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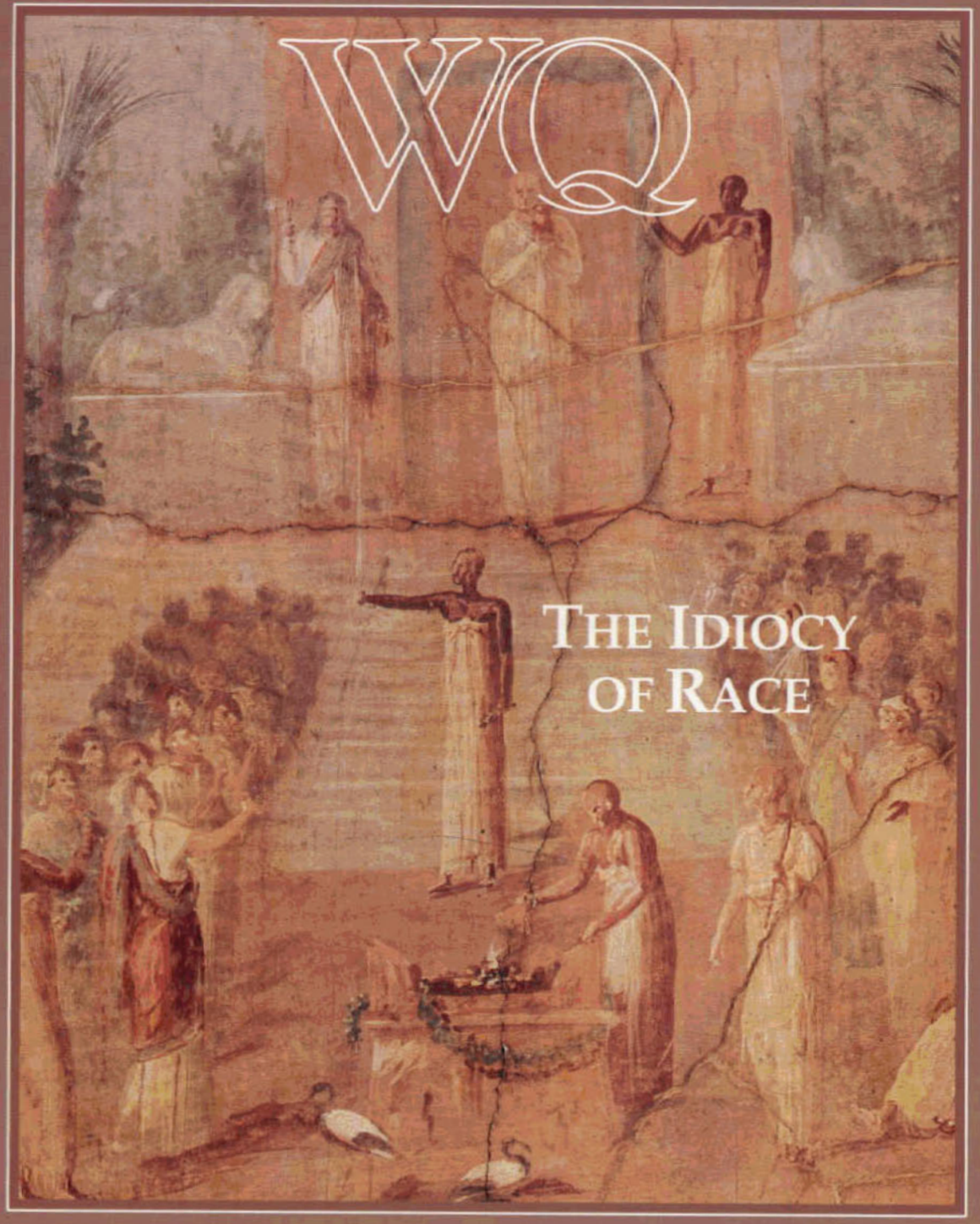

THE IDIOCY OF RACE

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FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT • DATE RAPE • C. S. LEWIS

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by Ivan Hannaford

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Cover: Detail of a first-century Roman fresco painting from Herculaneum, depicting a ceremony of the Isis cult. The original is in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples.

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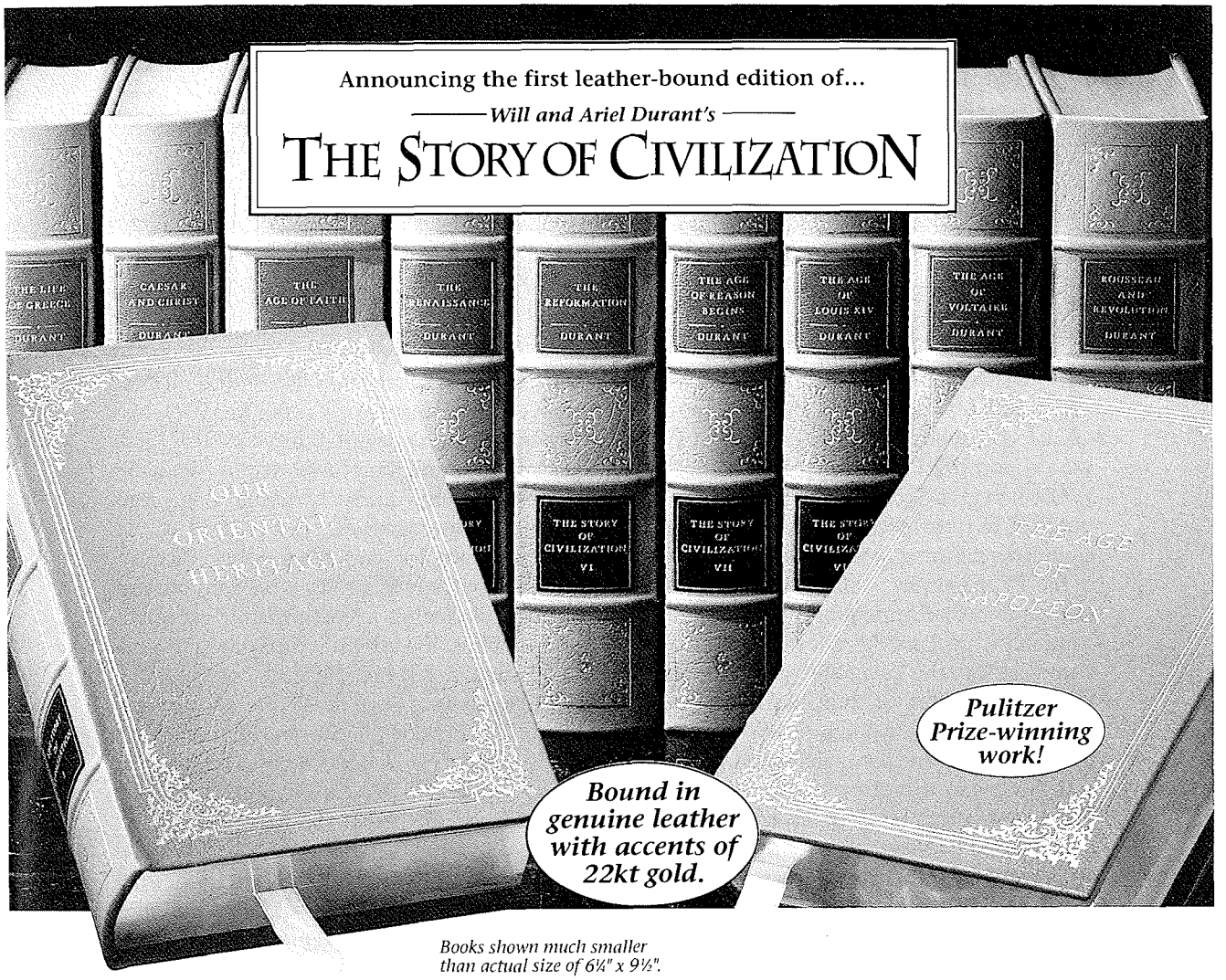
EDITOR'S COMMENT

If someone were to suggest that the way the United States and other Western nations have gone about dealing with the problem of race for the last 50 years was fundamentally wrong, even fatally misguided, you might be inclined to smile, nod your head ever so politely, and quickly walk the other way. In this issue, Ivan Hannaford, a British scholar, makes just this suggestion, but we urge you not to rush off. We could say that Hannaford is proposing a new paradigm here, but this decade is already awash in new paradigms. Besides, the antidote Hannaford offers to race-oriented public thinking and policies is hardly new. It is as old, he argues, as the Greek city-state, the *polis*—and is, in fact, nothing less than politics itself, in the radical sense of the word. The beauty of Hannaford's argument lies, in part, in his investigation of the classical formulation of political life, a mode of governance shaped specifically in opposition to forms of government based on blood and clan, kith and kin. Just as valuable is his history of the life of this precarious ideal, which has been repeatedly challenged by various forms of ethnic and, in recent centuries, eugenic thinking. The barbarism of the latter was, of course, nowhere more evident than in Hitler's racist ideology, but the pernicious influence of race-based thinking continues to undercut the possibility of a true political life to this day. Heed Hannaford. He reminds us of a valuable paradigm lost—but one that can be reclaimed.



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AT ISSUE

Goodnight, Delight

Lo these many years later, the question has lost none of its power to stun: If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be? We never expected Barbara Walters to give Socrates a run for his money, but *this*? In retrospect, the question probably signaled a defining moment in the devolution of the TV interview. And yet its empty-headedness is rather appealing today, when we routinely expect our interviewers to follow the baton right to the knee, the knife to its target flesh. The cocktail of choice for Barbara and her media compatriots is now a mix of six parts prurience and some shavings of concern.

Let's try to recapture the innocence and imagine the arboreal-preference question put not to some hapless celebrity but to the national public mood today. What might the mood answer? Not oak or pine or redwood, surely; nothing so sturdy or heroic. A lemon tree, maybe—and if not the entire tree, then its workaday fruit, which might roll to the corner of the produce department and lie unnoticed for days, sour and yellow and softening. Not unlike the times. We live in a lemon of an age, and if it came with a warranty, we'd be entitled to a refund.

WQ

Then again, who has ever thought the times, any times, were *not* out of joint? "Thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart," said Hamlet, even before receiving his fatal wound. Hamlet's heart had every reason to weigh a ton, but what is our excuse for the heaviness we have wrapped ourselves in like a stadium blanket? The popular culture is starved for wit and lightness and easy ingenuity, and the society is full of groups determined to jump till every soufflé falls.

We are losing our capacity for delight. Delight is not so explosive as joy, nor as deep-seated and sustained as happiness, even happiness that is short-lived. It is more modest than either, pleasure of a softer kind, a whisper rather than a shout. Sure, it still exists in pockets here and there, as partisans endure in caves for a while under continual siege after they have lost the war. But delight rarely shows its face, for fear of being picked off.

You have only to say the word, nimble and airborne, to feel its attraction. In these earthbound times, the volume of just about everything is too high to hear delight's soft voice. It's not in-your-face, and these are in-your-face years. The Democrats caught the mood perfectly in the 1992 war-room cry of which they were so proud—"It's the economy, stupid!" Like the professionals who had contrived it, much of the country found the sentence amusing—this is the way we talk to one another—when it was merely demeaning.

Places where delight was once common—the theater, movies, popular music, art museums, the classroom, bed—are as stripped of it as public figures are of their privacy. Take sex. If you believe the hype, it will either kill or incriminate. How far can I go, at what speed, and in what order? Nothing is easy. In the classroom, you must watch what you say. In art museums, you must watch where you step.

Or take music. The tune is out and aggression is in; album notes thank not God but parole officers. On TV the true stories of rampant victimization—of wives beaten up and kids beaten down—leave you hungry less for justice than for potato chips. Shakespeare had Holinshed; TV has the tabloids that block your escape from the supermarket.

In the theater, those foreign megamusicals have been let onto the stage like so many Trojan horses, mechanical and dead—no, worse than dead, deadly—horse and horse by-prod-

uct too. Thoughts too shallow for greeting cards find their just expression in these shows. Full of calculation but devoid of wit, they are said to give pleasure around the world. The only pleasure is to be counted among those who have survived them.

Delight was once routine in the theater; it lodged in the smallest details. The case can be made even with frivolous evidence. For example, in a failed Sheldon Harnick-Jerry Bock musical comedy called *Tenderloin* (1960), a mock 19th-century ballad told of a young urban orphan named Annie who supported herself making artificial flowers out of paper and wire and wax. Her career ended when her fingers froze and, as the lyrics have it, "wiring and waxing, she waned." It's not Pope, not even Porter or Hart, but there is more wit in that one half-line, sly and offhand—delightful, really—than in all the outbursts of A. L. Webber and his imitators, with their gassy sewers and wobbly helicopters and traveling chandeliers. Big loud stuff, right in your face, avoiding the heart and the brain. But the public is not inclined to hear the difference or judge the loss. And so, waxing, we have waned too.

Why the leaden hand upon us? We are not at war, abroad at least, or in economic depression at home. We are not sending children under their desks in school to practice surviving nuclear attack. (They have only to survive their friends.) We are not ravaged by disease, as parts of the world plainly are. We are living longer than ever, yet we can't shake the feeling that, after the years of health-club dues and little salt and less fat and enough leafy greens to carpet a continent, death is a defeat, even at 82.

Some days we are told that the country is headed for bankruptcy and that our children, or maybe their children, will pay for our excesses. Yet most of us do not live lives of excess, but merely ordinary lives. It's just that we fail to notice how extraordinarily high our ordinary expectations have become—expectations for how we should be able to dress, to play, to travel, and to surround ourselves with material goods that explain who we are. We have been assured that we are entitled and have rights, not just to pursue happiness but to sit triumphant astride its lassoed and domesticated hide. Falling short of what we have been led to expect, we are disappointed and act bereft of everything. We require Dr. Chekhov, and only Dr. Peter Kramer is on call.

Those of us too young to have known firsthand are told heroic myths of America in the 1930s, when times were genuinely bad, and people struggled against shortage and loss and hopelessness. At this remove, it is hard to figure how they did it, for we seem less capable today of coping with adversity, for all our opportunities to practice—natural disasters, casual violence, imperiled careers. The impulse to surrender, or to look elsewhere for rescue, is powerful, and the larger culture reflects the stress of a center barely holding.

Yet, oddly, in the midst of all the gloom and incentives to despair in the '30s, a capacity for delight seems to have persisted and to have been given full rein. Consider only the evidence that survives on screen. This was the great age of screwball comedy and of a certain kind of musical that brought the impossible within easy reach and nourished dreams and aspiration. Happy endings were the rule, against all probability. (Now, of course, we know these people were just fooling themselves.)

Perhaps the most gravely beautiful dance Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers ever performed occurs in the otherwise frivolous 1936 film *Follow the Fleet*. Gamblers down on their luck and close to despair, the two meet on an absurdly elegant casino rooftop, where each has come to commit suicide. They look like a million and are worth not a buck. Out of their individual gloom, to Irving Berlin's "Let's Face the Music and Dance," they create ravishing romantic images (Ginger in a sexy dress that moves with a will of its own), and they leave together as lovers, arm in arm. Just before they exit the stage, when the dance seems done,

there is a moment so surprising and audacious that it stirs the purest delight. The pair sink side by side to one knee, rise slowly, move backward, then forward several paces; suddenly they arch their backs, lift one knee high and triumphant, and lunge into the wings, the dark, the future.

Were Depression audiences buoyed by this allegory of the national mood, by Berlin's exhortation to stare down adversity and make the most of chance opportunity? It's hard to think how they could not have been. Our dances look like aerobic exercises—all work, none of Ginger's airy gauze, lots of Day-Glo spandex, respiration not aspiration. If these dances are about the heart, it's not the heart that dreams and yearns, only the pump that's going to need a by-pass unless adequately primed.

Is it that we now know too much to be taken in by the fantasies? Is that why our dreams have the zircon reality of the Home Shopping Network? Or perhaps we have simply embraced a different set of illusions and fail to see that we are complicit in their persistence. There are no bounds, for example, to the space one may occupy in the society to proclaim oneself a victim or to toss the hot coal of responsibility for personal failure into the lap of someone, anyone, else—ancestor, neighbor, bystander, ghost.

Nor are there constraints on the mental gymnastics we have learned to perform to excuse what common sense would once have allowed us to see plain—matricide, for example—in a more naive time, unvexed by sensitivity seminars and speech monitors, by individuals so emotionally fragile they find insult everywhere, by legions of the abused, by "the healing process" raised to the level of Olympic event, by assertions of ubiquitous "community." ("The bimbo community issued a strongly worded protest today against its continued characterization as soft from top to bottom." "The pedophiliac community will bring a court challenge against its standing exclusion from all Toys 'R Us stores.") Pick your aggrieved; pick your grievance; pick a number.

Every savvy Zeitgeist will keep a suitcase handy, for the moment it is sent packing, and many of us are counting the days till our grim ghost gets the boot. Until then, goodnight, delight. Sleep well and keep your beauty. Your time will come round again. We'll wake you when the nonsense is over.

—James Morris

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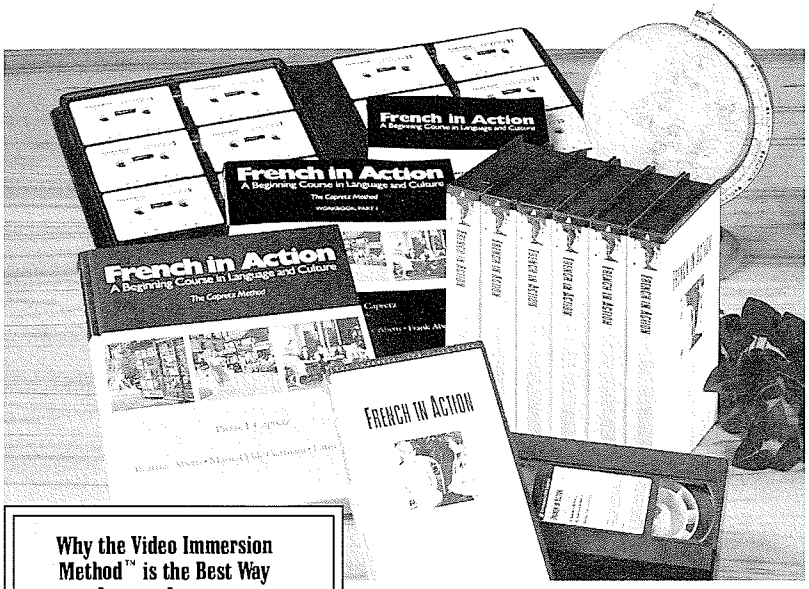

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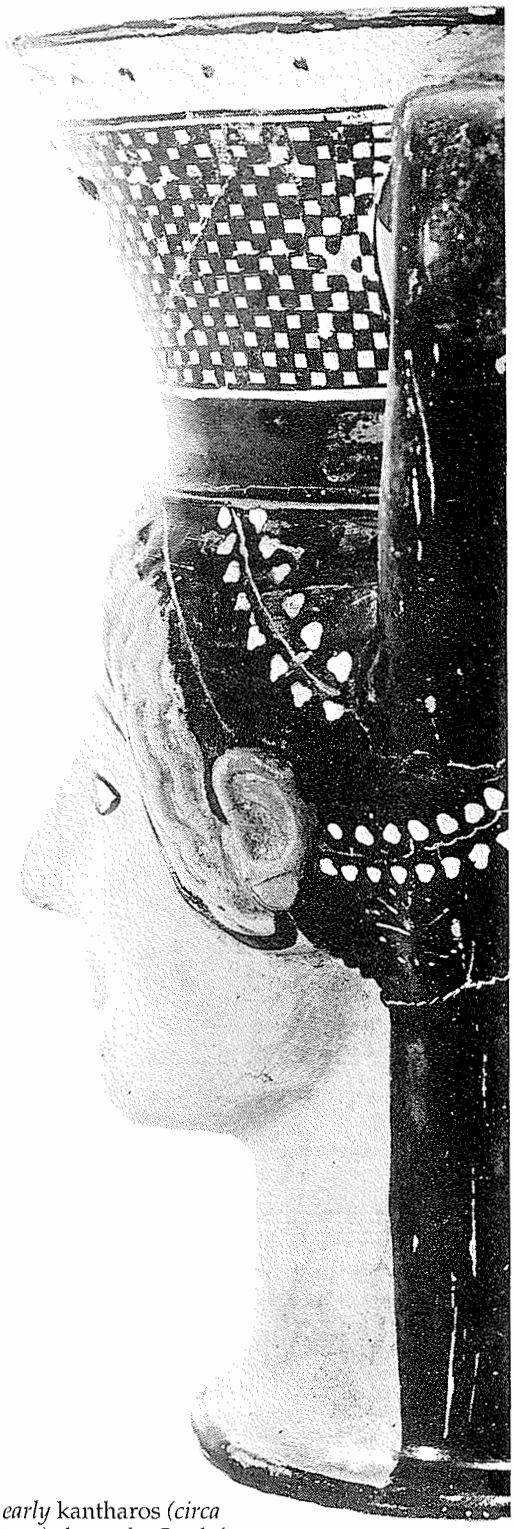
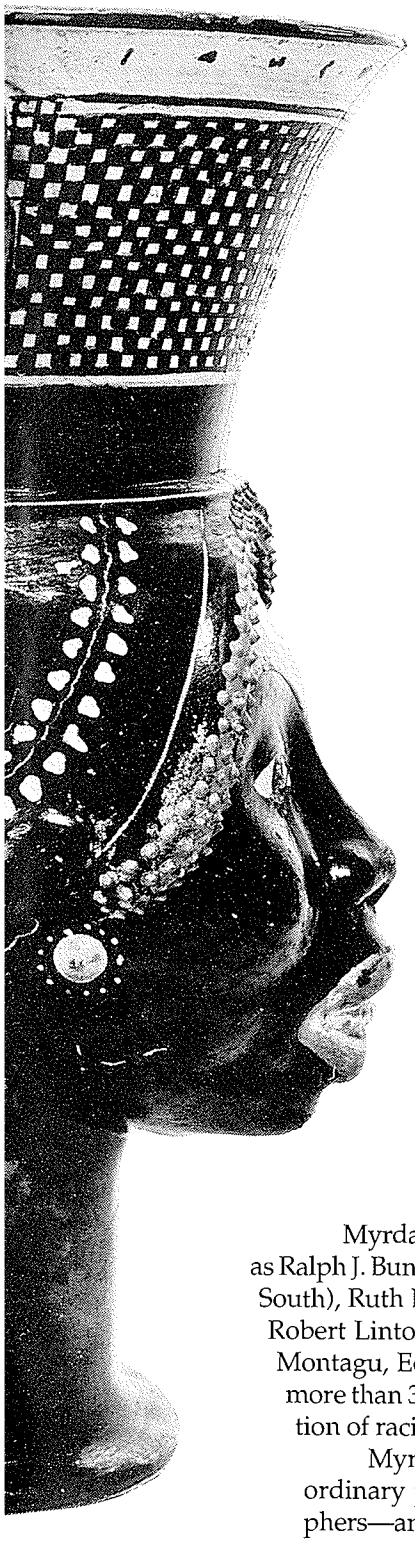
THE IDIOCY OF RACE

BY IVAN HANNAFORD

The Greeks referred to those who lived outside the realm of public life and politics as idiots—ἰδιῶται. In our unthinking acceptance of the idea of race, whose birth and development Ivan Hannaford here chronicles, we in the modern age may be guilty of a kind of collective idiocy. Genuine public life—not to mention a genuine solution to racial problems—becomes impossible when a society allows race or ethnicity to displace citizenship as one's badge of identity.



An early kantharos *(circa 510 B.C.) shows the Greeks' fascination with physical differences between the races, which they attributed not to innate qualities but to environment.*



For all men are by nature provided of notable multiplying glasses, that is their passions and self-love, through which, every little payment appeareth a great grievance; but are destitute of those prospective glasses, namely moral and civil science, to see afar off the miseries that hang over them, and cannot without such payments be avoided.
—Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651)

Fifty years have passed since Gunnar Myrdal published *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (1944), a classic work that still defines—and constrains—American thinking about race and politics. When the Carnegie Corporation commissioned the Swedish economist to analyze "the Negro problem," the United States was looking with uncertainty toward the end of World War II. Especially among liberals, unease over the possible return of economic depression mingled with alarm over the success in a depressed Germany of Hitler's racist ideology—with consequences whose terrible dimensions were by the early 1940s beginning to come clear. Myrdal was chosen from among a host of worthy contenders in part because he was an outsider; his homeland was assumed to have no history of imperialism, and it was thought that he would bring enough academic detachment to the subject to mobilize the considerable expertise then available in the social-science faculties of America's leading universities. At these institutions, "race relations" had established itself, along with human relations and industrial relations, as a new and popular discipline during the 1920s and 1930s, even though few of its practitioners had ventured into the public realm.

The Carnegie Corporation was not to be disappointed. Myrdal dutifully consulted with such great names of the academy as Ralph J. Bunche (who accompanied him on his dangerous travels into the South), Ruth Benedict, Franz Boas, Melville Herskovits, Otto Kleineburg, Robert Linton, Robert Ezra Park, Edward Reuter, Louis Wirth, Ashley Montagu, Edward Shils, and Arnold Rose. With the additional help of more than 30 research assistants, he produced a manual for the eradication of racism in the United States.

Myrdal began by examining the ideas and mental constructs of ordinary people, not of intellectuals, historians, or political philosophers—an odd choice, in view of the considerable racial mischief the latter group had been up to for more than a century. "In a sense and to a degree present conditions and trends can be analyzed without consideration

of their antecedents," Myrdal declared. His study was, he said, an analysis of morals, not an analysis in morals; not a historical description so much as an analytical *prescription* for future social and political action. Its aim was scientific investigation, purged of all possible bias so that a logical foundation could be laid for practical and political conclusions. The hope was that change, driven by education, and linked to social action in jobs and housing, would eliminate prejudice, reduce the practice of stereotyping, remove the causes of aggression and frustration, and create a sense of identity among those living anomic and unproductive lives. This was the social-engineering approach par excellence.

The Myrdal Report not only set the standard for public policy in the United States but also influenced the United Nations in the early 1950s (and later the British, who blithely transported the model across the Atlantic in the 1960s to deal with their "local difficulty" of immigration from the West Indies and Asia). There was a great fear that the eugenic principles and practices adopted throughout the developed world between 1904 and 1935, and implemented with such horrible effectiveness by the Nazis, might spread to the emerging countries of the underdeveloped world. If that were to happen, all that could be expected in the long run was continuous war between innumerable ethnic and racial groups. And so from the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO) came a number of pronouncements written by leading intellectuals declaring that all men belonged to the same species and that most modern notions of race had no scientific basis, and repeating the call for education, understanding, and other palliative measures. The remedy for bad social engineering was to be, implausibly, good social engineering.

More than any other document, *An American Dilemma* helped establish a social-engineering approach as a global orthodoxy, and it is this approach that today prevents us from viewing the idea of race in any other way than through Hobbes's "notable multiplying glasses." It is true that Myrdal's case for rationalism in politics appealed to the American ideal of equality and went some way toward bringing about a wider understanding of the injustices of segregation. But in its inspiration and in the chief remedies it advocated, the report was fundamentally antipolitical. It encouraged the belief that the correct social operations, conceived and carried out by skilled "experts," social workers, and the like, could cure the body politic of its ills. Most destructively, it seemed to relieve citizens of the political obligation to rethink the meaning of the national community.

Long before the Myrdal Report was published, the young Walter Lippmann, in *A Preface to Politics* (1913), recognized that the advocates of applied social science had missed the point of the American dilemma—and indeed of all tragic human dilemmas. Lippmann held up the Chicago Vice Report of 1911 as an example of how studies of this kind can become abstract

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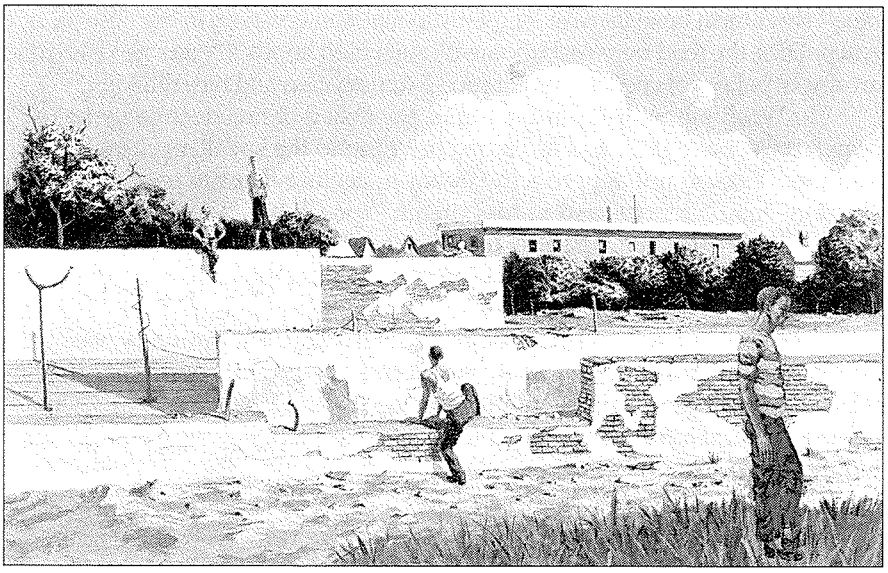
Ivan Hannaford, *a former Wilson Center Guest Scholar and Visiting Fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge, is a Fellow on the faculty of human sciences at Kingston University in Great Britain. His book,* Race and the Political, *will be published next year by the Woodrow Wilson Center Press.*



The Walls *(1955), by Hughie Lee-Smith.*

contestations, utterly removed from the realities of life. In the world of the social engineer, politics *qua* politics becomes an abstraction without substance, a counting of heads, and then a relapse into indifference. Or it can become a fanatical form of activity, a prairie fire of hot politics consuming everything reasonable in its path.

What Lippmann asked for in 1913, and did not get, was a new start for political thinking. He was not optimistic that documents such as the Chicago Vice Report would remove prostitution, sex, and lust from human affairs. On the contrary, the authors of such reports were too comfortable with a change of legal status. They lacked an understanding of the dynamic and passive forces and human impulses at the heart of the perceived "problem." Just as "white slavery" was not abolished in Chicago, so the Emancipation Proclamation (and for that matter the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act) did not eradicate all vestiges of chattel slavery in America. It may have broken the legal bond, but as Toni Morrison has shown so movingly in her novel, *Beloved*, the historical resonances of tragedy live on in the social bonds that shape, distort, and clarify our "rememories."

These "rememories" are part of the stuff from which a meaningful politics must be made. In his famous "I have a dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., took up the task of fashioning such a politics. But the sponsors of the notable civil-rights laws that followed, captive to the assumptions of social engineering, seemed to believe that a change of legal status would be enough. Ending Jim Crow and extending voting rights were great political achievements that helped bring black Americans into the political realm, but they were not matched by a continuing debate over the meaning of citizenship, with its rights, duties, and obligations. America's "race problem" was left to the ministrations of lawyers and bureaucrats and to rules and procedures (such as affirmative action) that com-

bined short-term benefits with long-term political enervation. In the absence of a real politics, the road departed upon with such high hopes 30 years ago has led to an empty politics of endless interest-group remediation and race thinking.

In Washington, D.C., last summer I watched the reenactment of King's March on Washington, and as I stood listening to the speakers at the Lincoln Memorial I could not suppress the unhappy feeling that the political dimension that King had captured in his "dream" speech had, as Virgil wrote on a like occasion long ago, "passed into the moving air." All that remained, it seemed, was the shell of an orthodox race-relations policy that only exacerbates the state of civic entropy.

The Greeks taught us the importance of living as a community of citizens bound together by law. If we are to rise above our current condition—a natural society of ethnic groups cleaving only to kith and kin—Americans, as well as Bosnians and innumerable others, will need to act politically, rethinking the nature of citizenship and of the civic compact.

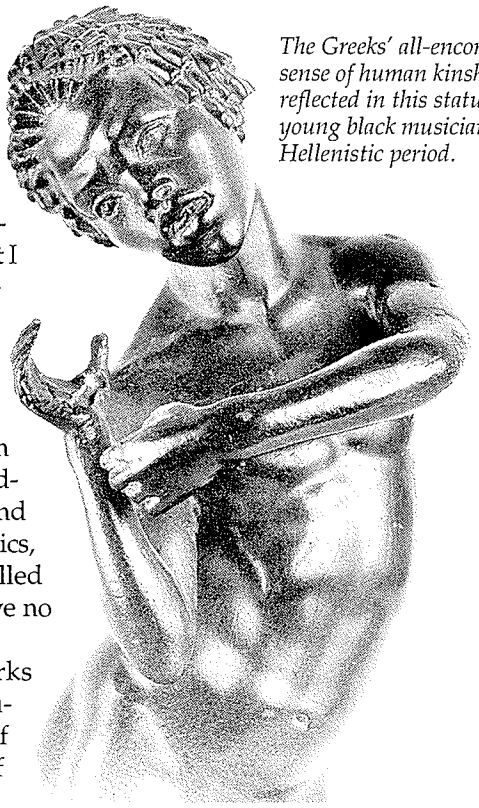
II

In discussing the challenges of the 20th century, one is always tempted to rely upon the shibboleths of the modern era—the concepts of self-determination and mass democracy—and to ignore the more important historical foundations upon which such ideas rest. What I argue here—in the company of Hannah Arendt, Erich Voeglin, and Theophile Simard (the much-neglected secretary of the Belgian Academy of Sciences in the 1920s)—is that the principles and practices of antiquity cannot be ignored if we are to begin to understand the challenges that confront us in modern "ethnically determined" societies.

In 1970, Frank M. Snowden, Jr., a professor of classics at Howard University, published *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience,* a study of the epigraphical, papyrological, numismatic, and archaeological evidence of the early encounters of Europeans and Ethiopians in the Mediterranean region. From painstaking study of the historical evidence, Snowden reached the conclusion that the Greeks and Romans did not, as is popularly supposed, possess racial attitudes such as we find in the modern world. That is to say, in ordering the form of state that emerged between 1000 B.C. and 300 B.C., they did not link skin color and other physical and physiognomonical traits to assessments of a man's worth.

Snowden elaborated upon this in detached and scholarly style in later texts and articles, the foremost of which is his contribution to the Menil Foundation's three-volume *Image of the Black in Western Art* (1976–89), which surveys countless pieces of art from ancient Egypt to World War I. In his part of this vast collaborative study, Snowden writes that the frequency with which blacks appear in Greek art and the skill and care with which they are depicted "prompt the inference that the sentiment of the kinship of all men as expressed by Menander and later adapted by Terence—'I am a man; I consider nothing human foreign to me'—was not limited to philosopher or dramatist." The Greeks and Romans, Snowden showed, depicted Ethiopians very differently from the way the Rationalists, Romantics, and Utilitarians of the 18th and 19th centuries did. They seldom, if ever, referred to

them except in terms of sharing a mortal existence and an awareness of the fragility and temporary nature of all life.



The Greeks' all-encompassing sense of human kinship is reflected in this statuette of a young black musician from the Hellenistic period.

Taking my cue from Snowden, among others, I argue here, and in the book that I have just completed, that we in the modern world have largely abandoned *eunomics*, the ancient moral and civil science of being "well-lawed" bequeathed to us by Western civilization, and are all in bondage to the presuppositions and dispositions of modern eugenics, the pseudoscience of controlled birth and breeding, even if we no longer use that name.

In considering the works of the ancients, and particularly the mythologies of Hesiod, the *Politics* of Aristotle, Cicero's *De Republica*, *De Legibus*, *De Officiis*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, *The Histories* of Polybius, and stretching even to the politics of Niccolo Machiavelli's *Discourses* (as opposed to *The Prince*), we see a constant concern with the question of what it means to found, maintain, and sustain a polity capable of cultivating a civic disposition—the belief that what matters in a man, that what *makes* a man and distinguishes him from others, is his participation in political life. The civic disposition is what distinguishes men from brutes and from one another. Beginning with the Greeks philosophically and the Romans philodoxically there is a peculiar belief, albeit fiercely contested by some, that there was a novel and different way in which people could pass from one form of life and exchange it for another. Those who were naturally tied to the monotone of household (*oikia*) by virtue of kinship and the need to subsist could elevate themselves above the menial, boring realm of the *private* into something which, as Pliny the Younger says, extended the limits set to life by chance, and by their actions in a *public* sphere as citizens (another strange invention) leave a mark upon the course of existence.

Beginning with Hesiod in the eighth century B.C., these thinkers recognized that the Phoenician, Hebrew, and Egyptian forms of governance, which relied upon households, families, tribes, estates, and administrative, religious, and military castes to maintain social order, were no longer adequate for organizing the extremely complicated activities of peoples of diverse and uncertain origins. People were now on the

move physically and intellectually, and social organization had outgrown the limits of kin. Some other form of governance had to be seriously considered if daily life was to be secure and peaceable.

The Greeks in their academic philosophy distinguished very clearly between states that were *political*, or "nomocratic," and states that existed in *ethos*, a state of barbarousness and viciousness. Later, Cicero exploited their formulation of the political state to the full in his treatise on the virtues of the Roman Republic and its laws, and centuries later the Greek idea of politics also inspired a number of the American revolutionaries. The political idea contained at least seven novel features:

- a constant repetition of the idea that *all* human beings have a common beginning, and share in the uncertainties of this life, especially in matters of sex, intellect, and property
- a great concern for immediacy—immortality comes only to those who have acted *pro bono publico*; no man, high or low, can be guaranteed immortality
- the identification of a general public arrangement, which published rules made by a category of people called citizens bound together by law, and not by heads of households acting privately on the sole basis of blood and kinship
- the resolution of difference by "speech gifted men" on the basis of sound critical argument about ends, with a commitment to balance, moderation, settlement, composition of difference, expression of doubt and uncertainty, and ample room for eccentricity
- the accommodation of difference by compromise
- the institutionalization of risk and the clear delineation in the mechanisms of governance of the limits of public and private action
- an emphasis upon articulate speech, argument, and discussion in a public place.

What was distinctive about these political communities, from the Greek *polis* to the American republic, was the notion that diverse peoples assembled together as citizens—not as administrators, generals, worshipers, subjects, or slaves—should be able to express opinions despite the unacceptability or inconvenience of those opinions, and that those temporarily and constitutionally charged with governance should be expected to listen intelligently, and to act in the best interest of the whole. Aristotle asks us not to confuse this nomocratic state with the democratic state, which is his sixth and worst form of private apolitical rule. Politics was about listening not to ignorant mobs but to "speech gifted men"—men in possession of *arete*, that elusive quality of excellence in knowledge of both *polis* and self that distinguished the true citizen from the barbarian and the corrupt backslider.

The Greeks insisted upon clear distinctions between the antitheses of the political and the natural (*nomos* and *physis*), the political and the barbarian, between political states and brutish or vicious states, between civic dispositions and slave dispositions, between justice and law, private and public, virtue and

vice, liberty and license, citizenship and kinship, politics and war, republic and empire, and later between faith in all its forms and the *via politica* of Hellenistic Rome. In all that vast treasury of Western literature I see a marked absence of racial thought, unless of course we read it in from later racialized sources. There are instead distinctions relating to the political and to civic virtue that we find difficult to accommodate within our modern understanding of self-determination and mass democracy.

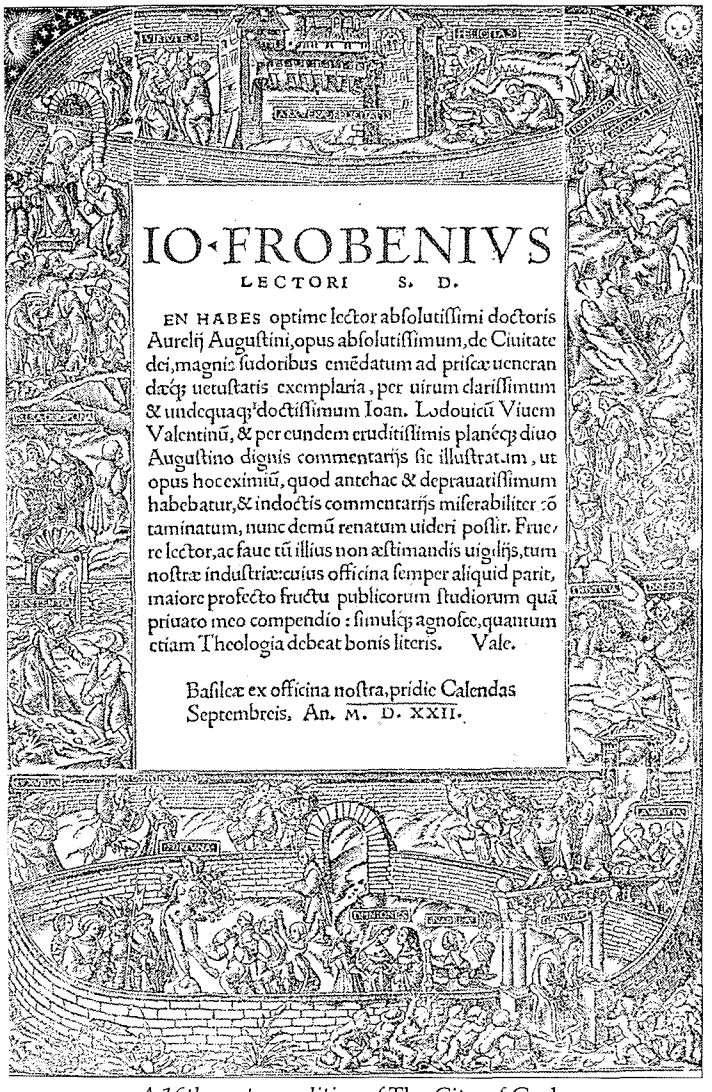
III

With the collapse of the city-state and the Roman Republic we enter a period from the first century A.D. to the sack of Rome by the Goths in 410 A.D. when the peculiar activity that the Greeks and Romans called "politics" was called into question by the rise of faith and religion.

The first full-fledged assault on the political idea came from Josephus Flavius (37 A.D.–95 A.D.?), in *The Antiquities* and his later reply to his critics, *Against Apion*. A Jewish general who reluctantly took part in Judea's revolt against Rome (66–70 A.D.) and later became a Roman citizen, Josephus attacked Greek philosophy and politics as dishonest, unoriginal, and unhistorical. Scarcely a Greek is spared, from Pythagoras to Herodotus. Josephus highlights the superior skills of the Greeks' predecessors, the Chaldean, Egyptian, and Phoenician historiographers and genealogists—from whom, in his view, the Greeks had borrowed without acknowledgment. For these and other reasons, Josephus rejected Greek nomocracy in favor of a theocratic form of rule based upon the Mosaic Code and the Covenant.

Josephus saw politics as irrelevant or worse—an opportunity for aimless, purposeless chatter—and the laws that arose from it a denial of the unfailing Covenant that bound God to Man. Unlike the Greeks, Moses "left nothing to be done at the pleasure and disposal of the person himself." In place of the Greco-Roman concept of citizenship, which in principle would sweep all tribes, all clans, all peoples in a condition of enslavement into a state of civility, Josephus chose to stay with the single more certain God, who had created the world and all the peoples in it.

The foundation of his theocracy he found in five stories that have since become pivotal to the understanding of race thinking in Western Europe: the Creation, Cain and Abel, the Tower of Babel, the division of the world and the curse on Ham's posterity, and Moses' exhortation to his people in the wilderness. Josephus borrowed his account of the division of mankind, for example, from Berosus, a Chaldean priest of the third century B.C., and despite attacks on its truthfulness by the Catholic Church the account would pop up again and again in ensuing centuries. Much of Josephus's rendition accords with the standard version. When Noah's son, Ham, comes upon his father lying drunk and "naked in an unseemly manner," he laughingly calls others to see the spectacle. But Noah's other sons, Japhet and Shem, refuse to look, instead covering their father. "And when Noah was made sensible of what had been done," writes Josephus, "he prayed for prosperity to his other



IO·FROBENIVS
LECTORI S. D.

EN HABES optime lector absolutissimi doctoris Aurelij Augustini, opus absolutissimum, de Ciuitate dei, magnis sudoribus emẽdatum ad priscæ uenerandæq; uetustatis exemplaria, per uirum clarissimum & undequaq; doctissimum Ioan. Lodouicũ Viuem Valentinũ, & per eundem eruditissimis planéq; diuo Augustino dignis commentarijs sic illustratum, ut opus hoc eximiũ, quod antehac & deprauatissimum habebatur, & indoctis commentarijs miserabiliter cõtaminatum, nunc demũ renatum uideri possit. Fruere lector, ac faue tũ illius non æstimandis uigilijs, tum nostræ industriæ: cuius officina semper aliquid parit, maiore profecto fructu publicorum studiorum quã priuato meo compendio: simulq; agnosce, quantum etiam Theologia debeat bonis literis. Vale.

Basileæ ex officina nostra, pridie Calendas Septembreis. An. M. D. XXII.

A 16th-century edition of The City of God.

sons; but for Ham, he did not curse him, by reason of his nearness in blood, but cursed his posterity." But Josephus's gloss on the story has Noah's son Japhet inhabiting Europe; Shem the region of the Indian Ocean, Persia, Chaldea, and Armenia; and Ham the land of Africa, Egypt, and Libya. The inhabitants of Africa, in other words, are cursed.

The faith that Josephus expressed in his polemic was not intended to bridge the gap between faith and politics, between Jew and Gentile, Christian and Christian, or pagan Roman and barbarian. Nor, I hasten to add, can it be used as a confirmation of the vulgar notion, often expressed by the great scholars of the 19th century, that the origins of race thinking may be traced unequivocally to Hebrew teachings about a chosen people of pure blood. Josephus was interested not so much in establishing ethnic affinity as in separating true believers from unbelievers. It was a religious system with ample provision for the conversion of strangers. The issue, in short, was faith, not race.

The task of reinstating politics amid a bewildering variety of new faiths fell to a North African Christian from Soukh Aras in western Algeria, Augustine of Hippo (354–430 A.D.). Augustine wrote *The City of God* (circa 413–426 A.D.) only a few years after the Goths sacked Rome. The barbarians who had formerly dwelled on the fringes of classical civilization now occupied the epicenter of politics, and Augustine was compelled to search history for an explanation, as well as for an understanding of what could bridge the gap between the old civility and the new faith.

Augustine began with Josephus's account of the settlement of the earth, and from his intensive examination of the history of mankind from early to modern times concluded that the competing genealogies of the Hebrews, Phoenicians, Chaldeans, and Egyptians were so complicated and confused that it was not possible to give a certain account of any true origins. Augustine preferred to see his own work not as a historically *correct* account of the

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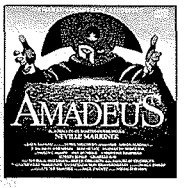

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beginning of mankind but as a foreshadowing of events: "So in this prophetic history some things are narrated which have no significance, but are, as it were, the framework to which significant things are attached."

For the purposes of our story the significant element in this framework was Augustine's reinterpretation in Christian terms of the biblical allegory of the settlement of the earth and its division into three parts by Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japhet. The version favored by Josephus and Berosus stressed the transgression of Ham and his banishment to the dark regions of Africa after the Deluge. Japhet and Shem occupied more propitious territories. Into this basic view were injected additional beliefs about good and evil, and about magic. Ham, the African, was a flaw in nature, a demon, irrevocably a blot on humanity.

Augustine rejected all these explanations of difference as fraudulent. He argued that all men are descended from Adam, and whoever is born of man is a rational mortal animal. "No matter what unusual appearance he presents in color, movement, sound, nor how peculiar he is in power, part or quality of his nature," Augustine declared, "no Christian can doubt that he springs from one protoplast." Augustine went on to argue that what a man looked like and where he came from were not the important considerations. He justified the inclusion of the Scythian, the Ethiopian, the Greek, the Jew, and the northern barbarian peoples, the invaders of the earthly *civitas*, within the ambit of a unified Christian civilization.

Augustine's assertion of the natural unity of mankind, and his rejection of any attempt to use the natural genealogies as justification for multiple religious and secular origins, left him with the immense philosophical problem of reconciling matters of faith with the pressing realities of the city of the flesh. One of those realities was that people were not associating in any kind of civil arrangement that allowed faith to coexist with politics.

Augustine resolved this difficulty in two ways. First, he proclaimed the alternative histories profane and heretical, and resisted all attempts to use the stories of the Deluge as justification for multiple religious and secular origins. The men in isolation, the clanless and hearthless—the remote African tribes, the barbarian war bands of Germany, the uncivil Britons—were not races as we understand them, Augustine insisted, but symbols of heresy against the Christian faith. They still could be brought into the household of God to become part of the body of the faithful in Christ. The device that Augustine used for entry into the faith was *conversion*, and the institutional overseer was the church based in Rome. It did not matter whether men were the sons of Noah, speech gifted or mute, barbarians, brutish or vicious, black or white—the focus of civic and religious participation was simultaneously widened to make all men eligible for membership in *communitas*, *christianitas*, and *humanitas* by faith through the taking of the sacrament.

Second, Augustine recognized that faith and membership in a Christian community would not by themselves overcome all the divisions of secular existence. Unlike Moses, Jesus, Josephus, and later Mohammad, Augustine did not insist that existence was simply concerned with the observance of the rules

and precepts of faith found in sacred texts. On the contrary, his acceptance of the intervention of both church and state provided a syncretic (some would say a hypocritical) solution. It temporarily legitimized an agency established to provide moral guidance and pragmatic advice (the Catholic church) to rulers who had to rule and subjects who had to obey, and at the same time allowed it to coexist with incumbent rulers possessing many priorities other than those of faith. It addressed the problems of diversity that existed between the church and states, and between states, by retaining those important "political" elements of Greco-Roman experience in the practices of dialogue, conciliation, settlement, talk, argument, and discussion in and between church and state, and between the denizens of Western Europe and North Africa who were not of the faith.

This dichotomy between matters of faith and matters of politics, which Josephus had solved by disposing of politics and nomocracy in favor of theocracy, was resolved in *The City of God* (albeit as an incidental element) by giving encouragement and nurture to the antique Ciceronian notions of *citizenship*, of being "well-lawed," of cultivating a civic disposition within a *res publica* serving a *populus* bound together in a nexus of law. In this way the worst excesses of blind faith within the church would be tempered, while the tendency to tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy outside the church would be curbed. In short, Augustine built upon the political idea of extending the humanizing civilization of republican Rome, while allowing that civilization to exist within a system of faith. One need not be sacrificed to the other.

This Augustinian compact between church and state in Western Europe was to last a millennium. It survived the Moors' invasion of the Iberian Peninsula in 711 A.D. and laid the foundation for a contentious, but continuing, intellectual and religious dispute about the proper roles of church and state, and of faith and politics, among Christians, barbarians, Jews, and Muslims mediated by the Catholic Church. It was, to say the least, an uneasy and anxious arrangement that often erupted into persecution, cruelty, and war. The Moors marched into portions of Europe as far north as Tours, and Spain was occupied for almost 800 years. Christians wishing to expel the Moors or to occupy Jerusalem launched frequent crusades, while Moors launched jihads to extend the frontiers of Islam into Europe. Yet for all the excesses committed in the name of faith, the political tradition of Aristotle, Cicero, and Augustine hindered and moderated the worst effects of religious zealotry for Christian, Jew, and Moor alike, and gave the migrant and the invader more than a toehold in a rich Western European civilization.

It was not until after 1200, when the dispute about faith was transmogrified into a dispute about genealogy and blood, that the persecutions effectively deprived the Jews and the Moors of their vestigial "citizenship" in *regnum* and *sacerdotium*. Moses Maimonides, born in 1135 in Cordoba, then at the center of the Muslim world, sought to respond to Christian and Islamic intolerance brought about by an upsurge of Islamic invasion. In his *Guide for the Perplexed*, written after he had fled to Cairo to avoid persecution, Maimonides, the greatest teacher of the Hebrew world, set out in the language of Greek teaching and thinking his opposition to the system and method of Is-

lamic theology. In his "Greeking in" of the Hebrew and Mutakallemim (orthodox Islamic) texts he established a compatibility between the scriptural account of Creation and Aristotle's teachings about nature, and thereby between the Christian and Hebrew faiths in Western Europe. On the basis of a close textual analysis of the Muslim texts he concluded that these texts were greatly mistaken concerning the corporeal and incorporeal nature of God. On these grounds Maimonides established allegorically that those who were beyond the methodological limits of mathematical science, logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics, and had their backs to it in their faith, should not be given any mercy, and could be swept from the face of the earth:

> Such are the extreme Turks that wander about in the north, the Kushites who live in the south, and those in our country who are like these. I consider these as irrational beings, and not as human beings; they are below mankind, but above monkeys, since they have the form and shape of man, a mental faculty above that of the monkey.

From the beginning of the 12th century, therefore, we have a justification for the extirpation of human beings on grounds of faith—albeit a perhaps unwitting one—and it revived an interest in all that Augustine had striven to suppress in *The City of God*: the mark of Cain, the Tower of Babel, and the pernicious legend of the banishment and the curse of Ham.

In 1492, the year of the "discovery of new worlds," Europe discovered another darker world—a world in which Maimonides' arguments about faith were turned against his own people. There had been a Jewish community in Spain for more than a thousand years, and it had made enormous contributions in service to the Spanish kings. Indeed, many of the Christian bishops were converted Jews. For the contribution they had made, the Jews managed to wrest some measure of religious protection and security from the Christian monarchs and grandees. In the early days the church had intervened to moderate attacks upon Jews, and a system of *ghettos* and *aljamos* (safe havens) was set up to ensure the protection and recognition of the right to worship. After Maimonides, the status of Jews as *castizos*—men having an honorable historical lineage—within a system of nomocratic tribunals of inquiry increasingly came into question. Did these people who were so close to the monarchs and the church, some of whom had converted to Christianity, really belong or not?

By 1204, Pope Innocent III, who earlier in his reign had issued decrees protecting Jews from unjust treatment, was chastizing the king of Aragon for excessive tolerance. In 1209, Innocent sanctioned the destruction of the French city of Béziers, which was thought to house heretics who favored Jewish over Christian law, with the words, "Strike down; God will recognize his own." As the absolutist executive and administrative inquisitions began to press harder upon the question of identity, which in earlier times had not been considered worth asking, the desire to know exactly who and what people were intensified, and the Jews became subject to the worst effects of unrestrained faith and reason. After 1215, there was a social census which enabled every backslider in faith to be identified and assigned a mark

to distinguish him as of "true" Christian lineage, a *converso* (one who had embraced the Christian faith by taking the sacrament), or a *marrano* (one who claimed to be a Christian, took the sacrament, and observed the faith publicly, but continued to be a Jew privately). Practicing Jews were required to wear a badge on their hats or bonnets.

The protections that remained for Jews in certain quarters of Europe vanished after the mid-14th century with the spread of the Black Death, which was widely blamed on the Spanish Jews. What was discovered in Spain between the rise of the Black Death and 1492 were new tests of belonging that no longer relied upon the contribution citizens made to the body politic. Especially after the onset of the Spanish Inquisition, which commenced in 1478 with the reluctant approval of Pope Sixtus IV, the investigators turned to the doubtful and confused criteria of astrological signs and portents divined from the shape of the face, the characteristics of the body, the tests of language proven by reference to the Hamittic heresy, and the purity of blood (*limpieza*).

With the final defeat of the Moors at Granada in 1492, the political nexus was completely broken. The external threat was gone, the Spanish monarchs were established, the intervention of the Roman church was minimized, and absolutism was ascendant. The Jews and the Moors had no one left to speak on their behalf, and they had no status as citizens. Some 300,000 Jews were expelled from Spain with only three months' notice, leaving behind a country that bears their mark to this very day. They at least were able to resettle in significant numbers under the protection of the papacy and the Orthodox church—the bulk of them in Constantinople itself, the rest in various places in Europe. The fate that befell the Moors, which is largely ignored by Western history, was even more horrendous. In 1502 the *moriscos*, who had inhabited Iberia for almost 800 years and had contributed so much to Western civilization, were likewise stripped of all they possessed and banished to North Africa. Only a fraction of the million or so expelled ever reached their unwanted destination. Most were picked off, plundered, and killed as they made their way to Gibraltar.

It is one of the great ironies of history that the Spanish reached a very different conclusion when they pondered the identities and genealogies of the peoples they discovered in Africa, the Americas, and the East Indies. At first, arguments derived from Maimonides prevailed. The conquest and enslavement of the Indians was seen as just because these alien people were naturally inferior. They were without law, property, and civilization, and, like the Jews and Moors, could be forcibly converted, enslaved, or extirpated.

These ideas were formally contested by Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474–1566), a missionary and historian, at a formal proceeding of theologians held at Vallodolid in 1550–51 to discuss how a just conquest was to be conducted. Las Casas, who had lived in the West Indies, rejected outright the arguments of his chief opponent, Juan Gines de Sepulveda, that the Indians were by nature inferior on the grounds that Sepulveda, like most lawyers and academics (then and now), had misinterpreted the Aristotelian theory of slavery and na-

ture in the *Politics*. Las Casas won the argument with a declaration that was widely circulated in Spain:

> All the people of the world are men . . . all have understanding and volition, all have the five external senses and the four interior senses, and are moved by the objects of these, take satisfaction in goodness and feel pleasure with happy and delicious things, all regret and abhor evil.

These findings were incorporated into the laws of church and state in South America, but that is not to say that the colonization, enslavement, persecution, and cruelty there were any less severe than they were elsewhere. Nevertheless, beginning in the 1570s the worst aspects of the doctrine of purity of blood, which had been used to expel the Jews and Moors from Spain, were tempered and mitigated abroad. Henceforth, neither the practice of chattel slavery nor the doctrine of race would gain much ground in South America—though alas they would flourish elsewhere in the New World and in Europe.

IV

The word *race* reached Scotland in the middle of the 14th century, and was used to denote someone running in a *raiss*—literally a test of speed or course—to the king. Although its precise origins are unclear, it is probably derived from the Spanish *raza*, the Portuguese *raca*, the Italian *razza*, and the French *race*, and has some tenuous connection with the Arabic *ras*, meaning chief, head, or beginning. Whatever the origin, it is clear that it did not in the beginning have the meaning it has today. It was not until John Foxe, the English clergymen who wrote the *Book of Martyrs* (1563), referred to "a race and order of kings and bishops" in 1570 that there is any faint resemblance to the idea of race as we in the modern world think of it.

Between 1570 and 1813, a radical change in the meaning of race took place, and it materially affected the way human beings saw themselves. Instead of symbolizing their experience in terms of their membership in a *polis* and *res publica* in the Greco-Roman sense and the sacramental entry into the body of the faithful in Christ in the Augustinian sense, European writers began to explain right ordering and governance in an entirely different way.

One cause of this change was the revival of the heretic legend of Noah and the division of the world as told by Berosus and Josephus. In his *Commentary upon the Works of Diverse Authors Spoken of in Antiquity* (1498), a Dominican friar named Juan Nanni (Annius of Viterbo) reprinted "missing" volumes of Berosus and other early writers, attractively and fraudulently refurbishing the legend for popular consumption. Church intellectuals assailed this story, and even showed that Annius had engaged in forgery. All to no avail. Indeed, the story that Annius told was so powerful—and its spread so strongly abetted by the rise of literacy and the release from church strictures that accompanied Lutheranism—that even today we remember it better than the original. It came along at a crucial time, when the learned men of Europe were struggling to

absorb the implications of discoveries and new contacts not only in the New World and Africa but in places such as Iceland, Russia, and Finland. In the hands of English natural philosophers and French rationalists the revived story of Ham's transgression and curse was transformed into a stock account that explained the ancient division of the world and therefore the bizarre discoveries of the explorers. Of course, the story's biblical origins were sheared off and it was covered with the trappings of science. It served as a useful vehicle for bridging into the idea that man was a member of a vast—and vastly differentiated—animal kingdom, and that therefore he could be understood more accurately through the new natural histories than through the teachings of the Greek and Roman philosophers.

Johann Blumenbach

The rise of race thinking between the age of discovery and the Treaty of Vienna in 1815 was driven by many developments, but two writers stand out as major contributors. The first is Germany's Johann Blumenbach (1752–1840), widely considered the father of anthropology. In *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind* (1775), Blumenbach synthesized the earlier attempts of François Bernier, Georges Buffon, and Carolus Linnaeus to explain the discoveries of the 16th- and 17th-century explorers and scientists according to rational laws and scientific method. Blumenbach disposed of the notion that the world was divisible into three distinct parts and reasserted the Aristotelian notion that *all* men, including wild men and brutes (those who know no political community and live in a barbarous condition) belonged to a single species, homo sapiens. He set about doing so by carefully scrutinizing the evidence using the best available scientific methods.

Blumenbach strongly resisted the claims of "caprice mongers" who, faced with the demise of the convenient Noachic account of division, now sought to establish out of "skin-and-bones" anthropology a physiological relationship between the orangutan and the Negro. Closely examining anatomical and other evidence concerning the four recently discovered "wild men" who were being held up as possible "missing links"—the so-called Hessian boy, Zell girl, Champagne girl, and Peter the Wild Boy of Hamelin—he showed that the four unfortunates were indeed members of

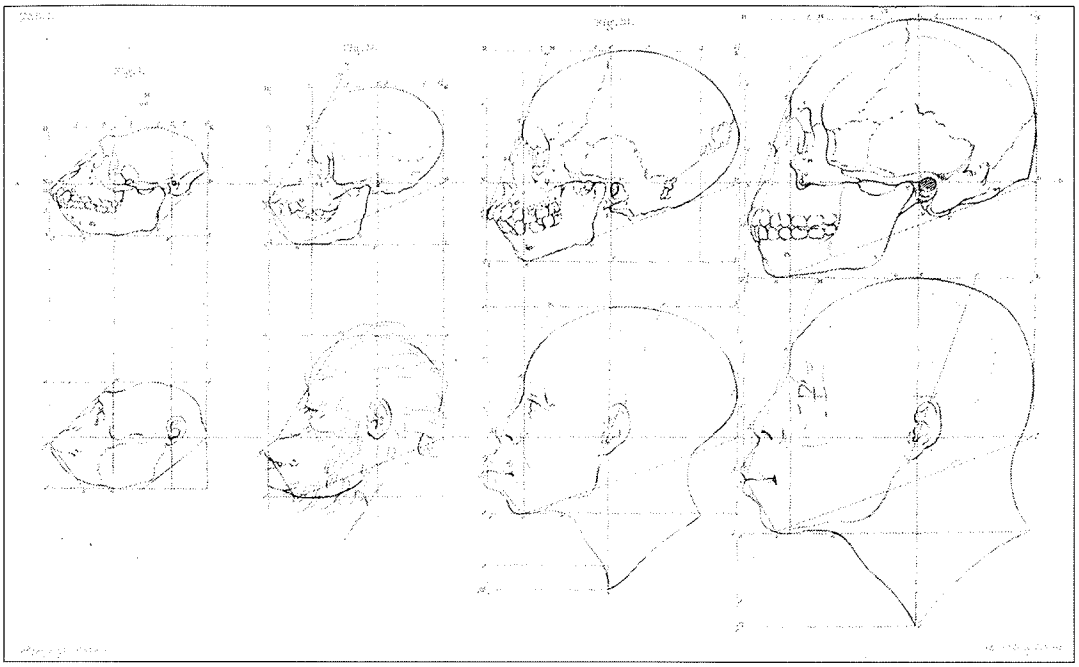
the human species.

Within the species of *genus humanorum* Blumenbach distinguished five varieties of mankind determined by climate, pigmentation, and skull size. He called them Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, Malay, and Caucasian (a term he coined to describe the European division, and which he derived from the name of the peoples who occupied the southern slopes of the Georgian region). Blumenbach went to great lengths to make clear that these divisions, or varieties, were simply useful classes for analyzing the incredible diversity within the unity of mankind. "For although there seems to be so great a difference between widely separate nations. . . ," he declared, "you see that all do so run into one another, and that one variety of mankind does so sensibly pass into the other, that you cannot mark out the limits between them."

Blumenbach insisted that three rules had to be followed in considering evidence of the variety of mankind: 1) that the human species stands alone; 2) that no "fact" should be admitted without a supporting document, that is, anatomical data; 3) that no natural scientist should pass from one explanation to another without heeding intermediate terms and shadings. Where there were doubts about such matters as the comparability of skulls and bone structures, Blumenbach thought that almost always they could be resolved by pressing harder on Newtonian method in the examination of the evidence available rather than by falling back on hearsay evidence or the legend of Noah.

Yet Blumenbach did leave a door ajar. Where doubts about how to account for differences did remain, he suggested, an explanation could be found in a curious energy he called the *nisus formativus* (formative force). In *On the Formative Force and its Influence on Generation and Reproduction* (1780) and *On the Force of Nutrition* (1781), he portrayed this force not as a cause—ultimate causes were hidden and beyond his purview—but as a perpetual and invariable *effect* of the stimuli of natural life. It responded, in other words, to things such as climate and mode of life, and altered human beings accordingly. Immanuel Kant had already discussed this energy or "life force" in his lectures at Jena in 1765–66. Kant had set out a method for the study of what was enduring in human nature and attempted to place humankind in an ethical context in creation rather than in the purely physiological context that Blumenbach and the physical anthropologists were considering in their work.

This "life force" itself became a kind of formative force in the emergence of Romanticism in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. In his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807–08), for example, Kant's pupil, Johann Fichte, argued that the life force was realized through personal quality in blood. Fichte held that Germany's incomparable advantages in geography, climate, and biology showed that the German race had been "naturally elected" by God to greatness. Friedrich Schelling (1775–1854) saw nature as a single living organism working toward self-consciousness in the human intellect. Johann von Goethe (1749–1832) recast the life force, seeing personal identities derived from the state and nation revealed in the *volklied* (folk songs) and poetry of past peoples. Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805), inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's revolt against the inhibitions and constraints of past politics, advocated a return to nature, and emphasized the role of drama and lyric poetry in his notion of *Sturm*



A 1791 study of human and animal facial angles by Petrus Camper, a Dutch anatomist. Camper warned against drawing any but physiological inferences—and was ignored by later race "scientists."

und Drang (storm and stress)—a term taken from descriptions of the American Revolution and attached to Germany's literary ferment.

One of the first thinkers to ponder the idea of hidden causes was Gotthold Lessing (1729–81), a dramatist, philosopher, and critic. An admirer of the new natural science, he nevertheless pointed out that the emerging skin-and-bones anthropology left unexplored the wondrous world of the aesthetic, the cultural, and the artistic. Chafing, like other German writers and intellectuals, under the domination of French influences—such as Jean Racine and Pierre Corneille—Lessing was inspired to develop a new understanding of art and culture.

In his preface to *Laokoon* (1766), an extended work of literary criticism, Lessing argued that, thanks to these French influences, German literature had embraced false concepts of beauty and ugliness. In attempting to chart a new aesthetic, he began with the proposition that there were certain things that aroused acute feelings of repugnance and disgust—scars, harelips, the absence of eyebrows—though they offended neither touch nor any other common sense. Such reactions, he insisted, could only be understood as manifestations of an "inward sensation" of beauty and ugliness. From there, it was but a short step to show that this "inward sensation" varied among different peoples: "Everyone knows how filthy the Hottentots are and how many things they consider beautiful and elegant and sacred which with us awaken disgust and aversion."

Thus while Blumenbach used the idea of a formative force to illustrate

the unity of species, and to explain residual hidden causes, Lessing's work suggested that there were interesting ways beyond the material realm in which the spiritual and intellectual, the dramatic and artistic, could be used to give integrity and authenticity to a changing world. Lessing advanced the idea that the world's major religions each generated a distinct "noble character," and he depicted Christianity as a living force that had existed before the textual record of it in the New Testament. This force had been encumbered by the antique constitutional arrangements of church and state. The Protestant Reformation, in his view, was a return to a purely spiritual primeval Christianity—an idea that would loom large in Romantic racial thought thereafter.

Lessing provided a foundation for a Germanic literature independent of the rationalism of French aesthetic forms and tastes. It established a philosophy, a science, a history, and a practice that were distinctively different. From Kant, Fichte, Hume, Coleridge, and Wordsworth came the Romantic idea that nobility and noble character, and the psychic and physical expression of it, could be distinguished in the structures and features of the face and in facial expressions. The Romantic writers thought that the individual "races" that displayed certain superior physiognomonical characteristics—notably the German, French, and English—were somehow descended from ancient noble peoples of different geographical origins. The lesser races, often seen as "species," were thought to possess innate dispositions in *blood* that distinguished them in character from their superiors.

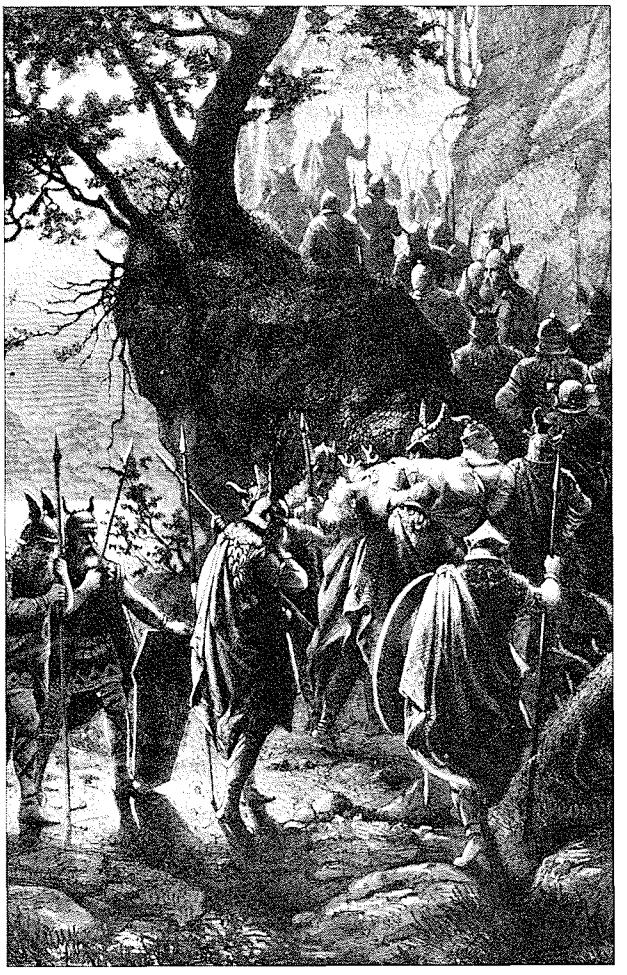
Challenging the old idea that civilization is the product of political life, the Romantic idea proposed that the cultures of ordinary people, working through the operation of personal psychic quality and blood, were the motive force in civilization. The advance of civilization depended upon the liberation of these people's innate racial, cultural, or political energies. To minister to the unbound *volk*, a pure spiritual Christianity would be required, one liberated from the shackles of biblical exegesis and the corrupt Catholic Church. What a man was could be discerned in purity of Christian soul and purity of blood. The state was a manifestation of both.

Still, Enlightenment ideas of race remained contained within a set of "political" ideas that drew upon classical sources. Race was not yet all. The final leap was largely the work of the era's second influential race theorist, Bartold Niebuhr (1776–1831). A Prussian diplomat and historian, Niebuhr was credited by Comte Arthur de Gobineau, France's chief 19th-century advocate of Northern white superiority, with providing to those who were searching for the causes of Europe's midcentury upheavals "an analytical tool of marvelous delicacy."

Niebuhr's unique contribution, beginning with his *Lectures on Ancient Ethnography and Geography* in 1813, was to set aside conventional historical methods in the study of Rome and use the kind of literary comparison and criticism advocated by Lessing. No longer would history be a dry gathering of facts; now much would depend upon the interpretation of texts. Niebuhr gave pre-eminence, for the first time, to a synthesis of ethnography, chorography (mapping technique), narrative history, and philology in

the understanding of European origins. In its emphasis on politics, he argued, all previous history had overlooked "the dark shades in character." He found a new past of nobility and spirituality in aspects of Greek and Roman literature that were not political.

In his three-volume *History of Rome* (1811–32), which greatly influenced generations of English historians, Niebuhr depicted Rome's history not as a conflict between classes or religions, not as a history of politics properly and constitutionally conducted under Aristotelian or Ciceronian tenets, but as a history of racial conflict between Romans and Etruscans. "The order of the history of the world," he wrote, was "to fuse the numberless original races together, and to exterminate such as cannot be amalgamated." He judged that Rome had done more to carry this mixture forward than any other empire. In a complicated rendering of German racial history, he argued that those Germans who had resisted Rome had nevertheless benefited from Rome's dominion:



With works such as Richard Wagner's acclaimed opera, Götterdämmerung *(1874), Romantic artists of the 19th century forged new German, Anglo-Saxon, and French race mythologies.*

> It was not by the forms which our ancestors . . . imported from thence and from classical ground, that the noble peculiarities of our national genius, peculiarities for which nothing can compensate, were smothered; but secondhand artificial spiritless Frenchified forms and tastes and ideas . . . these are the things that for a long time have made us lukewarm and unnatural. And so, while the nations look back on the Romans as holding a place among their progenitors, we too have no slight personal interest in their story.

This reinterpretation of the history of Rome set the stage for the racialization of history. It gave enormous impetus to the search for the "authen-

tic" origins of the noble Germanic peoples in the kith and kin of the fifth century—a search carried out by artists and writers as much as by scientists. There arose a vision of Europe once occupied by primitive peoples of innocence and purity, untainted by Roman politics—the Aryans, Celts, and Teutons—who were thought to have shared a common origin. They constituted an alternative past, "Another Rome." To root the new industrial civilization of the 19th century in this alternative history, European intellectuals—a cast of characters ranging from Thomas Carlyle to the Brothers Grimm—now began to reconstruct the histories of different racial types, building on a bewildering variety of shaky monogenist, polygenist, transformist, creationist, vestigialist, environmentalist, and evolutionist authorities. It is from this muddy trough that we continue to drink today.

During the period before the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, there were at least 10 contending hypotheses of race and ethnicity in Europe and the United States. Each was incompatible with the others, yet *all* persist to some degree in the analytical frameworks we continue to embrace in the closing years of the 20th century. The one that has held pride of place since the publication of Herbert Spencer's *Proper Sphere of Government* (1842) and Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) argues that everything in nature has its laws, that the fit will survive, and that evolution is as much characteristic of political and economic life as it is of the natural world of flora and fauna. Ergo, laissez-faire. As Spencer put it:

> The belief, not only of the socialists but also of those so-called liberals who are diligently preparing the way for them is that by due skill an ill working humanity may be framed into well-working institutions. It is a delusion. The defective natures of citizens will show themselves in the bad acting of whatever social structure they are arranged into. There is no political alchemy by which you can get golden conduct out of leaden instincts.

The movement inspired by Darwin and Spencer provided a logical basis for decrying all those aspects of the Greco-Roman polity and Christian civilization that were out of step with the new industrial civilization. It permitted "society" to be viewed as a natural entity in a state of war in the classic Hobbesian sense. Power in the hands of the correct classes or races, scientifically applied, would lead inevitably to progressive ends.

Thus, beginning in the middle of the 19th century all aspects of legal right, feeling, justice, treaty, compromise, settlement, conciliation, arbitration—the essential components of political society—were eclipsed by a doctrine of natural forces. The priorities now were biological necessity and managerial efficiency. It was not a big step from there to the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps.

Into this maelstrom stepped Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900). His contemporaries in Europe—eminent scientists, historians, philosophers, musicians, and artists—had argued for the existence of communities of blood, language, religion, and interest based upon a relationship between land and environment. They had developed from Gobineau and Darwin a naturalistic and evolutionary history in which they attempted to construct an

idea of race from the synthesis of heredity, biology, genius, and will impelled by the Hobbesian right of conquest. The analogies they used were biological, physiological, and psychological, and their notions of state, especially among those who wished to make the idea of state coterminous with nation and race, more natural than political.

In 1886, Nietzsche published *Beyond Good and Evil,* an interpretation of his earlier *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883–84). Nietzsche expressed revulsion against the deceit practiced by exponents of modern education and culture on the question of origins. It was not so much that the "plebian counterfeiters" who put forward these views were right or wrong, but that there was a general lack of understanding of the fact that, following the Niebuhrian acquisition of the sixth sense of history, *every* culture, every past, and every taste had been opened up to intensive scrutiny. "We ourselves are a kind of chaos," he wrote.

In that chaos, in which individual man was nothing more than a collection of limbs, assorted bits and pieces, large ears on thin shaky stalks, "present man"—the man of entertainment and happiness—was part of a great physiological process expressing itself in the concepts of civilization, humanization, and progress. "Evolving man" was locked into a process driven by increasing democratization toward a leveling and mediocratization. In the next century this would create the conditions necessary for the birth of human beings of "the most dangerous and attractive quality" and a future nobility of dazzling human potential.

Unlike his contemporaries, Heinrich von Sybel and Heinrich von Treitschke, whom he called "wretched historians," Nietzsche had no time for searches into the European past for evidence of racial origins in art, literature, and poetry. Those who sought their origins in race and nation and justified their title to rule in those terms were, Nietzsche declared, pathologically estranged from other men, anti-Semitic "screamers," victims of a debilitating "nerve fever." Nietzsche saw that the state could not live without the fully developed personality and the self-sufficiency of the individual, and yet the scientific and political principles upon which the new industrial civilization was being constructed had paralyzed myth and had created a class of barbaric slaves bent on vengeance.

But in rejecting nationalism and anti-Semitism, Nietzsche also turned away from the antique Aristotelian and Augustinian formulations of politics and religion. He discovered a new art of metaphysical culture in a primordial artistic drive that predated Niebuhr's critical history. He abandoned the biblical exegesis upon which the five stories of Creation were based, and went instead to the *Zend Avesta,* the scripture of Zarathustra, the seventh-century B.C. founder of the Persian faith of Zoroastrianism. Nietzsche found the solution to his problem in the twin propositions that God had died and that the antique model of the Greco-Roman state had totally disintegrated. Man was on his own, and the only truth was that created by the human mind. All past politics, philosophy, justice, and civilization were mere deceptions. To overcome the terror

of existence, self-determining man had to will forward something suprapolitical on the grand scale.

Nietzsche concluded that classical formulations of political life were all fruitless. What could not be settled and reconciled in the agora by debate, compromise, and law could only be mastered by the Will to Power—self overcoming—and a successor to God in the beauty and shadow of the entirely self-sufficient noble personality, the Overman. Nietzsche kicked over the traces of classical political theory and postulated a future *Macht Stat* (a "made" state dependent on the Will to Power) in which there would be a compulsion to large-scale superpolitics—a fight for the dominion of the earth in "a war of and for minds." The deceptions of polity would be expunged by noble Overmen manipulating the conditions of mass democracy, statelessness, and normlessness now in existence with all the power at their command.

It did not take Nietzsche's contemporaries long to misunderstand him. His strictures against nationalism, anti-Semitism, and race thinking for the most part went unheeded. His emphasis upon the idea that human beings, as successors to God, belonged to something noble was used to prove that the key physical motive power that bound person to person in a "folk" state was the fact of race, aided by the fact of natural selection, as expressed in the language of war.

One of those who most misunderstood Nietzsche was Houston Chamberlain (1855–1927), a British-born writer who married the composer Richard Wagner's daughter and settled in Germany. Chamberlain's *Origins of the 19th Century* (1899) is generally considered an influence on Adolf Hitler's ideas in *Mein Kampf* (1924), and Chamberlain himself is usually dismissed as a madman by modern scholars. But he was a respected intellectual in his day, writing squarely in the company of many distinguished anthropologists and biologists peddling the eugenic and biometric line during the years between 1883 and 1914. The first edition of his book, which nobody could possibly understand without a life of deep immersion in the classics, sold 60,000 copies. If it was rubbish, as many well-intentioned people have since argued, it was rubbish that thousands of intellectuals in Germany, Britain, and the United States wanted to hear, and, alas, continue to propagate in watered-down versions.

In *The Origins of the 19th Century* Chamberlain put forward a complicated explanation of history that enlisted the confused biological views of the time in the service of the power state. Much like his predecessors, he believed that formative forces resided in certain wandering "folk"—the Romans, Germans, Celts, and Slavs. These isolated folk peoples broke the political ring and made their initial entry into recorded history in 146 B.C., when Rome coldly set aside moral considerations and destroyed Carthage. This, in Chamberlain's view, was the first blow for natural selection and inbreeding—the dynamic forces that create races. The second appearance of the folk in history came with the challenge to Rome and Greece by the barbarian peoples in the fifth century A.D. The third appearance came with the Reformation, the "Teutonic" event, Chamberlain said, that created modern civi-

lization. In this great turning point in history, the political ways of Rome were progressively replaced by the connection of anthropology and science to a new spiritual barbarian Christian brotherhood purged of all ignoble Roman (Catholic) characteristics.

Upon this slippery historical foundation, Chamberlain's intellectual inheritors built a massive racial edifice. Between 1883 and 1914, people became obsessed with race and ethnicity as *the* key to the understanding of all history. Race management came to seem the only solution to the problems afflicting the world. The eugenicists saw the Teutonic race state as the great bulwark against the "swamping" of the Teutons by impure peoples and against the mixture and "miscegenation" from which all the ills of the world were supposed to flow. By the same token, the management of the breeding variables within the race state would breed in the "good" qualities and, in time, through the processes of public health and sanitation "cleanse" the folk state of imbecility, feeblemindedness, and physical disability.

The eugenicists were not at all a fringe movement. Indeed, eugenics became part of progressive-minded conventional wisdom, shared by the likes of H. G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw. By the late 1920s roughly half the American states passed laws allowing state prisons and other institutions to sterilize inmates who were epileptic, insane, or "feebleminded."

Perhaps the intellectual capstone of the eugenics movement was Madison Grant's *Passing of the Great Race* (1916). In his introduction to the volume, Henry Fairfield Osborn, a fellow zoologist and president of the American Museum of Natural History, argued that Grant had finally swept away competing theories—even Herbert Spencer's. The influence in history of environment, education, politics, and government were now shown to be only fleeting. There was nothing but race. "Race implies heredity, and heredity implies all the moral, social, and intellectual characteristics and traits which are the springs of politics and government," Osborn wrote. The correct scientific approach was to treat history as heredity writ large. The race was on.

V

The volatile ideas of race were thus latecomers to Western experience, their rise occurring in proportion to the decline of the idea of politics. With very few exceptions, most of the writers on the subject of race from 1813 to our time have preferred to avoid or escape political reality and to reject out of hand the antique idea of the *coexistent* state created politically by its citizens. In place of the political state, the proponents of the natural state have substituted, or superimposed, a notion of state that concerns itself with human beings either as pieces of biological material categorically fixed by the physical or social fact of ethnicity or, in the case of Adam Smith and Karl Marx, as producers, consumers, and distributors. In recent times we have seen the dramatic collapse in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe of the Marxist-Leninist version of the natural economic state, which at one time

was supposed to have eliminated all social and racial conflict. It may be that in the aftermath of the Thatcher-Reagan era we are witnessing a similar collapse of Adam Smith's version of the natural economic state, brought about by the spread of private license, viciousness, agoraphobia, corruption, and civic entropy.

At the same time that these momentous changes are occurring, however, the concept of state in which categories are fixed by the physical or social facts of race and ethnicity is rapidly gaining ground. In Western political regimes we see the transmogrification of civil and political communities into "no go" areas as ethnic regions, ethnic streets, and ethnic neighborhoods challenge—often in the name of democracy, freedom, and self-determination—the authorities, laws, and conventions of the coexistent political state. And, as Donald Horowitz in his massive *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (1985) and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D.-N.Y.) in his aptly titled *Pandaemonium* (1993) have noted, the forces released from Pandora's occidental box during the past two centuries are now sweeping virtually unhindered in the name of "democracy" across Central and Eastern Europe into Southeast Asia. Everywhere there is a fever for the *coterminous* arrangement of state, nation, and race—the *volkstaat*.

A long way from the Greeks: Physical racial characteristics are linked in this poster with things that are alien and sinful, as well as seductive.

We see the worst excesses of this model ostentatiously paraded in the breakaway Afrikaner *volk* groups of the South African Republic, which is struggling to reestablish politics within the framework of a coexistent state; and we see it in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia, where all attempts to resuscitate politics have so far failed. Surveying the 38 ethnic wars already raging

around the world, it seems a faint hope that new ones will not be ignited in the many countries that have emerged from the old Soviet Union and its borderlands.

Does science have nothing to tell us about race? The problem here is that the lessons of science have been mistaken for lessons of politics. In their 1936 book, *We Europeans*, Julian Huxley and Alfred C. Haddon took a new and late tack, exposing the science upon which the eugenic race state was based, demonstrating that it was fallacious even to use the word race. They also challenged the 19th-century belief that language was a criterion for race. No Celtic race or Aryan race could be adduced from the fact that people nowadays speak certain languages. The same skepticism, they argued, should be applied to art, institutions, gestures, habits, traditions, dress, and nations as criteria of race: "None of these can serve as any criterion of racial affinity between peoples."

But Huxley and Haddon's appeal, like UNESCO's appeal after all had been lost in the nightmare of Hitler's corporate race-hygiene war, was not to the values of the political state and classical political thinking. Rather, they argued for a more scientific explanation of how the pseudoscientific racists had got it all wrong, and for a more rational and "scientific" politics that might get it all right in a better-educated world.

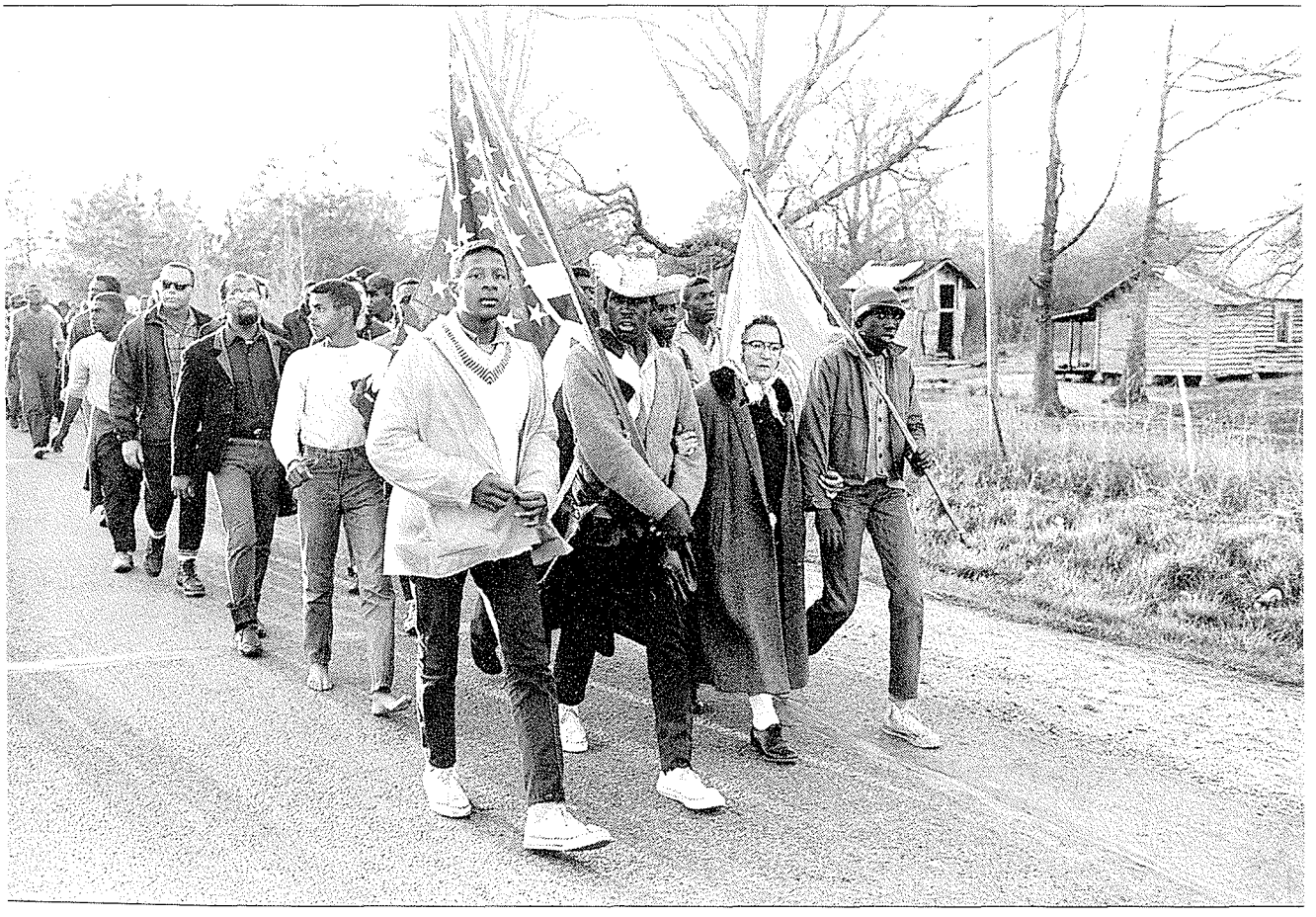
What my history has attempted to show is that, for all its well-meaning intent, the palliative race-relations approach embodied in Myrdal's *American Dilemma* has outlived its purpose. Not only has it failed miserably to prevent the balkanization of America into a collection of distinctive ethnic societies but it has also accelerated the process by which the natural resentments of narrow tribal, religious, and social units are perceived to be due to ethnicity, and to no other factor. Even as I write, a new, more "correct" derivative of the orthodoxy is imposing itself upon the literature and language of Western politics, an orthodoxy that vainly seeks to end racial discrimination by identifying pernicious language wherever it appears, in the home, the factory, the school, even the university, and eradicating it entirely from the conversation of humankind. Such efforts only distract us from the more important tension between the political and the apolitical.

As racial and ethnic tensions increase, it becomes important to reject the idea that race and ethnicity are inevitable premodern remnants irremedially visiting themselves upon the modern state like some syphilitic affliction. Race and ethnicity are phenomena invented in very recent times. As we have seen, the appellation *race* was not adopted until the 14th century, and did not come to have its modern connotation until the late 18th century. It was only after 1813 that race and ethnicity became organizing ideas of real significance. The 18th- and 19th-century ideologies of self-determination spawned the idea that a nation can be legitimate only if it is comprised of peoples who are ethnically or racially compatible, and that a state can be a state only if it succors the binding idea of *kith and kin* in nation and race. Such an idea is anathema to the concept of the political state comprised of good citizens living in a community under the rule of law, and

it is folly to believe that reliance upon any aspect of its pernicious doctrine will release us from its bondage.

There is, however, something to be learned from the genetic discoveries of Francis Crick and James Watson and their successors. In *The Selfish Gene* (1976) and *The Blind Watchmaker* (1988), Richard Dawkins, a distinguished zoologist at Oxford University, argues that the basic unit of natural selection is the gene and that the predominant quality in a successful gene is ruthless selfishness. Genes are the survivors; the bodies they inhabit are survival machines and individuals mere fleeting presences: "In a few generations the most you can hope for is a large number of descendants, each one of whom bears only a tiny portion of you—a few genes—even if a few bear your surname as well."

Whatever we may feel about this bleak analysis (and there is a fierce theological controversy about it), it deprives racial and ethnic concepts of their pride of place in the larger scheme of life. Where once it was possible to conceive of an existence in which individuals, nations, or races competed



A broad vision of politics, long since narrowed, inspired the civil-rights marchers of 1965.

in a struggle for the "survival of the fittest," it now appears that if there is any competition it is among submicroscopic genes. As Dawkins argues, all that biological life is then is statistical probability on a colossal scale operating cumulatively over eons by slow and gradual degrees. In this blind, unconscious process the races, as we call them, are little more than gigantic gene pools, ever-shifting chance variables that we have barely begun to understand, and about which we must reserve judgment.

Dawkins observes that existence in this scientific metaphor has no vision, no foresight, no sight at all. It was a similar vision of existence (*physis*) that horrified the ancient Greeks, and from which they sought release in the activities of politics, law, and citizenship. It reminds us that humans have not inhabited this planet for any great length of time, and that the span of years allocated to each one of us, whoever we are, wherever we live, whatever the size of our nose, whatever the color of our skin, whatever the current state of our bank balance, is short and very fragile. Faced with the terror and horror of existence and the fleeting presence of life, we have a human choice: Either we rely upon the fictitious unities of race and nation whipped up by the philologists, anthropologists, historians, and social scientists of the 19th century, and invent cunning new ideological forms of governance to create new unities; or we face up now to the immense difficulties of constructing a more realistic political way from the ingredients we have at our disposal.

What we face is not strictly an American dilemma. Nor is it confined to Bosnia and a few other "hot spots." And yet it is to America that one turns for solutions. Today, some 250 million human beings live and work in countries that are not their place of birth, and those numbers will vastly increase in the future. In preparing for this future, we need to restore lost confidence in the efficacy of domestic and international politics. Only then can we avert the terrible excesses that invariably follow when managers and soldiers, bereft of political guidance, are left to confront anarchy and chaos.

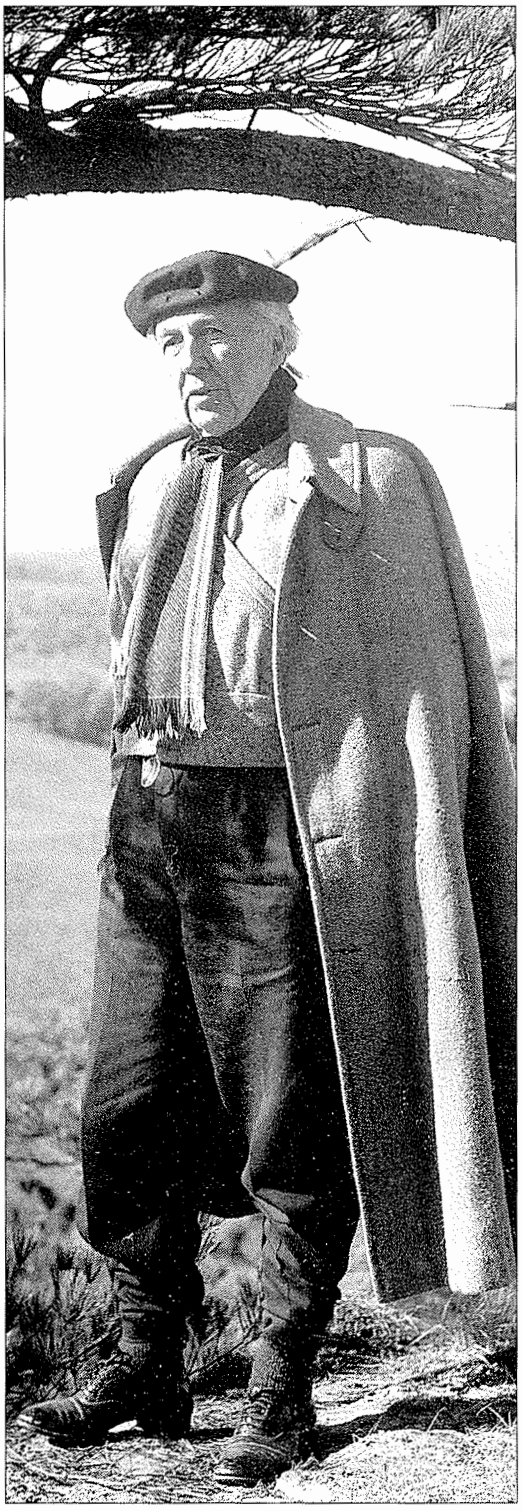
There is no prescriptive remedy that an "expert" can give for the recreation of politics. Yet continuing to choose race as the organizing principle of our public life is clearly the path to tragedy; in conceiving of our collective identity and destiny we must reach higher. Before World War I, Lord Acton warned that we should assiduously attend to our past and to our politics, and to our perceptions of political, national, and international boundaries, lest in our passion for symmetry we "relapse into a condition corresponding to that of men renouncing intercourse with their fellow men."

The conquest of space may have replaced the conquest of the wilderness as the great social adventure of America; it remains to be seen whether, as the most important player in world global politics, the United States can respond to the greatest challenge of all—the creation of a secular, demystified politics that embraces all citizens, and which secures and maintains their future safety and security in a dangerous world of accelerating apolitical change. *Dum spiro, spero*—while I breathe, I hope.

WHY WRIGHT ENDURES

BY WITOLD RYBCZYNSKI

The enduring fascination with Frank Lloyd Wright—evinced most recently by this year's retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art—is a tribute to an architectural genius whose distinctive style "spoke, and still speaks, to most Americans."



Frank Lloyd Wright in 1937.

Last summer, having accepted a position at the University of Pennsylvania, I came to Philadelphia to look for a house. Going through the pages of a real estate agent's directory, I chanced upon a postage stamp-size photograph of a structure that looked familiar, a building I remembered visiting 30 years ago as an architecture student on a traveling scholarship. The house was of unusual design: A sort of quadraplex, it was one of a four-unit cluster whose cruciform arrangement ensured privacy for each of the dwellings. According to the directory, the house was located in Ardmore, a suburb on

Philadelphia's Main Line. It was not where my wife and I were intending to live, but I thought the house itself would be worth a visit.

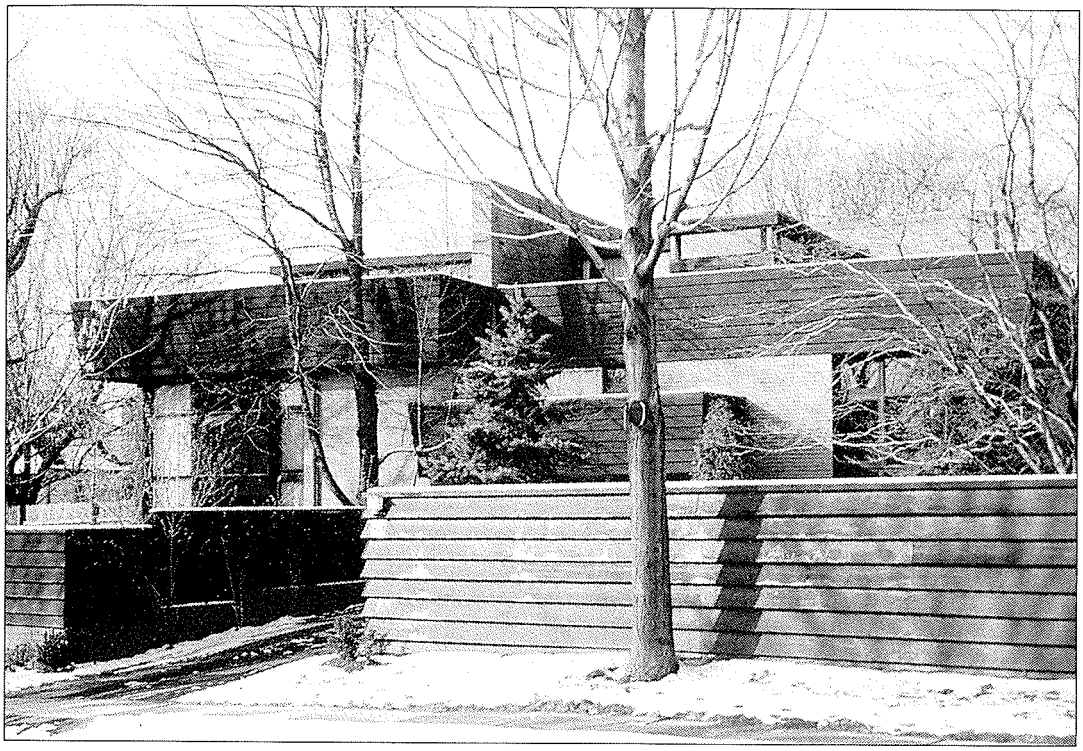
The brick and lapped-cypress exterior of the building was almost completely hidden from the sidewalk by trees. We went up the short driveway, under a large balcony that sheltered the carport (which previous owners had partially enclosed to create a study), and turned right to face an unprepossessing front door. Once inside, we found ourselves in the corner of a room that rose unexpectedly and dramatically to a 16-foot height. Two tall walls, entirely glass, not only allowed light to fill the interior but also made the garden outside seem like an extension of the room. There was a deep fireplace in one corner and a cozy built-in settee in the other. Built-in cupboards and bookshelves lined the brick walls, and the floor was polished concrete. The owners were in the process of moving out, but the room, even though empty, was a beautiful, serene space.

The modest materials and the profusion of built-in furniture throughout reminded me that when the quadraplex was built in 1938, it was intended to be an affordable starter house for young couples. Each 2,300-square-foot unit, which cost $4,000 to construct, had a master bedroom and two additional bedrooms with bunk beds. Each unit had three levels, with two large roof terraces that augmented the outdoor space of the small garden and made the upper rooms feel like penthouses—features that no doubt accounted for the development's original name, Suntop Homes.

A narrow stair led from the living room to an eat-in kitchen overlooking the living room and the garden beyond. An ingeniously designed clerestory window provided additional light, and the kitchen table was flanked by a built-in banquette. Also on this level were a compact bathroom (which reminded me of a Pullman sleeper), the master bedroom, and a tiny nursery; the two children's rooms were above. As the architect himself explained in 1948, the kitchen was conceived as a kind of command post,"where the mistress of the house can turn a pancake with one hand while chucking the baby into a bath with the other, father meantime sitting at his table, lord of it all, daughter meantime having the privacy of the front room below for the entertainment of her friends."

The architect was Frank Lloyd Wright. And while his notions of gender roles are excusable relics of the past—after all, he was born in 1867—there is nothing old-fashioned about the Ardmore house. The only thing that may be old-fashioned is the example of someone of the stature of Wright, then the most famous architect in the United States, applying himself to the humble problem of the small suburban house. Famous architects today seem to be too busy building grand museums and luxurious corporate offices. Wright built those, too, but he never lost his concern for the common man. That generosity and breadth of vision explain why, 35 years after his death in 1959, Wright and his work maintain such a strong hold on the public imagination.

Even by the frenetic standards of contemporary architectural publishing, which churns out illustrated monographs on individual architects—living and dead, famous and obscure, gifted and talentless—by the score, last year's flurry of books on Frank Lloyd Wright is impressive. Rizzoli, in conjunction with the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, is issuing a multivolume series of the celebrated architect's collected writings. So far, it covers the period from 1894 to 1939. The editor, Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, once a Wright apprentice and now director of the Wright archives, has also written the text that accompanies the lavish photographs of 38 Wright buildings contained in *Frank Lloyd Wright: The Masterworks* (1993). He includes several lesser-known houses such as the Zimmerman house in Manchester, New Hampshire. Alvin Rosenbaum, a planner who grew up in a Wright-designed house in Alabama, has produced an uneven memoir entitled *Usonia: Frank Lloyd Wright's Design for America* (1993), and this year, Pedro Guerrero,



Wright conceived Suntop Homes in Ardmore, Pennsylvania as an experiment in affordable housing.

who was Wright's photographer for 20 years, published *Picturing Wright* (1994), which includes some charmingly candid pictures of the architect at home.

Academics have always found in Wright a rich lode to mine, and two new studies explore the international influences on his designs: Kevin Nute's *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan* (1993) examines the role of traditional Japanese art and architecture in Wright's work, and Anthony Alofsin's *Frank Lloyd Wright: The Lost Years, 1910–1922* (1993) offers a fascinating analysis of the middle-aged Wright's European travels.

Then there is William Allin Storrer's valuable *Frank Lloyd Wright Companion* (1993), a comprehensive guide to the almost 500 buildings that Wright realized during his fruitful life. About 300 of these are still in existence, carefully maintained by their owners or restored by corporate or individual effort, and Storrer provides a useful index of their street addresses for the interested traveler. This year, fueled by a comprehensive retrospective that recently opened at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, Wrightiana will continue to flourish.

The public interest in Wright's work has always been sustained by the personality of the man himself. "He is a fascinating, adorable, and utterly irresponsible genius, full of magnetism, selfish to the extent of violating all the conventions if he sees fit; and an artist to his fingertips," wrote his friend, Frederick Gookin in 1919, in as good a capsule description of

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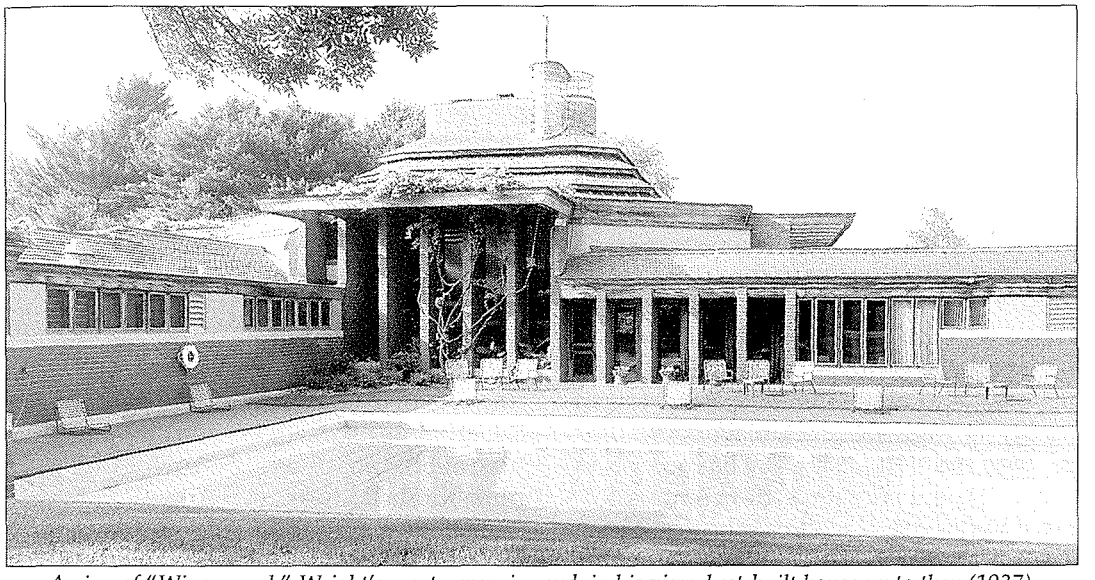
Wright as anyone has provided.

The melodramatic contours of the famous architect's life, which are recounted in two recent popular biographies, one by Meryle Secrest, the other by Brendan Gill, are well known: The rube from Wisconsin, whose domineering mother told him that he was to be a famous architect, comes to Chicago in 1888 and catches the eye of an old master—Louis Sullivan—at whose feet he learns the rudiments of his profession. Impatiently, the youngster soon strikes out on his own, and almost immediately—effortlessly—he begins to produce work that bears his own individual stamp. His career blossoms, the clients come, the commissions multiply. And then, willfully, he throws it all overboard—family, six children, flourishing practice—and runs away to Europe with the wife of a client. They return, and though they are the objects of scandal, they live together in a beautiful country house of the architect's design. He resumes his practice and attracts new clients. Then, in 1914, tragedy: A deranged servant kills Wright's mistress and her two children, and burns the beautiful house to the ground. However, the architect is unstoppable. He rebuilds the house—it is even more beautiful. He remarries and produces more masterpieces. By the age of 50—not old for an architect—he has already built three great buildings: the Larkin Administration Building in Buffalo, New York, Unity Temple in Oak Park, Illinois, and the Robie House in Chicago. He takes up with a young Montenegrin ballerina, they have two children out of wedlock, and as a result of the ensuing scandal (he is threatened with indictment under the White Slave Traffic Act) he almost goes to jail and is driven to the edge of bankruptcy. He is now 60, but there are still 31 years of the saga to go, years during which he will design some of his best—and best-known—buildings: the "Fallingwater" house, the Johnson Wax Building, the Guggenheim Museum, and his own remarkable desert retreat in Arizona. He lives to be 91, a grand old man surrounded by young acolytes, making oracular pronouncements, the most famous architect in the country, just as his mother promised.

The only other 20th-century American architect who stands comparison with Wright is Louis Kahn. (Mies van der Rohe's buildings are predominantly in America, but their roots—and their essence—like those of their transplanted maker, are firmly European.) Kahn's talent flowered late. Nevertheless, among the less than 50 buildings that he did complete before his death in 1974, there are some undoubted masterpieces, such as the sublime Kimbell Museum of Art in Fort Worth, Texas, and the great capital complex in Dacca, Bangladesh. But Kahn never achieved the public recognition that was accorded Wright. For one thing, his buildings, despite their cool beauty, are intellectual exercises in minimalism of a sort that architects find attractive but that often leaves the layperson unmoved. The unplanted, paved courtyard of the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, for example, drew plaudits from critics, despite the fact that it provides an uncomfortable setting where a shaded and welcoming garden was surely called for. Kahn's architecture, which is characterized by monumental forms based on abstract geometry, is often described as timeless, but it could as well be termed placeless. His designs look equally at home—or not at home—in Bangladesh or a southern Californian industrial park.* This placelessness gives Kahn's work a mysterious, almost mystical air, which may explain why, although his influence in the United States was short-lived, his ideas have taken root in India, where they continue to be explored by gifted architects such as B. V. Doshi and Anant Raje.

In Wright's buildings, the American public recognized a homegrown product. This set him apart from almost all of his contemporar-

*There is a small house designed by Kahn in the Philadelphia neighborhood where I live; it is a beautiful gem, but it looks absolutely divorced from its surroundings.



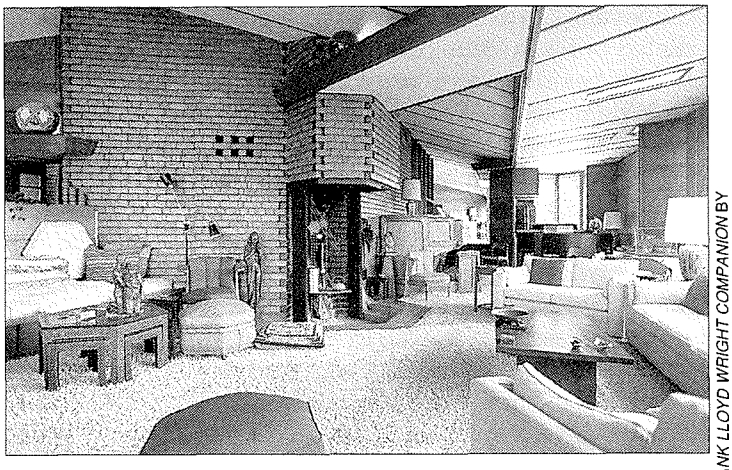
A view of "Wingspread," Wright's most expensive and, in his view, best-built house up to then (1937).

ies, and from succeeding generations of American architects. Classicists such as John Russell Pope, John Carrère, and Paul Cret were every bit as skillful, but their skill derived directly from the Parisian Beaux-Arts; eclectics such as Stanford White and Horace Trumbauer met the demands of their East Coast clients by manipulating the historical architectural styles of Europe. The influence of Europe was equally strong in the first generation of immigrant modernists—not only Mies van der Rohe but also Walter Gropius, Richard Neutra, and Marcel Breuer—who dominated the American architectural scene in the postwar years, and whose successors (and, often, students)—Paul Rudolph, Eero Saarinen, and Philip Johnson—followed in their footsteps. To modernist architects, Wright—who had known such historical figures as Louis Sullivan and Daniel Burnham, but who continued to practice until the end of the 1950s—appeared to be an anomaly or, at best, a leftover from the past. "America's greatest 19th-century architect," quipped Johnson, in an ill-disguised attempt to put Wright in his place.*

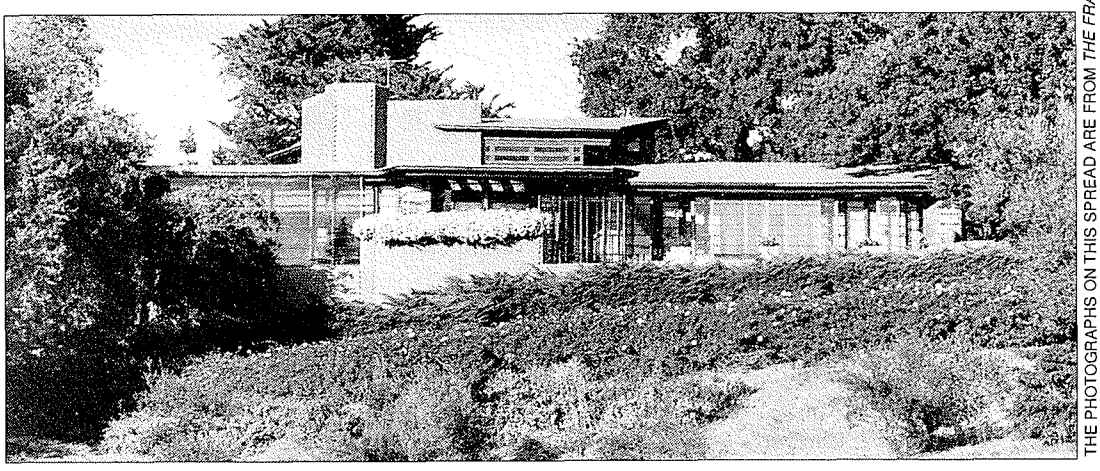
*In turn, Hilton Kramer once described Johnson as "the most successful artistic failure in the history of American architecture," which is likely to remain the judgement of posterity.

The postmodern architecture of the 1970s, which was a (chiefly American) reaction against the abstract internationalism of glass-box building, might have signaled a return to a native American architecture. Indeed, the domestic work of Robert Venturi and the late Charles Moore is rooted in the American vernacular, as Vincent Scully has convincingly argued. Moore was particularly adept at playing with regional styles (Californian, southwestern, New England) in a series of wonderfully exuberant houses. Venturi, too, played on American motifs. But the interest of both designers in architectural history also led them to explore European themes; so did Robert A. M. Stern's fascination with early 20th-century eclecticism. The buildings of Michael Graves, arguably the most talented of the postmodernists, progressively owe more and more to European classicism, especially to the ancient cultures of the Mediterranean.

Nor is Americanness an issue in the work of what passes for the avant-garde today. Not only is the outlook of architects such as Frank Gehry and Peter Eisenman international, like their practices, but if deconstructivism has any roots—other, that is, than in the Euro-American world of high fashion—it's probably in the



The Hanna Residence (1936) in Stanford, California, was one of the early "Usonian" homes. The near-acronym—derived from United States of North America—reflected Wright's search for a national architectural idiom. Typical features include an L-shaped plan, a cantilevered roof, a large "window wall," and generous interior space.



THE PHOTOGRAPHS ON THIS SPREAD ARE FROM *THE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT COMPANION* BY WILLIAM ALLIN STORRER, COPYRIGHT © 1993.

abstract architecture of the Russian constructivists of the early Soviet Union.

As the millennium approaches, it is obvious that Johnson was mistaken: Wright was—is—America's greatest *20th*-century architect, not only by dint of his considerable architectural accomplishments, which have proved remarkably durable, but also because of their very Americanness. His buildings belong to America in the same way as Whitman's poems, Faulkner's novels, or Gershwin's music. Wright's Americanness is not merely a question of style, although style has a lot to do with it. The use of natural materials, the drive to simplify, the fascination with what are often technological gimcracks, the unabashed use of dramatic effects (especially the masterly use of concealed electric lighting), a love of novelty and a willful evasion of history—all add up to a style that spoke, and still speaks, to most Americans.

It's not just the style of the buildings though; it's also the style of the man. Brash, self-promoting, largely self-taught, individualistic, Wright embodies most Americans' notion of the great *artiste*: bohemian in behavior and dress, extravagant, emotional, inspired. The Bauhaus architects dressed themselves up like proletarians in leather jackets and flat caps; Le Corbusier preferred black suits and severe, wire-rimmed glasses. Wright, on the other hand, wore striking costumes of his own design, and drove

flamboyant Cords and Packards, specially painted in his favorite color, Cherokee red. Decades before the term came into common use, Wright made himself into a celebrity.

His untutored self-sufficiency—also a part of his Americanness—was carefully cultivated. No European architect had influenced his work in any way, Wright consistently maintained. This was true at least to the extent that Wright avoided explicit references to European classicism as well as to European modernism. Nevertheless, as Anthony Alofsin's book amply demonstrates, Wright learned many lessons from Europe, especially from the Austrian Secessionist architect Joseph Maria Olbrich, and from other artists and craftsmen associated with the Wiener Werkstatte. At an earlier moment in his life Wright was also influenced by Japan, and he developed a style of perspective rendering that was openly derived from Japanese pictorial art. It may also be, as Kevin Nute suggests, though not altogether convincingly, that Wright drew on Japanese architecture for the open planning of what he came to call his Usonian houses. But while it is possible, and even valuable, to question Wright's blatant assertions of creative autonomy, this does nothing to diminish the extraordinary impact of his work. You don't have to be an architect, or an architectural historian, to appreciate Wright's buildings—their impact is immediate, and visceral.

Before Wright, most famous American architects were associated with a particular city or region: H. H. Richardson with Boston and New England, Louis Sullivan with Chicago and the Midwest, Frank Furness with Philadelphia, Bernard Maybeck with the Bay Area. There are more Wright-designed buildings in Illinois and Wisconsin than elsewhere, but he was really a national architect—and not only because he undertook projects in 37 of the states.*

*The only buildings Wright completed outside the United States were several in Japan, including the famous Imperial Hotel, a handful in Canada, and six tiny beach cottages in Egypt.

Although Wright did not always alter his architecture to suit different regions—the concrete block technique he developed for a house in Los Angeles pops up later in Oklahoma, Ohio, and New Hampshire, and the great sweeping roofs of his so-called prairie houses show up in Colorado and northern California—he did develop ways of using local materials that seem, on the whole, admirably suited to their climate and geography: heavy stone walls in the Southwest, patterned concrete and flat roofs in southern California, plant-draped trellises and pergolas in Florida, wood walls and protective overhangs in the Midwest. But regional as they may be, these buildings are always recognizably Wrightian.

What makes Wright's architecture American, however, is not only its appearance. Most of his work was residential, and his acceptance—and celebration—of the single-family house is also quintessentially American. Wright did design some grand villas in the British country-house tradition (apart from his own homes in Wisconsin and Arizona, "Wingspread" is probably the grandest Wright country house). But most of his houses were middle-class homes and, especially after the 1930s, projects such as Suntop Homes were intended to be affordable to families of modest means. These are not scaled-down versions of Tudor mansions or Palladian villas, nor are they imitations of Cotswold cottages. They are different from these predecessors not only because they look different but because they are designed to contain a way of life that is different: less formal, more comfortable, more connected to the outdoors, more aware of technical conveniences, that is, more American.

In the popular imagination, a Frank Lloyd Wright house is surrounded by a natural landscape, is built on the flank (never the top) of a hill or in the open desert. There were such houses but, more typically, they were situated on streets, close by other houses. (This was not always evident in the photographs of his so-called prairie houses, which were really in the

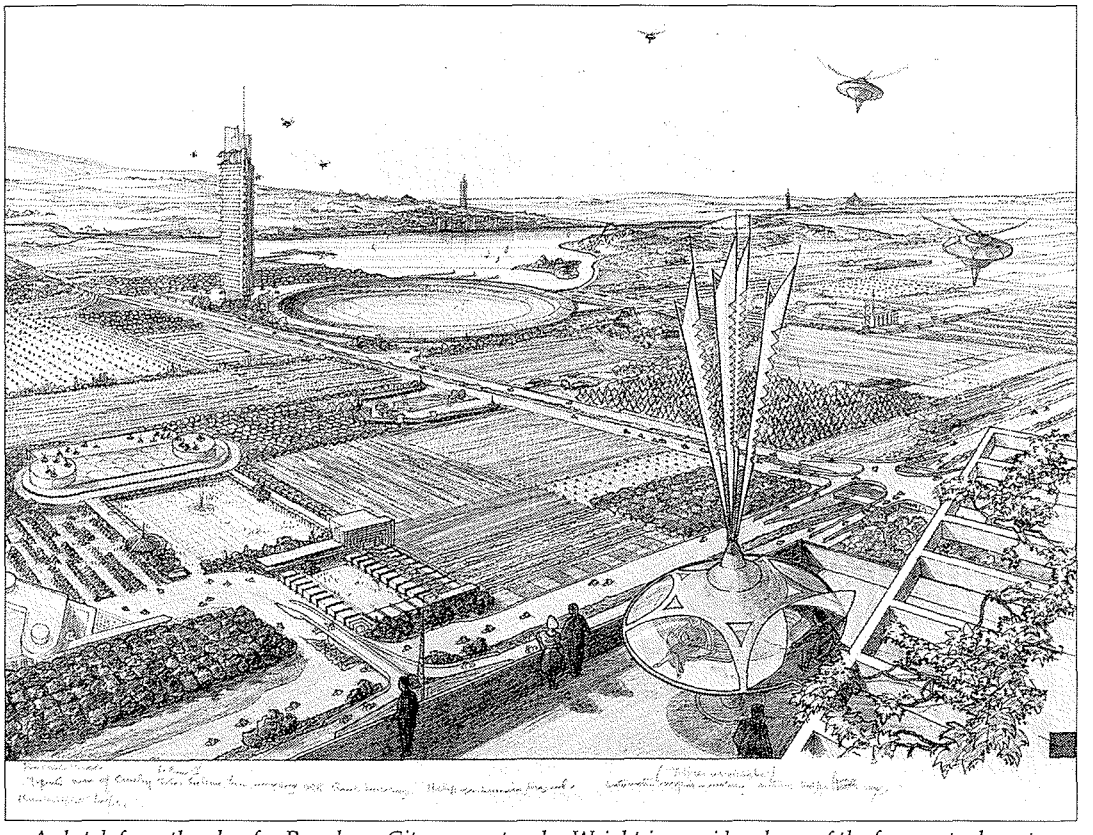
Wright with apprentices in his Hillside studio at Taliesin in 1948.

Chicago suburb of Oak Park.) Here is, I think, another aspect of Wright's continued popularity: He was America's premiere suburban architect.

Unlike almost every other architect of the 20th century, Wright did not live and work in a city. For the first 16 years of his independent practice his home-cum-office was in Oak Park; later he moved to rural Wisconsin, and still later he constructed a winter retreat outside Scottsdale, Arizona. Nevertheless, urbanism did interest him, and, in 1935, Wright unveiled a theoretical proposal for a new kind of city, as unusual in its own way as the earlier Ville Radieuse proposal of his European rival, Le Corbusier. Broadacre City, as Wright called it, consisted of buildings in the landscape, linked to each other through a system of roads and highways. The residential areas consisted of individual houses—the smallest lots were one acre. Shopping was to be in "wayside markets" and "distributing centers for merchandise of all kinds" located at highway intersections. Office buildings, factories, and community centers were scattered. There was nothing resembling a downtown in Wright's suburban vision. Indeed, his first book on town planning, published in 1932, was titled *The Disappearing City*.

Wright continued to tinker with Broadacre City for the rest of his life, but to most architects and planners, whose allegiance was to the traditional central city, this proposal was a bit of an embarrassment, an old man's foible. It turned out that the old man was right—or, at least, mostly right. The latest census confirms that the United States has become a nation of suburbs—more people now live in the suburbs than in traditional central cities. And these suburbs are no longer dormitory communities but self-sufficient metropolitan areas, with retail and entertainment facilities, and with employment opportunities. (Nationwide, only 19 percent of worker commutes are from suburb to city, while 37 percent are from suburb to suburb.) Moreover, the physical environment of these new suburban cities, or "edge cities," as Joel Garreau christened them in his book of the same name, resembles Broadacre City to an uncanny degree.

It seems likely that, in one way or another, succeeding generations will continue to find their own meanings in Wright's rich oeuvre. For example, his exploration of figurative ornament in the second and third decades of this century is surely something



A sketch from the plan for Broadacre City suggests why Wright is considered one of the foremost advocates of suburbia: Buildings scattered across a broad landscape are linked by roads and highways.

that current architects, many of whom are, once again, interested in decoration, would do well to emulate. Wright's use of stained glass, murals, and handmade furniture in his buildings also anticipates a contemporary concern with the crafts. His attempts to develop low-cost building methods for houses, while they may be technologically obsolete, remain a telling lesson that affordability does not have to negate architectural quality. Perhaps most appealing is Wright's ability to combine individualism with a broader sense of humanity. In a period when the individual feels increasingly powerless in the face of corporate and governmental bureaucracy, Wright's valiant protracted struggle to affirm his—and others'—personal worth may be the most moving example of all.

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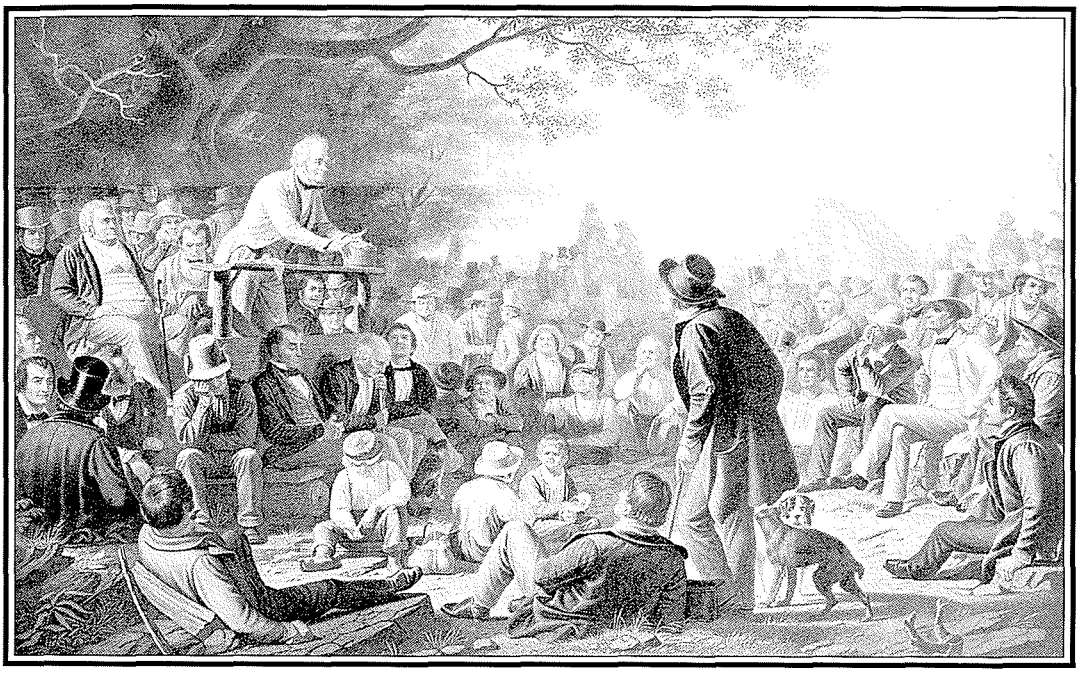


The Verdict of the People *(1854–55), by George Caleb Bingham.*

QUESTIONING LEADERSHIP

"Close to 3,000 books and articles have been published on the subject of leadership, mostly within the past three decades," notes business writer Richard Luecke—in a new book that adds to his statistic. Perhaps no coincidence, these same three decades have given rise to a consensus that great leaders no longer move among us. Our authors here propose that the usual ways of addressing the leadership question might themselves be a problem.

What's Wrong with American Political Leadership?

BY ALAN BRINKLEY

Visible occasionally among the numbing political advertisements of the 1993 election season was a commercial promoting the New York City ballot initiative proposing term limits for elected officials. The spoken text was reasonably predictable, but the visual image was striking: several enormously fat men sitting together, chomping on large cigars, and chortling—as if expressing their contempt for the law, or the people, or both. Whether the commercial had anything to do with the overwhelming success of the term-limits initiative, it did, it seems clear, convey what has become an increasingly common image of American political leaders: cynical, complacent, corrupt, cut off from any real connection with the people they ostensibly represent.

Something is clearly wrong with a political system in which the men and women charged with governing are held in such contempt by so many of their constituents. It is something more serious than the normal disorder, intrigue, and depravity that have always characterized democratic politics in the United States and other nations. The bonds that link our leaders and our political system with the larger public—the bonds of at least minimal respect and confidence that are essential to the stability and effectiveness of a democratic state—are badly frayed. There is, perhaps, reason to fear that they may soon snap altogether. An almost palpable cynicism has penetrated our public life, a cynicism that seems to be felt at almost every level of society. There is a widespread popular belief that no one in politics is to be trusted, that nothing government attempts works, even that nothing government attempts can work. We are experiencing a crisis of political leadership and legitimacy.

This is not the first time the United States has faced such a crisis. A century ago, in the face of social and economic problems at least as frightening and bewildering as those of our own time, many Americans developed a similar contempt for and cynicism toward their political leaders. Political cartoonists portrayed public officials with the same gleeful disdain that the advocates of term limits used in 1993. The pages of such magazines as *Judge* and *Punch* were filled with derisive images of bloated, complacent politicians and plutocrats, their vests covered with dollar signs and shiny gold watch chains stretched across their enormous midriffs. They too smoked cigars and chortled as they planned new ways to betray the public.

In the 1890s, as in the 1990s, there were fevered efforts by people across the ideological spectrum to explain the political crisis—to determine what had gone wrong, to decide who was to blame, to suggest how to fix a system that had somehow come unglued. And in both the 1890s and the 1990s, those explanations tended to cluster into two broad categories. Each of them had then, and has now, valuable things to say about American political leadership. But each of them, then and now, has also obscured some of the more important causes of our discontent.

The first explanation is what might best be called the populist critique of American politics. It is based on the assumption that most of the problems of our public life are a result of the frustration of popular will—by smug elected officials, by corrupt party bosses, by rapacious party organizations, by selfish special interests.

In the 1890s, the populist critique focused on monopolists and robber barons, the men Theodore Roosevelt once called "malefactors of great wealth." Standard Oil, it was said, had done everything to the New Jersey legislature except refine it. The railroads, many midwestern and southern farmers believed, regularly controlled the election of United States senators and dominated the workings of Congress.

And, in an age when many Americans believed corrupt party bosses had almost unlimited power, the criticism focused as well on the paucity of political leadership. National political leaders were widely disparaged, either as stolid defenders of entrenched wealth (for example, Grover Cleveland) or as unprincipled schemers intent on advancing their own careers at any cost (for example, James G. Blaine, who was dubbed "the continental liar from the state of Maine").

The 1990s have produced a similar assessment of politicians and of the selfish private interests that seem to control them. This critique has taken many forms, among them a virulent popular outrage at the undeserved perquisites public officials presumably receive and their seeming contempt for the needs and desires of the people they serve. The image of Washington, D.C., as an inspiring symbol of our nation's hopes and ideals, presided over by the spirits of Lincoln, Jefferson, and Washington, must now compete with a counter-image: a city of intrigue and corruption, swarming with greedy special interests. The ferocity with which much of the public and the media responded to such trivial issues as the congressional pay raise, the House banking "scandal," and even President Clinton's haircut in Los Angeles suggests the almost reflexive hostility to the idea of political life that fuels the populist outrage.

In the 1890s, the populist critique produced, among other things, a series of proposals to get the parties and the politicians out of the way of the public, to let the people exercise more direct control over the nation's public life. Such proposals, many of which were enacted, included direct election of United States senators (to replace election by the easily corrupted state legislatures), the initiative, the referendum, and the recall. There was a new, and briefly successful, political organization: the People's Party, committed, at least at first, to creating a more direct democracy through which ordinary men and women might once again control their own lives and futures.

In the 1990s, the populist fervor has produced a series of similar efforts to allow the people to circumvent politicians and control their public world more directly. The widespread support for term limits is a particularly vivid example. So is the popularity of Ross Perot and other antiparty politicians, who propose a direct pipeline between public opinion and public action.

At the heart of the populist view is the belief that the real wisdom and decency of American society resides in the people, that if only the politicians and the special interests would get out of the way, the people could be trusted to deal fairly and honestly with our problems. This is, of course, an old and enduring element of American folklore. Among recent examples of its hardiness is William Greider's *Who Will Tell the People?: The Betrayal*

Alan Brinkley, a former Wilson Center Fellow, is professor of history at Columbia University. He is the author, most recently, of The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People *(1993) and* The Transformation of American Liberalism, *to be published by Knopf later this year.*

of American Democracy (1992), a dismal chronicle of the corruption of the American political system that rests squarely (as the slightly overwrought title suggests) on a belief that the greatest cost of this corruption is the way it frustrates popular will.

Competing with the populist critique is another interpretation of our present political ills, one that, for lack of a better term, might be called the antipopulist analysis. It rests on a quite different assumption: that the problem with American politics is that leaders are excessively responsive to popular will, too easily swayed by the immediate, short-term demands of unreflective voters, and insufficiently willing to resist the politically popular in the name of the larger public interest. Far from being unresponsive to popular will, politicians have become skittishly sensitive to public opinion. They slavishly gauge their actions to the most recent public-opinion polls, to the character of their mail, to the number of phone calls they receive from constituents on this issue or that. The result is a politics in which the people have, on the whole, gotten what they demanded; and what they have demanded—low taxes and high services—has produced an epic fiscal disaster that will require several generations of sacrifice to undo. Hence an effective political system, according to the antipopulist analysis, requires a buffer between popular will and public action. It requires, in effect, an enlightened elite, capable of seeing the nation's long-term interests through the thicket of short-term demands.

The version of this diagnosis articulated in the late 19th century took the form of an extraordinary loathing and fear of the populists among educated elites of all political persuasions (and a particular fear of the disaster their demand for the abandonment of the gold standard would presumably visit upon the economy). And it produced a series of prescriptions for handing control of government over to experts, who would be insulated somehow not just from politicians but from voters. Civil-service reform created a cadre of professional public servants, protected from the pull and tug of politics. Cities created city-manager and commission governments, in which the day-to-day running of municipalities was entrusted to professional elites, never directly answerable to the people. Independent regulatory commissions emerged at both the state and the national level; their members, too, were to be insulated from politics, exercising control over economic activities on the basis of a disinterested sense of the public interest, rather than on the basis of their own political needs. A cult of expertise and professionalism emerged as a central element of the reform sentiment of the early 20th century—a cult that produced, among other things, a celebration of the "engineer," the trained professional whose only interest was in the smooth operation of systems, the technician who could be trusted to run society on the basis of scientific principles, not popular pressures.

In the late 20th century, the antipopulist critique is less well articulated (and less politically viable) than it was a century ago and certainly less well articulated than its populist counterpart. But it is visible nevertheless in the interstices of our political culture, both in the rising emphasis on state secrecy and in the persistent belief that there are educated elites capable of understanding our long-term needs in a way that elected officials cannot. Not many years ago, New York City handed effective control of its municipal finances to an unelected panel of experts (the Municipal Assistance Corporation). There are similar proposals today for insulating the federal budget process from popular pressure. Some (although by no means all) of the pressure for a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution reflects not just a distrust of politicians but also a distrust of the public.

These two interpretations of our political problems are, of course, very different, even in many ways antithetical. But they also share something very important. Both rest, in the end, on the premise that there is an identifiable

public or community interest—a set of concerns and goals that transcends politics, that transcends the particular interest of individuals and groups and reflects the essential needs of the nation. The goal of politics, therefore, should be to sweep away the obstacles to the discovery of that public interest and create a government that reflects it.

There is a basic difference between these two views over where a reliable conception of the public interest can be found. Populists believe it resides in the wisdom of the people; antipopulists believe it resides somewhere else—in the disinterested knowledge of trained elites or in timeless public truths inherited from earlier eras. But both stances reflect a belief that a unitary public interest exists and that it can and should be identified. Both envision a world free of political faction and selfish interests.

The search for a "public interest" is a worthy effort. It is, indeed, essential to the functioning of any political system. But much of today's political discourse reflects a rather too-easy acceptance of a set of illusions about what it is our society is seeking. The idea that a "public interest" exists somewhere as a kernel of true knowledge, untainted by politics or self-interest, is an attractive thought. But it is also a myth. We cannot identify a public interest outside of politics, outside of competing conceptions of self-interest, because in a democracy—and particularly in a democracy as diverse and contentious as our own—any conception of the public interest will always be contested. And as a democracy, we are obligated to provide a means by which that contest can occur.

That means is politics. And so our best hope for dealing with our problems is not escaping from politics, but rehabilitating and relegitimizing our political system and its leaders so that they can contain the inevitable conflicts of our society in a way that gives all Americans a sense that they have a stake in the process and its outcomes.

One way to begin is to search for some of the causes of our present discontents that move beyond the limited perspective of the prevailing diagnoses. There are two areas in particular where an effort to reshape politics may be worth pursuing and where a genuine change holds at least some promise of restoring public life and public leaders to a position of respect in our society.

One reason for the present disaffection with our political system is reasonably well described by the populist critique: the absence of any sense of connection between most individual citizens and the political process. The decline in voter turnout that has characterized public life throughout much of the 20th century and has, it seems, accelerated in the last 20 years is one sign of this sense of disconnection. So, of course, is the cynicism that has helped produce that decline.

The growing disconnection of people from politics has many causes, but among the most important are some changes in the *style* of politics that have occurred in this century, particularly during the last several decades. In the 19th century, and to a lesser but still significant extent throughout the first half of the 20th century, American politics relied heavily on mass popular participation: on the mobilization of thousands, even millions of people not just to vote but to work in campaigns and join in partisan events. Politics was something people cared about not just because of issues but also (as the historian Michael McGerr has argued) because of its importance as a social and cultural activity. For many, politics was a form of self-identification, as important to some people as religion or ethnicity.

An example of the power of this partisan loyalty was David B. Hill, a generally unremarkable Democratic governor of New York in the 1880s, who once attended a political meeting where some dissidents were threatening to desert the party. Hill stood up and made a short speech in which he said he would never bolt the party, no matter what it did or who it nominated, because, he said, "I am a Democrat." And that single sentence became a

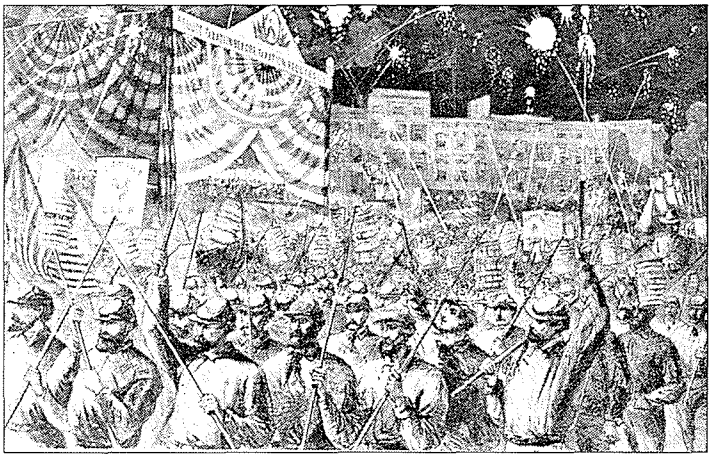
great political rallying cry, repeated constantly all over the country as a statement of profound emotional force and significance. It helped make David Hill a national hero to his party and, for a time, a highly touted contender for the Democratic nomination for president.

Politics was even a kind of sport. To many people, caring about a party or a campaign was much like caring today about a football or baseball team—an irrational attachment at times, but a passionate one. Politics meant attending rallies and barbecues, marching in parades, distributing bumper stickers and buttons—trivial activities, perhaps, but ones that gave many people the feeling of being a part of the public world and that created lifelong habits of political participation.

Americans began to lose those habits nearly a century ago, but during the last 20 years the level of interest and participation in politics has dropped more rapidly and steadily than ever before. Politics has moved out of local party offices, out of the streets and auditoriums, out of any significant place in the lives of communities and families and individuals, and into consulting firms, advertising agencies, and television studios. One result is that the parties themselves play an increasingly attenuated role in public life. Another is that it is now far more difficult for individual voters to feel any real connection with the candidates and campaigns they are asked to support. Politics has become remote, impersonal, unapproachable. And so most Americans have simply ceased to participate very often in, or even to think very often about, public life. Instead, politics has become an almost entirely passive activity in which most voters rarely and glancingly engage. They read capsule descriptions of campaigns in newspapers and magazines. They listen to the radio. Above all, they watch television. And occasionally, in ever-dwindling numbers, they go to the polls and vote. For most people, apparently, that is not enough to make politics seem significant.

The presidential campaign of Ross Perot in 1992, among its many significant (and ominous) implications, suggests the allure of an alternative political style. In the early months of that campaign, in particular, before Perot's precipitous and temporary withdrawal from the race, it produced something that had long been missing from American politics: It gave millions of voters the chance to feel that they were part of a genuine popular movement. As a result, the Perot campaign enjoyed astonishing success. The enthusiasm of those citizens was not just for, perhaps not even mainly for, Perot himself; it was an enthusiasm for the idea of political participation: for collecting signatures, organizing local campaign committees, passing out buttons and bumper stickers. Perot's followers experienced a small dose of the sense of empowerment that made the civil-rights movement, the antiwar movement, the New Left, and the right-to-life movement so alluring in the United States. Perot gave his supporters the chance to feel that they were controlling the process and not being controlled by it.

Perot's campaign demonstrated, if nothing else, that a yearning for political empowerment remains strong in America. To many voters, apparently, Perot's position on issues



Parades and hoopla made 19th-century American politics a popular activity. Here Democrats in New York march for their candidate in the 1868 election.

(or his unwillingness to take positions on them) was beside the point. He gave them something they considered more important: a chance to feel democracy at work.

Replicating that feeling in more conventional political campaigns will be difficult, perhaps even impossible, given the erosion of party structures and the overwhelming power of television in our world. But involving citizens in public life need not be restricted to campaigns, as the impressive growth of local, grass-roots political movements in recent years demonstrates. Leaders who wish to create some real sense of connection with their followers would do well to recognize that thousands of Americans have found a sense of engagement in working for specific, sometimes local, causes—environmentalism, education, feminism, antifeminism, and many others. Politicians might look for ways to make these people participants in the work of government.

But there is another, equally important, task awaiting those who hope to relegitimize political life in America. And that is the task of introducing into political discourse habits of reasoned reflection capable of making it an activity we can take seriously as an intellectual endeavor. Achieving this goal is even more difficult than meeting the voters' demand that our leaders tell the truth, although without a respect for truth political language will remain as empty and unrespected as it is now. What is needed is a vision of leadership as a search not just for power but also for knowledge.

In recent years, in particular, our politics has often seemed to be precisely the opposite. It has seemed a flight from knowledge. The cultivation of ignorance—ignorance of the real nature of our problems, ignorance of the predictable consequences of our actions—has been a deliberate political style. It is little wonder that contempt for political language and political life has risen significantly in the last decade or so and that leaders at all levels now find it much more difficult to enlist even modest public confidence.

The poet Robert Penn Warren wrote in 1975 (in *Democracy and Poetry*) of this concern, which had shaped his own thinking about politics throughout much of his life. He described

> the tragic ambiguity of the fact that the spirit of the nation we had promised to create has often been the victim of our astonishing objective success, and that, in our success, we have put at pawn the very essence of the nation we had promised to create—that essence being the concept of the free man, the responsible self.

To Warren, democracy had meaning only when based on the concept of the "responsible self." It had meaning only when citizens could aspire to understand the world in which they lived and their place in it, and only when they could expect their leaders to do the same. That was important, Warren argued, because without understanding there could be no effective public action. But it was also important because, without understanding, individuals would have no control of their own lives, no sense of their connections to their fellow citizens, to their community, and to their government.

What separates the 20th century from all the historical eras preceding it is, he argued, this: It is a world in which the gulf separating individuals from the institutions and processes that govern their lives grows ever larger, and in which the entrenched moral and social norms that once shaped and constrained the public world have lost much of their power to persuade. One response to such a world is simply to withdraw from it, to retreat into a private universe where one can at least pretend to exercise control. Another response is to place faith in leaders who promise simple solutions to complex problems. Both responses, Warren suggested, represent abdications of the responsibilities that come with being part of a democratic community. They represent, in particular, an abdication of the responsibility to seek knowledge—of ourselves and of our world. Without knowledge, he argued, we have no contact with our past,

with our community, and with ourselves. Without knowledge, we move through the world without really living in it. Without a respect for knowledge, the political world becomes an empty place. Its leaders become cynical, amoral, with no moral compass, no guide to what they can and cannot do, creatures of empty political ambitions.

Historians writing of the late 19th and early 20th centuries have noted, looking back on the anguished political rhetoric of those years, how imperfectly contemporaries understood the great social and economic forces that were the most important sources of their problems, how often they focused their anger and fear on things that were marginal to their plights, or irrelevant to them altogether. Future historians of our own time may say the same of us: that we flailed away at ephemera and phantoms without understanding that our real task was to comprehend a series of profound structural changes in our society and our world.

But there were people in that earlier period of political crisis who believed that Americans could find a way of genuinely understanding their dilemmas, and that effective political leadership could help them do so. One of these people was Walter Lippmann, who as a very young man wrote several now-classic books about politics in which he confronted directly what he considered the major crisis of his age: a crisis of knowledge. In one of the most important of those books—*Drift and Mastery*, published in 1914—he described an America that had been "passing through a reorganization so radical that we are just beginning to grasp its meaning. . . . The scope of human endeavor is enormously larger, and with it has come . . . a general change of social scale. Human thought has had to enlarge its scale in order to meet the situation."

And human thought, Lippmann and others believed, was capable of doing so, particularly if society was capable of producing leaders committed to genuine understanding of the world. There is, in *Drift and Mastery*, a tone of real contempt for "anyone who picks his way through the world as if he were walking on eggs." Such people, Lippmann wrote, will find the world "a difficult and unsatisfactory place." The worst qualities in leadership, Lippmann believed, were "timidity of thought, hesitancy and drift." (It is not surprising that Lippmann's great political hero was Theodore Roosevelt.)

One of the more remarkable aspects of Ross Perot's campaign in the 1992 presidential election was the intense involvement of his army of followers.

Drift was a word Lippmann returned to repeatedly, with contempt, even loathing. It was a sign of weakness and failure. Like many intellectuals in those years, Lippmann was profoundly influenced by Freud, and he drew from Freud a belief (perhaps not completely synonymous with Freud's own) that individuals must set as a goal the mastery of their own inner lives. But the more important political task, Lippmann believed, was for the nation, and its leaders, to do the same—for their collective life, their political life. They should

strive for mastery, for a coherent understanding of themselves and their destiny. In one of his most powerful passages, Lippmann wrote:

> We drift into our work, we fall in love, and our lives seem like the intermittent flicker of an obstinate lamp. War panics, and financial panics, revivals, fads sweep us before them. Men go to war not knowing why, hurl themselves at cannon as if they were bags of flour, seek impossible goals, submit to senseless wrongs, for mankind lives today only in the intervals of a fitful sleep. There is indeed a dreaming quality in life. . . . Men often wake up with a start: "Have I lived as long as I'm supposed to have lived? . . . Here I am, this kind of person, who has passed through these experiences—well, I didn't quite know it."

There is, in this passage, a contempt for the drift that Lippmann believed characterized so much of life, but also an implicit admiration for the "waking up," for recognizing the aimlessness of life, because through that recognition can come the determination to *control* one's own life and control one's own world. Lippmann continued:

> That, I think, is the beginning of what we call reflection: a desire to realize the drama in which we are acting, to be awake during our own lifetime. . . . When we cultivate reflection, [when] we draw the hidden into the light of consciousness, record it, compare phases of it, note its history, reflect on error, . . . we find that our conscious life is no longer a trivial iridescence, but a progressively powerful way of domesticating the brute. That is what mastery means: the substitution of conscious intention for unconscious striving. Civilization, it seems to me, is just this constant effort to introduce plan where there has been clash, and purpose into the jungles of disordered growth.

Americans in Lippmann's time never did, and of course never could, achieve real mastery over the great historical forces that were shaping the world. But their effort to do so was responsible for some of the notable public achievements of the early 20th century. In our own time, in a world considerably more complicated and considerably more dangerous than the one Lippmann described, it would be foolish to assume we could do much better. And yet we too, through the way we live our own lives and the way we conduct our politics, have an opportunity, even an obligation, as Lippmann put it, to "cultivate reflection," to attempt to understand and, when possible, "master" the forces that buffet us and bring such uncertainty and insecurity into our lives.

Political leadership in a democracy—be it from the president or from any one else who presumes to represent the interests of other people—can do only so much; one of the tasks of modern leadership is to help citizens understand that. But political leadership can do something. Leading us in an effort to comprehend our world, and what we can and cannot do to control it, would be a good place for those who hope to refurbish the tattered reputation of American public life to begin.

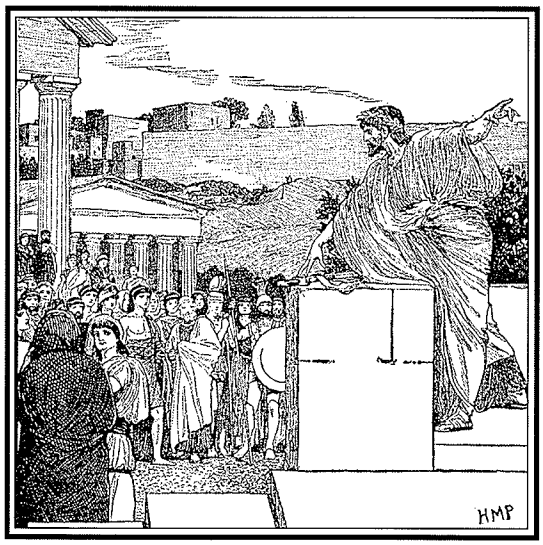
Do We Overstate the Importance of Leadership?

BY ALAN RYAN

Political argument is so obsessed with leadership that it might seem perverse to claim that it is a local passion, not a universal one, and that even in the United States it has been intermittent and not constant. It is certainly a claim that would be hard to make in a gathering of orthodox social scientists. It would be equally hard to persuade the public. American politicians and voters are much concerned with assorted "crises of leadership" as described in the contemporary mass media. Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher remain convinced that their success during the 1980s reflected the public's hunger for leadership. Today, in the face of one "crisis" after another, whether the Bosnian crisis, the health-care crisis, the education crisis, or some other, the cry for leadership continues to go up.

Crisis and leadership may be made for each other, but I should like to argue that the extent to which leadership is a central element in political life and the extent to which the understanding of leadership is central to the understanding of politics are easy to misunderstand and to exaggerate.

To be sure, there are many forms of initiative needed in any political system, and it would be silly to launch a campaign against all talk of leadership. My aim is not to persuade the reader to stop thinking about leadership but to emphasize that initiative in the creation of policy is not always leadership, and that leadership does not always imply leaders. It may be noncharismatic, provided by a group rather than an individual, based on knowledge rather than a surfeit of testosterone, and may have much more to do with *eliciting* the moral attachments of a political community than with *creating* them.



Plato feared that great orators such as Demosthenes could upset the workings of the well-ordered state.

Let us begin with our existing linguistic habits. Consider the distinction between leaders and rulers.* While rulers have commonly led those over whom they ruled—Elizabeth I both ruled the British and led them to victory over the Spanish, did she not?—there are two tasks, two roles, two statuses here. George III ruled but did not lead; his successors did not rule, even "through" Parliament.

Conversely, we would not say that Lee Iacocca "ruled" Chrysler unless we wanted to make a particular point about his managerial style—as in "ruled with an iron fist." To say he led Chrysler during the period of the firm's recovery, however, says only that he was in charge. CEOs lead; only some of them rule. It is a moot point whether any of them may plausibly be said to govern. Are these linguistic habits more than a quirk of idiom?

I think they are. Talk of leaders does, but talk of rulers does not, imply a struggle, a fight against other persons or a hostile environment. A leader mobilizes followers to achieve that task for which they join together. Rulers lay down the law, and may do it with an iron fist. It's a distinction one can see in one of the first great works of political reflection, Plato's *Republic*. Consider the difference between Plato's Guardians—the "philosopher-kings" he thought we must institute if a just political order is to be created—and the demagogues he so disapproved of. The demagogues were leaders and would-be leaders; they led factions, and tried to rally the Athenian people behind the projects they had in mind.

Not so the Guardians. Anyone who read the *Republic* in college will remember the question every undergraduate has asked: What do the Guardians actually *do*? They hold supreme power—but to avert change, not to bring it about. They have "auxiliaries," soldiers who are ready to defend the *polis* in wartime, but they have no foreign policy save isolationism. They regulate economic activity, but only so it does not run amok, with artisans becoming obsessed with wealth and consumers acquiring a taste for foreign products. Although they possess the unusual, perhaps impossible, attributes that make them philosopher-kings, the authority of the Guardians is not personal. They do not charm their subjects as Alcibiades charmed his followers; they do not persuade them as Demosthenes persuaded them. Because the poets and playwrights have been sent out of the city, Plato's Guardians can employ none of the theatrical arts on which politicians have always depended. Guardians are not party leaders, faction leaders, or popular leaders, not in any plausible sense leaders at all. We may be led by them, but that does not make them "leaders."

They are rulers. Their status is peculiar, inasmuch as their authority is the authority of reason itself and not the authority of birth, individual charisma, or past success. Nonetheless, if they are *philosopher*-kings, they are also philosopher-*kings*. In fact, the label "philosopher-king" is regrettable. Talk of "kings" stops a democratic age such as ours from appreciating the virtues of an administrative elite whose claim to authority rests on knowledge, acquired skill, and public spirit. We see that such authority is not democratic and stop our ears. We ought not to. Modern "Guardians" must be answerable to the electorate in some way or other, but this by no means excludes the thought that they would possess an authority based on solid claims to a disinterested expertise.

A different and almost equally substantial difference between Plato's vision and anything one might borrow from it must be acknowledged, however. Plato installs the Guardians to stop things from happening, while we have learned all too well that if we

*A quick search of Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Mill reveals the interesting fact that it is only in Rousseau and Mill that "leaders" are much talked of at all; in Machiavelli, "leaders" only appears where military or faction leadership is under discussion.

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do not move forward we move backward. That is a real difference between what he wanted and what we want. That Plato's Guardians do not *do* much is no defect in Plato's republic; the Guardians surely do not spend their days dashing around Athens putting out brush fires of popular discontent. What they do is set up arrangements that have the force of law, that regulate everyday life, assign people to appropriate work, encourage them into appropriate marital arrangements, and teach them to do without the things that would lure them into foreign adventures. Then, they maintain the timeless structure intact. If we need our own Guardians, it is because we need a flexible structure, one that is anything but timeless.

Plato's desire that the Guardians set up a timelessly valid structure within which individuals would live their lives contained no implication in favor of freedom of choice. Plato mostly treated freedom of choice as mere willfulness, and attacked Athens for placing too high a value on liberty. What mattered was that the citizens should lead the lives that were good for them. While this strongly distinguishes his ideas from liberalism, it remains true that liberal constitutionalism and the Platonic republic have something in common: The Guardians provide *structure* rather than leadership, or, better, they play a leading role without becoming leaders.

Plato's antipathy toward individual self-expression in fact reinforces the point. Citizens—or subjects—of Plato's ideal *polis* have no voluntary allegiances; there is thus no such task as persuading them to subscribe to any particular goal, no such art as that of rallying a *polis* of such people behind any particular cause. The emphasis on a rational structure maintained by a dispassionate elite displaces the entire phenomenon of political leadership from the center of attention.

It is an old complaint that Plato's stress on structure and rule as opposed to personal leadership simply abolishes politics. Aristotle himself devoted an interesting section of his *Politics* to arguing that Plato's ideal republic had no politics, and a moment's reflection on Aristotle's complaint may be useful, since it will enable me to make my case that Plato and Aristotle both offer little scope to leaders. It is not the absence of *leaders* that Aristotle complains of but the failure to accept the legitimacy of plural interests and plural values. And this has implications for anyone who wants to take seriously the leading role of non-"leaders" and wonder whether we need a modern Guardian class. Just as I readily agree that modern Guardians would have to be democratically answerable, so I readily agree that they would have to consider the welfare of a pluralist society, not a monolithic one. None of this challenges the thought that we have recently undervalued rational guidance and overvalued charismatic leadership, and that Americans pay too much attention to *presidential* leadership.

Aristotle charged Plato with exaggerating the degree of unity a state could and should achieve. Politics is possible only where a degree of unity prevails—citizens must recognize one another as citizens of the same state, accept common institutions, and share a number of social and cultural values. Otherwise, they could not live with one another at all. Nonetheless, their interests are not identical, and politics is the art of reconciling *divergent* interests—not finally and forever, but for long enough to shelter the search for the good life.

As the similarities of this account to the conventional wisdom of American pluralism might suggest, this vision of politics leaves plenty of room for the middle-level political leadership in which American politics is so rich, and American political scientists have often acknowledged Aristotle as a founding father of pluralist political analysis. It is thus an interesting fact about Aristotle's own account of politics that he skates over the question of leadership. He doubtless took it so much for granted that Athenians knew their

own interests and could press them in the *agora* that the idea that anyone might specialize in "interest articulation" and "interest aggregation," as political scientists say, was absurd. The problem rather was that people who fancied themselves as tyrants would use their skills as faction leaders to seize absolute power and would then exploit their fellow citizens. Hence Aristotle's famous wish that laws, not men, should rule.

The idea that when we set up a regime we might build "a machine that would go of itself" was only latent in Aristotle's *Politics*, but it was latent. It was not a major theme because his main concern was with citizenship. Greeks cared so much whether they were or were not citizens that the question of the qualifications and benefits of citizenship was a pressing one. What citizens got, according to Aristotle, was, famously, the chance to rule and be ruled in turn. The phrasing is significant. They did not get a crack at being the Senate majority leader, or the leader of the people in arms. People would rather rule than be ruled, and justice required a sort of equality. So a just *polis* would have everyone capable of office taking turns to hold it. Although Aristotle stressed the psychic benefits of being a free man who shared in the *polis*'s capacity for self-government, there is no emphasis at all on the pleasures of occupying a *leading* position. Indeed, there is a presumption against any such taste for eminence.

Aristotle's picture of the *polis* is thus a picture of a system that provides the government of laws; citizens contribute by taking part in a public process of deliberation about what conduces to the public good. That sounds banal, but it gets a good deal more force if we contrast it with the emphasis on *decision making* that permeates modern accounts of political activity. Laws do not make decisions and they do not lead. They shape, provide a framework, open opportunities; they do not rally troops, or summon us to some particular cause. They will doubtless lay down the procedures whereby we assemble an army and charge someone to lead it in battle. We use the laws in doing those things that need leadership, but lawmaking is not itself an exercise in leadership. Indeed, what we call law*making* is almost better thought of as law*finding* in Aristotle. No one who writes thus is likely to emphasize the role of the man on horseback, or to have a modern conception of executive initiative.

It is easy to object that Aristotle's account of politics reflects the prejudices of educated Athenians of two and a half thousand years ago and has no bearing on our situation. There is no quick answer to that objection. Here all I can do is offer a quick sketch of one 20th-century view of political life that paints a similar picture, even though its ancestry is Hegelian rather than Aristotelian, and its author's allegiances were as quirkily liberal as Aristotle's were not. English philosopher Michael Oakeshott, who died in 1992, appealed to a small but discriminating American audience. In his elegant and strikingly difficult book *On Human Conduct* (1975), he gave an account of the nature of a modern state that pushes leadership to the margins of inquiry in the same way that Aristotle did. Oakeshott borrowed from medieval legal arguments to distinguish between a *societas* and a *universitas*—words about as unhelpful for a useful distinction as could be imagined. Both *societas* and *universitas* refer to "organizations" or "groups"; but a *societas* is a union that has no exterior or ulterior purpose beyond itself, while a *universitas* is a union constructed for some such purpose.

A state may be either or both, and indeed was sometimes called a *societas cum universitate*. Oakeshott wanted to rescue the idea of the state as *societas* from writers who assume that all associations must have a collective purpose, and that their merits are a matter of how well they fulfill that purpose. In spite of the obscurity of the expression, the distinction is one that most people grasp intuitively. To be an American citizen is a matter of being legally and morally tied to other

American citizens, regardless of what individual and collective purposes one may have. To be an employee of General Motors is a matter of having a particular task to fulfill.

Why does the distinction matter? It implies a view of politics in which leadership is played down. Leadership goes with assembling people to carry out projects, and Oakeshott thought that even such projects as the achievement of "the welfare state" have unnoticed dangers. Politics, in Oakeshott's view, ought to be concerned with preserving the legal and institutional framework that allows particular, noncollective goals to be chosen and pursued by the citizenry. Once we make a goal such as maximizing social welfare central to the legitimacy of the state, it becomes credible that we might achieve that goal by some process of a technical or managerial kind. This erodes the idea that each person has his own life to lead. It also makes each of us vulnerable. Once politics is instrumental, we are in danger of being discarded, either as a threat to the goal, or as simply redundant. A Marxist party that thought it had mastered the key to history is an example of a group that claimed the right to lead society down the path to the socialist utopia because of a technical competence in getting us there, and the Marxist habit of consigning opponents to "the dustbin of history" an example of the danger.

Oakeshott thought that, in such a regime, citizens were no longer citizens but human building materials. He remarked, in a phrase that caused some resentment, that the welfare state is the first step on the road to the concentration camp. That was exaggerated, but not foolish. Anyone who has read Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* knows that one of the more chilling aspects of the book is its depiction of what can occur when many humane, sensible, and eminently defensible ideas for the amelioration of the human lot are taken to the extreme. What is disgusting is just that the inhabitants of Brave New World have no lives of their own, and are the manipulated objects of other people's arrangements.

Politics in Oakeshott's universe is a continuous debate about the conditions under which the game can go on, the ship can remain afloat, the argument can continue. There is a role for leadership here, but not for leaders. Leadership is a matter of helping to *elicit* or to *articulate* a view that the hearers already accept, but only implicitly. It sometimes seems that Oakeshottian politics was best practiced in 18th-century England. Parliamentary politics was not devoid of leaders and followers, but they conceived of themselves—or at least Edmund Burke offered an idealized portrait suggesting that they conceived of themselves—as devoted to preserving a constitutional framework. Yet it doesn't do to think these men had no sense of a collective purpose. The greatness of the British Empire moved them to enthusiasm; the promotion of national prosperity was a constant goal, as was the maintenance of a particular moral and religious culture. Nor, in fact, does Oakeshott wish to say that a political community, what he calls a "civil association," is all *societas* and not at all *universitas*. In practice, states will engage in a mix of instrumental and noninstrumental activities, but Oakeshott wanted to pick out the characteristic that he thought Utilitarians, Rationalists, Weberians, and almost anyone who wrote too readily about the "machinery of government" would overlook. In other words, we need leaders, but not as generally as they suppose, and leadership, but not always provided by leaders, and not always in the form of rallying the people behind a particular project.

The point can be made without Oakeshott's allegiances and antipathies. We might content ourselves with saying that one conception of politics emphasizes the importance of keeping a constitutional framework in good repair and ensuring that legislators understand their task as the provision of a framework, not achieving particular outcomes. People who were "good at" politics so defined would be capable of arguing a case and thinking about what made good law; people who were "good at public administration" would be skilled at

devising systems of rationing, queuing, or superintendence, and the distribution of benefits to the needy or deserving. Both might have the qualities of a leader in their particular spheres, that is, might be particularly good at the game, deft at getting people to take the same view as themselves, and so on. But the provision of leadership would not be definitive of either activity; nor would it be quite the same thing in different contexts.

Oakeshott's avowed object of discussion was "the character of a modern European state." An American audience might wonder how this bears upon American concerns—especially on the American concern with presidential leadership. In *Taming the Prince* (1989), Harvey Mansfield, Jr., provides an answer. His discussion of the authority of the modern executive starts from what Mansfield, a professor of government at Harvard University, takes to be Aristotle's tactful burial of the topic of executive action. The topic needed to be buried because Aristotle did not wish to dwell on the ugly deeds that leaders must often do. Aristotle throws the burden of government on the whole (qualified) people and suggests, without quite saying, that rulers can be held in check—that princes may be tamed.

Machiavelli is the proper foil to Aristotle. He insisted that princes could not be tamed, and that they needed their untamed power if they were to be effective. The U.S. Constitution then turns out to be an attempt to square the circle—to create a prince and then to tame him—and the current obsession with presidential leadership, an anxiety not to tame him so thoroughly that he cannot act. Mansfield himself does some squaring of the circle. He admires the Constitution, but takes the same pleasure as Machiavelli did in insisting that politics is played for high stakes—we rightly speak of executing both policies and enemies. The rise of the modern executive is thus the rise of a power that is beyond the reach of constitutional checks and yet has to be somehow kept in check. In that sense, Mansfield argues from both sides of the debate I have set up. On the one hand, he stresses the need for general rules, procedures that tie the hands of anyone with aspirations to leadership, and on the other sees even Roosevelt and Reagan as the heirs of Machiavelli's prince.

Whatever the justice of the charge, Machiavelli is associated with the doctrine that politics is centrally about the acquisition of power, and that there is a technique for its acquisition that can be learned and applied by anyone with the nerve, ruthlessness, energy, and ambition to do so. This focus on technique displaces the concern of previous political philosophers to elaborate the ends of political association, and it is this that is often simplified into the charge that he teaches evil. More important, Machiavelli writes as though the daring, skill, ambition, and ruthlessness of the would-be prince for whom he writes fill the whole of political space. The skeptical note I want to sound—it is the theme of this second part of my essay—is that writing about politics in these terms suggests that the common people, those who are not striving to become the supreme power in the state, are entirely plastic, and will receive whatever impress the prince cares to stamp on them. To overemphasize leaders is to treat public opinion as endlessly manipulable.

The step to Max Weber is a small one. Weber argued that the convictions of a modern society must be given to it, or impressed upon it, by a leader, whose personality would enable him to carry a conviction carried by nobody else. Part of Weber's argument was that moral and cultural values, and the political projects they validate, are not discovered but chosen—imposed rather than found. A feature of contemporary politics is that conservatives talk a good deal about leadership but believe in the existence of objective moral and religious rules that greatly curtail the leader's freedom, while moral and religious skeptics are anxious about what leaders may lead us


IL PRINCIPE DI NICCHOLO MACHIA
VELLO AL MAGNIFICO LOREN.
ZO DI PIERO DE MEDICI.

LA VITA DI CASTRVCCIO CASTRA.
CANI DA LVCCA A ZANOBI BVON
DELMONTI ET A LVIGI ALEMAN.
NI DESCRITTA PER IL
MEDESIMO.

IL MODO CHE TENNE IL DVCA VA.
LENTINO PER AMMAZAR VITEL
LOZO, OLIVEROTTO DA FER.
MO IL.S.PAOLO ET IL DV
CA DI GRAVINA ORSI
NI IN SENIGAGLIA,
DESCRITTA PER
IL MEDESIMO.

Con Gratie, & Privilegi di. N.S. Clemente
VII. & altri Principi, che intra il termino di. X.
Anni non si stampino. ne stampati si vendino:
sotto le pene, che in essi si contengono.
M. D. X X X II.

The title-page of the first edition of Il Principe *(1532). Machiavelli (inset) cited Cesare Borgia, subject of this 16th-century portrait (artist unknown), as an example of the new "Prince."*

into. This may reflect a sound judgment. It is easier to be confident that leaders will do nothing too destructive if you believe in an objective moral universe to which they will feel themselves answerable.

Weber, however, was a skeptic who believed in leadership. Weber's concept of *Führerdemokratie*—"leadership democracy"—emphasized two things that seem to be at odds: the modern phenomenon of the rational, bureaucratic administrative order on the one hand, and, on the other, the elected leader who brings the vigor and ruthlessness of Machiavelli's prince to the task of setting goals, standards, and purposes for that administrative system. What is absent is any suggestion that views and convictions may need to be elicited from and articulated for the public, but not imposed or stamped upon it; the public has desires for comfort and is susceptible to certain sorts of appeal, but this is not a picture of a give-and-take between leader-as-facilitator and people-as-source-of-inspiration. It is a picture of someone imposing a moral and political commitment where none was. To my eye, this exaggerates a feature of uncommon situations into a defining feature of modern politics.

Let us backtrack briefly. In *The Prince,* Machiavelli discusses the qualities needed by a would-be holder of power in the chaotic conditions of early 16th-century Italy. He generalizes to a wider canvas, but rulers who can rely on tradition, on habits of deference, and on the props of established religion do not interest him in the same way as "new men." The *virtù* of such men is not "virtue," since it embraces such qualities as Hannibal's extreme cruelty and Cesare Borgia's readiness to bring about the ostentatious and savage murder of his lieutenant Remirro de Orco. Politics does not aim at the virtuous life as described by Aristotle. What it aims at is the acquisition and maintenance of power. *The Prince* is advice addressed to a man contemplating a bid for power in a

rough world. It is amoral. Some kinds of violence and cruelty are so disgusting that they subvert the pursuit of what the prince wants—glory, or a great name in the history books. If a prince can obtain power by morally reputable means, so much the better. It is hard to acquire thus, but, if acquired, easier to hold on to.

I have said that Machiavelli treats technique as all-powerful and the people as passive until molded in what the ruler wants them to be. This makes the "prince" the most interesting character in the story and conveys an implausible image of popular vacuity. Yet, it is the well-being of the common people that is ultimately at stake. The self-aggrandizement of the prince is not Machiavelli's project. A "good" prince will leave a legacy of sound law and stable institutions, and acquires greater glory by building a stable polity than by any other act. Machiavelli also wants one kind of polity more than another, one kind of political result rather than others: He wants Italy to be unified and powerful, he wants the ordinary people to be contented and prosperous, and he wants them to live in popular republics on the Roman model. It remains true that his great "discovery" was that we can discuss the acquisition of power as a technical matter. Although Machiavelli never employs the word "leader" except when he is discussing leaders of armies or leaders of factions, it is this emphasis on the capacity to acquire power that has fed into modern understandings of leadership.

The connection between Machiavelli and Weber then runs as follows: One-man rule cannot provide for the administration of a modern state. The only thing that can is a technically competent bureaucracy that follows clear rules. Weber was interested both in the technical efficiency of bureaucratic administration and in its adherence to predictable and calculable rules of conduct. Getting things done and handling cases on a uniform basis are not always compatible with each other, and his vagueness on which was to give way to the other is a common complaint against Weber's work.

The more important thing is something quite simple. Weber thought of a bureaucratic administration as a headless entity, just as he thought of the mass of the population as a blank sheet on which charismatic leaders were to inscribe their plans. A bureaucracy needs a political input; it has to be given a purpose and a direction from somewhere other than within its own body, just as the public needs a sense of direction. *Führerdemokratie* thus answers to two needs at once. Leaders acquire the authority to govern by getting it from the people in an election, and the people find legitimate rulers in charge of the administrators with whom they have to deal in everyday life.

This picture animates the most impressive, if rather depressing, account of democracy offered in the past hundred years. Joseph Schumpeter's *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (1943) is hated by participatory democrats and other radicals. Schumpeter offered what he called a "realistic" theory of democracy that he contrasted with the so-called "classical" theory offered by writers such as Rousseau and James Mill. Democracy was not government by the people, since government by the people was impossible. Nor was it government by the people's delegates, since it was impossible to secure that sort of control over the people's delegates and still have them do what was needed. Democracy was the system of government in which elites acquired the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.

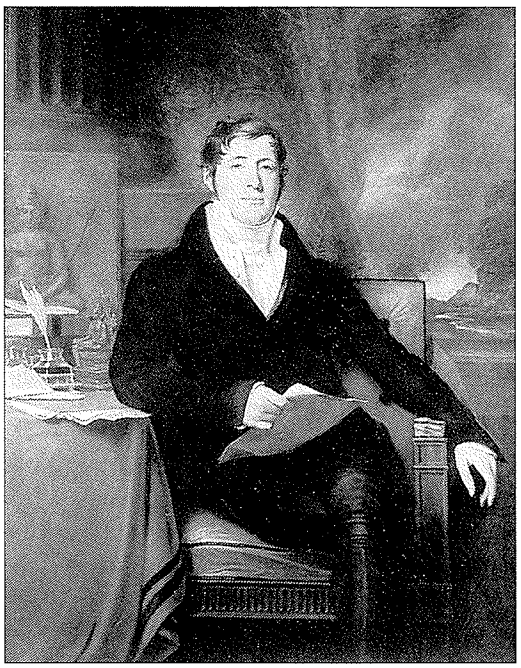
How well democratic government worked did not depend on how democratic it was but on the local political culture. This brings us back to leadership. Where Machiavelli's prince got his power by the exercise of *virtù*, the modern ruler has his crown placed on his head by the people. This presents a danger that Machiavelli's prince did not face. The people who have the right to place the crown on their ruler's head may think they have the right to remove it. If democracy is to work, the

people must show a great deal of self-control, and Schumpeter does in fact urge that once a government is voted into office it must be allowed to govern. But Schumpeter did not emphasize in quite the way Weber had done the role of charismatic leaders. To borrow from my opening claim, Schumpeter stresses leader*ship* without romanticizing leaders.

The political system as understood by Schumpeter is animated from the top, not from the bottom. The people do not form a view of their own welfare and search for someone to help them attain it. They may reject the vision on which their rulers have operated, but the vision comes from above, not below. Just as consumers are incompetent to design the goods they consume and must respond to what they are offered, so must voters. As the analogy suggests, Schumpeter saw elections as marketing operations, not as moral and evaluative transformations.

Indeed, Schumpeter ended his realistic account of modern democracy by insisting on the importance of an elite civil service, not by looking for a man on horseback. Schumpeter looked to several constitutional and cultural factors to make sure democracy did not collapse into factionalism or dictatorship. A traditional ruling class was one thing on which he relied. If peace was to be kept, politicians had to be able to lose gracefully and then find plenty of other things to do with their lives. Schumpeter expected to find this grace in defeat only in a ruling class that saw political service as a duty, not as psychic compensation or psychic thrill. In other words, democracy would only work with a large admixture of aristocracy. A society that did not possess a social stratum that took it for granted that it *ought* to provide political leadership would find it itself governed by inferior types who sought power for personal gratification or compensation.

Schumpeter did not put the whole burden of successful democracy on the characterological dimension. Two other things do a great deal of work. The first comes in response to a standard truth of liberal democratic theory and practice: the fact that democratic



Sir Stamford Raffles of the East India Company.

politics are peculiarly vulnerable to ideological and religious passions. (Schumpeter was an Austrian in exile in the United States and wrote when Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini were at the height of their power.) Having a ruling class of the sort Schumpeter thought the British had possessed in the 19th century would do no good if it were swept away by an inflamed mob. The inflamed mob must be stopped from forming. The obvious means was to take inflammatory matters out of politics. It was irrelevant whether this was done by a constitution as in the United States or by the conventions that preserved the same sense of what was and was not politically discussable in Britain. Fundamentally, what mattered was the thought that it was no part of the political process to sustain religious orthodoxy or racial purity or some particular revolutionary ideology. This was yet another element in the idea of popular reticence and leadership initiative. The public was not to swamp leaders with insatiable and ideologically driven demands, and leaders were not to chase fantasies.

The other essential requirement that

Schumpeter set down was the existence of an impartial career civil service ready to serve any government with equal skill and public spirit. These civil servants were not paper pushers and order takers, but people who could formulate policy and who would be able to guide, check, and otherwise assist the political leaders of the state. They were a more autonomous source of policy than Weber seems to have thought they could be. Once again, Schumpeter appears to have had in mind the British civil service as it was popularly supposed to be at the end of the 19th century.

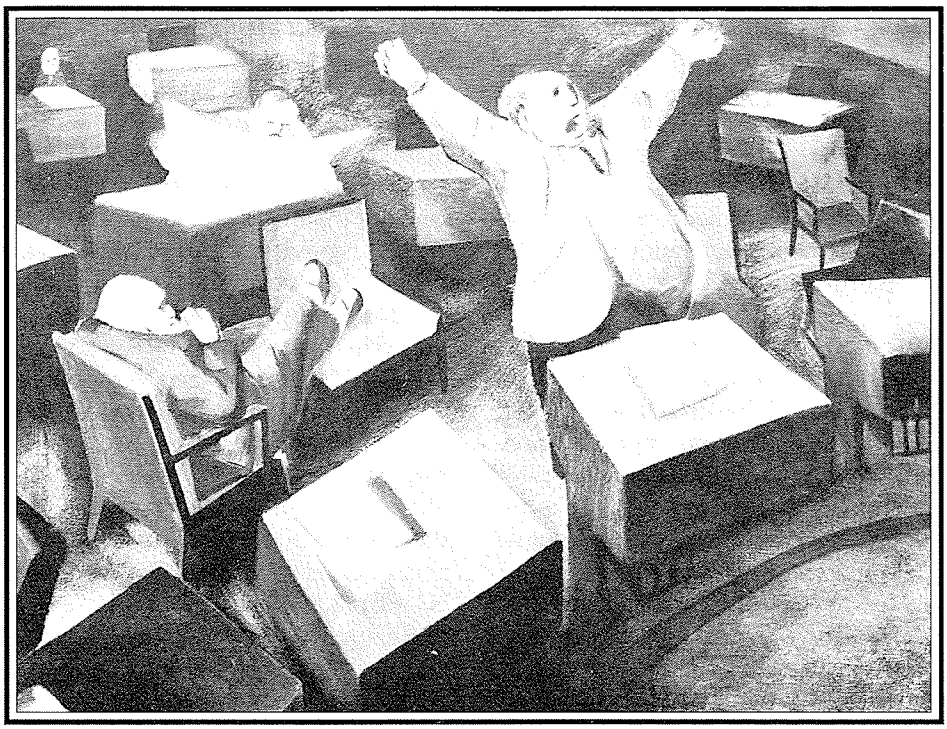
At the risk of sounding like Lord Bryce, who preached this doctrine at Johns Hopkins University a hundred years ago, and even convinced Woodrow Wilson for a time, I should say that I think Schumpeter was right, not so much about the British civil service as about the problem to be tackled. The demand for leadership cannot—save perhaps in time of war—be satisfied by anything done by a president, but it can be *bypassed* by spreading the burden over a differently constituted cabinet and an enlarged senior civil service.

This is not a novel view—something like it was argued by Walter Lippmann in *Public Opinion* in 1922—and it has never made any impact on American opinion. One powerful objection is that the American people distrust elites and do not like government by "experts." Another is that the people who would have to fill those posts do not exist. My sense is that it is the first objection that matters. So far as the second is concerned, we don't so much lack the persons who could do the job as an understanding of what the job is and, therefore, of the institutional arrangements that would attract the appropriate people. Only in the State Department have career public servants generally enjoyed the prestige and authority needed for them to perform the tasks Schumpeter had in mind.

It is the idea that the civil service ought to generate policy in a steady and continuous, rather than a crisis-oriented, fashion that is hard to get across. Although this view first reached the English-speaking world in the Northcote-Trevelyan Report in the mid-19th century, I do not suggest for a moment that the United States ought to adopt most features of the British civil service and its relationship to Parliament; the attractive combination is the (rather notional) American attachment to fierce congressional scrutiny by well-informed committees together with a cadre of public servants much like the British administrative class. Each side of the Atlantic has one half of what's needed.

The more serious the need for independent sources of policy, for disciplined administration, and a selfless attention to the needs of the public, the more persuasive the idea of leadership without leaders. When John Stuart Mill defended the about-to-be-abolished East India Company in 1858 before a committee of the Parliament, he argued that under the rule of disinterested civil servants, both British and native Indian, India had made a degree of progress that could not have been achieved by any other means. It was precisely because India had not been the object of political competition between the leaders of the British parliamentary parties that progress had been possible.

It would perhaps be tasteless to wonder whether the British themselves might have done better had they been governed by the East India Company; it is certainly against the whole spirit of Mill's argument, which was that it was essential that the East India Company should answer to an elected parliament *in some fashion*. We thus arrive at one defensible recipe for leadership without leaders, and without the obsession with "leadership qualities" that distorts current discussion. Indeed, my guess is that if Plato were writing today, he would be defending this answerable mandarin class, and not his implausibly omniscient philosopher-kings.



The Senate *(1935) by William Gropper*

Can Leadership Be Studied?

BY JACOB HEILBRUNN

In 1879 the brilliant young New England conservative Henry Cabot Lodge accepted for publication in the *International Review* a rousing essay calling for revived presidential leadership. Warning of the marked and alarming decline in statesmanship, the author lamented that "both state and national governments are looked upon with suspicion, and we hail an adjournment of Congress as a temporary immunity from danger." The essay, which appeared at a time when the *Washington Post* could state as obvious that party bosses such as Thomas Reed of Maine were "no less consequential than the president," expressed a widespread unease among Americans over corruption in Congress and political drift.

More than a century later, Thomas Woodrow Wilson's essay, which he expanded into his best-selling book *Congressional Government* (1885), offers a reminder of the enduring preoccupation of Americans with leadership as well as the ambivalence with which they regard it. The yearning for decisive leaders and

the apprehension that they might upset the balance between power and liberty has made Americans more adept at demanding leadership than at embracing it. Indeed, the U.S. Senate's defeat of Wilson's efforts to bring America into the League of Nations in 1920—a defeat engineered by the same Lodge who in 1879 had published Wilson's essay blasting congressional aggrandizement—could scarcely provide a more telling illustration of the constraints democratic leaders confront.

Today the renewed shift from international to domestic concerns has heightened the sense that we live in an age of pygmy figures hard-pressed to cope with new events and challenges. The diverse interests at play make decisive leadership much harder to assert; the sway of "policy wonks" does not exactly elicit great passions. What is more, leadership itself continues to seem inimical to democratic virtues.

So perhaps it should not be altogether surprising that even the mere *study* of leadership has become the target of various broadsides. Writing in a recent issue of *Harper's*, Benjamin DeMott, a professor of humanities at Amherst College, depicts the entire enterprise of leadership studies as a racket cooked up by academics to swindle American taxpayers and the federal government. Recounting his service on an academic grant-review panel in Washington, DeMott tells how he "was introduced to the leadership-studies cult, a no-less-perfect specimen of late-20th-century academic avarice and a precise depth gauge of some recent professorial descents into pap, cant, and jargon." Though most of his essay is a demolition job, DeMott concludes his attack on a somewhat pious note, charging that the very idea of leadership studies carries with it an antirepublican, mugwumpish fear of the masses that dilutes our "democratic essence."

In truth, it is not difficult to detect a whiff of intellectual snobbery emanating from DeMott and other foes of leadership studies—even a hint of antidemocratic hauteur. After all, exposing high school and college students around the nation to ideas about leadership, as well as busing them into Washington to visit the State Department, Pentagon, and Congress, is in the best American egalitarian tradition. What could be more reflective of the American creed than the conviction that almost anybody can become—or be taught to be—a leader?

No doubt the breezy how-to tips contained in tracts such as *A Passion for Excellence* (1985) and *Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun* (1985) inspire little confidence in the relatively youthful field. Still, it is easier to deride than to decipher the study of leadership. The recent efflorescence of leadership studies, including the creation of the Kennedy School's Leadership Project at Harvard University, the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond, and countless other programs and projects throughout the nation, has produced its share of monsters, but the field has a more robust (and respectable) intellectual history than *The One Minute Manager* (1982) might suggest. Theorists of leadership can point with pride to several solid accomplishments.

For a start, they have effectively addressed the question of leadership in public administration, business, and the military. The study of relations between workers and employers has, in fact, helped to improve those relations. Studies of "followership" and employee "empowerment" have been very useful to corporations forced to go through radical reorganizations by technological change and financial pressure. The faster that corporate chieftains "flatten management," the more quickly employees at even the lowest levels of management must learn to "lead" themselves.

Most important, the field has attempted to counter what John Gardner, a founding chairman of Common Cause and a profes-

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sor at Stanford Business School, aptly called America's "anti-leadership vaccine." This vaccine, he charged in a 1965 Carnegie Corporation report, not only makes most Americans unreasonably suspicious of all kinds of leaders but "immunizes a high proportion of our most gifted young people against any tendencies toward leadership." Leadership studies provides at least one needed antidote to what Brooks Adams at the turn of the century termed the "degradation of the democratic dogma."

The question looming over the field is whether it can fulfill its quest for devising a scientific formula of leadership. Though leadership specialists readily acknowledge their own shortcomings, their work continues to reflect many of the positivistic assumptions of early social scientists, above all the notion that human behavior and traits can be abstracted, defined, and even quantified. This reification of leadership (to purloin a fancy social-science term) may seem hopelessly naive, but the evolution of the field merits attention. To study the rise of leadership studies is to realize that its failures, as well as its successes, have advanced our understanding of an important phenomenon.

Max Weber launched the modern study of leadership.

The scientific study of leadership originated in the work of one of the founding fathers of sociology, Max Weber (1864–1920). A polymath who came to the study of sociology via law, Weber set the questions of authority, status, and legitimacy in the context of religion, politics, and the military. Devoting great attention to the unresolved tension between leaders and bureaucracies, he grew convinced that an inexorable trend toward rationalization in every sphere of society made the role of leaders both more problematic and more important.

Weber formulated three "ideal-types" of leadership: the rational-legal, the rational-authoritarian, and the charismatic. The charismatic leader was the most unusual of the three, and the only one, Weber thought, who might counter the dispiriting effects of life in an overly bureaucratic and rationalistic world, what he called the "iron cage" of modernity. Indeed, it was Weber's fondest hope that such a leader, endowed with extraordinary, even superhuman, qualities, might be able to instill in his followers a sense of mission and moral purpose that a thoroughly demystified society no longer provides.

The notion of charismatic authority was espoused in different form by Weber's contemporary, Georg Simmel (1858–1918), a lecturer in philosophy at the Humboldt University of Berlin. A pioneer in the study of social interaction, Simmel postulated the existence of a "prestige leader" who commands obedience by dint of unique personal qualities. Even more than Weber, Simmel stressed that the prestige leader could be understood only in the context of the intimate relationship between the leader and follower. Leadership did not consist of a body of received wisdom handed down from the heights of Mount Sinai but instead depended on the follower's perception of his leader. By refusing to appeal to

p } d } r =  ?

the base instincts that united them and by transforming their expectations of leadership, said Simmel, a leader could create a new kind of reality for his followers.

Though different elements of Weber's (and Simmel's) ideas have informed each stage of the study of leadership, the one constant running through the field's history has been the urge to fashion typologies. Indeed, the scientific study of leadership itself can be divided into three phases. In the first, from the turn of the century to World War II, researchers set about identifying the traits of leaders in an attempt to demystify charisma itself. The second phase, which lasted from World War II until around 1970, focused on the behavior of leaders. The third and current phase centers on the interaction between leaders and followers.

The first phase began promisingly enough. In an effort to identify the charismatic traits that leaders presumably possess, researchers such as Charles M. Cox, a finance professor at Brigham Young University, carried out a battery of tests designed to measure personality and character. These tests examined qualities such as the intelligence, physical appearance, dynamism, and speaking skills of exceptional leaders. Many researchers looked for leadership traits among school children. Not too startlingly, the studies revealed that the traits correlating most significantly with leadership were originality, judgment, liveliness, and the desire to excel.

Without question, the most important review of the traits field was conducted in 1948 by Ralph Stogdill, a professor of management science and psychology at Ohio State University. After examining 120 trait studies, this diligent social scientist declared that no consistent pattern of traits could be detected among leaders. "A person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits," Stogdill concluded, "but the pattern of personal characteristics of the leader must bear some relevant relationship to the characteristics, activities, and goals of the followers." Because these "trait studies" were unable to quantify leadership, they seemed to demolish the "Great Man" theory of history. Leaders, it turned out, were neither more intelligent nor vastly more energetic than the average person.

Even before Stogdill's conclusions were presented, the leadership field had begun to turn from identifying traits to examining the behavior of leaders. An explicitly psychoanalytic approach was advanced by the enormously influential Yale University political scientist Harold Lasswell. Lasswell did not wholly abandon the interest in typology. After conducting a series of interviews with leading political figures, he concluded that three types existed: the Agitator, the Administrator, and the Theorist. But Laswell's main interest was in the psychodynamics of leadership. He even devised a formula to explain what impelled potential leaders to mount the public stage: p } d } r = P, where *p* equals private motives; *d* equals displacement onto a public object; *r* equals rationalization in terms of public interest; and } equals transformed into; the result, *P*, is the political man. All one can say of this re-

markable formula is that the ineffable has never before been so decisively pinned down.

Other theorists of leadership, including Stogdill, contended that two types of behavior marked successful leaders. One was oriented toward the accomplishment of tasks; the other toward good relations with employees. Employees might designate a task-oriented individual as a leader, but they never termed an exclusively employee-oriented one as such. Under Stogdill's direction, a number of studies carried out at Ohio State disclosed that the effective leader would not only show consideration for his subordinates but also supply them with the tools to complete their tasks.

Identifying two main types of leadership behavior, however, was not the same as detecting precise patterns of interaction between leader and group. Even if the leader behaved in a considerate fashion toward his employees, his subordinates might remain dissatisfied with him. And there appeared to be no clear correlation between the behavior of the leader and the productivity of his employees. Stogdill and his associates were unable to draw a measurable connection between leadership style and performance. The behavioral studies demonstrated only that leadership behavior could profitably be grouped into two broad categories.

The third phase of leadership studies has attempted to examine those categories more closely, focusing on what might be called the "transactional" and "transformational" approaches. In the early 1970s, Edwin P. Hollander, a professor of psychology at Baruch College, employed the term "idiosyncrasy credit" to stand for the freedom that members of a group were granted to act idiosyncratically. He showed that a seeming paradox existed: Giving followers a measure of autonomy increased their willingness to respond to a leader's directions.

The stress on transformational and transactional styles was crystallized by the distinguished political scientist, James MacGregor Burns. Burns's massive study *Leadership* (1978) has, in fact, become the Rosetta Stone of recent leadership studies. Drawing on a wide range of historical examples and figures, from William Lloyd Garrison to Sir Robert Peel to Franklin Roosevelt, Burns offered an ambitious meditation on the nature of leadership, one that returned to Weber's and Simmel's emphasis on the leader-follower nexus. Unquestionably, Burns's most important insight was to draw a distinction between transformational and transactional leadership. Where transactional leadership is merely a version of managerialism that appeals to the economic self-interest of followers, transformational leadership alters the expectations of followers. Like Simmel and Weber, Burns contends that leaders can elevate their followers to new levels of morality and rectitude: "Moral leadership emerges from, and always returns to, the fundamental wants and needs, aspirations and values of followers."

The current generation of leadership theorists has not been slow to attempt to turn Burns's emphasis on the ineffable qualities of leadership into a measurable theory—or even to challenge it. Prominent among these challengers is Bernard Bass, a student of Stogdill's and a professor of organizational behavior at the State University of New York, Binghamton. The author of numerous books, including *Leadership, Psychology and Organizational Behavior* (1960) and *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations* (1985), Bass contends that Burns created a wholly artificial distinction between transactional and transformational leaders. Far from being antithetical, the two types of leadership can exist in the same person. Leaders such as Charles de Gaulle, Franklin Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson displayed varying degrees of transactional and transformational qualities. By the same token, Bass points out, a leader may exhibit neither set of qualities.

In an attempt to refine further the understanding of transformational leadership, Marshall Sashkin, an adjunct professor at

George Washington University, has devised a "Visionary Leadership Theory" to take account not only of the practices of leaders but also of the effect of their behavior on the culture of an organization. Sashkin argues that followers are transformed because they internalize the values of the organization. The task of the leader is to disseminate the organization's principles and to enunciate the values that animate the organization. The ultimate paradox, Sashkin finds, is that the effective transformational leader can employ a managerial approach in order to transform his followers.

Perhaps the most successful promoter of the transformational model in the business world is Warren Bennis, professor of management at the University of Southern California. And not only in business: Vice President Albert Gore has reportedly made Bennis's *On Becoming a Leader* (1989) recommended reading for his advisers. Blunt in manner, Bennis decries "management education" and calls for the training of leaders. "Leaders conquer the context . . . while managers surrender to it," he says. Even though Bennis's books come close to the homiletic school of leadership writing, he deserves considerable credit for linking leadership theory to the challenge of global competitiveness.

Despite its successive adoptions of new approaches to the question of authority, the field of leadership studies has remained hobbled by its epistemological commitments. The scientific quest for a generic model of leadership can take one only so far. Employing factor analysis to quantify leadership and focusing so minutely on the qualities of leadership, the field repeatedly loses sight of the one of the principal reasons for its subject's essentially unpredictable nature—the environment in which leaders function. Or, to put it another way, leadership studies lacks an adequate concern for context, historical or situational.

It is no mystery that different times call for different kinds of leaders. In the business world, patient, low-profile managers are sometimes preferable to forceful visionaries. The energetic Lee Iacocca functioned best when he was leading Chrysler out of financial disarray. A similar rule obtains in the world of politics. Winston Churchill was ejected from office once he had fulfilled his mission of winning World War II. Leaders, of course, are usually incapable of reconciling themselves to the fact that they can leave an imprint only when a certain constellation of historical forces is present. After a friend commiserated with Churchill and told him his defeat at the polls was a blessing in disguise, Churchill muttered, "If it is, the disguise is perfect."

Besides scanting the historical dimension, leadership studies neglects the variety of arenas in which different kinds of leaders operate. Successful captaincy in business, government, or the military does not necessarily transfer to other fields—or even among those three. General Ulysses S. Grant made a terrible president. Moreover, thanks to academic neglect, we are largely clueless as to what makes a strong religious leader, culture leader, reform leader, intellectual leader, sports leader.

One scholar who has stepped into the breach is Gary Wills, professor of humanities at Northwestern University. In his forthcoming book, *Certain Trumpets: The Call of Leaders*, Wills examines 17 kinds of leaders to show that a "leader whose qualities do not match those of potential followers is simply irrelevant." For each kind of leader, Wills chooses an ideal-type and an antitype to bring home his point that even an outstanding figure in a certain field is not necessarily a leader. He explains, for example, why the brilliant Viennese philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein never became the kind of intellectual leader that Socrates had once been. ("Wittgenstein's theories were largely wrested out of himself in periods of seclusion, or while serving in the army, or in menial jobs. . . . He was a Socrates in intent without the theory or the methods that lent themselves to interactions with others.") Wills's book is noteworthy precisely because of the emphasis he puts on the ways various fields of human endeavor call forth very differ-

Varieties of leadership: Eleanor Roosevelt excelled as reform leader; Martin Luther was a reluctant but powerful religious leader; dancer and choreographer Martha Graham stood out as an artistic leader.

ent kinds of leaders, an emphasis that the formal study of leadership would do well to take up.

Then there is the matter of elites and leadership. Contrary to DeMott's charge that leadership studies is elitist, the field shows inadequate concern for those networks through which leaders rise and operate.

The power of elites is particularly apparent in political arrangements, democratic as well as authoritarian, and the United States is no exception. National power continues to reside in institutions that promote elites—New York and Washington law firms, philanthropic foundations, the Ivy League colleges, the top media organizations. Though the power of these institutions should not be demonized, it is worth noting that at least half of the nation's industrial assets belong to 100 corporations, 50 foundations control 40 percent of foundation assets, and 25 universities control two-thirds of all private endowment funds in higher education. Fifty-four percent of corporate leaders and 42 percent of government leaders are graduates of 12 private universities—Harvard, Yale, Chicago, Stanford, Columbia, MIT, Cornell, Northwestern, Princeton, Johns Hopkins, Pennsylvania, and Dartmouth. That these institutions have opened their doors to minorities and women does not vitiate their importance as creators of elites; to the contrary, it vindicates their power. Again and again, elites in the United States,

like the British establishment, have replenished their ranks, and these elites continue to set the course of the nation, for better or worse. Consequently, when things go wrong with the system, the problem is not simply the figure at the top. The quick fix of leadership (narrowly defined) cannot be dumped into the stalled engine of government like antifreeze; the deeper problems rest in the clash of interests and elites on issues such as health care and welfare reform.

Another question to which leadership studies could profitably direct more attention is where our leaders are ending up—and, just as important, why they end up where they do. As former Harvard president Derek Bok notes in his excellent book *The Cost of Talent* (1993)—which could just as fittingly be titled *The Cost of Leadership*—for the past 25 years the best students have shunned government service and teaching in favor of law, medicine, and business. Law and business schools boomed between 1970 and 1990, while only one percent of top students in elite universities opted to teach in public schools. Quite clearly, we get leaders where we put our money, though money is not the only factor. Prestige counts. Whatever the incentives, if those to enter government and education remain grossly disproportionate to those offered by the corporate and legal worlds, our most important public institutions will continue to suffer from lackluster guidance. Leadership studies might provide a valuable service by showing how other societies have encouraged leaders to seek careers in fields that serve the public interest.

For all its concern with leaderly qualities, the science of leadership has devoted too little attention to what might be called the darker side of the question. Ruthlessness, mendacity, dishonesty, and cunning—all are qualities that the leadership theorists flinch from. A promising start would be to return to the Weberian conception of charisma, which has lost none of its explanatory power. The interaction between charisma and paranoia, as the MIT political scientist Lucian Pye has noted, can form one of the more important characteristics of dictatorial leaders. The defense of a "homeland" or "party" against diabolical foes can increase a leader's charismatic appeal. It helps to explain why Stalin's and Mao's murder of millions did nothing to damage—and, indeed, increased—their mystique at home and abroad.

The mystery of leadership touches on some of the more vexing philosophical questions about human existence, which theorists ignore only at the risk of ultimate irrelevance. Is leadership simply an act, a self-delusion projected upon followers? Are appearances all? Michael Deaver, in his memoir of his White House days with Ronald Reagan, offers an anecdote that goes to the heart of such questions: "One day Dick Powell died, and I asked him, 'Was he really as good a guy as I think he was?' And Reagan said, 'You know, you keep asking me about these actors. There's one thing you've got to understand, Mike. The camera doesn't lie. Eventually you are what you are.' " And so Reagan became what he was—most authentic precisely when he acted out the presidency. "To grasp and hold a vision," observed Reagan, "that is the very essence of successful leadership—not only on the movie set where I learned it, but everywhere."

No leadership theorist has ever said it better—and perhaps none ever will.

To date, the study of leadership has successfully identified many important traits of leaders and made valuable contributions to our understanding of how leaders and followers in organizations interact. But to grow as a discipline, it will have to cast a wider net. Doing so, it may discover that the most important things about leadership lie far beyond the capabilities of science to analyze.

CURRENT BOOKS

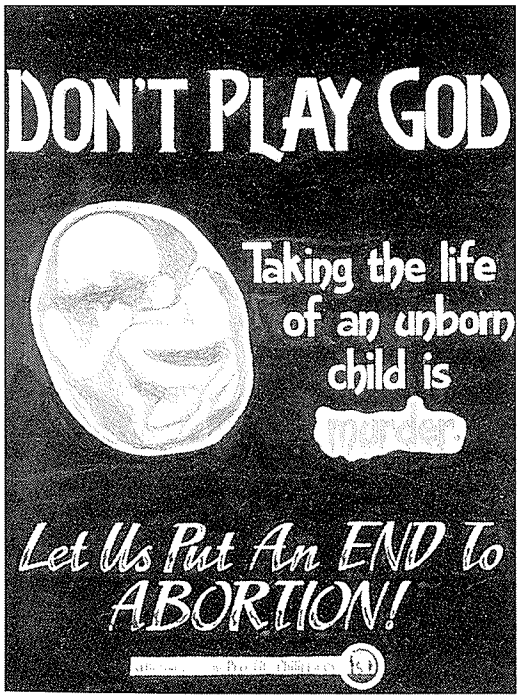
The Comic Face of the Culture War

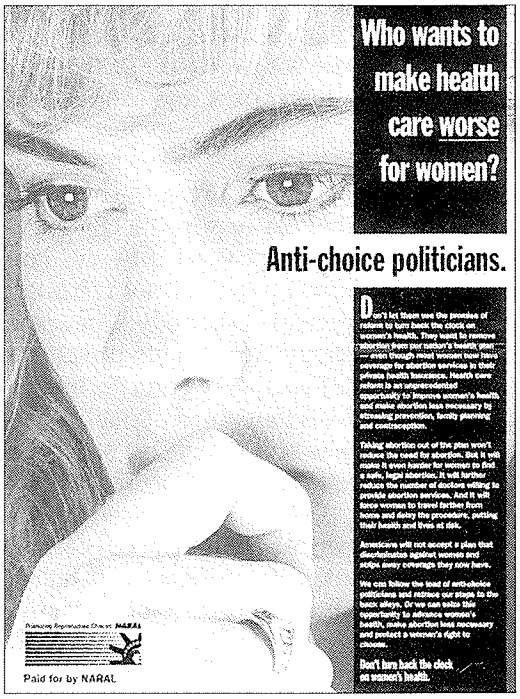
BEFORE THE SHOOTING BEGINS: Searching for Democracy in America's Culture War. *By James Davison Hunter. Free Press. 320 pp. $22.95*

James Davison Hunter is one of the few American writers who try to understand the culture wars rather than fight them. His previous book, appropriately titled *Culture Wars*, showed that new fault lines had emerged in U.S. society setting citizen against citizen over questions of identity, sexuality, and private behavior. No longer are cultural and moral disagreements fought out primarily among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. Instead, traditionalists of all three religions have joined forces against modernists of all three faiths (as well as those outside all faith traditions). What was once a theological conflict is now cosmological—and in many ways far more serious.

Hunter's book stood out among similar works for two reasons. First, unusual for a sociologist, Hunter let real people speak their views. Second, listening to what he heard, he refused to condemn conservatives as backward bigots. Hunter claimed that there was enough moral complexity and ambiguity involved in the culture war to make it, not a contest between good and bad, but an even more tragic conflict between two versions of the good.

Convinced that we must find a way to have a more civilized national dialogue over our cultural differences, Hunter has now shifted his attention to the question of whether democracy can accommodate both sides in the culture war. In *Before the Shooting Begins*, he focuses on abortion, which, he argues, "mirrors the culture war as a whole." As the March 1993 murder of Dr. David Gunn outside an abortion clinic in Pensacola, Florida, demonstrates, the shooting has already begun. Ameri-





cans, bored with free trade and information highways, feel strong enough about abortion to kill. Yet despite the passion abortion evokes, it seems that Americans—and Hunter himself—are unsure what they are fighting about.

At one level abortion is a matter of "high" politics, involving fundamental questions about the definition of public and private, liberty and authority, and the meaning and purpose of life. Even a liberal such as Ronald Dworkin thinks that the religion clause of the First Amendment is the appropriate constitutional vehicle for deciding what our national approach to abortion should be. At this principled elevation, abortion presents a tragic conflict, like the Civil War. Each side in the debate understands itself, and is understood by its antagonists, as standing for a worldview that cannot be compromised.

All this is understandable. The issues involved in abortion—whether defined as matters of faith or matters of personal identity and privacy—are among the most serious we face. At another level, however, abortion—like other cultural issues such as homosexuality, sexual harassment, unwed motherhood, and childhood sexual abuse—cannot be discussed apart from sex. Americans tend to treat everything having to do with sex as the stuff of gossip, talk shows, soap opera, and confessional literature, even though intimate matters are fully as important in most lives as matters of state. People, after all, are just as much in need of pleasure as they are of principle. But pleasure and principle speak in different languages. The former involves not the body politic but the politics of the body. One arena makes public issues interesting to private individuals, while the other renders the lives of private individuals the subject of public scrutiny. A life, it was said in defense of Lorena Bobbitt, is worth more than a penis.

But in America a penis attracts more media attention than nuclear proliferation. Americans cannot get enough of the lurid. Sometimes conducted in the noble and tragic rhetoric of Antigone, discussions of abortion can quickly take on the tone of the comic sexual wars of Aristophanes. But the comedy bears thoughtful consideration. For the debate over abortion is, at least in part, a debate over the remarkable transformation that has taken place since the 1950s in the way Americans think and act about what they do in bed, both inside and outside marriage.

Because he treats abortion only in elevated and principled terms, Hunter believes that our national discussion of this issue has become "a language game that has the form of meaningful communication, but is in fact merely another form of aggression." We talk past each other when we discuss abortion. And the problem begins with intellectuals, who routinely violate fundamental democratic principles in the way they balance the competing interests at stake. Both a liberal such as Laurence Tribe of the Harvard Law School and a conservative such as R. C. Sproul, an evangelical theologian, are incapable of recognizing the legitimacy of their opponent's position, Hunter argues. Tribe is explicitly anti-democratic. To him, the whole purpose of a constitution and a supreme court is to act as a check on popular positions. Sproul, by contrast, sees government as having no other purpose than to embody God's will—not exactly a formula for pluralism or religious liberty.

Also bearing responsibility are interest groups on both sides of the controversy, groups that tend to prefer rhetorical overkill to persuasion. They manipulate images, whether of dead fetuses or bloody coat hangers. They haul out poignant examples of abortions gone wrong or morning-after regrets. Statistics are routinely colored to support one side or the other. Soundbites and direct mail substitute for informed debate. What the protagonists do not say is that they often have an interest in the outcome, sometimes in the form of money (abortion, after all, is a business), at other times in the form of an ideological agenda, and on still other occasions in the form of preserving gender privilege. (Hunter, like

Catharine MacKinnon, points out that many men tend to favor access to abortion because it enhances their freedom to act irresponsibly.)

The third problem, as Hunter sees it, is that the general public is both uninformed and ambivalent. Forty-three percent of the American people have no idea what the holding in *Roe* v. *Wade* actually said, while 80 percent of Americans were willing to admit that they did not know much about recent landmark cases such as *Webster* v. *Reproductive Services*. Nonetheless, there is a relatively clear distribution of opinion on abortion: Clumps on either end are explicitly pro-choice or pro-life, while most people in the middle respond in different ways depending on what questions are asked.

After a very careful reading of the best polling data available, Hunter concludes that the position taken by most Americans on abortion reflects an emotional, rather than a rational, commitment. In the absence of strong moral traditions or a deep knowledge of the law, "all we can do is express our mutually opposed sense of 'revulsion' to one another. . . . People cannot help but respond viscerally to the images and rhetoric of the issue."

Finally, Hunter concludes, the institutions of civil society—intermediary institutions between the individual and state—have failed to mediate. The news media, which are supposed to be neutral, tend to report the struggle over abortion from the pro-choice side. Even more egregiously, professional associations, such as the American Psychological Association, chime in, confusing their expertise with their politics. (In one case described by Hunter, a number of distinguished historians submitted a brief in *Roe* v. *Wade* to the effect that abortion was not illegal throughout much of American history and that only in recent times did abortion become a moral issue, an act of shading the truth that the more scholarly of them subsequently came to regret.) Similarly, church leaders conflate their political commitments with religious ideas. One simply does not find intermediary associations playing the role assigned to them by Tocqueville; they become parties to the debate, not vehicles for bringing the debate under control.

Seen from the perspective of high politics, Hunter is correct to stress that our national debate over abortion fails to reach Sophoclean levels. But suppose we look at the abortion controversy from the aspect of pleasure as well as of principle. In its Aristophanean form, abortion is about one question: Should people be allowed to sleep around knowing that, if birth control fails, they have a fallback option to prevent long-term pain from interfering with short-term pleasure? I believe that a rough consensus surrounding an answer exists in this country. Most people do not believe, in the abstract, that sex should be free of guilt, but they do believe, in the case of their own sexual activity, that abortion should be retained as an option—just in case their principles do not live up to the practical circumstances in which they find themselves.

From this perspective, the very things that Hunter finds problematic about high politics serve the politics of everyday life. Yes, interest groups on both sides of the issue manipulate the truth; they would not be faithful to the ideologically committed who support them with contributions and time if they did anything else. But the question is not whether both sides play fair; the more important question is whether they influence ordinary people. Generally speaking, their influence is rather minimal. Despite the determined opposition of the Catholic Church to abortion, many Catholics have abortions. Despite a 30-year effort to make abortion available on demand, most state legislators, clearly responding to majority sentiment, make abortion difficult to obtain in some circumstances while making it available in others.

Much the same ambivalence holds for public knowledge on the abortion question. To be sure, most people know less about the details of the issue than intellectuals, but they are surprisingly well informed when such knowledge is compared with how much they know about minority set-asides or agricultural price supports, perhaps because sex is one of the few

genuine universals in our otherwise increasingly particularized society. And the fact that people respond emotionally to the issue ought not to cause dismay, given that sex is the most emotional activity in which people generally engage. Some Americans think we should have less sex and others think we should have more, representing the two ends of the bell-shaped curve that Hunter has found. The question for most people, however, is not whether sex should be prohibited on the one hand or treated casually on the other. Rather, they want to decide whether to have sex at a certain time with a certain person. Ambivalence on abortion may enable them to keep their options open.

Even if we do believe that the question of sexuality should be given a principled rather than a contextual answer, the principled answer that has emerged in this country is not a bad one. Americans are willing to allow their beliefs on sexuality to be expressed as part of their larger understandings of modernity. Those who want women to work and children to free themselves from parental control—decisions that usually imply a more active sex life—support greater access to abortion. Those who believe in the traditional family and have a strong sense of religious morality want to see access to abortion restricted or eliminated. On what better basis can people disagree? There is a great deal to be said for a kind of moral pluralism that enables people to live in more modern or more traditional communities based upon their fundamental values. In such a pluralism, which Hunter endorses, compromise positions may be discovered. (Hunter offers the example of St. Louis, where the director of Reproductive Health Services and the city's leading pro-life attorney fashioned common ground on the need both to reduce unwanted pregnancies and to increase prenatal care.)

As for intellectuals and professional associations—well, here, Hunter has it just right. Of all the Americans he discusses, the intellectuals are the ones who ought to aim for rationality, nuance, and respect. They, and not the interest groups, have an obligation to make sure that the national debate on abortion is conducted fairly. I am fully persuaded by Hunter's account of how some intellectuals routinely call for balance in the discussion of abortion, only to wind up arguing for one particular side. And his treatment of the way professionals confuse their political sympathies with their professional obligations is chilling; psychologists, lawyers, sociologists, historians, and medical doctors should not be in the business of claiming, based on their expertise, that only one side in the abortion debate has a position that corresponds with mental health, the Constitution, public order, history, or life itself.

In short, if one approaches abortion from the standpoint of principle, the conflict is serious indeed. But if one approaches it from the standpoint of everyday common sense, we may not be facing a new Bosnia. I think it far too premature to conclude that our present democratic practices have failed us. *Roe* v. *Wade* was not accepted by most Americans. It was altered by democratic debate without even the suggestion of men on horseback, and the resulting compromise remains far from a total ban on abortion. The fact is that most Americans have both moral and religious convictions *and* a healthy respect for everyday pleasures. They therefore want their political system to issue elevated judgments on abortion but not to allow such judgments to interfere with their own freedom.

Democracy, in short, has produced a response to the abortion conflict that is hypocritical, insincere, and contradictory. This naturally upsets those who believe in high politics. Hunter, dismayed by the superficiality of the debate, would prefer a "thicker" democracy that would enable sincere people to express what they really feel about abortion. His belief in "substantive democracy," which implies "an enlarged and deepened debate—a debate that is pre-political in nature" is surely welcome, but it is not

the last word. More significant is his recognition that we need to be more modest about what politics can accomplish. It would do wonders for our political life if people looked to government to protect commerce, provide economic security, and defend the country, while religious, educational, and community institutions worried about the search for the good.

In any case, if we are to respect both the pleasure and the fear that sexuality evokes in real people, we ought to recognize the dangers of sincerity and the benefits of hypocrisy. When most people believe that abortion is wrong but also know that they or their children may have to think about one, what can the political system do but look both ways?

—Alan Wolfe is University Professor and professor of sociology and political science at Boston University.

Tattered Velvet

EXIT INTO HISTORY: A Journey Through the New Eastern Europe. *By Eva Hoffman. Viking. 410 pp. $23*
THE BIRTH OF FREEDOM: Shaping Lives and Societies in the New Eastern Europe. *By Andrew Nagorski. Simon & Schuster. 319 pp. $23*
THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe. *By Gale Stokes. Oxford Univ. Press. 319 pp. $25*

Once upon a time, and not a long time ago it was, Eastern Europe was an almost forgotten place, a great gray swath of territory in the external empire of the Soviet Union. Periodic explosions of discontent were followed by no less periodic repressions and freezes. Then, during the miraculous year 1989, it became a magical territory where hope was rediscovered and the impossible became real. Communism was dismantled, and the nations of Eastern and Central Europe entered a new era. To many in the region and in the West, it appeared as though a new genre of politics was being tested, one based on the values of dialogue, subjectivity, and human autonomy. "Civil society" was the code word for this antipolitical politics, and Václav Havel, with his celebration of individual rights, its chief spokesperson.

Then, as a few wise prophets had predicted, the past came back with a vengeance. Nationalist passions threatened to destroy the fragile new political democracies, velvet revolutions were followed by velvet divorces, and the region appeared in less rosy colors. Transition ailments, including skyrocketing unemployment and social inequalities, soon led to

widespread nostalgia for an authoritarian order. Idealism was replaced by pragmatism, disenchantment spread, Machiavellian intrigues and arrangements flourished. Meanwhile, the communists themselves have staged a strong comeback. Last summer, the communists, having renamed themselves the Democratic Left Alliance, took 20 percent of the seats of the Sejm, the Polish parliament. Similar prospects loom large in Hungary's forthcoming elections.

Can it be that the Adam Michniks and the Václav Havels were wrong? Does anything remain of the great promises of antipolitics? Will Eastern Europe be able to escape its current predicament and construct workable liberal institutions and procedures?

The questions are disturbing not only because they bear on Eastern Europe's immediate future but also because they touch on the larger issue of the universal validity of liberal democracy and the very possibility of securing pluralist governments in countries that have little democratic "usable past." While they do not address such questions directly, three recently published books shed valuable light on the unfolding story of civic self-reclamation.

In *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*, Rice University historian Gale Stokes offers a needed preamble to the current predicament. His book is an authoritative if somewhat workmanly survey of the dynamics of the Soviet bloc after 1968. In Stokes's telling, the Soviets' prompt suppression of the Czech reformist experiment concluded a chapter in the history of Eastern Europe: the story of the effort to change things from above. Following the debacle of 1968, change was to come from outside the party, from the restored civic associations, or what Czech philosopher Václav Benda called a "parallel *polis*."

While Stokes describes this grassroots activism and unofficial civic ferment skillfully, he seems to hold to the questionable and somewhat contradictory notion that the revolutions of 1989 were the effect of the gradual exhaustion of communism's utopian appeals. True, the loss of elite self-confidence was significant, but the genuine force that brought down communism was the collective awareness among the powerless, and primarily among critical intellectuals, of the possible alternative. Indeed, it was the human dimension, Hegel's "negative conscience," that slowly but irresistibly chipped away at the established order. And it is this human dimension that is so essential to the making of the new societies.

In fact, the most perplexing issues confronting postcommunism involve the marginalization of the former dissidents and the vindictiveness of those who did not engage in resistance during the decades of communism but who now posture as apostles of purity and intransigence. A whole political set seems to have left the political scene. Their successors are primarily the former inhabitants of what used to be called the "gray area"—the realm between the communist institutions and the dissident counterculture. Although Havel is still president of the Czech Republic, for example, his position is largely ceremonial, his influence on political decisions minimal. Former dissidents are seen as losers, quixotic characters, dreamers little in touch with the hard realities of postcommunism. At worst, they are attacked as leftists, troublemakers, moralistic preachers. Given this turn of events, one wishes all the more that Stokes's history of the prelude to 1989 provided a closer look at the dissidents and the occupants of the gray area—at both their values and their ways of operating.

In *The Birth of Freedom*, Andrew Nagorski, *Newsweek*'s correspondent for Central European affairs, brings us closer to this kind of investigation. Interviewing various members of the new political class, he shows us a group whose ambition is to sever all links to the past, especially to the dissidents. Czech prime minister Václav Klaus, a strong proponent of liberal economics, never formally joined the dissident circles during the communist era. Today, he explains to Nagorski, with

so much practical work to be done, experience as a dissident should not be considered a professional qualification.

Nagorski lets us hear from the dissidents as well. Father Václav Maly, a former Czech dissident now completely devoted to his priestly duties, is more cynical about the aftermath of 1989. Because many people had collaborated with the communists in some way, Maly relates, the dissidents annoyingly personify whatever guilt they have: "It's a covert pleasure to push them out of politics."

Had Nagorski included Romania in his research, he would have discovered the same pattern. At first, the few dissidents who challenged the Ceauşescu despotism were praised; then, after the new regime was installed in December 1989, they were marginalized and slandered. Similarly, dissidents in the former East Germany, primarily intellectuals, have become the targets of vicious attacks from people who never lifted a finger to oppose the old regime.

At the same time, ironically, there has been tremendous social pressure to identify and bring to justice those responsible for years of repression. The ambiguities of "de-communization" are extensively analyzed not only by Nagorski but also by Eva Hoffman in *Exit into History*. Both focus on the same story of a Czech dissident who was accused of cooperating informally with the secret police, and who as a result saw his political career destroyed by innuendo and unconfirmed allegations.

Vexing questions abound. For example, should the secret-police archives be allowed to govern the lives of individuals decades after the collapse of communism? Add to this the obvious fact that many of the documents in these archives can be manufactured or doctored. Add further that a reference to a certain name of an individual may simply indicate the date he or she was interrogated—hardly an act of collaboration. Being so obsessed with their wounds, Eastern Europeans may be unable to balance retribution with forgiveness. As Hoffman puts it, they "may be finding the limits of too much remembering after having learned so well the dangers of too much forgetting."

There is, of course, a genuine need to settle accounts with the past. But as Hungary's president Árpád Göncz has pointed out, this should take place in the form of historical analysis and public discussion, rather than through exceptional and always dangerous forms of "corrective justice." Otherwise, decommunization serves all too easily as a vindictive battle cry for conservatives of old and new stripes, populists obsessed with the purity of the nation, and nationalists caught up in paranoid fantasies of foreign conspiracies. The new elites have to choose, Nagorski says, between governing and settling personal scores. The ghosts of the past will not vanish until lucidly scrutinized; the surprising return of the former communists in Poland may offer the best motivation.

The other serious challenge to pluralism involves the rise of the new ethnocentric movements. This trend is not only the unenviable hallmark of the southeastern part of the region, the Balkans. It also stalks the streets (more quietly, to be sure) of Central Europe. Boulevards have been named after former war criminals, former fascist dictators have received official reburials, and Gypsies, Jews, and liberals are again being scapegoated for past and present troubles. Nagorski examines the case of the Hungarian populist writer and politician István Csurka, whose extreme xenophobic views are served up as anticommunist broadsides. What Csurka abhors are liberal values, pluralism, Western-style institutions—all of which he lumps together as elements of a "Judeo-Bolshevik plot." Although Hungary's ruling Democratic Forum forced him out, Csurka has a growing following. Nevertheless, just as in Russia, these ethnocentric movements—with their salvationist rhetoric and their demonization of foreigners, minorities, and the "corrupt West"—are not likely to attract more than a strong minority in Eastern and Central Europe.

In general, while the threats to democracy are unmistakably present and the new, post-1989 politics has turned out to be less exhilarating—and certainly less pure—than we expected, one should not overreact and see these countries as sliding into new forms of authoritarianism. The old regime, with its despotic structure of repression and ideological pretense, is over. There are numerous encouraging achievements, most especially the disappearance of fear, the greatest force behind submissiveness and passivity. Liberal values have set roots in the region, political parties have developed, and the separation of powers is more than a constitutional stipulation. The media have feverishly expanded, enjoying the discovery of unhindered freedom of expression and opinion. And such segments of "civil society" as independent unions, human rights organizations, and associations committed to opposing bigotry and racism have helped keep alive the ideas and spirit of the dissident groups of the past.

Ironically, one of the greatest hopes for the ultimate success of democracy in these countries may come from the most unlikely of sources: the metamorphosis of the old communist *nomenklaturas* into the new business elites. Nagorski focuses on the case of Ireneusz Sekula, a former Polish minister, indeed a chief economic planner, now turned into a successful business executive representing a Polish-Japanese company. The same story could be documented ad nauseam in all the former communist states. To most people, seeing the former political rulers institutionalize their economic privileges is outrageous. But as they grow rich and benefit from the new order, such new entrepreneurs turn hostile to any return of the past. Cynical as they are, they have already linked their fate to the existence of a market economy.

As for the dissolution of the dissident culture, the fact remains that some of the former dissidents simply could not cope with the burden of bureaucratic tasks. Others could not tolerate the discipline and hierarchy imposed by party politics. In a way, it is normal that the countries of Eastern Europe are now governed by political figures skeptical of romantic abstractions. As Czech political philosopher Martin Palouš recently told me, it may well be that a "third generation" will soon come to the political fore, one that will reconcile the moral zeal of the first and the pragmatism of the second.

In short, the troubles of the current period, including all the outbursts of rancor and envy, should not lead to a revision of all earlier assumptions about the Velvet Revolution. The point is most poignantly spelled out by Nagorski: "Those opposition movements triumphed because of what was to rank as this century's major creative intellectual achievements: the development of a nonviolent strategy, an entire philosophy of resistance, that undermined the seemingly invincible military and political might of the Soviet empire."

Civil society was indeed an intellectual project based on the values of tolerance, trust, and individual freedom. Its objective was to create social energies, to inspire social activism, to stir people up and turn them from subjects of the state into citizens of a true republic. That these republics are less noble and successful than many would have wished is beyond doubt. But that does not alter the fundamental fact that the revolutions were made in the name of generously defined liberal values and not on behalf of nationalism or any other form of populism.

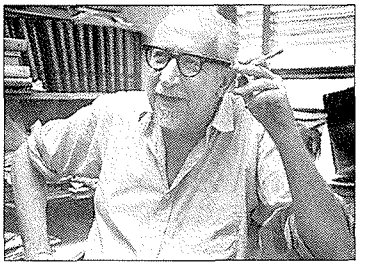
—*Vladimir Tismaneanu, associate professor of politics at the University of Maryland and a former Wilson Center Research Scholar, is author most recently of* Reinventing Politics: Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel *(Free Press, 1992).*

OTHER TITLES

History

A REBEL IN DEFENSE OF TRADITION: The Life and Politics of Dwight Macdonald. *By Michael Wreszin. Basic Books. 590 pp. $30*

Dwight Macdonald was probably contrary in his cradle. Of principled opposition, intellectual independence, and educated crankiness he went on to make a life's work. Born in Manhattan to upper-middle-class parents in 1906 and educated at schools appropriate to his class, Macdonald became one of the more conspicuous political, social, and cultural critics in America, and frequently of America, from the 1930s until his death in 1982. In this first biography, Wreszin guides the reader along the dizzying course of Macdonald's shifting political enthusiasms: the flirtation with communism, the embrace of Trotskyite socialism, the unremitting anti-Stalinism, the enduring opposition to totalitarianism and nationalism and the state, the pacifism, the ill-concealed impatience with the masses, the deep cultural conservatism. Perhaps it's no surprise that, by the end of his life, Macdonald had become a radical even a Republican could love.



After graduating from Yale University in the late 1920s, Macdonald worked for Henry Luce's *Fortune*, using the capitalist forum to write sympathetically of communists. During the 1920s and 1930s he believed that liberal democracy in the Western world was finished, a casualty of the World War. Dictatorship was no alternative (though he did retain some reluctant admiration for the dictators of the time). That left Macdonald seeking some third way between contending forces, as he was often to do in life, like Moses negotiating the Red Sea.

But he was rarely as successful as Moses. He opposed World War II, for example—both sides were brutal and reprehensible—and argued for a pacifist middle course. But as evidence of the Holocaust began to emerge, he had no choice but to cast a cooler eye on Germany than he was naturally disposed to do.

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that, though he was entirely serious about his politics and founded and edited for its five-year life in the 1940s an influential journal of the noncommunist Left that was even called *Politics*, Macdonald was not a profound or original political thinker. By the 1950s he abandoned politics altogether and moved to the *New Yorker*, where his criticisms of America were framed by glittering commercial endorsements of the very way of life he censured. And it is as a cultural critic, a Savonarola against masscult, midcult, and kitsch, that he is best remembered. The merging of high and low culture, the homogenization, the leveling of all values, standards, and distinctions struck him as another form of totalitarianism.

He chose his targets well. The permissiveness of Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* was an abdication of responsibility by an educated elite and encouraged an ignorance of tradition; it mirrored "a plebeian attitude toward language." The "revised standard version" of the Bible gave up the grandeur of the King James version and substituted a blandness all too symptomatic of American cultural life at midcentury. Macdonald compared the revisers' work to the bombing of Dresden.

Style was everything to him: An idea did not exist apart from the words used to express it. The possibility that the Bible—a book of faith, after all—might be comprehended more easily in its plain new dress by millions of people would not have occurred to him, and might have been ridiculed if it had. In fact, a good deal seems not to have occurred to him, which is why he frequently appears naive and a bit ridiculous, in his personal life no less than in his politics. By the 1960s and 1970s, Macdonald was smoking pot and protesting against Vietnam and fellow-traveling with the youth movement, his belly hanging bare over his belt and a cocktail serving as compass.

Wreszin's biography takes Macdonald from cradle to grave and moves him dutifully through all the crowds and controversies between. But Macdonald may be a 300-page subject trapped in a 500-page book. The length would be forgivable if Wreszin wrote with Macdonald's own

mischievousness and wit. ("The Ford Foundation is a large body of money surrounded by a lot of people who want some.") Perhaps only an autobiography would have done the man justice. If he had lived to read this book, he would no doubt have been flattered by all the attention, well deserved after all. And then, honest Dwight to the end, he would have turned on it with his rapier.

THE BIRTH OF FASCIST IDEOLOGY. *By Zeev Sternhell with Mario Sznajder and Maia Asheri. Trans. by David Maisel. Princeton. 338 pp. $29.95*

Fascism has never received the respect it deserves—or so Sternhell has spent nearly two decades arguing. A professor of political science at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, he maintains that fascism is neither a bizarre by-product of World War I nor a thoughtless Middle-European detour into authoritarianism. Rather, it is a full-fledged ideology in its own right. Formed by the confluence of the 19th century's two major ideologies, socialism and nationalism, fascism must be analyzed with all the analytical rigor applied to its major rivals, liberalism and communism. Moreover, Sternhell sees in the cultural milieu of fin-de-siècle Europe—its nihilism, its disgust with the universals of Enlightenment thinking, its festering national and racial chauvinism—a seedbed for the political ideals that were eventually to make ex-socialists such as Benito Mussolini into dictators.

Sternhell's previous book, *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France* (1986), generated a storm of controversy and brought on one successful libel suit, primarily because Sternhell suggested that French intellectual life in the 1920s and '30s was rife with fascism. His new book has already provoked a similar controversy in Italy, although this time his analysis is focused on the movement he believes initiated the final descent into fascism—syndicalism. If socialism is fascism's godmother on the Left and nationalism its godmother on the Right, syndicalism is its disreputable father, of troublesome origins and questionable intentions.

Launched in the 1890s in France as a trade-unionist ideology not too different from Marxism, syndicalism rapidly mutated under the influence of sometime-revolutionary and future royalist Georges Sorel. Under his direction, it became an antipolitical movement that called for direct action by workers, demonized capitalists (but not capitalism), and championed moral regeneration rather than economic transformation as the avatar of revolution. Sorel imagined that workers would be moved to violence not by a sensible platform of reform but by a chiliastic call to arms, with apocalypse to follow—or what he called the General Strike.

How did syndicalism's passionate advocacy of class warfare turn into a desire for war between nations? How did a putatively leftist desire to transform a whole society for the sake of social justice evolve into a national socialist manifesto for authoritarian social engineering? Sternhell argues that such tendencies lay barely dormant within Sorel's own theories. The General Strike blurs easily into national mobilization for war, while an acceptance of capitalism's inevitability lends itself to quietism on questions of class and the economy.

But Italy in the teens was also characterized by fiscal insolvency and jingoistic chauvinism, which produced a renewed faith in such sources of communal authority as the army and the church. Sternhell provides a strikingly simple quacks-like-a fascist test: Those leftist intellectuals who abandoned Marxist calls for economic transformation and spoke of "moral elevation," "ethical transformation," and the purging of "parasites" instead of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie were, or were on the way to becoming, fascists.

This book is so densely documented that patches of comparatively thin analysis stand out. It is quite strange, for example (though many critics will say it is not strange at all), that in making his case for the intellectual complexity and coherence of fascist ideology Sternhell should have so meticulously documented its leftist origins while leaving so murky its rightist wellsprings. He remains conspicuously silent about the Catholic corporatism and old-guard Italian conservatism that did so much to put fascism into power and that, as Sternhell rather grudgingly admits, "finally produced a regime from which all elements of socialist origin were banished."

Still, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology* adds up to compelling intellectual history. Sternhell forces us

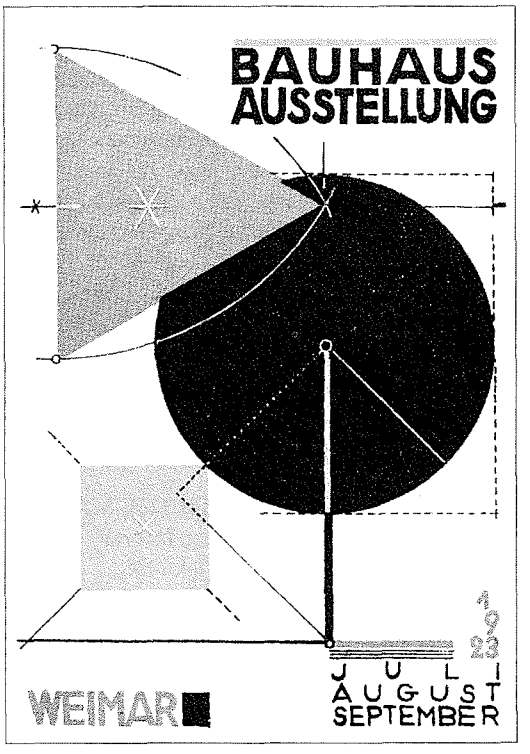
to acknowledge that it is not "age-old hatreds" but new combinations of political theory and historical contingency that we need to fear. After all, in 1912 Mussolini was a vaguely leftist editor of *Utopia*. By 1934 he was congratulating himself on having "buried the putrid corpse of liberty."

Arts & Letters

THE BAUHAUS: Masters and Students by Themselves. *Ed. by Frank Whitford. Overlook. 328 pp. $85*

In *From Bauhaus to Our House* (1981), Tom Wolfe wittily argued that Bauhaus architects—figures such as Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe, who gathered and taught at the influential German design school between the wars—were narrow-minded soldiers of socialism who created unadorned, ugly buildings that sacrificed the aesthetic and practical desires of the individual for an ideological ideal. "Every child," Wolfe charged, "[now] goes to school in a building that looks like a duplicating-machine replacement-parts wholesale distribution warehouse." Wolfe's sarcastic indictment of the Bauhaus has now become part of the conventional wisdom about the German design school. But the history and influence of the Bauhaus are a bit more complicated, as this first high-quality, full-scale art book on the school reveals.

Whitford, an art historian, has culled first-person accounts from art critics, journalists, and politicians of the day, as well as from the Bauhauslers themselves, and supplemented the usual reproductions of paintings and product designs with such original documents as notes, sketches, postcards, and book jackets. Although one of the aims of the school was to create economically efficient housing for workers, the book shows that the Bauhaus was anything but a source of dogmatism, political or otherwise. Founded by Walter Gropius in Weimar, the school was devoted to uniting all of the arts under architecture, which Gropius considered the supreme art, and to enhancing quality of life through design that was both economical and artistically sensitive. Remaining true to his original manifesto, which called for "the avoidance of all prescription" and



"a preference for the creative," Gropius consciously brought together people with different and conflicting views.

One of those people was Hannes Meyer, a Marxist who believed aesthetics should play no role in design. Gropius chose him in 1926 to head the newly formed architecture department and then to succeed him as director two years later, but Meyer's attempts to steer the Bauhaus toward communist purity repeatedly fell flat. His followers were few, and he met formidable resistance from independent-minded artists such as Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee. In 1930, Mies van der Rohe replaced Meyer and tossed the party line out. Unfortunately, the school, which had moved from Weimar to Dessau and ultimately to Berlin to flee Nazi repression, was finally shut down three years later.

While the Bauhauslers were trying to unite form with function, their guiding principles, as this book makes clear, were always aesthetic ones—line, balance, and beauty. Indeed, the Bauhaus was responsible for some of the more celebrated buildings of this century, including Gropius's Bauhaus school building in Dessau,

with its spectacular expanse of exterior glass wrapped elegantly around the workshop wing. And the Bauhaus's influence in the United States has been on balance positive, bringing a clean, streamlined look not only to architecture (see, for example, the indisputably gracious Mies Lake Shore apartments in Chicago), but also to graphics, furniture, and consumer products. Most of the ugly "modern" buildings that Wolfe (rightly) denounces were designed not by Gropius, Mies, or their students but by architects who clumsily appropriated the deceptively simple look of modern architecture and have now given it a bad name.

THE INTELLECTUALS AND THE MASSES: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880–1939. *By John Carey. St. Martin's Press. 256 pp. $19.95*

That turn-of-the-century literati were by and large hostile toward the masses hardly comes as news. Every British literature survey adverts to the aristocratic elitism and snobbery of W. B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, and other masters of modernism. It comes as no greater revelation that the intellectuals' notion of the "masses" was largely a convenient fiction, spun from such demographic facts as the population explosion (which in Europe was marked by a jump from 180 million to 460 million people between 1800 and 1914), rapid suburbanization, and the growth of the clerkly trades.

What distinguishes Carey's examination of all this is what he makes of it: very much, one might say in his favor; too much, one might object. Consider, for example, the modernist cult of difficulty, the urge to make the art object as complex and demanding as possible. Carey attributes this occultism entirely to the literary artist's contempt for the vulgar, uneducated tastes of the common man, and Carey is not altogether wrong. Many of the archmodernists held that only the priestly few should have access to Art; after all, Art was intended to separate the human wheat from the (barely) human chaff. T. S. Eliot's decree that poets "must be difficult" was widely understood and approved by those whom Coleridge had dubbed the clerisy. Such willful obscurantism led the modernists to undervalue some of the simpler (but no less important) pleasures of art, including sentiment and story, a bias that in turn has contributed to the marginalization of serious literature to this day.

Yet it is hard not to feel, even on this strictly literary point, that Carey presses too far in one direction, never acknowledging the possibility of a more generously motivated concern. Weren't modern intellectuals right to be opposed to the oversimplifying and sensationalizing tendencies of a modern popular culture that began to emerge at the turn of the century? Carey, a professor of literature at Oxford University, plays too easily the friend of populism when he discounts the virtues of difficulty. He would seemingly reduce art to entertainment. And doing so, he ends up indulging in a form of countersnobbery, as when he asserts that a person like Leopold Bloom would never read the novel in which he figures so centrally, James Joyce's *Ulysses*, because more than any other 20th-century novel, "it is for intellectuals only."

But art—important as it is—is not all that is at stake here. Carey sees literary values shaping political and social attitudes. And, again, there is great virtue in his driving home just how ugly and inexcusable many of the opinions of literary intellectuals were. Too often these have been lightly passed over, but Carey shouts where others have whispered. We learn of the extent of H. G. Wells's obsession with eugenics and his horror of undesirable types and races. We hear of George Gissing's vitriolic contempt for democracy and his yearning for a Nietzschean superman. We are treated to the full blast of Wyndham Lewis's fulminations against suburban man and his ghastly paeans to Nazi storm troopers. ("The Anglo-Saxon would feel reassured at once in the presence of these straightforward young pillars of the law.") And Carey rightly derides Ezra Pound's excuse for his anti-Semitism—"a suburban prejudice"—as obscuring the true high-culture origins of his attitude.

But Carey insists upon a simple determinism where a more nuanced analysis is called for. Modernist, elitist notions could as easily be used to attack Nazism as to underwrite it, and they were. It is more than an oversight not to mention that Gissing's beloved Nietzsche specifically loathed everything about anti-Semitism, includ-

ing the race-thinking behind it. Much similar denial of the complex play of ideas makes it possible for Carey to reach his banner-headline conclusion: "The tragedy of *Mein Kampf* is that it was not, in many respects, a deviant work but one firmly rooted in European intellectual orthodoxy." To which one can respond only with the Scotch verdict: Not proved.

Philosophy & Religion

SELLING GOD: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture. *By R. Laurence Moore. Oxford. 336 pp. $25*

Americans worship both the Almighty Dollar and, if opinion surveys are to be believed, the Almighty far more fervently than do the citizens of any other Western country. Such dual loyalty seems less incongruous if one considers that one of the sources of America's religious vitality is the absence of an established church. Churches have been forced (or allowed) to compete for souls, much as McDonald's and Burger King vie for hungry mouths. Moore, a Cornell University historian, might say that the link between fast food and religion is more than a useful analogy. Much that we mistake for the secularization of American society, he believes, "has to do not with the disappearance of religion but its commodification."

Since the late 18th century, when the new diversions offered by the nation's growing commercial culture—theater, cheap novels, and the like—began to threaten religious authority, church leaders have borrowed commercial methods to spread the Word. One of the first to discover the magic of the marketplace was the Calvinistic Methodist preacher George Whitefield (1714–70), whose wildly successful revival meetings in America and in England "turned a portion of the Protestant Christian ministry away from intellectual preparation and instruction toward emotional exhorting," according to Moore. Before long it was an accepted principle in many holy quarters that ministers should borrow methods from the theater to stir up audience enthusiasm. By the 1830s, Walt Whitman could call churches "the most important of our amusements."

The pattern was repeated over and over. No sooner did clergymen denounce the dime novel or television than some enterprising colleague was picking up a pen or daubing on makeup for the cameras.

Moore strives mightily to appreciate some of the benefits of this "commercialized" religion, observing, for example, that the notion of faith as something to be sold rather than imposed promotes religious toleration. But of course it is more interesting to ask what it has all cost. He discerns a general thinning of religion: Spread everywhere in American culture, from self-help manuals to Christian rap music, it seems to be nowhere.

Surprisingly, Moore has relatively little to say about today's televangelists, seeming to regard them as regrettable but inevitable products of a world where denominations must compete. It would have been interesting to get some idea of how "consumer satisfaction" with religion has changed over the past two centuries of "commodification," not to mention how the competition for new souls has affected non-Protestant sects.

Moore reserves most of his criticism for the mainline Protestant churches that embraced the Social Gospel in the late 19th century—the very denominations that most disdained commercial methods. He argues that the Social Gospel was nevertheless the last word in "commod-

ification," a complete theological capitulation to the era's emerging consumerist ethos. Ministers such as Harry Emerson Fosdick eagerly applied the latest business principles to the management of churches and the advancement of Progressive social reform. Ultimately, mainline Protestants were left "with the reputation that they had no faith stronger than what lay in the collection plate."

Only in his last two pages does Moore reveal his ultimate criticism. A commercialized church, he warns, cannot alert Americans to the dangers of needless consumerism—the real meaning of Adam and Eve's story, he says—and to the resulting environmental apocalypse he foresees. If that is so, it would take another book to prove it.

BERTRAND RUSSELL: A Life. *By Caroline Moorehead. Viking. 596 pp. $30*

In 1961, an 89-year-old Bertrand Russell was sent to jail for protesting the nuclear policies of the British government. He had been the object of controversy before. In 1940, the New York court that overturned his appointment to City College denounced his logic lectures as lecherous, libidinous, lustful, venerous, erotomaniac, aphrodisiac, irreverent, and narrow-minded. No easy man to live with, he married four times, often wreaking emotional havoc on his wives and children.

Bertrand Russell was also a Nobel Prize-winning philosopher who wrote 83 books, including *Principia Mathematica* (1910), and set the shape of philosophy in the English-speaking world. Though the contrast was rather extreme, both Russells were Russell.

As Moorehead relates in her engaging biography, Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) did not know how to be dull. He brought a philosopher's insights to issues ranging from nuclear warfare to the use of cosmetics by schoolteachers, and did so with a literary skill that leaves most other writers green with envy. Even his technical philosophy is full of vivid touches. Moorehead, a British journalist, wisely skirts the impossible task of explaining the foundations of mathematics. Instead, she sticks to what drove Russell to study such things—a longing for the timeless and absolute truth about the world, which he thought lay in logic. She also explains how he abandoned his first and highest love. Ludwig Wittgenstein, his one-time protégé, persuaded him that logic was no more than a matter of human convention; after civilized Europe plunged into World War I, Russell lowered his sights and looked to politics, education, social reform, and more enlightened attitudes toward sex and marriage as the route to human happiness.

Russell's childhood was a gloomy one. His radical parents died when he was a small child, and he was brought up by his elderly grandmother and assorted governesses. Lady Russell tried to keep Bertie pure. She failed. He met and after many battles married Alys Pearsall Smith—like his fourth and last wife, a daughter of Philadelphia and Bryn Mawr. This all fueled his later passion for sexual enlightenment. Paradoxically, Lady Ottoline Morrell, who became his mistress in 1910 and effected his liberation, did not much care for sex with Bertie; it was his mind she fell in love with.

He was amazingly clever and loved Cambridge, but he could never be confined to the academy. He ran for Parliament in 1907 as a women's suffrage candidate, fighting for a seat he could not win in order to stick up for an unpopular cause. In 1916 he threw away his Cambridge career to campaign against the war. Trinity College dismissed him from his lectureship, and in 1918 he was jailed for insulting an ally. (He said the U.S. Army would stay on in Europe after the war to shoot striking workers.)

In the 1920s and '30s he wrote important essays on socialism, the fate of the Soviet Union, appeasement, and the nature of power, but emotional discord bulked larger. In 1921 he married Dora Black, had two children, and opened a school—Beacon Hill. Its finances demanded constant lecture tours in the United States and short

articles for the Hearst newspapers ("Going to the Cinema," "Should Philosophers Smoke Cigars?," "Who May Wear Lipstick?"). The marriage broke up in the early 1930s. He then married Peter Spence, a woman 30 years younger than he. She left him in 1949. Finally, in 1952 he married Edith Finch and experienced 17 years of quiet bliss: an interesting but not edifying record. Moorehead only occasionally raises an eyebrow at the discrepancy between Russell's mastery of logic and his weak grasp of the realities of other people's lives.

The post-1945 Russell is the one Americans remember. This Russell fought for the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, wrote to John Foster Dulles and Nikita Khrushchev to demand nuclear disarmament, lectured John Kennedy on Cuba, and led a last, bitter campaign against the Vietnam War. Moorehead is pained by the way Russell was taken over by Ralph Schoenman during this final crusade. Schoenman was a left-wing graduate student at the London School of Economics who came to see Russell in 1960; he stayed to tea, then to manage Russell's affairs for the next eight years. He destroyed innumerable old friendships, wasted large amounts of money, hampered every good cause with which he was involved, and made Russell look ridiculous. Moorehead shares the universal relief that almost the last thing Russell did was break with Schoenman and write a memorandum explaining why. Can we decently say that a rip-roaring atheist like Russell redeemed himself? We can certainly rejoice that he died as clear-headed as he had lived.

BLASPHEMY: Verbal Offense Against the Sacred, From Moses to Salman Rushdie. *By Leonard W. Levy. Knopf. 688 pp. $35*

The question of blasphemy—what it is, what harm it does, whether it can even be a crime in a secular or pluralistic society—calls forth strong yet foggy views from across the political spectrum. Unlike obscenity, it doesn't belong to that category of things you know when you see; the many authorities, religious and otherwise, who have tried to construe it as such have only added to the confusion. As Levy shows in his history of blasphemy trials, political persecutions, and other related oddities, the charge—no matter who brings it—tends to blur with astonishing speed into related offenses and semioffenses such as heresy, impiety, sacrilege, apostasy, idolatry, and, as the early Catholic Church described the Arian heresy, "pestilential error."

Levy's story wends its way from the original, strict Judaic definition of blasphemy as "reviling God by name" (which, the Name being unknown and unpronounceable, presented insuperable difficulties of prosecution) through the uncontrollable political bloating of the concept in early Christianity up through the age of religious wars and the later struggles to distinguish between blasphemy and obscenity in English common law. The excitement mounts with the great 19th-century blasphemy trials that advanced freedom of the press in England, including those that made a martyr of the printer Richard Carlile, jailed for distributing Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. These trials in turn led to such legal landmarks as the Trinity Act of 1813, which decriminalized questioning the doctrine of the Trinity.

Levy's own views about the boundaries of blasphemy are obvious from the book's dust jacket, which shows the notorious "Piss Christ" photograph by Andrés Serrano in giant closeup. Levy thus implicitly rejects the view, an important one in the recent art wars, that the context in which such an image is shown or the use to which it is put has no effect on whether it is offensive. Exactly how the author, a professor emeritus of history at Claremont Graduate School, arrives at his conclusion that the charge of blasphemy is meaningless in a secular society remains murky. But there's so much material here that the argument can be treated as secondary, especially since it's clear that, on this subject at least, people are more interested in ammunition than in new ideas.

Contemporary Affairs

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS FREE SPEECH AND IT'S A GOOD THING, TOO. *By Stanley Fish. Oxford Univ. Press. 332 pp. $25*

While the current impulse in the so-called

"canon wars" may be toward conciliation, there's little likelihood that Fish will have a seat at the peace table if multiculturalists and traditionalists bury their differences and shake hands on the White House lawn. Fish, a professor of literature and law at Duke University, is an idiosyncratic and infuriating army of one. Welcoming the charge that he is a "contemporary sophist," he does battle with all sides while coyly refusing to stake out an agenda of his own. His battle cry is "Hearkening to me will lead to nothing. Hearkening to me, from my point of view, is *supposed to* lead to nothing."

Fish's latest collection is a smorgasbord of law, literature, and campus politics. Last year the author traveled the country with the right-wing polemicist Dinesh D'Souza, and several of the essays printed here are culled from their acrimonious exchanges. In them, Fish argues that much of the debate about political correctness has taken place under false pretenses. Conservative critics of campus radicalism have disguised their own partisan ends by appealing to "neutral" standards of high-mindedness, tolerance, and "common ground." They have exaggerated the spread of the multicultural curriculum and misstated their reasons for opposing it. And they have disingenuously opposed the "politicization of the humanities" while themselves occupying positions of considerable power and prestige.

Fish casts similar aspersions upon the academic Left. While he agrees with New Historicists and other practitioners of advanced literary criticism who declare that everything is "historical" or "political," he denounces their efforts to judge the worthiness of critical enterprises by the degree to which they are historical or political. To those critics who assume that the study of a poem's political implications is more properly "historical" than the study of its aesthetic principles, Fish replies that aesthetics is itself a historical tradition, and one that weighed heavily on poets in the past. These scholars' political aspirations, in short, are both self-contradictory and naive: "Those who conflate and confuse literary and political work end up doing neither well."

Although Fish's targets are scattered, his work clings to a central notion: that human beings cannot get any kind of critical distance from their activities. Instead, they are simply consigned to continue along in them as best they can. "Focus cannot be expanded," he argues, "it can only be adjusted." Therefore, Fish loathes any abstract concept—"fairness," "merit," "neutrality"—that promises to free us from our perspectives and guide us toward transcendent truth or open-minded flexibility. It is always, in his view, a false promise.

As a conscientious gadfly, Fish deflates other people's ideals with impressive panache. But he has hardly disposed of those ideals for good. Fish barely pauses to consider, for instance, the possible hazards of speech codes and other restrictions on free speech. It's easy to suspect that his cautious support of such policies is based less on a conviction that they are sound than on his irritation with their opponents.

Although Fish advises all thinkers to forsake "theory" and dwell in the "local," it is plain that he is most comfortable operating on a theoretical level. He is more aroused by the fact that all our perspectives are partial than he is by the content of any particular perspective. Like his fellow pragmatist Richard Rorty, who gestures toward the end of philosophy and the beginning of an age of free-floating conversation without ever quite getting around to joining that conversation himself, Fish apparently would prefer to travel busily across several disciplines than find a local habitation of his own. This champion of the situated self proudly keeps himself afloat.

Science & Technology

SILENT TRAVELERS: Germs, Genes and the Immigrant Menace. *By Alan Kraut. HarperCollins. 352 pp. $25*

Americans of the late 19th century were ambivalent about immigration. Because the nation's booming industrial economy created a need for laborers, popular opinion grudgingly tolerated the admittance of foreigners. At the

same time, as Kraut, an American University historian, shows, Americans' xenophobic tendencies (never too deeply buried) were stirred up by contemporary beliefs about the origins of disease. According to the dominant theory of the late 19th century, infections and epidemics were caused by decaying organic matter that provided a hospitable environment for disease-causing "contagia." By popular logic, the damp, filthy tenements where immigrants lived offered a perfect environment for the contagia to flourish. Branding immigrants agents of disease, Americans cried out for measures to protect the public health.

States responded with various quarantine measures, which further stigmatized newcomers as a menace to the national welfare. By the 1890s, American concern over disease-carrying foreigners had reached such a pitch that Congress passed an act requiring immigrants to have physical examinations before departing from their native countries and after arriving in the United States. Those who failed were barred from entry.

The collision of cultures only began at Ellis Island, where an authority-cowed immigrant could be rejected as a mental defective for displaying anxiety in front of the uniformed Public Health Service physicians. Misunderstandings and distrust continued thereafter. American health professionals and reformers tried to preach the gospel of sanitation to immigrants living in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions. But many foreigners chafed at the exhortations of intrusive Americans asking them to abandon their traditions. Preferring to rely on amulets and herbal remedies to cure disease, many immigrants distrusted hospitals ("a place you go to die") and organized American medicine in general ("cold and impersonal").

Yet, as Kraut relates, the history of immigration and public health has some bright spots. The swell of immigration from the 1880s to the 1920s brought improvements in health care for all Americans. Hospital construction boomed. The institution of the "school nurse" came as a boon to all children who were not receiving proper medical attention at home. Yearly physical and eye examinations for schoolchildren became mandatory. And, finally, the infusion of foreigners into the labor force, often in dangerous jobs, forced lawmakers to pass legislation protecting the health of all U.S. workers.

The story that Kraut tells is not completely behind us. The government's classification of Haitians during the 1980s as a high-risk category because of AIDS and more recent worries about foreigners infected with tuberculosis show that some things remain the same.

UNCOMMON SENSE: The Heretical Nature of Science. *By Alan Cromer. Oxford. 240 pp. $23*

The primary stumbling block to scientific progress, says Cromer, has always been the human mind: It cannot naturally perform feats of logical thought. This explains the persistence of belief in animism, spiritualism, and UFOs, and also why, in Cromer's experience, American college students "don't have the critical thinking skills needed to distinguish the fanciful claims of astrology from the extraordinary claims of astronomy."

According to Cromer, a professor of physics at Northeastern University, the unnaturalness of logical thought also explains why science has not experienced a steady progression from the discovery of fire to the unlocking of the atom. Instead, it has followed the bumpy course described by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962): "a succession of tradition-bound periods punctuated by non-cumulative breaks." The ideas of Copernicus, Galileo, and Isaac Newton displaced existing notions precisely because such thinkers came up with revolutionary ways of viewing the universe.

Cromer says that the reason science first appeared in ancient Greece, and that so many advances occurred during the Renaissance, was that people at both times developed the unusual ability to break through "the barrier of egocentricism" that characterizes most human thought. Greek culture, with its emphasis on assembly and a "maritime economy that prevented isolation and parochialism," gave the Greeks an opportunity to test new ideas and discard ones that were useless. Renaissance thinkers, rediscovering Greek ideas through medieval texts, adopted Greek-style methods of learning and thus were able to lay the groundwork for

their own scientific discoveries.

Why is scientific thinking so difficult? Cromer accepts the view of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget that only people who advance through the four developmental stages—sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational—are equipped to handle the complexities of physics or advanced mathematics. In an ideal progression, an individual will have reached the formal operational level—capable of solving several problems simultaneously, able to theorize, and so forth—by adolescence.

Unfortunately, as Piaget himself noted, the only way for people to advance from one stage to the next is through the "accumulation of relevant experiences"—learning the ins and outs of word problems, for instance, or understanding the basis of mathematical proofs. By almost any measure, current American educational methods are not providing these experiences. Cromer's suggestions for countering this deficiency—compressing public education after grade seven into an intensive, two-year "academy" that would develop reasoning skills, and then, after further optional study, admitting the most promising students into college at age 16—are provocative, if full of practical pitfalls.

In the course of *Uncommon Sense*, Cromer demolishes many popular science myths, including the notion that extraterrestrials will visit or attempt to contact Earthlings, or that humankind, given the known laws of physics, will ever develop the capability for interstellar travel. (A moment of silence, please, for the Trekkies in our audience.) Real science, Cromer concludes, will likely find its new frontiers much closer to home: "It is from the fields of molecular biology, brain research, and computer technology that the epochal discoveries of tomorrow will come."

THE ASTONISHING HYPOTHESIS: The Scientific Search for the Soul. *By Francis Crick. Scribner's. 336 pp. $25*

The title is teasing. Has Francis Crick found religion in his old age? The thought is quickly dispelled. His "astonishing hypothesis" is simply that what we call self, consciousness, the psyche, the ego, or the soul can be explored by ordinary scientific means—through brain anatomy, nerve morphology, and the physiology of nerve function. It is "astonishing," Crick maintains, because so few psychologists, neurologists, or neurobiologists have attempted to study consciousness by scientific means, and because the history of religion, philosophy, and popular belief has long separated mind from body in a comfortable dualism.

Crick, who with James Watson discovered the structure of DNA in 1953, is not deterred by the huge gaps in our knowledge. He wants scientists to penetrate the black box we call the mind by considering hereditary pathologies, strokes, brain injuries, single-nerve stimulations, histological analysis of the cortical and thalamic regions of the visual system, and especially experiments using primates and other mammals. How do the neurons in different regions of the brain transmit information to each other? How is the information stored and processed so that we can construct a symbol of the external reality that we then recognize as our reality? Focusing on visual perception, Crick shows that the final representation of how we see the world is the product of much "unconscious" analysis.

Crick's rallying cry for psychologists, neurologists, neurobiologists, and molecular biologists to turn serious attention to the "search for the soul" is much like Erwin Schrödinger's attempt to bring physicists to genetics in his influential *What Is Life?* (1946). While the scientific benefits of this enterprise are indisputable, the further demystification of such qualitative experiences as awe and love does produce twinges of regret. As Crick writes, " 'You,' your joys and your sorrows, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules."

POETRY

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

Selected and Introduced by Anthony Hecht

Any conventional list of the great modernist poets would begin with Eliot and Pound, Rilke, Valéry, and Rimbaud. These were not the only important poets of their era, possibly not even the greatest. One thinks of such others as Stevens, Frost, Montale, and Yeats. But the ones designated as *modernist* are credited with changing our whole mode of feeling, the voice and vocation of poetry itself. It is therefore surprising to recall that in 1926 two by no means negligible poets and commentators placed John Crowe Ransom (1888–1974) firmly in the ranks of the modernists. Robert Graves and Laura Riding, in their still-valuable *Modernist Poetry*, say of Ransom's work that it is of a kind which, "because it is too good, has been brushed aside as a literary novelty." Graves and Riding are no mere crackpots; their book was the inspiration, according to I. A. Richards, of that touchstone of modern criticism, William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930).

The poetry-reading public of today is not inclined to bracket Ransom with the modernists, despite some eloquent defenses of his work by the likes of Randall Jarrell, Robert Lowell, and Geoffrey Hill; and Ransom's work has engendered no such devoted examination as has attended the poetry of Frost, Stevens, Eliot, Pound, or Williams. Indeed, Ransom's poems are still read with a shocking carelessness even by those who purport to admire them. Take, for example, this observation from the headnote to Ransom's poems in *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry*, edited by Richard Ellmann and Robert O'Clair: "His poem 'Philomela' describes how, 'pernoctating' once with Oxford students in Bagley Wood, he heard a nightingale's song and was unimpressed." (So greatly do I revere the critical acumen of the late Mr. Ellmann that I have laid the blame for this comment, whether fairly or not, at the door of his colleague.) This has about it, in my view, the same flavor of blissful incomprehension reported by Matthew Arnold in his essay "Science and Literature": "I once mentioned in a school-report, how a young man in one of our English training colleges having to paraphrase the passage in *Macbeth* beginning, 'Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased?' turned this line into 'Can you not wait upon the lunatic?' "

Ransom was a Rhodes Scholar, and by "pernoctating" (passing the night) he means only, and with becoming modesty, that his Oxford sojourn was briefer than that of others. The poem, as a thoughtful perusal ought to make clear, is not about the experience of hearing a nightingale in Oxford but about the radical break of American culture from its classical parentage, of which the nightingale myth, represented by Philomela and de-

rived from Ovid, is a lovely but antique and conventionalized representative. Ransom is asserting that the old European tricks won't serve us anymore; in this he is adopting a stance we recognize in the work of Williams and Pound—and indeed of Eliot himself, who wrote of "the change of Philomel" as a "withered stump of time." When Ransom writes of Philomela's "fairy numbers" he means to recall Keats, and to imply that we can no longer get away with those Romantic stage props or that Keatsean mellifluousness. When he writes of her "fabulous provinces" he means that, for better or worse, the world we now live in has pretty well banished the "fabulous." Stevens was destined to take up the same theme.

Ransom is sometimes called an ironist, and compared to Hardy. The characterization is fractionally useful: Ransom admired Hardy, and edited his *Selected Poems*. Both, moreover, employed pronounced archaisms and antiquated diction. Hardy did so out of love for modes of rural English speech that were disappearing in the course of his very long life. But Ransom does so for quite other reasons. His poems very often present painful anachronisms that endure beyond the hope of resolution: codes of outdated morality applied almost laughably to a modern or heedless world; lovers torn by an equation of desire and ethics so perfectly balanced that they are like the proverbial donkey simultaneously attracted by two bales of hay, identical in their diametrically opposed distance from him and attraction to him, so that unable to choose, he dies of starvation midway between them. The effect is both ludicrous and pathetic, and it is this special emotional cocktail of contradictory ingredients, powerful and paradoxical, that forbids a simple response to many of Ransom's poems, that continues to puzzle and to charm, and that firmly distinguishes him from Hardy.

A poem such as "Captain Carpenter" is predicated on the notion that the ideals of courtesy, chivalry, and gentlemanliness can never survive against the barbarity they are pledged to oppose, since survival would entail abandoning those very ideals and adopting the brutal ways of the enemy. And into this world of irreconcilable paradoxes are always born the innocent, children and lovers, to whom the paradoxes are more bewildering than even to us, the poet's worldly and knowing readers. Ransom is telling us that, for all our worldliness and his, we were once as ill-equipped to cope with the world's welter of contradictions as the innocent; that in fact our worldliness is largely a matter of self-delusion; and when the heart of the matter is truly seen, we are as nonplussed as the veriest child. "Nonplussed" is a condition (if not a word) that Ransom is particularly gifted at eliciting in his readers, as well as describing in his poems. "Brown study" is a phrase he made powerful use of. What distinguishes his poems is a mixture of elegance and bluntness, a deep respect for innocence and the codes forged to protect it, along with a refusal to give way to any romantic or archaic delusions. It is always and disconcertingly, dramatically, dialectically, a bifocal poetry.

Philomela

Procne, Philomela, and Itylus,
Your names are liquid, your improbable tale
Is recited in the classic numbers of the nightingale.
Ah, but our numbers are not felicitous,
It goes not liquidly for us.

Perched on a Roman ilex, and duly apostrophized,
The nightingale descanted unto Ovid;
She has even appeared to the Teutons, the swilled
and gravid;
At Fontainebleau it may be the bird was gallicized;
Never was she baptized.

To England came Philomela with her pain,
Fleeing the hawk her husband; querulous ghost,
She wanders when he sits heavy on his roost,
Utters herself in the original again,
The untranslatable refrain.

Not to these shores she came! this other Thrace,
Environ barbarous to the royal Attic:
How could her delicate dirge run democratic,
Delivered in a cloudless boundless public place
To an inordinate race?

I pernoctated with the Oxford students once,
And in the quadrangles, in the cloisters, on the Cher,
Precociously knocked at antique doors ajar,
Fatuously touched the hems of the hierophants,
Sick of my dissonance.

I went out to Bagley Wood, I climbed the hill;
Even the moon had slanted off in a twinkling,
I heard the sepulchral owl and a few bells tinkling,
There was no more villainous day to unfulfil,
The diuturnity was still.

Up from the darkest wood where Philomela sat,
Her fairy numbers issued. What then ailed me?
My ears are called capacious but they failed me,
Her classics registered a little flat!
I rose, and venomously spat.

Philomela, Philomela, lover of song,
I am in despair if we may make us worthy,
A bantering breed sophistical and swarthy;
Unto more beautiful, persistently more young,
Thy fabulous provinces belong.

Piazza Piece

—I am a gentleman in a dustcoat trying
To make you hear. Your ears are soft and small
And listen to an old man not at all,
They want the young men's whispering and sighing.
But see the roses on your trellis dying
And hear the spectral singing of the moon;
For I must have my lovely lady soon,
I am a gentleman in a dustcoat trying.

—I am a lady young in beauty waiting
Until my truelove comes, and then we kiss.
But what grey man among the vines is this
Whose words are dry and faint as in a dream?
Back from my trellis, Sir, before I scream!
I am a lady young in beauty waiting.

Vision by Sweetwater

Go and ask Robin to bring the girls over
To Sweetwater, said my Aunt; and that was why
It was like a dream of ladies sweeping by
The willows, clouds, deep meadowgrass,
    and the river.

Robin's sisters and my Aunt's lily daughter
Laughed and talked, and tinkled light as wrens
If there were a little colony all hens
To go walking by the steep turn of Sweetwater.

Let them alone, dear Aunt, just for one minute
Till I go fishing in the dark of my mind:
Where have I seen before, against the wind,
These bright virgins, robed and bare of bonnet,

Flowing with music of their strange quick tongue
And adventuring with delicate paces by the stream,—
Myself a child, old suddenly at the scream
From one of the white throats which it hid among?

Janet Waking

Beautifully Janet slept
Till it was deeply morning. She woke then
And thought about her dainty-feathered hen,
To see how it had kept.

One kiss she gave her mother.
Only a small one gave she to her daddy
Who would have kissed each curl of his shining baby;
No kiss at all for her brother.

"Old Chucky, old Chucky!" she cried,
Running across the world upon the grass
To Chucky's house, and listening. But alas,
Her Chucky had died.

It was a transmogrifying bee
Came droning down on Chucky's old bald head
And sat and put the poison. It scarcely bled,
But how exceedingly

And purply did the knot
Swell with the venom and communicate
Its rigor! Now the poor comb stood up straight
But Chucky did not.

So there was Janet
Kneeling on the wet grass, crying her brown hen
(Translated far beyond the daughters of men)
To rise and walk upon it.

And weeping fast as she had breath
Janet implored us, "Wake her from her sleep!"
And would not be instructed in how deep
Was the forgetful kingdom of death.

Captain Carpenter

Captain Carpenter rose up in his prime
Put on his pistols and went riding out
But had got wellnigh nowhere at that time
Till he fell in with ladies in a rout.

It was a pretty lady and all her train
That played with him so sweetly but before
An hour she'd taken a sword with all her main
And twined him of his nose for evermore.

Captain Carpenter mounted up one day
And rode straightway into a stranger rogue
That looked unchristian but be that as may
The Captain did not wait upon prologue.

But drew upon him out of his great heart
The other swung against him with a club
And cracked his two legs at the shinny part
And let him roll and stick like any tub.

Captain Carpenter rode many a time
From male and female he took sundry harms
He met the wife of Satan crying "I'm
The she-wolf bids you shall bear no more arms."

Their strokes and counters whistled in the wind
I wish he had delivered half his blows
But where she should have made off like a hind
The bitch bit off his arms at the elbows.

And Captain Carpenter parted with his ears
To a black devil that used him in this wise
O Jesus ere his threescore and ten years
Another had plucked out his sweet blue eyes.

Captain Carpenter got up on his roan
And sallied from the gate in hell's despite
I heard him asking in the grimmest tone
If any enemy yet there was to fight?

"To any adversary it is fame
If he risk to be wounded by my tongue
Or burnt in two beneath my red heart's flame
Such are the perils he is cast among.

"But if he can he has a pretty choice
From an anatomy with little to lose
Whether he cut my tongue and take my voice
Or whether it be my round red heart he choose."

It was the neatest knave that ever was seen
Stepping in perfume from his lady's bower
Who at this word put in his merry mien
And fell on Captain Carpenter like a tower.

I would not knock old fellows in the dust
But there lay Captain Carpenter on his back
His weapons were the old heart in his bust
And a blade shook between rotten teeth alack.

The rogue in scarlet and grey soon knew his mind
He wished to get his trophy and depart
With gentle apology and touch refined
He pierced him and produced the Captain's heart.

God's mercy rest on Captain Carpenter now
I thought him Sirs an honest gentleman
Citizen husband soldier and scholar enow
Let jangling kites eat of him if they can.

But God's deep curses follow after those
That shore him of his goodly nose and ears
His legs and strong arms at the two elbows
And eyes that had not watered seventy years.

The curse of hell upon the sleek upstart
That got the Captain finally on his back
And took the red red vitals of his heart
And made the kites to whet their beaks clack clack.

How to Avoid Date Rape

BY NELSON W. ALDRICH, JR.

Egon Schiele's 1914 Man and Woman *(Liebespaar)*

What strikes some as an absurd tempest in a teapot is to others a crucial battle in the gender wars. Neither side gets the larger point of the date-rape controversy, says Nelson Aldrich.

Date rape, whirlpooling, *kultur*-rape in Bosnia, the Spur Posse in Southern California, the Manassas penis cutter—sexual horror stories shuddered through the media last year, each paroxysm more horrible than the last.

The erotic mayhem got so bad it even sustained an intelligent conversation for a few months. That's my subject—the talk, especially the talk about date rape and what to do about it. It has fascinated me. One reason, alas, is personal. Legally, it may be true that rape is rape, and that "date" is a needless qualifier of a simple, brutal crime. Trouble is, it may qualify me. The topic reminds me of squalid scuffles in dimly lit rooms, of desperate moves in the back seats of cars. Legal rape is for the poor, the crazy, the unlucky. Date rape, I have to say, may, at least in its broader connotations, be for me.

The other reason for my fascination may have more general implications. Talk of date

rape is appallingly destructive for everyone, even for those who merely talk about it. Anyone peering into the thick cloud of charges and denials can see the corpses. Hope and love died on that date, some sort of hope, anyway—and some sort of love. The truth was another casualty. With charges of date rape, often, one doesn't even have the consolation of knowing that "someone here is lying." Maybe neither of them has been lying.

That's the worst of the destruction, isn't it? To language, to our faith that an apparently common language can create common understandings. Join an argument about date rape, and within minutes we are spinning around in a maelstrom of multiple perspectives. Round and round we go, down and down, until at last we all go gurgling out into Humpty-Dumpty land:

> "When I use a word," Humpty-Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less."
>
> "The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."
>
> "The question is," said Humpty-Dumpty, "which is to be Master—that's all."

Humpty-Dumpty land is where events like date rape may happen, or not happen, simply because someone's word, or spin on a word, masters all competing words, or spins. This land is our land. It's where we come out after our multiple perspectives are so thoroughly separated—each from others, each from itself over time—that all reality is suddenly up for cognitive grabs. In Humpty-Dumpty land every fourth word looks like it's suspended between sarcastic quotation marks. The simple *was*ness of things is lost in a dustup of desperately performative utterances. "Let there have been date rape!" says you; "Let there have been some good clean sex!" says I. And in the end (if there ever is an end), since no one in Humpty-Dumpty land really is Master, all conflicts are settled by force—physical force, or, as we say, the forces of law and order.

Humpty-Dumpty land has been on the map since long before Lewis Carroll. Pick your own Fall—with Heraclitus, Montaigne, Locke, whenever. And one can get fetched up in that country in the course of almost any sort of conversation. Political journalists, for example, spend most of their days there, dizzied and dizzying, as they put competitive spins on the spins of spin masters. This is dismaying enough: A pall of mistrust falls between ourselves and our democracy, our self-government. But imagine what it must be like to get into a word fight over . . . well, let's call it an "intercourse event." Such fights can have consequences for the body. A raped body feels different from a body that has enjoyed a truly erotic moment. A rapist's body (or a "date rapist's") feels different in jail than it does at large.

That was the sort of fight, and the stakes, that were at issue last fall, for example, when two undergraduates submitted their contest for mastery over an intercourse event to the arbitration of a court. The trial happened to be in London, but it might have been anywhere in the English-speaking world. She said she'd been raped. He said he'd been seduced, and was now the victim of the woman's "self-repugnance after the fact." His word was declared Master, it turned out, but as always in the woozy world of Humpty-Dumpty, it had been a near thing.

Nor was the contest over. Isabel Hilton, a columnist for London's *Independent*, confidently opined after the trial that wild bids for mastery such as this woman's are "an abuse of the power that many generations of feminists fought for—the power to *make* their word count and to be taken seriously" (italics mine). But Hilton is naive. Do courts have the final

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word on other words? Can anyone but God, by saying the word, *make* it so?

But this is the horror: that meaning for the body should ever be contingent on the uses and abuses of *power*, yours, mine, and the next guy's, all mixing it up in a battle for mastery. Yet so it seems.

Many people find the prospect of endless semantic warfare extremely disagreeable. I know I do, which is why I am sympathetic to the largest and loudest group in the date-rape debate, the people who say they can't understand what all the fuss is about. I can tell one of them by the first words out of his or her mouth. "When I was dating. . . ," they begin, and invariably go on to claim that they always knew how to get what they desired (or to avoid what they did not) without feeling bad about it, or being thought bad, or being punished as bad, or actually being bad.

The women I've heard on this topic say they knew how to behave on dates because someone taught them: say, how to drink without getting (too) drunk. Their mothers told them what sort of boys to avoid. Their girlfriends explained how to put off the really heavy breathers without enraging them. One would think, listening to these women, that they'd grown up in the oral traditions of a tribe.

The men knew how to date because . . . well, they just knew. As a friend of mine put it, "I was always easily discouraged, is all."

Gnostics of the dating game are Romantics, direct descendants of the divine Jean-Jacques, nostalgists (as he was) of the unconscious conscience. They may also be romantic, lovers of romance, though this is uncertain. But they are certainly naive, like Isabel Hilton. Their tone is usually complacent at first, even bored. But as soon as they find themselves gurgling into Humpty-Dumpty land, they become petulant, frightened, furious. Accusations follow, notably against the people who set off the date-rape alarm. Romantics insist that these people are lying, twisting words for political, specifically feminist effect. A buzzword here is "problematize," as in, "Why are these women problematizing romance?"

But of course the Romantics want to be Master, too, though they seem scarcely aware of it. They want to be masters of the debate, to stop the spinning. It threatens something valuable to them, some broad understanding of "life," the common language that underwrites a pleasing, morale-sustaining arrangement of (moral) relationships and possibilities. Nietzsche called such an arrangement a "horizon," declaring that everyone must either draw one around himself, or "restrict [his] vision to the limits of a horizon drawn by another." We like to call such things a "culture."

Culture is a key concept in this debate. Romantics want one that exerts more or less preemptive control over our words and deeds. You can tell, listening to them, that what they have in mind is what we used to call a "second nature," a sort of quasireflex that mediates between our primal nature, where all our lusts and terrors and rages roil around, and the dry repressive artifacts of society, where our rewards and punishments come from. In a culture like that, laid down deep, knowledge of how to behave on dates, and elsewhere, appears to those who have it as simple realism, basic common sense.

Romantics believe they have it, or, more accurately, that they are had by it. The Romantic notion of culture almost always betrays a longing for that prelapsarian state where moral choices (if choices they are) seem somehow to have merely *happened*, to have come about without the slightest sense of personal agency. Thus, in the Romantic view, dating is always being anthropologized ("a ritual"), or aestheticized ("a dance"), or otherwise jollied into some morally reassuring condition ("a game") in which everyone knows the "moves," the "signals," the "score."

Who can't sympathize with that? I can. What is supremely annoying about the date-rape debate is that it's making everyone hor-

ribly mistrustful and self-conscious about something that ought to proceed easily and naturally. "How absurd!" we say, about the dating rules in force at Antioch College. "You can't legislate courting behavior!" Rules for the management of sexual desire ought to be, as it were, *inherited*. They should do their thing as a trust fund does its thing, releasing their instructions directly into the nerves and fibers of the body, like dividends into the bank account, without the distressing necessity, as one might say, of "working at it."

I speak as a man, but there are Romantic women who are quite as annoyed by the date-rape alarmists as the men are. "What's the problem?" they ask. "Why can't they *handle* these guys?" One heard this refrain often during the Hill-Thomas hearings, when southern women, black and white, were reported to be scorning their beleaguered "sister." "What *is* the matter with that woman," they'd say, "to let a man treat her so bad?" Camille Paglia, catching the refrain, has made a media career out of sneering at abuse-sensitive feminists. To Paglia, they are a bunch of complainers who can't seem to seize the full possibilities of their liberation: that they, too, as *naturally* as any man, can yearn for an intercourse event.

The notion of deep culture serves Romantics well. Too well, say the feminists, the second-loudest participants in the date-rape debate. To them, it seems obvious that the culture that these latter-day Romantics want to defend is "patriarchy." Cut through the persiflage, feminists say, and what you find is the very source of date rape, men's domination of women. Date rape occurs because the deep-cultural structures of patriarchy—a "second nature" if there ever was one, founded on the "natural" physical power of men—cannot accommodate the right of women to say no.

Forgive me if I seem Clintonesque here, not to say wimpish, but I find that I am as sympathetic to the feminist drive to destroy patriarchy as I am to the Romantic desire to restore "ritual." I am a liberal, that is to say, a grateful beneficiary of liberal revolutions, the American Revolution in particular. And what happened in that revolution, among other things, was a semantic struggle over "the King" in which we liberals gained the mastery. "The King," once a deep-cultural instruction of obligation and deference, was henceforth to be understood as a tyrannical claim on our deference and obedience. This justified the overthrow of the institution behind the word. American men today live on the spoils of that glorious triumph, and it seems to me that feminists want only to push it to its logical conclusion. As they see it, patriarchy lay at the bottom of the King, the Church, the Great Chain of Being, and God the Father. Patriarchy is the root system of a once-vast tree. The tree has been felled, by the American and other revolutions, but the roots still send up noxious shoots (such as rape) to pollute the good clean air of freedom and equality. This is feminism's self-appointed task: to whack away at these last extrusions of a deep, underlying culture—to cover it in darkness, so that it will die.

Romantics of the dating game can't be expected to applaud this task, but they can hardly protest it either, having profited so handsomely from its first cuts. The only thing they can do is ask the feminists the same question that was always asked of their predecessors in the liberal revolution: What happens when you've won? And if patriarchy is the last, deepest culture of them all, what on earth will take its place as a deep, preemptive control on our desires, as our new moral habit? And if nothing should take its place, how shall we ever be *good*?

Feminists seem not overly responsive to these questions. They appear much too busy with the more joyful part of their task, the liberating whacking part. Beyond that, they are usually content with the immemorial reply of previous liberal warriors. Deep dead cultures will simply have to be replaced by education. In the date-rape instance, this means, presumably, the marvelous educative powers of principle—No Fornication without Representa-

THE ANTIOCH COLLEGE
SEXUAL OFFENSE POLICY

1. For the purpose of this policy, "consent" shall be defined as follows: the act of willingly and verbally agreeing to engage in specific sexual contact or conduct.

2. If sexual contact and/or conduct is not mutually and simultaneously initiated, then the person who initiates sexual contact/conduct is responsible for getting the verbal consent of the other individual(s) involved.

3. Obtaining consent is an on-going process in any sexual interaction. Verbal consent should be obtained with each new level of physical and/or sexual contact/conduct in any given interaction, regardless of who initiates it. Asking "Do you want to have sex with me?" is not enough. The request for consent must be specific to each act.

4. The person with whom sexual contact/conduct is initiated is responsible to express verbally and/or physically her/his willingness or lack of willingness when reasonably possible.

5. If someone has initially consented but then stops consenting during a sexual interaction, she/he should communicate withdrawal verbally and/or through physical resistance. The other individual(s) must stop immediately.

6. To knowingly take advantage of someone who is under the influence of alcohol, drugs and/or prescribed medication is not acceptable behavior in the Antioch community.

A section of Antioch College's 1993 "sexual violence and safety" policy.

tion! Failing that, feminists will demand contracts, like Antioch's. Failing those, they will call, as exasperated liberals always do, for lashings of laws and punishments.

Somehow the liberal response doesn't seem to satisfy anymore, not as it used to. It especially doesn't satisfy those, such as Charles Taylor, Robert Bellah, and others, who are often called communitarians. Communitarians have a strong voice in the date-rape debate, and in some of them, the softer ones, it throbs equally with Romance and alarm. Like the feminists, if far less enthusiastically, the communitarians acknowledge that daters should treat each other as equals, lest there be no self-respect and mutual respect on dates. For, without those, dating will always be prone to corruption, unhappiness, and lousy sex.

Like Romantics, however, communitarians believe that it will take more than freedom and equality, more even than education, Antioch-like contracts, and the police, to assure smooth dating. Like Romantics, they believe it will take a culture. Daters need a culture to preserve the romance of dating, of course, but even more urgently they need one to save civil society from increasing violence. Or rather, to save us from two great evils that lead to violence.

One evil was flagged first by Jean-Jacques himself: the hypocrisy, the falsity, that comes with studied behavior. To that one might add the gaucherie. If "education" is all that stands between us and moral chaos, then good behavior is all a matter of study. It doesn't matter what sort of study, whether one gets it in school, or from how-to books, or at the feet of preachers, gurus, or fee-for-service therapists, or from any of the thousands of moral curricula that modern society has generated to help us control our desires. It might even come

from the always-handy "discipline of the marketplace." As soon as we depend on "study" or "work," we find ourselves on the slippery slope from frustration to rage, thence to the divine afflatus of fury that lifts us high, high, high above all conflict, mistrust, restraint, and lets us scream out at last the most blissful obscenity of rejection.

And that evil leads straight to the other: a society that has to whip itself into obedience with laws, rules, and regulations, all backed up by the police, the courts, and the prisons. The pendulum of American violence swings like that—back and forth between antinomian ecstasy and Arminian wrath.

No surprise there, say the communitarians. America, more than any other modern society, has neglected its communities. It is only "community," they say, that can provide us with both a Romantic's notion of culture and a feminist's notion of equality. More accurately, a strong, pervasive, and, yes, mildly repressive *sense* of community is what is needed. It takes a whole village, goes a favorite communitarian proverb, to raise a child. Cultures do not insinuate themselves, by themselves, into the mainsprings of people's behavior, as many Romantics seem to believe. They are cultivated, and constantly reinforced, by the example, the pressure, the approval, and if need be the condemnation, of members of a community. To imagine that "culture" could be an agent of self-government without community, as Romantics often do, is to imagine that Ralph Lauren breeds ladies and gentlemen. This is not just romantic; it is hopelessly romantic.

Against the feminist-liberals, on the other hand, communitarians take a decidedly skeptical view of freedom. Liberation is okay, apparently: freeing us from the oppression of inequality. Liberty is more dubious. But "community" subdues liberty, almost without our knowing it. It does this by replacing liberty with the great human goods that liberation has uprooted: a sense of place, of belonging, of the givenness of things; continuity between the generations; and, derived from these goods, a common, dependable language of speech and gesture, and a "horizon" to embrace and contain a renewed order of self-government.

As it happens, I have some personal experience of these benefits of "community." I grew up in as realistic a copy of a village culture as you'll find in America. Not among the Amish or the Hassidim; nor in an assimilation-resistant ghetto, immigrant or drug-infested. These places are arguably not in America, or not yet. I was raised in patrician Boston, with its bleak virtues of thriftiness, trustworthiness, grim fortitude, and moral candor; its *cursus honorum* of boarding school, outdoor discipline, and Harvard; and its endless, manifold repressions—sexual repression not least among them. This culture was laid down deep in me, or was supposed to have been, and to a quite specific purpose—the breeding of an all 'round boy, who would become a prudent, gentlemanly, civic-minded man, a sort of Renaissance trustee.

But the culture, deep as it was, was not deep enough. It did not take. Nor did it take with my childhood friends. It couldn't have: The Fall had occurred. Even in Boston, there is no inherited culture; it must be chosen, worked for, studied.

This was the great flaw in Katie Roiphe's famous *New York Times Magazine* article of last summer, which brought the date-rape debate home to her parents' generation. Roiphe is an apostle of a rather Pagliesque sort of Romanticism in dating. "No problem" is her view of date rape: How can it be rape if I'm loving it? (No, I am unfair. Her view is more like, "I may not be loving it, but it's not rape, either.") Still, she does try to account for the date rapes—in her view, the very few date rapes—that do happen. And her answer is: cross-cultural dating on today's multicultural campuses. In my terms this translates as: If I'd only stuck to ladylike Bostonians in my dating career, I could never even imagine, as I can now imagine all too

well, that I had ever committed date rape.

But Roiphe has made a truly nasty problem for herself here, and it's a problem I don't see communitarians finessing, either. For if it's true that our erotic mayhem, such as it may be, is a consequence of crossed cultural signals, then all we have to do to fix matters is a little cultural cleansing. Schools, singles bars, neighborhoods, municipal swimming pools, cruise ships, wherever people meet to date and mate (and possibly to rape), need only be segregated by village culture, that is, by the variety of second-nature nurture they received at birth, merely because of their birth, and all will be well.

This is dangerous rubbish. Cultural cleansing may cut down rape within cultures, assuming there is such a thing, but at the cost of increasing it along their (always expanding, always violent) frontiers. Moreover, Nazis, fascists, and Greater Serbians have all tried this sort of hygiene, and none has managed to remain clean for long.

Beyond the rubbish, though, I want to ask Roiphe what cultures she has in mind, in this New World, that are so determinative of male dating behavior that the word "no" actually gets translated as "yes."

To me, the Romantic-communitarian theory of cultured behavior is just another twitch of tribal nostalgia. "Culture" serves these people as does the chauvinism of a typically mixed-ethnic American who, of all the leaves in his genetic salad, chooses to claim the one called "German." Such ploys are just some of the desperate ways we have of coping with, by somehow delimiting, the single greatest constitutive achievement of modern societies, certainly of American society—our democratization of the franchise of desire. Anybody has the right to want anything, even to *be* anything.

It's easy to forget that not long ago a full range of desires was possible only for the privileged, by birth or traditional office. Everyone else was embedded in ignorance and poverty, surviving on fatalism, faith, and the remissive powers of alcohol. Today everyone, including our children, especially our children, is promised the freedom, the opportunity, the *possibility* of wanting almost everything there is to want—and the possibility of getting what he or she wants. (Not wanting, in fact, is a form of invisibility, a kind of death.) This achievement is the glorious reward of our long, bloody struggle for freedom and equality against kings, nobles, priests, and (soon now) patriarchs. It's as if all those old oligopolists had been dispossessed of their estates, with the privileges auctioned off to the richest bidders (richest in talents, luck, and money), and their hopes and dreams given freely to everyone else. In America, where the franchise of desire has spread wider and gone deeper than anywhere else in the world, this magnificent process is called the pursuit of happiness.

But no culture, not even Boston's, can possibly withstand the temptations of democratized desire. First, the franchise sends everything spinning. It may be an accident that the "Rashomon effect," everybody's favorite denominator of the vertigo of multiple perspectives, refers to a movie about a rape. But a drama of desire it had to be, of one kind or another. Desire is what pumps Humpty-Dumpty up.

Second, the free-market system combines with the franchise to abstract cultures and communities from their settings—to commodify, package, and send them to market. (Watch: In a generation or so, someone is sure to be selling us on the beauties of the Patriarchal lifestyle.) All the so-called cultures available in the modern world—the "culture" (which is also the "community," mind you) of your business, your favorite sport, your neighborhood, your social class, your region, your neurosis, your religion, your taste in food and drink, your therapy, your profession, and on and on—all the desire-control devices manufactured by a desire-driven polity are all simply elective cur-

ricula, more or less costly, more or less exchangeable, more or less thorough. But all, lest desire be hedged about, perfectly shallow.

Therefore, *pace* Katie Roiphe, it is not communities of common culture that intradate and make love, or interdate and rape, on campuses these days; it is individual closets of cultures. They may be a bit jumbled, these closets, Ralph Lauren suits on the hangers, grunge outfits on the floor. But the kids can't be expected to have their own personal style right off the dime, can they? Not any more than adults can be expected to keep a lifestyle for the length of a life. The modern principle applies to young and old: Mix and match your own cultures! Be your own Humpty-Dumpty! Select, don't settle.

Finally, to finish off any lingering fantasy we may have about cultivating deep cultures, there's the only common, truly pervasive culture we have, the consumer culture. Its Idol, as Auden called it, is possibility. The cultural horizons of communitarian nostalgia exerted desire-control by letting poverty, fatalism, religion edit (out, for the most part) possibility. There were some things you just did not want or do; they were utterly unimaginable. Humpty-Dumpty sat on his wall. Moreover, these pre- and proscriptions did seem inherited, "natural" as egg and sperm and "blood" are natural. However, as an added assurance of good behavior, the moral culture was passed along with an equally "natural" inherited status—as Slave, say, or Father, or First-Born Son, or Woman. Without a hereditary-status hierarchy, in fact, no community culture of the sort longed for by communitarians has ever existed. Nor, thanks to our democratic access to the sense of possibility, will it ever exist again.

Thus, in the actual world, it is impossibility that is unimaginable—for everyone. With the glory of liberation now hard-wired to the universality of the consumer "culture," the most compelling instruction of modern life, and of the whole worldwide economy built upon it, is that there is not now, nor ought there *ever* to be, any controls on our possibilities, our desires, at all.

Some communitarians seem to recognize the hopelessness of their cause. Like Charles Taylor, they pray that we may somehow see, and choose, the wisdom of embedding ourselves in some sort of community, of restricting ourselves within some Nietzschian horizon of the possible. But to judge by the activities of some of their agents—for example, the American Association for Rights & Responsibilities—the only way many communitarians can think of to accomplish this feat is to help "communities" lash the miscreants in their midst with new laws, more police, and harsher punishments. Any old liberal could have thought of that. But thought, too, that it will never do the trick.

No wonder date rape managed to get a good conversation going. The date is the perfect synecdoche for our modern predicament. We are always out on dates of some sort or other, petting and being petted, breathing heavily, tumescent, possessed by the passion to possess—something. Even objects of desire (subject to fear) have this experience. But at the same time, in the shadow of this heady arousal, the thought occurs that we can't get all we want all the time. There are too few resources, too many desires, too many objects of desire, too many ways of getting what we desire. Not to mention too many other desirers, each with multiple needs, wants, yearnings of their own, and multiple perspectives to go with them. It's enough to drive one mad.

Whereupon we sense the melancholy summons to self-government. The thing is melancholy in just about every way. It means choosing, which eliminates possibilities and reminds us that no one is chosen, that nothing is given. It means taking responsibility, thereby inhibiting desire and inviting blame. It means calculation, plans, cost-benefit analyses, all of which promote self-consciousness, prepare for embarrassment, and stifle romance. Above all,

self-government is terribly difficult, and not just because of the possibilities and temptations of desire. For the fact is that all the King's horses of "community," and all the King's men of "culture," cannot disguise the fact that we govern ourselves alone, and that we have to choose our own stars to guide us. It's only when we fail to do so that we find we have company—the police, for example.

Other help is available. Self-government is depressing, but not impossible. As Philip Rieff reminded us 30 years ago in *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, all the while that "cultures" were being rendered elective, and their "communities" with them, portable culture substitutes were being prepared in the consulting rooms of psychotherapists. Of course it's a highly contentious question in Humpty-Dumpty land how helpful fee-for-service therapy may be to self-government. Many Romantics loathe it as another plague of self-consciousness, another blight on romance. Many communitarians complain that without family, neighborhood, and peer group to reinforce the therapized behavior, the help will come to naught. And many feminists consider most schools of therapy just so many shoots of the old patriarchal root system, to be slashed and buried. No one claims that it will do anything for the loneliness of the task.

But even here help may be on the way. People have been "problematizing" the franchise of desire and the worship of possibility for a very long time. And again and again they've concluded that what's needed is to reverse the whole economic ethos that underwrites the franchise and the idolatry. This means turning upside down some of our most cherished values—"economic growth," "mobility" (always upward of course), the whole ideological apparatus that Plato condemned as "pleonexia," more-more-ism, the fatal disease of democracy.

The question is, how? There's been a surprising unanimity about this. Generation after generation of worriers about behavior have hit upon the same old counterethos—asceticism. It has been propounded in many forms, Christian mostly, but also classical. Among my sort of Bostonians, for example, the secret appetite suppressant (and capital preservative) was Stoicism. Today it seems to me that there are more asceticisms on the morality market than ever before: Buddhism, New Ageisms, especially varieties based on Native American practices, radical environmentalism, and so on. More to the point of date rape, a vast network of quasicommunities, ad hoc villages, has grown up around the possibility of impossibility and the folly of insatiable desire. This is the 12-Step movement set in motion by Alcoholics Anonymous, but now established among "communities" of incontinents of every conceivable description—including the lustful, the panicky, and the enraged.

But of course none of these curricula will make much headway against pleonexia so long as the marketplace keeps up its relentless arousal of desire. James Madison knew this in the 1790s, as did William James in the 1890s. Jimmy Carter knew it, too, when he echoed James's call for the moral equivalent of war to ground a new asceticism for the 1970s. Poor Carter. But now the rage for more, more, more is bumping up against a tiny but fully mobilized political opposition, as well as some brutal denials of desire in the environment. If it weren't for injustice, the sickening (and widening) gap between the desire possibilities of the rich and the poor, one might even suggest that the ascetic curriculum looks like a good long-term investment. There are no grounds for optimism, as Christopher Lasch pointed out recently, but we can always hope.

Meanwhile, as we await the future of asceticism, two things will change. The conversation about date rape will move on to other frightful subjects, and fewer and fewer intercourse events will be performatively declared "date rapes" by feminist-alarmist Humpty-Dumpties. The reason is not that these events will become universally consensual, still less that we'll all wrap ourselves in horizons of factitious culture communities and date only

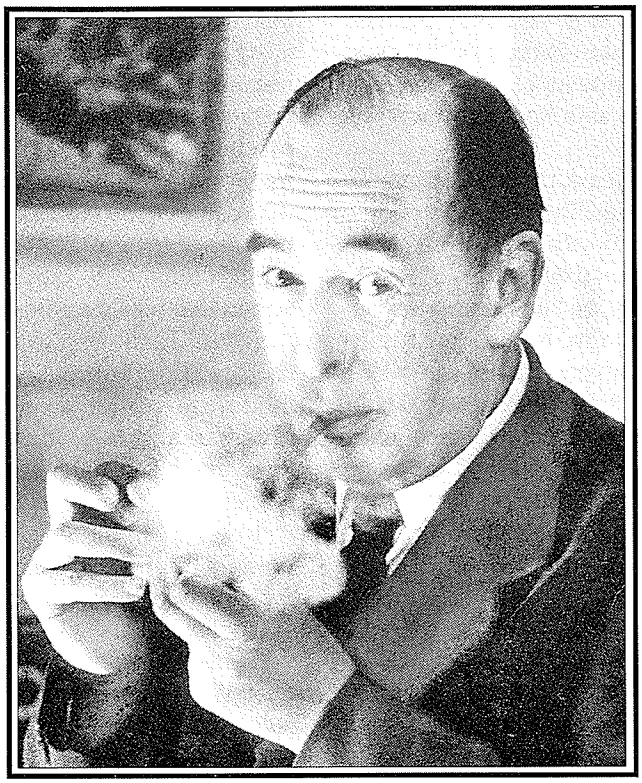
within them. The reason is that, long before society becomes just or we become ascetics, the feminist revolution will succeed and patriarchy will die.

After that it seems likely that the worst fears of the Romantics will come true. Mistrust and self-mistrust should become even more commonplace than they have been, spreading deeper and deeper into all social relations and all activities—schooling, politics, art, therapies. With this, love should become even less "natural," even more of a studied achievement, than it already is. Perhaps, then, we will finally accept what we hear so often, but don't want to believe: that love is "hard work."

Self-government, meanwhile, will be as hard as it always was, even with a proliferation of rules and contracts. And its failures, like rape, will be what they've always been in liberal regimes—ever more harshly, ever more ineffectually punished crimes. If you have seen Antioch, you have seen the future of America. And (up to a point) it works.

If this sounds disagreeable, as it surely does already to many millions of people, something can be done about it without waiting for the doubtful triumph of asceticism. There are any number of groups dedicated to the promulgation of a stable, inerrant language, and to a "natural," unequivocal moral law. These groups differ in the warrant they believe they've found for these certainties: the Bible, the Koran, the Roman Catholic doctrine of natural law, the tribe, the "original intent" of the Founders of the Republic, God's Word, your genes, and so on. They vary, too, in their attitude toward the free market and its indefatigable spirit of consumerism. But they do not vary in their hostility to liberty, to possibility, to democratic desire, and to individual self-government.

This is a high price to pay, it seems to a conversationalist like me, merely for a little semantic security. Moreover, it seems extremely unlikely that merely by subjecting himself to one Humpty-Dumpty, enclosing himself within the wall of his horizon, that anyone can put him back together again. And even if one could, what of the H-Ds on the other side? What of the H-Ds inside one's own head? We know now that the fat boys are here, there, everywhere. And as we'll never be able to forget it, we will never be together again, either.



MERE LEWIS

BY JAMES COMO

Thirty years after his death, C. S. Lewis remains a Celebrity Author: the complacent professor who churned out winsome children's fiction and quotable religious apologetics. That image, confirmed by the recent celluloid treatment, Shadowlands, *trivializes the weight and worth of Lewis's achievement, as well as the struggle behind it.*

It was the practice of Clive Staples Lewis, while at Magdalen College, Oxford, during the 1940s, to have friends, students, and colleagues to dinner parties. Amid much drinking and even more revelry, Lewis would sometimes perform an astonishing parlor trick. Upon being told how terrible it was to remember nothing, he would reply that it was worse to forget nothing, as was the case with everything he read. Of course, this declaration would be met with incredulity and demands that he put up or shut up. And so he would solicit a series of numbers from the most skeptical guest, which he then would apply to a bookcase, a shelf within that case, and a book upon that shelf. The guest would then fetch the specified volume (which could be in any one of several languages), open to a page of his own choosing, read aloud

from that page, and stop where he pleased. Lewis would then quote the rest of that page from memory. Like some supremely gifted performer—a DiMaggio, or a Spencer Tracy—he made it all look easy.

In its astonishing ease, this feat of memory is emblematic of the facility that many people have come to associate with Lewis's life, work, and even his religious convictions. Precisely because of this facility, he has come to be seen as a trivializing Pollyanna, tremendously gifted but of little ultimate consequence as a writer and thinker. The hit movie *Shadowlands* (about Lewis's late marriage to Joy Davidman Gresham) seems to have perfectly captured this celebrity image by presenting him as a sort of "human tea cozy," as one reviewer aptly put it.

To be sure, as icon and phrasemaker Lewis has had considerable appeal. He has been cited by churchmen of the utmost authority (John Paul II and Billy Graham) and by powerful political leaders (Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and George Bush, who borrowed "a thousand points of light" directly from *The Magician's Nephew*). Writers from highbrow critic Wayne Booth to children's author Madeleine L'Engle imitate him. Others use his motifs in their work (the notion of "longing" appears in Walker Percy's *The Second Coming*) or make allusions to him (Robertson Davies in *The Manticore*, Tom Wolfe in *Bonfire of the Vanities*). Most of his 50-odd books have been continuously in print since first publication, the Narnia series alone selling in the millions-per-year range in several different languages worldwide. A patently uneven industry of anecdotal memoirs, biographies (three in the last seven years, the best being *Jack: C.S. Lewis and His Times*, by George Sayer, who knew Lewis well), and especially commentary continues to flourish. And a number of societies devoted to the study of his life and the appreciation of his work thrive both in the United States and in England.

For all his popularity—or, more likely, because of it—Lewis has been vastly underestimated. One reason for this may be that he produced no Grand Theories or intricate methodologies. He never wrote what is formally known as systematic theology. In fact, he claimed to be no theologian at all, and he explicitly disavowed—indeed, shuddered at—the notion that his thought might be construed as "original." Far more significant, though, was his rhetorical opportunism. No venue was too modest, no reader too unlearned, no idea too unremarkable to be spared his gifts, if those gifts, however deployed, might profit the reader. Ironically, though this desire and ability to be accessible and adaptive, almost to the point of humility, was integral to Lewis's genius, it is also what has so often elicited charges of triviality and shallowness.

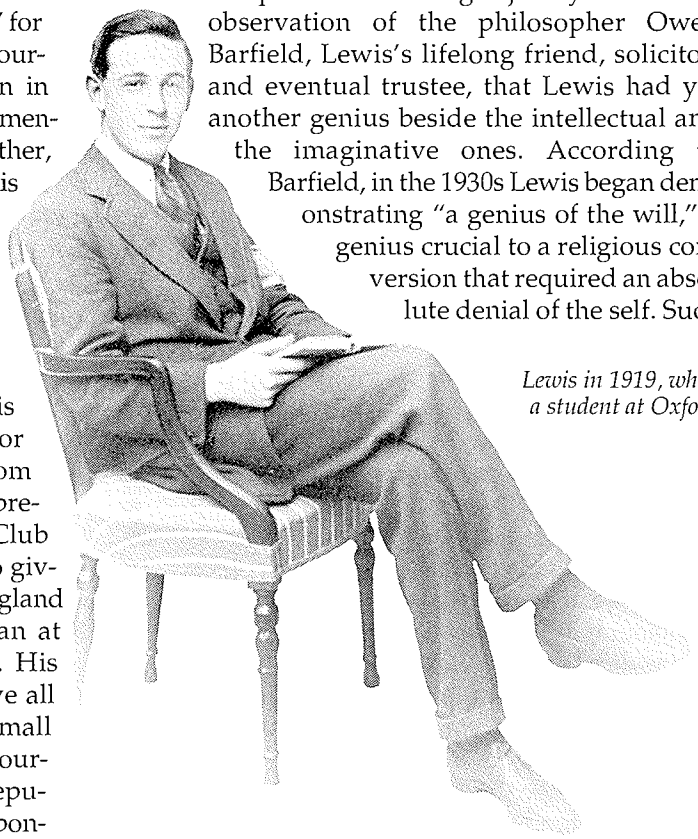
This scholar, storyteller, and philosopher deserves a more discerning appraisal. His intellectual output, to begin with, was huge and various—so much so that it beggars the capacity of most readers. In addition to his books, he saw to print more than 200 short pieces and nearly 80 poems, excluding those in the cycle *Spirits in Bondage* (1919). His essays range from critical, historical, and theoretical to religious, philosophical, and cultural. Devoted readers of his Narnia chronicles for children may not have read, or even know of, *The Screwtape Letters* (1942), surely Lewis's second best-known work and the one that earned him a place on the cover of *Time* in 1947. Lewis the scholar is likely unknown to the readers of his Ransom trilogy of space fantasies. Those who know *Mere Christianity* (1952), based on the wartime BBC radio talks that made his voice the second most recognized in Britain (after Churchill's), probably will not have read either the subtle *Problem of Pain* (1940) or the short analytical essays and the sermons. Still fewer will have read Lewis's lyrical poetry. And almost no one is aware of his long narrative poems.

James Como *teaches rhetoric and public communication at York College (CUNY), and edited* C. S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table, and Other Reminiscences *(1979).*

As it is known conventionally, Lewis's biography seems simple enough. He was born in Belfast in 1898; his mother, Flora, died nearly 10 years later. When he was not yet 19 he arrived at University College, Oxford, fluent in Greek, Latin, and French, only to find himself in the trenches of World War I soon thereafter. In 1919, wounded but not disabled (he would carry shrapnel in his chest all his life), and having distinguished himself by capturing a few dozen German soldiers, he returned to the university and took a rare triple first in classics, philosophy, and English literature. He won a permanent fellowship at Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1925, by which time he had been, in his words, "a blaspheming atheist" for nearly 15 years. Although his journey toward conversion began in these years, it did not gain momentum until the death of his father, Albert, in 1929. But even then, this "most reluctant convert in England" became simply a believer in God. Two years later he became a Christian, and remained a professing Anglican for the rest of his life.

For the next 15 years Lewis would be more active as author (18 books) and speaker—from broadcasting over the BBC to presiding at the Oxford Socratic Club (which he helped to found) to giving talks at bases all around England for the Royal Air Force—than at any other period in his life. His many great friendships, above all those nurtured within the small circle known as the Inklings, flourished, as did his worldwide reputation and burdensome correspondence (2,000 letters per week at its crest). In 1952, he met and would later court and marry Joy Davidman. In the meantime Lewis moved to Magdalene College, Cambridge, as its first professor of Medieval and Renaissance English Literature. After the publication of still other books and Joy's death in 1960, and now virtually alone with his beloved older brother and dearest friend, Warren ("Warnie"), he began a slow physical decline. Even so, he completed five more books during this period, including the supremely readable *Experiment in Criticism* and *A Grief Observed* (both 1961). In 1963 ill health forced his retirement; his death on November 22 of that year went virtually unnoticed throughout most of the world, at least until the shock of John F. Kennedy's assassination subsided.

Now, for all its striking achievements and some unlikely spikes, this life is not complicated—nothing to justify the curious observation of the philosopher Owen Barfield, Lewis's lifelong friend, solicitor, and eventual trustee, that Lewis had yet another genius beside the intellectual and the imaginative ones. According to Barfield, in the 1930s Lewis began demonstrating "a genius of the will," a genius crucial to a religious conversion that required an absolute denial of the self. Such a denial in the case of Lewis would be especially difficult in light of his inclination toward self-indulgence. "What I think is true," Barfield wrote in the introduction to *Light on C.S. Lewis* (1965), "is that at a certain stage in his life [Lewis] deliber-



Lewis in 1919, when a student at Oxford

ately ceased to take any interest in himself except as a kind of spiritual alumnus taking his moral finals." This stage also marks the beginning of what must be called his public ministry, for within a year of his conversion he would publish his first Christian work, *The Pilgrim's Regress* (1933), an allegorical autobiography so severe and unsparing in its assault on 20th-century idols that he would later regret its "uncharitable temper." Only a second, and closer, look at his early life can suggest what he converted from.

Flora Lewis, a loyal communicant in the Church of Ireland, must have been a remarkable woman. She witnessed what might have been a miracle at age 12 when, while visiting a Catholic church in Florence, she saw the eyes of a waxen female saint slowly open and gaze at her; later she earned a bachelor of arts from Queen's College, Belfast, in mathematics and logic. (Her son, incidentally, would prove mathematically useless, failing a simple algebra test required for entrance to Oxford; only because he had volunteered for service in the war was the requirement waived and Lewis admitted.) In *Surprised by Joy* (1955), his spiritual autobiography, Lewis described his mother's indulgent ways and likened her death in his 10th year to a continent's sinking into the sea. Alienation from his father, a solicitor, followed, and Lewis lost his Christian faith.

The university years that followed represented a great gap in what was the published autobiographical record. But Lewis's recently issued diary, *All My Road Before Me* (1991), shows a young man out of sync, working to hold a house yet too young and immature to head it, or even to know what he had gotten into. This strange set of affairs resulted from something that few people knew anything about: The house was presided over by the mother of Lewis's slain army buddy, Paddy Moore. Married but separated, Janie King Moore was an attractive 45-year-old woman when Lewis took up with her in 1919, when he was 20. In its early stages their liaison almost certainly included a sexual dimension. (This was neither the first nor final incidence of Lewis's curious sexual interests. As an adolescent writing about women, he signed some letters "Philomastix"—"lover of the switch." During his university days he read much Freud and Havelock Ellis; later he would dream of seductive "brown girls"—a purely symbolic, not racial, coloration—and finally allow that he had greatly underestimated the ease of overcoming the sin of lust.) This unusual household would end only with the death of Mrs. Moore at age 78, when Lewis himself was 52.

During this long ménage, Lewis eagerly undertook an endless round of menial chores, which warranted Mrs. Moore's observation that he was as good "as having an extra servant." Christopher Derrick, a pupil of Lewis's and a philosopher and Catholic apologist in his own right, has remarked on this episode and on Lewis's later marriage that they represent in his friend a sort of self-indenturing to certain women. Lewis's great friend J. R. R. Tolkien, as well as his brother and father, took Derrick's notion a step further and argued that Lewis was unable to resist anyone—especially a woman—in need. (During his life, he gave two-thirds of his income to charity.)

Perhaps the conversion was "no sudden plunge into a new life," as his brother Warren described it, "but rather a slow steady convalescence from a deep-seated spiritual illness of long-standing," a sort of neurotic atheism. Lewis might have admitted as much. But he would have insisted that both simple maturation (as Barfield claimed) and convalescence helped occasion the self-abnegation that was the key to his conversion. Thus, for example, he could marry an obnoxious American divorcée without regard to the loss of offended friends, and he could achieve great commercial success as a Christian apologist with no concern for the academic ostracism that inevitably followed. The point is that Lewis chose to surrender to all the self-sacrificing and unself-regarding ironies of Christian belief, no matter the conse-

quences to his self or the dues he had to pay. He did not even believe in the rewards of an afterlife when he first became a Christian; it was not until his fifties that he finally believed his own sins were forgiven. With this willful disregard for—and crucial inattention to—himself, he could seem to those around him a curious mix of enthusiastic affection and quite sheer reticence, while all along he was spiritually "regressing," becoming the innocent "little child" that Jesus counsels his followers to be.

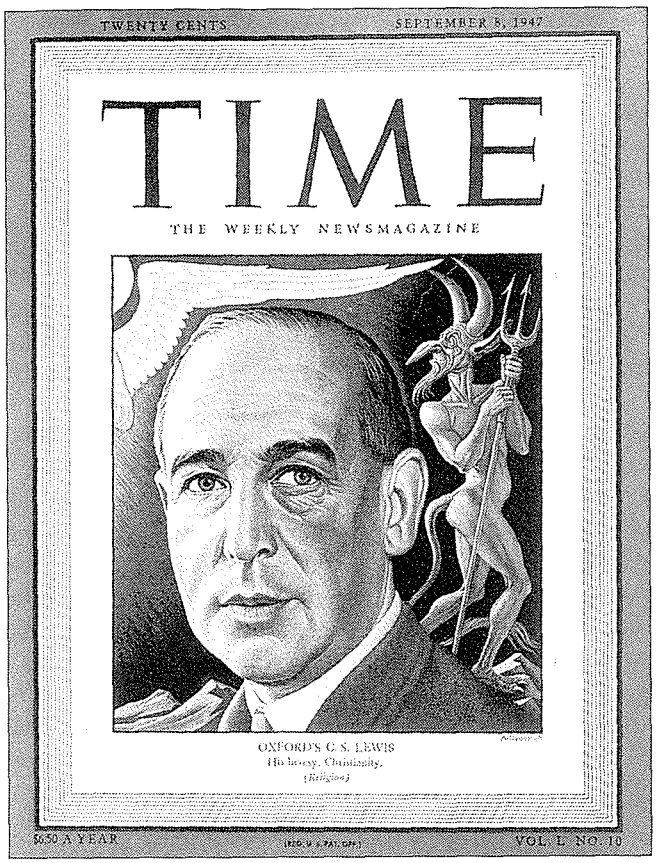
As for the charge of "wish fulfillment" traditionally leveled against Christianity and against Lewis in particular: If, to paraphrase Lewis, his purpose had been to fulfill wishes or to live as Pollyanna, even a dull man could have thought up something easier than Christianity. And, I would add, Lewis could have contrived a far more convenient life. Pain and grief, like disbelief and doubt, were old acquaintances. In writing about the diabolical Screwtape he said as much:

> Some have paid me an undeserved compliment by supposing that my *Letters* were the ripe fruit of many years' study in moral and ascetic theology. They forgot that there is an equally reliable, though less creditable, way of learning how temptation works. "My heart"—I need no other's—"sheweth me the wickedness of the ungodly."

His best genius used his pain, grief, doubt, and sin, demonstrating not some shallow facility but a triumph of charity. And the fact that he—not the scavenged, half-understood, misrepresented celebrity—could make it look easy allows it to seem possible for the rest of us.

In his famous 1954 inaugural lecture at Cambridge, Lewis called himself "Old Western Man"—one who could read old texts as a native and see newer ones from the vantage of a long perspective. His learning and critical skills were so prodigious that, in this case I think, facility must be conceded. Consider this mere inventory: He introduced the phrase "personal heresy" into our critical lexicon, arguing that we are wrong to read a book in order to find out about its author, or to study an author's life in order to understand his book; to do either is to abort the strictly literary experience, which is what we are after in the first place. He described the medieval foundations of romantic love and charted its literary genealogy, breathing life into a calcified notion of allegory. He defined *Paradise Lost* for a generation, debunking the Satan-as-hero error along the way. ("From hero to general, from general to politician, from politician to secret service agent, then to a thing that peers in at bedroom or bathroom windows, and thence to a toad, and finally to a snake.") He revised our understanding of English literature in the 16th century, believably claiming that there was no Renaissance in England and that, if there was, it did not matter. He explained the medieval worldview, so that we can never again consider those ancestors as especially ignorant, superstitious, or irrational. He described precisely those dozen or so concepts ("wit," "free," and "simple," among others) that so ensnare us when we take them for granted, especially when reading old books. And, by the pure force of his enthusiasm, he got more unlikely people to read more old books than ever before. He taught us (in *An Experiment in Criticism*, much before its time in 1961 and now too unassuming for our Age of Methodology) what we do, should do, and must not do when we read. Finally, he "rehabilitated" dozens of authors and shot out of the air as many literary fallacies as there are critical schools. And all of it is resplendently, improbably readable. In *An Experiment in Criticism* he wrote:

> Literary experience heals the wound, without undermining the privilege, of individuality. There are mass emotions which heal the wound; but they undermine the privilege. In them our separate selves are pooled and we sink back into sub-individuality. But in reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself. Like the night sky in the Greek poem, I see with a myriad eyes, but it is still I who see. Here, as in worship, in love, in moral action, and in knowing, I transcend myself; and am never more myself than when I do.



In 1947 C. S. Lewis made the cover of Time *magazine, largely as a result of the exorbitant success of* The Screwtape Letters.

This same commitment to making his ideas accessible motivated the direction taken by his storytelling career. "Any amount of Christianity can now be smuggled in under the guise of fiction," wrote Lewis to his friend Sister Penelope. All of Lewis's fictions are allegorical or "indirect communications," (as Søren Kierkegaard would have called them): *The Great Divorce* (1946), about a bus trip to heaven from what is either hell or purgatory; *The Screwtape Letters*, a correspondence from Uncle Screwtape, a chief devil, to his nephew, Wormwood, an apprentice at work on an earthly "patient"; *The Pilgrim's Regress*, the tale of John the Pilgrim's perilous search for the "landlord" and his return home; even his early short story, "The Man Born Blind," about a man whose sight is restored but who dies in an attempt to "see light." These and other fictional works have us encounter God as we do in reality. Or, as Lewis put it, "God is everywhere but is everywhere *incognito*."

The most striking manifestation of Lewis's obliqueness is his use of a first-person narrator—a queen, no less—in the masterpiece *Till We Have Faces* (1956). A retelling (or rather a setting right) of the Cupid and Psyche myth, it is an ostensibly simple study of a brilliant, resentful, and belligerent mind as it comes to confront its own self-serving, bigoted, militantly anti-Divine delusions. The book's themes and motifs are pure Lewis—the poison of possessive love, the dangers of an inflated and unrestrained self, the concrete immanence of the supernatural, among others. The flavor, however, is new in Lewis: The purpose is broadly moral but not explicitly didactic, the structure (especially its concentrically arranged time frames) is far more intricate than that of anything else he wrote, and the psychology of the protagonist is not only uncharacteristically ugly but ambiguous, too. Queen Orual is in despair, does not know it, but is on the brink of finding it out. In the end, it is she who will *be* found out, along with the rest of us for whom she is a surrogate.

Even in his children's books, Lewis was able to adumbrate the most complicated Christian themes and make them appealing to his reader. Consider Lewis's most remarkable speech, from *The Silver Chair* (1953), a Narnia book. Puddleglum the Marshwiggle has accompanied two children on a search for a lost prince who has been held captive by the Queen of Underland. The four are finally free, thanks to Puddleglum's heroic action, though still deep

in the queen's cave, when she comes upon them and begins casting a spell to convince them that there are no real trees and stars, nor even a real Aslan, the great lion who sang Narnia into creation. At the point of psychological and spiritual collapse, Puddleglum speaks:

> Suppose we have only dreamed, or made up, all those things—trees and grass and sun and moon and stars and Aslan himself. Suppose we have. Then all I can say is that, in that case, the made-up things seem a good deal more important than the real ones. Suppose this black pit of a kingdom of yours is the only world. Well, it strikes me as a pretty poor one. And that's a funny thing, when you come to think of it. We're just babies making up a game, if you're right. But four babies playing a game can make a play-world which licks your real world hollow. That's why I'm going to stand by the play-world. I'm on Aslan's side even if there isn't any Aslan to lead it. I'm going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn't any Narnia.

There is a textbook here on the Christian notion of faith (as well as on a number of other more esoteric concepts). Trusting in what you once knew to be true, what your reason and even senses showed you to be true, is crucial when that reason and those senses are clouded—by passion, or by the dismal spell cast, say, by the loss of a spouse—crucial if we are to live as God intended. Lewis realized, as Paul Holmer put it in *C.S. Lewis: The Shape of His Faith and Thought* (1976), that how we live "determines what [we] love and finally even know . . . [a] frame of life and mind within which some things become accessible to us."

Lewis's polemical genius worked as unrelentingly as, but even more single-mindedly than, the scholar and the storyteller to make a great variety of ideas comprehensible to the general reader. Moreover, his essays—from "The Humanitarian Theory of Punishment" to "Dangers of National Repentance" to "The Poison of Subjectivism" to "The Necessity of Chivalry"—could not only shed light upon, but virtually settle, any number of current debates. He would make short work, for example, of an oxymoron such as "the politics of meaning."

But like Aslan, Lewis was not tame. There are in his work improbable opinions that surprise even his most devoted readers: that young lovers should live together without marriage if the alternative is infidelity; that obscenity and antisodomy laws are useless at best; that a truly Christian economic order would have more than a small bit of socialism in it; that Darwin is useful even if he mistook a metaphor that was already in the air (Keats used a version of evolution in *Hyperion*); and that Freud has much to teach us (though a good deal less than he thought). No one has offered a more astute, trenchant, or profoundly Christian critique of the impact of European civilization upon the New World than Lewis:

> The English . . . conceived [colonization] chiefly as a social sewage system, a vent for 'needy' people who now trouble the commonwealth and are daily consumed with the gallows. . . . Nor was the failure [of English exploration] relieved by any high ideal motives. Missionary designs are sometimes paraded in the prospectus of a new venture: but the actual record of early Protestantism in this field seems to be 'blank as death'.

In an essay entitled "Religion and Rocketry" he expands upon the theme, claiming that "the missionary's holy desire to save souls has not always been kept quite distinct from the arrogant desire, the busybody's itch, to (as he calls it) 'civilize' the (as he calls them) 'natives.' " And in "The Seeing Eye" he contemplates the possibility of humanity meeting an alien rational species:

> I observe how the white man has hitherto treated the black, and how, even among civilized men, the stronger have treated the weaker. . . . I do not doubt that the same story will be repeated. We shall enslave, deceive, exploit, or exterminate.

After his conversion, Lewis explicitly committed his will and his rhetorical genius to his apologetic vocation. In "Christian Apologetics" he defined the scope of that task: "Modern man is to a pagan what a *divorcée* is to a virgin"; that is, "we live in a *post*-Christian world": "A century ago our task was to edify those who had been brought up in the Faith: our present task is chiefly to convert and instruct infidels. Great Britain is as much a part of the mission field as China." Among our contemporary biases is the tendency to reverse the ancient attitude and to approach God as the accused; "if God should have a reasonable defense. . . . the trial may even end in God's acquittal. But the important thing is that Man is on the Bench and God is in the Dock." In the final analysis, says Lewis, "Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of *no* importance, and, if true, of infinite importance."

The territory that most engaged Lewis was the concept of personhood. "You can't study people," he said, "you can only get to know them." Personality and our view of it was of particular concern. Recall for a moment Barfield's observation that Lewis willed his own self-disregard, and then consider this declaration of purpose:

> I have wanted to . . . expel that quite unchristian worship of the human individual as such which is so rampant. . . . I mean the pestilent notion . . . that each of us starts with a treasure called 'Personality' . . . and that to expand and express this . . . is the main end of life.

This theme of self-centeredness, its dangers and (of course) its antidotes, lies at the center of Lewis's philosophy of human nature. One of his works that is better known than read is *The Abolition of Man* (1943), ostensibly "Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools," or so its subtitle would have us think. In fact it is a diagnosis and a prophecy: When subjectivism is rampantly triumphant and natural law has been, not refuted, but "seen through," we begin to "innovate," first on nature (Lewis was environmentally alert long before the cant began), then on animals (he was also a vehement anti-vivisectionist), and finally on our favorite subject, the Self, which we will "condition" unto extinction. Any eugenicist or "harvester" of human fetal tissue should take note, if not of this book then of its horrifying fictional correlative, *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups* (1946), the last book of the space fantasy trilogy. In it Lewis both raises to glorious heights and lowers to terrifying depths the idea of geniuses as tutelary spirits, especially the particular "genius" of our century, a totalitarian death wish.

Lewis and Joy Davidman Gresham at a ruin in Kamiros, Rhodes, in 1960.

Not shy about depicting evil or its motive, he would have agreed with Edmund Crispin's detective Gervase Fen, who remarked, "I always think that psychology is wrong in imagining that when it has analyzed evil it has somehow disposed of it." But he nowhere uses upon his

reader the stick of eternal punishment in any way remotely resembling the enervating horror of, say, Jonathan Edwards, the 18th-century New England philosopher and divine, whose "Angry God" has his arrows of vengeance poised at our hearts, ready to be made "drunk with our blood" for nothing more than "His mere pleasure." Instead, Lewis tells us (in his 1941 essay "The Weight of Glory") that "all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumor" that we will not always be on the wrong side of the door. "Some day, God willing, we shall get in." Lewis thought that nothing could be more pleasurable than salvation. The final page of Lewis's final book, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (1964), contains a typically delectable image of just that:

> Then the new earth and sky, the same yet not the same as these, will rise in us as we have risen in Christ. And once again, after who knows what aeons of silence and the dark, the birds will sing and the waters flow, and lights and shadows move across the hill, and the faces of our friends laugh upon us with amazed recognition.

"Joy," he says, "is the serious business of heaven." But Lewis understood the limits of volubility and of argument, the dangers of verbal facility and intellectual smugness. I believe they frightened him. In *The Great Divorce* (1946), the only passenger on the bus to heaven who stays all the way to the end is the man who does not utter great rhetorical pronouncements. At the end of *Till We Have Faces* the queen writes, in what is her lucid and convincing complaint, "Only words, words; to be led out to battle with other words." And in *The Silver Chair*, Puddleglum's great affirmation follows upon his determining action: With his naked webbed foot he stamped on the fire that is part of the witch's verbal spell. Lewis said he never understood a doctrine less than when he was just done defending it.

Such humility seems ironic coming from "a genius of the will," much the same way his obsession with accessibility seems ironic. But the humility, the will, and the accessibility are all of a piece. Lewis's will was the instrument of his Christian conversion, which occasioned the denial of self. Only then could Lewis be at the disposal of those for whom—owing to his great intellectual, imaginative, and literary gifts—he could do great good. Thus his astounding ability to bring Christianity to so many, precisely what invites the dismissive charge of superficiality, is actually the product of one of the more complex emotional and intellectual processes. What he said about his beloved Edmund Spenser and *The Faerie Queene* can be applied to the scholar, storyteller, and philosopher-apologist:

> His work is one, like a growing thing, a tree . . . with branches reaching to heaven and roots to hell. . . . And between these two extremes comes all the multiplicity of human life. . . . To read him is to grow in mental health.

His former pupil Peter Bayley was among the few to attend his funeral. He has since written that "there was one candle on the coffin as it was carried out into the churchyard. It seemed not only appropriate but almost a symbol of the man and his integrity and his absoluteness and his faith that the flame burned so steadily, even in the open air, and seemed so bright, even in the bright sun."

THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

The Perils of Humanitarian Intervention

A Survey of Recent Articles

President George Bush won wide applause when, with United Nations approval, he sent 28,000 U.S. soldiers to avert mass starvation in Somalia late in 1992. Then, last October, after a firefight in the Somali capital of Mogadishu left 18 Americans dead (and 14 others fatally wounded), President Bill Clinton retreated from his own more ambitious nation-building plans for Somalia. The United States, he announced, would get out of Somalia completely by March 31, 1994.

Something, it seemed, had gone very wrong with this exercise in humanitarian intervention—but what was it? Some analysts, such as John R. Bolton, writing in *Foreign Affairs* (Jan.–Feb. 1994), contend that Clinton erred in expanding the original, limited mission. Others, such as David Fromkin, writing in the *New York Times Magazine* (Feb. 27, 1994), argue that Bush failed to face "the question of what would happen when the troops were withdrawn: would not the warlords go back to warlording and the Somalis back to starving?" Perhaps the real mistake was in thinking that the venture would be a straightforward and simple matter, carrying with it no risks, no deepening obligations.

The 1992 U.S. and UN decision to send troops to Somalia to clear the relief channels blocked by Somali gangs and to get food to the starving Somalis was "almost unprecedented," notes Guenter Lewy, a University of Massachusetts political scientist, in *Orbis* (Fall 1993). "Not since the 1840s, when Britain, France, and the United States dispatched cruisers to the west coast of Africa in order to hunt down slave ships, had the world seen a major military operation devoid of any strategic or economic benefit."

The Bush administration expected that once the mission was accomplished, in three or four months, responsibility would be handed back to the UN peace-keeping force and the United States would get out. The Bush administration, notes John Bolton, who served in it as an assistant secretary of state, strongly resisted UN attempts to go beyond that limited mission. But the Clinton administration took office less than two months later with different ideas. It pushed the UN Security Council to commit itself in March 1993 to what U.S. ambassador Madeleine K. Albright approvingly described as "an unprecedented enterprise aimed at nothing less than the restoration of an entire country." Not only this effort at nation building but also the apparent shift toward UN-led multilateralism eventually became an issue, with many insisting that the United States should not be led by the United Nations.

When the United States handed responsibility back to the UN peace-keeping force in May 1993, most American soldiers went home, but not all: about 4,500 troops were left behind. Just weeks later, forces believed to be under the command of General Mohammed Farah Aidid attacked UN soldiers, killing at least 23 Pakistani peace keepers. The Security Council authorized Aidid's arrest, and U.S. combat forces returned to Somalia to strike at positions believed held by Aidid's followers. Nation building, it seemed, was now going to be attempted under combat

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conditions, at least in Mogadishu.

Not everyone thought that mission misguided, even after the deaths of the U.S. soldiers in October. The *Economist* (Oct. 9, 1993) urged the United States to stay the course: "Outside a small area of Mogadishu, famine and anarchy have been defeated. . . . If some dozens of peace keepers—not all American—have been killed to make this possible, they did not die in vain. But if the UN operation were to collapse, the whole disaster could start again."

It was unrealistic for Bush to have thought "that a narrowly circumscribed effort—excluding such essential tasks as disarmament, help in reconstituting a civil society, and assistance for reconstruction—would be fruitful in restoring hope in this hapless country," Thomas G. Weiss, of Brown University's Institute for International Studies, writes in the *Washington Quarterly* (Winter 1994). He believes that "international intervention in such civil wars as Somalia and the former Yugoslavia should be timely and robust or shunned altogether." Weiss himself leans toward an active policy. A more cautious note is sounded by David Fromkin, in the *New York Times Magazine*: "If the issue is not important enough to be worth the lives of United States service personnel, we should not be sending in the armed forces."

General Aidid taught America a painful but useful lesson, argues A. J. Bacevich, of the Foreign Policy Institute at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. "The lost battle for Mogadishu," he writes in *Commentary* (Dec. 1993), "has shattered the dangerous illusion that the American military prowess displayed in the desert [during the Persian Gulf War] foretold an era of war without the shedding of American or civilian blood, an era in which American military might would guarantee political order. Americans have learned again . . . that to resort to arms is a proposition fraught with uncertainty."

"Even though it is true that America alone cannot solve all of the world's problems, there are many things Americans *can* do," Guenter Lewy argues. While there is a need "to make realistic calculations of costs and benefits, including estimates of the probability of success," he believes that humanitarian intervention is justified when "the conscience of the civilized world" is shocked.

But "the plight of the Iraqi Kurds [after the Persian Gulf War], the vicious fighting and sieges in the former Yugoslavia, and the starvation in Somalia"—which all resulted in UN intervention—were hardly the only situations to shock "the conscience of mankind" in recent decades, Adam Roberts, a professor of international relations at Oxford University, points out in *Harvard International Review* (Fall 1993). "The fact that mass slaughter in Cambodia, shootings in Beijing, ruthless dictatorship in Myanmar [Burma], or catastrophe in Sudan did not lead to humanitarian interventions suggests that some other factors are involved." These enabling conditions include extensive TV coverage and the absence of "dissent among powers or massive military opposition."

Where intervention is prompted by the disintegration of a state or by a government's evil actions (as opposed to a natural disaster, for example), Harvard's Stanley Hoffmann points out in *Harvard International Review*, it can become extremely difficult to remedy the calamity without addressing the causes that produced it. Otherwise, those intervening "may well be doomed to playing Sisyphus." But an effort to go to the root of the problem could risk, as in Somalia, "adding to violence and creating victims of its own."

Even in *successful* humanitarian intervention by the United States, warns Fareed Zakaria, managing editor of *Foreign Affairs*, there is a serious danger. Writing in *Commentary* (Dec. 1993), he argues that the case against "substantial intervention" in places such as Somalia is not that intervention will always fail or will not do good, but rather that America should not squander its power. The stable Cold War order is now coming apart. "It will take every effort of the United States to arrest this descent and secure the central achievements of the last 45 years—peace and prosperity in East Asia and Europe and an absence of serious rivalry among the great powers of the world. . . . If Washington gets so distracted by Africa, the Caribbean, and the Balkans that it loses the ability to focus the bulk of its energies on Europe and East Asia, the resulting strains in global politics and economics could make what is happening in Somalia look like a picnic."

FDR's Secret Ally

"President Hoover's Efforts on Behalf of FDR's 1932 Nomination" by William G. Thiemann, in *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (Winter 1994), 208 E. 75th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Herbert Hoover is usually remembered as the hapless victim of the Great Depression and, in the 1932 election, of the ebullient Franklin D. Roosevelt. History is always more complicated than such simple imagery suggests, and now Thiemann, a graduate student in history at Miami University, Ohio, adds an interesting detail to the Hoover-FDR tableau. It seems that the Republican president may have given FDR some help in securing the 1932 Democratic nomination.

Hoover, according to the unpublished diaries of his press secretary, Theodore Joslin, thought that Roosevelt would be the easiest foe to beat. Like many others at the time, the incumbent president viewed FDR as an opportunist and intellectual lightweight. Hoover also believed that the liberal two-term governor of New York would alienate conservative Democrats in the eastern states and thus tip the balance to him. (As it turned out, all six states FDR lost were in the East, but he still carried New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, not to mention the rest of the country.) When, in June 1932, Joslin said he thought Roosevelt would be nominated at the Democratic convention in Chicago later that month, Hoover responded: "I hope you are right . . . but I think you are wrong. I hate to think it, but I believe they will nominate Newton Baker," an internationalist who had been President Woodrow Wilson's secretary of war and had fought hard for the League of Nations.

After the convention got under way, Hoover and Joslin, doubting that Roosevelt would be able to prevail unassisted, set out to derail Baker. They fixed on a scheme to exploit the fact that press lord William Randolph Hearst, who controlled the crucial California delegation, was an isolationist who detested Baker. Hearst was backing Texan John Nance Garner, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, whose chances of emerging as the nominee were slim. At Joslin's suggestion, Hoover dispatched movie mogul Louis B. Mayer, who was close to Hearst, to warn Hearst that if he wanted to stop Baker, he "better get busy." (Hearst apparently received similar advice from businessman Joseph P. Kennedy.) Mayer believed that he had succeeded and wired back to the White House that "Hearst would cut loose in the morning."

Thanks a million?

In Chicago, after three ballots in the early-morning hours of July 1, it appeared that Roosevelt, possessing a majority but not the needed two-thirds of the votes, had been stopped. At 9:15 A.M., the delegates staggered back to their hotel rooms. That same morning, Hearst's *Chicago Record-American* printed a damning editorial about Baker, and during the day, Thiemann writes, Hearst communicated with Garner about releasing the Texas delegation. The California delegation switched to Roosevelt, and Garner (who became the vice-presidential nominee) and his Texas delegation went along. Roosevelt won the nomination.

When Hoover got word that the deal had gone through, Joslin was later told, he "smiled more broadly than he had in months."

What's Bothering White Voters

"Issue Evolution Reconsidered: Racial Attitudes and Partisanship in the U.S. Electorate" by Alan I. Abramowitz, in *American Journal of Political Science* (Feb. 1994), Journals Dept., Univ. of Texas Press, 2100 Comal, Austin, Texas 78722–2550.

Where have all the white voters gone? many Democratic Party leaders wondered during the

1980s. Between 1980 and '88, the proportion of the electorate identifying with the Democrats fell from 41 percent to 36 percent. Racial politics was the main reason, according to a widely accepted theory advanced by political scientists Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson. After a close look at American National Election Studies for 1980 and 1988, Abramowitz, a political scientist at Emory University, sees other causes.

Abramowitz agrees that the 1964 presidential election was a watershed, as Carmines and Stimson argue. President Lyndon B. Johnson, champion of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, trounced conservative Republican Senator Barry M. Goldwater, who had opposed it. Democratic leaders and activists then moved sharply to the left on racial issues, while their GOP counterparts moved sharply to the right. But that, Abramowitz points out, does not necessarily mean that voters were choosing parties on the basis of their racial attitudes, or that the subsequent "white flight" from the Democrats was racially motivated.

The survey data for 1988, he writes, show that among white voters, partisan differences over racial issues were "very limited." On most race-related questions, large majorities of Republicans *and* Democrats favored the "conservative" position. For example, 91 percent of white Republicans opposed racial preferences in hiring and promotion—but so did 82 percent of white Democrats. Similarly, 76 percent of white Republicans opposed the use of racial quotas by colleges—but so did 66 percent of white Democrats. Overall, the difference between white Republicans and white Democrats on racial issues averaged only eight percentage points. That compares with an average difference of 20 points on social-welfare issues (e.g., health insurance, taxes versus services), and an average difference of 13 points on national-security issues.

Did racial attitudes have an indirect impact, by influencing attitudes toward social-welfare programs? In *Chain Reaction* (1991), Thomas Byrne Edsall, a *Washington Post* reporter, and his wife Mary D. Edsall, a writer, argue that white disillusionment with the welfare state reflected a growing perception that government welfare programs disproportionately aided blacks. Abramowitz, however, says that a sophisticated statistical analysis shows only a "rather modest" connection between racial attitudes and social-welfare ones. Any indirect effect on party identification would have been extremely weak.

White defections during the '80s, he concludes, cannot simply be blamed, as many Democrats would have it, on the GOP's willingness to play the race card. Democrats, Abramowitz argues, must face facts: The Democratic belief in an expanding welfare state no longer goes down well with a lot of white voters. Bill Clinton, running as "a new kind of Democrat" opposed to his party's traditional "tax and spend" policies, seemed to recognize that. But his victory, Abramowitz says, was far from a guarantee that the Democrats' identity problems are over.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Containing China, Politely

"Wealth, Power, and Instability: East Asia and the United States after the Cold War" by Richard K. Betts, in *International Security* (Winter 1993–94), Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Univ., 79 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

East Asia claims about one-third of the world's population, a growing share of its economic product, and a big chunk of America 's foreign trade. During the Cold War, Washington's strategy toward the region, stretching from Japan to Burma, was determined mainly by the requirements of America's global struggle with the Soviet Union. Now, the policymakers have no automatic answers, notes Betts, a Columbia University political scientist. Is China's prosperity in America's national interest? What about a rearmed Japan?

Analysts can draw on two main intellectual traditions: conservative "realism," which stresses the pursuit of national interests and a balance of power, and Wilsonian liberalism, which emphasizes the spread of liberal political values. During the Cold War, Americans often did not have to choose, Betts points out: "The communist threat, like the fascist threat before it, combined military power with anti-liberal ideology, allowing conservative realism's focus on might and liberal idealism's focus on right to converge in a militant policy."

Take the question of whether the United States should want China to prosper. "For liberals," Betts writes, "the answer is yes, since a quarter of the world's people would be relieved from poverty and because economic growth should make democratization more likely, which in turn should prevent war between Beijing and other democracies. For realists, however, the answer should be no, since a rich China would overturn any balance of power."

Liberal and realist prescriptions are similarly at odds on Japanese military power. For liberals, a stronger Japan would be at worst harmless, since Japan is a democracy and a long-standing ally of the United States. For realists, however, a Japan armed with military power commensurate with its economic power, "unless it is pinned down by a powerful common enemy, is a potential threat. It would be the strongest military power in Asia, and the second-ranking one in the world." The fact that Japan is democratic is no guarantee of peace. Indeed, some observers doubt that Japan really is or will remain a democracy in Western terms.

Betts (who leans toward the realist perspective) believes that China is "the state most likely over time to disturb equilibrium in the region—and the world." Even by conservative estimates, he notes, China is not far from becoming an economic superpower. With just "a bit of bad luck," Betts warns, China's economic development could make the old Soviet military threat seem almost modest. In any case, in dealing with a prosperous China, the only alternatives for the United States "will be to accept Chinese hegemony in the region or to balance Chinese power" with what he calls "polite containment."

Fighting the Last War

"Down the Hatch" by Eliot A. Cohen, in *The New Republic* (Mar. 7, 1994), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

In the difficult effort to chart a course in the post–Cold War world, the Clinton administration's 1993 "bottom-up review" of defense policy is a major policy statement. Unfortunately, argues Cohen, director of the strategic studies program at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, it does not supply the radical rethinking of U.S. military needs that is needed. Mincing no words, he calls the report "timid," "conservative," and "possibly dangerous."

The review is unrealistic on several levels,

Losing the Peace?

Václav Havel, president of the Czech Republic, in *Foreign Affairs* (Mar.–Apr. 1994):

If we in [the] "postcommunist" countries call for a new order, if we appeal to the West not to close itself off to us, and if we demand a radical reevaluation of the new situation, then this is not because we are concerned about our own security and stability, and not only because we feel that the security of the West itself is at stake. The reason is far deeper than that. We are concerned about the destiny of the values and principles that communism denied, and in whose name we resisted communism and ultimately brought it down. . . .

Naturally, all of us continue to pay lip service to democracy, human rights, the order of nature and responsibility for the world, but apparently only insofar as it does not require any sacrifice. By that, I do not mean, of course, merely sacrifice in the form of fallen soldiers. The West has made, and continues to make, such sacrifices. . . . I have in mind, rather, sacrifice in a less conspicuous but infinitely broader sense, that is, a willingness to sacrifice for the common interest something of one's own particular interests, including even the quest for larger and larger domestic production and consumption.

according to Cohen. Its distinguishing premise is that the United States should be prepared to fight two major regional wars almost simultaneously—for example, a Korean war and a conflict with a rearmed Iraq. But a replay of the Persian Gulf War is unlikely. In fact, Cohen observes, if Saddam Hussein's defeat "taught America's foes anything, it was that they should *not* replicate the Iraqi strategy. Massed tank armies are not the way to take over small countries that happen to be American allies—far better to launch ambiguous takeovers behind the smoke screen of liberation movements or uncontrolled dissident groups or native putsch-makers."

Even more fatal to the review's blueprint, Cohen says, the U.S. military, for at least five to 10 years, will be incapable of carrying out the plan. "American airlift and sealift simply could not move the bottom-up review force to two simultaneous wars, nor could the United States shuttle forces from a war in one corner of the globe to a war in another without pause for refitting, retraining, or rest." In addition, Cohen argues, the blueprint force—about the minimum size necessary to sustain, even in theory, the two-war strategy, and little smaller than the force planned by the Bush administration—"is just plain unaffordable." With 10 active army and three marine divisions, 12 aircraft carriers, and 13 active air force wings, the force looks formidable. But its size will come at the cost of deferring replacement of helicopters, tanks, and other equipment; after 10 to 15 years, "a massive junking of obsolescent gear" would be necessary.

As if all this were not enough, Cohen discerns "a deeper malady" in American strategy: It fails to face up to the fact that sooner or later the United States will confront "upheavals overseas that cannot be accommodated or negotiated away," such as a takeover of Egypt by Islamic fundamentalists. It also fails to look beyond the next five or 10 years, to "a world in which China becomes an assertive Asian power, perhaps provoking a Japanese nuclear response, or a world in which nuclear weapons are not merely developed but occasionally used."

The Pentagon planners, wedded to Cold War thinking, assumed that the United States would always fight defensive wars. But it is just as likely, Cohen says, "as in the Gulf or now in Bosnia," that it "will find itself weighing an intervention to reverse a fait accompli, to prevent a disaster, or to excise a menace." That would require a very different force structure. And there are more subtle military matters to ponder, Cohen argues. Between the world wars, the U.S. military, operating at a relaxed pace that encouraged reflection, managed to produce "a generation of leaders who had thought deeply and imaginatively about their profession." They proved invaluable when war came again. Now that the Cold War is over, America needs to figure out how to breed a similar generation of military leaders.

Iraqgate Unraveled

"The Myth of Iraqgate" by Kenneth I. Juster, in *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1994), 2400 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037–1153.

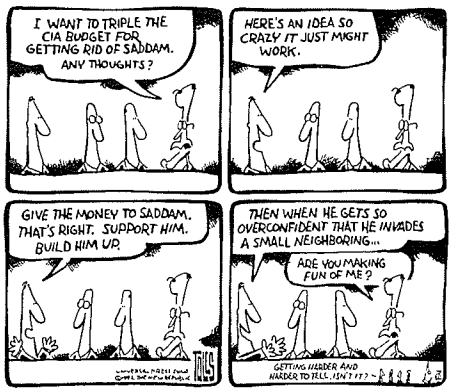
New York Times columnist William Safire and other members of the press have written extensively about what they call "Iraqgate." The gist of their attack is that prior to the Persian Gulf War, the Bush administration perverted U.S. agricultural-assistance programs to provide loans to Iraq's Saddam Hussein, who then used the money to buy weapons. Various charges of wrongdoing, criminal or otherwise, have been made by the news media, among them that the CIA helped get money to Iraqi arms agents, that the U.S. government itself shipped arms to Iraq, and that the Bush administration tried to cover up alleged misconduct.

After more than four years of hearings and investigations by various executive branch, congressional, and judicial bodies, the charges of wrongdoing remain unproven, notes Juster, a lawyer who served in the State Department during the Bush administration (and says he had no involvement in U.S. policy toward Iraq before the invasion of Kuwait). What is more, he contends, the press, which is largely responsible for creating the widespread impression that something deserving the name "Iraqgate" happened, has repeatedly misrepresented crucial facts regarding the workings of the agricultural-assistance program and what Iraq did under the program.

U.S. News & World Report (Oct. 26, 1992), in a typical media account, declared that the Bush administration "continued to provide billions of dollars in loans to Saddam Hussein after [Iraq's] war with Iran ended in 1988. Despite evidence that Iraqi agents were stealing some of the American loan money and using it to buy and build biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, the Bush administration *increased* the amount of the loans." Then, in August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait.

One problem with this account is that the U.S. government never loaned Iraq any money. What really happened, according to Juster, is that in 1989, in the belief "that the evolution of normal relations with Iraq was in America's interest," the Bush administration decided to keep making Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) credit guarantees available for export sales of farm products to Iraq (as the United States had done during the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq war). The CCC credit guarantees were not loans but a form of insurance that greased the wheels of commerce. They were issued to U.S. exporters selling wheat, rice, or other farm products to Iraq. In essence, the guarantees allowed U.S. banks to pay the exporters for the farm products and then extend credit to Iraq for the purchases, with Washington agreeing to pay the banks if Iraq defaulted.

The decision to make the credit guarantees available may have been unwise, Juster observes, but a lack of wisdom is not the same as criminal wrongdoing. The guarantees, he acknowledges, did free Iraqi funds that could have been used for arms purchases. However, because of the three-year payment schedule, that



Pre-Gulf War efforts to improve relations with Iraq later seemed incredible—even criminal—to some.

happened only in the early years, during the Iran-Iraq war. Then Iraq had to begin repaying American banks. In fact, during fiscal 1990 (up until the invasion of Kuwait), Iraq paid out $455 million *more* in hard currency under the CCC program than it received in new credit. Iraq met all its scheduled payments until sanctions were imposed after the invasion of Kuwait. Iraq then owed about $1.9 billion under the CCC program—and it still owes that amount to the U.S. government or U.S. banks. All but $392 million of the total represents loans piled up before George Bush assumed the presidency.

The pre–Gulf War policy toward Iraq could have been the subject of a serious debate, Juster notes. Unfortunately, he says, the effort by the news media and others "to criminalize foreign policy differences" prevented such a debate from taking place.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

The Blessings Of Bankruptcy

"The Freedom to Fail" by Jonathan Foreman, in *Audacity* (Winter 1994), 60 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011.

Since colonial days, the clash of creditors and debtors has left many marks on American history, particularly in hard times. Until this century, periodic battles over bankruptcy legislation were waged with great passion. They pitted Jeffersonians against Federalists, farmers against merchants, and southern and western interests against the Northeast. But out of the conflicts has come something distinctly American, argues Foreman, a New York lawyer. Bankruptcy laws in other nations usually have been designed only to protect creditors, he says, but in the United States

such laws have often shielded debtors, too.

The harsh bankruptcy law of 18th-century England permitted creditors not only to seize a debtor's assets but to have him put in prison. In colonial America, most loans were unsecured, which made it hard to proceed against a debtor's property. Imprisonment was thus the creditor's ultimate weapon—though it was rarely used.

Armed uprisings against courts and creditors in the troubled 1780s, including Shays's Rebellion in 1786, led to the bankruptcy and contracts clauses of the Constitution, which give Congress sole power to enact bankruptcy laws. That power lay dormant until the panics of 1792 and '97, brought on by waves of speculation. Some prominent Americans were among the debtors. Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolution, went to jail in Philadelphia for three years. In 1800, Congress enacted a bankruptcy law allowing foreclosure but not imprisonment. Backed by Federalists, along with urban and commercial interests, the measure was opposed by southerners and farmers. "Is commerce so much the basis of the existence of the United States as to call for a bankrupt law?" asked Thomas Jefferson. He and his followers won the law's repeal in 1803.

New bankruptcy laws were enacted in 1841 and 1867. Each was subsequently repealed. The economic upheavals of the 1890s revived interest in such laws. Despite the opposition of farmers, who strongly objected to letting creditors foreclose against debtors without their consent, Congress passed the Bankruptcy Act of 1898. It allowed both voluntary and involuntary bankruptcies, but barred creditors from forcing farmers into involuntary bankruptcy.

Mugged by Reality

Renowned liberal George McGovern, a former senator from South Dakota and the 1972 Democratic presidential nominee, bought the Stratford Inn, in Connecticut, in 1988. During the next few years (before he finally gave up), he writes in *Inc.* (Dec. 1993), he learned a lot about business that he wishes he had known before.

I learned first of all that over the past 20 years America has become the most litigious society in the world. . . . As the owner of the Stratford Inn, I was on the receiving end of a couple of lawsuits. . . . In one case, a man left our lounge late one night and headed for his car, which was parked in our parking lot. He got into a fight along the way, and later sued the hotel for not providing more security in the parking area.

On another occasion, a person leaving our restaurant and lounge lost his footing and fell, allegedly suffering a costly injury. He promptly sued us for damages. Both of the suits were subsequently dismissed, but not without a first-rate legal defense that did not come cheaply. . . .

The second lesson I learned by owning the Stratford Inn is that legislators and government regulators must more carefully consider the economic and management burdens we have been imposing on U.S. business. As an innkeeper, I wanted excellent safeguards against a fire. But I was startled to be told that our two-story structure, which had large sliding doors opening from every guest room to all-concrete decks, required us to meet fire regulations more appropriate to the Waldorf-Astoria. . . .

I'm for protecting the health and well-being of both workers and consumers. I'm for a clean environment and economic justice. But I'm convinced we can pursue those worthy goals and still cut down vastly on the incredible paperwork, the complicated tax forms, the number of minute regulations, and the seemingly endless reporting requirements that afflict American business. Many businesses, especially small independents such as the Stratford Inn, simply can't pass costs on to their customers and remain competitive or profitable.

That law, modified many times, survived until the 1970s. The enormous Penn Central bankruptcy—which involved liabilities of $3.3 billion and took a decade to sort out—brought home the fact that the bankruptcy law was not designed for an age of big business. The case saw, among other things, "the absurd spectacle of a single [court-appointed] lawyer attempting to run a huge company."

In 1978, Congress adopted a new Bankruptcy Code. Instead of just turning bankrupt operations over to outside trustees, it gives managers who want to remain in charge the benefit of the doubt. It has critics on both Left and Right. The former argue, ironically, that the law is too permissive, allowing executives to remain in control of companies they have run into the ground. Some conservatives would like to see bankrupt firms quickly liquidated so that their assets can be efficiently redistributed by the market. Foreman thinks the new law has got it about right. Why lose "the synergy of a working business" in a liquidation? Abuses, he insists, are rare. Thanks to the code, he notes, the Federated chain of department stores, Continental Airlines, and Macy's are all still in business, with employees still on the job.

How CEOs Got Theirs

"CEO Pay: Why Such a Contentious Issue?" by Margaret M. Blair, in *Brookings Review* (Winter 1994), 1775 Mass. Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Since 1987, according to annual *Business Week* surveys of about 250 companies, there have been 277 cases in which a corporate executive made more than $5 million in a given year, and 77 in which an executive made more than $10 million. For 13 lucky executives, total compensation in 1992 topped $20 million. Three took home more than $60 million. Popular resentment is such that last year Congress provided tax penalties under certain circumstances for firms that pay executives more than $1 million. The multimillion-dollar salaries of ballplayers, entertainers, and TV anchorpeople do not seem to diminish their popularity much. Why, then, do many Americans get upset about CEOs' high pay?

The answer, says Blair, a researcher at the Brookings Institution, lies in the fact that the same economic forces that pushed executive pay to astronomical heights during the 1980s often were simultaneously making the jobs of many ordinary Americans less secure. Indeed, many executives earned their big rewards by closing down factories and offices and slicing payrolls.

Before the mid-'80s, Blair notes, extremely high pay for executives was rare. During the 30 fat years after World War II, U.S. corporations, especially in manufacturing, generated enormous surpluses, allowing most large firms to satisfy investors, workers, and managers. Salaries of executives generally varied with the size of the company, while bonuses depended on how fast it was growing.

By the early 1980s, returns to capital, already on a downward trend, reached a postwar low, while real interest rates soared. Stock prices languished, encouraging corporate raiders and hostile takeovers. They also encouraged a movement to tie executive compensation more closely to the returns achieved for stockholders. Stock options, which could yield enormous payoffs if stock prices rose, soon became a big part of executive pay packages.

Improved stock performance was often achieved, Blair writes, through "corporate restructuring that resulted in layoffs, cutbacks, and tremendous pressures on rank-and-file workers and mid-level managers." This began in smaller firms during the early 1980s, and is still working its way through the economy, with major layoffs and cutbacks having taken place even at such giants as IBM, General Motors, and Sears.

Of course, many of the highest-paid executives in the past few years have been at growing firms such as Hospital Corporation of America, Toys 'R Us, and Walt Disney. Nevertheless, says Blair, "there are plenty of companies like Martin Marietta, General Dynamics, General Electric, RJR Nabisco, Time Warner, ITT, and Unisys, all of whose CEOs made the list of the 15 highest paid executives in years when their companies were undergoing significant downsizing." And that has made the CEOs' jackpot hard for many to stomach.

The Sam Also Rises

Temporarily down on their luck, the Japanese are, for the moment at least, looking at American industry with renewed respect, T. R. Reid reports from Japan in the *Washington Post* (Feb. 10, 1994).

In this homogeneous, media-saturated country, where new ideas and fashions spread the length of the land in the blink of an eye, the only remaining dispute about the widely reported American revival is what to call it.

In a 16-part, front-page series on America's "high-tech comeback," the Yomiuri Shimbum, *Japan's biggest newspaper, chose the title "America's New Tide." An influential political newsletter refers to "The New American Might."*

But the most popular new term seems to be "Rising Sam"....

Sharing the Secrets

"Why Alan Greenspan Should Show You His Hand" by William Greider, in *The Washington Monthly* (Dec. 1993), 1611 Conn. Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

The Federal Reserve System's "power over the daily lives of ordinary Americans—not to mention the largest enterprises of commerce and finance—is at least as great as the president's or Congress's and, in most instances, more immediate," writes Greider, national affairs columnist for *Rolling Stone* and author of a 1987 book, *Secrets of the Temple*, about the agency. The Fed's decisions affect inflation, interest rates on mortgages and other loans, and economic growth. Yet, Greider complains, the Fed's decision-making is kept secret from the public.

Created in 1913 with the hope that it would be insulated from politics, the Fed is in reality suffused with it. Few decisions can be made on technical grounds alone. "Monetary policy is filled with large uncertainties, squishy facts, and unpleasant trade-offs between competing goals." And contrary to myth, Greider says, the Fed is not above "politics" in the generic sense of the term. It is not that bankers and bondholders have "captured" the Fed, he believes, but rather that the institution "is preoccupied with a narrow version of economic reality while other competing versions are excluded from the inside debate." While bankers "are consulted regularly and intimately . . . labor unions and farmers, home builders and independent oil drillers are not."

Greider favors proposed legislation that would require publication of a full transcript of the deliberations of the Federal Open Market Committee, the Fed's top policy-making body, a few months after its meetings. Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan and the Fed's governors maintain that releasing anything more than a brief outline of a meeting's minutes might cause damaging financial speculation. But Greider argues that the measure would encourage the Fed to consider more viewpoints. It would also foster coordinated policy making. While the Fed controls money and credit policy, Congress and the White House control fiscal policy (spending and taxation), and the two sometimes work against each other.

In 1981, for example, the Reagan tax cuts and defense buildup were powerful economic stimulants. "But the Federal Reserve was simultaneously embarked on the opposite course: suppressing economic growth with extraordinarily high interest rates in order to squeeze out price inflation. . . . The car with two drivers wound up in a ditch—first a deep recession, then an awesome accumulation of debt."

After the 1981–82 recession, Greider says, the Fed privately resolved to continue to check the stimulus of the Reagan program so as to prevent inflation from recurring. It held interest rates very high throughout the rest of the decade, and that, he contends, "dramatically worsened" the savings-and-loan crisis; sent the dollar's value soaring against foreign currencies and so made the U.S. trade deficit mushroom; triggered the collapse of Third World debt in August 1982;

and caused the farm crisis of the mid '80s. Neither farmers nor other debtors were given fair warning of what the government was doing. It is unconscionable, Greider concludes, that Americans and their elected representatives are kept in the dark about matters of such magnitude.

SOCIETY

Leaving Home And Doing Well

"Black Immigrants in the United States: A Comparison with Native Blacks and Other Immigrants" by Kristin F. Butcher, in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (Jan. 1994), Cornell Univ., Ithaca, N.Y. 14853-3901.

Do the "cultural traditions" of American-born blacks impede their economic progress? Prominent economist Thomas Sowell—pointing to the higher earnings of West Indian immigrants in the United States—has argued that they do. Butcher, an economist at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, has a different explanation.

Analyzing 1980 census data, she finds that West Indian immigrant men did indeed have higher average earnings. Jamaicans, for example, earned an average of $10,115 while native-born black men earned $9,063. The difference in employment rates was also significant: 87 percent of the Jamaicans had jobs, compared with 79 percent of the native black men. The two groups differed in other, arguably pertinent ways, as well. Sixty-two percent of the Jamaicans were married, compared with only 51 percent of the native-born black men.

However, Butcher says, there is a subset of the native-born that compares quite well with the Jamaicans, and that is native-born black men who have moved away from the state in which they were born. Such migrants (57 percent of whom were married) earned an average of $10,710 in 1979, nearly $600 more than the Jamaicans did and much more than the $7,896 that the "stay-at-home" native black men did. Eighty-two percent of the migrants were employed, compared with 87 percent of the Jamaicans and 77 percent of the "stay-at-home" American black men.

What's true for blacks, Butcher notes, is also true for whites: Native-born white men earned less ($14,371) in 1979 than white immigrants did ($15,421). A widely accepted explanation of that finding, she points out, is "that immigrants are a self-selected group—differing from other members of the population in their motivation, ability, or attitudes toward risk." The same, she suggests, may be true for blacks. The distinction between those who dare to venture into strange territory and those who stay at home may be "more fundamental than any inherent distinction between U.S.- and foreign-born black men."

Big City

"Fate of a World City" by Nathan Glazer, in *City Journal* (Autumn 1993), 52 Vanderbilt Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

With its awesome skyscrapers, great bridges, huge railroad terminals, and vast subway system, New York City was long the very symbol of the modern city. Today, the city leaves a different impression. Harvard University sociologist Glazer argues that it is suffering from "a massive change" during the 1960s in the direction of city government.

Spending by the city (in constant dollars) tripled during the 15 years after 1960, while New York's population fell. Checked for a time by the fiscal crisis of 1975, outlays began rising again in 1983. By the end of the decade, city government by itself consumed nearly 20 percent of "local value added" (a measure of the size of the local economy).

New York, writes Glazer, has been pouring money into things a city simply cannot do well: "redistributing income on a large scale and solving the social and personal problems of people who, for whatever reason, are engaged in self-destructive behavior—resisting school, taking to drugs and

crime, indulging in self-gratification at the expense of their children, their families, their neighbors."

" 'Redistribution,' " Glazer notes, "suggests handouts to the poor, and indeed some redistributive expenditures consist of cash payments to the poor. But far more go for salaries to those who serve the poor. Redistribution meant a huge increase in the number of city employees and in their influence over city decisions."

Doubling or tripling outlays in these areas seems to yield "no particular improvement," Glazer says. "On the other hand, a sharp reduction in expenditure does not seem to hurt," judging by the experience of Massachusetts today—or even New York in 1975.

Meanwhile, the city government has "stopped trying to do well the kinds of things a city can do." These include "keeping its streets and bridges in repair, building new facilities to accommodate new needs and a shifting population, picking up the garbage, and policing the public environment." Ultimately, it is individual businesses and people that make a world-class city, and a city that does not tend to such things does not attract them. Other cities have made many of New York's mistakes, but its competitors for world-class status manage to get the basics done. New York needs to build mass-transit links to its airports, open new highways, and pick up the trash. New York, Glazer insists, is not a helpless victim of forces beyond its control. It holds its future in its own hands.

The Illegitimacy Error

"Does Welfare Bring More Babies?" by Charles Murray, in *The American Enterprise* (Jan.–Feb. 1994), 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Does welfare encourage single women to have babies? That has been one of the thorniest questions in the nation's welfare debate. Researchers who think that it does can point to the rising percentage of black babies born out of wedlock since the 1960s. But they have had to face up to the conflicting fact that the *birth rate* among single black women dropped significantly during the '60s. If welfare was such a powerful promoter of illegitimacy, why was the percentage of single black women having babies shrinking?

Even conservative Charles Murray, in writing *Losing Ground*, his controversial 1984 book about the impact of the social welfare policies of the '60s, recognized the argument's force. He did not argue (despite the popular perception of *Losing Ground*) that welfare caused more illegitimate births. The evidence, he thought, could not sustain that thesis. But, he now says, "I was wrong."

The "error," says Murray, a Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, was in the choice of a population pool to use as a standard: single black women. The problem is that, thanks to changing social mores and other factors, this group itself underwent a radical change. Between 1965 and 1970, the percentage of black women ages 15–44 who were married plummeted from 64 to 55—"an incredible change in such a basic social behavior during such a short period of time." During the 1970s and '80s, the marriage rate continued to fall, hitting a low of 34 percent in 1989.

The pool of unmarried black women was thus being flooded—and the new additions evidently did not have the same propensity to have babies out of wedlock. Hence, the incidence of illegitimate births per 1,000 single black women fell. But that was a statistical mirage caused by the transformation of the base group. The incidence of illegitimacy among *all* black women—a far more stable base—rose sharply. The number of illegitimate babies born annually in the black population nearly doubled between 1967 and 1990. "It increased most radically," Murray says, "from 1967 to 1971, tracking (with a two-year time lag) the most rapid rise in welfare benefits."

That, he notes, does not "prove" that the welfare benefits promoted illegitimacy. However, he says, the message is plain: "At the same time that powerful social and economic forces were pushing down the incidence of black children born to married couples, the incidence of black children born to unmarried women increased, eventually surpassing the rate for married couples. Something was making that particular behavior swim against a very strong tide, and, to say the least, the growth of welfare is a suspect with the means and the opportunity."

With black illegitimacy now at 68 percent and white illegitimacy—22 percent in 1991—moving

into "the same dangerous range" that prompted alarms to be sounded in the mid-1960s about the breakdown of the black family, Murray believes that "the institutions necessary to sustain a free society" are threatened. For that reason, he says, "I want to end welfare."

PRESS & MEDIA

Throwing Bombs

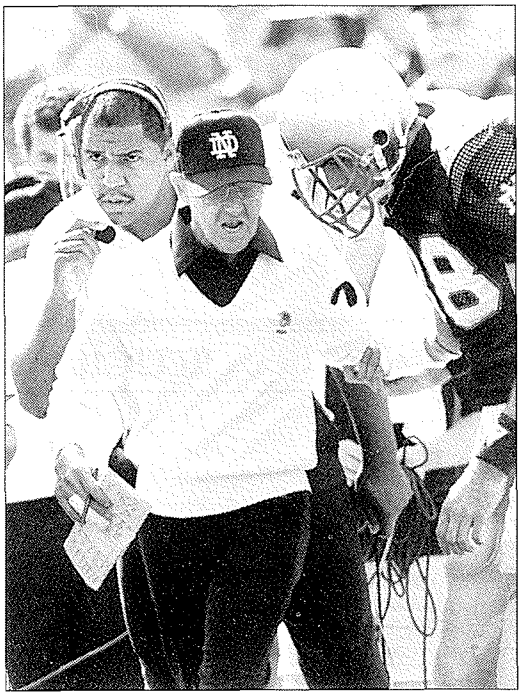
"Tarnished Pen" by Paul Sheehan, in *Forbes MediaCritic* (No. 2, 1994), P.O. Box 762, Bedminster, N.J. 07921.

The University of Notre Dame and its football coach, Lou Holtz, took a severe pounding last year in the best-selling *Under the Tarnished Dome: How Notre Dame Betrayed Its Ideals for Football Glory*. The authors, journalists Don Yaeger and Douglas Looney, portrayed Holtz as a repulsive, hypocritical, mentally unstable bully, and his players as an ugly crew of violent, stupid, drug-abusing jocks. Television news shows and big-city newspapers brayed the bad news. Sheehan, chief U.S. correspondent for the Australian Consolidated Press magazine group, contends that they are the ones who ought to worry about being tarnished.

More than 300 students have played for Notre Dame during Holtz's tenure. Yaeger, a former newspaper reporter, and Looney, a *Sports Illustrated* veteran, listed 108 of them as sources, Sheehan observes, but more than half that number appeared only briefly or not at all in the text. "The book turns out to have been built on quotes from two dozen players, most of whom were either thrown out of the university, suspended from the team, dropped out, failed out, transferred, were placed on probation, or never played for Holtz," he says. Opposing views were not offered. The views of the 20 team captains during the Holtz era, for example, were not presented. Rick Mirer, the school's all-time passing leader, told the *Los Angeles Times* that Yaeger and Looney "looked for people who had a reason to be angry about whatever happened in their career there." The book is "a horrible misrepresentation of the university," Mirer said, and "the rap" against Holtz is "just not fair."

Key allegations in the book are at odds with the facts, Sheehan maintains. The authors claimed, for example, that steroid abuse was encouraged by Holtz and is widespread at Notre Dame. In fact, Sheehan says, Notre Dame has "the most rigorous screening program in the nation," and since 1985, when it began, only five out of more than 400 players have tested positive; since 1990, none have.

Despite such grievous flaws, *Under the Tarnished Dome* was published by Simon & Schuster (after having been turned down by its original publisher, HarperCollins), serialized in such newspapers as the *Detroit News* and the *New York Post*, and its charges uncritically taken up on ABC's "Nightline." In the first month after publication, the *New York Times* "ran no fewer



Did two journalist-authors who refused to play by the rules give Notre Dame and its coach Lou Holtz (shown here in the midst of a game) an undeserved black eye?

than six negative reports on Notre Dame, five of them quoting the book," Sheehan says. Even the sports pages, it seems, are not immune to the press's "deep structural bias in favor of discord, and its weakness for the disenchanted."

Ad Trek: The Next Generation

"Is Advertising Finally Dead?" by Michael Schrage, with Don Peppers, Martha Rogers, and Robert D. Shapiro, in *Wired* (Feb. 1994), 544 Second St., San Francisco, Calif. 94119-9866.

These days, we *always* seem to be poised on the brink of an utterly new era in which life will be very, very different. The latest new age on the horizon, according to Schrage, a columnist for *Adweek* magazine, and his fellow seers, is the "Interactive Age"—and in this brave new realm, advertising and the relationship between advertisers and potential consumers is going to be . . . very, very different.

"Yesterday, we changed the channel; today we hit the remote; tomorrow, we'll reprogram our agents/filters," Schrage proclaims. "We'll interact with advertising where once we only watched; we'll seek out advertising where once we avoided it. Advertising will not go away; it will be rejuvenated."

When "smart" cable converter boxes sit atop TVs everywhere (as John Malone, of Tele-Communications, Incorporated, has promised) and all video is digitized and carried on hundreds of channels, then "encoding and tracking all the ads becomes a snap," Schrage says. A sophisticated system "would be technically capable of offering its customers not just pay-per-view but TV-sans-ads." For an extra $5 or $10 a month, a viewer's local cable company might be willing to cut out all the ads. Or viewers could arrange to get only the types of ads they want, and screen out the rest.

The implicit "deal" that mass media advertisers have always made with viewers or readers—*Take our ads and we'll pay for the TV or radio programs, or heavily subsidize the newspapers or magazines*—"is likely to become decidedly explicit" in the new Interactive Age, claim Peppers and Rogers, co-authors of *The One-to-One Future: Building Relationships One Customer at a Time.* When they turn on their television, viewers will get such offers as "Watch this two-minute video on the new Ford Taurus, and we'll pay for the pay-per-view movie of your choice," or "Answer this brief survey from Kellogg and we'll pay for the next three episodes of 'Murphy Brown.' " The very character of these ads will be different, Schrage speculates: "Advertisements will feel and play like visual conversations, video games, and simulations."

In this interactive future, Peppers and Rogers believe, a significant shift in power will have taken place: "The consumer will be the one in the driver's seat, and the advertiser will be thumbing a ride."

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

The Importance Of Seeming Pious

"What the Polls Don't Show: A Closer Look at U.S. Church Attendance" by C. Kirk Hadaway, Penny Long Marler, and Mark Chaves, in *American Sociological Review* (Dec. 1993), Dept. of Sociology, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz. 85721.

Survey after survey since World War II has yielded the same finding: Roughly 40 percent of Americans go to church every week. This high rate of church attendance helps (along with other survey data) to make the United States "God's country" in the eyes of some sociologists and historians. Hadaway, of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, Marler, of Samford University, in Birmingham, Alabama, and Chaves, of the University of Notre Dame, believe that a lot of Americans are fibbing.

They examine actual church attendance among Protestants in Ohio's rural Ashtabula County, and among Catholics in 18 dioceses else-

where in the nation, including two of the largest, the archdioceses of New York and Chicago.

According to a 1991 Gallup poll of adult Americans, 45 percent of Protestants and 51 percent of Catholics said they had gone to church the preceding week. The authors' own survey of Ashtabula County residents found that only 36 percent of Protestants claimed to have attended services. But head counts at the churches indicated that only 20 percent of the county's Protestants took part in services in an average week.

The result was similar in the 18 Catholic dioceses, where the authors found that, overall, on the basis of actual counts, only 28 percent of all parishioners went to weekly mass. Even that figure, for various reasons, is probably too high.

The authors conclude that Protestant and Catholic church attendance is roughly one-half the levels reported by Gallup. That suggests that total church attendance in the nation is only 20–25 percent. Without allowing for differences between reported and actual attendance in other countries (which appear to be much smaller), that puts Americans on a par, more or less, with Australians, Canadians, Belgians, and the Dutch. American "exceptionalism" in this case may come down to an exceptional belief that it is important to appear pious even if one is not.

The Two Mr. Mills

"Liberty: 'One Very Simple Principle' " by Gertrude Himmelfarb, in *The American Scholar* (Fall 1993), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

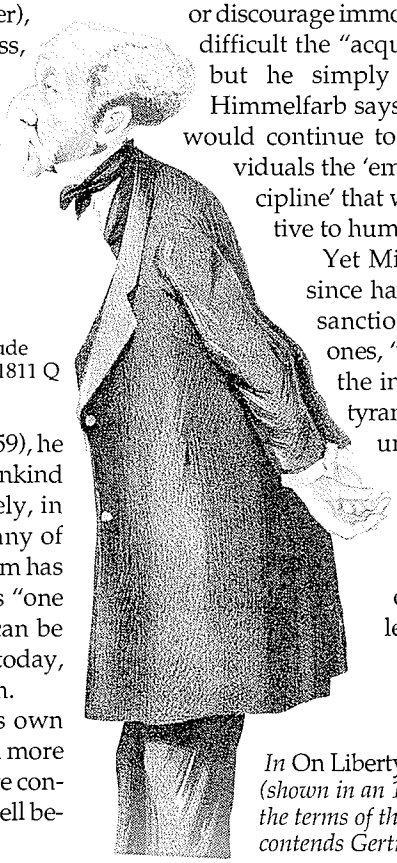
In John Stuart Mill's classic *On Liberty* (1859), he asserted that "the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection." Liberalism has come a long way since then, but in Mill's "one very simple principle" (as he called it) can be found the roots of many of its problems today, contends Himmelfarb, the noted historian.

"*On Liberty* was radical enough in its own time," she writes, "but it is, in a sense, still more radical in ours, because it seems to validate contemporary ideas about liberty which go well beyond those that Mill intended."

Although he favored absolute liberty of discussion, Mill had no doubt that truth exists and can be known. That was the point of discussion. But his doctrine lends itself to relativism, Himmelfarb points out. "Mill himself meant only to say that society cannot presume to decide between truth and falsity, or even to lend its support to truth once that has been determined. But a later generation, deprived of the authority of society and impressed by the latitude and tolerance given to error, can so relativize and 'problematize' truth as to deny the very idea of it." Thus, postmodernists today are skeptical even of contingent, partial, incremental truths.

Similarly, in moral affairs, Mill himself was not a relativist; he believed in the intrinsic superiority of chastity to promiscuity, sobriety to drunkenness, decency to indecency, altruism to self-interest. But he also believed, Himmelfarb says, that "morality is dependent upon a maximum amount of individuality." There should be no legal or social sanctions to promote morality or discourage immorality. He knew how difficult the "acquisition of virtue" is, but he simply took for granted, Himmelfarb says, "a civilization that would continue to impose upon individuals the 'eminently artificial discipline' that was the moral corrective to human nature."

Yet Mill and most liberals since have proscribed social sanctions along with legal ones, "stigmatizing both as the instruments of 'social tyranny.' In doing so, they unwittingly invite a worse tyranny, for legislation is then called upon to do what society might otherwise have done less obtrusively and



In On Liberty, *John Stuart Mill (shown in an 1873 caricature) "set the terms of the debate for our time," contends Gertrude Himmelfarb.*

more benignly."

In liberalism today, there is a disjunction between the moral and economic domains, the historian says. Mill's dictum that "trade is a social act" is carried to an extreme. Government regulation has been extended from business and commerce to so-called "social" issues, such as racial integration, sexual equality, and multicultural education. This "social paternalism" is combined with "moral individualism," Himmelfarb says, in a way that suggests a double standard. "Why is it proper for the government to prohibit insalubrious foods but not sadistic movies, to control the pollution of the environment but not of the culture, to prevent racial segregation but not moral degradation?"

Mill himself, Himmelfarb writes, "did not intend to advocate so complete a double standard, let alone so radical an inversion of values. He put a higher value and priority on moral goods than on material ones." In *On Liberty*, unfortunately, he unwittingly left the opposite impression. Liberals today, Himmelfarb concludes, need to go back to the "other" Mill and to the liberal tradition of Montesquieu, Madison, and Tocqueville. Absolute liberty, like absolute power, tends to corrupt absolutely—and, indeed, is "a grave peril to liberalism itself."

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Perilous Pond Scum

"The Toxins of Cyanobacteria" by Wayne W. Carmichael, in *Scientific American* (Jan. 1994), 415 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017–1111.

To scientists, the blue-green microorganisms are known as cyanobacteria; non-scientists more often call them by a different name: pond scum. By any name, the many forms of cyanobacteria that are toxic may be posing an increasing hazard to humans, warns Carmichael, a professor of aquatic biology and toxicology at Wright State University, in Dayton, Ohio.

The deadly pond scum was discovered in 1878 by an Australian investigator, George Francis. Scientists have since confirmed that some cyanobacteria are indeed poisonous and have caused mass deaths of animals. In the midwestern United States, for instance, migrating ducks and geese have perished by the thousands after consuming water contaminated by toxic cyanobacteria.

Scientists so far have found two basic types of toxic cyanobacteria. *Neurotoxins* attack the nervous system and, by inducing paralysis of the respiratory muscles, often cause death within minutes. *Hepatotoxins* damage the liver and can cause death within a few hours or days.

"No confirmed human death has yet been attributed to the poisons," Carmichael notes. "But runoff from detergents and fertilizers is altering the chemistry of many municipal water supplies and swimming areas, increasing the concentration of nitrogen and phosphorus. These nutrients promote reproduction by dangerous cyanobacteria." Water-treatment processes only partially filter out the microbes.

Some evidence, Carmichael says, suggests that certain of the toxins may contribute to the development of cancer. He and other researchers are carrying out a long-term study in areas of China where, they suspect, extremely high rates of liver cancer may be linked to cyanobacterial toxins in the drinking water.

Cyanobacteria are not all bad, Carmichael points out. They have provided scientists with insights into the origins of life. The microbes existed more than three billion years ago; because they were the first organisms able to convert carbon dioxide into oxygen, they "undoubtedly played a major part in the oxygenation of the air." Also, researchers think that the toxins and their derivatives may yield medicines to treat Alzheimer's disease and other disorders.

Some cyanobacteria—from the genus *Spirulina*—are even sold as a sort of health food. *Spirulina* itself is not harmful, but the practice worries Carmichael. There are no regulations

requiring that the products be monitored for contamination by toxic cyanobacteria. Also, *Spirulina*'s popularity has led to the marketing of other types of cyanobacteria, *Anabaena* and *Aphanizomenon*, which have highly poisonous strains. Without "sophisticated biochemical tests," he warns, "the safety of these items is questionable."

Trading Organs For Dollars?

"Indecent Proposals?" by Margaret Davidson, in *The New Physician* (Oct. 1993), American Medical Student Assn., 1890 Preston White Dr., Reston, Va. 22091.

Each year, kidneys, hearts, livers, and other organs are transplanted from some 4,500 brain-dead or otherwise deceased individuals into critically ill patients. But that leaves more than 2,500 patients each year who die because they never receive transplants. Should families of potential organ donors be offered cash in order to boost the number of donations? An increasing minority of specialists and patients say yes, according to Davidson, a freelance writer.

"We're killing too many people who don't have to die," asserts Auburn University economist Andrew Barnett. "There are a lot of people who would be willing to have their organs harvested if there were a profit motive involved and if they were asked." He favors a full-fledged market approach: Spot markets would provide for paying the families of donors; futures markets would pay potential donors for the right to remove organs after they die.

But most advocates of compensation—which is now illegal—have something much less radical in mind, Davidson says. Dr. Thomas Peters, director of the Jacksonville (Florida) Transplant Center, for example, thinks that lump-sum death benefit payments of $1,000 to the family might be appropriate. Dr. Stephen Jensik, a transplant surgeon at Chicago's Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Hospital, favors paying $2,000 to the donor's family to help defray funeral expenses.

Most medical and other specialists in fields related to transplantation are against offering any financial compensation, however. One survey found that 78 percent of neurosurgeons and 79 percent of critical-care nurses were opposed. Foes of compensation fear that physicians might not do their utmost to save lives if they knew that the family would get some form of payment if the patient died. They also worry that a market system would favor wealthy transplant patients.

One way that organ donations might be increased *without* providing financial compensation, Davidson points out, would be if more physicians were simply to ask families of potential donors about it. A survey of neurosurgeons indicated that many now do not regard that as their responsibility or are reluctant to place an additional burden on grieving families.

Have a Rice Day

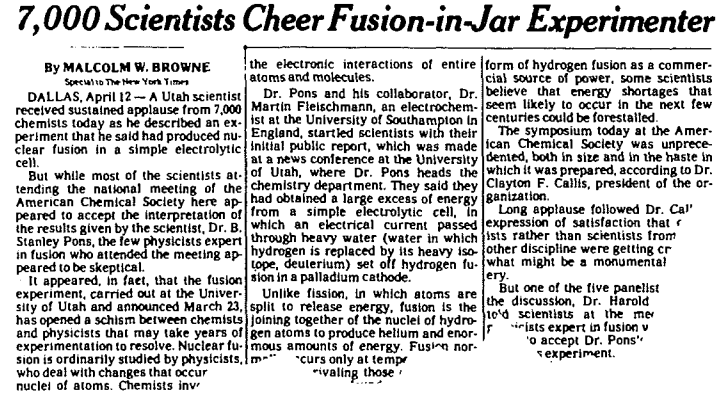
In *American Historical Review* (Oct. 1993), Peter A. Coclanis of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ponders the meaning of rice.

Rice (Oryza sativa) *has shaped the lives of relatively few Westerners over time. It has dominated the lives of fewer still. While the cereal has been known in the West since antiquity, its production and consumption for the most part have been of only minor importance, occurring at the margin of Western foodways. That we speak of breadwinners rather than ricewinners and pray for our daily bread rather than our daily rice tells us something about the hold of bread—primarily wheat bread—on the Western world. In the East, where the rice plant originated, things are far different; . . . in that part of the world, rice is indeed king. That the Indian word for rice,* dhanya, *means "sustainer of the human race," that the name of the Buddha's father, Suddhodana, the sixth-century–B.C. king of Nepal, literally means "pure rice," and that the idiomatic expression "Have you eaten your rice today?" was a polite way of saying hello in traditional Chinese society only begins to convey the place of rice in the East.*

Headline Science

" 'Perky Cheerleaders' " by John Crewdson, in *Nieman Reports* (Winter 1993), Nieman Foundation, Harvard Univ., One Francis Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

In 1989 the Philadelphia-based Wistar Institute reported in *Science* magazine that multiple sclerosis might be caused by an AIDS-like virus. News media across the country picked up the story. Neither the *Science* report nor the news stories it inspired mentioned that essentially the same "finding" had been announced four years earlier in the British journal *Nature*, and that other laboratories had swiftly thrown cold water on it (just as was to happen with the recycled *Science* finding). When Wistar a few years later announced that it had linked chronic fatigue syndrome to an AIDS-like virus, once again its "breakthrough" was widely reported—and the subsequent debunking of it by the Centers for Disease Control was widely ignored. The public is ill served by such superficial reporting, says Crewdson, a senior writer for the *Chicago Tribune*. He contends that science writers all too frequently serve as mindless cheerleaders for the scientists they cover.



7,000 Scientists Cheer Fusion-in-Jar Experimenter

By MALCOLM W. BROWNE
Special to The New York Times

DALLAS, April 12 — A Utah scientist received sustained applause from 7,000 chemists today as he described an experiment that he said had produced nuclear fusion in a simple electrolytic cell.

But while most of the scientists attending the national meeting of the American Chemical Society here appeared to accept the interpretation of the results given by the scientist, Dr. B. Stanley Pons, the few physicists expert in fusion who attended the meeting appeared to be skeptical.

It appeared, in fact, that the fusion experiment, carried out at the University of Utah and announced March 23, has opened a schism between chemists and physicists that may take years of experimentation to resolve. Nuclear fusion is ordinarily studied by physicists, who deal with changes that occur nuclei of atoms. Chemists inv

the electronic interactions of entire atoms and molecules.

Dr. Pons and his collaborator, Dr. Martin Fleischmann, an electrochemist at the University of Southampton in England, startled scientists with their initial public report, which was made at a news conference at the University of Utah, where Dr. Pons heads the chemistry department. They said they had obtained a large excess of energy from a simple electrolytic cell, in which an electrical current passed through heavy water (water in which hydrogen is replaced by its heavy isotope, deuterium) set off hydrogen fusion in a palladium cathode.

Unlike fission, in which atoms are split to release energy, fusion is the joining together of the nuclei of hydrogen atoms to produce helium and enormous amounts of energy. Fusion nor- curs only at temp rivaling those

form of hydrogen fusion as a commercial source of power, some scientists believe that energy shortages that seem likely to occur in the next few centuries could be forestalled.

The symposium today at the American Chemical Society was unprecedented, both in size and in the haste in which it was prepared, according to Dr. Clayton F. Callis, president of the organization.

Long applause followed Dr. Cal' expression of satisfaction that ists rather than scientists from other discipline were getting cr what might be a monumental ery.

But one of the five panelist the discussion, Dr. Harold to'd scientists at the me r ists expert in fusion v 'o accept Dr. Pons' experiment.

Reported scientific breakthroughs don't always live up to their billing.

Like other journalists, science writers generally prefer stories that are simple and dramatic. Because scientific subjects are so often extremely complicated and technical, science writers are more dependent than other reporters on the people they cover to tell them what the story is. Some researchers are only too happy to give them a "story." In addition, Crewdson writes, "Science writers may be the last innocents. Among journalists they are certainly the last optimists." When a scientist says that he has discovered something big, the science writers usually are eager to believe him.

In the brave new world of Big Science, researchers are highly dependent on favorable publicity, Crewdson observes, and some have become shrewd manipulators of the Fourth Estate. "Whether it comes from the federal treasury or a private foundation, next year's money depends on this year's discoveries." When there are no important discoveries, "non-discoveries and marginal discoveries and problematic discoveries are spiffed up and published in journals like *Science* and *Nature*, which [distribute] them to the mass media as energetically as any big-city tabloids competing for circulation."

Eager for stories, the science writers go along. In the Wistar case, Crewdson says, not only was the institute's history of dubious discoveries ignored, but reporters "failed to notice that the institute's increasingly desperate publicity grabs paralleled both its worsening financial straits and the . . . struggle of its septuagenarian director to keep his job."

The old view of scientists as disinterested, almost godlike creatures simply won't stand up, Crewdson says. Science writers need to learn a basic journalistic lesson: "If your mother says she loves you, check it out."

Technological Retreat

"Suppressing Innovation: Bell Laboratories and Magnetic Recording" by Mark Clark, in *Technology and Culture* (July 1993), Univ. of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Ill. 60637.

The advance of technology may seem inexorable, but there is no guarantee that consumers will quickly reap the benefits. Sometimes, as with magnetic recording during the 1930s, the

fruits of innovation are deliberately withheld.

In 1930, after outside firms tried to interest it in some form of telephone-answering device, American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) had its research arm, the now-renowned Bell Telephone Laboratories, take up the question of magnetic recording. Physicist Clarence Hickman and his colleagues made remarkable progress. By 1934, writes Clark, who has a doctorate in the history of technology from the University of Delaware, "magnetic recording had become a practical method for sound reproduction, one which had a number of potential commercial applications." A prototype telephone-answering machine built that year, although large and complicated, "met all reasonable engineering requirements for performance," Clark says. Similar equipment was used successfully in field tests. Yet AT&T did not offer an answering machine to its customers until the early 1950s—and prohibited the connection of recorders to public phone lines until 1948, when consumer pressure became too great to resist.

Why the delays? Upper-level executives at AT&T, Clark says, feared that if recordings of conversations were permitted, customers would be less willing to use the phone system. A slip of the tongue recorded during a business negotiation, for example, could be fatal to a deal. Also, some AT&T executives estimated that up to one-third of all phone calls involved matters of an illegal or immoral nature. Even the possibility that recording devices were being used, one manager said, "would change the whole nature of telephone conversations and would in our opinion render the telephone much less satisfactory and useful in the vast majority of cases in which it is employed."

Surprisingly, according to Clark, the managers "paid far more attention to the question of trust and image" than to potential profits. That was a reflection of the public-relations problems AT&T was having as a result of New Deal antitrust investigations.

Having failed to exploit the technological lead it had developed, AT&T lost it after 1940. When the Bell system finally began offering answering machines to its customers in 1951, they were built not by AT&T but by an outside contractor.

ARTS & LETTERS

The Prize for Irrelevance

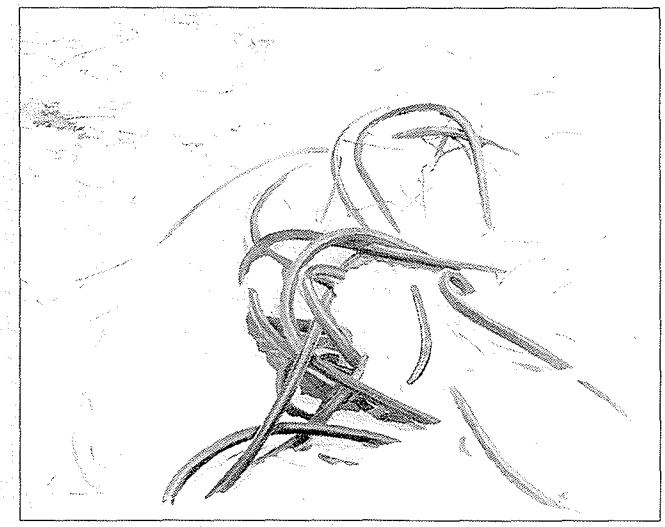
"The Nobel Prize for Literature" by Renee Winegarten, in *The American Scholar* (Winter 1994), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Jorge Luis Borges, Joseph Conrad, Graham Greene, Henry James, James Joyce, Federico Garcia Lorca, Vladimir Nabokov, Marcel Proust, and Leo Tolstoy—all were great writers, yet all were passed over for the Nobel Prize for Literature. Those honored instead include such now largely forgotten writers as French poet Sully Prudhomme (1901) and American novelist Pearl S. Buck (1938).

Of course, worthy writers, from T. S. Eliot (1948) and William Faulkner (1949) to Czeslaw Milosz (1980) and Joseph Brodsky (1987), have won the Nobel jackpot—now worth $12,500. (William Butler Yeats's first question upon learning he was to receive the award in 1923 was "How much?") Yet on the whole, argues Winegarten, an essayist and literary critic, the award's meaning for literature or writers is greatly overblown. And rarely does the prize go to a struggling writer, enabling him or her to do more work. George Bernard Shaw (the 1925 winner) said the Nobel Prize was "a life belt thrown to a swimmer who has already reached the shore."

"The great merit of the Nobel Prize for Literature," Winegarten says, "is that it is international in scope—even if internationalism . . . is a cultural virtue, not strictly a literary one." While the prize is "honorably universal, embracing writers from India (Rabindranath Tagore [1913]), Japan (Yasunari Kawabata [1968]), Nigeria (Wole Soyinka [1986]), the Caribbean (Derek Walcott [1992]), the citations monotonously discuss literature in terms of ethnic identity and

A Realist's Progress



From the start of her career in the early 1970s, Catherine Murphy has been hailed as a brilliant representational painter, an heir of Edward Hopper, notes critic Gerrit Henry in Art in America *(Jan. 1994). "She was praised for her aerial views from the window of her Hoboken apartment looking toward the Empire State Building, or her tree-shaded, high-lawned treatments of her childhood home in the woods of Lexington, Mass., all painstakingly painted from life." But, as* Garden Hose in Melting Snow *(1988), right, shows, Murphy has progressively come to grips with aspects of 20th-century modernist abstraction.*

From a few feet away, Garden Hose in Melting Snow *looks exactly like what its title says it is. But from 10 feet away, Henry observes, "it looks like a field of pristine white strewn lightly with pencil markings, with loopy bright-green calligraphy at center." Murphy herself comments: "It's about a line on a piece of paper. The snow is the paper, the line is the garden hose."*

"She is unusual among today's realist painters," Henry says, "for she accepts the challenge of incorporating abstraction within—not imposing it on top of—convincing naturalist imagery."

nationality." Latin American writers, for example, are generally praised for writing about their native region, not for literary virtues independent of nationality.

Indeed, contrary to popular perceptions, the prize was not intended to be awarded purely on the basis of literary merit. Alfred Nobel (1833–96), the Swedish inventor and frustrated writer who endowed the prize, declared in his will that it should go to the author of "the most outstanding work of an idealistic tendency." It has often gone to writers who have exposed injustice, such as Britain's John Galsworthy, who won in 1932 on the strength of works such as *The Silver Box* (1906), a play about the law's unequal treatment of rich and poor, or to spokesmen for the underdog, such as John Steinbeck, author of *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), who won in1962.

For all its limitations, the Nobel Prize undeniably has its great moments. When Soviet dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn was selected in 1970, a French writer said the choice by itself justified the existence of the Nobel Prize.

The Age of Corruption

"Edith Wharton's Abuser" by Kenneth S. Lynn, in *The American Spectator* (Dec. 1993), 2020 N. 14th St., Ste. 750, Arlington, Va. 22216.

R. W. B. Lewis's *Edith Wharton: A Biography* (1975) won the Pulitzer Prize and the Bancroft Prize and is the work upon which other commentators on the author of *Ethan Frome* (1911), *The Age of Innocence* (1920), and other famous novels now rely. Lynn, a literary biographer and erstwhile professor, charges that the Yale University professor's work is a scandal—ridden with errors and "profoundly corrupt."

Thanks to Lewis, Lynn contends, today's critics and scholars who write about Edith Wharton (1862–1937) "are working out of the following assumptions: Borne down by her society, her

mother, and her husband, Wharton collapsed. Victimization, however, laid the groundwork for rebellion and rebirth. Gallantly, she fought back. She resumed writing. She had an affair with [a journalist named Morton Fullerton]. She shucked off her husband. And early and late she produced brave, wonderful books. In fine, *she triumphed.*"

This "Wharton myth," Lynn argues, is a product of "the fantasies of [Lewis's] ideologically driven mind, wherein victimization equates with virtue and a wealthy, socially privileged mother . . . is bound to be a moral monster."

In his relatively skimpy treatment of Wharton's childhood development (she is 40 years old by page 105 of the 532-page text), Lewis manufactures psychodramas "out of swift manipulations of scanty facts, omissions of lengthier contradictory facts, pumped-up rhetoric, and bluff," Lynn asserts. For example, Lewis strongly implies that what Wharton described as a "choking agony of terror" she suffered in childhood "was rooted in the traumatic scoldings, humiliations, and other abuses visited upon her by a Gothic ogress of a mother." He ignores, Lynn points out, "Wharton's touching expression of gratitude to her mother and father for helping her through her agony," which is contained in an unpublished autobiographical fragment.

Lynn cites criticism of the Wharton biography made in the (London) *Times Literary Supplement* by two former research assistants, Marion Mainwaring and Mary Pitlick, whom Lewis warmly praised in the book as "something closer to collaborators" than assistants. "He lavishly praised my research," Mainwaring said, "but distorted or neglected much of the material I gave him. One result is that other writers have been propagating his errors." For example, Mainwaring found out a great deal about Wharton's affair with Fullerton, but was not able to find out much, not even her first name, about a woman named Mirecourt, who allegedly blackmailed Fullerton. In a letter to Lewis, Mainwaring speculated that Mirecourt might have been a journalist, "a kind of French Henrietta Stackpole," alluding to a reporter in Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady.* In Lewis's book, the Mirecourt woman appears as "Henrietta Mirecourt."

The other researcher, Pitlick, pointed out that a crucial "breakdown" Lewis claims Wharton had in the summer of 1894—supposedly precipitated by her marital unhappiness, her absorption of society's, and her mother's, "distrust" of anyone who took writing seriously, and her loss of self-confidence in her early stories—never took place. Lewis took at face value the excuse of illness that Wharton gave her publisher for failing to produce a promised volume of stories. He ignored the letters she wrote to others showing her to be "an ebullient woman going back and forth to Europe." The facts, Lynn writes, did not fit the "Lewis-confected Wharton myth."

A Grimm Dahl

"The Grimmest Tales" by Christopher Hitchens, in *Vanity Fair* (Jan. 1994), 350 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Critics make two complaints about *The Witches, The BFG* (Big Friendly Giant), and Roald Dahl's other popular books for children. First, that the books, as one irate mother from Iowa charged, are too sophisticated and do not teach moral values. She cited passages in which a witch plotted to kill children, there was a reference to "dog droppings," and people's "bottoms" were skewered. Second, critics charge that Dahl (1916–90) was an anti-Semite and a racist, and that he treated his wife badly. Hitchens, a journalist, contends that the critics just don't grasp the powerful appeal of "a good yucky tale."

To the Iowa mother, Hitchens says: "The word is out about bottoms and dog doo-doo, and while you may want less of it, the kids are unanimous. They want more. They also wish for more and better revolting rhymes, sinister animals, and episodes where fat children get theirs."

One explanation of adults' dislike of Dahl's work is jealousy, Hitchens asserts. The writer's formula, as he himself said, consisted of "conspiring with children against adults." He was not merely a pied piper but "a genuine subversive," Hitchens writes. "In his world, kids are fit to rule. They understand cruelty and unfairness and, I'm very sorry to say, are capable of relishing it. They also have a rather raunchy idea of what's funny."

Hitchens quotes the late child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim: "There is a widespread refusal to let children know that the source of much that goes wrong in life is due to our very own natures—the propensity of all men for acting aggressively, asocially, selfishly, out of anger and anxiety. Instead, we want our children to believe that, inherently, all men are good. But children know that *they* are not always good; and often, even when they are, they would prefer not to be."

As for the politically correct critics who wring their hands over the author's repellent private attitudes and vices—now on display in Jeremy Treglown's *Roald Dahl: A Life* (1994)—Hitchens says they miss the point. There is little doubt that Dahl was a pretty awful human being. Only some cauldron of vileness bubbling away within him could have enabled him, in his books, to keep "children enthralled and agreeably disgusted and pleasurably afraid."

OTHER NATIONS

Germany's Painful Transition

A Survey of Recent Articles

The collapse of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 suddenly made German unification a live issue, and West German chancellor Helmut Kohl embraced it as his own. With firm and crucial support from the United States, Kohl skillfully brought about the *Vereinigung* (unification) the next October. But in that election year of 1990, he "did not say that the path to unity would be expensive, arduous, and long," Heinrich August Winkler, a historian at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, notes in an exceptionally rich issue of *Daedalus* (Winter 1994) devoted to Germany. Instead, Kohl assured East Germans that the new *Länder* (states) would be transformed within a few years into "flourishing landscapes." That has not happened. With Germany now in the middle of a serious recession, it is apparent not only that real unity is going to require many years of sacrifice and patience but also that Germans are having to rethink what it means to be German.

Although the Berlin Wall is no more, it continues, in a sense, to exist, Columbia University historian Fritz Stern writes in *Foreign Affairs* (Sept.–Oct. 1993): "On some deep psychological level the unified Germany is more divided than before; the physical wall has been internalized. Where once had been the untroubled hope that at some future date the division of the country, unnaturally maintained, would be healed, there are now painful inequalities of power, wealth, experience, and assertiveness." Three-fourths of the nearly 80 million people of Germany live in the old *Länder* in the West, and an even larger proportion of the gross national product is created there.

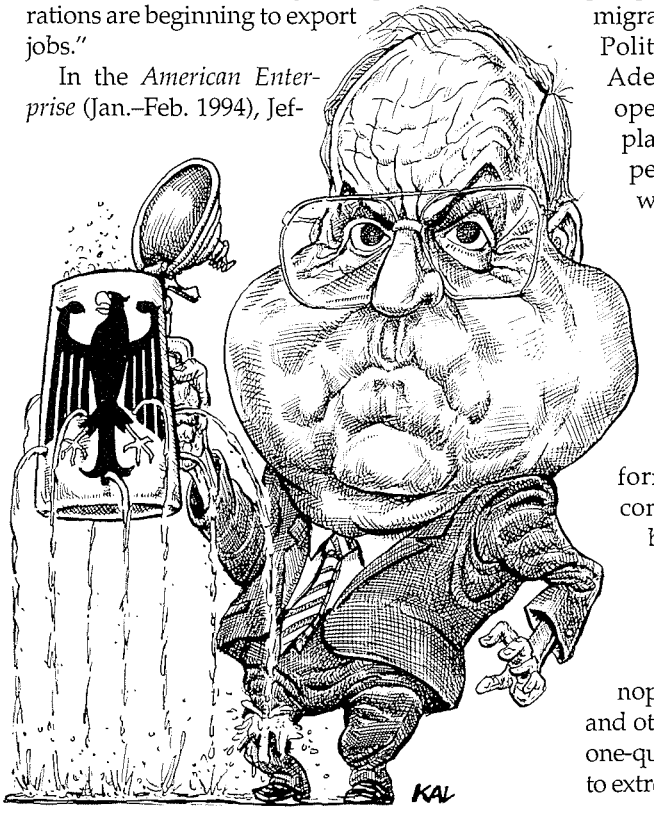
The East German economy—supposedly the strongest in Eastern Europe—turned out to be in disastrous shape, historian Gordon A. Craig, author of *The Germans* (1982), observes in the *New York Review of Books* (Jan. 13, 1994). "Because of neglect and unrealistic planning, all major East German industries—steel, machine tools, chemicals, and synthetics, manufacture of cars and trucks, housing construction, and textiles—were far below Western standards and hence difficult to make competitive." Within three years after unification, three million jobs were lost in eastern Germany. Mass poverty was avoided only by vast infusions of aid from the West—160 billion deutsche marks, or $27 billion, from the Fund of German Unity, up to this year. In March 1993, the *Bundestag* (parliament) approved a *Solidarpakt* (solidarity pact) providing for new taxes to underwrite more aid for the new *Länder;* about one trillion deutsche marks will be transferred over the next decade.

No matter how impressive such amounts may look, Ludger Kühnhardt, a political scientist at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, points out in *Daedalus*, "Germans are psychologically and culturally not brought together" by

them. "The climate has become rougher, in the West no less than in the East." Many westerners blame eastern Germany for their problems. They have long since forgotten, Ludger Kühnhardt maintains, that "their economy has enjoyed a net profit from the opening of the East. Few are prepared to accept that the economic recession and the unavoidable crisis of adjustment of the social state that existed before 1989 were in fact slowed down by unification."

Germany's attractiveness to industry was declining long before unification, explain Thomas Kielinger, editor in chief of the German weekly *Rheinischer Merkur*, and Max Otte, director, U.S. Eastern Region, of Kienbaum & Partners, a German management consulting firm, in *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1993): "A combination of high taxes, heavy regulation, and high labor costs has prompted more and more German companies to look for production facilities abroad.... In the past, large German corporations had countered economic crises with capital investment and increased productivity. Now, more and more of the largest corporations are beginning to export jobs."

In the *American Enterprise* (Jan.–Feb. 1994), Jeffrey Gedmin makes much the same point about Germany's decline, noting that Germans have "the longest vacations and the shortest work weeks, the earliest retirement age, and the oldest students" in the industrialized world. Even Kohl has said that Germany can no longer afford to be a "collective amusement park."



Ludger Kühnhardt believes that after Germany regains its economic footing, North-South divisions may overshadow the East-West schism. For centuries, the Northeast and East were Protestant, Slavic-oriented, and dominated by large landowners, while the westward-looking Catholic Northwest and West enjoyed more prosperity. Already, Kühnhardt reports, the southern *Länder* of the former East Germany, Thuringia and Saxony, are enjoying a speedier economic and technological renewal than northern Germany.

As if the economy and unification were not sufficient, there are other weighty problems confronting the country. In the past, German prosperity made the country "a magnet for immigrants," notes Stephan Eisel, director of the Political Academy of Germany's Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation, in *Daedalus*. The opening of Germany's eastern borders also played an important role. In 1990, 193,000 people from Eastern Europe and elsewhere sought political asylum; in 1991, 256,000; in 1992, 400,000. In addition, ethnic Germans from Poland, Romania, and the former Soviet Union were arriving at the rate of 200,000–300,000 a year. While some of the immigrants were genuine refugees—Germany has taken in eight times as many people fleeing from the war in the former Yugoslavia as all other countries combined—most were seeking economic betterment. To reduce their number, Germany's political parties last spring agreed on a constitutional amendment to limit abuse of the asylum laws. The legislators hoped to quell rising xenophobia. A wave of violence against Turks and other foreigners began in 1990. Only about one-quarter of the suspected perpetrators belong to extreme right-wing groups, Eisel notes; nearly

three-quarters are youths under 20. Jane Kramer, in a vivid and incisive *New Yorker* (June 14, 1993) report on the violence, writes that there are about 6,000 "right extremist" skinheads in Germany, of whom about 3,500 live in what used to be East Germany. The government holds them responsible for 3,000 brutal attacks—lately, about five a day. Forty percent of the attacks have taken place in the new *Länder*, whose people, before the fall of the Wall, had never really known any foreigners.

Chancellor Kohl's response to the new violence has been very low-key. His associates say that that is deliberate, Stephen Kinzer, chief of the *New York Times* bureau in Berlin, reports in the *Atlantic Monthly* (Feb. 1994). "He is acutely aware of the growing potential of far-right political parties, they say, and he wants to make sure that conservative voters do not abandon his Christian Democratic Union in favor of those parties." Nineteen separate elections are taking place this year for local offices, the *Länder* parliaments, the *Bundestag*, and the European Parliament. (The chancellor is elected by the *Bundestag*.) To hold conservative voters, Kohl "is taking a strong law-and-order stance and refusing to identify himself with unpopular groups such as Turks and gypsies, who are the terrorists' chief victims."

The German government repeatedly insists that "the Federal Republic is not a country of immigration." In reality, however, between 1945 and 1990 nearly 15 million East Germans, ethnic Germans, and political refugees immigrated to West Germany and became citizens, according to University of Osnabrück professor Klaus J. Bade, writing in *Daedalus*. These new citizens, together with 4.8 million Turks and other resident foreigners, amounted to one-third of West Germany's inhabitants in 1990.

The traditional German idea of nation, based on descent, is enshrined in the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law, or constitution) and is used to deny naturalization to foreigners who have lived in Germany for decades and to their children who were born there. This must change, observers such as Heinrich Winkler believe. "The new formation of the German nation can only succeed," he writes, "if it coincides with a Westernization of the German understanding of nation. In the future, the term 'German' will have to be defined not only by descent, but also by the will to belong to the German nation."

Revisiting the Korean War

"New Findings on the Korean War" by Kathryn Weathersby, in Cold War International History Project *Bulletin* (Fall 1993), Woodrow Wilson Center, 1000 Jefferson Dr. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20560.

On June 25, 1950, North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel and invaded South Korea, starting the Korean War. While most scholars have said that it was absurd to think that North Korea leader Kim Il Sung could have gone ahead without Stalin's approval and aid, some revisionists, such as Bruce Cumings, author of *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. II (1990), have argued otherwise. Indeed, Cumings contends that the invasion may have been provoked by South Korea, just as North Korea and the Soviet Union always maintained. Weathersby, a historian at Florida State University, contends that a document recently unearthed in the Soviet archives shows what really happened.

The document, "On the Korean War, 1950–53, and the Armistice Negotiations," was prepared in 1966 by Soviet Foreign Ministry staff, apparently to provide background information to Soviet officials who were then considering Soviet aid to the Viet Cong in their war with South Vietnam and the United States. The report, which cites diplomatic telegrams in the Soviet Foreign Ministry archive, proves that the June invasion was not a defensive response to provocation by the South, writes Weathersby. Moreover, "Stalin approved the North Korean [invasion] plan, provided sufficient arms and equipment . . . and sent Soviet military advisers to North Korea to assist in planning the campaign."

However, Weathersby adds, the Soviet document also shows that the assumption—made by President Harry Truman's administration and by many scholars—that the initiative for the attack came from Stalin is false. "This was Kim Il Sung's war; he gained Stalin's reluctant approval only after persistent appeals (48 telegrams!)."

The question of who called for war is crucial, in Weathersby's view. By the spring of 1950, she says, "the Truman administration had concluded that South Korea was not of sufficient strategic importance to the United States to justify military intervention to prevent a North Korean takeover of South Korea. However, for the *Soviet Union* to attempt to gain control over South Korea was a different matter entirely."

The Soviet document, Weathersby says, suggests (but does not state) "that Stalin supported Kim's plan only because he calculated that it would *not* involve military conflict with the United States." Other documents in Soviet archives, as well as memoirs recently published in Russia, she says, "indicate that Stalin was surprised and alarmed by the U.S. intervention. He evidently blamed Kim for having badly misjudged the situation."

But Washington, too, misjudged the situation, Weathersby thinks: "The nearly unanimous opinion within the Truman administration was that [the invasion] was a Soviet probe; if the United States did not resist this act of aggression, the Soviet Union would move next into West Germany, or perhaps Iran." In reality, Weathersby believes, the North Korean attack on South Korea was not intended as "a test of American resolve."

Remember Panama?

"Panama: Casablanca without Heroes" by Silvana Paternostro, in *World Policy Journal* (Winter 1993–94), World Policy Inst., New School for Social Research, 65 Fifth Ave., Ste. 413, New York, N.Y. 10003.

More than three years after the United States invaded Panama with 24,000 troops, toppled General Manuel Antonio Noriega's military regime, and brought Noriega to Florida to stand trial on drug trafficking charges, the country, no longer in the spotlight, "has reverted to old habits," writes Paternostro, a freelance journalist.

Although no longer centralized, as under Noriega, the drug trade still flourishes, and official corruption remains a problem. A Panamanian legislator was arrested in Tampa, Florida, last October and charged with conspiring to smuggle 150 kilos of cocaine into the United States. Javier Chérigo, deputy director of Panama's restructured and demilitarized intelligence police, says his 800-man force on the drug beat spends most of its time investigating drug trafficking on the streets of Panama, where rival Colombian and Panamanian drug gangs battle one another. Police corruption, Chérigo says, is his biggest problem.

In addition to Panama's 3,500 lawyers, "who for less than $1,000 can form and register a company on paper in less than 24 hours," Paternostro notes, the country has "104 banks, an iron-clad secrecy law, and no restriction on the amount of cash entering the country." In other words, Panama has all the classic ingredients for money laundering on a grand scale. In 1992 alone, total banking center deposits increased from almost $2 billion to $19 billion.

Lawlessness has bred more than 100 private-security companies since 1989. Many ordinary Panamanians pack guns. Now, many fear that the political campaigns leading up to what some describe as Panama's first free elections this May could be marked by bloodshed. Guillermo Endara, who was sworn in as president at the time of the U.S. invasion, is not running. Of those who are, Ernesto Pérez Balladares, the candidate of the Revolutionary Democratic Party, which was the political arm of Noriega's regime, appears to be leading.

The turnover of the Panama Canal to Panama in 2000, in accordance with the 1977 treaty negotiated with the United States, is not a hot election issue this year. Unemployment seems to be Panamanians' biggest concern. But many Panamanians, Paternostro says, are no longer enthusiastic about the prospect of control over the canal. The U.S. Department of Defense employs about 5,400 Panamanians and pumps more than $250 million into Panama's economy each year. Some Panamanians have proposed that their government renegotiate. "You can't eat sovereignty," one observed.

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions

"Does Head Start Make a Difference?"

National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc., 1050 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138. 59 pp. $5
Authors: *Janet Currie and Duncan Thomas*

Head Start, launched in 1964 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty," is one of the few federal welfare programs that enjoys broad public support. Today, some 622,000 poor children ages three to five—about 28 percent of all those eligible—are enrolled in the $2.2 billion program, which aims to improve the learning ability, social skills, and health of youngsters.

Past studies suggest that Head Start produces significant early gains in IQ, which are then lost over time. By the third grade, children who once were enrolled in Head Start perform no better on IQ tests than those who were not. Currie, of the National Bureau of Economic Research, and Thomas, of Yale University's Economic Growth Center, sought to take a broader measure of Head Start's effect—on success in school, on various comprehension tests, and on health. They found, surprisingly, that Head Start does make a difference but that its effects vary by race.

Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey's Child-Mother file, Currie and Thomas compared children who participated in Head Start with their siblings who did not. White children who took part in Head Start did better on tests of mathematics and vocabulary comprehension than did their siblings. Hispanic children outperformed their stay-at-home siblings on reading and vocabulary tests. Significantly, the benefits persisted after the children reached age eight. But Currie and Thomas found that Head Start had no impact on the test scores of black children.

Similarly, Head Start reduced the likelihood that a white or Hispanic child would have to repeat a grade in school by more than 30 percent, but it had no effect on the failure rate of black children.

Head Start did have important health benefits for black children. Participants got measles shots earlier and grew taller than their siblings.

The racial differences are something of a mystery. They "cannot be entirely explained by the fact that some groups are more disadvantaged than others," the authors say. There are more than 1,300 local Head Start programs. Perhaps, Currie and Thomas speculate, those serving black children put less emphasis than the others do on academic achievement, and more emphasis on health.

"Rethinking Russia's National Interests."

Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1800 K St. N.W., Ste. 400, Washington, D.C. 20006. 116 pp. $14.95
Editor: *Stephen Sestanovich*

Like the United States, Russia has long thought it has a special mission in the world. Under the tsars, "Mother Russia" was persistently expansionist. The Soviet Union aimed at social utopia and world revolution. If Russia and its leaders today do not abandon this sense of mission and start thinking in terms of *national interests*, peace on Russia's periphery is extremely unlikely. The 11 contributors to this collection of essays agreed that the most important task is for Moscow to devise a realistic, nonimperial approach to the "near abroad"—the other 14 newly independent states formed from the old Soviet Union.

"For Russia," observes former secretary of state Henry Kissinger, "those lands that had always been considered part of Russia, indeed from which Russia originated, like Ukraine, are now foreign countries, and they deal with Moscow as a security problem. That is a huge emotional adjustment."

The United States, with its peculiar experience in the Western Hemisphere, observes Vladimir P. Lukin, Russia's ambassador to the United States, should be able to understand that the " 'near abroad' is a zone of fundamentally important interests and a natural sphere of Russia's influence."

Some 25 million ethnic Russians live outside the Russian

Federation. Russia is entitled to expect that their human and civil rights will be upheld, Lukin asserts. "Russia is also justified in expecting its neighbors to prevent threats to Russia from arising on their territory as a result of the activities of third countries."

Such concerns are legitimate, agrees Francis Fukuyama, a consultant at the RAND Corporation, but must be seen in light of Russia's "long history as an imperial and authoritarian power. . . . Although there have been and will be many instances of genuine persecution of Russians abroad, in other cases—particularly in the Baltics—Russian populations are seen as fifth columns representing Russian imperial interests. Threats from Moscow on this score are likely to increase rather than decrease that suspicion." Fukuyama believes that the West should back inclusive citizenship laws in the 14 countries to allay Russian fears. "The effect of such outside pressure on small countries like Estonia from a Europe they are eager to enter would be enormous."

Despite Russia's legitimate economic, political, and security interests in the other successor states, says Paul A. Goble, a Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Russians so far "have talked more about loss and about mission than about those interests. The nostalgia for the [Soviet Union] that is growing in Russia, the fear that the successor states will either collapse into violence that could spread to Russia or become *places d'armes* for countries hostile to Russia, the sense that all current problems are traceable to the collapse of the old system rather than to the features of that system—all these things are giving an ever bigger audience to those who want to talk in terms of mission."

"Statistics for the 21st Century."

Dun & Bradstreet Corp., Economic Analysis Dept., P.O. Box 3938, New York, N.Y. 10163-3938. 266 pp. $14.95
Authors: *Joseph W. Duncan and Andrew C. Gross*

The pundits have stars in their eyes over information: the information superhighway, the information revolution, the information economy. Few have noticed that the prized commodity itself, information, is often of dubious quality.

It has not escaped Duncan, a vice president of Dun & Bradstreet, and Gross, a business professor at Cleveland State University. Flawed economic and social statistics, they warn, are giving highly inaccurate portraits of the world. International Monetary Fund statistics, for example, show that world trade jumped by 14.3 percent in 1990. But the trade data reported by individual countries do not add up: Since one country's exports are other countries' imports, the world's balance of trade should always equal zero. It never works out that way. In 1990, the discrepancy was $112 billion.

Why do such errors occur? Partly because it is costly and technically difficult to keep tabs on the goods, services, and money that cross borders. Bigger problems have been created by rapid economic change. For example, the growth of multinational corporations means that much "foreign" trade now occurs between affiliated companies. In 1991, 46 percent of all U.S. imports were accounted for by U.S. firms buying from their own affiliates overseas or by foreign affiliates in America buying from their parent companies abroad. On a practical level, the question is whether such purchasers are paying market prices. (Probably not.) On a conceptual level, one must ask if a U.S. automaker's purchase of, say, a steering wheel from its subsidiary in Canada really is an "import." Similar complications surround exports.

Revising trade data to exclude such transactions would give Americans a drastically different—and in many ways more accurate—picture of the nation's economic strengths and weaknesses, Duncan and Gross say. In 1987, the official U.S. trade deficit was a staggering $148 billion. If one uses their "supplemental" accounting, however, that deficit drops to $68 billion.

The two researchers concede that there are good arguments for going slow in the revision of statistics. But reform, already under way in a number of areas, is imperative.

COMMENTARY

We welcome timely letters from readers, especially those who wish to amplify or correct information published in the Quarterly *and/or react to the views expressed in our essays. The writer's telephone number and address should be included. For reasons of space, letters are usually edited for publication. Some letters are received in response to the editors' requests for comment.*

Closely Watched Trains

It's wonderful to read an essay that gets the facts straight. Mark Reutter, in "The Lost Promise of the American Railroad" [*WQ*, Winter '94], has done a masterful job of reviewing the major events in the annals of American railway passenger service.

I am especially pleased that he showed that total ossification did not prevail in the industry during the post–World War I era. With imagination and optimism, Reutter shows, Ralph Budd led his Burlington Railroad and the nation into the promising world of diesel-powered, high-speed passenger trains. Reutter was right to compare the tremendous public excitement about Budd's *Zephyr* and the M-10001, the Union Pacific's first streamliner, with recent interest in Amtrak's demonstration of foreign-made X2000 and ICE trains.

The point that Reutter made so well is that the great advances in intercity passenger technology no longer come from American concerns but from abroad. The reason is clear, and one that most people either never knew or have forgotten. The railroad industry was wholly overregulated until passage of the Staggers Act in 1980. The problems were numerous, and included more than rate and service controls. They involved archaic works rules (there were actually "excess-crew" rather than "full-crew" laws), unreasonable taxation, and government support for competing modes of transportation. A more balanced playing field ought to make it possible for the United States to emerge as a leader in railway technology. There are encouraging signs. The popularity of the X2000 and ICE equipment indicates that more Americans realize the need for better intercity transport. The fact, too, that the nation has reinvented the trolley, now called "light rail," is a powerful reminder that good things can run on steel rails.

One can hope, then, the 21st century will give credence to what some thought to be the silly, even pathetic, slogan Amtrak used shortly after its creation in 1971: "TRACKS ARE BACK!"

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"The Lost Promise of the American Railroad" competently examines the decline of the American passenger train. One red herring, though, was the lengthy but engrossing treatment of the Burlington Railroad's Pioneer *Zephyr* of the 1930s. The story of Ralph and Edward Budd's joint venture into streamlined trains—a significant chapter in U.S. railroad history—bears retelling. However, the reader risks getting the erroneous impression that the streamliner story has some direct correlation to the decline of the passenger train.

Thirteen pages into the article, Reutter gets to the heart of the matter: "After World War II, government became the railroads' biggest competitor . . . (as) federal expenditures for airports and highways rocketed to dizzying heights, driven by the politics of the Cold War and the pork barrel." That is the essence of the article. Reutter adds: "The public promotion of roads and runways, with government construction, government maintenance, government policing, and government signaling, made it easy for truckers and airlines and bus companies—not to speak of motorists—to compete with railroads that built and maintained [and paid taxes on] their own rights of way." Precisely.

Public policy and public investment, more than any other factors, dictate the role played by any form of transportation, including passenger trains.

A comment on Reutter's Amtrak sidebar: Amtrak's purported lack of "enthusiasm for starting other high-speed corridors" outside the Northeast has nothing to do with commitment. It has to do with capital money, travel markets, and operational control of the railroad. The owner and operator of the Northeast Corridor between New York and Boston, Amtrak is in the midst of a major high-speed rail initiative which will bring 150-MPH operation before the turn of the century. New-generation equipment used in the Northeast—where population density and travel patterns have already helped make "Metroliner" a household word—eventually will be applied to other corridors.

The same public policy favoring government highway and airway investment that Reutter

carefully chronicles as a reason for the decline of the passenger train still prevails in the United States. Until a steady source of capital similar to existing highway and airway trust funds is available to Amtrak, progress must be incremental.

Thomas M. Downs, President
National Railroad Passenger Corporation
Washington, D.C.

Reutter's article illustrates the high price we sometimes pay when governments interfere in the natural development of an industry. Just as B&O president Howard E. Simpson predicted, the Interstate Highway Act of 1956 was the death warrant for the American passenger train.

Interestingly, a similar thing happened to another sort of railway: the electric railways, interurbans, and streetcar systems that provided much of our local mobility. Many eastern and midwestern cities, and some in other parts of the country as well, were once connected by electric interurban lines. Locally, the excellent high-speed Washington, Baltimore, and Annapolis line offered frequent service among those cities. Most of the interurbans disappeared during the 1930s, and government played a central role in doing them in. From their beginning, mostly in the 1890s, many of the interurban companies sold electric power to the communities they served. By the 1930s, the power business had come in many cases to dwarf the transportation business, keeping the latter afloat financially. But the Roosevelt administration issued a "trust-busting" ruling which required that the two businesses be separated. The companies naturally chose to keep the more profitable business, and the interurban lines were abandoned.

Similarly, government played an active role in many cities in destroying local streetcar systems. Like the passenger train, the streetcar benefited greatly from the "streamliner" era of the 1930s. The famous PCC car, a highly advanced, fast, smooth-riding marvel of 1930s technology, had given streetcars a new lease on life. But streetcar companies, mostly privately owned, had to maintain their own tracks and often parts of the streets where the tracks ran. Buses got free use of the public highways. Seldom were municipal authorities helpful in equalizing the difference; to the contrary, they were often eager to push the trollies into oblivion.

Washington, D.C., is a sad example. D.C. Transit provided a well-run, modern streetcar system that survived until 1962. Congress, which then governed the District directly, mandated the end of the streetcars on the grounds that they were too "old fashioned" for the nation's capital, even though many were modern PCC cars. If we had converted the streetcar system gradually into a subway instead of building Metro from scratch we would have saved billions of dollars and had superior service.

Paul M. Weyrich, Publisher
The New Electric Railway Journal
Washington, D.C.

Mark Reutter's impressive history left out little. He says railroads competed "foolishly among themselves." This occurred throughout the century (except during World War I). Before air travel became prevalent, however, such behavior was a rational response to the tendency of corporate moguls to ship their freight on the railroad they traveled themselves. In other words, with the same company controlling tracks, passenger trains, and freight trains, what was best for the railroad and its corporate identity was not always best for *passenger train* efficiency.

One by-product of the post–World War I restoration of duplicative passenger trains and facilities was a series of fare increases, badly hurting business during a period when millions first gained access to affordable automobile travel.

Amtrak, however, deserved more favorable treatment from Reutter. In the face of a decade of White House hostility, Amtrak maintained its overall market share as the market grew. In absolute terms, travel on Amtrak rose 48 percent—from 4.2 billion passenger-miles in the 1982 fiscal year to 6.2 billion in fiscal 1993. Growth was greater outside the Northeast Corridor (55 percent) than inside it (34 percent), admittedly because Amtrak has raised fares more aggressively in the Corridor. And when compared with the *fastest* trains of the 1940s, Amtrak long-distance trains indeed are slower, but they usually serve more stations and passengers.

Finally, far from displaying "little enthusiasm for starting other high-speed corridors," Amtrak testifies in favor of such work and promotes it with the states. In April 1994, the Spanish Talgo starts a six-month Seattle–Portland demonstration, capitalizing on enthusiasm sparked by recent Amtrak-instigated tours of the United States by the German ICE and Swedish X2000 trains.

We would see faster progress if Congress would allow states to spend federal highway funds on

intercity passenger rail. Such a provision passed the Senate in 1991 but fell victim to jurisdictional conflicts in the House.

Ross Capon, Executive Director
National Association of Railroad Passengers
Washington, D.C.

To steal a phrase from the business historian Alfred Chandler, Mark Reutter showed how momentous transformations in an economy and society are not the inevitable result of natural market forces but are shaped by the "visible hand" of deliberate policy decisions and choices. If the "consumer" ultimately chose the car or the plane over rail passenger service after World War II, it was only because government policymakers, in conjunction with the private advocates of air and highway transport, consciously and deliberately rewrote the rules of the transportation market, thereby making the consumer choice of cars and planes a foregone conclusion.

I commend you for publishing an article that shines light on the past and, almost in spite of the follies that it chronicles, raises at least some hope for the future. I suspect that Reutter's piece will soon be added to the reading lists of university courses on both transportation history and public policymaking. Let's hope our current policymakers also learn something from it.

David Porreca
Champaign, Ill.

The author is surely correct in his thesis that diesel-electric locomotives had many advantages over steam locomotives. Yet steam power was not hopelessly inefficient or ineffective as a mover of passengers and freight. As late as 1946, steam hauled 88.1 percent of the U.S. freight traffic and 78.2 percent of the passenger traffic and performed 69.1 percent of switching service. During World War II it was steam, not diesels, that moved the record traffic. In 1943, for example, there were 39,725 steam locomotives, 868 electric units, and 2,125 diesels in service on U.S. railroads. It might also be noted that most of the diesels were switchers and so were confined to performing yard work. It wasn't until the middle 1950s that diesel became the dominant form of locomotion on American railways.

I am certain the press releases of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad would have us believe that the *Zephyr* was the fastest train in the world. But its record run was a staged event and it is hardly fair to compare it with trains operating under normal traffic restrictions on a single track railroad. Hundreds of trains would occupy this track, going in both directions. Hence there were constant delays as the major and minor trains see-sawed around each other. If the signals are set on green, no stops are required and all other trains are ordered into a side track. Is it any wonder that the *Zephyr*'s time was about half that of a regular train?

Later in the article, mention is made of other fast streamliners, such as the *Twentieth Century Limited* and the *Broadway Limited*—both were indeed very luxurious extra-fare trains, and yet both were steam powered until the late 1940s. The *Broadway*'s challenging schedule of 16 hours (New York to Chicago) was maintained on a daily basis by steam locomotives produced in the 1920s.

Diesels surely had an advantage when it came to the length of runs—they were competing largely with an aged steam fleet and so should have done better. Some modern steam locomotives, however, performed rather well in this area—the Santa Fe's 4-8-4's made continuous runs of 1,791 miles and the New York Central's Hudson class ran 928 miles Harmon to Chicago. These were everyday performances—not publicity stunts. And so the chuffing steamers, for all of their apparent shortcomings, remained in favor for nearly a quarter century after the introduction of the diesel-electric simply because they proved themselves a reliable form of motive power. Surely they had many failings, but a lack of dependability and speed was not among them.

It might also be noted that the *Zephyr*, for all of its flash and sparkle, was a very undersize train that could hardly handle a full-size assignment, especially on long runs. Passengers, at least first-class passengers, would demand sleeping accommodations. The *Zephyr* had none—only coach and parlor seating. Its capacity was about equal to a single coach. So for heavily traveled runs where 10 and 12 car trains were the norm, the little *Zephyr* could not do the job—unless it was multiplied 10 times over, which would cancel any of its cost advantages.

John H. White
Senior Historian Emeritus
Division of Transportation
Smithsonian Institution

I enjoyed Mark Reutter's essay, but there is one point that I dispute. Paraphrasing *Railway Age* magazine, he writes, "Had Hitler . . . not sacrificed Germany's fine rail network to his

autobahns, . . . the state of the world might have been different."

While I believe that even the best railway system imaginable could not have saved Germany from ultimate defeat, my understanding is that it was not so much the "sacrifice" of railway to autobahn which contributed to Germany's defeat as it was the poor allocation of the then existing German (and occupied) railways. Throughout much of the war, the Reichsbahn (German railroad authority) was strongly devoted to the transportation of civilians to slave labor and extermination camps, even at a time when there was a critical shortage of trains to supply the needs of the German armed forces. Had it not been so subordinate to the wishes of the SS, and to the implementation of the Final Solution, the Reichsbahn could conceivably have contributed more to the German fighting effort, which was—faced by the immense industrial and military might of the Allies—doomed from the outset.

Daniel B. Baskin
Shorewood, Wisc.

Mark Reutter has written a great article. However, I take issue with the reference on page 15 to "recessed fluorescent lighting" on the 1934 *Zephyr*. It is my understanding that true fluorescent lighting was not available until several years later. My Official Guidebook to the 1934 Chicago World's Fair has references to gaseous lighting. Neon was red gaseous lighting. Other gasses and colored glass made other colors. But I doubt that the 1934 *Zephyr* had any gaseous lighting. The Guidebook also states that "All lighting is indirect" in reference to the lighting on the 1934 *Zephyr*. Indirect, but still incandescent, lighting was all the rage in the early 1930s. No doubt that is what the 1934 *Zephyr* had.

J. D. Rowell
Sacramento, Calif.

Mark Reutter overstates the speed differences between Amtrak trains and those of the streamliner era. The crack Santa Fe trains of that earlier era were scheduled to break the 40-hour barrier between Chicago and Los Angeles and did so regularly, day after day, for decades.

The current Amtrak train that is most similar is the *Southwest Chief*. Traveling west from Chicago, it reaches its destination in 41 hours, 10 minutes—a far cry from the 50 hours Reutter cited.

Forty hours to California represented a standard of excellence in long distance train travel that reflected American technology, corporate rivalry, company advertising, and most important, personal pride for the people who made good on this corporate promise.

A 50-hour California schedule would be an indication to generations of Santa Fe employees and officers that the apocalypse was imminent, not just that service had deteriorated a bit.

George Tiller
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Mark Reutter makes a somewhat disparaging reference to the "friends" of Amtrak, and refers to them as "nostalgia buffs who seem satisfied to have Amtrak operate trains like those they knew as children."

Our response is to ask, as Mr. Reutter seems to be asking, if it is nostalgic to desire good service—i.e. comfort, speed, courtesy, and reliability—while traveling? And is it necessarily bad to want what is known to be possible based on previous experience?

It is easy to hurl barbs at Amtrak. It is, after all, a ward of government, made so by government ineptitude. But with the resources it has, Amtrak has been able to demonstrate the public will respond to investment in a program of improved and expanded rail passenger service.

Daniel B. Lovegren, Director
Region XII
National Association of Railroad Passengers
Sacramento, Calif.

Mark Reutter replies: Readers have pointed out two errors. J. D. Rowell is right. The original *Zephyr* had tubular recessed lighting, not fluorescent lighting. George Tiller correctly notes that Amtrak's *Southwest Chief* requires a bit more than 41 hours to travel between Chicago and Los Angeles. However my main point stands: The streamliners of nearly 60 years ago were faster.

John White protests that the *Zephyr*'s record-setting run was a staged event, but the famous steam speed records were also set under controlled conditions. Moreover, I never assert that diesels outnumbered steam locomotives before World War II, only that their superiority was evident. By 1939, the 10 fastest scheduled trains in the world were hauled by American diesel locomotives. Steam was helped by a government ban on the construction of passenger diesel locomotives and restrictions on freight diesels during

World War II. The United States produced its last commercial steam locomotive in 1949.

Missing Integrity

Robert Erwin's breezy trip through modern social history ["Lifestyle," *WQ*, Winter '94] was provocative, teaching us a more precise context for the word *lifestyle*. As he shows, when we leaned on it as an organizing principle for contemporary society, it proved a weak reed. In the end, he reminds us that "a culture should provide us points of reference in a whirling world." But he sees nothing sterner to take lifestyle's place in the offing. Perhaps he's not looked far enough.

In his review I was struck that the idea of Integrity was left out. I'm confident that in the past this would have been named more often than Respectability as filling such a place not only in culture but in the individual life.

Integrity requires that we be whole and predictable. It rests upon a pyramidal foundation, with Honesty at the base, Consistency next, and Discipline at the top. This is not elitist. I called our washerwoman "Mrs. Willis" not because she wanted respectability, but because we knew her as a person of integrity.

C. M. Berry
Atlanta, Ga.

Mercenaries or Patriots?

In the Periodical Observer [*WQ*, Winter '94] there is a review of Tad Szulc's article, "Waiting for the Blowout–Hurricane Fidel," which originally appeared in *The Washington Spectator*.

How dare Mr. Szulc call "mercenaries" those Cubans who left the island because they were unwilling to compromise their political philosophy or have their children's hearts and minds drained by a ruthless Marxist dictatorship? How dare he call "mercenaries" those who have fought rifle in hand against that Communist dictatorship?

How can you be a mercenary when you fight for your country? How can you be a mercenary when you don't fight for money or for a foreign power?

Mr. Szulc obviously has not been hurt by Castro the way the whole of Cuba has been.

I think Mr. Szulc is subtly trying to create a golden parachute for Castro out of "old sympathies." No one wants to see a bloodbath occur in post-Castro Cuba; however, a Cuba without Castro but with Castro's revolutionary policies at the core of government is not acceptable. Castro is bad and so are the policies that he espoused.

Amaury Piedra
Boulder, Colo.

Battering TV

Television continues to be the "battered child" of the intelligentsia. Attacks from all sides imply, even "prove" how terrible television is. For example, it is implied in the letter from Stanford W. Briggs [*WQ*, Winter '94, p. 154] that William Bennett's data are approved by liberals and conservatives alike. The data may be accurate, but the conclusions drawn are flawed. Low SAT scores, children on welfare, teen suicides, and the violent crime rate cannot be blamed on TV alone.

Constant repetition of the charges against television eventually makes the charges credible, even when there is little proof. History will better judge this magical medium. Remember, printing was once called "an instrument of the devil" too.

Chicken Little continues to attack the medium as the root cause of evil in our nation when, in actuality, it is within ourselves.

Jack Lantry
Pasco, Wash.

A Secular Definition

According to Diana Eck ("In the Name of Religions," *WQ*, Autumn '93), pluralists define secularism as "the separation of government from the domination of a single religion." Please refer her to the dictionary definition: "secular spirit or tendency, especially a system of political or social philosophy that rejects all forms of religious faith" (Random House, 1988).

When I, a Jew active in interfaith dialogue, speak to churches, I affirm that Christians and Jews, by exploring together their common heritage and differences, can better appreciate their common interest as religious people to withstand the inroads of secularism.

The real distinctions today are not between members of different faith communities, but between those whose lives are shaped by religious values and those (the secular majority) whose aren't. I am a pluralist—respecting others and

their ways to God, and insisting that others respect me and my way to God—but not a secularist.

J. C. Rothberg
Madison, Va.

The Forest for the Trees

Dr. John B. Reubens's attack on my research as reported in the Periodical Observer [*WQ*, Summer '93, p. 143] is off the mark. If anything, the results of my research were *under*stated in the review.

Whether Dr. Reubens wishes to acknowledge it or not, the number of trees in America's forests—some 230 billion—is greater than at any point in this century. This represents more than "seedlings and saplings." The standing volume of trees has increased by more than 20 percent over the past four decades and timber growth per acre has risen nearly 70 percent over that same period. Dr. Reubens is correct to be concerned about "our public timberlands"; most federal lands are in poor shape. This simply makes the robustness of their private counterparts that much more impressive.

I cannot help it if Dr. Reubens wishes to label my organization "suspect," but for the record, the Competitive Enterprise Institute is an independent organization and none of my research on this issue was funded by the timber industry. (Though I am sure our development office would be pleased to accept donations.)

Jonathan H. Adler
Assoc. Dir. of Environmental Studies
Competitive Enterprise Institute
Washington, D.C.

Corrections

In the second stanza of Peter Huchel's "Aristeas I" ["Poetry," *WQ*, Winter '94], the word "branches" was substituted for "bird." The correct stanza should read:

The bird flew,
its wingbeat hard against the gray light
of the alders,
the milky skin of the steppe.

On page 110 of the same issue, Robert Erwin's book should have been titled *The Great Language Panic and Other Essays in Cultural History.*

We regret the errors.

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FROM THE CENTER

During those hours of nocturnal sleeplessness through which we are all fated to pass, a word or phrase will sometimes pop into mind and rudely refuse to depart. One phrase that has lately been overstaying its welcome with me is "information superhighway," a decidedly busy pair of words to have buzzing about one's thoughts in the early-morning hours.

To make clear my perturbation, some confessions are necessary. The first is that I do not fully understand what the much-discussed information superhighway is, or is meant to be.

From the phrase itself, and from what I have heard and read, I have constructed for myself a rather general notion, which may be roughly accurate or may be somewhat overblown. I imagine a vast system containing virtually all information about everything, a system that will give users access to this information with relatively inexpensive hardware and software, and will also permit them to "converse" with each other more or less universally around the globe. Not only bibliographical information and indices of various kinds will be available (literally) at one's fingertips, but also texts, visual images, sound recordings, and motion pictures. A traveler on the superhighway, if that is the correct term, will thus have almost instantaneous access to facts, to books, to lectures, to operatic performances, and even to the opinions of other travelers—all in the comfort of his or her home. This is a heady prospect indeed.

But, to come to my second confession, it is not a prospect that I contemplate with unmixed emotions. Using the metaphor on which the phrase is based, I must say that I still feel considerable nostalgia for the roads and parkways that have been made more or less obsolete by our great national system of automotive superhighways. While there is no question about which is the more efficient way of driving from Point A to Point B—barring accidents, road repairs, and badly designed interchanges—I miss the towns and villages through which the old roads took us, the countryside we could admire at a leisurely pace, and the restaurants and inns (and even filling stations) that preceded the frantic and unwelcoming fast-food factories that seem to be the only "amenities" that superhighways now offer their somewhat dazed and exhausted travelers.

This having been said, I must add that I am not an electronic Luddite—yet. I cheerfully enjoy the benefits of innumerable machines and technologies that I don't begin to understand; I am pleased that the Center's radio program, *Dialogue*, is now available to users of Internet; I am even a member, albeit not a very useful one, of the board of an organization devoted to making the texts of important works in the humanities available on computers. Nevertheless, I am inclined to paraphrase the title of E. M. Forster's famous essay on democracy and propose only two cheers for the information superhighway.

One does not need to be a Marxist to believe that technologies have a dynamic of their own, and that what *can* be done technologically *will* be done. Nothing I have heard recently has startled me more than the fact that one can go to the local electronics store and for $1,000 purchase more computing power than NASA used to run the first spacecraft it sent to the moon. Surely no technological revolution in human history (or prehistory) progressed at this kudzu-like pace. Thus it is not the technology we now possess that bothers me, but rather the prospect of the technology that may with astonishing speed possess us.

My final confession, then, is that I do not look forward to curling up beside my PC and related gadgets to "read" a book, "hear" a concert, or "enjoy" a new production of an opera; I fear the day when I will no longer be able to browse at random in a bookshop or the stacks of a library; I am appalled by the prospect of millions of people spending their lives in isolation while somehow believing that they are in touch with the whole world.

Warnings about the disappearance of community and laments about too much information and too little knowledge (let alone wisdom) may be overwrought, but they still inspire me with moments of foreboding. I cannot help recalling the response of Henry David Thoreau when he was told that the invention of the telegraph had made it possible for people in Massachusetts to communicate instantaneously with people in Texas: What if they have nothing to say to each other?

Charles Blitzer
Director

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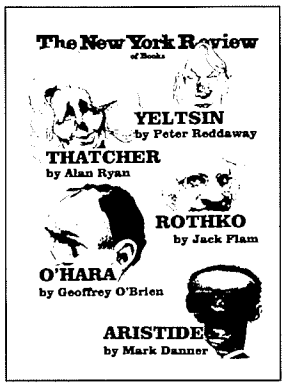

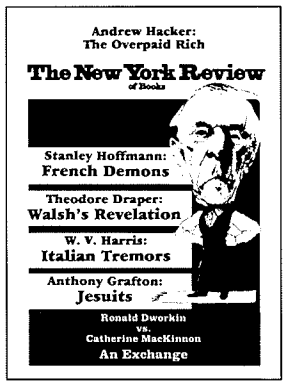

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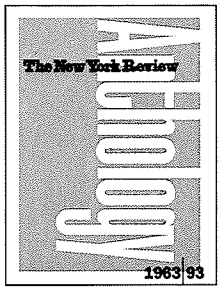

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Madge Gill, Figure in Geometrical Setting, 1954

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