that states have offered automakers seeking new factory sites. In 1980, concessions cost Ohio $4,000 per newly created Honda job; by the early 1990s, Alabama was spending $168,000 for each new Mercedes-Benz job. Even Alabama may come out ahead ultimately, as economic benefits ripple throughout the state economy—but the inducements, the author notes, exemplify the rent-seeking, "industrial policy" behavior that repulses most economists (as well as the conservatives who are especially partial to devolution). Donahue points out that education spending, which one would expect to be a high priority for competitive states, may actually suffer in a business environment that emphasizes immediate results. Governors and legislators may worry that they will bear the costs and tribulations of education reform, while their successors will reap the benefits.

Devolution has other shortcomings as well. State lines often lead to jurisdictional conflicts, which can impede efforts to track incompetent doctors, regulate air and water pollution, and control interstate crime. Donahue points out that lobbying, a key factor behind citizens' distrust of the federal government, is no less prevalent in state capitals. Indeed, state-level lobbying is often more opaque, less scrutinized, and potentially more insidious. The various interests lobbying the federal government frequently cancel out one another's strength, whereas a locally powerful interest group can hold a state hostage.

Donahue's most intriguing argument is that even if devolution did improve the quality of government, the financial gains would likely be small. "Suppose," he writes, "every last thing that the federal government does, aside from running defense and foreign affairs and writing checks (to entitlement claimants, debt holders, and state and local governments) were transferred to the states—national parks and museums, air-traffic control, the FBI, the border patrol, the Centers for Disease Control, the National Weather Service, student loans, the space program, and all the rest. Suppose, then, that the states proved able to do *everything* that the federal government used to do a full 10 percent more efficiently. The cost of govern-

ment would fall by a little under one-half of one percent." Rather than squeezing blood from this administrative turnip, Donahue argues that the real way to cut the federal government is to reduce entitlements, an idea that is far less popular among politicians than devolution. Donahue also suggests privatizing and "voucherizing" certain federal undertakings, such as job-training programs, rather than devolving them to already-groaning state bureaucracies.

What is most notable about *Disunited States* is its painstaking fairness. When Donahue summarizes his arguments at the end of the book, the depth of his skepticism toward devolution comes as a surprise, given the scrupulous balance of his earlier chapters. This reasoned, constructive assessment of unpopular economic realities is a rare achievement: a book that boasts both a stunningly original concept *and* a near-flawless execution.

—Louis Jacobson

MAKING THE CORPS.
By Thomas E. Ricks. Scribner.
324 pp. $24

For a great democracy that is also a global superpower—and whose continued dominance demands a superior military force—the relationship between soldiers and society is a matter of singular importance. Although recent developments have suggested that the American civil-military relationship is far from healthy, most Americans continue to take it for granted. This readable and provocative book should change that.

Despite his job title—Pentagon correspondent of the *Wall Street Journal*—Ricks understands that the real story of today's military is not the generals in Washington but the sergeants and captains in the field. Parris Island, the Marine Corps base in South Carolina that provides the principal setting for Ricks's tale, is about as remote from the corridors of power as you can get. *Making the Corps* tells the story of Platoon 3086: a group of 63 young men delivered by bus to Parris Island in early-morning darkness, each to discover if he has what it takes to become a United States Marine. Step by painful step, Ricks follows the progress of these recruits through boot camp, an arduous, disorienting, sometimes brutal 11-week rite of passage that some will fail to navigate. He tracks those who make it into the Fleet, where they struggle to adapt the standards of boot camp to those prevailing in the "real" Marine Corps. Finally, Ricks evaluates the efforts of these rookie marines to come to terms with the world outside the Corps, a world that Parris Island taught them to disdain.

In telling his story, Ricks introduces the reader to a fascinating cast of characters: the hierarchy of senior leaders who design boot camp with the explicit intention of stripping each new recruit of his civilian identity; the drill instructors who, as gods, tyrants, mentors, role models, and father figures, preside over the daily process of transforming recruits into marines; and, above all, the recruits themselves, whom Ricks portrays with empathy and respect. Today's marine volunteers come, for the most part, from among the have-nots of society. They enlist not for love of country but out of something like desperation, reacting to boredom, failure, minor scrapes with the law, and love affairs gone awry. Yet each yearns to be somebody. To enter the exclusive brotherhood of the marines is to be somebody very special indeed.

Boot camp is the price of admission. Recruits pay the price less by attaining the technical skills of the professional soldier than by embracing without reservation the ethos of the Corps. Central to that ethos are values such as honor, courage, and selfless-

ness that, according to senior marines, have all but vanished from American society. The essence of boot camp, in other words, is cultural indoctrination.

Here lies the author's true achievement. *Making the Corps* exposes the gaping cultural divide that separates soldiers, marines in particular, from the rest of today's soci-

ety. Others have noted that, in the aftermath of Vietnam, American elites turned their backs on the military, a process ratified by the end of the draft. A generation later, the armed services, still nursing Vietnam-induced resentments of their own, return that contempt with interest. Professing to be repelled by a society they view as undisciplined, corrupt, and selfish, soldiers today cultivate a self-image of moral superiority over those they serve.

Ricks does not note, although his reporting clearly suggests, the extent to which this self-image is false. Certainly it is not sustained by the experience of Platoon 3086. "Parris Island," Ricks observes, "was theory—a showplace of what the Corps would like to be." Reality turns out to be altogether different. Several of those who survive boot camp become chronic disciplinary problems, washing out of the service before completing their first year. (Ricks notes that one-third of all marines fail to make it through their initial enlistment.) For many, the Fleet turns out to be a disappointment: members of Platoon 3086 encounter fat, incompetent sergeants and fellow marines more interested in smoking dope and getting drunk than in adhering to the standards of Parris Island. Indeed, the platoon's experience suggests that the putative transformational impact of boot camp may be largely mythic. Proclaiming themselves ever afterward to be members of an elite set apart from society, they remain all too human.

Ricks recognizes that this cultural antagonism between soldiers and society is fraught with danger. His own proposal for healing the breach is to bring the middle class back into uniform, by reviving conscription if need be. Some readers may question the political feasibility of doing so. Others may suggest a more direct approach: pointing out to soldiers—even marines—that they may not differ from the rest of us as much as they imagine. Understanding the myth and reality of Parris Island offers a useful first step in that direction.

—A. J. Bacevich

NEWS OF A KIDNAPPING. By Gabriel García Márquez. Edith Grossman, trans. Knopf. 304 pp. $25

On a secluded ranch dotted with African wildlife, a Colombian drug lord orchestrates the abduction of 10 leading journalists and political figures. The drug lord, Pablo Escobar, declares that he will release these hostages only if he is tried for narcotics crimes in his native land and not extradited to the United States for trial. "Better a grave in Colombia," he avows, "than a jail in the United States." The Colombian government at first refuses to bend. After two of the prisoners are murdered, though, the government bars Escobar's extradition, and the remaining hostages are released.

In recounting these events of 1990, Nobel laureate García Márquez returns to journalism, a profession he left to take up fiction some 35 years ago. While stripping his prose of the exotic flourishes that mark such novels as *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), he nonetheless provides a striking portrait, grim but hopeful, of a nation in crisis. His book reminds us that democracy can be fragile but never futile.

News of a Kidnapping is a deeply personal account that pays tribute to the author's friends Maruja Pachón, one of the people kidnapped by Escobar's men, and her husband, Alberto Villamizar, an influential politician who personally lobbied both President César Gaviria and Escobar for release of the hostages (including his sister and his wife). Villamizar and Pachón persuaded García Márquez to write the book, and the two of them appear as central characters. "Their pain, their patience, and their rage," the author notes, "gave me the courage to persist in this autumnal task, the saddest and most difficult of my life."

To García Márquez, the government's extradition policy was a mistake from the outset. "No mother would send her children to be punished at the neighbor's house," he told an interviewer last year. In *News of a Kidnapping*, he suggests that the tragedy could have been avoided if the government had abandoned the policy more readily. His argument is convincing to a degree, but only because he neglects to take note of the cycle of violence and death that has terrorized Colombia for much of this century. This shortcoming is an act of omission, not one of ignorance, for García Márquez is acutely aware of the perilous state of affairs in his native land. Still, he remains optimistic. "News of a kidnapping, no matter how painful," he observes, "is not as irremediable as news of a murder."

—David Brindley

History

THE BLACK DEATH AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WEST.
By David Herlihy. Edited by Samuel K. Cohn, Jr. 128 pp. Harvard Univ. Press. $27 hardcover, $12 paper

As a teacher, the Brown University historian David Herlihy was a model medievalist, an unassuming man adept at unraveling technical details of demography and society, and equally able to provoke students with the big questions. His last and posthumous work (he died in 1991), though brief, is a splendid memorial.

We are approaching the 650th anniversary of Europe's worst natural disaster, the bubonic plague of 1348. The cataclysmic "Black Death"—a term coined in the 16th century and popularized in the 19th—reduced the continent's population by as much as two-thirds, leaving behind an indelible record in contemporary chronicles, art, and (in Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*) literature. With the discovery of the bacillus *Yersinia pestis* a century ago, the biological roots of the epidemic became clear. The social factors behind the plague, however, remain controversial.

Herlihy addresses today's most widely accepted social explanations for the epidemic, the Malthusian and the Marxist. Did the Black Death result from overpopulation, declining living standards, and malnutrition, as the former theory suggests? The author thinks not, because European population had been high for decades without a major epidemic and because the population continued to fall for decades after the plague. Malnutrition may even have afforded some protection against disease; bacteria, like their human hosts, need nutrients to survive. Was the true cause, as the Marxist explanation holds, heightened exploitation of the peasantry by lords who, when the real value of their rents declined, turned to war and pillage? No, because nonfeudal regions such as Tuscany suffered similarly. Herlihy argues that the Europe of 1348 was stagnant but not in crisis. Its population density, though high with respect to available technology and resources, was sustainable when the plague struck. Whatever other social and economic patterns may have promoted the plague, the author discounts deprivation as a cause.

While the mass death was not a consequence of social decline, Herlihy contends, it did prove to be a terrible but effective catalyst for social renewal. It broke demographic, economic, and technological deadlocks by depleting the work force and raising labor costs. Landlords had to offer tenants forms of capital such as oxen and seed. Artisans had to extend guild apprenticeships beyond the family circle. Craftsman-entrepreneurs such as Johannes Gutenberg found ways to substitute technology for manpower. With soldiers and sailors as with scribes, the labor shortage stimulated innovation: introduction of firearms and larger ships.

Disease changed European culture, too. In higher education, the plague dealt a terrible blow to Oxford, whose student population declined from 30,000 to 6,000; in all, five of Europe's 30 universities had to close. Yet pious bequests and the need for new clergy led to new colleges at Oxford and Cambridge as well as innovative new universities in Prague and Florence. In science, the obviously contagious nature of the plague challenged Galenic medicine to modify a model of disease that recognized only imbalances of humors. The plague also left its mark on religion. The search for divine pro-

tection led to a new vigor in devotion to the saints (and to newly popular saints—in Florence, parents began to name their sons Sebastian, Bartholomew, and Christopher), which sharpened the already growing controversy over their role in Christianity. In some respects, then, mass mortality and depopulation may be healthy for technology, learning, faith, and other living forces: a cheerful reflection for the new millennium.

—*Edward Tenner*

DIVIDED MEMORY: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys.
By Jeffrey Herf. Harvard Univ. Press. 560 pp. $29.95

Herf, a historian at Ohio University, reveals how the leaders of both post-World War II Germanys manipulated memory of the Holocaust for political ends. Rather than following the path of *Vergangenheitsbewng* (coming to terms with the past) paved in the early postwar years by, for example, the West German Social Democrat Kurt Schumacher and the East German Communist Paul Merker, the two nations construed history through the distorting lens of ideology.

During the 1950s, West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer allowed millions of Nazi-era civil servants and judges to reassume their former positions. Adenauer believed that integrating the former Nazi supporters could help stabilize and nurture the new democracy. The nation paid a heavy price for his decision: a series of scandals about the Nazi records of these officials, which in turn fueled widespread political disaffection, especially among young people. With time, political freedom and open debate led to criticism of the Adenauer years, criticism that included efforts to comprehend the Nazi past.

In the East, Communist Party leader Walter Ulbricht shamelessly followed Stalin's anti-Semitic policies, purging "Cosmopolitanism" in 1952-53 to establish communist martyrdom at the core of anti-fascist memory. To justify the communist dictatorship, Ulbricht interpreted the murder of millions of Jews as nothing more than confirmation of Nazi brutality. Herf, who gained access to the archives of the Central Committee of the SED (East Germany's communist party) and those of the Ministry of State Security (the Stasi), is particularly incisive here. Although anti-Nazism became part of the East German collective memory, the "Jewish question" remained largely unconfronted for years. Still, the seeds were planted. In one of its first declarations in 1990, East Germany's democratically elected parliament—which governed for the six months prior to reunification—expressed remorse for the crimes of the Nazi past *and* for the policies of the communist regime toward Jewish people.

—*Burkhard Koch*

HOMESTEADING.
By Percy Wollaston. Lyons & Burford. 131 pp. $20

Jonathan Raban's lyrical 1996 book *Bad Land* recounts the settlement of eastern Montana early in this century. A heretofore unpublished memoir by a settler, *Homesteading* was one of Raban's primary sources. Wollaston was six years old in 1910 when his family left a rented farm in South Dakota to take title to a 320-acre homestead near Ismay, Montana. They built a house, planted crops, and survived the winter —"I don't think there is anything that can make cold seem more penetrating or dismal than that creak of wagon tires in cold snow." After a few years, though, Ismay fell into a slump. The livery barn closed, the lumber yard burned, and a tornado leveled the town hall, "leaving the piano sitting forlornly in its place with the sheet music still on the rack." Wollaston moved west in 1924, planning on college but ending up a firefighter; his parents abandoned the farm two years later.

Bad Land portrays the homesteaders as tragic figures—bamboozled by railroad tycoons who needed more residents in order to make new rail lines profitable, gulled by a balmy theory that rainfall increases as population grows, exploited by shiftless bankers and too-easy credit. *Homesteading*, by contrast, depicts plucky survivors. "The next meal might be potatoes and water gravy but you didn't hear anything about hardship unless somebody burned out or broke a leg," Wollaston writes. He tells of a drifter who came across a Norwegian farmer's homestead. The farmer was away, so, as was customary, the visitor fixed himself a meal. After dinner he sat down, had a smoke, then took the shotgun down from the farmer's wall and blew his head off. Raban, in his foreword to *Homesteading*,

intones that this "horribly memorable suicide" overhangs the entire memoir. But to Wollaston, it's a blithe yarn building to a punchline. Once the body is removed, the farmer frantically scrubs down the cabin, then prepares to retire for the night—and, in the farmer's words, "there was one of his dommed eyes, right in the very middle of my bed."

Where Raban sees villainy and victimization, Wollaston sees self-reliance and goodheartedness. Whatever the explanation for the two authors' divergent viewpoints—the rosy glow of Wollaston's childhood memories, the generational outlook of someone who came of age in the 1920s (as opposed to Raban's 1960s)—the chipper, anecdotal *Homesteading* is a worthy complement and counterpoint to *Bad Land*. "We are all of us pioneers in our time," Wollaston writes, "wearing the clothes that are most suitable or available, making the best of the present situation and learning to cope with new conditions."

Along with Wollaston's recollections, *Homesteading* offers a handful of family photographs. More numerous and evocative photos can be found in the biography of another prominent figure in *Bad Land*, Donna M. Lucey's *Photographing Montana, 1894–1928: The Life and Work of Evelyn Cameron*, back in print from Knopf.

—Stephen Bates

Science & Technology

THE PLATYPUS AND THE MERMAID AND OTHER FIGMENTS OF THE CLASSIFYING IMAGINATION. By Harriet Ritvo. Harvard Univ. Press. 304 pages. $29.95

In 1735, when Carl von Linné (a.k.a. Linnaeus) published his *Systema Naturae*—in which he coined the term *Homo sapiens*—he described some 300 animal species. A century and a half later, with naval expeditions routinely carting new zoological specimens back from overseas, British taxonomists struggled to identify more than a thousand new genera each year, a number that a contemporary commentator deemed "simply appalling." Classifying these legions of creatures became a principal occupation of Great Britain's naturalists.

Not every new discovery slid easily into existing categories. In 1770 the crew of Captain James Cook's *Endeavour* reported coming across an Australian animal "as large as a grey hound, of a mouse colour and very swift," which "jumped like a Hare" on two legs, "making vast bounds." And what to make of the amphibious, egg-laying mammal with webbed feet that seemed to have "the beak of a Duck engrafted on the head of a quadruped"? The British met the challenges: by 1804, the kangaroo (the name was borrowed from an Aboriginal language) had been declared "a most elegant animal," fit to be included in the royal menagerie; and by 1851, stuffed platypuses were appearing alongside rabbits and squirrels in British museum displays.

In *The Platypus and the Mermaid*, Ritvo, a historian at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is less interested in kangaroos and platypuses than in the principles undergirding Victorian taxonomy. She contends that "the classification of animals, like that of any group of significant objects, is apt to tell as much about the classifiers as about the classified." The fact that British naturalists earnestly placed *Homo Europaeus Britannici* at the pinnacle of their taxonomic system speaks volumes, of course.

But, as Ritvo demonstrates at length, naturalists were not alone in their solemn categorizing. Farmers, hunters, butchers, and breeders all developed distinct systems of their own for organizing the natural world. Hunters, for example, "classified game according to the kind and degree of amusement it offered." This anthropocentrism and general penchant for classification help

explain the Victorian fascination with whatever deviated from neat definitions and distinctions, including "monstrous" human anomalies (missing limbs, Siamese twins, dwarfs), hybrids (mules, children of mixed races), and imaginary creatures (mermaids, sea monsters).

Ritvo draws a staggering amount of anecdotal detail into *The Platypus and the Mermaid*, enough to convince any reader of the Victorian era's compulsion for classification. It's a virtuoso display, but the book doesn't offer much of an argument. Ritvo's goal is simply and topically "to represent the range of these taxonomic practices." One can, of course, draw one's own conclusions from this taxonomy of the taxonomists, but further ruminations from the author, who has led readers to anticipate learning "as much about the classifiers as about the classified," would have been welcome.

—Toby Lester

THE SYMBOLIC SPECIES: The Co-evolution of Language and the Brain.
By Terrence W. Deacon.
Norton. 527 pp. $29.95

Long ago, my English professor sneered that biological "reductionism thinks that it explains weeping as 'paroxysmal lachrymosis.'" But he had it backward. It is *holism* to "explain" weeping as paroxysmal lachrymosis, or, for that matter, laughter as an explosive release of tension. Reductionism, by contrast, traces both weeping and laughter to origins deep in the brain, those origins to the movements of cations (positively charged ions) across the membranes of neurons, and those ion flows to an evolutionary divergence of primate brains from their common roots. Today, such reductionist explanations are becoming more and more numerous. Nowhere is the growth of knowledge about behavior, "animal" and human, better exemplified yet more obscure than in the study of language.

Humans are unique in having language—the capability of manipulating symbols for our apprehension of, response to, and communications about the external world and our internal milieu. No other animal is a symbolic species. The linguist Noam Chomsky was right in insisting upon something special in the human brain, something preformed, that enables children to learn language. But even Chomsky and his followers in effect denied the relevance of evolution, and therefore that of biology, to the provenance of the "language organ."

How does the human brain differ from the brains of animals without language, and how did it get that way? An answer begins to appear in half a dozen different disciplines: linguistics, neurology, physical anthropology, developmental biology, molecular genetics, evolution. Few people can manage them all; even fewer can make the findings accessible. Deacon, a Boston University researcher in neuroscience and evolutionary anthropology, does both without ever losing clear sight of the whole. *The Symbolic Species* brings the language organ securely within the purview of the life sciences.

The language-competent brain does differ from those of other species, but not in absolute size. A recently understood subtlety of embryo development determines not only a brain's gross size but also its size relative to the rest of the body and the relative sizes of the constituent parts of the brain. The relative sizes of the brain's parts in turn determine, in a remarkable Darwinian process of selective cell death, how densely each part is connected to the others. As Deacon shows, the new language-biology suggests that symbol manipulation ultimately results from the manner in which nerves disseminate throughout the embryonic brain and its periphery. The capacity for language must have offered early humans a selective advantage in their environment, for only in our species did the brain develop in this fashion. Development of our language organ thus cannot be understood apart from evolution.

Deacon attempts what seems impossible: a book rich in scientific insights, in a demanding multidiscipline, that nevertheless reaches and informs nonspecialists. To a large extent he succeeds. Authoritative insights are there in profusion, and so assembled, they are a revelation. General readers will miss implications buried in technicalities and glosses, but that is a small price to pay for a mind-expanding tour of the emerging science of language. *The Symbolic Species* is a must-read for scientists and lay readers alike who want to know where we stand in the quest to define—rigorously and in physical reality—the psychobiological distinction we name "humanity."

—Paul R. Gross

Poetry

Derek Walcott

Selected and introduced by Edward Hirsch

There is a force of exultation, a celebration of luck, when a writer finds himself a witness to the early morning of a culture that is defining itself, branch by branch, leaf by leaf, in that self-defining dawn," Derek Walcott said in his Nobel Prize lecture for 1992. That force of exultation and celebration of luck, along with a sense of benediction and obligation, a continuous effort of memory and excavation, and a "frightening duty" to "a fresh language and a fresh people," have defined Walcott's work for the past 50 years. He has always been a poet of great verbal resources and skills engaged in a complex struggle to render his native Caribbean culture: the New World—not Eden but a successor to Eden, a polyglot place, an archipelago determined to survive—a world he calls "a ferment without a history, like heaven . . . a writer's heaven."

Derek Walcott is the greatest poet and playwright writing in English that the West Indies has produced. His *Collected Poems* (1986) is itself a massive achievement, bringing together work from 10 previous books written between 1948 and 1984. It moves from his first privately printed pamphlet, *25 Poems*, to his Lowellian sequence, *Midsummer*. It includes early work from *The Castaway* and *The Gulf*, and his major autobiographical poem *Another Life* (which is his *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*); and later work from *Sea Grapes*, *The Star-Apple Kingdom*, and *The Fortunate Traveller*. Since *The Collected Poems*, he has published *The Arkansas Testament* (1987), *Omeros* (1990), which is a booklength reprise to *The Odyssey* that parallels Greek and Antillean experience, and *The Bounty* (1997). The themes of Walcott's poems are echoed and counterpointed by the ritual action and vernacular language of his major plays, from *Dream on Monkey Mountain* to *Remembrance* and *Pantomine* and on to *Beef, No Chicken*, *The Last Carnival*, and *A Branch of the Blue Nile*. Reading through Walcott's lifework, one is always aware of the covenant he has made with a people and a place.

Walcott has one of the finest ears of any poet writing in English since Hart Crane or Dylan Thomas. His descriptive powers are, as Joseph Brodsky pointed out, truly epic. He has repeatedly sought to give voice to the inlets and beaches, the hills, promontories, and mountains of his native country. The sea is an inescapable presence in his work and has fundamentally affected his sense of being an islander. ("The sea was my privilege/ and a fresh people," he writes in *Omeros*.) He exults so much in the salty tang of words themselves that at times it feels as if the vowels and consonants of his three-language vocabulary (English, English patois, and French patois) have been saturated by the sea itself. Each phrase seems "soaked in salt."

Here is the beginning of his early lyric "A Sea-Chantey":

Anguilla, Adina,
Antigua, Canelles,
Andreuille, all the *l*'s,
Voyelles, of the liquid Antilles . . .

There is a quality of earthly prayer in the way Walcott luxuriates in sounds and savors letters, turning over the words, holding up the names. A sacred sense of vocation informs his high eloquence and powerful commitment to articulating his native realm, calling out "the litany of islands,/ The rosary of archipelagoes" and "the amen of calm waters."

Walcott was born in 1930 in Castries, the capital of St. Lucia. He entered the province of poetry empowered by the feeling that he was speaking not just out of his own experience but for everything he saw around him, naming a world thus far undefined:

Forty years gone, in my island childhood, I felt that
the gift of poetry had made me one of the chosen,
that all experience was kindling to the fire of the Muse.
(*Midsummer*)

Walcott's early Adamic pact with his island was also balanced by a sense of self-division and estrangement. He grew up as a "divided child"—a Methodist in an overwhelmingly Catholic country, a developing artist with a middle-class background and a mixed African, English, and Dutch ancestry coming of age in a mostly black world, a backwater of poverty. Some of the dramatic tension in his work comes from the gap he has always had to cross to describe the people with whom he shares an island. So, too, a great deal of rage sometimes breaks loose in his work as a fury against racism: against those who have typed the poet as neither black nor white enough; against those who still view the Caribbean people as illegitimate and rootless; against the legacies of slavery and colonialism.

Walcott has called himself "a mulatto of style," and increasingly has given voice to the contending languages and cultures operating inside him. The Odyssean figure of Shabine undoubtedly speaks for his creator when he uses the demotic and turns the language of colonial scorn into a source of pride:

I'm just a red nigger who love the sea,
I had a sound colonial education,
I have Dutch, nigger, and English in me,
and either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation.
("The Schooner *Flight*")

Homer has become Walcott's tutelary spirit, and he mimics *The Odyssey* here by echoing that moment when Odysseus slyly deceives the Cyclops by calling himself "nobody." He is also asserting that this "nobody" is the culture's representative figure, "a nation." Walcott's Caribbean reworking of *The Odyssey*, *Omeros*, suggests that the task of the Homeric bard is to unearth lost lives and shattered histories, but also to sing of a new people and a new hope.

Walcott is ultimately a poet of affirmations, a writer who believes that the task of art is to transcend history and rename the world. As he says in "The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory," "For every poet it is always morning in the world. History a forgotten, insomniac night; History and elemental awe are

always our early beginning, because the fate of poetry is to fall in love with the world, in spite of History." The poet's enterprise is a redemptive one, a joyous calling. Derek Walcott's lifework is a grand testament to the visionary powers of language and to the freshening wonders of a world that is always starting over again despite History, a world that is always startling and new.

Sea Grapes

That sail which leans on light,
tired of islands,
a schooner beating up the Caribbean

for home, could be Odysseus,
home-bound on the Aegean;
that father and husband's

longing, under gnarled sour grapes, is
like the adulterer hearing Nausicaa's name
in every gull's outcry.

This brings nobody peace. The ancient war
between obsession and responsibility
will never finish and has been the same

for the sea-wanderer or the one on shore
now wriggling on his sandals to walk home,
since Troy sighed its last flame,

and the blind giant's boulder heaved the trough
from whose groundswell the great hexameters come
to the conclusions of exhausted surf.

The classics can console. But not enough.

Names

(for Edward Brathwaite)

I

My race began as the sea began,
with no nouns, and with no horizon,
with pebbles under my tongue,
with a different fix on the stars.

But now my race is here,
in the sad oil of Levantine eyes,
in the flags of the Indian fields.

I began with no memory,
I began with no future,
but I looked for that moment
when the mind was halved by a horizon.

I have never found that moment
when the mind was halved by a horizon—
for the goldsmith from Benares,
the stonecutter from Canton,
as a fishline sinks, the horizon
sinks in the memory.

Have we melted into a mirror,
leaving our souls behind?
The goldsmith from Benares,
the stonecutter from Canton,
the bronzesmith from Benin.
A sea-eagle screams from the rock,
and my race began like the osprey
with that cry,
that terrible vowel,
that I!

Behind us all the sky folded,
as history folds over a fishline,
and the foam foreclosed
with nothing in our hands

but this stick
to trace our names on the sand
which the sea erased again, to our indifference.

II

And when they named these bays
bays,
was it nostalgia or irony?

In the uncombed forest,
in uncultivated grass
where was there elegance
except in their mockery?

Where were the courts of Castille?
Versailles' colonnades
supplanted by cabbage palms
with Corinthian crests,
belittling diminutives,
then, little Versailles
meant plans for a pigsty,
names for the sour apples
and green grapes
of their exile.

Their memory turned acid
but the names held;
Valencia glows
with the lanterns of oranges,
Mayaro's
charred candelabra of cocoa.
Being men, they could not live
except they first presumed
the right of every thing to be a noun.
The African acquiesced,
repeated, and changed them.

Listen, my children, say:
moubain: the hogplum,
cerise: the wild cherry,
baie-la: the bay,
with the fresh green voices
they were once themselves
in the way the wind bends

our natural inflections.

These palms are greater than Versailles,
for no man made them,
their fallen columns greater than Castille,
no man unmade them
except the worm, who has no helmet,
but was always the emperor,

and children, look at these stars
over Valencia's forest!

Not Orion,
not Betelgeuse,
tell me, what do they look like?
Answer, you damned little Arabs!
Sir, fireflies caught in molasses.

The Season of Phantasmal Peace

Then all the nations of birds lifted together
the huge net of the shadows of this earth
in multitudinous dialects, twittering tongues,
stitching and crossing it. They lifted up
the shadows of long pines down trackless slopes,
the shadows of glass-faced towers down evening streets,
the shadow of a frail plant on a city sill—
the net rising soundless as night, the birds' cries soundless, until
there was no longer dusk, or season, decline, or weather,
only this passage of phantasmal light
that not the narrowest shadow dared to sever.

And men could not see, looking up, what the wild geese drew,
what the ospreys trailed behind them in silvery ropes
that flashed in the icy sunlight; they could not hear
battalions of starlings waging peaceful cries,
bearing the net higher, covering this world
like the vines of an orchard, or a mother drawing
the trembling gauze over the trembling eyes
of a child fluttering to sleep;
                it was the light
that you will see at evening on the side of a hill
in yellow October, and no one hearing knew
what change had brought into the raven's cawing,
the killdeer's screech, the ember-circling chough
such an immense, soundless, and high concern
for the fields and cities where the birds belong,
except it was their seasonal passing, Love,
made seasonless, or, from the high privilege of their birth,
something brighter than pity for the wingless ones
below them who shared dark holes in windows and in houses,
and higher they lifted the net with soundless voices
above all change, betrayals of falling suns,
and this season lasted one moment, like the pause
between dusk and darkness, between fury and peace,
but, for such as our earth is now, it lasted long.

A Sea-Chantey

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme, et volupté.
—Baudelaire

Anguilla, Adina,
Antigua, Cannelles,
Andreuille, all the *l*'s,
Voyelles, of the liquid Antilles,
The names tremble like needles
Of anchored frigates,
Yachts tranquil as lilies,
In ports of calm coral,
The lithe, ebony hulls
Of strait-stitching schooners,
The needles of their masts
That thread archipelagoes
Refracted embroidery
In feverish waters
Of the seafarer's islands,
Their shorn, leaning palms,
Shaft of Odysseus,
Cyclopic volcanoes,
Creak their own histories,
In the peace of green anchorage;
Flight, and Phyllis,
Returned from the Grenadines,
Names entered this Sabbath,
In the port clerk's register;
Their baptismal names,
The sea's liquid letters,
Repos donnez à cils . . .
And their blazing cargoes
Of charcoal and oranges;
Quiet, the fury of their ropes.
Daybreak is breaking
On the green chrome water,
The white herons of yachts
Are at Sabbath communion,
The histories of schooners
Are murmured in coral,
Their cargoes of sponges
On sandspits of islets,
Barques white as white salt
Of acrid St. Maarten,
Hulls crusted with barnacles,
Holds foul with great turtles,
Whose ship-boys have seen
The blue heave of Leviathan,
A seafaring, Christian,
And intrepid people.

Now an apprentice washes his cheeks
With salt water and sunlight.

In the middle of the harbour
A fish breaks the Sabbath
With a silvery leap.
The scales fall from him
In a tinkle of church bells;
The town streets are orange
With the week-ripened sunlight,
Balanced on the bowsprit
A young sailor is playing
His grandfather's chantey
On a trembling mouth organ;
The music curls, dwindling
Like smoke from blue galleys,
To dissolve near the mountains.
The music uncurls with
The soft vowels of inlets,
The christening of vessels,
The titles of portages,
The colours of sea grapes,
The tartness of sea-almonds,
The alphabet of church bells,
The peace of white horses,
The pastures of ports,
The litany of islands,
The rosary of archipelagoes,
Anguilla, Antigua,
Virgin of Guadeloupe,
And stone-white Grenada
Of sunlight and pigeons,
The amen of calm waters,
The amen of calm waters,
The amen of calm waters.

THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

The Census Snarl

A Survey of Recent Articles

Everyone concerned with the already controversial 2000 census seems to prize scientific accuracy—but for the most part, strangely enough, only selectively. In the name of greater accuracy, liberals and the Census Bureau favor making a statistical adjustment to the headcount to correct for the predictable failure to reach all black Americans and other minorities, while conservatives object to this departure from past practice (which, as it happens, would aid Democrats and hurt Republicans). But their positions are reversed when it comes to certain other ways of enhancing the accuracy of the census: namely, adding a "multiracial" category to more accurately reflect the condition of persons of mixed ancestry, or—more radically—getting rid of all the classifications based on the unscientific concept of "race."

This last proposal, however rational, would indeed be a sharp break with the past. "Asking about race or color is an old American tradition," notes Brandeis University historian Lawrence H. Fuchs, author of *The American Kaleidoscope* (1991), writing in a *Society* (Sept.–Oct. 1997) symposium. "It goes back to 1820, when the census counted 'free colored persons.' In 1850, it subdivided color into 'white, black or mulatto' for free inhabitants. Slaves were not counted and were assumed to be black." Twenty years later, "the word 'race' was used for the first time," with the racial categories being "white," "colored," "Chinese," and "Indian." The categories have changed over the decades. The current ones—"white," "black or Negro," "Asian or Pacific Islander," and "American Indian," as well as "other race" and "Spanish/Hispanic origin"—were adopted by the Census Bureau in 1980. Despite the fact that race has been thoroughly discredited as a biological concept by scientists, racial categories remain in the census, Fuchs notes, for a simple reason: "to implement affirmative action programs."

Yet the existing racial categories have offended many of the increasing number of interracial families in the country. The number of children in families with one parent white and the other black, Asian, or American Indian more than tripled between 1970 and 1990, rising from fewer than 400,000 to 1.5 million. Six percent of black householders in 1990 had nonblack spouses.

From organized groups of these families came the push in recent years to add a "multiracial" category to the 2000 census. Census Bureau surveys indicated that only a tiny percentage of people who classify themselves as black would shift to the multiracial category. Even so, civil rights leaders viewed the proposed classification "as a wrecking ball aimed at affirmative action," writes Lawrence Wright in the *New Yorker* (July 25, 1994). In early July, a federal government task force nixed the multiracial category, asserting that it would stoke "racial tensions and further fragmentation of our population." Instead, the task force suggested that people of mixed ancestry be allowed to select more than one of the existing racial categories on the census form. This approach, Judith Lichtenberg and three University of Maryland colleagues approvingly write in *Report from the Institute for Philosophy & Public Policy* (Summer 1997), "would allow lighter-skinned blacks, or people with one black parent, to opt out of an exclusive iden-

tification as black if they wished, but it would not give official status to a new, competing affiliation."

The government is expected to adopt this recommendation this fall, but Orlando Patterson, a sociologist at Harvard University, argues in a *New York Times* (July 11, 1997) op-ed piece that the "more than one race" approach is no better than the "multiracial" one and "will only intensify and reinforce our misguided obsession with racial categories." In his view, the Census Bureau should simply cease classifying Americans by race. "After all, why do we need a 'race' category when we already have an 'ethnic' one on the forms? . . . Distinguishing between race and ethnicity is an ingrained part of America's racial ideology. The racial categories maintained by the Census Bureau can only perpetuate the idea that there is such a thing as racial purity and that people in the United States have essential biological differences."

Patterson's fellow Harvard sociologist Nathan Glazer wonders in the *New Republic* (Oct. 7, 1996) why the Census Bureau "[has] gotten so deeply into this business of trying to make ever more refined racial and ethnic classifications at all," devoting more than two-fifths of the most recent census short form to racial and ethnic questions. He thinks there is far more such "counting" than necessary.

"Race in America means blacks, as a result of our long, sad, history, and it is of course blacks for whom the numbers are important, to rate our progress, or lack of it, in achieving equality," Glazer writes. "That is the only race that counts. There is no need to count Asian groups to the nth generation. In any case, intermarriage will make the effort futile in a few decades. There is no need to count American Indians, either. The figures have been inflated wildly in the last two counts as people with only a fraction of Indian ancestry call themselves American Indians. And there is no need to record 'Hispanicity,' as if it were an indelible mark impervious to American assimilation."

Ideally, in Glazer's view, the census would ask only three questions about race or ethnicity: "Are you black? Where were you born? Where were your parents born? That would tell us all we really need to know or can know with any degree of accuracy."

If an accurate count of black Americans is of signal importance, then so is the undercount. The Census Bureau and others contend that a statistical adjustment can be reliably made to correct for the large number of blacks—an estimated 5.7 percent in 1990, compared with 1.3 percent of whites—not counted in the census. The uncounted blacks are mostly in urban neighborhoods with high rates of poverty, crime, and drug abuse.

The Census Bureau has known about the relatively high undercount of blacks since the 1940 census, but only in recent decades, with congressional and state legislative redistricting affected, as well as the allocation of billions of federal dollars to state and local governments, has it become a significant issue. The undercount has prompted controversy and litigation in connection with both the 1980 and 1990 censuses, and promises to do so again with the 2000 one. The Supreme Court laid the 1990 lawsuits to rest last year without deciding the constitutionality of a statistical adjustment, note Margo Anderson, a historian at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, and Stephen E. Fienberg, a professor of statistics and social science at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh. That, they write in *Society* (Mar.–Apr. 1997), means that the Court could later construe the Constitution's reference to an "actual enumeration" as prohibiting a statistical adjustment.

Such a ruling would be fine with Michael Barone, a senior staff editor at *Reader's Digest* and co-author of the biannual *Almanac of American Politics*. He does not question the sincerity of the statisticians who believe an adjustment would improve the accuracy of the census. But he thinks that it would enable politicians to manipulate census figures with relative ease, and that Republicans are right to oppose it. The Framers of the Constitution, he writes in the *Weekly Standard* (Aug. 11, 1997), "knew that estimates could and would be politically manipulated and that an enumeration, though it would not be perfectly accurate, would anchor would-be manipulators more closely to verifiable facts. The architecture and animating spirit as well as the words of the [Constitution's] census clause are very much on the Republicans' side and against census adjustment."

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

The Presidential Rating Game

"Rating the Presidents: Washington to Clinton" by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., in *Political Science Quarterly* (Summer 1997), 475 Riverside Dr., Ste. 1274, New York, N.Y. 10115–1274; "The Ultimate Approval Rating" by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., in *The New York Times Magazine* (Dec. 15, 1996), 229 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036; "'There You Go Again'" by Alvin S. Felzenberg, in *Policy Review* (Mar.–Apr. 1997), The Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Ave. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Ever since historian Arthur M. Schlesinger asked 55 of his colleagues in 1948 to rate the American presidents, scholars and others have continued to play the game. Schlesinger's son, historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., did so last year for the *New York Times Magazine*. Through the decades, he notes, the polls show a remarkable scholarly consensus.

"There have been nine Greats and Near Greats in nearly all the scholarly reckonings," he writes. "Lincoln, Washington, and F.D. Roosevelt are always at the top, followed always, though in varying order, by Jefferson, Jackson, Polk, Theodore Roosevelt, Wilson, and Truman. Occasionally John Adams, Cleveland, and Eisenhower join the top nine. The Failures have always been Grant and Harding, with Buchanan, Pierce, Fillmore, Taylor, and Coolidge always near the bottom."

"The most striking change," Schlesinger says, "has been the steady rise of Eisenhower." In a 1962 poll conducted by Schlesinger *père*, Ike finished in 22nd place, near the bottom of the Average presidents; in the 1996 survey by Schlesinger *fils*, he ascended to 10th, just outside the Near Great ring. (Ten of the 32 jurors thought he belonged among the Near Great; one placed him among the Great.)

"Several factors account for Eisenhower's ascent," Schlesinger says. "The opening of his papers showed that the mask of genial affability Ike wore in the White House concealed an astute, crafty, confident, and purposeful leader. . . . Moreover, the FDR model and the yardsticks in earlier polls contained a bias in favor of an activist presidency. After Vietnam and Watergate showed that presidential activism could go too far,

Contemporary critics used Eisenhower's fondness for golf to suggest he was not a dynamic chief executive.

One of Their Own

Woodrow Wilson's high standing in the eyes of the historians who took part in a 1962 poll mystified President John F. Kennedy, reports historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., in *Political Science Quarterly* (Summer 1997).

Kennedy was surprised that the historians voted Woodrow Wilson a Great, placing him number four after Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, while ranking Andrew Jackson only number six and a Near Great. Though a fine speaker and writer, Wilson, in Kennedy's view, had failed in a number of cherished objectives. Why did professors admire him so much? (I suggested that he was, after all, the only professor to make the White House.)

Eisenhower appeared in a better light. . . . The more his successors got into trouble, the better Eisenhower looked. Presidents sometimes do more for the reputations of their predecessors than they do for their own."

"The most astonishing part of Schlesinger's poll," asserts political scientist Felzenberg, who has taught at Princeton University and elsewhere, "was the low assessment" given to Ronald Reagan, who placed 25th ("Average"), just below George Bush and ahead of Chester Arthur. Reagan, Schlesinger writes, "has seven Near Great votes, including some from liberal scholars impressed by his success in restoring the prestige of the presidency, in negotiating the last phases of the cold war, and in imposing his priorities on the country." But Reagan also received nine Below Averages and four Failures from others on the Schlesinger panel.

Ten graders of a more conservative bent queried by *Policy Review* not surprisingly give Reagan much higher marks. "When passions cool after a generation or so," predicts Alonzo L. Hamby, who teaches history at Ohio University, "Ronald Reagan will be widely accepted by historians as a near-great chief executive."

A Republican Rainbow?

"New Bedfellows" by Peter Beinart, in *The New Republic* (Aug. 11 & 18, 1997), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Many liberal politicians and community activists take it for granted that Jews and "people of color" such as Latinos should stick together in politics. And in city after city, state after state, Jews and Latinos are voting the same way, writes Beinart, a *New Republic* senior editor. "What they do not do—to the great surprise of leaders in both communities—is vote like African Americans."

Beinart says that the new ballot-box alliance has become evident recently in a number of closely watched elections around the country and been a crucial factor in some of them. In Los Angeles this spring, moderate Republican mayor Richard Riordan, challenged by liberal-left Democrat Tom Hayden, won 70 percent of the Jewish vote, 60 percent of the Latino vote—and only 25 percent of the black vote. In the mayoral contest in Houston in 1991, white businessman Bob Lanier, running against a liberal black state legislator, won 70 percent of the Jewish vote, 70 percent of the Latino vote—and only five percent of the black vote. In New Jersey's 1993 gubernatorial race, Republican Christie Todd Whitman garnered 45 percent of the Latino vote and 40 percent of the Jewish vote in beating incumbent Democratic governor Jim Florio, who won 75 percent of the black vote. In Illinois in 1994, moderate Republican governor Jim Edgar captured a majority of the Jewish vote and one-third of the Latino vote, to win re-election; his Democratic foe got 85 percent of the black vote.

In many large cities and states, both Latinos and Jews "are proving themselves far more economically conservative than African Americans, and far more conservative on crime," Beinart says. In Houston, for instance, most Latinos "don't live the same sort of lives" as most blacks, whom they now slightly outnumber. The Latinos (mostly Mexican Americans) are less likely to be jobless, to work for the government, or to be in single-parent families, and more likely to own their own businesses.

Jewish political identity, too, Beinart contends, is no longer as "liberal" as it once was. A recent survey, for instance, shows that 62 percent of American Jews oppose government redistribution of wealth. In New York City, mayoral aspirant and Manhattan borough president Ruth Messinger "is articulate, wonkish and compassionate—an embodiment of Jewish left-liberalism," Beinart says. "And, outside of her base on the Upper West Side, she is getting creamed by Republican incumbent Rudy Giuliani—among Jews." Jules Polonetsky, an Orthodox Jew on Giuliani's ticket, says that people see Messinger as "the kind of liberal Jewish leftist who's willing to be mugged because the mugger had a bad childhood."

Despite the new reality at the state and local levels, Beinart says, both Jews and Latinos are alienated by Republican attacks on immigration, cultural diversity, and minority rights, and "are refusing to follow white ethnics into the national GOP in sig-

nificant numbers." Because of their party registration and presidential voting patterns, they still look like anchors of the Democratic Party's liberal wing. In fact, though, he maintains, "they are stranded together in a fiscally conservative, culturally cosmopolitan political no-man's land. And they are a large part of the reason that growing numbers of candidates who are themselves ideologically stranded between the two parties—Whitman, Riordan, Edgar—have in recent years been elected."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

In Search of Interests

"The Erosion of American National Interests" by Samuel P. Huntington, in *Foreign Affairs* (Sept.–Oct. 1997), 58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Defining America's national interest has become almost impossible in the 1990s, argues Huntington, a political scientist at Harvard University and author of *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996). Foreign affairs pundits and other specialists have searched frantically "for new purposes that would justify a continuing U.S. role in world affairs comparable to that in the Cold War," but their quest has come to naught. The real problem, he argues, is that, deprived of an enemy by the demise of the Soviet Union, and increasingly subjected to multiculturalism's centrifugal forces, Americans are no longer sure of who they are.

"Given the domestic forces pushing toward heterogeneity, diversity, multiculturalism, and ethnic and racial division . . . the United States, perhaps more than most countries, may need an opposing other to maintain its unity," Huntington writes. But no significant enemy is now in sight. "New threats will undoubtedly arise, but given the scarcity of current ones, campaigns to arouse interest in foreign affairs and support for major foreign policy initiatives now fall on deaf ears," he points out. "The administration's call for the 'enlargement' of democracy does not resonate with the public and is belied by the administration's own actions," letting the commercial interests of particular firms and the sentimental ties of particular ethnic groups determine U.S. foreign policy.

Polls show that most Americans "are unwilling to support the commitment of significant resources to the defense of American allies, the protection of small nations against aggression, the promotion of human rights and democracy, or economic and social development in the Third World," Huntington notes. Consequently, he says, the alternative to a foreign policy in pursuit of commercial and ethnic interests cannot be one based on some "grand design," but rather must be "a policy of restraint and reconstitution aimed at limiting the diversion of American resources to the service of particularistic . . . interests."

At some time in the future, a serious external threat may compel Americans to clearly define their national interests and commit major resources to their defense. Until then, Huntington concludes, the United States should conserve its resources by scaling back its involvement in the world. Today, he writes, America's "national interest is national restraint."

No Substitute for Victory

"The Myth of Rescue" by William Rubinstein, in *Prospect* (July 1997), 4 Bedford Sq., London WC1B 3RA; "The Bombing of Auschwitz Revisited: A Critical Analysis" by Richard H. Levy, in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* (Winter 1996), Oxford Univ. Press, 2001 Evans Rd., Cary, N.C. 27513.

Historians such as David Wyman, author of *The Abandonment of the Jews* (1984), have argued that, out of indifference and anti-Semitism, the United States and Britain failed to do much to rescue Europe's Jews from the Holocaust. This view has gained wide currency, but it completely misconstrues the situation that the Jews of Nazi-occupied Europe faced, contends Rubinstein, a professor of history at the University of Wales, at Aberystwyth.

Before World War II, Nazi policy was to expel as many Jews as possible, not to kill them. The claim by Wyman and other crit-

ics that the West erected "almost insuperable barriers" to their emigration while "'there was still time,'" Rubinstein says, is belied by the facts: 72 percent of Germany's Jews, and an even higher percentage of Jewish children, "managed to flee before this became impossible [in late 1940], one of the greatest rescues of any beleaguered group in history." After *Kristallnacht* in November 1938 made it obvious that Jews had no future in Adolf Hitler's Germany, no new Western barriers to Jewish immigration were raised, he notes. "On the contrary, more Jews left Germany in 1939 than in any other year." Britain radically liberalized its immigration policies for their benefit.

The Jewish refugees who escaped Hitler before the war came exclusively from Germany and its satellites, Rubinstein points out. While continental Europe then had a Jewish population of about 10 million, Germany in 1933, when Hitler came to power, was home to only about 500,000 Jews and Austria, 190,000. The Jewish population of the Sudetenland and other parts of Czechoslovakia that Hitler annexed during 1938–39 after the Munich accords was 115,000. The vast majority of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust lived elsewhere—in eastern Europe, particularly Poland, the Soviet Union, and Hungary—and, before the war, were not under Nazi domination and were not refugees.

The situation changed drastically, Rubinstein notes, with Hitler's rapid conquest of most of continental Europe between 1939 and 1941. "From late 1940, Jews were specifically forbidden to emigrate from Nazi-occupied territory." Now, the Jews became prisoners, the barriers to their emigration "raised by the Nazis themselves, not by the western allies." And now, "only the military liberation of Nazi-occupied Europe could rescue any significant number of Jews."

Wyman and others have indicted the Allies for failing to bomb the gas chambers and crematoriums at Auschwitz. That possibility was widely discussed by Jewish leaders and British and American officials in the summer of 1944, notes Levy, a retired aeronautical engineer, in an extensive analysis of the controversy. Only the heavy bombers of the U.S. 15th Air Force, based in Italy, were capable of striking at Auschwitz, and the targets, including underground gas chambers, would have required very heavy bombing. The raids could well have failed to destroy all the gas chambers, would have impinged on the war effort, and probably would have killed or wounded thousands of the Jewish inmates. That would have given the Germans a pretext for blaming the deaths at Auschwitz on Allied bombing. For these reasons, Leon Kubowitzki of the World Jewish Congress in New York and David Ben-Gurion of the Israeli "government-in-embryo" in Palestine opposed the idea at the time. Writes Rubinstein: "Only by winning the war as quickly as possible, and destroying the Nazi scourge, could the surviving Jews of Europe be liberated."

The New Diplomacy

"Globalization and Diplomacy: A Practitioner's Perspective" by Strobe Talbott, in *Foreign Policy* (Fall 1997), 2400 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037–1153.

Growing global interdependence is making "the very word *foreign* . . . obsolete" in some realms of diplomacy, writes Deputy Secretary of State Talbott. "From the floor of the stock exchange in Singapore to the roof of the world over Patagonia where there is a hole in the ozone layer, what happens there matters here—and vice versa."

With trade and international investment now more economically important to the United States, the State Department has been collaborating more closely with the Commerce Department and other government agencies, not only to help "write the rules and build the institutions that govern the global economy" but to help American firms win contracts overseas, Talbott notes.

The new cooperative diplomacy—which also involves joint efforts with U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies to fight international organized crime and drug trafficking—has changed the look of the 249 American embassies and consulates overseas. "In fact, 63 percent of those now under the authority of U.S. ambassadors and other chiefs of mission are not State Department

employees," Talbott notes.

Ironically, even as the wider world has become more important economically and in certain other ways, public and media interest in world developments has waned. U.S. spending on "foreign affairs" (including diplomatic operations, foreign aid, military assistance, humanitarian relief, contributions to international organizations, Voice of America, and programs to help fledgling democracies) was $18.4 billion in fiscal 1996—half the total (after adjusting for inflation) in fiscal 1985. Since the end of the Cold War, the State Department has opened 23 new embassies and consulates in the states of the former Soviet Union, Vietnam, and elsewhere, but it has been forced to close 34 others around the world.

U.S. Consul Robert Pollard and his wife look on as the flag over the U.S. Consulate at Udorn, Thailand, is lowered for the last time, on December 8, 1995. The consulate is one of many shut down.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

What Do Consumers Really Want?

A Survey of Recent Articles

A little more than two decades ago, an economist named Tibor Scitovsky challenged a basic assumption of modern economics: "that the consumer is rational . . . that whatever he does must be the best thing for him to do, given his tastes, market opportunities, and circumstances, since otherwise he would not have done it." It was "unscientific" to make this assumption, Scitovsky argued, and sustained observation of human behavior showed that it was frequently unjustified: people often fail to choose what is best for them. They watch too much television, for instance, rather than reading great literature.

Scitovsky's book, *The Joyless Economy* (1976), received scant recognition when it first appeared, but some now are hailing it as a prophetic masterpiece. It is among "The Hundred Most Influential Books Since World War II," according to a survey of prominent scholars by the *Times Literary Supplement* (Oct. 6, 1995). More recently, in *Critical Review* (Fall 1996), seven sympathetic critics and Scitovsky himself revisited the book's critique of consumer capitalism.

"Drawing on research in physiological psychology," Scitovsky began with the human inclination to avoid discomfort and seek plea-

sure, note Jeffrey Friedman and Adam McCabe, *Critical Review*'s editor and research assistant, respectively. But he contested the notion that the dynamic is so simple. "In Scitovsky's view, there are *two* sources of displeasure: not only too much stimulus—pain; but too little—boredom." Affluent societies had produced widespread *comfort*—but too much comfort resulted in ennui. By seeking excessive comfort rather than stimulation, or by turning to such fleetingly satisfying types of stimulation as TV or shopping, people made "wrong" choices and got less enjoyment than they could out of life. "The remedy," Scitovsky said, "is culture" and the stimulation provided by music, painting, literature, and history. Consumers must be educated to make wiser choices.

Friedman and McCabe note "the paternalistic implications" of Scitovsky's work. If freedom has great intrinsic value, they say, "it is difficult to see why we should be concerned with Scitovsky's, or anyone else's, empirical findings about freedom's potentially unhappy effects." Unfortunately, they add, the conviction of freedom's intrinsic value "drains any urgency from the investigation of how we *should* live; indeed, it taints such investigation as suspect, because [it] might lead to 'elitist' conclusions." Unsurprisingly, "such investigation is rare, and . . . Scitovsky's example is a lonely one."

But Amartya Sen, a professor of economics and philosophy at Harvard University, denies that Scitovsky's book is "paternalistic in spirit." Rather, he says, his diagnosis has some affinities with "[the] Socratic claim that the 'unexamined life' is not worth living. . . . If constructive stimulation is neglected in actual behavior, this is not because people have examined the alternatives and the range of choices that are in fact within their command, and have come to the considered conclusion that they really do want comfort rather than stimulation. Had that been the case, it would have been harder for Scitovsky to press stimulation on them, 'in their own best interest.'"

Juliet Schor, author of *The Overworked American* (1992) and a professor of the economics of leisure at Tilburg University, in the Netherlands, credits *The Joyless Economy* with pointing out the yawning gap between consumption and satisfaction. However, the solution, she believes, does not lie in better-educated consumers but in a movement away from "consumerism" toward a different "system" with less private consumption and more "public goods, savings, leisure time, and environmental preservation."

Albert O. Hirschman, a professor of social science, emeritus, at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey, also faults Scitovsky for "his utter neglect" of the *public* sphere—of politics, participation in public life, and pursuit of the public interest—as a welcome source of stimulation. Sometimes, Hirschman points out, public and private stimulations can be had at the same time. In ancient Greece, for example, banquets that originated in the religious sacrifice of a bull or ox not only offered the private pleasure of food but played a part in the emergence of Athenian democracy.

Scitovsky—whose academic career included stops at Stanford University, the University of California campuses at Berkeley and Santa Cruz, and Yale University—says in *Critical Review* that the criticisms of his book's narrow focus on the private domain are justified. "I dealt only with the desire for status, the comfort of belonging, and the stimulus of conversation in pubs and cafés, but was remiss in overlooking all the pleasure and stimulation provided by many public goods and activities, ranging from beautiful landscapes and cityscapes to one's public activities and duties as a citizen." These, too, have value, yet are slighted in the usual economic calculus.

Michael Benedikt, a professor of architecture at the University of Texas at Austin, criticizes Scitovsky on another front, arguing that his "simple dichotomy" of comfort and stimulation doesn't lead very far. What's needed, he says, is a hierarchy of human needs that would allow evaluation of the true "utility" of different things. Benedikt proposes six categories, from the need for survival to the need for freedom.

But Scitovsky gets the last word. A now-glaring shortcoming of his *Joyless Economy*, he says, is that it focuses on the problems of the affluent while neglecting those of the poor. They, too—in addition to their more obvious privations—"suffer from boredom, just like the idle rich." But the boredom of the poor "is chronic, which makes it a deprivation as extreme as starvation, and with equally fatal consequences . . . violence and vandalism." Work, Scitovsky suggests, is "the main antidote to boredom for the majority of mankind," and one of our deepest human needs.

Killing the Railroads

"Scientific Mismanagement" by Phillip Longman, in *Audacity*
(Summer 1997), 60 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011.

In 1910, the railroads in the eastern United States petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) for a 10 percent, across-the-board increase in freight rates. With most of the nation's commerce dependent on rail transportation, the ICC, in effect, was making "high-stakes industrial policy," observes Longman, author of *The Return of Thrift* (1996). Its actions, he contends, show "the limits of useful government regulation of the economy."

"They All Want Mr. Brandeis Now," a cartoonist jibed after the lawyer claimed the railroads could save millions.

In 1887, in response to complaints that the railroads' "robber baron" owners had discriminated, charging more in regions where they faced less competition, Congress established the ICC. It was to provide regulation of the railroads by disinterested "experts." From the start, Longman says, "the ICC committed itself to order and science." The commission was not in thrall to the industry it was regulating; nor was it bent upon giving in to political pressures. Yet the commissioners frequently found it hard to resist "the irresponsible demands of *broad* special interests," such as Midwestern farmers, to hold down rates. In the absence of a free market, the ICC "experts" had no objective basis for assigning a value to railroad services, Longman argues. As a result, the commissioners embraced "shifting subjective standards of what were 'fair' and 'equitable' rates—standards that [they] could neither consistently apply nor defend in the face of intense popular pressure for low tariffs."

Thanks to inflation and the ICC's rulings, he says, real railroad rates, which had been falling slowly since the 1870s, "began a steep and dramatic decline after 1897." Even as the railroads' costs soared, the average price they could charge for moving a ton of freight one mile dropped nearly 24 percent. This further stimulated demand for rail services, leading the railroads to make huge capital investments in track and freight cars. Because they were prevented from raising rates, they had to borrow, thus "shifting more and more of the cost of rail services from current to future users."

In opposing the 1910 petition for a rate hike, future Supreme Court justice Louis D. Brandeis, the crusading lawyer representing the freight-shipping interests, conceded that the railroads needed more money. But he claimed that if they would adopt the "scientific management" ideas of another "expert," industrial engineer Frederick W. Taylor, they could save $1 million a day. Brandeis's headline-making assertion was utterly unfounded, Longman says. Railroad work was very different from manufacturing. But the ICC turned the railroads down.

"By the middle teens," Longman writes, "the financial condition of many major systems . . . had become desperate." After America entered World War I, in 1917, the nation's rail system was overwhelmed, with soaring volume and plummeting net profits. The government soon took over the system.

"Though railroads reverted back to private ownership after the war," Longman writes, "the pattern of meddlesome and inefficient rate-regulation continued for another 60 years." Air freight and trucking bit deeply into the railroads' markets; service deteriorated. Finally, in 1980, "alarmed by a series of huge railroad bankruptcies in the Northeast and Midwest," Congress stripped the ICC of its power to set freight rates. "The dramatic resurgence of the [freight] rail industry since then," Longman concludes, "underscores just how costly the ICC regulation of this industry had been."

Screening Out Sex Bias

"Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of 'Blind' Auditions on Female Musicians" by Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse, in *Working Paper 5903* (Jan. 1997), National Bureau of Economic Research, 1050 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

Discrimination against women in hiring is often alleged, but hard to prove. Goldin and Rouse, economists at Harvard and Princeton universities, respectively, examine one case that offers an unusual opportunity to gauge the extent of sex bias: symphony orchestras.

Orchestras traditionally have been largely male bastions. Many conductors looked upon female musicians as less talented than men or too temperamental. "I just don't think that women should be in an orchestra," Zubin Mehta, conductor of the Los Angeles Symphony (1964-78) and of the New York Philharmonic (1978-90), once said. Women seldom got the chance even to apply. Orchestra positions paid well and turnover was low, and when new musicians were to be hired, most who were invited to audition were "the (male) students of a select group of teachers," the authors note. The "Big Five" orchestras (in Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, and Philadelphia) were at least 95 percent male until the mid-1960s.

Since then, however, most major orchestras have opened up their hiring practices. One change is unique: using "screens," such as a room divider placed on the stage, to hide the sex of candidates from the judges. The result: the proportion of female members of the "Big Five" orchestras has dramatically increased, to 25 percent. The New York Philharmonic is 35 percent female. (Despite Mehta's previously expressed opinion, 45 percent of the new hires during his tenure there were women.)

Hiring has increased partly because the pool of female applicants is larger. But screening out bias, Goldin and Rouse conclude from an analysis of audition records of eight major symphony orchestras, made it 50 percent more likely that a woman would be advanced from some of the preliminary rounds of an audition, and also significantly improved her chances of being selected in the final round. Overall, their study of the personnel rosters of a larger number of orchestras shows that the use of "screens" was responsible for at least one-fourth of the increase in female musicians since 1970.

SOCIETY

Honk If You Love Your Car

"Cars and Their Enemies" by James Q. Wilson, in *Commentary* (July 1997), 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

If there is one feature of American life that inspires near-universal revulsion in social critics, it is Americans' love affair with the car. The latest blast comes from Jane Holtz Kay, the architecture critic for the *Nation*. In *Asphalt Nation* (1997), she takes a sledgehammer to the hated shiny object, shouting "sprawl . . . pollution . . . congestion . . . commuting." She wants mass transit, railroads, and more biking and walking. What Kay and

other auto haters don't seem to grasp, argues Wilson, a professor of management and public policy at the University of California, Los Angeles, is that Americans have very good reasons for preferring cars.

The debate between car lovers and car haters is really over "private benefits and public goods," he says. Virtually everyone is against pollution, energy inefficiency, excessive noise, fatal accidents, and the other social ills blamed on the automobile. But people choose their transportation based on what's good for them. It's an easy choice, says Wilson: "The automobile is more flexible, more punctual, supplies greater comfort, provides for carrying more parcels, creates more privacy, enables one to select fellow passengers, and, for distances over a mile or more, requires less travel time." The best studies, he adds, show that getting to work is quicker in cars than by mass transit.

As a practical matter, he notes, there is no real debate: Americans have voted. In 1960, 20 percent of U.S. households still didn't own a car; by 1990, only 10 percent were carless. That year, in 19 of the 20 largest metropolitan areas, at least 75 percent of trips to and from work were made by a lone person in an automobile. "The exception," Wilson says, "was the New York metropolitan region, but even there—with an elaborate mass-transit system and a residential concentration high enough to make it possible for some people to walk to work—solo car use made up over half of all trips to work."

America's car haters often hold up Europe as a shining example of a superior, auto-snubbing way of life. But the fact is that the number of autos per capita grew three times faster in Western Europe than in the United States between 1965 and 1987, Wilson says. "Despite [government] policies that penalize car use, make travel very expensive, and restrict parking spaces, Europeans, once they can afford to do so, buy cars, and drive them."

Though critics minimize the effort, the United States "*has* tried to copy the European investment in mass transit," he points out. Transportation planners have struggled to get people out of their cars and into buses, trains, and subways (and carpools). "Despite spending about $100 billion, Washington has yet to figure out how to do it." During the 1980s, the Metrorail system in the nation's capital expanded from 30 to 73 miles of line and opened an additional 30 stations—yet the number of people driving to work increased by 414,000, and the transit share of all commutes declined.

The social costs of the car can be moderated, Wilson says. "Auto-exhaust pollution has been dramatically reduced in this country by redesigning engines, changing fuels (largely by removing lead), and imposing inspection requirements." More can be done, by raising gas taxes and building bike pathways, for example. Yet Wilson doubts that the critics will ever be satisfied, because so many of them dislike not just the car but all that it stands for: privacy, autonomy, speed, and "the joyous sensation of driving on beautiful country roads."

Abandon All Cars!

It is time for Americans to get out of their cars, Jane Holtz Kay, author of *Asphalt Nation* (1997), declares in *Preservation* (May–June 1997).

"If you build it, they will come," according to the cliché. If you build highways, more traffic will come, Americans stuck in traffic have begun to realize. We can look back at a 75-year history of traffic begetting roads begetting more traffic and hence more roads. . . .

We are learning that if you build it right, *they will come and stay. If you reinforce cities and Main Streets with compact, transit-friendly neighborhoods, if you build and zone communities as pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly places, if you end subsidies for the car and invest in mass transit, and if you will run the automobile-proliferation reel in reverse, they will come. "They" will be walkers, transit riders, and bicyclists, a.k.a. people. It is human mobility, not automobility, that preserves our communities and their context. It is proximity, not car-bred sprawl, that holds our historic landscape intact.*

Homes, Not Nursing Homes

"Replacing the Nursing Home" by Peter Uhlenberg, in *The Public Interest* (Summer 1997), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Nursing homes, which now house 1.7 million elderly Americans, cost too much (more than $45,000 a year for a middle-range one) and provide poor care in a dehumanized environment. The indictment is familiar, but Uhlenberg, a sociologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, argues that something can be done: phase out the government's $50 billion annual subsidy, and channel it instead to "cost-effective, noninstitutional alternatives," including home care, "assisted living," group homes, hospices, and rehabilitation programs.

The $80-billion-a-year nursing-home industry developed after World War II largely as a result of government support, Uhlenberg points out. Fewer than 200,000 people lived in nursing homes in the mid-1940s. The Hill-Burton Act of 1946 provided money to build nonprofit nursing homes, while the Federal Housing Administration guaranteed mortgage loans to for-profit ones. After Medicaid was established in 1965, the government would pay the full cost of long-term care for poor older persons in nursing homes—but not in other settings. The "deinstitutionalization" of mental hospitals, starting in the 1960s, provided another boost to nursing homes. By the early 1970s, more than one million elderly folk were living in such institutions.

Today, Uhlenberg writes, "all but the very wealthy face the threat in old age of having to transfer their life savings to a nursing home and becoming wards of the state." In return, they usually receive "unloving care" from low-paid, unskilled aides. The quality of care could be improved by raising salaries, reducing workloads, and providing more training, he says, but that would only make care even more outrageously expensive.

Some extremely disabled individuals must be institutionalized, the author concedes. But roughly 80 percent of the older persons who are dependent on others for help in dressing, eating, and other routine daily activities live in their own home, he points out, and even more could remain at home if government policies were reoriented. Spending on home health care has been growing rapidly in recent years, in part because Medicare and Medicaid requirements have been eased. Medicare expenditures increased from $1.9 billion in 1986 to $9.7 billion in 1994. The regulations should be revised, Uhlenberg says, to encourage much greater use of home health care.

Studies indicate that the cost of providing shelter, food, personal assistance, and medical care at home is generally less than at a nursing facility, Uhlenberg says. And the quality of the care is superior, in part because the individuals or their family members "have greater control over who provides the care and how well [it] is provided"—not to mention the fact that family and friends can continue to help care for the person. Institutionalizing someone puts an end to all these advantages, Uhlenberg writes.

The Redskin Fallacy

"How Indians Got to Be Red" by Nancy Shoemaker, in *The American Historical Review* (June 1997), 400 A St. S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

Many scholars today believe that Europeans invented the idea of race and imposed their notions of racial identity on others. But in at least one case, argues Shoemaker, a historian at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, a non-European group named itself.

That group is the Indians of North America. It has long been thought that they were labeled *red* by early European explorers—not because of their skin color, which the Europeans usually described as tawny or brown, but because they often daubed themselves with red paint. Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnaeus made red a racial category in his *Systema Naturae* (1740).

But Shoemaker says that records of early meetings between Europeans and Indians show that the Indians had already taken the name red for themselves. In 1725, for example, a French priest in Mobile, Alabama, recounted a story told by a Taensas chief involving three men, one white, one black, and one red. The priest felt compelled to explain to his readers that the latter was an Indian, "for they call themselves in their language 'Red Men.'" In a 1726 transcript of an effort by the English to

mediate a peace between the Creeks and Cherokees in South Carolina, the Indians referred to each other as "red people," while the English called them Indians.

Why did the Indians refer to themselves as red? Among some tribes of the Southeast, origin myths may have provided the inspiration. The Mesquakies of the lower Mississippi valley, for example, believed that the first humans were created out of clay "red as the reddest blood," one scholar wrote. The tribe's name means "red Earths."

A second possibility is that Indians responded with red after the Europeans began calling themselves white. The first Europeans in the New World thought of themselves as Christians, but with the arrival of black slaves in the Carolinas in the early 18th century—some of them Christians—they began referring to themselves as white. Red was a natural response for the Indians, Shoemaker notes, because red and white already had strong paired symbolic meanings: red generally stood for war, white for peace. Some tribes may have borrowed the color red from tribes like the Mesquakies.

It is unclear if the Indians saw red and white as racial categories (i.e. biologically linked to social, political, and cultural characteristics) or only as the equivalent of "school colors." But whites in the 18th century did embrace race thinking. "It would take another century for the science of race to reach its full height and then one more century for the idea of race to be seriously questioned," writes Shoemaker. "Perhaps we are now at the brink of the apocalypse, when the idea of race will be abandoned entirely and another system of categories will emerge to take its place."

PRESS & MEDIA

Tabloids Invade TV News!

"Local News: The Biggest Scandal on TV" by Steven D. Stark, in the *Washington Monthly* (June 1997), 1611 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009; "News Lite" by James McCartney, in *American Journalism Review* (June 1997), 8701 Adelphi Road, Adelphi, Md. 20783–1716.

No matter what the community in America, the local TV news is much the same: crimes, disasters, and fluff, all served up by two relentlessly personable anchorpersons and their eager-to-please young correspondents, reporting and chatting "live" from various corners of the community and nation. It's not just their shallowness that makes these news shows so objectionable, argues Stark, author of *Glued to the Set* (1997); it's the fact that they've become so immensely influential. Sixty-five percent of adults in a 1996 survey reported watching the local TV news, compared with only 42 percent who tuned in to TV network newscasts.

Local news shows once were "an insignificant part of the television day," Stark recalls. But in the late 1960s and early '70s, stations began to grasp the shows' profit potential. They are relatively cheap to produce, and the local stations can keep the profits (which they can't do with network programming). Local newscasts grew to a half-hour, right before the evening network news; then to an hour, even 90 minutes.

Taking the advice of media consultants, Stark notes, the stations began offering "happy talk" news, with personable "anchors" as the principal attraction, and tabloidlike "action news" (a.k.a. "eyewitness news"), with "a high story count, an increasing number of striking visuals, and exciting upbeat music." The formula worked. Such newscasts soon began to generate between one-third and one-half of local stations' total profits.

By the 1980s, communications satellites and other technological advances enabled local stations to send their own correspondents to national and international events, scooping the network news programs. The Cable News Network, established in 1980, also began selling news footage to local news operations, and local affiliates of the Big Three broadcast networks then forced them to share their own jealously guarded film. Gradually, says Stark, local stations became "the average viewer's window on the whole world," and the locals' tabloid style "became the trademark of national and international coverage."

Now, the networks themselves are going "tabloid," with the trend especially evident in the last year or so, says McCartney. A typical NBC evening news broadcast reports only

five or six traditional "hard news" items, compared with about 20 in the Huntley-Brinkley heyday. Instead of news about government and world events, the networks are giving viewers the lowdown on such subjects as daydreams, telephone psychics, and unidentified flying objects. Today, it seems, all TV news is "local."

A Room of One's Own

"The White House Beat at the Century Mark" by Martha Joynt Kumar, in *Press/Politics* (Summer 1997), Kennedy School of Government, Harvard Univ., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

In 1895, William Price, a reporter for the Washington *Evening Star*, took up a position outside the front gate of the White House, and from it, buttonholed politicians who had been in to see President Grover Cleveland. Soon, wrote Washington correspondent Delbert Clark in 1941, Price was joined by other reporters. For seven years, in good weather and bad, they persevered until finally, one wet day in 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt, taking pity on the rain-soaked wretches, "called in his secretary and then and there directed that a special room be set aside in the newly built Executive Offices for the sole use of the press. The Washington correspondents had come of age."

President Theodore Roosevelt skillfully used reporters to promote his aims with the public.

It's a nice little story, and scholars and journalists have repeated it over the years to explain the origins of the White House press corps. But there's very little truth in the tale, says Kumar, a political scientist at Towson University, in Maryland.

In prosaic fact, she says, the newsworthiness of the presidency had grown so much by President Cleveland's administration that in 1896 Price and two other correspondents were given a table in a White House corridor at which to work. After William McKinley became president, he turned the whole second-floor corridor over to the press. During the Spanish-American War (1898), as journalist Ida M. Tarbell wrote that year in *McClure's*, a half-dozen or more reporters could routinely be found "in the outer reception-room of the business part of the White House, a corner containing a well furnished table and plenty of chairs." In 1902, President Roosevelt gave White House reporters a large room in the new "temporary offices" (now the West Wing). Eager to use "the bully pulpit," TR made himself more accessible to the correspondents than his predecessors had been, Kumar notes. He was the first president to meet regularly with reporters, but not the first to give them a home in the White House.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

The Death Debate

A Survey of Recent Articles

Six prominent philosophers took an unusual step earlier this year. Setting aside their differences on "many issues of public morality and policy," they joined in urging the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold two appeals courts' rulings and give terminally ill patients a constitutional right to kill themselves.

"Though academic philosophers have been parties to amicus briefs before, as mem-

bers of organizations or as representing an applied specialty like bioethics, I am unaware of any other occasion on which a group has intervened in Supreme Court litigation solely as general moral philosophers," observes Ronald Dworkin in the *New York Review of Books* (Mar. 27, 1997), in an introduction to the brief that he and five other professors filed. Joining Dworkin, of Oxford University and New York University, in "The Philosophers' Brief" for physician-assisted suicide were Robert Nozick, John Rawls, and Thomas Scanlon, all of Harvard University, Thomas Nagel of NYU, and Judith Jarvis Thomson, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Though the Supreme Court did not take their advice, and instead, this past June, unanimously reversed the two lower courts, the philosophical debate is far from over.

Dworkin and his colleagues are firmly "pro-choice": "Just as it would be intolerable for government to dictate that doctors never be permitted to try to keep someone alive as long as possible, when that is what the patient wishes, so it is intolerable for government to dictate that doctors may never, under any circumstances, help someone to die who believes that further life means only degradation."

The six philosophers reject the usual moral distinction, as it has evolved among bioethicists in recent decades, between allowing someone to die (by, for instance, withdrawing "extraordinary" life-sustaining treatment) and killing that person (by, say, giving a lethal injection with the intention of causing death). In either case, they maintain, "the doctor acts with the same intention: to help the patient die."

Their argument leaves J. Bottum, associate editor of *First Things* (June–July 1997), unimpressed. The authors of "The Philosophers' Brief," he says, resolutely refuse "to engage in philosophical analysis." While they "dismiss as philosophically naive ('based on a misunderstanding of the pertinent moral principles') the commonsense distinction between letting die and killing, the brief uses such commonsense phrases as 'in the patient's best interest to die' without any nod toward their philosophically difficult character. (How, a philosopher ought to ask, can it ever be in anyone's best interest to cease to have interests?). . . And in a fairly straightforward begging of the question near the end of the text, the brief asserts that there exist patients 'whose decisions for suicide plainly cannot be dismissed as irrational or foolish or premature,' offering as a self-evident premise what was supposed to be proved as the conclusion."

Like Bottum, F. M. Kamm, a professor of philosophy at NYU and a visiting professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, is unwilling to give up the traditional distinction between killing and letting die. But, writing in *Boston Review* (Summer 1997), she nevertheless maintains that "assisted suicide (and euthanasia) are sometimes morally permissible." The "strongest case" for assisted suicide, she says, is "if the overriding aim is to end physical pain," though with modern techniques of pain control, the need may be rare. But the patient has a right to avoid pain.

Marcia Angell, executive editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine* (Jan. 2, 1997), argues "that if expert palliative care were available to everyone who needed it, there would be few requests for assisted suicide." For those who can't be adequately helped, she believes, physician-assisted suicide should be available. The distinction between killing and letting die is "too doctor-centered," in her view. "We should ask ourselves not so much whether the doctor's role is passive or active but whether the *patient's* role is passive or active." The fact that assisted suicide is voluntary "provides an inherent safeguard against abuse," she believes. And recent reports from the Netherlands, where physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia have been given legal sanction since the early 1970s, "indicate that fears about a slippery slope there have not been borne out." Studies in 1990 and '95 indicated that the incidence of doctor-assisted suicide there remained about the same, 0.2 percent of all deaths, while euthanasia increased from 1.7 percent to 2.4 percent. The investigators did not regard this jump as very significant.

But Herbert Hendin, of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and two Dutch colleagues, writing in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (June 4, 1997), maintain that Holland is already sliding down the "slippery slope." In recent decades, they write, "the Netherlands has moved . . . from euthanasia for terminally ill patients to euthanasia for those who are

chronically ill, from euthanasia for physical illness to euthanasia for psychological distress, and from voluntary euthanasia to nonvoluntary and involuntary euthanasia."

According to the 1995 Netherlands study, in 0.7 percent of all deaths, physicians admitted they had actively ended patients' lives without their explicit consent. In all, Hendin and his colleagues point out, the estimated number of deaths caused by physicians' active intervention of one sort or another—euthanasia, assisted suicide, ending the life of a patient without his or her consent, and giving pain medication with the explicit intention of ending the patient's life—increased from 4,813 (or 3.7 percent of all deaths) in 1990 to 6,368 (or 4.7 percent) five years later.

Medical standards in the care of terminally ill patients in the Netherlands have eroded, and doctors have failed to take advantage of advances in palliative care, Hendin and his coauthors argue, as euthanasia, "intended originally for the exceptional case," has become an accepted form of "treatment." In one recent case, they report, a Dutch patient with cancer who had said she did not want euthanasia "had her life ended because in the physician's words, 'It could have taken another week before she died. I just needed this bed.'"

When in Rome . . .

"Jerome and the Sham Christians of Rome" by John Curran, in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (Apr. 1997), Robinson College, Cambridge CB3 9AN, UK.

Saint Jerome (A.D. 340?–420), the learned ascetic who is especially remembered for his translation of the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate version), had little good to say about the high-living upper-class Christians of fourth-century Rome. But underneath the legendary disdain of his polemics, argues Curran, a professor of ancient history at Queens University of Belfast, Jerome was waging "a vigorous struggle for the support of the city's elite." He gathered about him a circle of noble Roman Christian women, mainly widows, including Paula, his most devoted disciple. "Much of the vigor of Jerome's criticism of 'sham' Christians," Curran says, "came from the uncomfortable knowledge that his friends were from, and in certain ways remained close to, this world."

During the fourth century, Curran points out, clerics and monks drew closer to Rome's aristocratic families, and in theological disputes in the latter part of the century, sought to win this audience over. Jerome, for example, crossed swords with a certain Helvidius, who argued in the 380s that after Christ's birth, his mother Mary "enjoyed a full and normal married life." The implication for ordinary Christians was that married life was not inferior to the celibate life of a virgin. Jerome made a "skillful and tendentious rebuttal," quoting Saint Paul and arguing that a married woman seeks to please her husband, while an unmarried virgin is able to serve the Lord.

Jerome looked askance at the active social life that some well-born Christians in Rome enjoyed, and warned against the temptations of good food and drink. He was suspicious even of such Christians' benefactions: "Many

Saint Jerome, with Crucifix and Bible near, as depicted by the 17th century Flemish painter Anthony van Dyck

build churches nowadays; their walls and pillars of glowing marble, their ceilings glittering with gold, their altars studded with jewels. . . . Let us, therefore, think of His cross and we will count riches to be but dirt." Jerome was also irritated by the rich Christians' ostentatiously public charity. But Curran thinks he was too harsh. "Their outlay could be extensive and costly," he notes, and "their physical and personal patronage of sites such as that of St. Peter's basilica" helped to secure the churches as anchors of the faith.

The irascible scholar's sharp-tongued criticisms eventually led to his exile. After Pope Damasus, his patron and protector, died in December 384, an accusation of impropriety, probably in connection with his relationship with Paula, was brought against Jerome. "Although acquitted on the most serious charge, Jerome was humiliatingly invited to leave [the city]," Curran writes. He departed in bitterness and, with Paula and other disciples, made his way to the Holy Land and to Bethlehem, far from the Babylon on the Tiber.

The Significant Other

In *Index on Censorship* (May–June 1997), Umberto Eco, author of *The Name of the Rose* (1983), describes his vision of the birth of a natural code of ethics.

I am of the firm belief that even those who do not have faith in a personal and providential divinity can still experience forms of religious feeling and hence a sense of the sacred, of limits, questioning and expectation; of a communion with something that surpasses us. What you ask is what there is that is binding, compelling and irrevocable in this form of ethics. . . .

The ethical dimension begins when the other comes on the scene. Every law, whether moral or statutory, regulates interpersonal relationships, including those with that other who imposes it. . . .

How then can there be or have been cultures that approve massacre, cannibalism, the physical humiliation of others? Simply because they restrict the concept of "other humans" to the tribal community (or ethnic group) and consider the "barbarians" non-human; not even the Crusaders felt the infidel was a neighbor to be excessively loved. The fact is, the recognition of the role of others, and the need to respect in them the needs we consider essential for ourselves, has developed slowly over thousands of years. The Christian commandment of love was enunciated with great effort, and only accepted when the time was ripe.

But, you ask me, can this idea of the importance of the other furnish an absolute base, an immutable foundation for ethical behavior? It would be enough for me to reply that even the foundations that you define as absolute do not prevent believers from sinning in the knowledge that they sin, and the story would end there; the temptation to evil is present even in those who have a solid and revealed notion of Good.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

The Cloning Controversy

A Survey of Recent Articles

When the now-famous Scottish sheep named Dolly was introduced to the world earlier this year, the world responded with a giddy mixture of levity and alarm. "An udder way of making lambs" said a headline in the same issue of *Nature* (Feb. 27, 1997) that carried the astonishing news that Ian Wilmut and his colleagues at the Roslin Institute, near Edinburgh, had cloned Dolly from the udder of a six-year-old ewe.

"We should be clear why the science of Dolly is so important," John Maddox, a for-

mer *Nature* editor, writes in *Prospect* (Apr. 1997). The cells in an animal's body undergo a gradual process of specialization as the embryo develops into a newborn animal, so that while each cell in the animal's body has a full complement of DNA, each uses only those genes needed for its specialized function. Scientists thought that the unused genes were somehow permanently switched off. Dolly refutes that. She shows that an animal replica can be grown from the DNA in just about any cell in the body.

What Wilmut and his colleagues did, explains *Science News* (Apr. 5, 1997) writer John Travis, was to take mammary cells from a ewe and deprive them of nutrients, so that the cells entered a "quiescent" stage. The researchers then fused these cells, containing all their DNA, with egg cells whose nuclei had been removed. The developing embryos were then implanted in a surrogate mother. Out of 277 attempts to produce a clone in this way, Wilmut and his associates succeeded only once. (Helping to ease doubts that Dolly might be a fluke, researchers at a Wisconsin firm disclosed to *New York Times* [Aug. 8, 1997] science writer Gina Kolata that they have cloned genetic replicas of more than 10 adult Holstein cows. Though none of the clones had yet been born, some of the cows were expected to deliver "very soon," and the researchers were confident of success.)

"In one sense," observes Travis, "Dolly isn't even a true clone—she does not share all of her genes with her donor." While the nucleus was removed from the egg cell that became Dolly, the energy-producing mitochondria, home to a few dozen genes, were not. Is this mixing of genes important? Scientists do not know. "Nor do they know whether Dolly will be fertile or have a normal life span." The nucleus from which she was created was from a six-year-old ewe; was the age of the transplanted nucleus "reset"? If not, Travis says, "Dolly's life might be historic but brief."

Despite the uncertainties, the cloning of animals may benefit humans. The Roslin research, for example, has been underwritten by a Scottish biotech firm seeking to genetically alter female animals so that they secrete valuable drugs—such as human hormones or other biological products to treat disease—in their milk. In July, the scientists announced that they had produced a lamb called Polly with a single human gene in every cell of its body—a lamb cloned from a fetal cell that had that human gene implanted in it, reports Gina Kolata in the *New York Times* (July 25, 1997).

Cloning technology may also allow scientists to give sheep and other animals human diseases, for study and testing. Researchers might also be able to produce pigs tailored to generate organs suitable for transplant into people. It is even possible, when the process for reversing the specialization of tissue cells is better understood, that whole organs such as human livers could be regenerated.

What about cloning humans? The nightmarish possibilities are readily apparent, observes Tabitha M. Powledge, a science journalist writing in *Technology Review* (May–June 1997). "Consider, for example, a world without sex because cloning does away with fathers. Or endless duplicates of individuals—Nobel laureates, movie stars, criminal masterminds, fascist dictators, whoever—created with or without their knowledge. Or how about raising the dead, literally, from the cells of corpses?"

Some are optimistic about the future of cloning. Biologist Francis Crick, codeveloper of the double-helix model of DNA structure, and 30 humanistic scientists, philosophers, and others signed a declaration in *Free Inquiry* (Summer 1997) expressing confidence that human reason will be able to resolve any "moral predicaments" that cloning humans may bring.

But Leon R. Kass, a physician-philosopher at the University of Chicago, writing in the *New Republic* (June 2, 1997), contends that cloning humans would be unethical and dangerous. "Asexual reproduction, which produces 'single-parent' offspring, is a radical departure from the natural human way, confounding all normal understandings of father, mother, sibling, grandparent, etc., and all moral relations tied thereto. It becomes even more of a radical departure when the resulting offspring is a clone derived not from an embryo, but from a mature adult to whom the clone would be an identical twin; and when the process occurs not by natural accident (as in natural twinning), but by deliberate human design and manipulation; and when the child's (or children's) genetic constitution is pre-selected by the parent(s) (or scientists)." At issue, Kass believes, is nothing less than "the future of

our humanity." He favors a legal ban on the cloning of humans.

President Bill Clinton agrees. Human cloning, he said in June, "has the potential to threaten the sacred family bonds at the very core of our ideals and our society." He is backing his National Bioethics Advisory Committee's recommendation for legislation "to prohibit anyone from attempting, whether in a research or clinical setting, to create a child through somatic cell nuclear transfer cloning."

These alarms may turn out in the end to be false. Cloning humans by the method used to produce Dolly may be impossible, the *Economist* (Mar. 1, 1997) notes. The transplanted DNA may need to be "reprogrammed" before it can work. In a sheep's embryo, the DNA does not start controlling the new organism's development "until the egg has divided three or four times." In humans, the DNA must take control much sooner—after the second cell division. This may not allow enough time for the transplanted DNA to be reprogrammed.

If human cloning should be at all possible, however, it "cannot be prevented" from being done somewhere in the world, argues James Q. Wilson, author of *Moral Judgment* (1997). Cloning's major threat, he writes in the *Weekly Standard* (May 26, 1997), would be to the already besieged two-parent family. If cloning were allowed only for two married partners, and the mother, in normal circumstances, carried the fertile tissue to birth, then, he thinks, the gains ("a remedy for infertility and substitute for adoption") would outweigh the risks. But that, of course, is a big if.

The Left's Creationists

"The New Creationism" by Barbara Ehrenreich and Janet McIntosh, in *The Nation* (June 9, 1997), 72 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011.

In anthropology and certain other academic redoubts these days, it is fashionable to dismiss the idea that human beings share a common, biologically based nature. The very notion is declared unpardonably "reductionist" and treated with irate contempt in seminars and lectures, and wherever feminist and left-wing scholars gather to denounce the patriarchy and the outrages of late capitalism. Ehrenreich, a leading feminist writer, and McIntosh, a graduate student in ethnology at the University of Michigan, protest the current trend in the name of biology and of common sense.

"To set humans apart from even our closest animal relatives as the one species that is exempt from the influences of biology," they write, "is to suggest that we do indeed possess a defining 'essence,' and that it is defined by our unique and miraculous freedom from biology." This outlook, they observe, is "eerily similar" to that of the fundamentalist creationists now waging war on the theory of evolution.

The "new creationists," as Ehrenreich and McIntosh call their misguided friends on the left, profoundly misunderstand biology and science in general. "Biology is rhetorically yoked to 'determinism,' a concept that threatens to clip our wings and lay waste to our utopian visions, while culture is viewed as a domain where power relations with other humans are the only obstacle to freedom." But in fact, they note, biology is not so deterministic—"genes work probabilistically, and their expression depends on interaction with their environment." And human cultures are not as easily remolded "to suit our utopian visions" as many new creationists assume.

Ironically, the authors point out, in rejecting "any biologically based human commonality, secular creationists undermine the very bedrock of the politics they claim to uphold," because if human beings are just "pure products of cultural context," then understanding or communication between cultures becomes impossible. If there is no human nature that is not socially "constructed," observes Barbara Epstein, of the History of Consciousness Program at the University of California, Santa Cruz, "then there is no basis for social criticism and no reason for protest or rebellion."

As things stand in the academy today, however, Ehrenreich and McIntosh conclude, "it takes more than a nuanced mind to deal with the interface of culture and biology. It takes courage. The climate of intolerance, often imposed by scholars associated with the left, ill suits an academic tradition rhetorically committed to human freedom."

Yellowstone's Unnatural Disaster

"Yellowstone: Ecological Malpractice" by Charles E. Kay, in *PERC Reports* (June 1997), Political Economy Research Center, 502 S. 19th Ave., Ste. 211, Bozeman, Mont. 59718.

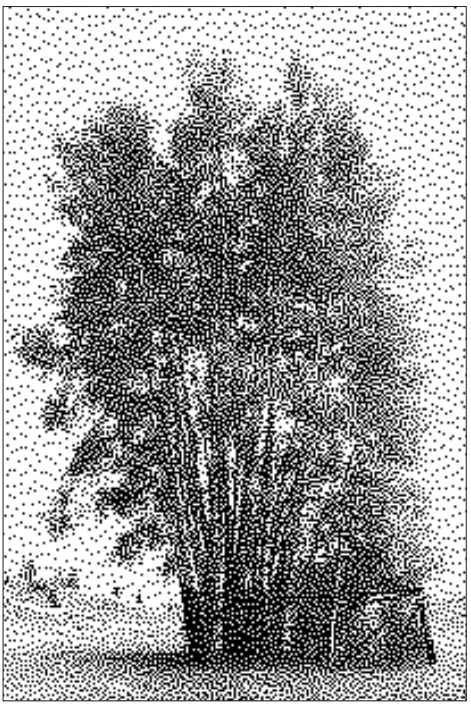
When hundreds of buffaloes from Yellowstone National Park's northern herd roamed outside the park in search of food last winter, they caused a regional uproar. Ultimately, at the insistence of Montana ranchers, worried because many of the animals carried a disease that causes miscarriages in cattle, some 1,100 bison were killed.

But the root problem, argues Kay, a Utah State University political scientist with a Ph.D. in wildlife ecology, has yet to be addressed: overgrazing of Yellowstone's northern range by the park's bison and elk. Wandering buffaloes are the least of the effects. Overgrazing, he maintains, "has denuded the range, destroying plant communities and eliminating critical animal habitat. The result has been a drastic decline in Yellowstone's biodiversity."

Kay blames the overgrazing on the National Park Service's policy of "natural regulation" of the populations of elk, bison, and deer, under which their numbers are left to be determined solely by the available food supply. (The unusually harsh winter of 1997, for example, cut the bison population in half, to less than 2,000.) Until natural regulation was adopted in 1968, the Park Service deliberately thinned the herds.

As evidence that overgrazing has occurred, Kay offers turn-of-the-century photographs of Yellowstone habitat and recent photos he has taken of the same places. Forty-four sets of "repeat" photographs indicate that tall willows on the northern range have declined by more than 95 percent since the park was established in 1872. Other sets of photos show that the area occupied by aspen has shrunk by more than 95 percent. In fenced enclosures, however, the trees are thriving.

The dearth of willows, aspen, and cottonwoods, which beavers need for food and to build dams, has prevented the beavers from playing their ecological role, Kay says. As a result, many streams in Yellowstone have cut deeper channels, lowering water tables and helping to destroy vegetation on the banks. Grazing elk and other animals do more damage. A visit to the Lamar River in the park left Oregon State University hydrologist Robert Beschta shocked: "I've seen plenty of examples of streams degraded by domestic livestock. But this is among the worst."



In 1986, this stand of aspen in Yellowstone, shielded from grazing wildlife, had grown more than 60 feet tall.

The effects of overgrazing are far-reaching, says Kay. It has even deprived Yellowstone's grizzlies of berries—prompting some bears to leave the park for what frequently turn out to be fatal encounters with the human animal.

The Thief of the Mind

"Plundered Memories" by Zaven S. Khachaturian, in *The Sciences* (July–Aug. 1997), 2 E. 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia in the elderly, currently afflicts at least four million Americans, and care for Alzheimer's patients costs $100 billion a year. If

no cure is found, warns Khachaturian, director of the Ronald and Nancy Reagan Research Institute of the Alzheimer's Association, in Chicago, the number of Alzheimer's patients will double every 20 years.

The insidious disease "quietly loots the brain, nerve cell by nerve cell, like a burglar returning to the same house each night," Khachaturian notes. Forgetfulness is typically the first symptom; then comes "more severe memory loss, followed by confusion, garbled speech and movements, hallucinations, personality changes and moods that can swing from anger to anxiety to depression." Death may not come for as long as 20 years after the first symptoms appear. (The period from onset to death now lasts, on average, eight years, but that is likely to lengthen, Khachaturian says, as the relatively healthy baby boomers age.) Patients are not the only victims: Alzheimer's usually takes a toll, psychological and financial, on their families as well.

The disease was identified in 1901 by Alois Alzheimer, a German physician, but the era of modern research only began 75 years later with the discovery of a link between a biochemical brain defect (a deficiency of acetylcholine) and Alzheimer's. Scientists next investigated the protein chemistry responsible for the "odd brain-tissue growths" that are now considered "the hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease," Khachaturian says. More recently, researchers have turned their attention to the genetics involved.

In 1993, Allen D. Roses, a neurologist and geneticist at the Duke University Medical Center, identified a gene indicating a greater likelihood of getting Alzheimer's. This year, investigators at Duke and Massachusetts General Hospital have reported finding a chromosome where a second "susceptibility" gene is located. When this second gene is finally pinpointed, Khachaturian says, then physicians should be better able to predict who is likely to get "late-onset" Alzheimer's, the most common form of the disease.

This will present physicians with an ethical dilemma: whether to tell likely future victims of their fate when no cure is yet available. Khachaturian, however, thinks that the genetic approach is bringing the pieces of the puzzle together. He believes that a cure "will appear in the next five to 10 years."

Paradigm Lost

In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), historian Thomas Kuhn (1922–96) overturned the vision of science as a pristine enterprise driven by pure reason. He argued instead that science moves erratically—and not always toward the truth—its direction determined by whatever paradigms are accepted by scientific communities. Like the much-overused term *paradigm shift*, which Kuhn also invented, writes anthropologist Clifford Geertz in *Common Knowledge* (Spring 1997), this idea took on a life of its own.

Despite cries of "subjectivism," "irrationalism," "mob psychology," and, of course, the favored execration of the entrenched these days, "relativism," all of which have been repeatedly launched against Structure *. . . its agenda, whatever the fate of its particular assertions, is here to stay. The subjection of the sciences to the attentions, sustained and superficial, informed and ignorant, of historians, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, even of science writers and English professors, unwilling to stop at the borders of disciplinary authority or to cower before the solemnities of Nobel laureates, grows apace. This particular genie, once out of the bottle, can't be stuffed back in, however frightening or ill-behaved he (she?) may be—or to whom. . . .*

Kuhn was far from comfortable with doctrines that questioned either the possibility of genuine knowledge or the reality of genuine advance in it. Nor, for all his emphasis on sociological considerations in understanding theory change, was he ever anything less than scornful of the notion that such considerations affect the truth value of theories of how light propagates or planets move.

Kuhn is not the first person to have accomplished, early on in a career, something that upset a lot of apple carts and who then had to come to terms with its far-reaching implications, some more than a bit unpalatable, as it became in its turn common wisdom.

A Hanging Offense?

"*Billy Budd* and Capital Punishment: A Tale of Three Centuries" by H. Bruce Franklin, in *American Literature* (June 1997), Duke University Press, 905 W. Main St., Ste. 18-B, Durham, N.C. 27701.

For decades, critics of Herman Melville's posthumously published novel *Billy Budd* (1924) have debated whether Captain Vere was justified in condemning the young sailor Billy Budd to death. Critics such as Peter Shaw, Milton Stern, and Hannah Arendt sided with Vere; others disagreed. Franklin, a professor of English at Rutgers University, Newark, maintains that the little-noticed public controversy over capital punishment that raged at the time Melville wrote *Billy Budd* shows what he intended.

In the novel, set in 1797, Budd is taken from a British merchant ship and impressed into service aboard the warship H.M.S. *Bellipotent*. When Claggart, the master-at-arms, falsely accuses him of trying to rouse other sailors to mutiny, a shocked Budd stutters and impulsively delivers a single blow to Claggart's forehead, killing him. A trial is arranged by Captain Vere, who fears a real mutiny if the apparent crime is not swiftly punished. Budd is hung at the next sunrise.

At the time, notes Franklin, King George III's "Bloody Code" was in force, prescribing death as the penalty for more than 100 different crimes in both civilian and military cases. By the time Melville (1819–91) was writing *Billy Budd*—1886 to 1891—even advocates of capital punishment, Franklin says, "agreed that eliminating most of the code's capital offenses constituted one of the century's notable achievements in human progress." Yet at Budd's trial, Vere defends "the most egregious features of the Georgian code," such as the refusal to consider motive or extenuating circumstances.

In New York, where Melville was living, the capital punishment debate focused on the *means* used to carry out the death sentence. "As abolitionists emphasized the grotesque and sordid spectacles of public hangings," Franklin writes, "they often played into the hands of retentionists," who looked to electrocution as a humane alternative. Melville carefully crafted his story "to keep the *means* of execution from being a significant issue," Franklin notes. In *Billy Budd*, he "strips away the illusions of justice and deterrence to reveal the essence of capital punishment: human sacrifice, a ritual of power."

Amid all this controversy, Franklin writes, Melville "could safely assume that almost all potential readers in 1891 would regard public execution and hanging as relics of a barbarous past . . . and would already either oppose the death penalty outright or consider it warranted only for first-degree murder and treason." Those readers, Franklin speculates, would not have debated the rightness of Vere's actions. To them, the only question probably would have been whether he was insane.

The Artful Dodger

Though difficult and often denigrated, the style of the eminent British critic F. R. Leavis (1895–1978) was actually quite artful, writes George Watson, of Cambridge University, in *The Hudson Review* (Summer 1997).

This was the one aspect of Leavis which in his lifetime was consistently underrated. He was a great stylist. Those who thought him a potent thinker cursed by crabbed diction missed the point altogether. It is doubtful if he ever had much to say that was genuinely his own, and it is doubtful whether, in a lifetime of writing, he ever added a particle to human knowledge. But he was artist enough with words to convince thousands, for years and for decades, that he was a fountain of irreplaceable truth.

We'll Always Have 'April in Paris'

"Something to Sing About: America's Great Lyricists" by Philip Furia, in *The American Scholar* (Summer 1997), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

They're the standards now, heard in jazz and cabaret performances, in Broadway revivals, and on Hollywood soundtracks: "April in Paris," "Embraceable You," "Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered," . . . the list goes on and on.

The vast Tin Pan Alley songbook is the product of a uniquely American style of composition. When A. S. Sullivan, of the famous 19th-century English songwriting team Gilbert and Sullivan, was asked which came first, the words or the music, his answer always was: "The words—of course." He provided melodies to fit W. S. Gilbert's light verse. This seemed the only possible way to get clever, sophisticated lyrics.

In America, however, notes Furia, author of *The Poets of Tin Pan Alley* (1990), songwriters traditionally put the music first. This made the lyricist's job much harder—especially with the rise of jazz and its intricacies. Ironically, an Englishman showed a new generation of American lyricists the way.

In a series of musicals mounted between 1915 and 1917 in New York's tiny Princess Theatre, P. G. Wodehouse supplied the sophisticated lyrics to Jerome Kern's music, coming up with imaginative rhymes and making the lyrics sound more colloquial and less like poetry. Thus, "Kern's sequence of 'twiddly little notes' in 'Till the Clouds Roll By' inspired him to come up with the subtle rhymes of 'What bad *luck*! *It's* coming down in *buckets*.'" Said Wodehouse: "I couldn't have thought of that in a million years—why, dash it, it doesn't scan."

"No one embraced the Princess Shows more eagerly" than budding New York lyricist Lorenz Hart, who teamed up with a young composer named Richard Rodgers, Furia writes. For years, "Hart's clever rhymes and literate wit were dismissed by [Broadway] producers as 'too collegiate.'" The partners finally struck gold with a 1925 fund-raising revue. Scheduled for two performances, the show—with the songs "Manhattan" and "Mountain Greenery"—ran for more than 200. Rodgers and Hart continued to collaborate on shows, writing such popular tunes as "Here in My Arms" and "With a Song in My Heart." For the rest of the decade, Furia writes, Hart, Ira Gershwin, and Oscar Hammerstein "led the lyrical way." Using such common expressions as "you took advantage of me" and "my heart stood still," they and other lyricists "took the American vernacular and made it sing." Nearly all were the children of Jewish immigrants who had learned English on the streets of New York and poetry in the public schools.

Though the Great Depression ended the Broadway musical's heyday, musical theater adapted, turning to smaller revues and frugally staged "smart shows" with a satirical edge. And the coming of sound films, making it possible to present songs more intimately than on stage, lured songwriters to Hollywood. "As America emerged from the Depression, many songwriters returned to Broadway and collaborated on a series of successful shows, each filled with stellar songs," Furia says. After Hart's death in 1943, Rodgers teamed up with Hammerstein to produce *Oklahoma!*, and later, *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, and *The King and I*. But with the birth of rock 'n' roll in the mid-1950s, Furia writes, the "Golden Age of American Song" reached the beginning of the end.

Composer Rodgers, left, and lyricist Hart, in a 1938 New Yorker *caricature*

Battle of the '60s Film Visionaries

"Dostoyevsky Behind a Camera" by Garry Wills, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (July 1997), 77 N. Washington St., Boston, Mass. 02114; "Decency and Muck" by George Packer, in *Dissent* (Summer 1997), 521 Fifth Ave., Ste. 1700, New York, N.Y. 10017.

Ever since his *JFK* (1991), which presented a far-fetched, fact-challenged conspiracy theory about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, filmmaker Oliver Stone has increasingly come to seem an irresponsible Hollywood loon, obsessively turning out simple-minded, albeit cinematically exciting, political "message" movies. *Natural Born Killers* (1994) glamorized violence; *Nixon* (1995) trashed RN, even if not as badly as many had expected, and last year's *People vs. Larry Flynt*, which Stone produced but didn't direct, draped the First Amendment around a misogynistic porn merchant who was sanitized for the screen. "You have to recreate the climate of madness in the culture," says Stone.

Wills, author of the Pulitzer Prize–winning *Lincoln at Gettysburg* (1992), contends that the filmmaker is widely misunderstood and is actually writing "great novels . . . with the camera." Stone's work shows "a feel for timeless narrative patterns" (a mystery story, for instance, in the case of *JFK*), Wills says, into which he imports "not only newspapers from below but also a mysticism from above. He is constantly suggesting cosmic showdowns behind or beyond the newsy events and the genres. Improbable martyrs and gurus haunt the screen." *Just like Dostoyevsky!* Wills breathtakingly asserts. "Both men set this material ablaze with fierce energies."

Packer, author of *The Half-Man* (1991), is far less impressed. Stone is "an extremely talented filmmaker," whose early *Salvador* (1985), about El Salvador's slide into civil war and American culpability in the conflict, "is proof that he once had a strong gift for story and characterization." But Stone "has squandered his talents." (Not that it seems to have hurt him at the box office.)

In his nine subsequent films, Stone has come to depend so heavily on visual effect to generate excitement, Packer says, that he is unable to explore the "more complicated and more *truly* exciting" reality beneath the surface. "In Stone's climate of madness there's no room for human relationships—they are always static, and his women have no life on the screen except in the case of a strong performance, such as Joan Allen's as Pat Nixon. Nor is there room for real politics, which is to say, moral and historical complexity."

Packer contrasts Stone's films with the mature work of another left-wing writer-director from the baby boom generation, John Sayles. In *Matewan* (1987), *Eight Men Out* (1988), *City of Hope* (1991), and last year's *Lone Star*, the independent filmmaker details "the relationships, personal and social, among a range of characters, all concerned with justice. . . . The style is understated, the pace often slow, the cinematography simple. Three or four plots are woven together, suggesting a theme of mutual responsibility." The main characters are working people caught in mundane obligations to family, job, or town. "His vision of community isn't a dropout's utopia held together by love but a town divided by social class in which individuals are faced with old-fashioned moral choices."

Sayles is not as visually inventive as Stone, in Packer's view, nor even as good a screenwriter as Stone at his best. But his films draw on what was best in the 1960s ("reasonableness . . . collective hope . . . the Port Huron Statement"), instead of, as Stone's do, on what was worst ("paranoia, grandiosity, romantic primitivism"). That Sayles's career has been so overshadowed by Stone's, Packer concludes, shows "the attraction of glamorous muck over common decency, and the difficulty of saying something serious about politics through the vehicle of mass culture, which seems the only way left to be heard."

OTHER NATIONS

www.China.com

"The Great Firewall of China" by Geremie R. Barmé and Sang Ye, in *Wired* (June 1997), 520 3rd St., 4th floor, San Francisco, Calif. 94107–1815.

In China, the Net is hot. Breathless news reports claim that the traditional greeting *Ni chifanle ma?* (Have you eaten?) is being replaced by *Ni shangwangle ma?*

(Are you wired?). That's not really so, observe Barmé, a Senior Fellow at the Australian National University, and Ye, a Chinese journalist, but high technology has indeed arrived. "The question on everyone's mind—the Chinese government and its critics alike—is whether it will also be a cultural and political Trojan horse."

Chinese scientists put together the country's first extensive network of computers in 1993; two years later came the national university system, with e-mail connections to the outside world as well as within the country. However, Barmé and Ye point out, just a small number of graduate students and professors, mainly in science and engineering, actually have access to the Web.

Overall, only 150,000 Chinese are "wired"—not many in a land of 1.3 billion. According to a Beijing marketing firm, only 1.6 percent of Chinese families own a computer. Even so, the government is worried. The Public Security Bureau (PSB) in Beijing is attempting "to build a digital equivalent to China's Great Wall," Barmé and Ye write, by requiring Internet service providers to block access to "problem" sites abroad. Off-limits are most of the Western media, as well as the China News Digest, an on-line service run by Chinese exiles. "Eager for a slice of the action, the major global networking companies—Sun Microsystems, Cisco Systems, and Bay Networks, among others—cheerfully compete to supply the gear that makes [blocking access] possible," the authors observe.

Individuals who are, or wish to get, wired are closely regulated. They also need to pay: "Figure a monthly net-plus-phone bill of Y350 (US$42)—roughly half a recent college graduate's monthly salary," say the authors.

The regime makes use of the information technology itself, of course, Barmé and Ye note. "The ever-vigilant PSB [is linked by a closed network] to every major hotel and guest house where foreigners stay. The minute you register at your five-star joint-venture hotel, Comrade X [at the PSB] and his associates know you're there."

Computer keyboards can't accommodate the 3,000 Chinese characters. One solution is software that recognizes written characters.

Ultimately, the regime may find the information revolution impossible to control. "The one certainty," say the authors, "given the headstrong Chinese bureaucracy and the Maoist mentality that spawned it, is that China's adaptations of the Net will be unique, and probably bizarre by Western standards."

Russia's Science Crisis

"Rough Times in Russia: Post-Soviet Science Faces a New Crisis" by Dan Vergano, in *Science News* (May 10, 1997), 1719 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

American scientists may bemoan the tighter research budgets of the post-Cold War era, but their plight is nothing next to that of their Russian counterparts. "Of all the people reeling from the collapse of the Soviet Union," writes Vergano, a science writer, "scientists rank among those who have fallen the furthest in terms of pay, prestige, and professional opportunity."

In 1991, the Soviet Union boasted a scientific work force of 1.5 million people, and a big research budget, as much as 80 percent of it for military projects. Since then, the number of working scientists, Vergano reports, has plummeted by an estimated 600,000, or 40 percent.

Western security analysts had feared an exodus of Russian scientists to other nations, he says, but "an internal brain drain" has taken place instead. Economist Irina

Dezhina, of Moscow's Institute for the Economy in Transition, estimates that for every researcher who leaves the country, 10 have jumped into businesses such as banking or computer sales. The Soviet Union probably had three times as many scientists as necessary, says Harley Balzer, a regional specialist at Georgetown University, but it is largely the "creative" ones who are getting out of the field. "Russian science is deteriorating faster than I can write about it," he claims.

U.S. and other Western aid has helped to keep Russian nuclear scientists from taking their knowledge to hostile nations, Vergano notes. The U.S. Department of Energy's Initiatives for Proliferation Prevention, for example, supports some 2,000 former weapons scientists in an effort to direct their research into other fields. The International Science and Technology Center in Moscow, funded by the U.S. State Department, has spent $121 million for the same purpose.

For most Russian scientists, however, the situation is grim indeed. One-fourth of the country's 4,500 science institutes received no funding from Moscow at all last year. In some locations, scientists went on hunger strikes. The director of a nuclear weapons laboratory, reportedly despondent over his inability to pay his researchers, killed himself.

The science institutes are sometimes part of the problem. "Horror stories abound," Vergano writes, "of scientists who win rare grants, only to see the funds disappear to pay utility bills or even, as many suspect, to line the pockets of administrators."

Europe's March of Folly

"European Union—A Disaster in the Making" by David Pryce-Jones, in *Commentary* (June 1997), 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Scheduled to adopt a common currency (the Euro) by 1999, the nation-states of Europe continue to march toward some sort of political federation—and also to disaster, warns Pryce-Jones, a British political analyst and novelist.

"Europe" today, he notes, "still has no sovereignty, in the true meaning of that word, but is rather a stew of German federalism, French *dirigisme* [state intervention], protectionism, corporatism, and mass welfarism—all enshrined in an Orwellian language naturally known as Eurospeak and intelligible, if at all, only to the presiding Eurocrats."

But every European country, including Britain, he points out, now has two heads of state—its own and the president of the European Union (EU), Jacques Santer—"two capitals, two parliaments, two flags, and, above all, two systems of law: national law, and the law decreed by the European Court of Justice." Conflicting statutes are breeding a disrespect for law itself. "European elites increasingly treat public life as a vast patronage system, there for the plundering," he says. Almost $10 billion of the EU's $89 billion budget for 1995 "disappeared through corruption and fraud," according to auditors, but unofficial estimates are much higher.

The rise of a supranational Europe is producing unintended consequences, Pryce-Jones writes. "As the nation-state surrenders to something larger than itself, it is leaving behind a vacuum, and ethnicity is filling that vacuum fast. . . . Basques in Spain, Flemings in Belgium, the IRA in Britain, Corsicans in France, all threaten the social and political cohesion of their respective nation-states." Nationalist xenophobia is increasing. Europe's roughly 20 million immigrants, legal and illegal, are often blamed by popular opinion for weakening the nation-states' old identities.

"Historically," Pryce-Jones argues, "the nation-state has satisfied but also controlled nationalism, which otherwise builds up like underground gas, to explode when it can." But the new Europe's weakened states aren't as effective. "Strange new groupings" have flourished, such as the Northern League in Italy, Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front in France, and Jorg Haidar's Austrian Freedom Party.

The creation of a supranational Europe is "a utopian experiment which is mustering the very same destructive forces it claims to be eliminating," Pryce-Jones concludes. Though the nation-states are surrendering their sovereignty, national interests remain. "On the day these interests collide," he fears, "there will be nothing except the Euro and a half-formulated anti-American ideology to hold together the artifical scaffolding that is Brussels, and ward off a general collapse in anger, disillusionment, and violence."

Research Reports

Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions

"Closed Hearts, Closed Minds: The Textbook Story of Marriage."

Institute for American Values, 1841 Broadway, Ste. 211, New York, N.Y. 10023. 21 pp. $10

Author: *Norval D. Glenn*

Thirty-eight percent of married men and women between the ages of 30 and 59 report in recent surveys that they are very happy—a far higher percentage than for their unmarried counterparts. Substantial social-science research confirms that married people of both sexes are on average better off than all types of unmarried people "in terms of happiness, satisfaction, physical health, longevity, and most aspects of emotional health," notes Glenn, a sociologist at the University of Texas. Yet most recent college textbooks on marriage and family offer a very different impression.

Most of the 20 textbooks he examined, "while at times professing respect for marriage as a relationship, offer a determinedly bleak view of marriage as an institution, and especially of marriage as a morally or legally binding commitment." The books are used in some 8,000 college courses every semester. It is, he says, as if the authors all lived in "a strange world in which all bad things about marriage (domestic violence, marital fragility, and career costs to women) are clearly visible, but all good things" about it can barely be seen.

The textbook authors, Glenn writes, also seem to adjust their blinders when considering "nontraditional" families, so that any research showing the hazards to children growing up outside intact families—such as evidence of the relationship between family structure and juvenile crime—is ignored or minimized, "while virtually any optimistic theory about the benefits of 'family diversity' gets magnified far out of proportion to the data that generate it."

Glenn awards only one of the books, Andrew J. Cherlin's *Public and Private Families: An Introduction* (1996), any A's for scholarship and balanced treatment of controversial topics, but considers even its coverage of today's urgent family issues worthy only of a C.

"Giving Better, Giving Smarter."

National Commission on Philanthropy and Civic Renewal, 1150 17th St. N.W., Ste. 201, Washington, D.C. 20036. 130 pp. $20

Nearly 70 percent of American households in 1995 reported making charitable contributions. Their gifts totaled $116 billion, accounting for 80 percent of all charitable giving in the United States. (Other major sources of philanthropy: bequests from individuals at death, $10 billion; foundations, $10 billion; corporations, $7 billion.) Yet few Americans know how effectively their charitable dollars are being used, according to the National Commission on Philanthropy and Civic Renewal, a private body headed by former secretary of education Lamar Alexander.

Americans give only nine percent of their charitable donations directly to "human services" organizations aiding the poor. But they give 57 percent of their donations ($66 billion) to churches and other religious organizations, which devote nearly a third of their outlays to aid for the poor. Many of the organizations supported by the United Way (which, with some 2,000 local chapters, raised $3.1 billion in 1995) and other federated charities also help the poor.

But "far too much" of all this private largesse, the commission believes, "is misspent or misdirected," making "scant difference in people's lives or the well-being of communities." Generous donations to large national organizations serving the poor, while "not to be discouraged . . . often represent a missed opportunity to strengthen more innovative, if less prominent, local institutions and organizations," the commission says. Most Americans "treat charity as an obligation or a habit," without thinking carefully

about how their dollars are used. Actively seeking out more effective local charities requires more effort on the part of the donor, of course, but the investment may "do more good for the poor and needy and for one's community."

Private foundations are also missing the mark, in the commission's view. They "are engaged in too much study, too little direct service, and too little hard-nosed evaluation of what they get for their money." Many foundations also are too inclined to see themselves as a "laboratory" for government. Instead of spending large sums "to 'study' or 'pilot-test' various programs aimed at systemic change," the commission says, the foundations ought to help effective community organizations pay their bills. "Good charitable organizations deal with concrete facts and real people, not abstract theories about combating poverty."

"World Development Report 1997: The State in a Changing World."

The World Bank, 1818 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20433. 265 pp. $25.95.

A half-century ago, it was widely thought that "undeveloped" countries would make the speediest economic and social progress by relying on strong government, guided by technocrats. Now, after the failure of the world's centrally planned economies, the emphasis is on markets. The World Bank, which helped make the first view conventional wisdom and has more recently embraced markets, warns that this latter approach can be carried too far.

The "miracle" economies of East Asia, in which the state has been deeply involved, and the recent agonies of Somalia and Liberia, which collapsed into anarchy, point up the importance of the state, the World Bank report says. "An effective state is vital for the provision of the goods and services—and the rules and institutions—that allow markets to flourish." The new view among development specialists, according to the report, is that the state should operate "not as a direct provider of growth but as a partner, catalyst, and facilitator."

Unfortunately, in many countries today, governments are failing to perform even their most basic functions, such as providing law and order and protecting property rights. Private businesses in 27 of 69 countries surveyed—including more than three-fourths of the firms in the Commonwealth of Independent States (the former Soviet Union), and about half of those in Latin America and Africa—say that official corruption, crime, and an arbitrary judiciary are major obstacles. Still, the report notes, some developing countries, including many in East Asia and others elsewhere, such as Botswana, Chile, and Mauritius, have done well at "managing the fundamentals."

After establishing a foundation of law and taking up other "fundamental tasks" (such as protecting "the vulnerable" and the environment), the report says, states in many cases need to scale back government's role through privatization and deregulation. This has worked not only in such countries as China and Poland, which previously had command economies, but in countries with mixed economies as well. In 11 of 12 carefully studied cases in Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, and the United Kingdom, divestiture of state assets resulted in increased productivity and investment as well as more efficient pricing. In the United States, deregulation of airlines, railroads, and three other industries that had been tightly regulated yielded, by 1990, estimated gains to consumers of at least $33 billion.

Besides cutting back overgrown governments, states need to strengthen public institutions, the report says. "Policies that lower controls on foreign trade, remove entry barriers for private industry, and privatize state firms in a way that ensures competition—all of these will fight corruption." Recent efforts in Uganda along these lines have had some promising results.

The worldwide trend toward democracy, with the number of independent democracies increasing from 39 (or one in four) in 1974 to 117 (or two out of three) today, is another encouraging development. In addition, decentralization of government "is bringing many benefits in China, India, much of Latin America, and many other parts of the world." Nevertheless, the report says, "central government will always play a vital role in sustaining development."

Continued from page 144

There is no reason to deny the *Times*' observation that I managed to raise congressional (and other) hackles by speaking up for the values and practices that have earned the Center international acclaim for three decades. Happily, there has always been support as well from legislators of both parties in both chambers: two scholar-statesmen, former senator Mark Hatfield (R.-Ore.) and Representative David Price (D.-N.C.), have been especially true friends.

If we find ourselves more beleaguered than usual, I would suggest that this is because we are living in a society that increasingly looks for instant solutions and quick fixes. To the extent that this is true, the case for an institution like the Woodrow Wilson Center is surely all the stronger. Although it is not my place to prescribe for the Center's future after my departure, I do fervently hope that our Board of Trustees and my successor will remain true to the essential tradition of the Center and that they will enjoy more success in persuading those upon whom we depend of its vital importance.

Charles Blitzer
Director

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From the Center

For the past several months, the Woodrow Wilson Center has been engaged in a struggle for survival. Earlier this year, the House of Representatives voted to cut federal support for the Center from the current $5.8 million to $1 million, in effect the amount needed to close down. The Senate has voted to continue funding at the current level. By the time these words are published, the issue of federal support for fiscal year 1998 may well be decided. It amounts to a choice between extinction and, after several years of budgetary stringencies, difficult leanness.

During these months of debate, a gratifying number of supporters have come to the Center's defense, including prominent individuals in public life as well as important institutions. The *Washington Post* called the Center "a unique memorial to one of the great American presidents whose particular legacy—the connection between learning and the national life—endures to this day," and said it "attracts some of the best minds and has richly earned taxpayer patronage." George Will hailed the Center as "irreplaceable." The *Weekly Standard* described it as "one of the few havens for disinterested scholarship in the country." In September, an editorial in the *New York Times* declared that the fate of the Wilson Center is "a matter of unusual interest to the global republic of letters." The *Times* called the Center "a zone of civility during political and cultural wars, and a refuge for those persecuted elsewhere."

Even if, as we have reason to hope, the Center survives the current crisis, there will remain strong pressure for it to become more "relevant" to immediate issues of public policy. Yet those of us involved in the creation of the Wilson Center, including Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D.-N.Y.), have long emphasized that in establishing the Center Congress did not intend to create yet one more "think tank" in a city already generously supplied with such institutions. First-rate scholarship not only is valuable in itself but has a vital, though often indirect and deferred, role in contributing to the solution of issues in public policy. Saving the Center's appropriation at the cost of destroying the very quality that has made it so valuable would be an empty triumph.

The *Times* put the issue well:

> The center's House critics fault it for lacking "a public policy function" by overemphasizing scholarly pursuits. This seems perversely to miss the point. Washington is amply stocked with policy think tanks, and the center was never meant to churn out position papers. The hope instead was to provide a forum where politicians and officials might encounter those more alien muses of history, philosophy and literature.
>
> That such a forum is needed was suggested by a senator's inept award several decades ago of a "golden fleece" to a Wilson scholar for writing a paper on how Russia's czars persecuted nomadic minorities centuries ago. This theme was not remote or irrelevant to the author, Bronislaw Geremek, the Polish medievalist who was to play a pivotal role in the Solidarity movement. In the humanities, as in the natural sciences, ideas often spring from improbable intersections.
>
> Few dispute that the center has stimulated prize-winning books, animated innumerable public workshops and published a lively quarterly. Every federal dollar appropriated for the center is matched by a private donor, but federal support has been the essential catalyst. Though Congressional hackles were raised by the center's plain-spoken director, Charles Blitzer, he has just resigned and is no longer a source of contention.
>
> In a Capital addicted to surface froth, it seems gratuitous self-injury to put in jeopardy a center devoted to inquiry that reaches deeper than an inch.

Continued on page 143

"Required Reading"

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"Mississippi Freedom Summer tested my commitment and my faith. . . . To this day, I wonder how those who opposed us reconciled their faith with their hatred and anger or even their inaction. *God's Long Summer* admirably attempts to explore this unfathomable paradox."
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