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SUMMER 1992

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WQ



*Land of the Great
Silk Road*

Daniel Bell on America's Cultural Wars

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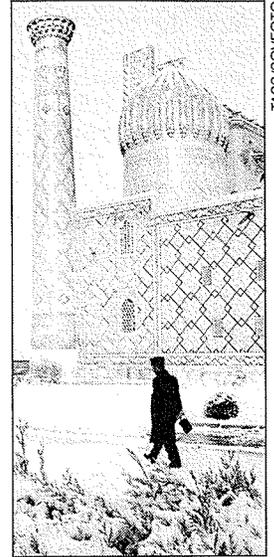
One scholar recently described post-Soviet Central Asia as "the greatest thought experiment in international politics." The experiment could be extended backward for millennia. **James Critchlow** reconstructs the history of the region; **Roya Marefat** looks at the architecture of Samarkand to unravel some of the mysteries of Turkestan's cultural identity; **Marie Bennigsen Broxup** tells how the Soviet Russian overlords attempted to transform Muslim Central Asia; and **Paul Henze** considers the prospects of an emerging Turkestan.

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American intellectuals were once a small, distinctive group preoccupied by debates over the meaning of Marx, Freud, and Modernism. Now they find themselves comfortably ensconced in one or another ideological camp, waging one or another of the bitter contemporary cultural wars. **Daniel Bell** tells how the change came about.

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Hispanics in the United States are at a crossroads. They must decide whether they are a traditional ethnic group or a racial minority. Their choice will be fateful, **Peter Skerry** argues.



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Television and film have made all the world familiar. Why, then, does good travel writing enjoy unprecedented popularity? **Dervla Murphy** explains.

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Cover photograph by Hugues Krafft, from his 1902 book, *A Travers le Turkestan Russe*.



Editor's Comment

In our last issue (Spring '92, p. 139), we suggested to readers that they form *Wilson Quarterly* discussion groups or devote sessions of their existing book clubs to discussing articles from the *WQ*. To give credit where credit's due, we were merely passing on the suggestion of a number of readers who had already formed such groups and found them rewarding. To help things along, we volunteered to work as a broker, linking readers with other interested parties in their areas. So far, we have received a large volume of letters and have begun the matchmaking. There were, however, cases in which we received only one letter from a reader living in a particular locale—a problem that forces us to modify our original proposal. From now on, subscribers to our service should indicate whether we can list, in a future issue of the *WQ*, their name, phone number, and address in case they are the only respondents from their areas. By granting such permission, these readers would become the contact points for nascent discussion groups in their vicinity. Finally, we hope that some of the groups will write to let us know how they are faring, how they go about using the *WQ*, what works and what doesn't. Magazines, particularly magazines of ideas, are extended conversations among readers, writers, and editors. We need to hear what you, the readers, think, and we urge you as well to contribute to our commentary section.

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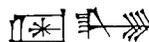
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From the Center

Several years ago Russell Baker described an ingenious form of gift exchange that he and his wife had developed. At breakfast on Christmas morning one would say to the other, "Darling, for the whole next year I'll worry about Latin America so that you won't have to spend any time thinking about it." "Thank you, darling," the other would reply, "and I'll worry about agricultural subsidies."

I have observed over the years that this is very much the way members of Congress behave. Given the variety of highly technical matters on which they are required to vote, most senators and representatives choose to specialize in a few issues and rely upon trusted and generally like-minded colleagues for guidance on all the rest. Some of these choices are easily understandable in terms of constituents' interests (tobacco subsidies for those from tobacco-growing states), some seem to reflect particular personal interests (Senator Sam Nunn and Representative Les Aspin on defense), while others are in a sense almost accidental. When I came to the Woodrow Wilson Center one of the first events I attended was a small lunch for the then-foreign minister of Haiti. Apart from the foreign minister's entourage, the only person invited from outside the Center was Representative James Oberstar of Minnesota. Since I had always associated the congressman with issues concerning aviation, this struck me as a rather odd choice—at least until I discovered that he had spent several years in Haiti teaching English. This explained both why much of the conversation at lunch was in Creole rather than French and, more importantly, why his colleagues in the House tended to turn to Representative Oberstar for guidance on Haitian matters.

Sad to confess, I, too, have a distressingly long list of topics to which I devote woefully inadequate time and attention. One of these is the cluster of issues that includes the environment, ecology, pollution, and conservation. I have no memory of any conscious decision to scant these enormously important questions; perhaps, along the lines of the Bakers' experience, it had something to do with the fact that for many years I worked at the Smithsonian Institution, where I was surrounded

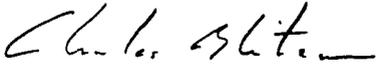
by people who were devoting their lives to rainforests and global warming.

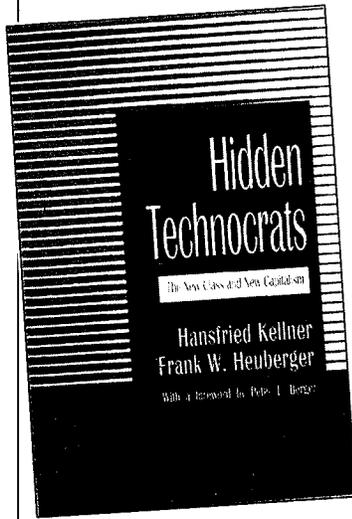
Despite this inexcusable environmental blind spot, every now and then something comes along that momentarily causes me to pay attention. Nearly four years ago former Representative Claudine Schneider introduced me to the fascinating notion that corporations could improve their financial returns by behaving in environmentally responsible ways. The authors of *The Limits of Growth*, who first introduced their publication to the world at a Woodrow Wilson Center meeting 20 years ago, returned here recently to reveal the results of their latest studies. The ensuing discussion was among the most heated that I have heard at the Center, and although neither the participants nor I emerged with a single assessment of the authors' continuingly gloomy Malthusian predictions, my attention was once again captured.

Most recently, I had the pleasure of reading *Beyond Compliance: A New Industry View of the Environment*, published by the World Resources Institute and edited by Wilson Council member Bruce Smart. The book is a skillfully interwoven compilation of statements by 24 U.S. corporations ranging from giants

like DuPont to Briggs Nursery, Inc. of Olympia, Washington, concerning ways in which they are responding to the spectrum of environmental concerns. With some exceptions, *Beyond Compliance* is a heartening account of corporate responsibility and tends to confirm what Claudine Schneider had told me: It is indeed possible to do well by doing good. (By introducing reuse of packaging and pallets, for example, based on a standardized design, Xerox estimates that it will avoid about 10,000 tons of waste and save up to \$15 million annually.) Particularly since I am almost certain to relapse into my unfortunate state of environmental non-awareness, it seems only fair to take advantage of my momentarily rekindled interest to recommend with enthusiasm the book that is responsible for it.




—Charles Blitzer
Director



HIDDEN TECHNOCRATS

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Hansfried Kellner and Frank W. Heuberger
With a foreword by Peter L. Berger

Since the early 1970s, critics have identified a new elite in modern society, one based on the "knowledge industry." This new class has been seen as a natural political and cultural opponent of the old business based middle class—and because it naturally has close ties to academia and the media, both critics and proponents see the New Class as positioned for great influence. *Hidden Technocrats* details contemporary characteristics of the New Class phenomenon and maps its location in contemporary America and Western Europe, identifying a new symbiosis with older bourgeois culture.

Hidden Technocrats raises essential questions about whether this "new capitalism" in the making will favor or diminish the international competitiveness of the economies in which it has emerged. Stimulating and wide-ranging, the book is at the leading edge of discussion about capitalism at the close of the twentieth century.

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The World In Our Image?

*A Survey of Papers from a Conference
on Popular Culture*

When Euro Disneyland opened near Paris this year, many French intellectuals were far from pleased. One writer, Jean Cau, sounding a little like Donald Duck at his angriest, called the theme park "a horror made of cardboard, plastic and appalling colors, a construction of hardened chewing gum and idiotic folklore taken straight out of comic books written for obese Americans." And novelist Jean-Marie Rouart grimly warned, "If we do not resist it, the kingdom of profit will create a world that will have all the appearance of civilization and all the savage reality of barbarism."

In the barbaric horror's homeland, meanwhile, intellectuals also have been pondering the immense worldwide impact of American popular culture. On March 10, a host of thinkers—few of them quite as overwrought as the French antagonists of Mickey Mouse—gathered at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C. for a conference (with papers to be published as a book later this year) on "The New Global Popular Culture: Is It American? Is it Good for America? Is It Good for the World?" Conference organizer and AEI Senior Fellow Ben J. Wattenberg's answers to those questions were "Yes," "Yes," and "Yes," and he added, for good measure, that "what's happening in this realm is the most important thing now going on in the world." This last sentiment, both ardent fans and gloomy critics of American popular culture agreed, was not merely a reflection of the undying American penchant for superlatives.

"Charles Bronson, Clint Eastwood, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and the multicolor chorus of Coca-Cola," Berkeley sociologist Todd Gitlin told the conference, "are... the icons of the latest in one-world ideology, or, better, a global semi-culture, helping to integrate at least the urban classes of most nations into a single cultural zone." In 1990, "Pretty Woman," a made-in-America Cinderella story about a prostitute, was the number one film in Germany, Sweden, Italy, Spain, Australia, and Denmark. The preceding year, four of the top five films in Argentina, Austria, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France,

Iceland, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, and Yugoslavia originated in the United States.

This global popularity translates into big bucks for Hollywood film studios. Stephen E. Siwek, director of financial analysis at Economists Incorporated, in Washington, D.C., reported that the major studios earned \$1.7 billion in 1990 from theatrical film rentals in overseas markets, compared with just \$600 million five years earlier. Foreign videocassette and TV sales brought Hollywood another \$4.7 billion. (Despite the popularity of American fare, or perhaps because of it, the European Community, effective last October, imposed quotas requiring that a majority of entertainment programs broadcast on European television be European productions.)

The American producers of popular culture have been so successful in the global marketplace, George Mason University sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset maintained, because they supply "what people everywhere most want in popular culture." It is not that the world is becoming Americanized, he argued. "Rather, [it is that] we all like the same kinds of candy, ice cream, automobiles, computers, movies, detective stories, TV sitcoms, comics, music."

And, he might have added, magazines. *Reader's Digest* has 41 editions in 17 languages. With its "unabashed optimism, its emphasis on hu-

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man progress, its celebration of courage and adventure, and its strong sense of right and wrong," said the magazine's editor-in-chief, Kenneth V. Tomlinson, *Reader's Digest* can easily be regarded as a quintessentially American publication. Yet the bulk of its revenues and profits now comes from overseas. "This is not because the magazine 'exports' American culture," Tomlinson maintained, "but because it embodies values—about freedom, family, God, and the nature of man—that are universal and destined to become the dominant culture on our planet."

Not all popular culture, however, is quite so wholesome as *Reader's Digest*. "We have come a long way," AEI scholar Robert H. Bork observed, "from the era when it was considered shocking that 'Gone With the Wind' ended with Clark Gable saying to Vivien Leigh, 'Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.'" Now, as Georgetown's Walter Berns noted, Madonna appears on stage, screen, and video before youthful audiences numbering in the millions and "is permitted to bare her breasts, rub her crotch, masturbate with bottles, and hop into bed with naked men while exclaiming about the size of their sexual organs." And she has become an international celebrity.

As have such cartoonish movie he-men as Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger. "The Rambo grunt, the Schwarzenegger groan, the 'Die Hard' machine-gun burst degrade the human spirit," Todd Gitlin insisted. "If the export of . . . the vicious, the blatant and stupid is 'good for the world,' to use the conference organizers' phrase, then all values have been sacrificed to the bottom—and I do mean bottom—line." Hollywood, he said, "is in the grip of inner forces which amount to a cynicism so deep as to defy parody. The movies are driven by economic and technological incentives to revel in the means to inflict pain, to maim, disfigure, shatter the human image."

Cynthia Grenier, a former production executive at Twentieth Century-Fox, took a different view. Just as in the past an actor such as John Wayne "symbolized American values—courage, independence of spirit, a kind of honor," she maintained, so today do movie heroes such as Schwarzenegger and Eastwood.

Whether one regards the violent heroics of these screen figures as admirable or contemptible or just mindlessly entertaining, there is little question that they—along with American popular culture in general—do reflect American values. At the core of those values, University of Connecticut political scientist Everett C.

Ladd observed, is "a uniquely insistent and far-reaching individualism—a view of the individual person which gives unprecedented weight to his or her choices, interests, and claims."

That extreme individualism has demonstrated worldwide appeal. "The more straitened or shut-off a culture," said Pico Iyer, a *Time* essayist, "the more urgent its hunger for all the qualities it associates with America: freedom and wealth and modernity. Thus poor countries around the world still hold themselves hostage to 'Bonanza,' and citizens of Communist countries long to make contact [with what they still imagine to be] the Promised Land of Opportunity."

Indeed, American popular culture, with its near-anarchic and hedonistic spirit, has had "a wonderfully corrosive effect on all totalitarian and strongly authoritarian regimes," noted Irving Kristol, co-editor of the *Public Interest*. But this same popular culture, he believes, can also be "self-destructive to a democracy." In a democracy, he argued, the people must constantly be "educated and disciplined to civilized self-government." Their "characters have to be formed," in order for such crucial habits of thought and action as self-control and deferred gratification "to prevail over more spontaneous impulses." And this is accomplished, in part, through "culture," which takes in "our religious institutions, our educational institutions, the media, and all of the various creative arts." These institutions used to have an "elitist" orientation, Kristol said. But today there is no longer a "high culture" to set the tone for the popular one. As a result, he contended, American popular culture, with all the destructive power of its extreme individualism, has become "less an ornament of American democracy than a threat to this democracy."

"We are exporting a principle of instability," Kristol asserted. Inevitably, foreign leaders, "after first welcoming the 'liberating' effects of our popular culture, soon show signs of what we call 'anti-Americanism.'" This has long been evident in Western Europe and now it can also be seen in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Russia.

"Popular culture provides entertainment, sometimes quite wonderful entertainment," Kristol acknowledged. "But while it may, at its worst, debase its consumers, it cannot ever elevate. That is not its mission. So," he concluded, "I am not happy that the United States today has been so successful in exporting its popular culture to the world at large. I am not happy that the United States even *has* this popular culture to export."

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

*Reborn at
Gettysburg?*

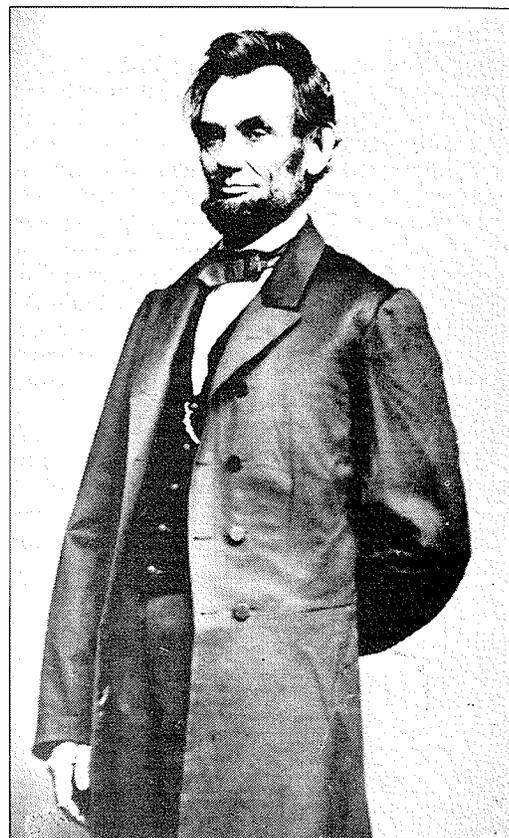
"The Words That Remade America" by Garry Wills, in *The Atlantic* (June 1992), 745 Boylston St., Boston, Mass. 02116.

The Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln's immortal prose poem, has been faulted by some for a lack of intellectual content. Literary critic James Hurt, for example, saw in the speech only "the ordinary coin of funereal oratory." But Garry Wills, author of *Inventing America* (1978) and other iconoclastic works, sees much more. He contends that with the powerful oration's 272 words, President Lincoln on November 19, 1863, brought about "an intellectual revolution."

Lincoln went to Gettysburg, according to Wills, not just to deliver, as requested, "a few appropriate remarks" at the dedication of the new cemetery for the men who had died in battle there. Lincoln audaciously sought "to clear the infected atmosphere of American history itself, tainted with official sins and inherited guilt. He would cleanse the Constitution [by altering it] from within, by appeal from its 'etter to its spirit."

Lincoln reached back "four score and seven years ago" to the Declaration of Independence of 1776, when, he famously said, "our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." He thus, by implication, treated the Declaration as founding law, and "put its central proposition, equality, in a newly favored position as a principle of the Constitution," Wills argues. This was done, despite the fact that the Constitution nowhere mentioned equality and, indeed, prior to the Civil War amendments, tolerated slavery. Lincoln's feat, Wills asserts, was "one of the most daring acts of open-air sleight of hand ever witnessed by the unsuspecting. Everyone in that vast throng of thousands was having his or her intellectual pocket picked. The crowd departed with a new thing in its ideological luggage, the new Constitution [that] Lincoln had substituted for the one they had brought there with them."

Some contemporaries realized what Lincoln was doing, Wills notes. The *Chicago Times*, quoting the Constitution, said that the president was betraying it: "It was to uphold this constitution, and the Union created by it, that our officers and soldiers gave their lives at Gettysburg. How dared he, then, standing on their graves,



That Lincoln wrote his remarks on the back of an envelope is a "silly but persistent myth."

misstate the cause for which they died, and libel the statesmen who founded the government? They were men possessing too much self-respect to declare that negroes were their equals, or were entitled to equal privileges."

Before the Civil War, "the United States" was a plural noun; after the war, it was a singular one. When Lincoln, at the end of his address, spoke of "government of the people; by the people, for the people," he was saying, according to Wills, "that America was a people accepting as its great assignment what was addressed in the Declaration." Lincoln's vision won overwhelming acceptance, and the Gettysburg Address became "an authoritative expres-

sion of the American spirit . . . For most people now, the Declaration means what Lincoln told us it means," which he did in order "to

correct the Constitution without overthrowing it." Because of his speech at Gettysburg, Wills concludes, "we live in a different America."

Bureaucracy: Grow It Must

"The Shrink-Proof Bureaucracy" by Jonathan Walters, in *Governing* (Mar. 1992), 2300 N St. N.W., Ste. 760, Washington, D.C. 20037.

Politicians with their eyes on the mayor's office or the governor's mansion often promise to cut overgrown governments down to size. For all such campaign talk, however, state and local government employment—which now stands at more than 15 million—has risen by about 20 percent over the last dozen years. [The ranks of the 3.1 million federal civilian employees, by contrast, increased by only 0.6 percent in 1980–89.] During the '80s, such state and local growth outstripped population gains by two-to-one; in fact, in some big cities, such as Washington, D.C., public employment increased even though population was *declining*.

It is easy to see why the public payroll is such a tempting target for budget-minded politicians, observes *Governing* staff writer Jonathan Walters. According to an analysis by the Tax-Free Municipal Bond division of Dean Witter Reynolds, states would have saved \$12 billion had their personnel growth in 1980–89 only kept pace with population growth. New York State alone would have saved \$2.7 billion—more than three times its current projected deficit. Municipal finance specialist Phil Dearborn, executive director of the Washington Research Center, estimates that the state and local "bloat," nationwide, averages 5–10 percent of total payroll. So what makes it so difficult for mayors and governors to eliminate it?

To begin with, Walters points out, there are often political complications. "A huge proportion of middle managers in any city government have politically influential allies willing to go to bat for them; that is one reason they got to be managers."

Then there are the civil-service complications. When New Jersey Governor Jim Florio took office in early 1990, he thought it would

be possible, in a state work force of more than 100,000, to find 1,000 people who would not be missed. "But it turned out not to be that simple," Walters writes. "Eliminating any position, even a superfluous one, can trigger an intricate chain of civil service 'bumping,' the process by which more senior staff move down to force out less senior staff as positions are eliminated. In order to fire 1,000 people, Florio learned, he would have to send notices to 20,000 people that their jobs might be affected." Legislatures could change such rules, of course, but somehow they are never eager to do so.

Supposing the would-be bloat-buster surmounts the political and civil-service hurdles, there is still another obstacle: sheer resistance from the affected public servants. In New Jersey, for example, Walters says, some agencies "have simply ignored" Florio's latest request to identify jobs that can be eliminated. Often, the officials out to get rid of the bloat antagonize the very people they need to help them do it. "The more talk from mayors and governors of cleaning out the deadweight with shovels, the fiercer the [bureaucracy's] resistance to change," Walters notes.

Yet, despite all the obstacles, some governments do manage to trim the payroll. In New Orleans, for example, municipal employment has plummeted in the last 10 years from 12,000 to 6,000. Mayor Sidney J. Barthelemy, elected in 1986, simply had no choice: He faced a \$30 million budget deficit. Such "truly horrendous fiscal problems," Walters says, are apparently the only force strong enough "to restrain or bust bloated bureaucracy . . . Only when budgets have to be cut drastically do bureaucracies feel the bite." Otherwise, he concludes, "bloat is inevitable."

Ike's Hidden Hand On Civil Rights

"Shattering the Myth About President Eisenhower's Supreme Court Appointments" by Michael A. Kahn, in *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (Winter 1992), 208 East 75th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower is often portrayed as having been unsympathetic to civil

rights and disappointed by the rulings of his Supreme Court appointees, particularly Chief Jus-

tice Earl Warren and Justice William Brennan. According to biographer Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower privately said on a number of occasions that he wished the Supreme Court had upheld *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) instead of overturning it in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark 1954 decision declaring segregation in public schools unconstitutional. After Eisenhower left office, he frequently said that his biggest mistake had been appointing Warren to the court. For his part, Warren said in his memoirs that he always believed Eisenhower "resented our decision in *Brown*." Despite all this, San Francisco attorney Michael Kahn, a member of the Center for the Study of the Presidency's national advisory council, contends that, in civil rights, Eisenhower "got exactly what he bargained for" in his Supreme Court appointments.

When Eisenhower nominated Warren to be chief justice in 1953, he was very familiar with the man and his reputation as a liberal Republican, Kahn notes. Warren, a former California governor, had been his party's vice-presidential nominee in 1948 and had competed against Eisenhower for the 1952 presidential nomination. Moreover, the president and Attorney General Herbert Brownell, who helped him select Warren, were well aware that *Brown v. Board of Education* had been argued in the 1952-53 term and scheduled for a rehearing, and that a landmark civil-rights decision was in the offing.

Hence, Kahn argues, the *Brown* ruling, at least to the extent that it was Warren's doing, should have come as no surprise.

"Southern fury against the 'northern Supreme Court's' effort to impose on the South 'northern values' and standards of equality was unabated throughout the 1950s in virulent racist and segregationist rhetoric and conduct," Kahn notes. "It was in this context that Eisenhower [appointed to the court] four Midwesterners and Northerners [John Marshall Harlan, Brennan, Charles Whitaker, and Potter Stewart], each of whom pledged—in absolute defiance of southern senatorial anger and threats of reprisals—to uphold the principles of *Brown v. Board of Education*." In the case of liberal Democrat Brennan, Eisenhower may not have known in 1956 that the jurist "would ultimately become a symbol of liberal judicial philosophy for two generations of Americans," Kahn says, but there was no doubt at all that he "would vigorously implement civil rights decisions."

During his presidency, Eisenhower did not doubt that he had been right to select Warren as chief justice. Later, however, as a result of his disapproval of the Warren Court's expansive interpretations of the rights of accused criminals and communists in the early 1960s, his feelings changed. But that, Kahn says, should not diminish President Eisenhower's great—and little recognized—accomplishment in the field of civil rights.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Ronald Reagan, Peacemaker

The policy of containment, pursued by the United States for more than four decades, usually gets much of the credit for the West's victory in the Cold War. The knock-out punch, conservatives maintain, was delivered by the Reagan administration's firm anticommunist stance and its determined military buildup. Political scientists Daniel Deudney of the University of Pennsylvania and John Ikenberry of Princeton have a different interpretation, one that offers greater comfort to post-Vietnam liberals who feared nuclear destruction more than communism and favored a policy of ac-

commodation with the Soviet Union rather than one of confrontation.

Containment, as applied over the decades, was important in blocking Soviet expansionism, Deudney and Ikenberry acknowledge, but it was not just Western strength that finally brought the Cold War to an end. "The initial Soviet response to the Reagan administration's [military] buildup and belligerent rhetoric was to accelerate production of offensive weapons, both strategic and conventional. That impasse was broken not by Soviet capitulation but by an extraordinary convergence by Reagan and

"Who Won the Cold War?" by Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, in *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1992), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2400 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-1153.

In Victory, Indifference

Writing in *The Times Literary Supplement* (May 22, 1992), military analyst Edward N. Luttwak, of Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies, sees a hard-won maturity in the American public's "peculiar indifference" to the United States' Persian Gulf and Cold War victories.

[British Prime Minister Clement] Attlee had good reason to be anxious when faced with the emotional storms unleashed across the Atlantic by the vicissitudes of the Korean War. And Lyndon Johnson's conduct of the Vietnam War was conditioned by his fear that, if the public became aroused, it would impulsively demand stronger action against Vietnam's Soviet and Chinese allies than prudence allowed. But after their long education in the hard school of the Cold War, Americans at large, otherwise not especially sophisticated, proved themselves almost Bismarckian in their cold-blooded attitude to the Gulf crisis from start to finish.

Before the fighting, instead of uttering war cries . . . a vast majority of the American public evidently considered the use of force against Iraq as a complicated question in need of serious analysis, a fit subject for prolonged Congressional deliberations During the fighting . . . the destruction of Iraqi military power was clearly viewed by most Americans as a necessary chore rather than as an occasion for glorious combat After the fighting, the parallel absence of triumphalism . . . was the most telling evi-

dence of the public's maturity, its sober appreciation that while defeat would have been disastrous, victory over Iraq could not yield much, and would probably engender new travails of one sort or another

[As for the Cold War], there is no denying that the Soviet Union would have won global predominance even as its internal decay silently progressed, had the United States not shown the prolonged tenacity that Churchill for one feared impossible, both by military expenditures sustained year after year, and by the patiently persistent diplomacy that preserved its broad alliances decade after decade. Americans are not especially modest, yet no outburst of self-congratulation ensued when the Soviet Union finally collapsed after the August 1991 coup [The] American people [were] manifestly indifferent to all that power and glory, not because of pettier distractions but rather because [they] correctly saw no worthwhile purpose for either

Sooner than most of the foreign-policy elite in fact, the common people of America . . . instinctively understood that victory in the Cold War had abruptly weakened the United States as well, for its military-diplomatic power was thereby devalued. Not without bitterness, Americans repeated to one another the season's joke: the Cold War is over, Japan has won. Even if the terminology was not theirs, a great many Americans understood that a new "geo-economic" era had abruptly emerged

Mikhail Gorbachev on a vision of mutual nuclear vulnerability and disarmament."

President Reagan's aversion to nuclear weapons was just as strong as his anticommunism, Deudney and Ikenberry argue. Although most administration officials disagreed with him, the president regarded the abolition of nuclear weapons as "a realistic and desirable goal." Reagan's strong antinuclear views at the 1985 Geneva summit meeting were "decisive in convincing Gorbachev that it was possible to work with the West in halting the nuclear arms race." At the Reykjavik summit meeting the next year, Reagan's antinuclear commitment became even more open, and he and Gorbachev "came close to agreeing on a comprehensive program of global denuclearization that was far bolder than any seriously entertained

by American strategists since . . . 1946."

Many hard-liners in Washington were aghast. Former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger accused Reagan of engaging in "casual utopianism." But Reagan's antinuclearism, the authors contend, gave Gorbachev "the crucial signal . . . that bold initiatives would be reciprocated rather than exploited." The first fruit was the 1987 Treaty on Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces—"the first genuine disarmament treaty of the nuclear era."

"Not just containment, but also the overwhelming and common nuclear threat brought the Soviets to the negotiating table," Deudney and Ikenberry write. "In the shadow of nuclear destruction, common purpose defused traditional antagonisms." An end to the Cold War was in sight.

A New Munich In Yugoslavia?

"Peacekeeping in the New Europe" by James E. Goodby, in *The Washington Quarterly* (Spring 1992), Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1800 K St. N.W., Ste. 400, Washington, D.C. 20006.

After Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in June 1991, the Serbian-led Yugoslav Army, supported by Serbian militias, swept into Serbian-populated areas of Croatia, and civil war broke out between Serbs and Croats. For months, the European Community (EC) tried to stop the fighting—but without success. In that failure, declares Goodby, a former foreign service officer who is now a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, lie important lessons for the United States and a Europe that is reshaping itself in the wake of the Cold War.

The experience in Yugoslavia, Goodby says, shows that it is time "to think about the unthinkable—international intervention in internal struggles." The prospects of ending the conflict were never bright, Goodby notes, since the Serbs and Croats "seemed to prefer slaughtering each other to compromise," and the leaders of Serbia and Croatia did not appear to be far-sighted statesmen. Faced with such intransigence, the EC's diplomacy was fatally weakened by its obvious unwillingness to use force to impose a peace. Without an active U.S. role—still a necessity if force is to be used despite all the post-Cold War talk of European unity, Goodby says—the EC could not reach a consensus. Some members, notably France, did seem favorably disposed toward such a step, but Britain and others were reluctant to send troops even to preserve a cease-fire.

"The tragedy of Yugoslavia was allowed to

mount in intensity and to become a disastrous precedent for all the other disputes in Eastern Europe," the former foreign service officer writes, "while the Community denied itself anything like the ultimate argument. The possibility that force would be used to deny military objectives to an attacker or to exact punishment for violations of a cease-fire by irregular forces was a consideration that neither Serbs nor Croats ever had to face."

An uncertain peace finally came to Croatia earlier this year after the battered combatants agreed to a United Nations cease-fire. But only *after* the cease-fire—and after the deaths of 6–10,000 people, mostly civilians—was a UN peacekeeping force deployed in Croatia. Since the cease-fire, conflict has erupted in newly-independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, where ethnic Serbs, who are in the minority and favor unity with Serbia, have been battling Muslims and Croats.

Goodby allows that intervention in European civil conflicts would be risky. It might, among other things, "lead the nations of Europe to take sides against each other, with disastrous results." But the risks of inaction may be greater. If the Yugoslavian experience ultimately shows that "borders can be changed by force so long as the struggle is between successor states to a former union," Goodby warns, that "could be as deadly a lesson as Munich was in its time."

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

The Transformation Of Labor Day

"America's Labor Day: The Dilemma of a Workers' Celebration" by Michael Kazin and Steven J. Ross, in *The Journal of American History* (Mar. 1992), 1125 Atwater, Indiana Univ., Bloomington, Ind. 47401-3701.

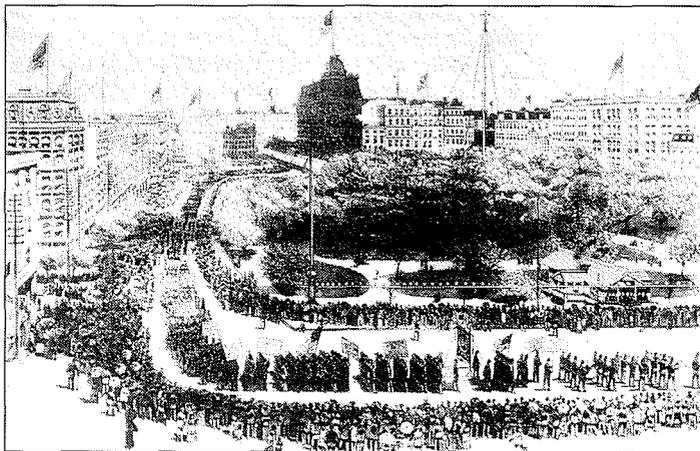
For most Americans, the first Monday in September signifies a long, sale-filled weekend and the end of summer. Labor Day—founded in 1882 in an era of labor strife—once had a much more charged meaning, recall historians Kazin, of American University, and Ross, of the University of Southern California.

"Labor Built This Republic, Labor Shall Rule

It" and "The Government Must Own the Railroads and Telegraphs" were among the defiant slogans at the first Labor Day celebration, held 110 years ago in New York City. It was staged by the socialist-oriented Central Labor Union as a way of bringing diverse workers and activists together and of displaying the labor movement's might to the general public. Some 10–

20,000 marched from lower Broadway to Union Square, drawing as many as 250,000 spectators, and a mass picnic afterward in Wendel's Elm Park was also a big success. In 1884, the national Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions (soon to become the American Federation of Labor, or AFL) urged "all wage workers" to observe the day. By 1886, Labor Day celebrations were taking place throughout the country.

The rising labor movement had little difficulty persuading local, state, and (in 1894) national legislators to add Labor Day to their official calendars. But few employers were eager to give workers the day off. "Consequently, for nearly two decades Labor Day was a virtual general strike in many cities," Kazin and Ross write. "In New York City, where many shops and factories remained open during the early years of the holiday, unions fined their members a day's pay for working on Labor Day. This swelled the ranks of marchers and, by 1889, forced most businesses to close for the day."



Carrying placards reading "Agitate, Educate, Organize" and "Labor Creates All Wealth," marchers pass through New York's Union Square in the first Labor Day parade in September 1882.

The Limits of Small Business

For much of the 20th century, owners of small businesses have been celebrated for their heroic individualism, but their businesses still were seen as backward and inefficient. They could hardly compete very well with big busi-

nesses, which tended to be capital-intensive firms that benefited from economies of scale and technological innovations. Economists such as Robert Averitt and John Kenneth Galbraith portrayed the U.S. economy as a "dual

But with the AFL's success in obtaining widespread observance of Labor Day came a loss of control over how the holiday was to be marked. By the early 1900s, Labor Day was being transformed into a three-day celebration of leisure rather than labor, as union-sponsored parades and picnics faced new competition. The newspapers, note Kazin and Ross, "were filled with announcements of special Labor Day movies, horse races, baseball doubleheaders, yachting regattas, and inexpensive excursions to the beach or countryside." Most workers gradually came to regard the holiday as a time to be spent alone with family and friends, not "tramping in full uniform down hot city streets."

Even during the 1930s, when an upsurge in union membership and a new aggressiveness on the part of labor prompted a revival of large, public Labor Day observances, there was no simple return to the celebrations of the past. To attract as many people as possible, Kazin and Ross write, the union organizers got rid of "all vestiges of the by now rather stodgy images of grimly purposeful male craftsmen and instead filled their parades with fantasies and personalities drawn from the world of mass culture." Figures such as Popeye and the Keystone Cops, and floats depicting such exotic locales as the South Sea islands or bearing attractive young women in bathing suits now became part of Labor Day parades. Thoughts of "a proudly autonomous labor culture" had become a thing of the past. Sears and Roebuck and other retailers began incorporating Labor Day into their advertisements. "The ubiquitous Labor Day weekend sale," the historians note, "was only a short step away."

"Small Business in America: A Historiographic Survey" by Mansel G. Blackford, in *Business History Review* (Spring 1991), Baker Library 5A, Harvard Business School, Boston, Mass. 02163.

economy," with big businesses at the center and small firms on the periphery. But in recent decades, economists and others have been revising their views. "As big businesses have faltered as engines of economic growth in America," Ohio State historian Mansel G. Blackford notes, "smaller firms have come to be seen by some as likely sources for economic rejuvenation."

Until the mid-19th century, small businesses were the norm in the United States, with thousands of them producing and distributing most of the country's goods and services. But by 1914, one-third of U.S. industrial workers labored in firms with 500 or more employees, and another third worked in companies with 100 or more. Yet small firms—by developing market niches or supplying goods to larger industrial firms—remained significant right up to the mid-20th century. Then, however, they went into a decline. The share of business receipts received by small companies plummeted from 52 percent in 1958 to 29 percent in 1979.

In the late 1970s and the '80s, small business experienced a resurgence. Of the 17 million businesses that filed tax returns in 1986, only 10,000 were firms employing more than 500 workers. Small companies were generating most of America's new jobs—by one estimate, 64 percent of the 10.5 million created in 1980–86. The shift of the U.S. economy from manufacturing to services undoubtedly played a part

in this, as did the development of computer technologies, spawning everything from lawn-care companies to entrepreneurial software firms.

With the renaissance of small business, Blackford writes, some analysts began to argue that America's industrial future lies in getting away from standardized mass production and embracing instead "a system of flexible production by smaller companies linked together in industrial communities." Flexible production, said economist Michael J. Piore and political scientist Charles F. Sabel, in their best-selling *The Second Industrial Divide: Possibilities for Prosperity* (1984), is "a strategy of permanent innovation: accommodation to ceaseless change, rather than an effort to control it."

But Blackford sounds a cautionary note. Historical studies of small firms in Philadelphia's textile industry and Pittsburgh's iron and steel industry, he notes, "have shown that by developing market niches, using flexible production techniques, and depending on a highly skilled labor force, small businesses could compete successfully with much larger firms across the nation." But these studies, he adds, have also underlined the limitations of small business.

Earlier in this century, for example, independent textile makers in Philadelphia were unable to meet the growing demand from big customers, and many were forced to close their doors. Sometimes bigger is better.

Why There Was No Trickle Down

During the prosperous 1960s, America's poverty rate fell from over 22 percent to 12 percent. This accomplishment seemed to bear out President John F. Kennedy's contention: A rising tide lifts all boats. Yet the sustained economic growth of the 1980s produced virtually no decline in the poverty rate. It stood at 12.8 percent at the end of the decade, about what it had been in 1980. Why was there no "trickle down" effect?

Northwestern University economist Rebecca Blank says the reason is that increased employment and weeks of work among low-wage workers during the 1980s were more than offset by declines in real wages. Whereas in 1963–69 the bottom tenth of the population enjoyed a \$2 increase in weekly wages for every one percent rise in gross national product (GNP), in 1983–89 real wages for those at the bottom ac-

"Why Were Poverty Rates So High in the 1980s?" by Rebecca M. Blank, National Bureau of Economic Research *Working Paper No. 3878* (Oct. 1991), 1050 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

tually fell somewhat, despite the economy's growth. (For the top one-fifth of workers, by contrast, each one-percent increase in GNP meant a raise of \$2.16 in weekly wages in 1963–69 and of \$3.53 two decades later.) Blank attributes the drop in real wages for low-income workers to the decline of unions, technological change, increased competition from abroad, and the decreased demand for less-skilled workers.

This drop in real wages—not the increase in female-headed families or the cuts in welfare benefits made during the early 1980s—was behind the failure of "trickle-down" economics, Blank says. "Unfortunately," she concludes, "if the changing wage patterns of the 1980s continue into the future, economic growth can no longer be relied upon as an effective weapon in future wars against poverty."

SOCIETY

Does Dating Work?

"Choosing Mates—The American Way" by Martin King Whyte, in *Society* (Mar.-Apr. 1992), Rutgers—The State Univ., New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

The history of courtship in America begins with the Puritans (enough said), proceeds to the modest sexual revolution of the 18th century and the counter-revolution of the 19th, and then arrives, around the turn of the century, at the familiar practice called "dating." According to University of Michigan sociologist Martin King Whyte, however, all those centuries of romantic evolution may not have done much to improve one's chances of finding a good mate.

Dating was born among middle and upper-middle-class students, and by the 1920s, the earlier custom of "calling"—in which a young man, if invited, would call on a nubile maiden at her home, with her mother hovering protectively nearby—had largely disappeared. Not incidentally, Whyte says, more of the initiative in courtship shifted to the men.

America's prosperity had a great deal to do with the rise of dating. The expansion of secondary schooling and higher education provided "an arena in which females and males could get to know one another informally over many years," he notes. "Schools also organized athletic, social, and other activities in which adult supervision was minimal." Colleges provided an almost complete escape from parental supervision.

Increased affluence freed young people from the necessity of helping to put bread on the family table, and gave them the money and leisure to date. Whole industries sprang up to serve them. Youths could visit an ice cream parlor or an amusement park, dance to popular music recordings, or go to the movies. Automobiles not only got young people away from home but "provided a semi-private space with abundant romantic and sexual possibilities."

By contrast with "calling," Whyte points out, the main purpose of dating, at least in its initial stages, was not the selection of a spouse but the pursuit of pleasure, and perhaps romance. Eventually, of course, dating often led to "going steady," and from there to engagement and marriage.

In the popular mind, dating became the rough equivalent of shopping. Youths would make modest purchases in a variety of stores, have a good time doing so, and eventually find the best available "product" for them—a Mr. or Miss Right. A happy and enduring marriage would ensue.

The problem, Whyte says, is that things do not seem to work out so neatly. It's not that avid players of the dating game never find marital bliss, but that their playing the game doesn't seem to help. A survey of 459 women in the Detroit area Whyte conducted in 1984 revealed no clear connection between dating experience and a successful marriage. "Women who had married their first sweethearts were just as likely to have enduring and satisfying marriages as women who had married only after considering many alternatives." Nor was there any discernible difference between the marriages of women who were virgins when they wed and those of women who were not. One thing did seem to make a difference. Those women who recalled being "head over heels in love" when they wed had more successful marriages. Their memories were probably colored by subsequent experience, Whyte acknowledges, but nothing they said contradicted the familiar wisdom of poets and songwriters. Dating may not work, he concludes, but perhaps love really does conquer all.

Getting Ahead at Community Colleges

"Community Colleges and Baccalaureate Attainment" by Kevin J. Dougherty, in *Journal of Higher Education* (Mar.-Apr. 1992), Ohio State Univ. Press, 1070 Carmack Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43210; "The Community College at the Crossroads: The Need for Structural Reform" by Kevin J. Dougherty, in *Harvard Educational Review* (Aug. 1991), Gutman Library, Ste. 349, 6 Apian Way, Cambridge, Mass. 02138-3752.

Students who enter community colleges hoping to go on eventually to earn a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution may find themselves facing an unexpected obstacle: the

community college itself.

Although community colleges stress vocational education, some 30-40 percent of entering students have visions of going on to obtain

Periodicals continues on page 139

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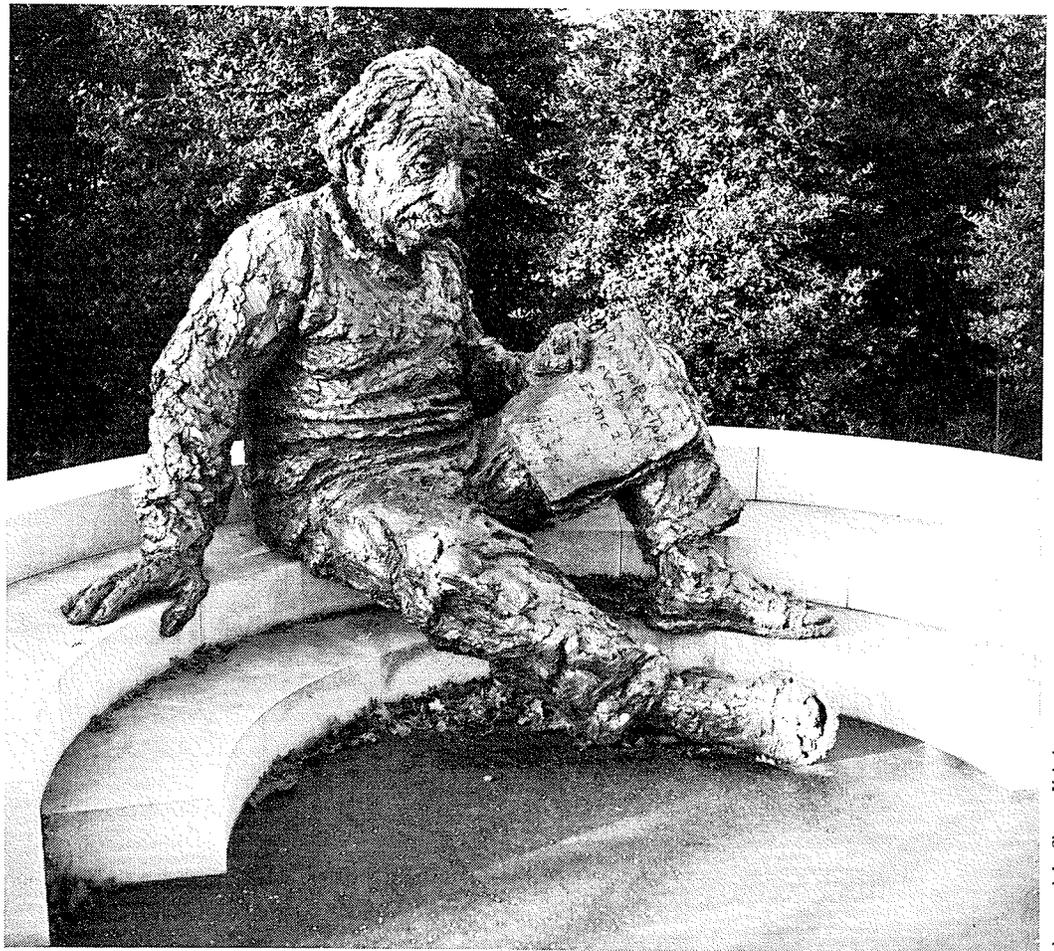
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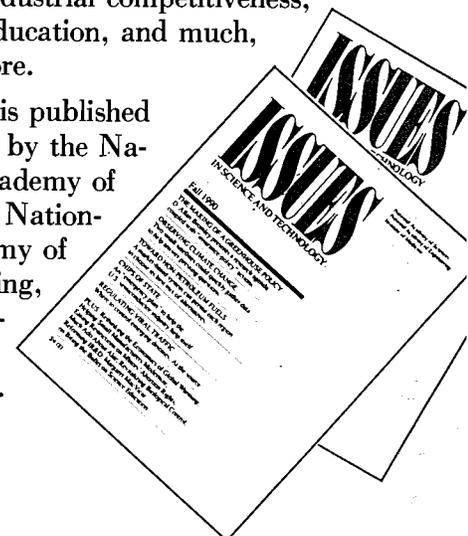
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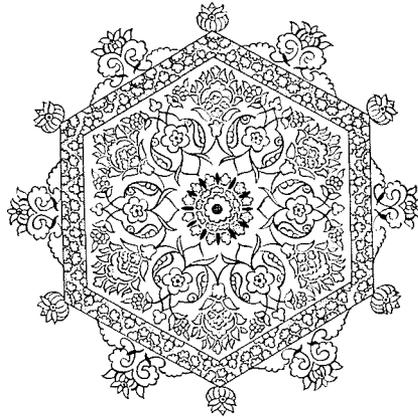
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Land of the Great Silk Road

While all eyes have focused on the destinies of Russia and the newly independent nations of Eastern Europe, the five Central Asian states that emerged from the former Soviet Union have received far less scholarly attention. Our contributors here consider the past and future of this important region, land of the Silk Road, seat of empires, a center of Islamic civilization, and sometime-pawn in the world's geopolitical struggles.



CARAVANS AND CONQUESTS

by James Critchlow

Even before the official breakup of the Soviet Union in December 1991, Central Asians began to reclaim their history. In Alma-Ata, capital of Kazakhstan, for example, civic leaders changed the name of one of their major thoroughfares from Gorky Street to Jibek Joly—Kazakh for what English speakers call the “Great Silk Road,” the fabled trade route that ran through Central Asia in ancient times. The renaming was but one of countless symbolic gestures in a process that Uzbek historian Hamid Ziyaev describes as “breaking the bars of the cage.”

The cage was of Russian making. Tsarist armies began to transform Central Asia into a colonial dominion during the 18th and 19th centuries, and efforts to Russify the region grew even more intense under Soviet rule. For roughly seven decades, the peoples of Kazakhstan and its southern neighbors Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, were forced to accept a crude and demeaning version of their past. According to official Soviet histories, Central Asians had long lived in primitive obscurity until brought enlightenment by their Russian “elder brother.”

To Central Asians, mention of the Silk Road evokes memories of a bygone grandeur, when Turkestan, a vast territory half the size of the continental United States, was an affluent center of world trade. For centuries, camel trains laden with silks and spices from China and India stopped in its caravanserais on their way to Asia Minor and Europe, and more than one traveler was struck by the splendors of its art and architecture as well as by the activity of its bazaars. During his late-12th-century journey to Cathay, Marco Polo, that cosmopolitan man of Venice, described Bukhara as a “very great and noble city.”

The attainments of Central Asian civilization were forgotten by many in the West, but not by all. H. G. Wells, in his *Outline of History*, observed that “in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. not merely Persia, but the regions that are now Turkestan and Afghanistan, were far more advanced in civilization than were the French and English of that time.” Wells’s observation came in the middle of his discussion of Manichaeism, a once-important world religion founded by the third-century Persian prophet Mani, who traveled and preached throughout Central Asia. The ancient city of Samarkand (in today’s Uzbekistan) became

the center of Mani's faith, proof, Wells noted, "that Turkestan was no longer a country of dangerous nomads, but a country in which cities were flourishing and men had the education and leisure for theological argument."

Theological argument opened the door to other religions in this era before the birth of Muhammad, giving Zoroastrianism and Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity major followings in the region. A Christian church once stood on the

site of Bukhara's Kalan minaret, since the 12th century a symbol of what has been regarded as one of Islam's holiest cities. Unfortunately, indigenous written records from that early period are almost nonexistent, and historians have had to rely on scant descriptions in Greek, Chinese, Persian, or Arab sources. But a tantalizing fragment of the early native sensibility and culture survives in a mural painted sometime between the fifth and seventh centuries on the wall of a palace excavated near the city of Samarkand. The mural depicts richly dressed nobles in an elegant bridal caravan, a royal reception of foreign ambassadors, and hunting and swimming scenes. Archaeologists at the site say they have reached a stratum showing Samarkand to be at least 2,500 years old, and they believe there are still deeper strata to be found.

With few natural defense barriers, Central Asia has been a perennial target of invaders. For much of history, parts or all of it have been subject to the hegemony of alien empires: Persian, Greek, Parthian, Chinese, Mongol, Russian. And always (until Russian arms



Depicting two noblemen, this detail from a fifth- or sixth-century mural excavated near the city of Samarkand attests to the high level of culture attained by the early "oasis" civilization.

imposed a new order beginning in the 18th century) stability was threatened by bands of nomad raiders who, weary of their hard life as herdsman and lured by urban booty, swept down off the Eurasian plain from the north or through the mountain passes from the east. As in China, walls were erected against the intruders. The ruins of one are still visible in Bukhara today. Of all the nomadic invaders, the Turks, who came in successive waves, became the most lasting presence. Seduced by the warmth and comfort of the oases, they settled down and created an amalgam of nomadic and sedentary cultures that was to culminate in powerful empires spreading out to make Central Asians, for a time, not the conquered but the conquerors.

Their troubled history has doubtless helped to shape the character of the Central Asians, who are often viewed as wily and secretive masters of pokerfaced reserve. The American diplomat Eugene Schuyler, who made a lengthy visit to the region in 1873 from his post in St. Petersburg, liked the people he met but found them to be untrustworthy, perhaps because they identified him with the Russians who were then



The faithful pray in front of the Tilla Kari madrasah (theological school) in Samarkand's main square, the Registan. Tilla Kari functioned both as a school and as a mosque.

in the process of overrunning them.

The territory included in the five Central Asian republics of today extends southward from the grassy Siberian steppes to the deserts and oases of what ancient writers (and modern ones like Arnold Toynbee) called "Transoxania," the lands north of the Oxus, Central Asia's greatest river (now the Amu Darya). The Arabs referred to the area as "Mawara-an-Nahr" (beyond the river). And the name Turkestan came into use as a geographical concept around the third century, employed by Persians of the Sassanid

period to designate the "land of Turks" on the other side of the Oxus that then formed the border of their empire (and today the boundary between Afghanistan and the republics of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan). The name was institutionalized by tsarist administrators in the second half of the 19th century, when they set up a Turkestan Government-General to rule their newly acquired colonies in the territory.

Ethnically, however, Turkestan is something of a misnomer, because many of the modern non-Russian inhabitants are Irani-

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ans. These are the Tajiks, who speak a language close to the Farsi of Iran and are descended from the earliest recorded settlers. If today the Tajiks are an Indo-European island in a vast sea of Turks, they can at least take satisfaction in the fact that the Persian civilization of their forebears made a lasting imprint on the Turkic conquerors, especially in the great oasis cities of Samarkand and Bukhara.

Long before the first raids by the Turks and at least a millennium before the birth of Christ, Iranian nomads settled in the fertile river valleys to raise food crops and, in time, cotton. Rice became the staple and remains so today. Water was crucial to life in a region where there is often no rainfall over the entire growing season, and artificial irrigation was introduced in very early times, fed by streams that descended from the high snow-capped mountains to the east and south and then flowed gradually in a northwesterly direction toward the lowlands of the Caspian littoral, on the way forming oases in the desert. Politically, the territory came to be dominated by a land-owning class of agrarian warrior magnates, the *dihqans*, each *dihqan* exercising sway over the surrounding countryside from a fortified redoubt.

At some point during this early period, traders began to traverse the region, among them Chinese merchants, who brought silk in exchange for products of Central Asian artisanry and animal husbandry and for other goods flowing in from Asia Minor and Europe. (The "heavenly" breed of horses raised in the Fergana Valley was much in demand at the Chinese imperial court.) As well as being early traders in the region, the Chinese are credited with teaching water-thirsty Central Asians to dig wells and with providing iron as raw material for an early metalworking (and armaments) industry in the Fergana Valley. From the other direction, the Roman Empire, came knowledge

of glassmaking, and in time Fergana colored glassware was said to surpass that of Western manufacture.

By the sixth century B.C., two power centers had arisen south of the Oxus. One was the empire of the Persian Achaemenid dynasty, founded by Cyrus the Great; the other was the Bactrian kingdom (centered near present-day Balkh in northern Afghanistan), where the stationing of Greek garrisons had left a strong Hellenic influence on the monarchy. Parts of Central Asia were ruled at various times by both powers. When Alexander of Macedonia stopped off with his army on his march to India in the second half of the fourth century B.C., Sogdiana, the ancient name for the area around Samarkand, was a Persian province, as was Margiana (around Merv in today's Turkmenistan). To the northwest, along the lower reaches of the Oxus near the present-day city of Khiva, the state of Khorezm (or Khwarizm) was enjoying a phase of independence.

During his stay in Central Asia, Alexander briefly pushed the outer limit of Greek civilization to the banks of the Jaxartes, Central Asia's second great river (now known as the Syr Darya), which flows north of the Oxus (Amu Darya) and more or less parallel to it. The implosion of Greek power after Alexander's death in 323 B.C. resulted, however, in western Central Asia's coming under the new Parthian Empire, which had filled the vacuum and become wealthy by controlling the east-west caravan routes and using the Oxus to move cargo by ship. The eastern part of the territory was swept by nomads called in Chinese sources the Yüeh-chih, Iranians from western China who invaded Bactria to the south.

Meanwhile, on the northern and eastern periphery, the power of the Turkic nomad tribes, said to be related to the Huns who had struck ter-

TURKS AND TURKISH

As early as the third century B.C., Chinese chroniclers mention Turks as one of several nomadic peoples living in the steppe and forest regions northwest of China. The Chinese called them *Tu-kiu* and *Tu-lu*. By the sixth century A.D. these tribes had formed a Turk empire that encompassed immense territories and persisted some 300 years. Its rulers left inscriptions in a runic alphabet on stone monuments that have been found throughout the region encompassing present-day Mongolia, Tuva, and neighboring parts of Siberia. On his funerary stele Bilge Kaghan, who died in 734, declared:

I did not reign over a people that was rich; I reigned over a people weak and frightened, a people that had no food in their bellies and no cloth on their backs To preserve the reputation achieved by [my] father and uncle, for the sake of the Turk people, I spent nights without sleep and days without rest. When I became kaghan, the people who had dispersed in different countries returned, at the point of death, on foot, naked. To reestablish the nation, I led 22 campaigns. Then, by the grace of Heaven, and because of good fortune and propitious circumstances, I brought back to life the dying people, the naked people I clothed, and I made the few many.

The next great eastern Turkish empire was established in the eighth century by the Uigurs, who were converted first to Buddhism and then to Islam. The ruins of their capital, Karakhoja, cover several square miles not far from Turfan in modern China's Xinjiang-Uigur "autonomous" region and are surrounded by walls that still stand more than 25 feet high. The Uigurs, whose empire

lasted until the 12th century, wrote their Turkish in the classical vertical alphabet that the Mongols still use. While the eastern empires rose and fell, other Turks spread across Asia to the southern Russian steppes, where many were enlisted as mercenaries in the armies of the Byzantine Empire. The Khazars, another Turkic people, created an empire that lasted from the seventh to the 10th century and extended from the North Caucasus to the Volga and beyond into western Central Asia. They converted to Judaism. Arthur Koestler advanced the controversial theory in his *Thirteenth Tribe* that when their empire collapsed, its scattered people became the Ashkenazi Jews.

The Turkish languages belong to the same Altaic family as Mongolian and Manchu. (Some linguists also include Korean and Japanese in this family.) In form but not vocabulary, Turkish is related to Hungarian and Finnish. There are now at least 20 written Turkish languages ranging from Gagauz, used by Christian Turks in Moldova, to Yakut, spoken in the republic of that name in far northeastern Siberia. Modern Turkish languages are written in the Latin, Cyrillic, and Arabic alphabets. The Turkish of modern Turkey has the largest number of speakers (over 50 million), followed by Azeri (perhaps 20 million), Uzbek (17 million), Kazakh (9.5 million), modern Uigur (7.5 million), and Tatar (6.5 million). A speaker of basic Turkish can make himself understood all the way from the Balkans to North China. Ask an Azeri or a Kazakh or an Uzbek for a glass of *su*, and each will give you water.

—Paul B. Henze

ror in Roman hearts, was growing. By the sixth century A.D. the Turks had seized control of the Eurasian plain, and Turkic cavalry were engaged in struggles against three sedentary empires, Byzantine, Persian, and Chinese. Central Asian towns began to fall to the rule of Turkic dynasties.

Although in the modern sense of the word not quite the "barbarians" that the Chinese called them, the Turks were tough

and warlike. At the same time, they shaped a society with elaborate customs and ways that have survived in the nostalgia of Turkic peoples today. Among those ways were modes of clannic and tribal political and social organization that in some forms persist to the present.

In the nomadic days of the steppe, before the Turkic forebears of today's Central Asian nationalities settled down, a tribal

chieftain had to retain popularity among his followers in order to keep them from simply wandering off. This gave rise to a certain democratic tradition according to which the chieftain consulted on important decisions with the *aksakals*, tribal elders. At the same time, ancestry played an even more decisive role than popularity in the selection of the chieftain, and elaborate oral genealogies established the all-important blood lines. (After the death of Chingis [or Genghis] Khan in the early 13th century, the ability to trace one's descent from the Mongol conqueror was especially prized, often mandatory for a ruler.)

As a result of migration and military expeditions, kindred tribal units became widely dispersed, with much intermingling and interaction. The names Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen are derived from tribal confederations, the first three being members of a larger Kipchak conglomerate, sometimes called the "northwest" Turkic group, whose name relates to the *Dasht-i-kipchak*, the steppe to the north of Transoxania. The Turkmen, by contrast, are members of the Oguz or southwestern group, which in terms of their origins puts them closer to the Turks of modern Turkey. The former Soviet republics bearing these names actually have mixed populations, with members of each republic's eponymous nationality scattered in other Central Asian republics.

During the Soviet period allegiance to tribal affiliation was officially proscribed, and could bring severe penal sanctions; only "nationality" was considered the legitimate identity. In consequence, people kept quiet about their tribal or

clannic ties, and research on the subject was taboo. Today, the question of the Central Asians' true identity is shrouded in mystery. When Uzbekistan's President, Islam Karimov, complains about interference of clannic networks in the work of the state, is he referring to the old tribal identities or merely to family ties and local autarky? How much truth is there in reports that in Kazakhstan there are functioning networks based on the three subdivisions of the Kazakh tribes, the Greater, Lesser and Middle Hordes? Given the years of sedentary living and disruption of the old tribal patterns, are such distinctions merely a kind of romantic nostalgia without basis in social reality? These questions are ripe for study by researchers, now that they have the freedom to investigate.

Testimony about the lifeways of the early Turks survives in the chronicle of a Chinese Buddhist man of learning, Yuan-Chwang, who, in the seventh century, ventured through Central Asia on his way to India. Along the route to Samarkand, he and his party came across a band of 2,000 mounted Turkish robbers di-



In this turn-of-the century photograph, Sarts engage in a fierce game called buzkashi. The game connects the urbanized Sarts with their nomadic Turkic forebears, the great horsemen of the steppes.

viding up booty from a caravan; the Chinese travelers seem to have been saved when the Turks began to fight among themselves over the spoils. But on reaching the city where the "Khan of the Turks" was located, the Chinese party witnessed a scene of a different kind: an entourage of 200 officers dressed in brocade and with braided



The Middle East and Asia seem to blend in this photograph of painted boys performing a dance to the accompaniment of bangles and tambourines.

hair, surrounded by support troops wearing furs and "fine spun hair garments" and mounted on horses and camels. The Khan, resplendent in a robe of green satin and a silken turban, emerged from his tent, "a large pavilion adorned with golden flower ornaments which blind the eye with their glitter." Although the Turks were then still Zoroastrian fire-worshippers, the Khan with courteous ceremony conducted the learned Buddhist visitor inside, where officers "clad in shining garments of embroidered silk" were seated in rows on mats. To musical accompaniment, a feast of mutton and veal was served with wine. For the Buddhist holy man, there were special dishes of rice cakes, cream, and various

sweets. At the Khan's request, Yuan-Chwang explained the principles of his religion and was given an attentive hearing.

The seventh century, the time of Yuan-Chwang's odyssey, was also one of Chinese imperial expansion—at one point extending all the way across Central Asia to the Caspian Sea and frequently bringing the Chinese into military conflicts with the Turks. Around the middle of the same century, however, such warring began to assume far less importance to the settled urban populations of Central Asia. A new power appeared on the scene: the Arabs.

Propelled by a great burst of expansionist energy combined with religious fervor, Arab armies in the decades after Muhammad's death in 632 created an empire that extended from North Africa and Spain in the west to Asia Minor and Persia in the east. Transoxania was on the outer fringes of this vast region, and its conquest by the Arabs was neither rapid nor easy. They occupied the western oasis of Merv in 651, but farther to the east, Bukhara, under a female ruler, and Sogd (Samarkand) held out for decades. Even after initial victories, the Arabs had to reconquer the eastern portion of the territory, which at one point was given up for lost in the face of uprisings and the recalcitrance of native surrogates weakly overseen by their emirs.

Spread thin by the vastness of their empire, the Arabs lacked cadres of their own to administer it. Nor did all people of Transoxania accept the Arabs' Islamic religion. Marco Polo, passing through Samarkand more than five centuries after its subjugation by Arab power, found a sizeable Christian minority still locked in conflict with the Muslim majority. Arabic served as the official language for some three centu-

ries, but in time gave way to Persian for all but religious purposes. This development reflected the declining political power of the caliphate in Baghdad and the rise, in the late ninth century, of the Persian Samanid dynasty, whose second ruler, Ismail, made Bukhara his capital. (His mausoleum there remains in splendid condition, having been preserved beneath sand for centuries.)

The transcendent achievement of Islamization was to make Central Asia an integral and active part of a farflung international civilization. Abu Raihan Muhammad al-Biruni, born in the Khorezm district in 973, has been called by one authority "probably the most comprehensive scholar Islam ever produced." He is known for his writings on science, mathematics, and history, as well as for a description of the India of his day that is still a classic. Had he been born a few hundred years earlier, this man would almost certainly have lived and died in oblivion. Similarly, the talents of his contemporary, al-Khorezmi, who is credited with having invented algebra, or the somewhat later Bukharan Avicenna (ibn-Sina), a philosopher and scientific investigator whose medical treatise in translation was used in Western Europe for centuries, might have been relegated to obscurity.

Central Asians were also to make early contributions to the development of the Islamic religion, founding movements which continue to have significant followings throughout the Muslim world. Among such figures were the 12th-century poet and Sufi philosopher Ahmad Yasavi and the 14th-century Bukharan Bahauddin Naqshband, originator and first sheikh of what is still one of the largest Sufi orders.

If by the year 1000 Persian secular culture was in the ascendancy over that of the Arabs, political power passed definitively from Iranian to Turkic hands. Samanid rule, which at its height embraced almost

all of Transoxania and Persia, was undermined by the intrigues of Turk military commanders in its service. Its end was hastened by a singular irony: Having secured the voluntary conversion to Islam of the Turkic tribes on their borders, the Iranian Samanids, when attacked by those same tribes, could no longer call for *jihād*, holy war. Transoxania was taken over by a succession of Turkic or Turco-Mongol rulers from outside, making "Turkestan" a political reality. In time, however, a new indigenous power arose, the empire of the Khorezm Shahs, a Muslim dynasty originally of Turkic origin centered in the city of that name. For a few decades in the 12th and 13th centuries, its dominion spread through Transoxania and Persia.

But a new invader from the east was not long in coming—the Mongol Chingis Khan. In alliance with Turkic warriors, Chingis began the year 1220 by capturing



A Jewish woman of Samarkand.

and sacking Bukhara and finished it by occupying Samarkand and the other important Transoxanian cities.

Chingis survives in the folk memory of Russians and other Europeans as the very embodiment of ruthless evil, an image that has been encouraged with varying degrees of zeal in later centuries. During the Soviet period, the portrayal of Chingis as a force of darkness became a matter of ideological orthodoxy, with official historians quoting Karl Marx on Mongol misdeeds in refutation of such "bourgeois apologists" as the Yale historian George Vernadsky, himself of Russian origin.

But while Chingis's atrocities appear to have been excessive even by the standards of his day, scholars have certainly been right to point to mitigating circumstances. His reported harshness in Central Asia, compared with relative leniency in other areas, may have been connected with an incident in which one of his trading caravans was murderously attacked on the territory of the reigning Khorezm Shah. And for all his barbarity, Chingis's conquests had the civilizing effect of facilitating the spread of Muslim culture by his Islamized descendants. It is noteworthy, finally, that accounts by foreigners who visited Turkestan not long after Chingis supposedly leveled its cities contained no reports of ruins. However ruthless he was in fact, the popular view of Chingis as bogeyman is essentially Eurocentric. In Turkic lands from Anatolia to Xinjiang, parents proudly name their sons Chingis (or even Attila).

After Chingis's death in 1227, his empire was split among his successors. It took more than a century for a new unifying force to emerge in the person of a Central Asian named Timur from the city of Kish (the old name for Shahrisabz in present-day Uzbekistan). Seizing control of Turkestan, where he made his capital at Samarkand, Timur administered crushing blows to the

nomads and led invading armies into Persia, southern Russia, India, and Asia Minor, defeating and capturing the Ottoman sultan at Ankara in 1402, three years before his death at age 69. Timur's azure-domed mausoleum in Samarkand, the Gur-i Amir, remains one of the great architectural monuments of the world.

The legend of Timur's cruelties captured the imagination of the West, where he became known as Tamerlane. Not quite 200 years after his death Christopher Marlowe's play *Tamburlaine* was being performed for London audiences by the Lord Admiral's company, and the powerful figure of its protagonist "threatening the world with high astounding terms" made it more successful in its own time than even the plays of Marlowe's contemporary, William Shakespeare. Slightly more than two centuries later, the American schoolboy Edgar Allan Poe wrote his poem *Tamerlane* in which Timur appears as a dying and repentant old man musing in Samarkand, "queen of Earth," on a youth spent "striding o'er empires haughtily, a diadem'd outlaw."

Central Asians of today see the Muslim Timur's legacy in a more positive light, especially his role in creating the lasting glory of Samarkand, a city that during his reign reached new commercial prosperity as a trading center through which flowed silks and pearls from China, sugar and spices from India, leather and cloth from Russia and Tatarstan, and rugs woven by the Turkmen tribes in the western desert (pronounced by Marco Polo a century earlier to be "the finest and handsomest carpets in the world"). A Spanish envoy who visited Samarkand shortly before Timur's death described the city's squares as "swarming night and day with people who trade without a moment's pause." From the lands he conquered Timur sent back to Samarkand

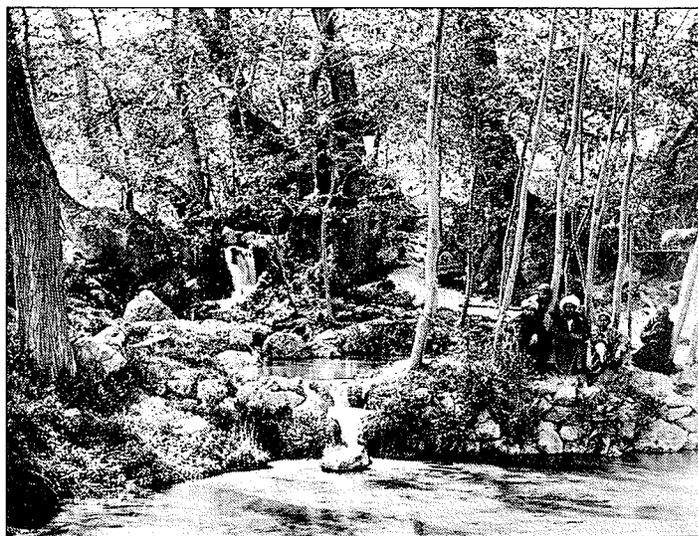
architects, astronomers, theologians, historians, craftsmen, and assorted other scientists and artists estimated by the same Spanish envoy to number "at the very least a hundred thousand." Special guards were installed to keep these unwilling courtiers from escaping the city.

Timur's domain, like Chingis's, did not long survive his death. His demise set in motion an era of fragmented power and internecine feuding lasting until the Pax Russica of the 19th century. The urbanized descendants of this warrior made lasting cultural contributions, but they were handicapped by political weakness. Although Timur's grandson, Ulugh Beg, ruler of Samarkand, has gone down in history for his contributions to astronomy (the observatory which he built there survives), he was a target of political intrigue and fell victim of an assassin. Even the most famous of the Timurids, Zahiruddin Babur, who is revered today by Turks for his *Babur-nameh*, one of the first important literary works in an Eastern Turkic language, was forced—as Arnold Toynbee has pointed out—to pursue his ambitions elsewhere because of his inability to establish a reliable power base at home in Turkestan. To establish such a base, Babur marched his troops through Afghanistan to India, there founding the Mughal Empire.

The vacuum created by the political weakness of the Timurids opened the way to a new incursion of Turkic nomads from the steppes, this time Uzbek tribes led by a chief named Muhammad Shaibani Khan. These Uzbeks were able to seize

power from the remaining Timurids, completing their conquest of Turkestan in the first decade of the 16th century. But they lacked the strength to restore lasting unitary rule. (The coincidence of this tribal name and that of modern-day Uzbekistan should not lead to the assumption that the Shaibanids were the exclusive progenitors of today's Uzbeks, whose ancestry is complex and eclectic. "Uzbek" is at best an ethnic approximation, applied indiscriminately to descendants of the nomadic Uzbek tribes and to the urban Turkic population, known before the 1917 revolution as "Sarts," who had a traditional language and culture that differed greatly from those of the nomads.)

On the heels of the Shaibanid invasion, Central Asia's fragmentation into small, shifting territories ruled by feuding local khans or other aristocrats was exacerbated by two new factors, both of external origin: economic decay and religious isolation. Vasco da Gama's discovery at the end of the 15th century of a seaway from Europe to India and China further undercut the ancient land routes, where caravans were al-



The importance of oases in arid Turkestan is no mystery. Its great cities, including Samarkand and Bukhara, rose around them.

ready hampered by a proliferation of customs barriers erected by greedy petty rulers and by a breakdown of order that left them at the mercy of bandit Turkmen nomads in the Kara Kum Desert. The collapse of trade plunged the cities along the well-worn routes into decline.

Around the same time, Persia's Safavid dynasty embraced the Shi'a branch of Islam as its state religion. Growing intolerance between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims created a zone of hostility extending northward like a wedge from the Persian plateau through Azerbaijan into the Caucasus, severing the Central Asians' traditional ties with Persia and cutting off access to fellow Sunnis in the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and other western Muslim countries. Turkestan, which for centuries had been an active contributor to the Islamic renaissance, now entered a long night of history.

As Central Asian power and prosperity declined, a new force was rising in the north. By the mid-16th century, Muscovite Russia had shaken off the effects of three centuries of vassalage to the Tatar-Mongol Golden Horde. In 1552, the troops of Ivan the Terrible captured the Tatar stronghold of Kazan on the Volga, opening the way for a movement of expansion eastward and southward that was to last 400 years. By the end of the 18th century, Russian traders and settlers were moving in strength into the steppelands north of the Central Asian oases, encroaching on the already dwindling pasture lands of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz nomads. To protect these subjects of the tsar, a line of Russian forts began to stretch across the territory, manned by Cossacks.*

*The Slavic Cossacks, whose Christian society originated near the Turkic marches of southern Russia, and the Turkic Kazakhs, have names that have been attributed to the same Turkic verb, meaning "to roam." The similarity of names has not engendered amity. Even today, the government of Kazakhstan expresses concern over the alleged anti-Kazakh activities of Cossack agitators in the republic.

In time, the Turkic nomads came to accept the Russian presence, seeing it as the lesser of two evils. (The other was pressure from the east, from Buddhist nomads of Mongol origin.) This accommodation was helped by the relative recency and superficiality of the nomads' conversion to Islam, which made them more easygoing about religion than their sedentary neighbors to the south. A truce of sorts between Russians and nomads was concluded. Tribal khans accepted fealty to the tsar, although this did not always keep them from entering into simultaneous treaties of allegiance to Chinese or Central Asian rulers. Nor did it prevent the khans' subjects from attacking Russian settlers who moved onto their grazing lands. Still, tribesmen began to be educated in Russian schools and to serve in the tsarist army, some rising high in officers' ranks.

Following this relatively easy penetration of the nomadic steppes, the Russians paused for a time before moving further south into the more densely populated region of Transoxania. The chief obstacles to their advancement were three Central Asian khanates, known by their capital cities, which had become the political centers of the Transoxanian region: Kokand in the Fergana Valley to the east, Bukhara in the center, and Khiva (near the ancient site of Khorezm) in the west.

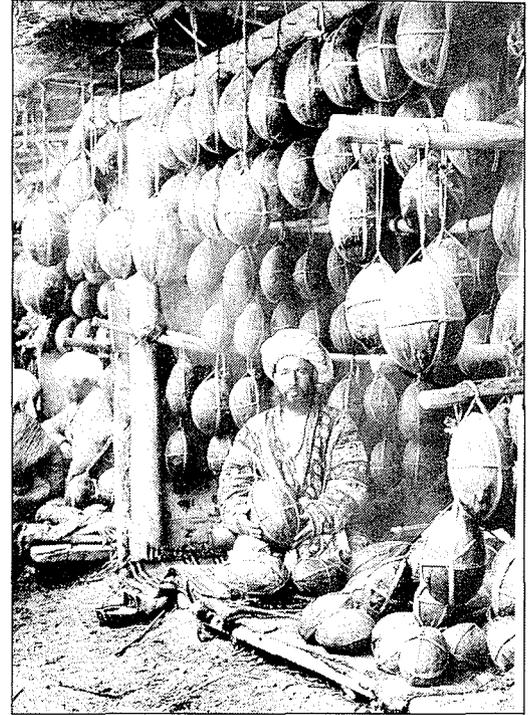
Of these, the largest and most formidable was Bukhara, whose ruling khans had come, under Persian cultural influence, to assume the additional title of "emir." ("Khan," a title of Mongol origin, was supposed to denote the bearer's descent from Chingis Khan, thus reinforcing his claim to legitimacy.) Contemporary accounts portray the Bukharan emirate as a land of poverty and persecution and slavery, of oppressive taxes, of public tortures and drawn-out executions, a place where curious non-Muslim visitors could be (and sometimes

were) clapped into the emir's *siyah chah*, his black hole, and eventually put to death. (Such was the unhappy fate, around 1842, of two British adventurers, Colonel Charles Stoddart and Captain Arthur Conolly.) At the same time, the city maintained its reputation as "holy Bukhara" (*Bukhara-i-sharif*), one of the great centers of learning in the Islamic world.

By the 19th century, this reputation was enhanced by Bukhara's very remoteness and isolation. Many Muslims valued the city because it had in their eyes remained uncorrupted by the aura of infidel Western colonialism affecting such other Islamic centers as Cairo and even Ottoman Constantinople. One paradoxical result was that Bukhara's religious schools attracted Tatar students from the Volga region, young men who brought with them ideas from Russia and the European Enlightenment. Amid the stagnation of the emirate, the Tatar presence exercised a certain modernizing and liberalizing influence.

By the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the rulers of these three khanates had become sufficiently alarmed to begin making overtures to Ottoman sultans in the hope of obtaining their support against Russia. In return, they offered to become their subjects. One such appeal was received during the reign (1808–39) of Sultan Mahmud II. After deliberation with his advisers, who pointed to the remoteness of the khanates and the danger of becoming embroiled again with Russia (whose armies were threatening the Turks), Mahmud declined, defensively citing Islamic law as the authority for his refusal to come to the aid of his fellow Muslim potentates.

Now that they are free to do so, Central Asian historians have adduced evidence to show that when the Russian attack on the land south of the steppes finally came, resistance to it was far stronger than Soviet historiography ever revealed. It is true that ef-



A melon merchant in the ancient market of Bukhara. Melon- and rice-growing date from the earliest days of Central Asian agriculture.

forts by the khanates were disorganized and undercut by internecine feuding among the rulers, but the Russians were hardly welcomed as liberators. In 1853, defenders of the Ak Masjid fortress in the Kokand khanate refused demands to surrender during 22 days of siege marked by fierce fighting. In 1865, the people of Tashkent withstood siege for 42 days without food and water; when Russian troops finally breached the city wall—led by a cheering Orthodox priest—the defenders held out for another two days and nights of bitter hand-to-hand combat. It was not until 1885 that the last organized resistance was overcome with the defeat of the Turkmen tribes in the western desert.

The imperial government let the three khans keep their thrones, even while claiming their lands as tsarist protectorates. Bukhara and Khiva retained this status until

after the 1917 revolution. The khanate of Kokand, on the other hand, was liquidated soon after Russian occupation. Its land, like the rest of the conquered territory not part of the protectorates, was placed under the direct administration of the Turkestan Government-General. (By then, certain areas of what is today Kazakhstan already belonged to the adjacent Government-General of the Steppe, whose headquarters were located in the Siberian city of Orenburg.)

In the new colony the Russians practiced a policy of considerable *laissez-faire*, allowing the Muslim society to be largely self-governing. The French historians Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay, whose work was seminal in reminding the West of the Muslim character of regions that many people too carelessly called "Russia," summed up Moscow's strategy in these words:

The Russians had no precise long-term policy towards the native population except in the sense that they aimed at keeping them apart, at isolating the country from all outside influence, and at maintaining it in a state of medieval stagnation, thus removing any possibility of conscious and organized national resistance.

The impact of the Russian presence was in fact enormous. Military victory opened the door to Russian settlers who gravitated toward Tashkent (in modern-day Uzbekistan), administrative headquarters of the Turkestan Government-General. New opportunities attracted Russian capital, especially to develop cotton growing. Economic change created a new class of prosperous native businessmen, while at the bottom of society fluctuations in crops and prices caused many peasants to lose their land. This was also a time of revolutionary technological change, as railroads and the telegraph brought the old cities into con-

tact not only with Russia and Europe but also with those parts of the Muslim world from which they had long been cut off.

Under Russian rule, Central Asia remained fairly stable. There were uprisings, some of them massive and bloody, but no organized radical movements. Yet the region acquired a new Islamic vigor. Turkestan intellectuals, exposed to modern currents despite Russian efforts to keep them isolated, came under the spell of Islamic reformers in other Muslim regions of the Empire, and of Young Turks and Young Iranians abroad. Muslims everywhere, humiliated by the ascendancy of European power in their lands, sought to reform their societies and make them able to compete in the modern world, to regain the lost glory that shone from the Islamic renaissance in the days when the West had been the backward neighbor.

In Russian-dominated Turkestan, which centuries earlier had been an active contributor to that renaissance, foreign and domestic newspapers in Turkic languages and in Persian now circulated freely, becoming vehicles of a new ethnic awareness. *Anjumans*, discussion groups, debated the burning issues of the day in homes and tea-houses. As elsewhere, there was a drive to introduce secular subjects into the curricula of Muslim schools, its proponents called *jadids*, from the Arab expression *usul jadid*, "new method."

This rebirth was cut short after 1917, and in the decades that followed Moscow tightened its yoke still further. Along with other repressions, the Soviet regime attempted—in the name of ideology—to eradicate or distort the record of past greatness. Yet despite persecutions and privations, the Central Asians clung privately to the memory of their former place at the pinnacle of world civilization.

THE HEAVENLY CITY OF SAMARKAND

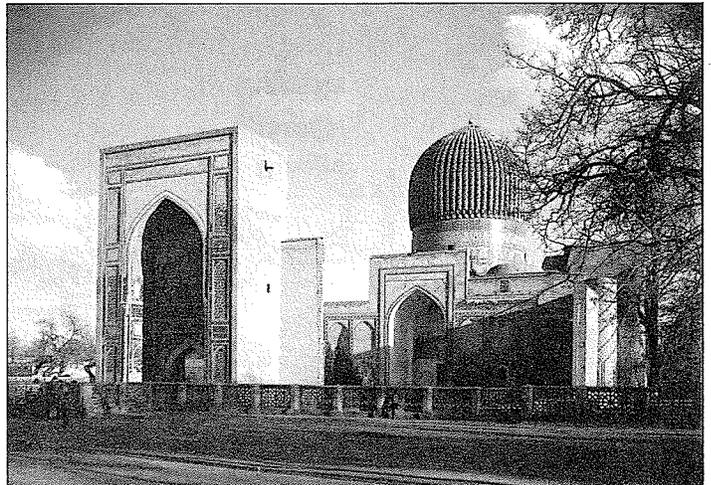
by *Roya Marefat*

The many architectural splendors of Samarkand—the mosques, religious schools, shrines, and mausoleums, sparkling even today with glazed tiles in lapis, turquoise, and gold—owe largely to the efforts of one man, the legendary conqueror known to the West as Tamerlane. A Turkicized Mongol from the Barlas tribe, Timur (1336–1405) ruled a vast empire that stretched at its height from India to Anatolia and Damascus. Endowed with artistic vision as well as military prowess, Timur laid the foundations of an artistic renaissance that was to mark the next two centuries of Islam and have a direct influence on the architecture of Iran and India.

There is no more vivid portrait of Timur himself than that penned by historian René Grousset: “Tall, with a large head and deep reddish complexion, this lame man, ever coursing about the world—this cripple with his hand ever clasped about his sword, this bowman whose marksmanship, as he ‘drew the bowstring to his ear,’ was as infallible as Chingis Khan’s—dominated his age like Chingis Khan before him.”

Unlike the blunter Chingis, Timur was a Machiavellian ruler who frequently ran his empire behind figureheads, but he was every bit as determined as his predecessor.

Conscious of the symbolic power of architecture, Timur commissioned works with posterity in mind, building not only in Samarkand but in other areas of Transoxania, including his birthplace, Kish. He was usually ruthless with the people he conquered, but he spared the lives of artists and craftsmen to bring them to work in his capital. Always concerned with legitimizing his rule—he married a descendant of Chingis Khan to compensate for the fact that he himself was not related to the ear-



This contemporary photograph of the Gur-i Amir (“King’s Grave”) complex features the gateway, the entry hall, and the fluted, melon-shaped double dome.

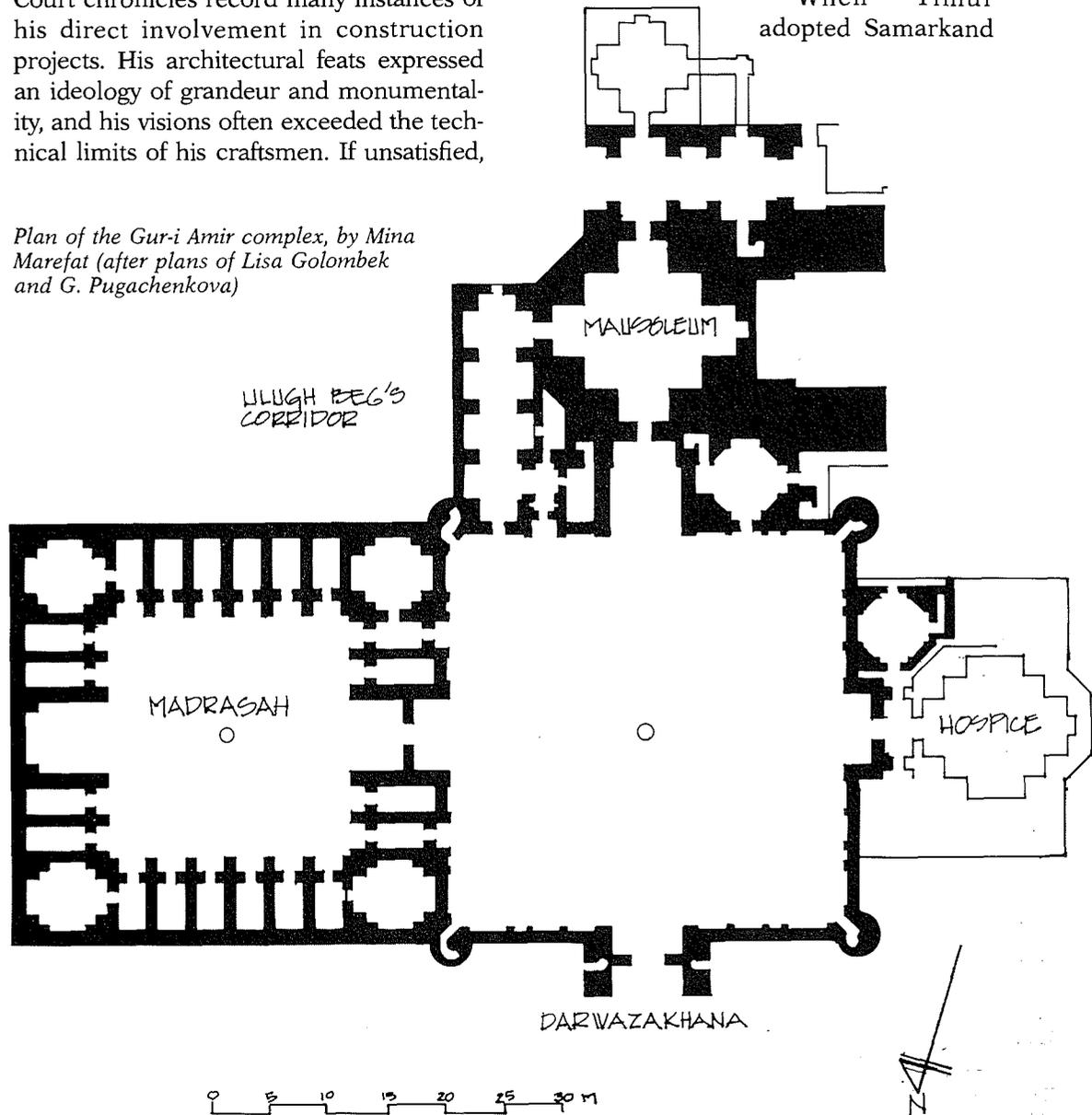
lier conqueror—he created an architecture that fused Islamic elements with refined Persian artistry and symbols of the rugged nomadic culture of the Turks and Mongols.

Timur was no passive patron of the arts. Court chronicles record many instances of his direct involvement in construction projects. His architectural feats expressed an ideology of grandeur and monumentality, and his visions often exceeded the technical limits of his craftsmen. If unsatisfied,

he would order that a building be redone. At the same time, he was obsessed with speed, and the noblemen who supervised his projects understood the literal meaning of deadlines.

When Timur adopted Samarkand

Plan of the Gur-i Amir complex, by Mina Marefat (after plans of Lisa Golombek and G. Pugachenkova)



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as his capital in 1370, the former Persian city was still recovering from the Mongol devastations of the previous century. The palaces that once lined the river were in ruins, and none of the city walls remained standing. The brick, adobe, and stone remnants of the old city were little more than ghostly reminders of a rich Persian, Turkic, and Islamic heritage. Timur quickly brought new life to his capital, commissioning numerous gardens, pavilions, and palaces for his personal pleasure. These works moved poets to think of Samarkand as "the paradisiac city," and Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo, the Spanish ambassador to the court of Timur, confirmed the accounts of their magnificence:

The garden where this festival took place is very large and it is planted with many fruit-bearing trees with others that are to give shade, and throughout are led avenues and raised paths that are bordered by palings along which guests might pass their way. Throughout the garden many tents had been pitched with pavilions of colored tapestries for shade, and the silk hangings were of diverse patterns, some being quaintly embroidered and others plain in design. In the center of this garden there was built a very fine palace the ground plan of which was a cross. The interior was all most richly furnished with hangings on the walls.

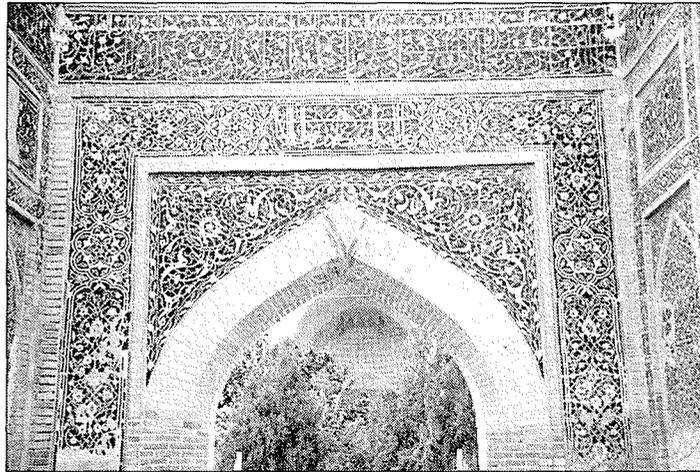
Inspired by mosques he saw during his India campaign in 1398–1399, Timur commissioned the building of a monumental congregational mosque, known today as Bibi Khanum. Some 400 to 480 marble columns, hauled from quarries by 95 elephants that Timur brought back from Hindustan, helped to support what historians Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber call "one of the most colossal monuments ever built in the Islamic world." From India, the conqueror also brought stonemasons to construct a building whose dome, chroniclers said, "would have been unique had it not been for the heavens, and unique

would have been its portal had it not been for the Milky Way."

By far, though, the best-known structure Timur commissioned in Samarkand is the mausoleum known as Gur-i Amir. Although it eventually became his own resting place, he ordered it built in 1404 for his grandson and heir, Muhammad Sultan, who had died in battle the year before at age 29. Dissatisfied with the initial result, Timur ordered his workers to make it grander. Clavijo reported that the command was carried out in 10 days, but the detailed execution of the structure casts doubt on his account.

Typifying the Timurid emphasis on a unified design for clusters of structures, the Gur-i Amir was built not as a single monument but as part of a larger complex, including three structures earlier commissioned by Muhammad Sultan. The most conspicuous of these neighbors was a religious college, or *madrasah*, but there was also a dervish hospice and a public bath.

The entrance to the Gur-i Amir (which in fact was erected by Timur's grandson) is a monumental gateway, or *darwazakhana*. Measuring 12 meters high, it is elaborately decorated in lapis tile with ornate Arabic calligraphy and lush vegetal motifs. The appearance of inscriptions on buildings, neither new nor limited to funerary structures, was integral to Islamic architecture from its inception. The dedicatory, religious, and pious sayings were interwoven in the buildings, often providing information about the date of construction, the patron, the builder, and the function of the edifice. (The architect of the gateway inscribed his name and birthplace in a cartouche on the facade: Muhammad b. Mahmoud *al-bana* Isfahani.) The geometric and vegetal ornamentation derived from an even older Middle Eastern art and architecture, but they came into wider use after the rise of Islam because of the faith's prohibition against the making of figural images. The artists of



A detail of the gateway built by Ulugh Beg in 1434 provides a fine example of the arabesque motif and Timurid tilework.

the Islamic world transformed the naturalistic forms into elaborate abstract figures, generally known as arabesques.

Beyond the *darwazakhana* is a square courtyard measuring 32.5 meters on each side, with walls that still retain remnants of rich tile mosaics. In the time-consuming and costly method of tilework known as mosaic faience, each individual color was fired separately, cut to the desired shape, and fitted into place. This technique, originally developed in Iran, was introduced to Samarkand during the building of the tomb of Timur's sister and then used in other structures. The decoration of the courtyard included both floral and vegetal ornamentation, at times intertwined with elegant Arabic calligraphy. The floral and vegetal motifs had great symbolic significance in tomb architecture because of the association of the garden with paradise in Islam. Appropriately, the Arabic terms for tomb and garden are the same word: *rawza*.

Directly across the courtyard from the gateway stands the tomb chamber. On the side of the chamber facing the gateway is an *iwan*, a roofed space enclosed on three sides and open on one. This distinctive

architectural form derived from ancient Persia, its name originally being synonymous with the word palace. (The famous *iwan* of the Sassanian Persian palace, Taq-i Kisra, in Ctesiphon, was so grand in its dimensions—35 meters in height, 25 in width, 50 in depth—that subsequent builders tried, usually without success, to equal it.) Functioning as a transitional zone between the exterior and the interior, the three-sided hall was incorporated in secular and religious ar-

chitecture throughout Central Asia, as well as in the common courtyard house.

The vaulted roof of the *iwan* in Gur-i Amir is richly decorated with a honeycomb design called *muqarnas*, the individual cells of which are in square, rhomboid, almond-shaped, and barley grain patterns. In the Gur-i Amir the cascading *muqarnas* is made of stucco and is decorative rather than structural. Applied to both the interior and exterior of buildings, the *muqarnas* symbolized the vault of heaven and the complex composition of the cosmos.

The tomb chamber itself, octagonal on the outside, is capped by a high drum on top of which sits a melon-shaped dome. The dome in Islamic funerary architecture has a long tradition. In fact, both the Persian and Arabic words for it eventually came to be synonyms for tomb. How this association came about is not entirely clear. Some scholars see the influence of Turco-Mongol society. The tent, or *yurt*, of the nomads was used not only as a dwelling but as the place for displaying the bodies of the dead before burial. Thus, it is believed, the dome mimicked the form of the tent in the sturdier urban materials of stone and brick.

(The melon shape of the Gur-i Amir dome is particularly suggestive of the circular ribbed skeleton supports of the *yurt*.) As well as carrying such traditional associations, the fluted azure and turquoise dome of the Gur-i Amir set a new standard for artistic achievement. Its double-domed structure allowed greater height, and the outer dome, with its 64 flutes, measures 34.09 meters from the ground.

The exterior wall of the tomb chamber is decorated with tiles geometrically arranged to spell the words "Muhammad" and "Allah" in a recurrent pattern. Such repetition, typical of Islamic art, recalls the repetition of prayers, or *dhikr*. Today, the tiles still shimmer in the bright Central Asian sun, making the mass of the tomb chamber appear light, almost weightless.

The dominant color of the exterior tiles is blue, ranging from light turquoise to deep cobalt and lapis. Because blue was the color of mourning in Central Asia, it was the logical choice for most funerary architecture. But the preference reflected a range of other, more favorable symbolic associations. As well as being the color that wards off the evil eye (a function that it still performs on the doors of many Central Asian houses), blue is the color of the sky and of water, the latter being a precariously rare resource in Central Asia and the Middle East. Abetting this clearly overdetermined fondness for the color is the fact that the region abounds in such minerals as lapis and turquoise.

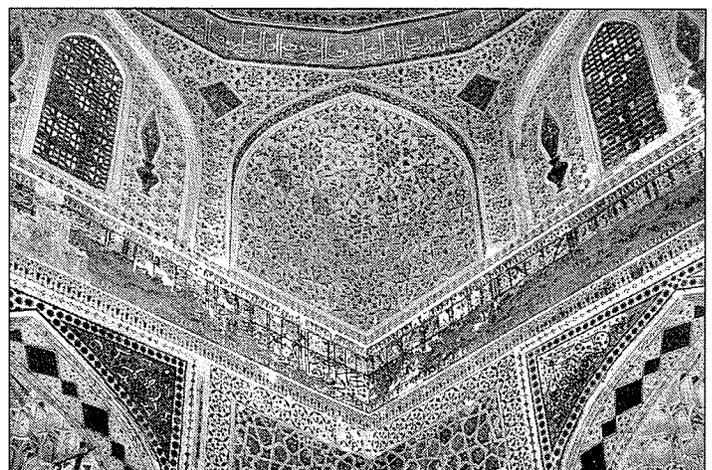
Apart from the dome, the other noticeable feature of the tomb's exterior, according to historical sources, was its four minarets. These were the towers from which

the *muezzin* called the faithful to prayer; they also stood as important elements of the Islamic urban iconography. Today, only two minarets survive, but because they are truncated and lack inner staircases, they barely resemble minarets at all.

The interior plan of the tomb chamber is square. Each side, 10.22 meters long, has a deep niche, covered with elaborate decorations in the *muqarnas* motif. The interior height of the chamber is 22.5 meters. Inside, the transition from the square chamber to the dome is achieved by means of squinches, which create an octagonal zone of transition.

Carrying the Islamic passion for geometry to new lengths, the Timurid builders established certain measurements as the basis for other elements of a structure. The entire geometric system of the Gur-i Amir is based on the two rectangles (and their diagonals) that together form the square plan of the tomb chamber.

As well as providing an outstanding example of the Timurid fascination with vaulting, the interior of the Gur-i Amir is sumptuously decorated in gold and lapis, applied in the technique of wall painting



An interior view of the Gur-i Amir shows the transitional zone—the squinch—between the square tomb chamber and the round dome.

known as *kundul*. Unique to Central Asia, *kundul* gives the appearance of embroidered gold fabric. The geometric design of the interior features the use of the twelve-sided and five-pointed star. Within the rhomboid shape of the star, the name Muhammad is interwoven three times.

In the central part of the chamber, a carved stone banister surrounds cenotaphs of Timur and his family, who are buried in a cruciform crypt. Seyyed Birka, an important religious figure, was not a member of the family, but his body was moved to the tomb by order of Timur—yet another attempt to solidify the foundation of his rule by associating himself with Islam.

The body of Timur himself was laid to rest at the foot of the Seyyed Birka. His clothing and military gear were placed on the walls, and though nothing remains of these memorabilia, vestiges of another Mongol tradition are visible in the form of a *tuq*—a tall pole with horses' tails, symbolizing the Turkish ritual of horse sacrifice honoring the dead. Even in death Timur continued the intermingling of Islamic and nomadic traditions.

In 1409 Ulugh Beg (r. 1409–1446) became the ruler of Samarkand when his father Shahrukh assumed the Timurid throne. Ulugh Beg followed in the footsteps of his grandfather and became a prolific patron of architecture. Making the most important additions to the Gur-i Amir, he was responsible for the construction of the gateway to the building and for the corridor that leads to the tomb chamber.

Under Ulugh Beg's rule Samarkand flourished as a center for culture, science, literature, and the arts. His observatory, some of which survives, is a testimony to the technological sophistication of the Timurids. Ulugh Beg's *madrasah* in the Registan, the grand square in Samarkand,

served as the inspiration for two other *madrasahs* commissioned later by the Shaibanids, the successor dynasty to the Timurids. The square, with its theological schools and bazaars, became the hub of the city and still stands as one of the world's most celebrated examples of urban design.

Just as Timurid architecture absorbed the influence of Persian and Indian building, so the great Timurid works came to influence the architecture of the Safavids in Iran and of the Mughals in India. Babur (1483–1530)—the founder of the Mughal empire—remained proud of his Timurid lineage, and he and his descendants became prolific builders, embellishing their cities with monuments and gardens. Whether Babur or envoys from the Mughal court were responsible for the transfer of Timurid ideas, or whether they came with Persian architects, the Timurid building style had a decisive imprint on some of India's more prominent structures. Similarities between the Gur-i Amir and the Taj Mahal include octagonal exterior plans, bulbous domes, *iwans* that punctuate the central part of both buildings, and their four minarets.

Today the Gur-i Amir alone marks the spot where a complex of buildings once stood. The ornately decorated monument to the dead seems to defy death and remains a reflection of paradise. Though new buildings everywhere jostle with the old, Samarkand still asserts the religious and imperial greatness of the Timurid empire. Even under the Soviets, when bars were housed in *madrasahs* and pop concerts and sound-and-light shows were held at the Registan, Muslims from all parts of the Soviet Union continued to flock to Samarkand to visit the shrines and the Gur-i Amir. In alternating hours, tourists and pilgrims paid homage to Timur's legacy.

COMRADE MUSLIMS!

by Marie Bennigsen Broxup

Those familiar with Central Asia's ancient history and civilization might assume that the Soviet era—a mere 70 years of alien domination—could have left few scars on people who since time immemorial had learned to withstand and to assimilate foreign conquerors. They would be wrong. More zealously than any former invader, the Soviet Russian overlords set out to destroy the foundation and fabric of Central Asian society. For decades, Soviet propagandists proclaimed that the Central Asian republics had become, through communism, “modern” nations, endowed with all the attributes of developed industrialized countries and enjoying a standard of living much superior to that of neighboring Muslim countries such as Turkey and Iran. Today we know that such tales of Soviet achievements were castles of sand hiding the reality of colonial exploitation, corruption, ethnic strife, and poverty.

What ended so badly be-

gan with the highest of hopes. In the early days of the Bolshevik struggle, many native leaders in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and other Muslim areas looked favorably upon Lenin's revolution. They saw it not so much as the beginning of a new socialist era but as the end of Russian imperialist domina-



A Soviet propaganda poster from the early 1920s urges Central Asians—“comrade Muslims”—to support the revolutionary cause.

tion. In 1921, one Tatar observer, Hanafi Muzaffar, expressed this early optimism: "As long as Europe can maintain its imperialistic policy [in the East] our situation will remain hopeless. However, in Europe herself new forces are growing which are becoming more threatening every day for imperialism . . . [I]t would be a great mistake for us peoples oppressed by Europe to fail to recognize that Marxism is fighting imperialism. As the Communist Party is fighting this same imperialism in Russia and abroad, we must accept Soviet power."

Lenin's "April Thesis," adopted by the Bolsheviks in the spring of 1917, promised the right of secession and political self-determination to all peoples within the old Russian empire. It did much to rally the support of Muslim nationalists and liberals to the Bolshevik cause, or at least to ensure their initial neutrality.

But when the Bolsheviks—mainly Russian soldiers and workers—took power in Tashkent in October 1917, they received, rather to their surprise (and to that of many Muslims), the support of most of the local Russian population, including former civil servants, officers, merchants, and even the resident Orthodox clergy. This unholy alliance was prompted by a common fear of the native Muslim population, which in many parts of Central Asia had long been excluded from any position of power. All 15 members of the Ruling Council of People's Commissars of the Tashkent Soviet were Russians or other Europeans. The chairman of the Council, a former railroad worker named Kolesov, declared in November 1917 that it was "not possible to admit Muslims into the supreme organ of revolutionary power because the attitude of

the local population toward us is uncertain and because it does not possess any proletarian organization."

The some 10 million Muslims of Central Asia could hardly have taken this as a very encouraging message. That same month, convinced that they could not cooperate with the Tashkent Soviet and the regime of terror it had inaugurated, Central Asian leaders called a congress in Kokand. Made up of nationalists and liberals representing all the territories of Turkestan, the Kokand "government" was intended to provide the nucleus for a future centralized government of Turkestan. Mustapha Chokay, a Kazakh aristocrat related to the princely dynasty of Khiva, was elected president. Educated at the law faculty of St. Petersburg, an active publicist instrumental in the political awakening of the Muslim population of Central Asia. Chokay was a moderate Panturkist. Regarding relations with Russia, he favored autonomy rather than secession. His main effort was directed at unifying Turkestan.

At the time, the Kokand government—called the Muslim Provisional Government of Autonomous Turkestan—was the only organization able to mount an effective political opposition to the Tashkent communists. Behaving moderately at first and willing to cooperate with Lenin and the Bolsheviks in Petrograd, the Kokand government viewed the Tashkent leaders as renegades. But after a disappointing exchange with Petrograd in early 1918, the Kokand leaders began to wonder whether they could count on any of the Bolsheviks. On January 23, 1918, they informed the Tashkent Soviet that they were forming a parliament in which one-third of the seats would be reserved for non-Muslims.

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The Tashkent Soviet grew alarmed. Fearful of losing Russian control of the region, Kolesov sent a large but ill-disciplined army to Kokand. Meeting little resistance, the army, which included many Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war, razed the city and massacred most of its 50,000 residents. The Kokand government collapsed, and Chokay fled, eventually ending up in Paris. Grigory Safarov, commissioned by Lenin to investigate the situation in Turkestan, described Kokand as "a sea of fire" the day after the attack. He noted, too, that the looting and banditry of the Tashkent troops was "monstrous."

The destruction of Kokand sparked an insurrection known as the Basmachi War, a struggle that quickly engulfed most of Turkestan, from the eastern Lokay region in present-day Tajikistan to the Fergana Valley to the western Turkmen steppes. The basmachi—meaning bandits—constituted an unexpected and deadly threat to the new Soviet leadership, which at the time was ill-prepared to fight a popular rebellion.

Fortunately for the Bolsheviks, the basmachi leaders were a varied lot who never developed a unified strategy or ideology. They included tribal heads such as Junaid Khan in the Turkmen area and Ibragim Beg in the Lokay region, numerous Sufi sheiks, authentic bandits, a few liberals and reformers, and a former high-ranking Ottoman officer named Enver Pasha, who had tricked Lenin into sending him to Turkestan to fight for the Bolshevik cause. The movement had roots in pre-revolutionary struggles against Russian domination, and though the basmachi had no clear ideology, they had several compelling reasons for fighting. These included the desire to defend their traditional ways against the infidel Russians and, in the case of tribal and clannic leaders, to show loy-

alty to their former rulers, the Khan of Khiva and the Emir of Bukhara. While compelling to some Central Asians, these reasons proved insufficient to gain the long-term support of the whole native population or to sustain a drawn-out war effort when faced with the enthusiasm and conquering spirit of "war communism."

Following Kokand's destruction, the Tashkent Soviet became completely isolated. Civil war raged in Russia, and Turkestan was cut off from Moscow by the White Army of Admiral Alexander V. Kolchak and Cossack units from the Urals. The Tashkent Soviet had at its disposal some 20,000 fighters, including many prisoners of war and Armenian militias. The Red troops were outnumbered and outgunned by the basmachi, who, combined with the army of the Emir of Bukhara and the Ural Cossacks, made up a fighting force of approximately 30,000 men.

Survival was the only goal of the Tashkent Soviet, which often sneered at directives from Moscow or Petrograd (including one against the recruitment of POWs into the Red Army). Its policy was simple but brutal: "Strike before you are attacked." As a devastating famine spread throughout Central Asia, the Tashkent troops plundered and massacred the rural population (which in the Fergana Valley alone fell by close to a quarter million between 1917 and 1919), even while they profaned and destroyed the mosques and confiscated religious property. By 1919, the Tashkent Soviet had to face an almost general uprising, but its strategic position, extraordinary fighting spirit, and daring cavalry raids ensured its survival until the Red Army, led by Marshal Mikhail Frunze, broke through to Turkestan in early 1920.

Frunze immediately established a "Turk Commission," consisting of himself and other Russians, to redress the political errors of the Tashkent Soviet. The commis-

sion's approach was pragmatic. To preserve Soviet power, revolution had to be achieved cautiously, in stages. Radical Russian chauvinists, accused of leftist deviation, were ousted from positions of responsibility and replaced by intellectual internationalists, including a high proportion of Jews and Georgians from Moscow.

At the same time, the commission encouraged Muslim fellow-travellers to join the Communist Party and the soviets (councils) at all levels of power. Moderate reformers and nationalists (including Young Bukharans and Young Khivians inspired by the Young Turks' movement and opposed to the rule of the Emir of Bukhara and Khan of Khiva) were accepted *en bloc* into the Communist Party. The cavalry raids were stopped, anti-religious propaganda suspended, and native society was treated with great respect. Religious trust (*waqf*) properties and religious courts abolished by the Tashkent Soviet were restored and mosques reopened.

Most important to the Bolshevik success, however, was the recruitment of Muslim fighting units. These included native militias in the Fergana Valley, the Red Army of Bukhara, a Tatar Rifle Brigade, and a Muslim Cavalry Brigade. At the same time, Muslim soldiers, officers, and advisers were incorporated into all Russian units. These Muslims fought with the same enthusiasm as the Russians, not out of belief in communist dogma, of which they knew little, but in the hope that the reconquest of Turkestan would lead to the eventual liberation of the colonial world. By having Muslims in their ranks, the Bolsheviks prevented the basmachi struggle from ever fully acquiring the character of a colonial or religious war (a strategy that failed to work many decades later during Moscow's war against Afghanistan's mujahedin).

Militarily, Frunze's strategy consisted of occupying the territory around the main

cities (particularly Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent, and Dushanbe), isolating the enemy in the Tien Shan and Zarafshan mountain ranges and the Turkmen Desert, preventing the guerrillas from taking sanctuary in Afghanistan, and destroying them in open battles once Red units had succeeded in obtaining superiority. The Turkestan Front consisted of some 150,000 troops, outnumbering the basmachi by five to one, even in 1922, when the movement was at its peak. The basmachi resistance, almost unknown beyond Turkestan's border, received virtually no assistance from abroad, except for a few boxes of rifles from Afghanistan.

As a rule, the organization and pacification of the conquered territories was left to Muslims, in particular to the Young Bukharans. One of them, Fayzullah Khojaev, the future First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, was responsible for the successful pacification of Lokay. Indeed, credit for convincing the Turkestan population to accept Soviet rule redounded solely to the dedication and ability of the early Muslim national communists, who believed that their people would achieve equality with the Russians through communism.

In 1924 the Red Army broke the backbone of the basmachi resistance after a decisive battle in the Turkmen Desert. Red cavalry units and aircraft overwhelmed Junaid Khan, the Turkmen "Commander of the Islamic Army." Almost one million refugees escaped to Afghanistan, an enormous number if one considers that the Muslim population of Central Asia was approximately 10 million people (10,670,000 according to the 1926 census). Many took their livestock with them. In Lokay alone, the number of karakul sheep dropped from 5,000,000 in 1918 to 120,000 in 1924, and the number of horses from

51,000 to 4,750. Sporadic basmachi resistance continued well into the 1930s, but it no longer posed a serious threat.

Muslim communists and fellow-travelers now expected their support of the Bolshevik cause to bear fruit. Like pre-revolution Muslim reformers, the new Muslim communists such as the Uzbek Fayzullah Khojaev and the Kazakh Turar Ryskulov hoped to see Panturkist and even Panislamic dreams fulfilled. They believed that sooner or later all Central Asia would be unified in one state, Soviet Turkestan, and they advocated a geographically convenient administrative division of all former "Russian" Islamic territories into three states: the Tatar-Bashkir state in the Middle Volga region, Muslim Caucasus, and a unified Turkestan comprising Kazakhstan and the other Central Asian lands—Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, and Tajik. They also championed the formation of a Turkic Communist Party, a national Muslim army, and the expatriation of Russian colonizers from Central Asia. Chagatay Turkic was to be the official language of this immense territory.

This, of course, did not comport well with Bolshevik designs. From the earliest days of their struggle, the Russian Bolsheviks aimed to implement a strictly centralized Marxist-Leninist regime under the tight control of Moscow. In 1919, the same year the Turk Commission was established, Yakov M. Sverdlov, the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, delivered the official line at the Third Congress of the Ukrainian Communist Party: "In all the independent Soviet republics which we have created we must maintain the supremacy of our Communist Party; everywhere the leadership belongs to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party."

Ideology was the justification of centralized party control, but the Bolsheviks barely disguised their real motives for re-



A poster with tips on modern child-care was but one part of an elaborate Soviet strategy to win over Muslim women—and to weaken the power of the traditional male elites.

taining a firm hold on Central Asia. Grigori Zinoviev, one of Lenin's lieutenants, made the point clearly as early as 1920: "We cannot do without the petroleum of Azerbaijan or the cotton of Turkestan. We take these products, which are necessary for us, not as the former exploiters, but as older brothers bearing the torch of civilization."

It was obvious to Moscow that if the Muslims became one nation, they would pose a serious challenge to the Russians' claim to leadership of the Soviet Union. For this reason Joseph Stalin, General Secretary of the Communist Party and Lenin's successor, deemed the prevention of Muslim unity essential. As soon as the basmachi threat was largely eliminated in 1924, he

set about dismembering Turkestan, dividing it along ethnic and linguistic lines, despite the fierce opposition of most national Muslim communist leaders. What had stood as three administrative territories during the early Soviet period—the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Autonomous Republic of Turkestan, and the People's Republic of Bukhara and Khwarezm (divisions corresponding to earlier tsarist ones)—was over the next 12 years transformed into six states: the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic, the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic, the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic, the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic, and the Karakalpak Autonomous Republic.

The division was completed by the creation of eight new nationalities (Uzbek, Turkmen, Tajik, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Karakalpak, Uigur, and Dungan), each with its own written literary language, sometimes artificially conceived, designed to ensure that the Turkestanis would have to resort to Russian in order to communicate with one another. In 1929, by official decree, the Latin alphabet replaced the Arabic script that had long been used in Central Asia. (Ten years later, the Cyrillic alphabet was substituted, further distancing Turkestanis from their cultural patrimony.)

In certain cases, the creation of the new states had some basis in historical reality. The Kazakhs, for instance, answered the Stalinist criteria of a nation—linguistic, cultural, territorial, and economic unity. In Turkmenistan, the consolidation of the great tribal federations into one nation, a trend noticeable since the end of the 18th century, was easy and rapid. Similarly, the Tajik nation, sharing the brilliant Persian cultural tradition, sedentary since ancient times, homogeneous, with no tribal divisions, had no difficulty in adapting to its new nationhood status. The Kyrgyz nation, however, was at the outset an artificial cre-

ation. The Kyrgyz could be distinguished from the Kazakhs only by slight differences in their dialect and by their way of life, being semi-nomadic mountain peoples while the Kazakh nomads roamed the steppes. In the case of the Uzbeks, consolidation was even more problematic. Linguistic and cultural differences between former nomads and sedentary people were significant, with many tribal formations keeping close kinship links with the Kazakh tribal federations. The Karakalpak nation, composed of the same tribes and clans that lived in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, was also an entirely contrived state. Its creation, unnecessary and divisive, was an important part of the Soviet's strategy to prevent the Muslim community of Central Asia from building an alliance or even an integrated economic, cultural, and administrative zone.

With the consolidation of Soviet rule in Central Asia in 1928, genuine power sharing with the Muslims came to an end. The implementation of the five-year planning system to socialize the economy called for an ever-growing class of bureaucrats and technocrats. This in turn justified a massive influx of Russians. The Central Asian elites who could have filled administrative slots were deemed ideologically unsound because of their "bourgeois" or "feudal" origins. They were accused of nationalist deviation and liquidated in the bloody Stalinist purges of the 1930s. A whole generation disappeared, including the Muslim communist leaders, and was replaced by a new generation of subservient bureaucrats, mostly of peasant origin and brought up in the Soviet mold. They and their heirs hold powerful positions in the new Central Asian states to this day.

According to Soviet doctrine, articulated by a consensus of Moscow ideologists, the new nations, guided by the Russian "el-

der brother," would gradually draw closer to each other, the final stage of this evolution being their merger into one Soviet nation, with a single Soviet culture. National differences would then disappear, national cultures would survive merely as folklore, and a new Soviet man would emerge "with the psychology and ideals of a Russian industrial worker from Petrograd"—or so dreamed Mikhail Kalinin, the first president of the Soviet Union. This crude utopia, although often criticized and reformulated within the Soviet Union, served as the basis of Soviet nationality policy until the last days of Gorbachev.

But to bring about this "new order," it was necessary to destroy not only the political and national unity of the Turkestanis but also their traditional identity. To this end, Islam, considered like all other religions as a superstition from the past, became the next target. The themes of anti-Muslim propaganda varied little after 1924, when the tenets of the anti-religious campaign were developed. In addition to the usual Marxist arguments directed against all religions—"reactionary, fanciful opium of the toiling masses"—there were specific objections to Islam. Of all the religions, it was claimed to be the most conservative and the least "social" because it sanctified the authority of elders, humiliated women, inculcated submission, fanaticism, intolerance, and xenophobia. Islamic rites and customs, such as circumcision and fasting during Ramadan, were criticized as primitive, barbaric, and unhealthy, while Islamic art and literature were ridiculed as incapable of evolution or progress. This simplistic, pseudoscientific dogma served as the basis of the atheistic education of all Soviet citizens, and was fed to children from the moment they entered an educational establishment at the age of four.

The anti-religious campaign began gradually and more cautiously than in Christian

areas in order not to provoke a resurgence of the Basmachi War. The assault was first aimed at Islamic institutions. In 1925 the Soviet government started to expropriate all *waqf* properties, which hitherto had guaranteed the Muslim institutions economic power and independence. By 1930, the process was completed. At the same time, an attack was directed against the Quranic and customary laws. In 1927, all traditional Muslim courts were abolished. Then followed an offensive against religious primary and secondary schools deemed to be "the vehicle of feudal, bourgeois, and clerical culture." There were approximately 8,000 such schools in the General Government of Turkestan alone before 1917. The last ones disappeared in 1928.

Finally, in 1928 the frontal assault against believers began. At the time, the Muslim establishment still boasted an impressive facade. On the eve of the revolution, the Russian empire, excluding Bukhara and Khiva, had 26,000 mosques. In 1927 they were still largely intact. The onslaught was led by the "Union of the Godless," grouping atheist agitators and propagandists. Muslim leaders and their congregations were hunted by the Extraordinary Commission for the Struggle Against Counter-Revolution and Sabotage (CHEKA) and liquidated as parasites or counter-revolutionaries; after 1935 they were accused of being spies for Japan and Germany. Mosques were destroyed, used as warehouses, or left to rot. In 1942 only 1,312 active mosques remained.

When Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, Moscow was obliged to reduce the administrative and police pressures against Islam. In 1942, Abdurrahman Rasulaev, a Tatar cleric, approached Stalin with a proposal for normalizing relations between the Soviet government and Islam. Stalin accepted, and a concordat was signed. It granted the religion legal status



Dunes surround a fishing boat that once worked the Aral Sea. Formerly the fourth largest inland body of water, it has lost two-thirds of its volume to irrigation projects. Spewing salty dust over the region, the drying of the Aral has made the local climate hotter and less moist.

and endowed it with an official Islamic Administration. A period of relative tolerance lasted until Stalin's death, when the number of "working" mosques rose to 1,500. The administrative and psychological offensive against Islam was resumed by Nikita Khrushchev in 1953, under the policy of "back to Lenin." During this little-known purge, the number of mosques was reduced to around 350, and the number of registered clerics to at most 3,000. But far from destroying the religious feelings of the Muslim population, this policy only served to fuel underground Sufi and fundamentalist activity.

Another danger threatened the Central Asians during the Soviet years, that of being literally submerged by the Russians and other Slavs. The case of the Kazakhs was the most tragic and may yet result in dangerous conflicts with Russia, despite the cautious administration of President Nursultan Nazarbaev.

When Russian rule in the Kazakh steppes replaced that of the khans in the early 1820s, the Russians at first avoided many of the blunders they committed else-

where. For a time Russian administrators who had fallen in love with the romantic aspect of nomadic life did their best to encourage the revival of traditional Kazakh culture and literature, and to establish real cooperation. Their efforts were short-lived. The immense steppe territory with its scarce population offered a tempting solution to the eternal problem of pre-revolutionary Russia—the peasants' land hunger. In 1891, the first wave of Russian and Ukrainian settlers reached the steppes, not, as in the 18th century, in a disorderly rush of peasants fleeing from serfdom but in an organized migration planned by the administration. By 1914, over one million Slavs had occupied the richest areas along the Chinese border and on the northern fringe of present-day Kazakhstan. The Kazakhs were ruthlessly driven to the poorest regions of central, western, and southern Kazakhstan. With the loss of their pastures and consequently their livestock, their standard of living dropped catastrophically. The inevitable tragic end came in 1916 when the nomad tribes attacked the settlers, only to be slaughtered by a joint force of Russian military and armed peasants. Many survivors were forced to take refuge in China.

In 1917 the Kazakhs still constituted the majority in their land, but the Soviet administration surpassed the tsarist regime in its ruthlessness. During the late 1920s, the Soviets slaughtered the nomads' livestock to destroy their way of life and bring about "collectivization." As a result, one-and-a-half million Kazakhs died of starvation between 1926 and 1939. Finally, during the 1950s, with Khrushchev's encouragement, another huge wave of Russian rural and urban settlers moved into Kazakhstan, reducing the native Kazakhs to the status of a minority. Only in 1989 did the Kazakhs again become the majority in their republic, thanks to their high birth rate.

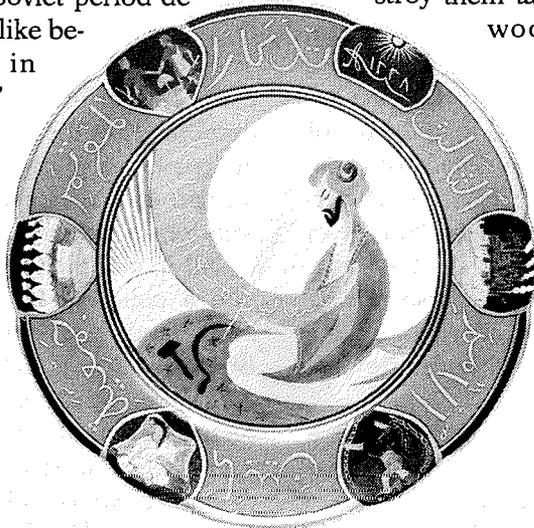
The flow of Russian immigrants was not

limited to Kazakhstan, of course, and at one time it threatened to engulf the entire region. In 1970, there were almost 12 million Russians and other Europeans in Central Asia, representing 37 percent of the total population. Needless to say, this influential minority tended to enjoy more benefits of the socialist dream than did their Muslim brethren, including everything from jobs and housing to schools and health care. At the end of the Soviet period in Uzbekistan, for example, about 80 percent of the Uzbeks lived in rural settlements, or *kishlaks*, where many of them, particularly women and children, worked in the cotton fields, earning roughly 35 to 40 rubles a month. Their land poisoned by chemical pesticides, Uzbeks suffered from one of the worst health profiles in the world (including an official infant mortality rate of 47 per 1,000, though perhaps closer to 120 per 1,000 in the area around the Aral Sea). Speaking little if any Russian, this "rural proletariat" had almost no chance for mobility through education. One Uzbek near the end of the Soviet period described his plight as "like being an immigrant in your own country," and his was a fate shared by many

other native Central Asians. Except for the approved native elites, the Muslim peoples of the five former Soviet republics found the decks stacked against them in almost every aspect of daily life.

Meanwhile, Central Asians saw their faith and traditions vilified, their history distorted, their natural wealth and resources exhausted or destroyed. Diverted for massive cotton irrigation projects, the waters of the region's two great rivers, the Syr Darya and the Amu Darya, no longer reach the Aral Sea, and the land around it is becoming a vast salt desert where nothing grows. The poignant words of a great Kazakh poet, Mir-Yakub Dulatov, in his poem of 1906, *Wake Up Kazakh*, were written during the reign of the tsars, but they speak with even sadder eloquence to the experience of those Muslims who lived under the hammer and sickle: "Every year our land and water grow smaller. They are taken by the Russian peasants. The tombs of our glorious ancestors are now in the middle of their village streets. Russian peasants destroy them taking the stones and the wood for their houses.

When I think about this my heart is consumed by sorrow like fire."



TURKESTAN RISING

by Paul B. Henze

Imagine an American think-tank in operation in 1900. A generous benefactor has given it a grant to look into the future and contemplate the farfetched possibility that European colonial empires might become independent nations by the end of the 20th century. Looking at Asia, its researchers compare prospects for two large colonial regions—British India and Russian Turkestan. Which would then have appeared to be a better candidate for successful evolution into a modern nation-state?

Consider the case for India. Although a well-known geographic entity since ancient times, it was still regarded in 1900 as a subcontinent rather than a nation. British administrators serving under a London-appointed viceroy governed two-thirds of India, but there were also dozens of semi-independent states, some (such as Hyderabad and Kashmir) as large as European countries, others only dots on the map. Seven enclaves on India's long coastline remained under French or Portuguese dominion, the largest being the historic city-state of Goa.

Inhabiting the vast subcontinent was a myriad of peoples, living in radically different ways, worshiping different gods, and speaking different tongues. (The only common language, English, was understood by perhaps less than one percent of the population.) The Brahminic caste system that held sway in many parts of India further

aggravated social divisions, and periodic outbursts of violence were taken as inevitable.

To be sure, India enjoyed many benefits of the British imperium. A network of railways had been built. Dams and irrigation works were under construction. Roads and telegraph and postal services were expanding. And several major cities had a European veneer. But native rulers had different priorities from those of the British, spending most of their revenue on palaces and temples and very little on education or social services. Even in areas directly administered by Britain, the majority of the population remained illiterate, leading traditional lives as cultivators and craftsmen. This in itself would be no cause of instability, but the fact that millions of people passed their days as beggars or on the margin of extreme poverty hardly boded well for an emerging modern nation.

All in all, chances for India's evolution into a coherent nation-state would have been—and, indeed were—rated low. Most Britons believed that India, if given independence, would degenerate into chaos, perhaps even fall prey to the Russians, eager to extend their Central Asian conquests to warmer lands and open seas.

A think-tank at the beginning of this century would almost certainly have concluded that Turkestan—Russian Central Asia—offered brighter prospects for coherent nationhood than India. The people

were almost all Turkic. The Persian-speaking minority posed no problem, for Turkic and Persian cultures coexisted and mixed with minimal strain. The area suffered no population pressure or sharp social cleavages. Ninety-five percent of the population adhered to Sunni Islam. Tiny ethnic and religious minorities—Ismailis, Arabs, Jews, among others—occupied stable niches in society. Cotton production had already brought prosperity to the region, and the threat of famine was remote. After their conquest, the Russians expanded infrastructure rapidly. Promise of exploitable minerals and vast expanses of unused land offered unlimited prospects for further economic development. By the standards of the time, the Russian colonial administration based in Tashkent set a precedent for the rational integration of the whole area.

Of course, Turkestani independence would have been thought impossible without a fundamental change in the nature of the Russian Empire. That was even more difficult to foresee at the beginning of the 20th century than the freeing of India. Then suddenly in 1917 the tsars' control collapsed. But the opportunity was lost. Buffeted by political cross-currents and military intrigues that prevented them from developing a coherent vision of their own future, Central Asians were reabsorbed in Lenin's restored Russian Empire. While India, with all its diversity, evolved toward in-

dependent nationhood under Britain's guidance, the idea of a united, autonomous Turkestan all but disappeared.

Today, that idea enjoys new life, but it will be difficult to realize, perhaps more so for contemporary Central Asians than it would have been for their predecessors. So-



Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev and Boris Yeltsin at a December 1991 meeting of leaders of the former republics of the Soviet Union. Is Nazarbaev the man of Turkestan's future, its Atatürk?

viet policies have left awkward legacies for the five Central Asian states that became members of the United Nations in March 1992. The most obvious are political.

During the Brezhnev era (1964–82), Soviet rule in Central Asia evolved into an even more effective form of semi-feudal

colonialism than it had been in earlier decades. In return for docile acceptance of Kremlin priorities for performance in certain key areas—cotton production in the four southern republics, supply of grain and meat and acquiescence in nuclear testing in Kazakhstan—local chieftains were given wide autonomy. These leaders built up networks of privileged followers and kinsmen. As long as they did not flagrantly challenge the basic tenets of the communist system and kept opposition in check, they could operate profitable schemes, indulge in ostentatious construction projects, and even foster some aspects of local culture and religion. At the very least, this system created the illusion of stability; to some superficial observers, it even appeared to be an engine of progress. But *perestroika* and *glasnost* shattered such illusions.

Ethnic tensions between native populations and peoples who had moved into Central Asia turned volatile as economic conditions deteriorated, unchecked either by Gorbachev's reforms or his program of openness. The rapid growth rate of the indigenous population created intractable problems, especially in urban areas where unemployment became serious. Acute salination affected much of the southern republics' best agricultural land as irrigation was expanded to increase cotton production. Overuse of pesticides and fertilizers poisoned domestic water sources and was linked with alarmingly high rates of cancer. The Aral Sea shrank and marine life died. In mining and industrial areas pollution spread. Large expanses of Kazakhstan were rendered radioactive by nuclear testing.

Gorbachev was incapable of comprehending the depth of the economic disaster

or ethnic nationalism and frustrated his own intentions by encouraging Russians in Central Asian communist parties to play a greater role. Massive riots broke out in Alma-Ata in December 1986 when he made a Russian the First Party Secretary of Kazakhstan, a position that Kazakh Dinmukhamed Kunaev had occupied for more than 27 years. Some reform-minded Kazakhs maintained that the riots had been encouraged by Kunaev himself, but there was more to them than that. The unrest in Kazakhstan was repeated in some form in every Central Asian republic before the end of the decade. In each instance the specific causes were different, but the common denominator was the same: critical economic problems and social and ethnic tensions exacerbated by oppression and bureaucratic neglect.

After the Alma-Ata riots, more and more Central Asians felt free to register their discontent. The native-language press became bolder. Writer Oljas Sulemeynov founded the Nevada-Semipalatinsk anti-nuclear movement. And growing numbers of Central Asians openly espoused the Islamic faith of their forefathers, many of them championing it as the basis for a reconstituted social and political order. Nevertheless, compared to many other parts of the Soviet Union, political change came slowly. Democrats and reformers displayed limited organizing skill, and protest movements were largely confined to intellectuals. Most of the mildly reformist local communists that Gorbachev favored were insecure about their own positions and were often outmaneuvered by their own conservative *nomenklatura* col-

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leagues.

As the collapse of communism accelerated in other parts of the Soviet Empire, and especially in Russia itself after Boris Yeltsin took the lead, the Central Asian republics lagged behind. The most politically astute of all the new Central Asian leaders, Nursultan Nazarbaev in Kazakhstan, allied himself with Yeltsin as Gorbachev faltered and fell, but neither he nor his colleagues in the four other republics welcomed the demise of the Soviet Union.

In fact, with only one exception, the Central Asian leaders supported or at least hesitated to condemn the August 1991 reactionary coup in Moscow. The exception was the Kyrgyz leader, Askar Akaev, a scientist who had skillfully outmaneuvered the republic's conservative communist establishment in late 1990 and early 1991 to consolidate his own position. His commitment to full democracy was, and has remained, unequivocal. The other republics remained in the hands of erstwhile communists who donned democratic garb. Facing the inevitable, they all had their parliaments declare independence after the coup failed. When Yeltsin took the lead in forming the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to succeed the Soviet Union, the Central Asian leaders promptly joined.

But in truth the leaders of all the Central Asian states (including Kyrgyzstan) would rather have seen the old Soviet Union last a little longer—that, or at least evolve into a more coherent successor than the CIS is likely to be, if it manages to survive at all. The problem of making the transition to a free-market system weighs heavily upon the men who long depended



High-school students in Kazakhstan learn Arabic. Abandoning Cyrillic as the script of their Turkic dialects, Central Asians will have to decide whether to adopt the Arabic or the Latin alphabet.

upon Moscow's subsidies and familiar sources of food, fuel, and consumer goods. A Western businessman who advises Tajikistan on trade and privatization offered a blunt assessment of the current situation: "There are at least 15 things Moscow used to do for these republics. It was a totally paternalistic system. Moscow is gone now and they lack bureaucrats who know how to issue a regulation, fill out a bill of lading, or transfer money. They have to try to learn everything at once."

It is easy to understand why most of the new leaders fear competition from religious conservatives and politically inexperienced intellectuals. As communists, they were brought up to scorn such people. Their conditioned reflex is to suppress them, though they are now usually constrained to resort to roundabout methods. Islam Karimov, the Uzbek leader who has limited the autonomy of the Central Asian Muslim Board and kept the progressive *Birlik* (Unity) Party from fielding a candidate against him in the December 29, 1991 presidential election, was nevertheless sworn in on a copy of the Koran. As leaders of independent countries, they all profess a commitment to multi-party democracy,

free-market economics, and protection of human rights, but their capacity to transform themselves into genuine democrats remains to be proven.

In many of the former communist countries of Eastern Europe as well as in some parts of the ex-Soviet Union, the first generation of new leaders who were pulled and pushed to reform their economies and move toward democracy were discredited and exhausted in the process. They have already been replaced by a second generation. Most second-generation leaders are former communists too, but they have developed a less qualified commitment to change, do not carry the burden of past tactical mistakes, and have convinced a significant proportion of their populations that they sympathize with their aspirations more fully than their predecessors did. The same kind of political evolution seems likely in Central Asia. It has so far occurred only in Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan has been torn by competition between assertive communist survivors and reform-minded rivals. As of this writing, an uneasy accord has been established between President Rakhmon Nabiyev's old-guard communists and the Muslim-dominated opposition, possibly the strongest Islamic revivalist movement in Central Asia. Leaders in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan still display many of the characteristics they acquired as party *apparatchiki*.

While his embrace of democracy is far more equivocal than Akaev's, Kazakhstan's President Nazarbaev may prove to be Central Asia's most successful political survivor. He displays the dominant characteristics of his countrymen, who, despite Stalin's best efforts to decimate them during the collectivization campaign of the 1930s, have endured as a fiercely proud, assertive people whose hatred of communism runs deep.

Kazakhstan, a third the size of the continental United States, with vast agricultural lands and mineral resources but only 18 million people, outranks all the Central Asian republics in economic potential. Nazarbaev has encouraged privatization and has engaged a Korean-American, Chan Young Bang, as economic adviser. He has not based his political or economic position on preservation of any aspect of the Soviet system. He has cast himself as a convincing proponent of a dynamic, modern, economically strong country commanding respect in the world. And he has cleverly exploited Western concern about Kazakhstan's large nuclear arsenal (more than 1,000 missile warheads) in order to raise his country's visibility and influence in the international arena.

Nazarbaev harbors no doubts that Kazakhs themselves will remain first among equals in independent Kazakhstan, but he is realistic about the ethnic mix to which he has fallen heir: as many Slavs as Kazakhs, almost one million Germans (many of whom were forcibly resettled from the Volga to Kazakhstan during World War II), and at least 25 other nationalities, including Greeks, Turks, Kurds, Uigurs, Koreans, and Dungans (ethnic Chinese Muslims). While such a mix could be the recipe for permanent crisis, Nazarbaev has so far handled ethnic issues astutely. He countered Russian talk of territorial adjustments by reminding Moscow that Kazakhs in the southern Urals and Siberia might like to be reunited with their homeland too. At the same time he has cooperated with Yeltsin on political and economic issues and stressed the importance of broad future relations with Russia. Despite his background as a communist, Nazarbaev comes the closest of any current Central Asian leader to showing the kind of determination and political skill of the man Central Asian leaders could well aspire to emulate: Mustafa Ke-

**CENTRAL ASIAN PEOPLES
(1989 Soviet Census)**

Nationality	In the Five Central Asian Republics	Elsewhere in Former USSR	Abroad (estimate)
Uzbeks (incl. Karakalpaks)	16,937,000	173,000	1,700,000
Kazakhs	7,476,000	662,000	1,200,000
Tajiks	4,163,000	54,000	6,000,000
Kyrgyz	2,482,000	49,000	170,000
Turkmen	2,673,000	45,000	3,200,000
Other Muslims	2,133,000		
Russians	9,566,000		

**Total Population
(1989 Soviet Census)**

Uzbekistan	19,808,000	Total indigenous nationalities in five republics:	33,731,000
Kazakhstan	16,463,000	Total Central Asian nationalities in ex-USSR:	34,714,000
Kyrgyzstan	4,258,000	Total Muslims in five republics:	35,864,000
Tajikistan	5,090,000		
Turkmenistan	3,512,000	Approximate total of Central Asian nationalities outside borders of the former Soviet Union:	12,270,000
TOTAL	49,131,000		

**Ethnic Composition by Republic
(1989 Soviet Census, in thousands)**

	Uzbeks	Kazakhs	Tajiks	Kyrgyz	Turkmen	Other Muslims	Russians
Uzbekistan	14,535	808	932	175	123	923	1,652
Kazakhstan	334	6,532	26	14	4	768	6,226
Kyrgyzstan	551	37	34	2,228	1	212	917
Tajikistan	1,197	11	3,168	64	21	95	387
Turkmenistan	320	88	3	1	2,524	135	334
Total in ex-USSR	17,110	8,138	4,217	2,531	2,718	20,088	145,072

mal Atatürk, founder of the modern Turkish nation.

Questions about leadership lead to questions about the republics themselves. Do they have the capacity to evolve into successful independent states?

Central Asian boundaries, like those of most African states that gained independence during the 1960s, were imposed by colonialism. They are artificial. This is true not only of the borders Moscow drew to separate the ethnically defined republics. It is also true of the international borders of the region—those with Iran and Afghani-

stan to the south, with Chinese-controlled territory to the east, and with Russia to the north. Everywhere people with the same religion, customs, and language live on both sides. Well over half a million Kazakhs live in the southern Urals, in Russia. More than one million live in Xinjiang (Chinese Turkestan).

Whatever its shortcomings, there is no better data on the ethnic composition of Central Asia than the 1989 Soviet census. Of a total population of 49,131,000, the native peoples in the five republics totaled almost 34 million at that time, of whom

half—17 million—were Uzbeks. Kazakhs, the next largest Central Asian nationality, totaled almost seven-and-a-half million. Over two million Muslims of non-Central Asian origin (primarily Caucasians and Tatars) were also counted in 1989. Muslims thus accounted for approximately three-quarters of the entire population. (In the four southern republics they accounted for more than 86 percent.) Since all Muslim nationalities have high birthrates, the total Muslim population of Central Asia may well pass 40 million in 1992.

Nine-and-a-half million Russians lived in the five Central Asian republics in 1989, three-quarters of them in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Their numbers have fallen during the past three years, as out-migration has accelerated, especially from Uzbekistan. If jobs and housing were not hard to find in Russia itself, Russians would be leaving Central Asia faster. None of the local governments, however, has pressured Russians to leave, and there has been no sustained popular agitation for the departure of Russians and other non-indigenous peoples. Ethnic clashes in Central Asia, which have occurred in all the republics since the late 1980s, have usually been between native Muslims and other Muslims, who were forcibly settled in the region or came to work (Caucasians in the oil industry, for example). Riots in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were sparked in early 1990 by rumors that Armenians fleeing from Azerbaijan would be resettled in Central Asia.

These disorders have alarmed Russians and other Europeans, but both Nazarbaev and Akaev have urged Russians to stay, meanwhile cautioning their people not to create an atmosphere in which all non-Muslims will feel compelled to leave. Somewhat over eight million Russians probably remain in all of Central Asia today. No matter what policies the governments pursue, more Russians will leave.

And even if they did not, high Central Asian birthrates make it likely that Europeans will decline proportionately and their political and economic position will erode. All of these trends lead to a clear conclusion: The future of Central Asia is and will remain in the hands of Central Asians. But how will they cooperate?

Though it encouraged some nationalist particularism, the Soviet divide-and-rule approach never succeeded in obliterating pan-Turkestan awareness. In spite of the gerrymandering that divided the Fergana Valley among three republics (with extensions shaped like U.S. congressional districts), people always crossed borders and intermingled. Every day in the *Buyuk Bozor* (main public market) in Tashkent, sellers bring fresh produce from Osh in Kyrgyzstan, from Khojent in Tajikistan, and from Chimkent in Kazakhstan.

Ethnicity has often been nothing more than a Soviet-imposed fiction. When people who had long been called Sarts had to declare themselves Uzbeks or Tajiks in the 1920s, there were instances of brothers in the same family choosing different "nationalities." Such families had spoken both Turkic and Persian for generations. They identified primarily with their town or district and regarded themselves simply as Muslims and Turkestanis. Modern concepts of ethnicity were irrelevant to their lives.

On the outer fringes of Central Asia, among peoples of nomadic culture, tribal awareness was and remains stronger. This is also true of the mountain peoples of the Pamir region (eastern Tajikistan), where old Iranian dialects change from one valley to the next. Ethnic awareness is much weaker than tribal affiliations among the Kyrgyz, the Turkmen, and the Kazakhs. The Kazakhs, perhaps more than the other Central Asian people, display many of the pre-

requisites of nationhood, but the differences among Kazakhs and Uzbeks and Kyrgyz and Uzbeks become fuzzy along their borders with Uzbekistan.

Language-engineering and alphabet-juggling—encouraged by Moscow to stress the differences rather than the similarities among the Turkic dialects of Central Asia—never went far enough to make most Turkic speakers unintelligible to each other. Variations in the kinds of Turkic spoken in Central Asia are no greater than the differences between Provençal and the French of Paris, between the Italian of Sicily and that of Lombardy, or between *Bayrisch* and the various kinds of *Plattdeutsch* of northern Germany. If the region had followed a more normal course of evolution in the 20th century, the Turkestani literary language in wide use in the early 20th century—Chagatay—would probably have evolved into a dominant standard throughout the region, with local variations surviving as dialects or sub-languages.

Is it too late for this evolution to resume? A region-wide TV broadcast in basic Turkish, launched this past April by Ankara with the enthusiastic support of the Central Asian republics, will help. So would the adoption of the Latin alphabet, especially if it is used in its modern Turkish form with sounds represented by identical letters in all the existing literary languages. But while Turkey has been sending in Latin-alphabet typewriters and computers, Iran has been offering enticements for the return to the Arabic script, and the Tajiks are shifting to it. On one thing most Central Asians are in agreement: The Cyrillic forced on them in 1939 should be abandoned.

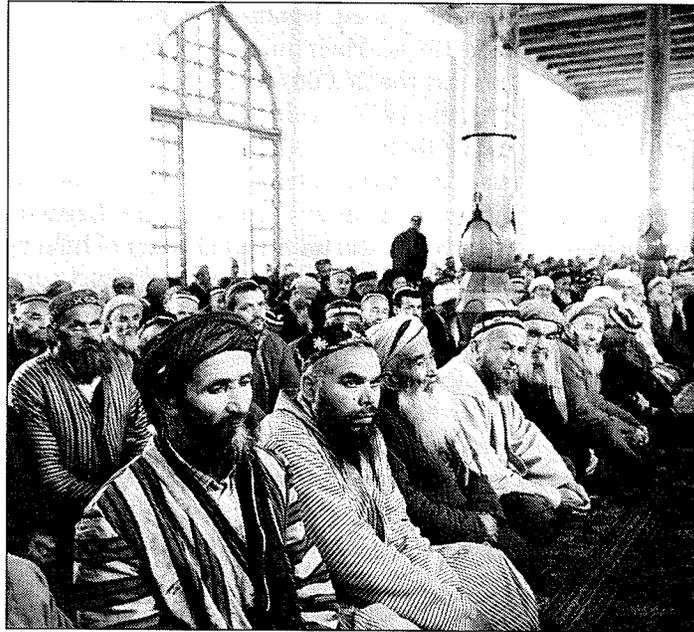
Islam, which places small value on tribalism or ethnicity, is another major unifying force, and there has been an enormous religious resurgence throughout Central Asia. Thousands of mosques have

been reopened, legalized, or built since the late 1980s. Their number may eventually surpass the 26,000 said to have existed before the 1917 revolution. The Muslim Religious Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, created by Stalin in 1943 as a wartime liberalization-and-control mechanism, clearly had the unintended effect of helping maintain a regional sense of religious community. (And Sufi brotherhoods, working underground, did their part as well in keeping the faith alive.)

Even before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Central Asian Muslims showed growing reluctance to accept Moscow-managed religion. Demonstrations in Tashkent during the first week of February 1989 led to the downfall of Mufti Shamsuddin Babakhanov, head of the Muslim Religious Board. The Babakhanov family had become, since the 1940s, a kind of religious feudal dynasty. The deposed Mufti had assumed office in 1982, succeeding his father, Ziauddin, who in 1957 had succeeded *his* father, Ishan ibn Abdulmejid, Stalin's original choice for the job. Like some native party lords, Shamsuddin was accused of corruption and high-living. He was replaced in March 1989 by Muhammadsadyk Mamayusupov, head of the prestigious Imam al-Bukhari Islamic Institute in Tashkent and a popular figure, though still a member of the official Islamic religious establishment.

Muslims have continued to be assertive. An embryonic political movement, Islam and Democracy, held a conference of representatives from most of the republics in Alma-Ata following Babakhanov's fall. It defined its purpose as "the spiritual cleansing of people from immorality and preaching the democratic principles of the Koran." Whether this group has been absorbed into a larger movement, The Islamic Renaissance Party, is not clear.

Islamic Renaissance was founded at a



Worshippers in Tajikistan listen to the Friday sermon at their mosque. The religious resurgence in this former republic, while strong, does yet not augur the rise of a fundamentalist state.

conference in June 1990 in Astrakhan under Dagestani (North Caucasian) leadership and rapidly spread to Central Asia, where it seems to have wide appeal. The Muslim Board and republican leaders gave it a cool welcome. It was denied official registration in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and was thus unable to compete in elections. It has not, however, been forcefully suppressed and appears to be continuing to gain adherents. Mamayusupov has maintained that it is "unnecessary," because Islam stands above politics. Government spokesmen have branded it as reactionary, but the allegations are reminiscent of those that the Soviets used to make about Islam in general. And while influences from abroad may be at work in the Islamic Renaissance, there is as yet little reason to believe that either Iran or Saudi Arabia dominates the movement. It is doubtful too that many Central Asian Muslims would embrace the extremism of the Iranian Shi'ites or the puritanism

of the Saudi Wahhabis; by all signs, they prefer the moderate blend of religion and secularism that prevails in Turkey.

There is no question that Soviet policies discouraged economic collaboration among the Central Asian republics. But geography imposed certain limits on Moscow's strategy. All the republics share the same rivers and most major lines of communication. With few exceptions, roads and railroads could not be built to fit the Soviet-imposed borders. As a result, Central Asia never lost its basic economic unity, and today economic imperatives compel even greater cooperation

among the five republics.

As early as June 1990, the presidents of the republics met in Alma-Ata on Nazarbaev's initiative to discuss preparations for a federation. They set up a Coordinating Council in August 1991. The Ashkhabad declaration of the five republics' leaders of December 13, 1991 on joining the CIS was prompted primarily by economic worries. Leaders and ministers had already been traveling to Turkey, Iran, Korea, China, Pakistan, Europe, and the United States in search of advice and new economic ties. In February 1992 the four southern republics joined the Economic Cooperation Organization sponsored by Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, while Kazakhstan opted for observer status. And the acceptance of all five-republics into the International Monetary Fund on April 27 cleared the way for the development of bilateral and multilateral economic aid and investment programs such as the one resulting from Turkish Prime

Minister Demirel's late April visit.

To be sure, the political structure Stalin imposed on the region could prove to be a serious obstacle, particularly if republican leaders are unwilling to surrender their prerogatives and face the political risks of competing in a larger arena. Though serious inter-republican rivalry has not yet developed, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan could find themselves in competition for leadership. Despite Kazakhstan's commanding size, Uzbekistan, with its large population, controls the geographic and economic heart of the entire region and is heir to most of its history.

Western journalists and strategists love to speculate about competition between Turkey and Iran for domination in the new Central Asia, whatever political form it eventually takes. Ankara's economic dynamism, democracy, and non-fanatic adaptation of Islamic practices and values to modern life so far give Turkey the edge. The head of the Uzbek writers' union, Jamal Kamal, on his return from a late 1990 visit to Turkey, summed up Ankara's appeal: "Turkey has three times Uzbekistan's population, produces only a fifth as much cotton and a quarter as much silk, and yet its population lives 10 times better than ours." Presidents, prime ministers and cabinet ministers of all five republics have made visits to Turkey and hosted Turkish officials. Even Persian-speaking Tajikistan turned to Turkey for advice on economic reconstruction in the spring of 1991.

Turkey is already preparing to make a major contribution to Central Asian educational institutions and has offered to train thousands of Central Asians at its universities. They are going eagerly. On many levels, Turkey represents an attractive avenue to the outer world for Central Asians, for Turkey itself is open to the world and commands wide respect. Dependence on Iran

would bring none of these advantages. Nevertheless, good relations with Iran are recognized by most Central Asians as desirable. In the end, a modernizing, secular Central Asia will likely have more influence on Iran than Iran has on it.

All the Central Asian republics have been formally classified as European by being accepted into the Council on Security and Cooperation in Europe, but Central Asians also know that they are Asians. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, in particular, have been eager to copy the successes of East Asia. South Korea has special appeal. Both presidents visited Seoul in late 1990 and laid the basis for cooperative relationships. All the republics admire Japanese technical prowess and hope for Japanese investment. Pakistan and India are close, and both are seen as trade partners and sources of experience that can be applied to developing Central Asia's resources. Europe is distant and the United States more so, but interest in good relations is high, as are expectations of aid and trade.

No Central Asian leader has advocated severing relations with Russia and the other states of the former Soviet Union. And while there is no longer any desire to prolong dependence on backward Soviet technology and administrative practices, Central Asians view Russia as a natural trading partner. Leaders of the five republics are all hard bargainers for terms of trade that will rectify the disadvantages they suffered under 70 years of Soviet colonialism. In March, Turkmenistan raised the price of natural gas supplied to Ukraine by 50 times. New patterns of trade relations as well as other forms of mutual interchange will be slow in stabilizing.

Time will also be required for building stable relations with kindred peoples in Iran, Afghanistan, and China, and such relationships will be affected by the political evolution of these countries. Uigurs, the ba-

sic population of Chinese Turkestan, also speak a Turkic language intelligible to Central Asians. They have been watching developments across the mountains to the west with keen interest while their Chinese masters look on with apprehension. China cannot keep Uigurs and other Muslims from listening to Central Asian broadcasts, reading newspapers that make their way across the border, or even, in some favorably situated areas, from watching the new Turkish-sponsored TV network. The economic liberalization and freeing of religion that China undertook after the death of Mao have given all China's energetic Muslims wide opportunities for initiative, but politics remains frozen.

Nazarbaev, meanwhile, has encouraged Kazakhs in Mongolia and China to come back to Kazakhstan, which has room for many more people, especially Kazakhs. Serious migration is likely only when Kazakhstan begins to experience sustained economic recovery. A railway link to the Chinese system, completed in 1991, provides the basis for trade and contact across a border that was long sealed.

After being closed for most of the 20th century, borders in Central Asia have become permeable and are likely to remain so. The long Afghan border on the south was opened by Moscow's 1979 invasion. Troops and war materiel flowed into Afghanistan, but people engaging in trade and religious and political proselytizing began moving in both directions. Afghanistan is home to more Tajiks than Tajikistan, and the Tajiks and Turkic peoples of Afghanistan were happy to renew links with relatives and tribal brothers in the Central Asian republics. Some observers speculate on a massive realignment

of borders and state structures in the region before the end of the 1990s. It cannot be ruled out, but international experience in the 20th century argues against it.

Journalists and armchair strategists also like to conjecture about a resumption of the Great Game of the latter half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. It seems unlikely. Britain is no longer a player in Asia. Russia is likely to be too preoccupied with the formidable challenge of recovery from communism to have time or money to invest in new forms of expansion. Who, then, would play in a new Great Game? Turkey and Iran? Saudi Arabia? Pakistan and India? India and China? The United States with some or all of these, or with a resurgent Russia? It seems hard to envision. Empires and 19th-century imperialism are not only out of style. They cannot stand the test of cost-benefit analysis. It is far more likely that the leaders of the now-independent republics will chart their own course.

Distasteful as they found Russian imperial domination to be, Central Asians also made gains as part of the Russian Empire in both its tsarist and communist forms. They became aware of their resources and potential. Some gained mobility, and many learned the value of education. By experiencing the pains of having their culture distorted and suppressed, they gained a deeper appreciation of the value of their heritage. But most Central Asians show no desire to return to the style of life that prevailed in 7th-century Arabia, or to the stagnation and decay that afflicted them before the Russian conquest, or even to the glories of the time of Tamerlane. However much they now enjoy rediscovering the greatness of Turkestan's past, they dream no less about the possibilities of its future.

BACKGROUND BOOKS

CENTRAL ASIA

One problem in the study of Central Asia is defining the region's geographical limits. A narrow but precise definition limits the region to the five former Soviet republics that lie to the east of the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea and to the west of China. But the definition can be expanded to include some or all of the following: Chinese Turkestan, (Xinjiang Province), Afghanistan, northeastern Iran, Mongolia, Tibet, Azerbaijan, and the entire Eurasian steppe. The Soviets, by contrast, narrowed the five-republic definition by excluding Kazakhstan.

The people of the region are little known in the West, but three reference books provide helpful basic information about the main indigenous groups. (None of the books, however, is devoted solely to Central Asia.) The most concise is **The Peoples of the USSR** (Macmillan, 1984), by Ronald Wixman. A geographer at the University of Oregon, Wixman covers such subjects as ethnic definitions, languages, and status within the former Union. Both **Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union** (2nd ed., KPI, 1986), by Shirin Akiner, of the University of London, and **Muslim Peoples** (2nd ed., two volumes, Greenwood, 1984), edited by University of Houston anthropologist Richard Weekes, have longer descriptive articles on each nationality.

A reliable introduction to Central Asia in the 19th and 20th centuries is **Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule** (Columbia, 1967), as well as its revised version, **Central Asia: 120 Years of Russian Rule** (Duke Univ., 1989), edited by Columbia University historian Edward Allworth, one of the foremost scholars of Central Asia in the United States. Both offer a clear narrative of the course of political and military events as well as chapters on specific issues, all written by specialists in the field.

Much the same subject matter, but with more background and detail on the Soviet period, is covered in **Modern History of Soviet Central Asia** (Praeger, 1967), by the late Geoffrey Wheeler of London's Central Asia Research Centre. A former officer in the British Army, Colonel Wheeler was not hesitant to pass judgment: "The death of Stalin," he wrote,

"and the subsequent repudiation of some of his methods and policies had less fundamental effect in Central Asia than elsewhere. There may have been some temporary decline in the Great Russian chauvinism fostered from the mid-30s onward, but there was no reduction in the measure of central control exercised through the medium of the Communist Party."

A classic study of the Muslims of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union through the mid-20th century is **Islam in the Soviet Union** (Praeger, 1967), by the late Alexandre Bennigsen, a leading figure since the 1960s in the Western study of Muslims in the Soviet Union, and his frequent co-author, Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejey. One of the book's many strengths is its depiction of the diversity of opinion among the Muslim peoples during a period of great upheaval. The history and politics of one particular Central Asian nationality is the subject of a meticulous study, **The Kazakhs** (Hoover Inst. Press, 1987), by Colgate political scientist Martha Brill Olcott. Discussing the political and social organization of the Khazakhs, Olcott corrects a common error: "Although used by Western and Soviet scholars alike, the term horde is probably a misnomer; the Kazakhs referred to these three groups as the *Ulu Zhuz*, *Orta Zhuz*, and *Kichi Zhuz*, literally the Great Hundred, Middle Hundred, and Small Hundred. This distinction between horde and hundred is important, since the former implies consanguinity and common ancestry, whereas the latter does not. The Kazakh hordes . . . were simply an extension of the temporary military unions formed by both Turkish and Mongol tribes . . . largely for military purposes—to make the Kazakh lands more secure in the absence of any stronger central authority."

Several 19th-century travelers recorded their observations of Central Asia before or soon after Russia enforced its dominance during the 1860s and '70s. Such books contain much useful information and are often evocative of a vanished world, even though they reflect the ethnic prejudices of their authors and the political motives that underlay most of their journeys. "According to Central Asiatic ideas,"

wrote American diplomat Eugene Schuyler in his **Turkistan**, (two vols., Schribner, Armstrong, 1876), "a city, to be really such, must have a *Jumma* [Friday] mosque, that will hold all the inhabitants at Friday prayers, and must possess all of the 32 guilds or trades (*Kasaba*) which are thought to comprise the whole world of commerce." Accounts by other military men and diplomats include Alexander Burnes's **Travels into Bukhara** (J. Murray, 1834), Arthur Conolly's **Journey to the North of India**, (two vols., Richard Bentley, 1830), Joseph Pierre Ferrier's **Caravan Journeys and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan, and Beloochistan** (J. Murray, 1856), Arminius Vambery's **Sketches of Central Asia** (W. H. Allen, 1868) and **Travels in Central Asia** (J. Murray, 1864), and Joseph Wolff's **Narrative of a Mission to Bukhara** (J. W. Parker, 1845).

For earlier periods, the late René Grousset's 1939 classic, **Empire of the Steppes** (Rutgers Univ., 1970), deals with a broad geographic area that partially overlaps Central Asia and concentrates on the Turkic and Mongol peoples from antiquity to early modern times. Grousset wrote a lyrical prose, full of crystallizing observations, as in this description of the rhythms of nomadic conquest: "The periodic descents by the hordes of the steppes, whose khans ascended the thrones of Changan, Lo-yang, Kaifeng or Peking, Samarkand, Ispahan or Tabriz (Tauris), Konya or Constantinople, became one of the geographic laws of history. But there was another, opposing law, which brought about the slow absorption of the nomad invaders by ancient civilized lands. The Sinitized or Iranized barbarian was the first to stand guard over civilization against fresh onslaughts from barbarian lands." **Bukhara the Medieval Achievement** (Univ. of Okla., 1965), by Richard Frye, a professor of Iranian studies at Harvard University, uses its focus on one of Central Asia's great cities to discuss the cultural life as well as political history of the region in the early centuries of the Islamic era.

The era of the Russian Revolution and the consolidation of Soviet rule in the region is covered from different perspectives in four noteworthy books. **Islam and the Russian Empire: Reform and Revolution in Central Asia** (Univ. of Calif., 1988), by Hélène Carrère

d'Encausse, director of Soviet Studies at the Institut d'études politiques, examines the way Central Asian advocates of modernization grappled with the pressure of Westernizing reform, pride in their heritage, and communism. Large sections of Harvard historian Richard Pipes's **The Formation of the Soviet Union** (rev. ed., Harvard Univ., 1970) look at the military and political battles through which the largely Russian or Russified Communist Party took control of Central Asia. The most unusual approach to this period is Gregory Massell's **The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919-1929** (Princeton Univ., 1974). The Hunter College political scientist argues that in a region without a large, indigenous working class, the new communist regime used a campaign to change the status of a different disadvantaged social group—women—to undermine the authority of the traditional, male elite.

Comparatively few works focus on Central Asia in the period after the consolidation of Soviet power in the 1920s and before the mounting problems of the 1980s. The late Elizabeth Bacon's **Central Asians under Russian Rule** (Cornell Univ., 1966) offers an extremely perceptive anthropologist's insights into the social transformation the communists produced in the region. **Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia** (Johns Hopkins, 1970), by Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone of Carleton University, is a study by a specialist on Soviet politics that uses one particular republic, Tajikistan, as a case study of how people in Moscow and in the region manipulated nationality politics. **Russia in Central Asia** (Collier, 1963), by historian Michael Rywkin of the City University of New York, gives a clear, concise picture of the impact of Soviet rule on Central Asia.

The last dozen years of Soviet rule over Central Asia are covered in a large number of books and articles of widely varying quality. One of the best works to treat a broad range of issues—including language policy, nationality politics, and the status of women—is **Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation** (Westview, 1991), edited by William Fierman, a political scientist at Indiana University.

The role of Islam in Central Asia in the late Soviet period is one of the more contentious topics in the study of this region. Since the late

1970s, a spurt of publications reflected the unfortunate influence of trends in Western political thinking: the tendency to view all Muslims as alike (most often as "fundamentalist" revolutionaries) combined with the hope that the growing population of Muslims in the Soviet Union would unite under the banner of Islam to overthrow the Soviet regime. The demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 without an Islamic revolution has demonstrated the degree to which that approach contained an overly generous helping of wishful thinking. Representative of a variety of different but more temperate interpretations of the Islamic question are University of Southern California professor Ayşe Rorlich's chapter in the Fierman volume and two essays by Martha Olcott, "Moscow's Troublesome Muslim Minority," in *Washington Quarterly* (9 [1986]: 73-83) and "Soviet Islam and World Revolution," in *World Politics* (34 [1982]: 487-504). My own opinions on the subject may be found in *The Subtlest Battle: Islam in Soviet Tajikistan* (Foreign Policy Research Inst., 1989).

Another critical issue for contemporary Central Asia is the disastrous consequences of misguided Soviet economic and environmental policies. The most important treatments of the economic aspects are Harvard Russian Research Center scholar Boris Rumer's *Soviet Central Asia: A Tragic Experiment* (Unwyn Hyman, 1989) and Carnegie-Mellon political scientist Nancy Lubin's *Labor and Nationality in Soviet Central Asia* (Princeton Univ., 1984). The catastrophic environmental damage in the former Soviet Union receives authoritative treatment in *Ecocide in the USSR* (Basic, 1992) by Murray Feshbach, a demographer at Georgetown University, and Alfred Friendly, Jr., *Newsweek's* former Moscow bureau chief.

Central Asia has a rich literary tradition, both oral and written. Little of it is available in English. Two medieval epics strongly influenced by elements of Central Asian life but not centered there are the Turkish Dede Korkut stories (the name refers to their presumed 14th-century author) and the Persian *Shah-nameh* (Book of Kings). The Dede Korkut epic has come down to us from Turks who made their

way farther west to Anatolia and much of it is set there; however it preserves information about the culture and way of life of Turks in Central Asia. It is available in two English translations, both entitled *The Book of Dede Korkut* (one version was translated and edited by Faruk Sumer, Ahmet E. Uysal, and Warren S. Walker [Univ. of Texas, 1972]; the other was translated by Geoffrey Lewis [Penguin, 1974]). The greatest version of the *Shah-nameh* was written by Abu 'l-Qasem Ferdousi in the late 10th and early 11th centuries. This mythic history of ancient Iran from its origins to the downfall of the last pre-Islamic dynasty includes as one of its major themes the prolonged conflict between sedentary Persian-speakers and Turkic nomads from the northeast. A translation by Reuben Levy, revised by Amin Banani, is entitled *The Epic of Kings* (revised edition, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973); though parts of the text are omitted and summarized briefly, it is a useful introduction to the work. Babur (1483-1530), one of the last descendants of Tamerlane to rule a part of Central Asia, was driven from there by the Uzbek conquest of much of the region and went on to found the Mughal Empire in India. He wrote his autobiography, the *Babur-nameh*, in Ohaghatai Turkish; there is an English translation, *The Babur-Nama* (two vols., Luzac, 1922 and AMS Press, 1971) by Annette S. Beveridge.

One of the most important literary works from contemporary Central Asia is a novel by the Kyrgyz author Chingiz Aitmatov, *A Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* (Indiana Univ., 1983). It combines several themes, including the impact of modern Soviet technology and the importance of preserving a people's traditional ways and values. It also blends elements of science fiction and evocative descriptions of the natural world of the steppe, once so important to the nomadic way of life. The novel has popularized among educated Central Asians of various nationalities the word *mankurt*, which refers to a person who has been enslaved and denied knowledge of his own heritage.

—Muriel Atkin

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ANNALS OF ETHNICITY

E PLURIBUS HISPANIC?

From Miami's Calle Ocho to the Los Angeles barrios, Hispanics have established a vivid presence in American life. Although Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and others are now eight percent of the U.S. population, they are still groping for a collective Hispanic identity. As Peter Skerry argues, their future—and the nation's—will be strongly influenced by whether they emerge as a racial minority, an ethnic group, or some combination of the two.

by Peter Skerry

In the summer of 1987, the surprise success of *La Bamba*, a film about teenage singer Ritchie Valens (born Valenzuela), inspired a news media celebration of the role of Hispanics in our national life. But several ironies surrounding the film went unnoted. For example, the writer and director of this commercial success was Luis Valdez, former director of the agitprop-inspired Teatro Campesino and professor of Chicano studies at Berkeley. Valdez had once denounced "the subversive onslaught of the 20th-century neon *gabacho* [gringo] commercialism that passes for American culture" and rejected "efforts to make us disappear into the white melting pot, only to be hauled out again when it is convenient or profitable for *gabacho* . . . politicians." Yet *La Bamba* paints a very typical picture of American life, one of aspiration and assimilation. It is a bittersweet success story of a clean-cut Mexican-American kid who loved his family and his Anglo

girlfriend, sang his way to rock 'n' roll stardom, and died young in a 1959 plane crash. And this young man who grew up in a migrant labor camp, whose big hit was a Mexican folk song, *La Bamba*, in fact spoke little Spanish.

To complicate matters, in the film Valens was played not by a Mexican American but by a young actor, Lou Diamond Phillips, who was born in the Philippines and raised in Texas, and who describes his background as a mixture of Filipino, Hawaiian, Chinese, Scotch-Irish, and Cherokee. A Puerto Rican, Esai Morales, played Valens's half brother. The next year Phillips again portrayed a Mexican American, in *Stand and Deliver*, a film about Jaime Escalante, the math teacher acclaimed for his work with East Los Angeles high-school students. Bolivian-born Escalante was played by Mexican-American actor Edward James Olmos, who grew up in East Los Angeles. The film was co-written and directed by Ramon Menendez, a Cuban-born graduate of

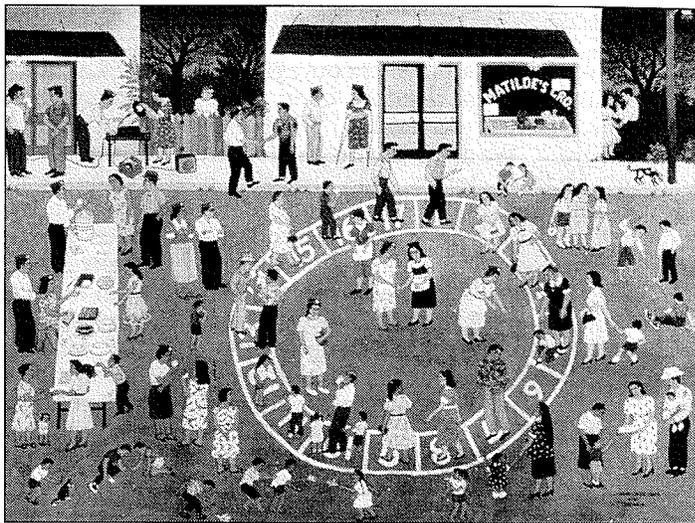
The paintings accompanying this essay are by Carmen Lomas Garza, who lives in San Francisco, California. These and other works are part of a travelling exhibition that originated at The Gloria Arts Museum in Austin, Texas in October 1991. The exhibition is currently at the Mexican Fine Arts Center in Chicago through October 4, 1992, before continuing on to Los Angeles's Leband Art Gallery (November 1–December 12, 1992) and The Oakland Museum (January 9–March 27, 1993).

the UCLA film school.

This tale of two films suggests how problematic the term "Hispanic" can be. Both movies, which brought so much positive attention to Hispanics, were actually about Mexican Americans. At the same time, they were projects on which Hispanics of diverse backgrounds collaborated, suggesting the possibility of an emergent pan-ethnic Hispanic culture. In these ways, the films raise the question: Does the term "Hispanic" have any real substance to it, or is it merely the creation of media moguls and political entrepreneurs?

Alejandro Portes, a Cuban-born sociologist who teaches at Johns Hopkins, is one of those who takes the latter view. He argues that "'Hispanic' ethnic solidarity is quite fragile because it is ultimately a political creation, rather than one based on the real experiences of the groups so labelled." Yet the difficulty with this formulation is that what begins as "a political creation" often ends up defining "real experiences." Earlier in this century hundreds of thousands of European peasants left their villages thinking of themselves as Sicilians, Calabrians, and the like, but after arriving here they gradually came to regard themselves as they were regarded by Americans—as Italians and, eventually, as Italian Americans. As Greek philosophy long ago taught, the essence of politics is the shaping and perfecting of "natural" social ties through human artifice and convention. It would therefore be a mistake to dismiss the term "Hispanic" as a mere political contrivance. A closer look at it tells us as much about the conventions of contemporary American politics as it does about Hispanics themselves.

More precisely, the term reflects the pervasive tendency in the United States to encourage members of these groups to define themselves in divisive—and not wholly appropriate—racial terms. At the same time, the vagueness of a term that subsumes Indian peasants from Central Amer-



"Cakewalk," by Carmen Lomas Garza

ica and the grandchildren of Portuguese immigrants may moderate these divisive tendencies, enabling Hispanics to stake a claim on our nation's immigrant ethnic tradition. The substantial historical, social, and economic differences among the various Hispanic groups are continually played out in the media, in marketing, and in politics. Nevertheless, the very ambiguity of the pan-ethnic term serves to blur these distinctions, making it politically useful and assuring its longevity.

Puerto Rican, Mexican, and Cuban* leaders often denounce the term "Hispanic" as a stereotypic label concocted during the 1970s by ignorant government bureaucrats intent on cramming diverse groups into one ill-fitting category. And one is tempted to agree, since only eight percent of "Hispanics" use the label to identify themselves. Yet these same leaders resort to "Hispanic" when it suits their purposes. Bureaucrats did not found the Congressional *Hispanic* Caucus in 1976. Nor did bureaucrats stretch the term to include then-Representative Tony Coelho (of Portuguese descent) and the non-voting

*Precision would seem to require the use of terms such as "Mexican American" and "Cuban American." But even these are not precise, because they typically refer to aggregates that include both the assimilated members of the group and recent immigrants for whom the suffix "American" is, arguably, inappropriate. For the sake of conciseness, therefore, I use the terms "Mexicans" and "Cubans."

congressional delegates from the Virgin Islands and Guam.

Nor have bureaucrats encouraged the debate among these leaders over which pan-ethnic term is preferable, "Hispanic" or "Latino." Wading through arcane analyses of these terms, one despairs of finding any meaningful distinction. At the moment, "Latino" is in the ascendancy among those seeking the least "Eurocentric" designation. As Berkeley social scientists Charles Henry and Carlos Munoz write, "The term ['Hispanic'] implicitly underscores the white European culture of Spain at the expense of the nonwhite cultures that have profoundly shaped the experiences of all Latin Americans..." Yet the same could be said of "Latino," which is after all a Spanish word meaning "Latin." Indeed, for much of this century "Latin American" was the euphemism used by assimilationist Mexicans to obscure their ties to Mexico (as when Mexicans in Corpus Christi, Texas, in 1929 formed the League of United *Latin American* Citizens). But circumstances change, and today the animus against "Hispanic" undoubtedly stems from the perception that it was coined by federal officials. Finally, because it is Spanish, "Latino" is felt to be the more politically assertive word.*

Whatever the term used and however strained its interpretation, there *are* significant similarities among the various national-origin groups. The first and most obvious is socioeconomic status: Whether they are Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago, or Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles, or Dominicans and Puerto Ricans in New York City, most Hispanics belong to the lower or working classes.

Yet class similarities are less striking than cultural ones. For most Hispanics, the Spanish language is the most visible and charged symbol of their common cultural heritage. This is true even though about

*In this article, I follow the lead of the Washington-based advocacy group, the National Council of La Raza, and use the two terms interchangeably.

one-fourth of all Hispanics do not speak the language of their forebears.

Latinos also share a long and ambivalent relationship with the Catholic Church. In part, the ambivalence reflects the Church's history of alliances with European-oriented Latin American elites and its distance from the concerns of the indigenous populations. Because Hispanics generally have not brought their own clergy with them to the United States, this gap has persisted in this country, particularly since the American Catholic Church has been dominated by Irish clergy with very different notions of the faith. Hispanic cultures also emphasize *personalismo*, which in the religious context translates into a reliance more on ties to individual clerics or patron saints than to the institutional Church. Among Puerto Ricans and Mexicans in particular, this longstanding ambivalence has led to steady defections to various Protestant churches, especially small fundamentalist sects. Sociologist Andrew Greeley estimates that the defections amount to about 60,000 individuals each year. One can sit in any barrio rectory and hear rumors flying about who has "turned Protestant." Today, only about 70 percent of Hispanics are Catholics.

Finally, Hispanics share an emphasis on family life. For example, while 70 percent of non-Hispanic households are maintained by families, more than 80 percent of Hispanic households are. To be sure, as researchers Frank Bean and Marta Tienda note, Hispanics experience separation and divorce as frequently as non-Hispanic whites. Moreover, a higher proportion of Hispanic than non-Hispanic families are female-headed (23.8 versus 16.4 percent). Yet Hispanics (with the exception of Cubans) also have larger families than non-Hispanics. Furthermore, two-parent Hispanic families are much more likely than their non-Hispanic white counterparts to include a grandparent or other adult relative. Social scientists debate whether these family characteristics reflect cultural values or social and economic forces. What is not de-

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batable is that Hispanics see themselves as much more family-oriented than non-Hispanics.

All of these cultural similarities do not mean, however, that a cohesive Hispanic identity is emerging in the United States. Often, these shared characteristics lead to friction among the groups. Strong family ties, for example, can hinder development of the impersonal, instrumental relationships needed to forge stable political organizations. As a result, the national-origin groups are often factionalized internally, and such problems will likely afflict organizational efforts among groups.

A common religion is likewise no guarantee of cohesion, especially since Latinos from different countries often worship different saints and manifestations of the Virgin. Nor is the Spanish language the unifying force it is typically assumed to be. "The way we speak Spanish" tops the list of items that Hispanics polled by Daniel Yankelovich said are significant differences among them; fully one-third cited it. In Los Angeles's Pico-Union district, for example, the director of a childcare center serving Mexican and a variety of Central American immigrants notes that the idiomatic differences among them are so great that composing Spanish-language materials acceptable to parents and staff usually requires heated negotiations.

The question of whether Hispanics are one group or several also arises in the marketplace. In the 1980s, McDonald's launched a successful pan-Hispanic campaign featuring a celebration which to non-Hispanics looked like a birthday party, but which all Hispanics recognized as a *quinceañera*, a party marking a young woman's coming-of-age on her 15th birthday. On the other hand, an insecticide company blundered badly when it mounted a pan-Hispanic campaign promising that its product would kill all "*bichos*"—which means bugs

to Mexicans, but the male genitals to Puerto Ricans. Other problems have arisen, literally, from differences in taste. Goya Foods, one of the largest Hispanic-owned firms in the nation, grew with the post-World War II influx of Puerto Ricans, and has since developed a loyal customer base among them and other Caribbean Hispanics in the Northeast. But its recent effort to develop a line of Mexican foods for the Southwestern market failed miserably. As an embarrassed Goya executive admitted to the *Wall Street Journal*, "Nobody here knew anything about Mexican food."

Such episodes reflect not just cultural differences among Hispanics but social and



"Tamalada" (Making Tamales)

economic ones as well. Cubans are, by virtually all socioeconomic indicators, the most successful Hispanics. (See table, p. 67.) They have the most education, the lowest unemployment, the highest family and household income, the lowest proportion of individuals and families living below the poverty level, the highest rate of home ownership, and the lowest proportion of female-headed households. Puerto Ricans, by contrast, have fared least well and are by some measures worse off than blacks. Mexicans generally fall between the Cubans and Puerto Ricans.

Such socioeconomic differences reflect the distinctive history of each group and the circumstances of its arrival in the

United States. Cubans have come here in the wake of Castro's revolution, and even though (with the exception of the Marielitos) they have arrived relatively well endowed with financial and educational resources, they have, as refugees, received substantial help from the federal government. Puerto Ricans, on the other hand, have come to the mainland with fewer advantages, having been pushed off the land and out of the cities by rapid post-World War II industrialization on the island.

Mexicans present a more complicated story. Many are longtime U.S. residents, and some can trace their ancestry back not only to the time when the American Southwest was part of Mexico, but to the millennia before the arrival of Europeans on the continent. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of Mexicans in the United States today are recent immigrants, most of whom arrived illegally. This complicated group profile is highlighted by the fact that Mexicans are the Hispanic group with the highest proportion of illegals, as well as the highest proportion of individuals born in the United States.

Following separate paths to the United States, these groups settled in different regions. Almost two-thirds of all Cubans live in Florida; more than two-thirds of Puerto Ricans live in the Northeast; about three-fifths of Mexicans live in the West. Even in cities that are home to several Hispanic groups, each tends to live in distinct neighborhoods. In Chicago, for example, Mexicans are concentrated in the Little Village and Pilsen districts, while Puerto Ricans are clustered in Logan Square and Humboldt Park. Intermarriage among Hispanic groups similarly appears to be infrequent, except perhaps among Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and other Central or South Americans in New York City.

Such historical and socioeconomic differences are obviously important, but their *political* significance is not readily apparent. Each group certainly has its own unique relationship to the American political system. The Cubans are the smallest group (constituting less than five percent of all Hispanics), but they are the most powerful politically. As refugees, they have long dreamed of overthrowing Castro

and returning home. Yet at a time when this dream seems closer to realization than ever, its appeal has begun to diminish, particularly among younger Cubans born and raised here. It is in any event striking that Cubans have a significantly higher naturalization rate than Mexicans, whose long and complex history in the Southwest has translated into one of the lowest such rates among all groups in the United States. This helps explain why Mexicans have yet to wield political power commensurate with their numbers, which make them the largest Hispanic group (accounting for 63 percent of all Hispanics). Puerto Ricans, by contrast, are U.S. citizens at birth, but their circular migration between the island and the mainland, along with the fact that they constitute only about 11 percent of Hispanics, helps make them the weakest of these three groups.

The political interests of the three groups are as varied as their power, as can be seen in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Founded with five members in 1976, the Caucus has grown to 13 members (10 voting and three non-voting), of which all but two are Democrats. Most of the members are Mexicans; two are Puerto Ricans; one Cuban. Congressional Quarterly's *1991 Guide to Congress* contrasts the Hispanic Caucus with its black counterpart and notes that the former "rarely took a unanimous position." The Caucus's high point came in 1983-1984, when it succeeded in blocking action on the controversial Simpson-Mazzoli immigration reform legislation. Yet as then-Representative Manuel Lujan (R-N.M.) observed, "Everyone [in the Caucus] is opposed to the Simpson-Mazzoli bill, but each of us has different reasons." In fact, the Caucus was unable to agree on alternative legislation, and Simpson-Mazzoli ultimately passed, albeit in altered form.

Bilingual education and the Voting Rights Act are two issues around which the Caucus has been able to come together. Yet there are plenty of other issues where Hispanic interests do not very neatly converge: Cubans have focused on anti-Castro initiatives; Puerto Ricans have been preoccupied with the statehood question; and Mexicans and Central Americans (the fastest growing

Hispanics Compared

	Non-Hispanics	Blacks	Hispanics	Mexicans	Puerto Ricans	Cubans	Cent. & S. Americans
Population (in millions)	227.4	30.9	21.4*	13.4	2.4	1.1	3.0
Median household income (in dollars)	30,513	18,676	22,330	22,439	16,169	25,900	23,568
Percent households with income of \$50,000 or more	25.4	11.9	13.4	11.6	11.9	19.8	15.7
Percent households maintained by families	69.6	70.0	80.1	81.7	77.8	78.8	82.5
Percent female-headed households	11.4	47.8	19.1	15.6	33.7	15.3	21.5
Percent urban households	72.8	N/A	91.8	90.5	95.2	95.7	97.0
Percent households owning or buying home	65.8	42.4	39.0	43.5	23.4	47.3	22.2
Percent completed high school	80.5	66.7	51.3	43.6	58.0	61.0	60.4
Percent with four or more years of college	22.3	11.5	9.7	6.2	10.1	18.5	15.1
Percent unemployed	6.9	12.4	10.0	10.7	10.3	6.4	10.3
Percent of individuals below poverty level	12.1	31.9	28.1	28.1	40.6	16.9	25.4

*Not shown in the table are 1.6 million people in the category "other Hispanic."

Source: Various Current Population Reports, 1991 (U.S. Bureau of the Census).

Hispanic group, having increased by more than 250 percent from 1980 to 1990) have emphasized immigration issues.

Any convergence of interests among Hispanic groups is equally difficult to find at the local level. At one extreme is Washington, D.C., unique among American cities in that none of the three principal Hispanic groups—Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans—predominates numerically. The

largest group, Salvadorans, has only recently arrived, during the 1980s. The capital's Hispanic population is small—only six percent of the city's total, and barely one percent of the electorate. It is also extremely diverse—the metropolitan area sustains no fewer than 17 Spanish-language newspapers. This demographic fragmentation, along with the refugee and illegal status of many newcomers, has stymied efforts

at political organization and hindered the emergence of effective leadership. These problems were highlighted in the aftermath of a riot in the city's Mount Pleasant neighborhood that made national headlines in the spring of 1991.

Washington Latinos, still in a largely "pre-political" mode, flex their organizational muscles planning for the annual Hispanic Festival, which has in recent years been marked by intense bickering over the management of the event. One such dispute—between a Panamanian building contractor, a Spanish newspaper publisher, and a Puerto Rican radio-station owner—got so heated that the League of Women Voters was brought in to resolve it. Until very recently, this acrimony has benefited Puerto Ricans from New York, who, as citizens and Anglophones, enjoyed an advantage in negotiating festival arrangements with city and federal officials.

Puerto Ricans—with leaders like Herman Badillo, Robert García, Fernando

Ferrer, and José Serrano—have also dominated Hispanic politics in New York City, but for different reasons. There they are the most established and largest Hispanic group, constituting about 50 percent of all Hispanics. With Cubans and Mexicans each accounting for only three percent, Dominicans are the other major Hispanic group in New York. They share with Puerto Ricans both Caribbean origins and a racial mixture that includes many blacks. Residential and intermarriage patterns also suggest that the two groups are in much closer contact with each other, and with black Americans, than with other Latino groups in New York. Politically, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans have at times cooperated but at other times competed. The severe fragmentation of Washington is generally not apparent. But neither is a pan-Hispanic coalition. One reason is that, while Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, many other New York Hispanics are not, and the latter remain more focused on the politics of their homelands.

Then there is Miami, where Cubans to-



"Sandia/Watermelon"

day constitute about 62 percent of the city's Hispanic population, with Nicaraguans and "other Hispanics" from Central and South America accounting for another 32 percent. Yet the city's first Hispanic mayor, Maurice Ferré, was a Puerto Rican, elected in 1973 by an anti-Cuban coalition of Anglos, blacks, and Puerto Ricans (who constitute only five percent of the city's Hispanics). Miami's first Cuban mayor, Xavier Suarez, was elected in 1985, when Ferré lost his black support. The Hispanics of Miami are a long way from the pre-political state of their counterparts in Washington, but, like former San Antonio mayor Henry Cisneros, Suarez has been the beneficiary not of any pan-Hispanic political coalition but of the overwhelming predominance of a single group.

As in Miami, Latino politics in Los Angeles has been dominated by a single group—not Cubans, who constitute about one percent of the city's Latinos, but Mexicans, who account for about 67 percent. Most of the remaining Hispanics (31 percent) are "other Hispanics," which in this instance means Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans who flooded into the city during the 1980s. Aside from whatever attention was sporadically paid to them by activists criticizing U.S. foreign policy in Central America, these predominantly poor and illegal immigrants have had no visible presence in Los Angeles politics.

Yet in the immediate aftermath of the recent riots in Los Angeles, signs of change were evident. Mexican leaders, who up to then had been quite willing to represent Central Americans as part of one enormous and growing Latino constituency, were quick to contrast the destruction in the Pico-Union district, just west of downtown, where Central Americans have crowded into dilapidated apartment buildings, with the calm that prevailed in the Mexican neighborhoods of East Los Angeles. At the same time, these leaders, always concerned that blacks get attention and resources at the expense of Latinos, expressed outrage that the riots were being defined in black and white terms, and could be heard claiming, "These were our riots, too."

The one city with some signs of an Hispanic coalition is Chicago, where Mexicans constitute about 65 percent of Hispanics,

and Puerto Ricans about 22 percent. Through efforts like the Latino Institute, a nonprofit advocacy and research institute founded in 1974, and the *Latino Studies Journal* at DePaul University, local Hispanic leaders have tried to forge a unified Latino political agenda. But such efforts seem to reflect the long-term goals of activists and intellectuals more than on-the-ground realities. Not only do Puerto Ricans and Mexicans live in distinct neighborhoods, the latter are more likely than Puerto Ricans to live among Anglos. These residential patterns are reflected, not surprisingly, in politics. Puerto Ricans, for example, have been much more supportive of Harold Washington's and Jesse Jackson's electoral bids than Mexicans. As one Latino community activist says about efforts to build a Latino-black coalition in Chicago: "Mexicans have been passing [as whites] for years. They have lived in white neighborhoods. There are more black Puerto Ricans, so there is much stronger support [for the coalition]."

If the outlines of an emergent Hispanic identity or agenda are not obvious in politics, they might be more evident in the mass media. After all, immigrant Latinos do not become citizens or voters immediately, but they do become consumers. Latino markets are among the fastest-growing in the nation, and three Spanish-language television networks—Galavision, Telemundo, Univision—have emerged to serve them, recently joined by a Spanish-language version of CNN. The rise of these networks now presents the possibility of these different groups coming together in a way that was not possible for earlier, European immigrant groups.

Yet one problem with this scenario is that Spanish-language television generally is ignored by young Hispanics, who overwhelmingly prefer to tune in to CBS, MTV, and other mainstream offerings. As Henry R. Silverman, then president of the Telemundo Group, told the *New York Times*, "There is no question that teen-age Hispanics are not watching Spanish-language programs." The continuing influx of immigrants undoubtedly helps these networks offset this generation gap. But this same influx also further complicates pan-Hispanic marketing strategies. Guillermo Martinez,

executive news director for the Univision Network offers this explanation: "The only power we [Spanish-language broadcasters] have now is at the local level. We know that. But it is difficult to influence three different groups—Cubans, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans—in the same way."

Sergio Munoz of Los Angeles's Spanish-language daily, *La Opinion*, is among those who have faulted Univision and Telemundo for trying "to appeal to a hypothetical homogeneous Latin American community." But such criticisms are the least of it. The Spanish-language media have also been the stage for rancorous disagreements among Hispanic groups. In 1990, for example, Carlos Alberto Montaner, a Cuban-born commentator on Univision, caused a furor by pointing to the high incidence of female-headed families among Puerto Ricans as a cause of the group's disastrous poverty rate. Angry Puerto Rican leaders were further outraged when the president of Univision, the Chilean American Joaquin Blaya, refused to fire Montaner.

There have also been conflicts over who controls, and profits from, the Spanish-language media. Here Cubans are frequent targets, for two reasons. First, they have the education and resources necessary to take advantage of the growing Hispanic market. Second, Spanish-language production facilities have become concentrated in Miami, which is the nation's second largest Hispanic market and, unlike Los Angeles, has low, non-union production costs.

Mexicans in particular tend to resent Cuban influence. Apparently in response to such discontents, Los Angeles-based Galavision recently established itself as a national network; yet it does not even plan to have outlets in Miami and New York. The president of the network's parent company puts it forthrightly: "You cannot satisfy all Hispanic tastes. Ours is not a smorgasbord programming menu like that of the two other networks. Our fare caters to the growing Mexican and Central American population, while the Caribbean and Cuban migration is basically over."

Although seldom reported, similar tensions are evident among Hispanics in the political arena. In Chicago, for example, a Mexican activist who advocates a Latino political agenda nevertheless cautions:

[W]e need to be concerned with the term Latino or Hispanic because that includes everybody. It includes the Cubans, the Central and South Americans, and I have always felt the struggle has been a Chicanos-*Boricua* [Puerto Rican] struggle. I have worked with the city in other capacities and I've always seen how they like to impose upon us a Cuban or a South American to positions of power to keep the Chicanos and the *Boricuas* divided.

Within the Republican Party, there have been debilitating tensions between Cubans and Mexicans. Possessing considerable organizational skills and financial resources, Cubans have attained leadership positions within the party without playing the Hispanic card. In the early 1980s, for example, a Cuban surgeon from Los Angeles, Dr. Tirso del Junco, became state party chair on the basis of his fund-raising efforts. When del Junco subsequently focused his efforts on the Republican National Hispanic Assembly, he encountered stiff opposition from Mexican Republicans who did not share his ideological conservatism and resented his domination of Republican Hispanic politics. The Cubans, in turn, regard the small businessmen and struggling entrepreneurs who typify Mexican Republicans as poor relations, embarrassments among affluent Anglo colleagues, and ideological weaklings with all-too-recent ties to Democrats. Mexicans who ally themselves with Cubans are reviled by fellow Mexicans as "stooges." The resulting battles within Hispanic Republican circles have hindered the party's efforts to reach out to Mexicans, the largest and one of the fastest growing Hispanic groups.

Tensions among Hispanic groups are not usually so acrimonious. Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, for example, have not experienced the class and ideological animosities rife among Latino Republicans. But the ever-present possibility of ill feelings encourages efforts to de-emphasize or even ignore differences and to emphasize the similarities among Hispanics. This tendency is especially strong among non-Hispanics. As one education administrator explained to me, the "Hispanic" category is indispensable to foundation executives who, by setting up programs designated

broadly for Hispanics, avoid the problems that would arise if they targeted specific groups. Better to establish an umbrella program, the thinking goes, and let the various groups fight it out among themselves. Government bureaucrats and politicians apply the same logic, and so do Hispanics themselves. A Chicana activist accustomed to dealing with colleagues from different parts of the nation uses the term "Latino" and explains, "It avoids problems."

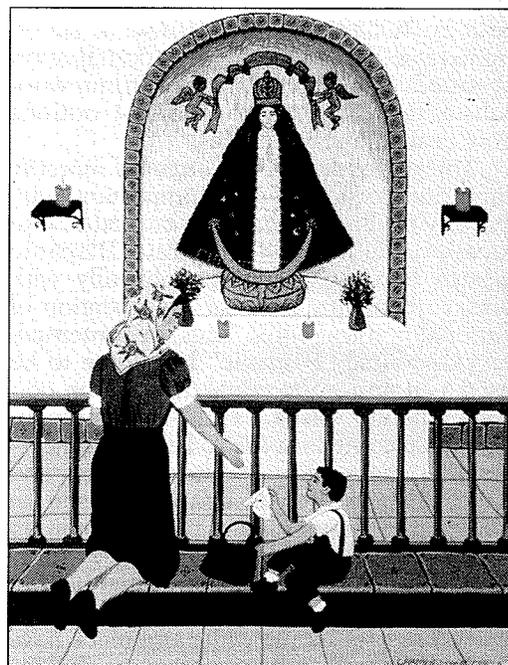
For such leaders, though, the strongest reasons for adopting the "Latino" label are not merely defensive. Those most likely to refer to themselves or others as Latino or Hispanic are the most cosmopolitan and nationally oriented politicians. In Washington, "Hispanic" has certainly been the term of choice for some time, as suggested by the names of many Washington-based efforts: the Hispanic Caucus; *Hispanic Link*, a weekly newsletter culling news of interest to all Hispanics; *Hispanic* magazine, a general interest English-language monthly; or the National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organizations. Former Congressman Robert García, a New York-born Puerto Rican, put it well: "When I first came to Washington I saw myself as a Puerto Rican. I quickly realized that the majority society saw me as a member of a larger group called Hispanic."

As García suggested, being "Hispanic" allows these leaders to increase the size of the constituencies they represent. It also helps specific groups reposition themselves in the political marketplace. Cubans, for example, constitute a small and steadily shrinking proportion of all Hispanics, but as "Hispanics" they become part of a rapidly expanding national presence. As *Los Angeles Times* editorial writer Frank Del Olmo (a Mexican) writes: "The term 'Hispanic' allowed other Latinos to use a large and growing Mexican-American population to increase *their* influence." Given Cuban foreign-policy concerns and the consequent role they seek to play in Washington, this factor has been critical to their political aspirations.

Mexicans have become "Hispanics" for different reasons. Historically, they have felt ignored and isolated in the Southwest, at the farthest possible remove from the centers of the nation's economic and political

power. But as "Hispanics," Mexicans are part of a group spread all over the United States, including Puerto Ricans in the Northeast and Cubans in Florida. Though hardly oblivious to the importance of their growing numbers, Mexican leaders are keen to avoid having their interests and problems dismissed as those of a regional group and understand the importance of being regarded as a *national* minority group.

The same goal of raising themselves above the status of a regional group also induces Cubans and Puerto Ricans to adopt the "Hispanic" label. And as with Cubans, becoming Hispanic allows Puerto Ricans to tap into whatever clout accompanies the huge and still growing Mexican population. Yet more to the point, Puerto Rican leaders embrace the pan-ethnic label to moderate the popular impression that Puerto Ricans have sunk into the underclass. Manuel A. Bustelo, former executive director of the National Puerto Rican Forum, makes the point in the negative: "The use of 'Hispanic' rather than specific ethnic groups has distorted reali-



"La Virgen de San Juan de los Lagos"

ties. In many instances, this has served to convey a more positive picture of overall advancement, while concealing the fact that the Puerto Rican communities in the mainland are worse off than in previous years."

Complex though these dynamics are, they comprise only half of what is encouraging these leaders to call themselves "Hispanics." For if becoming "Hispanic" allows each group to become a *national* minority, it also allows each to become a national *minority*—that is, a group that has experienced racial discrimination and is therefore in need of special help and programs. As "Hispanics," each group can stake a stronger claim of this kind on the nation's conscience than it could on its own. Clearly, the path being followed is that of black Americans, who (as Hispanic leaders continually remind themselves) captured the nation's attention in the 1950s and '60s by making racial discrimination more than just a "Southern problem." By shifting the source of redress to Washington, blacks gained the help of more sympathetic, nationally oriented elites, particularly the media. But the black struggle for equality fundamentally altered American politics. It hastened the demise of states' rights and the consequent nationalization of American politics. This new framework substantially limits the political options now available to Hispanics.

Therefore, the phrase *national minority* captures two sides of a very important coin. Only by trading on that coin can otherwise locally oriented and disparate Hispanic groups hope to compete politically with blacks, their only rival for the attention of national political elites. Thus, in contemporary discourse "Hispanic" has come to be used as a non-white racial designation corresponding to "black." Think for a moment how accustomed we are to hearing, and repeating, the phrase "whites, blacks, and Hispanics," which is routinely used in newspapers, government reports, opinion polls, and scholarly journals. The litany rolls so readily off our tongues that we forget that these are not in fact mutually exclusive categories. While white and black have generally come to be accepted as distinct racial categories, Hispanic—at least until

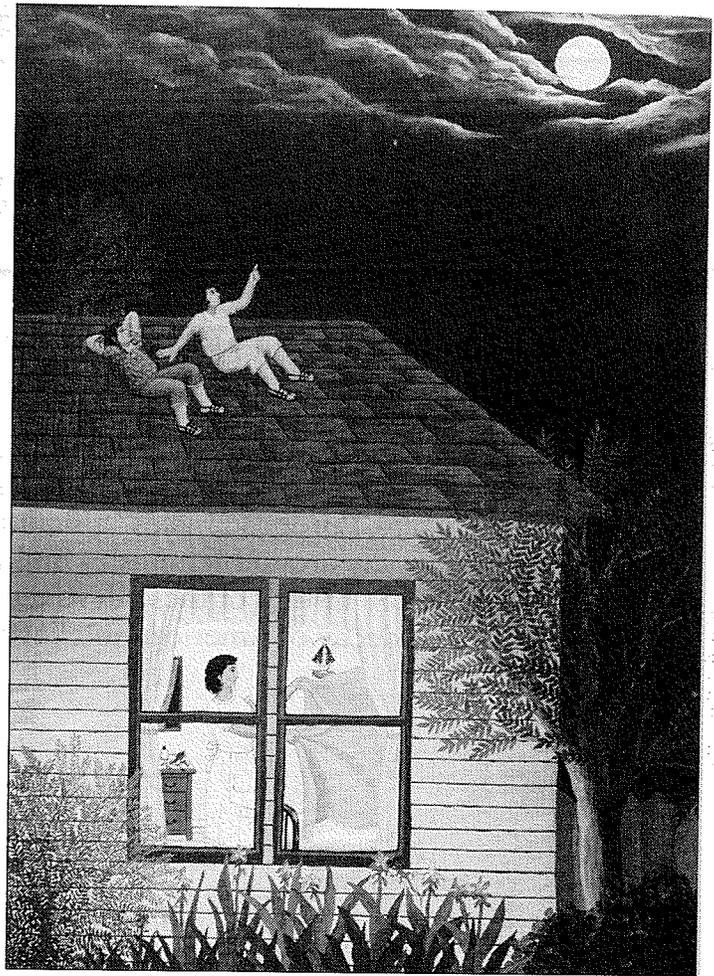
quite recently—has been regarded as an ethno-cultural designation. Yet today, the Census Bureau is virtually alone in maintaining this distinction: The small print at the bottom of its tables continually reminds us that "Hispanics can be of any race."

Even as the transformation of "Hispanic" into a non-white racial category proceeds in Washington, individual Hispanics offer a more complicated picture of themselves. On the one hand, about 52 percent of all those belonging to Hispanic groups told the 1990 census they were "white." About three percent defined themselves as "black." On the other hand, most of the remaining Hispanics—about 43 percent—designated themselves as "other race." Moreover, this "other race" category has grown since 1980. In other words, these figures challenge the ready assumption that *all* Hispanics are non-white. But at the same time, they point to the emergence of a distinct non-white racial identity among *some* Hispanics.

This confusion, or ambivalence, over racial identity is at the core of the emergent "Hispanic" category. In emulating the political example of blacks and claiming status as a racial minority group, Hispanics run the risk of being stigmatized as a group beyond help or hope. In fact, this may already be happening to Puerto Ricans in the United States. Yet as "Hispanics," Puerto Ricans can also identify themselves (and be identified) with a more positive aspect of the American experience—immigrant aspiration and upward mobility. For this is how, to varying degrees, Cubans and Mexicans are perceived. Yet many Mexicans also see themselves as members of a racial minority deserving of the same extraordinary help that has, despite much controversy, been afforded black Americans. Even Cubans, who despite their evident prosperity qualify (as Hispanics) for affirmative action benefits, find it useful to be part of a group which includes Puerto Ricans and others who fit the profile of an impoverished urban minority. Thus, depending on the specific context, Hispanics can claim to be an immigrant ethnic group in the classic American pattern, or, alternatively, a minority group suffering racial discrimination.

To observers such as Alejandro Portes, this confusion underscores the artificiality of the term "Hispanic." Yet the complaint misses the point: Imprecision is what makes the term so politically useful. On the most mundane level, it gives activists the option of throwing their opponents off-guard by insisting on the inappropriateness of the "label." More fundamentally, "Hispanic" speaks to the critical concerns of any disadvantaged group that seeks support from the modern welfare state. On the one hand, all such claimants must establish the legitimacy of their demands on the public sector. Largely because they follow in the wake of the black civil-rights movement, Hispanics today must base this legitimacy on claims of racial disadvantage and discrimination. On the other hand, claims must also be based on evidence that the group is worthy of help and yet not so disadvantaged that it is beyond hope. The old distinction between the "worthy" and "unworthy" poor endures in today's welfare state. The two facets of "Hispanic"—immigrant ethnic group and racial minority—meet the divergent requirements.

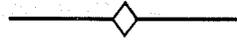
Despite the many social, cultural, and economic differences among these national-origin groups, the term "Hispanic" does have political substance. Today much of that substance derives from the notion of a nonwhite racial identity. Not without grounding in the way Hispanics see themselves, this identity is nevertheless exaggerated by leaders encouraged by our post-



"Camas para Sueños" (*Beds for Dreams*)

civil rights regime to compete with blacks as a racial minority. This strategy clearly solves short-term political problems for these leaders, but if it works and Hispanics begin to see themselves exclusively as a minority group, America's racial problems will have acquired a new and troubling dimension.

THE CULTURAL WARS



AMERICAN INTELLECTUAL LIFE, 1965-1992

At century's end, the universities and other enclaves of American intellectual life are torn by conflict. The canon and the "hegemony of dead, white, European males" are under attack; the tenured and their students rally around feminism, multiculturalism, and other causes. To chart the history of these developments, Daniel Bell argues, is to trace the decay of American intellectual life.

by Daniel Bell

There is no longer any intellectual center in the United States. And, for that matter, very few intellectuals remain, if by intellectuals one means those socially unattached individuals devoted solely to the search for truth. The existence of such a stratum was, for the sociologist Karl Mannheim, one of the more distinctive facts about cultural life in the 20th century. As he wrote in 1929:

One of the most impressive facts about modern life is that in it, unlike previous cultures, intellectual activity is not carried on exclusively by a socially rigidly defined class, such as a priesthood, but rather by a social stratum which is to a large degree unattached to any social class and which is recruited from an increasingly inclusive area of social life. This sociological fact determines essentially the uniqueness of the modern mind, which is characteristically not based upon the authority of a priesthood, which is not closed or finished, but which is rather dynamic, elastic, in a constant state of flux, and perpetually confronted by new problems.

How dated all this seems more than a half-century later. How many intellectuals are there, outside institutional attachments? There is a considerable amount of intellectual activity—in universities, think tanks, and research centers of public policy; in centers of literary studies in universities, libraries, and museums; in various "institutes of advanced studies," most of which are attached to universities; and in government and business, usually among "planning staffs."

We do not have intellectual inquiry or discussion but "research," "policy analysis," and, in literature, "theory." Increasingly, intellectual life is specialized, professionalized, jargonized, and often hermetic in its focus



Deconstructionists and other literary theorists—including Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man, and Geoffrey Hartman—at work in Mark Tansey's wry "Constructing the Grand Canyon."

and language. There is little attention to the "common reader" of the kind that Virginia Woolf sought to address, while, ironically, the life of Mrs. Woolf has itself become a cottage industry and her work (despite her strictures) an icon for ardent feminist critics.

Mannheim also assumed another condition that might sustain the existence of the independent thinker. This would be the freedom from the patronage system—of church, government, and wealthy individuals—and its replacement by the market, so that writers would be free to

chance their own thoughts and fortunes (as had already begun in the 18th century, when Alexander Pope had led the way by selling his books by subscription and when independent printers began to be publishers). Mannheim also assumed the expansion of a broad educated public, as a result of the spread of mass higher education, which would be receptive to such writers.

Yet there is no broad intellectual life and no broad intellectual public today. Most readers from the larger managerial and professional public (there are now 30 million such people, according to the last census!) want and seek "information" of a utilitarian variety, but few have the taste or desire for discussions of a philosophical kind that undergird or challenge their prejudices and pursuits. And how many serious intellectual journals are there that exist independent of the new patronage system of foundations, universities, or wealthy patrons? By and large, institutions dominate intellectual life.

Such developments may have occurred in other "advanced" societies as well. Still, one thinks of Paris as an intellectual center, with its concentration of universities, publishing, broadcasting, and government (with publishers still sponsoring intellectual magazines such as *Le Débat*), and the tradition of the important public thinker, though no one today matches the stature or influence of a Raymond Aron or a Jean-Paul Sartre. There is the monarch, M. Mitterrand, who builds new opera houses and grand libraries, and refurbishes museums, and who had as a doorkeeper and courtier, M. Jacques Attali, who has written 10, 20—or is it 30?—books, from dawn to noon of the day (reversing the habits of Balzac). Major historians and intellectuals, such as Georges Duby, or Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie, or Roger Chartier, or François Furet, continue to occupy major cultural positions.

English cultural life still retains the smile of the Cheshire cat, with the feline manners and style and gossip of a concentrated literary life, and, *mirabile dictu*, books are reviewed, in seven or eight quality newspapers and magazines, in the week of their publication. The *Times Literary Supplement* has become lively under the editorship of Ferdinand Mount, a political analyst and novelist, while the *London Review of Books* is one of the few periodicals, if not the only one, that has carried long and serious discussions of philosophy, featuring Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam

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(two Americans), Bernard Williams, and others. The triangulation of Parliament, the universities, and journalism provides sustenance for newspapers such as the *Independent*, the *Times*, the *Telegraph*, the *Guardian*, and the *Sunday Observer*, though their glossy weekly supplements reflect the cultural contradictions of capitalism in their stylish consumerism. But the writing of ten sparkles, especially in the parliamentary sketches, while the *Economist* presents polished weekly tutorials on politics and economics, and the *Financial Times* publishes cultural pages that are informed and enlightening. It is high-class journalism, and only that.

England has rarely had the high-brow cultural periodicals that were once published in such profusion in the United States. *Encounter*, an Anglo-American journal published in London, lasted almost 40 years but disappeared mysteriously one month, without even a whimper. *Granta*, a lively journal published in Cambridge, is edited by an American and presents intelligent literary articles and occasional criticism. For a time, there was an active group of left-wing journals, principally the *New Left Review*, edited by Perry Anderson (who insistently sought to bring European thought and Marxism to the parochial English), and the chic communist journal, *Marxism Today*, which combined upper-class bohemianism with "designer socialism." But Anderson now spends part of the year teaching in California, while *Marxism Today* suspended publication with a bang—that is, a bang-up party that featured left-wing glitterati of stage and screen at its farewell ball.

German intellectual life, one is told, is



fragmented, lacking a center. But political issues, largely because of the problems of identity and historical consciousness and guilt, necessarily engage an educated public, particularly the historians and philosophers. The *Methodenstreit*—the philosophical controversies about positivism between Karl Popper and T. W. Adorno—has faded, but the *Historikerstreit*, the debate about “mastering the past,” remains warm, and one can still read a Jürgen Habermas, a Michael Stürmer, a Thomas Nipperdey, a Hans Magnus Enzensberger, a Günter Grass. There are informed newspapers such as *Die Zeit* and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, as well as a “thick” newsmagazine, *Der Spiegel*, whose cultural discussion and analysis make *Time* and *Newsweek* look like the weekly “shoppers” sent free through the mail.

One can without much effort cite other instances of brightness such as, in Spain, the thoughtful newspaper *El Pais*, an authoritative, critical voice of opinion, and its serious magazine, *Claves*, which reminds one in its breadth of Germany's *Der Monat*. And in Mexico, there is still the “old-fashioned” interest in literature and ideas that arises from the unmistakable voice of Octavio Paz, in his magazine *Vuelta*.

The reason for this cursory survey is to point up the dryness of American intellectual life. There is one general cultural periodical that “everyone” reads, the *New York Review of Books*, but its featured and repeated writers are drawn usually from England (with a few American “lapsed conservatives” such as Garry Wills and Joan Didion), and its audience is principally in the universities. The *New Republic*, a weekly, is often bright, and the back-of-the-book section is literate and sophisticated, but the focus is primarily political and on gossip from “inside the beltway,” the hothouse atmosphere of concentrated Washington flora. *Commentary* and *Partisan Review*, once the authoritative forums of intellectual discussion and engagement with European culture, have faded, the one for its strongly conservative stance, the other with the passing of the “New York Intellectuals” and their concerns.

A previous generation had such independent intellectuals as Edmund Wilson, Lewis Mumford, and Dwight MacDonal (who was the freest floater of them all), none of whom were identified with a university culture. Today's writers exist largely within the academic milieu. A book on this theme by an itinerant left-wing writer, Russell Jacoby, has as its title *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (1987). The book chronicles the disappearance of an independent sphere of American cultural life, and the fact that intellectuals who emerged 30 years ago, “like Daniel Bell, William F. Buckley, Jr. and John Kenneth Galbraith, still command the cultural heights.” These “last intellectuals,” Jacoby points out, wrote for the educated public. “Yet they are now an endangered species, without younger successors”—though there is still Norman Mailer and his perpetual advertisements for himself.

To continue the inquiry within this framework, however, is to con-

tinue the misconception fostered by Mannheim, a conceit still accepted by many intellectuals to reinforce their claim to being the "privileged thinkers" judging the age. Mannheim, influenced by the late-19th-century Russian view of the *intelligenty*, thought that the social role of the intellectual was to be critical, and that "structurally" the intellectual was outside the existing class society. But intellectuals today—those who shape and transmit words and ideas—are all *within* the social structure and occupy comfortable positions therein. They have tenure in the universities and exercise considerable power over status, funds, and the organization of research and literary centers. They staff the elite media—newspapers, television, and Hollywood. They play influential and often decisive roles in the staff positions and committees of the Congress and the executive branch.* They *constitute* the institutional life of the society, and their wars—over positions in the institutions, especially the universities—and their conflicts over the definitions of what is salient in the culture (such as feminism and multiculturalism), constitute the "cultural wars" that are taking place in American life today.

To understand the modalities of intellectual life today, we need a basis other than the ones that have been used to set off the intellectual class (since it is not a unity or a defined social role) from other groups in the society. The problem is, how do we define various differentiations?

I begin with an arbitrary yet perhaps useful distinction between a *culture* and a *society*, the *culture* being the regnant attitudes and traditions that are the wellsprings of belief, the *society* denoting common attitudes and interests that define a people.† In some nations—Islamic, for example—there is a congruence between the two because of the unifying force of religion. In modern Western nations there is usually a division between the realms.

The United States today is a *bourgeois society but not a bourgeois culture*. It is a bourgeois society in its emphasis on individualism and materialism. But it is, at the "advanced" level, a *modernist culture* in its acceptance of experiment, new design, and complex forms. (In the formation of the republic, one could say that there was a unity between the culture and the society because of the unifying role of Protestantism, the Calvinism of a Jonathan Edwards and the practicality of a Benjamin Franklin. By the mid-19th century a split developed with the spread of populist attitudes in the society and a genteel spirit in the culture.)

The *culture* of the United States today is permissive in its ethos (espe-

*To give one a sense of the scope of the intellectual establishment: There are more than 3,600 institutions of higher learning in the United States, employing more than 700,000 college and university teachers (more than 10 million students are enrolled in degree-credit programs, and an additional five million in college courses). There are about 350,000 social scientists, of whom about 200,000 are psychologists and 120,000 economists. There are 260,000 editors and reporters, more than 80,000 authors and 60,000 technical writers, 200,000 librarians, 395,000 natural scientists, 730,000 mathematical and computer scientists, etc.

†I would hope to avoid possible confusions by using "society" and "culture" as separate realms, when one has also used "society" as a generic term. I could talk of the "mundane" and the "symbolic," but these carry their own confusions. I hope that the contexts make my distinction clear.

cially on moral and sexual issues) and modernist in its willingness to accept new and innovative and trendy expressions in the arts and literature. It is, to use the phrase of Lionel Trilling, an "adversary culture," in its opposition to the prevailing societal attitudes.* Yet that adversary culture is increasingly entrenched within the institutions of the society, especially the universities, and enjoys a cozy nonconformity in parading its new snobbishness, often on the pretense of still being persecuted. Inevitably, those attitudes have produced a reaction within the culture of what Sidney Blumenthal has called "the counter-intellectuals," or, in the political arena, of the "neoconservatives," men and women who have come forward strongly in defense of "bourgeois society" and its values. And uneasily between the two is a current of "political liberalism," which, in separating the public and the private realms, defends the permissiveness in culture, but is more concerned to rectify the deficits of "bourgeois society," especially on the issues of equality and redistributive justice.

In effect, we have a new set of "cultural wars," or *Kulturkämpfe*† which are not the romantic visions of the intellectuals against the society, but intense disputes between—and within—enclaves of intellectuals whose arguments only occasionally (as now with the debate about "political correctness") reach the larger public.

II

During the past 25 years, there have been three currents in American intellectual life that can be designated, loosely, as radical, conservative, and liberal. After dealing with the historical background of these currents, I will move on to current controversies.

The radical march

The radical movement derives largely from the events of 1968, the eruptions in the universities in the United States, France, and Germany and, to a lesser extent, in other countries as well. It was, uniquely, a youth movement, similar to the *Jugendbewegung* of early-20th-century Germany, with its romanticism, self-preening, the attack on materialism and impersonality of an alienating society, and the use of Nietzsche's relentless denunciations of bourgeois society.

In the United States, the focus of the emotional heat was the Vietnam

*Let me distinguish here between the idea of an "adversary culture" and that of the "new class" put forth by, among others, Irving Kristol. For Kristol, the new class is a stratum that brings together those who occupy the elite positions in the media, the universities, and publishing, and who have an anticapitalist stance. I think the definition is a conceptual muddle, for it seeks to bring together in one frame a structural position in the society and a cultural mentality. The word *class* here is, I think, misleading.

†The original meaning of *Kulturkämpfe*, literally *cultural wars*, goes back to 1870 when the newly unified German state sought to impose a cultural dominance of Protestantism against the Catholic minority. Hence *Kulturkampf* meant a new "war of religion." It became transposed in Weimar Germany as conflicts between Left and Right, and now would mean simply "cultural war."

War and the conscription that threatened all young males—though university students could postpone or sidestep the draft, while the burdens fell disproportionately on young blacks. The upsurge also owed much to the eruption of a large youth cohort (because of a demographic bulge) and was tied to a music-drug culture and, in its own conceit, to a sexual revolution.* The movement was not revolutionary, in the sense of having a programmatic alternative to capitalist society, but rebellious; and like many rebellious movements, it was diffuse in its targets and its impacts.

There were differences. In the past, particularly in Europe, the youth movements became attached to older political or artistic movements. What was striking about the New Left was that it cut itself off from previous socialist and communist generations, in part because of the hiatus of the 1950s, when many of the older generation had made their peace with society, and in part because the artistic movements, such as abstract expressionism in painting, became the established modes.

The pride of the New Left was in the word *new*, that these young people had made themselves anew. And this was a vision that, in its impulses and actions, was different from the programmatic and somewhat scholastic doctrines of the left-wing movements of the 1930s. There were three components to this worldview: the idea of participatory democracy, the repudiation of “white-skin” privilege, and the embrace of a romantic revolutionary dream centered on the Third World.

The emphasis on participatory democracy, vaguely Rousseauian, focused on the idea of “community,” and the community organization of the poor, the dispossessed, and even the *lumpenproletariat*, or criminals, particularly black criminals, since these were seen as victims of the society. The trade-union movement, by and large, was either ignored or scorned as bureaucratic and as “integrated” into capitalism.

Repudiating “white-skin” privilege meant the acceptance of guilt in being white, and the designation of the Third World countries as a new “external proletariat” serving the core capitalist countries, a theme first enunciated, ironically, by Arnold Toynbee, but made into a revolutionary slogan in the 1960s by Lin Biao, then Mao’s designated successor.

The revolutionary romanticism was the salute of a new cadre of heroes—Mao, Fidel, Ché Guevara, and in the long trail a-winding, Daniel Ortega and the Sandinistas of Nicaragua. Much of this was rhetoric, but the greatest publicity arose with the embrace by the New Left of the Black Panthers (and of Frantz Fanon as an intellectual avatar). The most notorious event came when the *New York Review of Books* featured an article by Tom Hayden, one of the leaders of the New Left, and on its cover depicted a Molotov cocktail. (No one was hurt, except the *New York Review of Books*.)

*A conceit because more than 50 years before, a sexual revolution had begun in the bohemian enclaves of Greenwich Village. The difference, as is so often the case, is in the *scale*—the larger numbers involved, the spread to other classes, but most important, the attention and visibility won because of the media by the “beats,” the “hippies,” the “flower children,” and similar groups who flaunted a “new” lifestyle.

All of these themes and visions unraveled and blurred over time. Participatory democracy placed the Left in a bind. Individuals and communities ought to have the right to "affect the decisions that controlled their lives." The Left assumed that whatever "the people" wanted would be right. But what, then, of the claim of Catholics in South Boston to resist integration and the busing of black children into their schools on the ground that it would disrupt *their* community? Should they not have the right to affect decisions that controlled their lives? How far down does participatory democracy go, and to what extent are individuals also members of the larger, inclusive polity that makes a decision binding on all?

Atoning for white-skin privilege often meant endorsing violence and murder by black militants, and justifying actions by men such as George Jackson, who killed three prison guards in an attempt to escape from San Quentin in 1971.

Because of the very nature of a democratic (even if flawed) society, blacks had to make the choice of coming into the system and seeking electoral place and power or becoming even more militant and extreme. Inevitably the black movement split. Some went the way of extremism, such as Eldridge Cleaver, who achieved great literary notoriety, fled abroad and, after years of wandering in Cuba and Algeria, came home to repudiate his past and become a born-again Christian. Most blacks came into the system, with the result that in the past decade and a half, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, Washington D.C., Cleveland, Atlanta, Newark, and smaller cities have elected black mayors. The Black Panthers faded.

As for the revolutionary romanticism, in the 1970s a section of the New Left, the Weathermen, went underground and carried out bombings and bank hold-ups and killings, and led empty lives for years until their movement finally evaporated. For the larger number, there have been the successive disillusionments with Mao and the Cultural Revolution; with Fidel, in part because of the imprisonment of homosexual and cultural figures such as Heberto Padilla; with Ché, for his inept failures in seeking to carry out Régis Debray's theory of guerrilla revolution. And most recently there was confusion over the repudiation of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in a free and democratic election.

And yet, though bereft of causes, many in the generation, and their epigones, retained a radical posture and began (in the phrase of the German radical Rudi Dutschke) "the long march through the institutions." In the 1980s, the aging New Left—now in tenured positions in the universities, in powerful positions in the print media, Hollywood, and broadcasting—began a number of *Kulturkämpfe* which have made many universities a new battleground.

There is little of a radical economic or political program in their concerns. The battleground is culture, and the field is the curriculum and "theory." The language, the rhetoric, and to some extent the analysis

derived from the Frankfurt School and Georg Lukacs (though few knew that the two denounced each other violently) and from Antonio Gramsci, and while those initial influences have been fading, the new rhetoric androdomontade in the justifications of a cultural nihilism come from Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida.

The key word, from Gramsci, is "hegemony"—an essential tool in the Left's effort to undermine the dominion of "capitalist culture," but as it is difficult to define the capitalist "culture," what this means in practice is the legitimacy of capitalism as a just system. The attack was developed most sharply by the Critical Legal Studies movement, which originated in the early 1980s at the Harvard Law School and has now spread to the major law schools of the country. The contention of the movement is that law, especially judicial decisions, serves to reinforce the systems of power and privilege in the society—a not very original insight which, in the United States, goes back to the "legal realism" of Jerome Frank and Thurman Arnold in the days of the New Deal, but which is given here an Hegelian-Gramscian frippery, rather than the pragmatic cast of the earlier movement. To the extent there is a central thinker, it is the Harvard Law professor Roberto Mangabeira Unger. And to the extent that one can state a central theme in a large and impressive number of books, it is the need for societies to find mechanisms to break up old, encrusted institutions and create new ones. The difficulty is the lack of a normative vision, namely, what should law be, what is justice? Unger emphasizes the need for a continual re-ordering of institutions. But if law is built, as are most societies, on tradition, what are the consequences of the "permanent revolution?" If law requires stable rules, so that people shall obey the law, how does one know how to behave?

But all this has been the past, and a new and larger sociological development has taken place among radicals (and in the social sciences themselves), the decline of interest in *class* and the focus on *gender* and *race* as the crux of power and position in the society. In the last decade, feminism and black studies have been the redoubt of radicalism in the United States, and these challenges have posed some of the more troubling questions to established institutions and thought.

The conservative turn

A neoconservative, Irving Kristol quipped in the 1970s, is "a liberal who has been mugged by reality." Yet at the start, at least, the phrase "neoconservative" was a misnomer. The term had not been put forth by the men called by that name, and it was not an accurate description of their beliefs. It was, in fact, coined in *Dissent* by the socialist writer Michael Harrington, who, in a maneuver typical of old sectarian politics, masked his own move to the "right"—in this instance abandoning independent socialist electoral politics and joining the Democratic Party—by attacking those who were themselves Democrats, though of a

skeptical cast. The label was given a journalistic stamp in a book by Peter Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives: The Men Who Are Changing American Politics* (1979). In that book, Steinfels singled out Irving Kristol as the publicist of the group, Daniel Patrick Moynihan as the professorial politician, and this writer as the theoretician and moralist. A large number of social scientists associated with the magazine the *Public Interest*, founded by Kristol and me in 1965, were identified with this orientation: the sociologists Nathan Glazer, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Robert Nisbet; the political scientists Samuel Huntington and James Q. Wilson; and, in the background, such posthumous individuals as Lionel Trilling, Richard Hofstadter, and the legal scholar Alexander Bickel. The significance of the movement, said Steinfels, apart from its members' influence as writers and their "links to power" through their positions in elite universities and on government commissions, was their opposition to liberalism and their belief that "neoconservatism is the serious and intelligent conservatism America has lacked."

Yet, not surprisingly, the content of this alleged conservatism was never stated. Not surprisingly because except for Robert Nisbet, who espoused a Durkheimian belief in community as against individualism, there was not at the time a conservative content shared by all these men. In my own writings, for example, I have been critical of bourgeois life, and my proposals for a "public household," in my *Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976), represent the liberalism of John Dewey. (I have also described myself as a socialist in economics, a liberal in politics, and a conservative in culture.) Kristol, in his writings, has sought to work out a union of the free-market and individual-interests principles of Adam Smith with the principles of liberty of Edmund Burke—who despite the label of "conservative" was for most of his life a Whig in politics and temperament. If any common definition is possible—unless it is too much of an oxymoron—it would be a skeptical Whiggism: a hope for progress, but doubt that it may be possible.

Much of the difficulty with this term, now more than 25 years old, derives from the fact that there have been two different phases in the orientations of this "movement." The first, identified with the launching of the *Public Interest* in 1965, was the singular focus on domestic social policy. The telling fact was that the principal intellectual periodicals of the day—*Commentary*, the *New York Review of Books*, and *Partisan Review*—had all swung left, and their pages were closed to those critical of the nascent New Left and its revolutionary romanticism. Equally, none of these periodicals had any interest in economics or social policy, though these were the crux of the Kennedy–Johnson Great Society programs.

The opening editorial of the magazine declared that it would be anti-ideological, for "the essential peculiarity of ideologies [is] that they do not simply prescribe ends, but also insistently propose prefabricated interpretations . . . that bitterly resist all sensible revisions." The magazine emphasized the necessity of empirical social research and was critical of

many of the vague proposals in the areas of health, education, and housing. The magazine was attacked as "pragmatic" or "technocratic," while Norman Podhoretz, the new editor of *Commentary*, who had taken it to the left, somewhat scornfully derided the *Public Interest* (in his 1967 autobiography, *Making It*) as little more than a "company suggestion box," though he genuflected to his elders as men of talent.

Yet there was a larger theme in the thinking of the "neoconservatives" that derived from the experiences of the previous 30 years. This was the recognition of the difficulties in realizing utopian programs in an imperfect world. In the "socialist" states this would begin in revolutionary terror and end in bureaucratic nightmares, while in the democratic societies, efforts to use "blueprints" for social planning would result in unexpected consequences, so that if one were to seek "social engineering," it would have to be, in Karl Popper's phrase, in piecemeal fashion. Thus, the underlying philosophical orientation was skepticism toward utopianism. If that is conservative, so be it.

Toward the end of the 1970s, there was a distinct shift in American politics with the election of Ronald Reagan and the emergence of foreign policy, in particular the confrontation with the Soviet Union and communist adventurism in Latin America, as the center of political attention. This brought to the fore a number of individuals, former Democrats, who had not been identified previously with the neoconservatives. The "bridge" between the two was Irving Kristol, who had already become a Republican, and who, through a column in the *Wall Street Journal* and other periodicals, had become a major public thinker in American life. Now he was joined by Norman Podhoretz, who, principally because of his support of Israel and the Likud party, had come forth as a "hard-liner" on foreign policy. Also joining him was Jeanne Kirkpatrick, whose 1979 article in *Commentary*, suggesting that authoritarian regimes were subject to change but that totalitarian regimes were not, caught the attention of Mr. Reagan. Though a Democrat, Kirkpatrick was named the ambassador to the United Nations. The overtly ideological posture of the Reagan administration in foreign affairs also attracted a large segment of anticommunist Democrats and former Social Democrats who, having the political savvy and propaganda skills, moved into important ideological positions in the Republican administration—in the Voice of America, in the National Endowment for Democracy, and in the various negotiation teams dealing with the Soviets.

Dennis Wrong, in his review of the Steinfels book, remarked, apropos of the subtitle, that "It seems far more probable that American politics will change the men, rather than the other way round." I left the *Public Interest* 10 years after its founding. Senator Moynihan, challenging Reagan's ideological interventionism, advanced Wilsonian principles in international relations (defending international law).

And yet, in the last decade a distinctive neoconservative movement

did emerge in the United States, combining an ideological posture in foreign policy, a hostility to the welfare-state bureaucracy, a commitment to supply-side economics, and animosity to the "adversary culture." With the support of several conservative foundations, a large number of neoconservative journals have emerged which, until recently, have dominated the intellectual scene outside the universities. In addition to the *Public Interest*, there is now a seven-year-old sister magazine on foreign affairs, the *National Interest*, published by Mr. Kristol. Three major cultural periodicals are edited by neoconservatives: the *New Criterion*, a magazine devoted to the arts, edited by Hilton Kramer, a gifted art critic, yet often testy, even when justified, in his scathing remarks on left-wing cultural criticism; the *American Scholar*, the journal of Phi Beta Kappa, edited by Joseph Epstein, who writes a witty and barbed column on literary affairs; and *Partisan Review*, now more than 50 years old, edited by William Phillips, once the insignia of the New York intellectuals, but now, regrettably, a pale shadow of its former self. *Commentary*, published by the American Jewish Committee, is still a brilliantly edited journal, but focused relentlessly, if not monomaniacally, on attacks on the Left and the defense of Israeli hard-line policy. In addition, there is a slew of magazines supported by right-wing organizations, such as *Policy Review*, funded by the Heritage Foundation, and a number of conservative student magazines on the major campuses, funded by foundations where Kristol has an influential voice.

What is striking in all of this is the large chasm between the neoconservatives on one side and the liberal and Left cultures on the other, a split that reflects the different spheres of influence and antagonism between the two sides. The neoconservative influence is largely in Washington and government institutions (such as the grant-giving National Endowment for the Humanities) and in the spheres of public policy. The influence of the Left and liberal circles is predominantly in the universities, and since many of the neoconservatives are also professors, they feel themselves to be isolated and scorned within the universities, while leftists and liberals feel derided and attacked in government circles. And they may both be right.

The return of liberal philosophy

The third intellectual current of the past two decades, in addition to the activist New Left and the reactive neoconservative movements, has been an astonishing revival of philosophical liberalism.

Postwar America, it is said, demonstrated the triumph and exhaustion of political liberalism. The triumph was the entrenchment of the welfare state so firmly that three different Republican administrations, those of Nixon, Reagan, and Bush, could not dismantle it but only attempt to starve it. The exhaustion arose out of the realization that extravagant promises had been made—the elimination of poverty, the creation of

an adequate health-care system, the raising of educational standards—but that the costs had risen substantially and the systems increasingly were bogged down in bureaucratic swamps. While this has probably been a common feature of most advanced industrial societies, the situation in the United States was compounded by the Vietnam War, which not only sapped the moral self-confidence of the society but stalled the Great Society programs and unleashed a surge of inflation that took more than 20 years to wring out.

Yet a paradox emerges. While liberalism as public policy has been foundering, liberal political philosophy has exploded with great intellectual strength and excitement, reviving a field that had been moribund since mid-century. Four men, with a new analytic rigor, and by returning normative considerations to the precincts of philosophy, have been crucial to these changes.

The first is John Rawls of Harvard, whose book *A Theory of Justice* (1971) has inspired countless debates. Every society, argues Rawls, requires some allocative system for the “social primary goods” that comprise liberties, opportunities, economic resources, and conditions of self-respect. The question is how one designs a system that is both just and fair in the minds of its citizens. If one says, as do some conservatives, that one cannot “design” a set of social arrangements, how can one explain the U.S. Constitution, which laid out a framework of rights and representation that has worked for over 200 years?

A utilitarian system, such as that set forth by Jeremy Bentham, says that the community is a “fiction,” that rewards should go to individuals, and that justice is the “greatest good for the greatest number.” But is that fair if there are large disparities of income or privilege? How do we get individuals to agree on some common standard?

Rawls begins with the crucial point that scarcity will be present in any society (socialists had assumed that abundance would be created by technology) and that distributive allocations require a moral standard that is just for all. The novelty of Rawls’s scheme is that while it begins with an individualist premise, it forces individuals to achieve a collective consensus. The basis for this is not utilitarianism but a “social contract” founded on Kant’s argument that individuals would wish to universalize their positions.

Rawls’s innovation is to propose a game, a “veil of ignorance,” under which each person has to choose a “maximin” allocation of social primary goods (in rough terms, a “safety net”) that would be the measure of resources needed for each person to participate fully in the society, the measure which, as Aristotle pointed out in *Politics*, defines him as a citizen. That level, chosen for one’s self, behind the veil of ignorance, then becomes the standard for all.*

*In the old folk tale, the father allows the elder son to draw the division of the inherited land, but the other son has first choice after the division.

Ronald Dworkin, the second writer, though a professor of jurisprudence at Oxford, spends half his time in the United States and writes largely for American publications, notably the *New York Review of Books*, on U.S. constitutional issues. The title of an early collection of his essays, *Taking Rights Seriously* (1977), exemplifies his standpoint. Rights, in Dworkin's view, are not created by explicit political decision, such as prescribed by legal positivism, or by metaphysical natural law, but derive, following Rawls, from the "right to equal concern and respect" which each person has. While for Rawls the foundation of these rights is contractarian, for Dworkin rights derive from "our intuitions about justice," and from the fact that in the chain of interpretations and reasoning, rational discourse and argument will provide one "right" answer. (Aware, from criticism, of the weakness of his philosophical grounding, Dworkin has sought to find in the "integrity" of law, the concern for justice, an underlying coherence behind the empirical applications of law.)

Dworkin's major influence has been, however, in the application of the idea of rights to constitutional matters. The focus on "concern and respect" allows him to interpret the "equal protection" clause of the Fourteenth Amendment as extending to affirmative action for minorities and the "right to privacy," and from that to the right to "choice" in such matters as abortion and sexual preference.

Both Rawls and Dworkin, in their separate ways, seek to establish unitary standards for the polity, yet problems are posed by the fact that in the distribution of social goods there may be different rules for the distribution of wealth, power and status, and other social goods. And if there are different rules, how does one avoid contradiction or undue advantage? These are the questions raised by Michael Walzer, of the Institute for Advanced Study, in his thoughtful book, *Spheres of Justice* (1983). Walzer argues that different spheres may have their own relevant principles of distribution, founded in the social meanings and the values of these spheres. If wealth is gained freely, some inequality may exist. While everyone is entitled to respect, not everyone is entitled to praise or status (e.g., professorial position) in a university. The basic principle is that individuals who have authority or advantage in one sphere should not be able to convert those positions into advantages in the others (e.g., wealth into power or priority in access to medical care). In this way, Walzer seeks to maintain the principle of plurality and complex equality, so that domination cannot be exercised uniformly across the range of different spheres in society.

The fourth individual who has begun to influence moral and economic theory profoundly is the Indian-born economist and philosopher Amartya Sen, who, after a long career in England, now teaches at Harvard. What Sen has done is to clothe neoclassical economic theory with a set of ethical evaluations, providing a more complex view of the individual and his nature. In neoclassical formulations of economic behavior, a person is simply a "bundle of preferences," which are ordered, in a utility

scale, in respect to one's tastes or needs. For Sen, beginning from welfare economics, a person or a family is conceived of as a "bundle of entitlements," which consist of "endowments" (the labor power of its members) and the claims for social support such as unemployment assistance, social security, and the like.

Sen has applied this conceptual scheme most acutely to his analysis of famine and hunger. The former, as he showed in his study of the Bangladesh famine of 1974 (*Poverty and Famines*, 1981) and most recently, with Jean Drèze, in *Hunger and Public Action* (1989), is due not to the physical scarcity of food because of crop failures or drought, but to the social fact that the entitlements of individuals do not provide access to food. And as against the compassionate impulse of providing food through famine relief—which may lead to pilfering, corruption, or aid to people who are not needy—the better social policy is the redefinition of entitlements: providing public-works jobs for people for cash wages. The cash income activates the market for food, bypassing cumbersome administrative apparatus. Substituting jobs for outright grants of food, moreover, may reduce possibilities of corruption and political misuse.

These explorations by Rawls, Dworkin, Walzer, and Sen have stimulated many debates in moral and political philosophy, in ethics and economics, and over the meaning of individualism and community, and the nature of virtue and justice. The paradox is that while liberal political practices have thinned out, liberal political philosophy has "thickened." Whether this will open new roads in political programs or social policy remains to be seen.

III

The two most important political events at the turn of the decade have been the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and the war in the Persian Gulf. Surprisingly, neither of these events has left a strong imprint upon the intellectual community in the United States.

The reason for the insignificant response to the first is that in the last decade, if not before, few intellectuals had defended the Soviet Union or the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. In France, the intellectuals had been polarized between support for the Soviet Union or for the United States, and given a latent anti-Americanism and cries of imperialism, had tilted toward the Soviet Union and shrugged off revelations about the regime. That is why the volumes of Alexander Solzhenitsyn about the Gulag had such a shattering effect. When this was followed by the revelations of the repressions of the Cultural Revolution in China, the '68 generation, led by such "master thinkers" as André Glucksmann, turned strongly against the communist countries. In the United States,

however, there had been within the intellectual community a strong anticommunist force led by such people as Sidney Hook and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., while in the larger political ambience, anticommunism was represented by Hubert Humphrey and the AFL-CIO. What remained strong among the Left was an anti-Americanism and a denunciation of "imperialism," especially, during the Reagan years, in Latin America. There was a marked generational difference. The older generation of intellectuals had grown up with Stalinism as the central political question of their lives, and the successive disillusionments from the Moscow Trials on reinforced their anticommunism. For the New Left generation, all that was "ancient" history. The Vietnam War set their emotional bearings and provided the basis for their anti-American attitudes.

Has the collapse of communism also undercut Marxist ideas? Here the answer is more complex. Most economists and sociologists would agree that Marxism has little relevance for the building of a "socialist" society and that market mechanisms are necessary in a complex economy. Many might still argue that Marxism, in varying aspects, is useful for the analysis of capitalism and commodity production. A number of Marxist sociologists, such as Erik Olin Wright of the University of Wisconsin at Madison and Fred Block of the University of California at Davis, have moved away from stilted Marxist class analysis and adopted, in varying degrees, a post-Marxist or postindustrial scheme as the new feature of Western development. The most prominent exponent of Marxist economic ideas, Robert Heilbroner, has admitted the failure of "socialism," but continues, understandably, his criticism of capitalism. Some Marxist economists, notably John Roemer, have sketched the outlines of a socialist market economy as an alternative to private capitalism. But, by and large, all this is academic—even in the best sense of the word.

The Gulf War produced a complicated reaction among the intelligentsia, especially the Jewish intellectuals who have been so prominent in American life. Few supported the claims of Iraq, though writers in such places as the *Nation* saw U.S. actions as a further illustration of the imperialist drive to control oil. A number of writers, including the feminist Barbara Ehrenreich, the co-chair of the Democratic Socialists of America, took the position (reminiscent of the socialist leader Norman Thomas in 1939–1941) that radicals should concentrate their energies on evils at home rather than abroad. The majority of the intellectual community, like the Democratic Party in Congress, supported economic sanctions.

After the war began, the Democrats in Congress supported the administration. The *Nation* opposed the war. The two major liberal/Left magazines, *Dissent* and *Tikkun*, split internally on the question. *Dissent*, the long-time socialist but anti-New Left magazine edited by Irving Howe and Michael Walzer, refrained from an open statement because of divisions within its board. *Tikkun*, a new magazine made up of younger Jewish intellectuals, also divided, though its editor, Michael Lerner, supported the war with reservations. *Tikkun* (the Hebrew word for repair and re-

construction) had started a few years before as a counterpoint to *Commentary*. Ironically, *Commentary*, which began in 1945, had been the route for the younger Jewish intellectuals of the time to find their way back into Jewish life and even to celebrate American society. *Tikkun*, 40 years later, was itself a new route for the '68 New Left to find its way back into a Jewish identity and new roots in Jewish life. The new, strong identity with Israel became its first crisis, and the magazine divided.*

The amazing rapidity of the American-led victory in Iraq, however, also quieted the debate about the war. Many people were sickened by the huge number of casualties inflicted on the Iraqis. Many still question whether the decision to begin military action may not have been too precipitous. But some of this criticism has been stilled by the revelations of the hidden nuclear capabilities that Saddam Hussein had developed.

In the 40 or so years after World War II, American intellectual concerns had been oriented strongly to the political questions of Stalinism and the fates of the people in the Soviet bloc. What is striking now is how all this has moved so quickly into history. The rising problems of the recession and the starving of social services within the United States have turned attention inward. And this may be the most important development in American political and intellectual life today.

The Left was until recently unified around the strong emotional championing of the Third World and anti-imperialism. Now the Third World—to the extent that there is a single “Third World”—has lost its allure, particularly as many of these countries turn to market economies and the race issue in South Africa seems to be moving toward some resolution. There is bewilderment about the rise of nationalism and a quiet fear about the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, but few if any intellectuals have been able to confront these questions. Liberals still speak of the need to spread democracy throughout the world and to aid the nations of Eastern Europe economically (though there is also the awareness of a possible swing to the right in these countries). Politically, the Left (along with part of the Right) has become isolationist, and its attention has turned not only to domestic problems but, more, to the debates about the issues of feminism and gender and about multiculturalism in the schools. Not only politically but intellectually the world has become centripetal. It is to these whirling divisions that I shall now turn.

*The division over support of different forces in Israel is the fault line that divides Jewish intellectuals and cuts across many of the other divisions. *Tikkun* is a strong supporter of the Peace Now movement in Israel and of rapprochement with the Palestinians. But so are many figures identified with the neoconservatives, such as Nathan Glazer and Seymour Martin Lipset and myself. Liberal Jewish leaders, such as Henry Rosovsky, have initiated a movement called *Nishma* (“Let Us Listen”) to strengthen support for peace initiatives in Israel within the U.S. Jewish community, which often fears to speak out openly on these questions. But important publicists such as Norman Podhoretz and Irving Kristol support Yitzhak Shamir and the Likud.

IV

For the intellectual, in the beginning is the word, and the word is truth, power, and glory. Inevitably, the competition for these coronets leads to a war of words. In the past decade one can identify three *Kulturkämpfe* in the American intellectual playground, often with a surprise crossing of old lines.

1. *Neocons* vs. *paleocons*. These odd-sounding abbreviations for neoconservatives and paleo- (old) conservatives would be of only minor interest if not for the ugly manifestations of anti-Semitism that have broken through the surfaces of the controversy.

For years, conservatives chafed at their outcast status in American intellectual life. The banner of conservatism had been raised in 1953, by the author Russell Kirk, whose book, *The Conservative Mind*, received attention because of the revival of interest in Edmund Burke and for Kirk's belief in order and tradition, hierarchy and authority, and the concept of an organic society—strange sentiments in a plural and immigrant society such as the United States, sentiments that seemed to give off echoes of the famous *I'll Take My Stand* (1930) manifesto of the Southern Agrarians, including John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and Cleanth Brooks, and their attack on the harsh industrialism they had seen as disrupting the traditions of the old South.

But conservatism in the United States broke into the national scene with the appearance of *National Review* in 1955 and the quirky brilliance of its editor, William F. Buckley, Jr. The core of *National Review* was its anticommunism and the leading role in its editorial board of a group of former communist or Trotskyist intellectuals, including Whittaker Chambers, James Burnham, William Schlammm, and Frank Meyer, rather than any single philosophical conservative vision. Indeed, a free-market capitalism that is wholly disruptive of tradition, let alone the libertarianism of Ayn Rand (who was cast out in the cold by *National Review* for her anti-religious sentiments), always sat uneasily with the organicist views of a Richard Weaver, an *éminence grise* of conservative thought. It was politics, not philosophy, that made conservatism prominent.

The emergence of the neocons in the 1970s, an able and articulate group, gave conservatism a new vocabulary and a new visibility. But their writings were marked more by skepticism than by a philosophical orientation. To the extent that there was a philosophical backdrop it was the writings of the late Leo Strauss, a political philosopher at the University of Chicago. Strauss attacked the subjectivism of modernity and espoused the foundational ideas of virtue and excellence that are to be found in classical political writings. Strauss attracted a strong group of exegetes, and through them a cohort of younger acolytes who today occupy key staff positions in the executive branch of the Republican administration. His most famous disciple is Allan Bloom, at the University of Chicago, whose

book on education, *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987), became a startling best-seller, and whose own disciple, Francis Fukuyama, achieved wide notoriety with his essay, subsequently converted into a book, *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992). Irving Kristol acknowledges Strauss's influence.

The success of the neoconservatives in gaining intellectual attention and in influencing conservative foundations to support a myriad of neoconservative magazines, conferences, and organizations, has angered the paleocons, who have felt excluded from the front pews of politics. The antagonisms first broke out publicly in 1981, when the paleocons proposed as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, M. E. Bradford, then a professor at the University of Dallas. Bradford had written a scholarly denigration of Abraham Lincoln, had opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which struck down race segregation, and had twice supported the Alabama segregationist George Wallace for president. The neocons proposed William Bennett, the director of the non-governmental National Humanities Center in North Carolina, and, after a bitter public battle, Bennett was chosen. (Subsequently, Bennett became secretary of education in the Reagan administration, the drug czar in the Bush administration, and is now an editor of *National Review*.)

These antagonisms simmered for a decade but broke out more openly in recent years as the old unifying ideological issues have receded. At a 1986 meeting of the Philadelphia Society, Stephen Tonsor of the University of Michigan identified conservatism with Christianity and tied neoconservatism to the "instantiation of modernity among secularized Jewish intellectuals." (What is strange is that two of the leading neoconservative thinkers are Peter Berger of Boston University, a Lutheran who has written a number of profound books on religion, and Richard John Neuhaus, the editor of *First Things*, a Lutheran pastor turned Catholic.) And Russell Kirk, the avatar of the paleocons, delivered a speech to the Heritage Foundation, an aggressive right-wing organization (whose research director at the time, Burton Pines, is Jewish), asserting that the preservation of Israel "lies in back of everything" the neocons believe in, and "not seldom it has seemed as if some eminent neoconservatives mistook Tel Aviv for the capital of the United States."

Israel is the nub of the matter, and what might have been a heated teapot quarrel among old and late newcomers for the front seats on the political bench has now become an open and vitriolic public matter. The man who made it so is Patrick J. Buchanan, the former Nixon and Reagan speechwriter, a nationally syndicated columnist and television personality, who has challenged President Bush for the Republican nomination. Buchanan's speeches have become a rallying point for the cranky, the fundamentalist, and the frustrated sections of the electorate.

Buchanan, a pugnacious and brawling "macho" personality, took an isolationist stand on the Gulf War and accused the Jews of leading the call

for American intervention. "There are only two groups beating the drums for war in the Middle East," he said on a television show, "the Israeli Defense Ministry and its amen corner in the United States." And in a syndicated column, he attacked the neoconservatives, saying: "Hadn't we made a terrible mistake when we brought the ideological vagrants in off the street and gave them a warm place by the fire?"

The virulence of these remarks has precipitated a crisis in the ranks of conservatism. "Which side are you on?" has now become a question that conservative writers are forced to confront. In a remarkable special issue of *National Review* (which will be published as a book) William F. Buckley, Jr., explored the ramifications of this question, and concluded, in part, that Pat Buchanan has "said things about the Jews that could not reasonably be interpreted as other than anti-Semitic in tone and in substance." Buckley raised the ominous corollary: Ten years ago, Buchanan would not have been able to make his statements publicly; the shadow of Auschwitz is now fading and no longer inhibits expressions of overt anti-Semitism. Like the covert issue of race, raised by the former Klansman David Duke, and the growth of isolationism and attacks on foreigners, the revival of anti-Semitism portends a possible dark period in American life. So far it is a small cloud, but the fact that prominent intellectuals and publicists—and even almost all of the paleocons—are willing to use these issues publicly, makes one somewhat fearful of the political storms ahead.

2. *Liberals and Communitarians.* If the ugly battle between the paleocons and neocons is largely within the corridors of power and influence in Washington, the dispute between liberals and communitarians is within the ivory tower of political philosophy, and only secondarily is there a spill over into social policy. In a broad sense, both camps are "liberal" in having a melioristic stance, though one end of the continuum moves to an individualist libertarianism and the other to defining the community as prior to individual rights.

One should start, perhaps, with the "players" to locate the different positions in the argument. On the liberal side are the older figures such as John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin, insofar as they take the individual as the foundation of their philosophies. A more activist, younger group is centered in the new policy journal, the *American Prospect*, co-edited by Paul Starr, a sociologist at Princeton University, and Robert Kuttner, an economist. The journal sets itself up in opposition to the *Public Interest*. One of Starr's concerns has been to differentiate liberalism from socialism, insofar as New Deal liberalism has been loosely identified as a form of reformist socialism.

On the communitarian side, there are Michael Sandel, Robert Bellah, and Alasdair MacIntyre. The movement's publicist is Amitai Etzioni, a sociologist at George Washington University who edits a journal, the *Responsive Community*. Etzioni, for example, asserts that the defense of individual rights has gone so far as to hobble the work of public-

health authorities (in AIDS testing) and the police. Sandel, along with many feminists, would allow communities to curb pornography, and Sandel would also limit the power of firms in closing plants.

Off to one side (is it left or right?) are libertarians such as Robert Nozick, who had championed the idea of the minimal state but has recently modified his views, and the Cato Institute in Washington, D.C., a group that expresses a thoroughgoing laissez-faire in all fields, from economics to morals, including the legalization of drugs. (One should point out that some people often thought of as conservative, such as the free-market leader Milton Friedman, also support the legalization of drugs, on prudential as well as libertarian grounds.) At the edge, falling off the continuum, perhaps, are the followers of Ayn Rand, who espouse individual freedom based on reason in all fields. If there is a position further over on the communitarian side, it would be the espousers of "civic republicanism," as expressed by the English political philosopher Quentin Skinner and the British-born historian of ideas, (now at Johns Hopkins) J. G. Pocock—though their growing influence has been primarily in the history of ideas and the languages of political theory rather than in explicit contemporary issues.

At the heart of the problem is the dilemma expressed most sharply by Rousseau, that in modern society man is both *bourgeois* and *citoyen*, having egoistic self-interests and obligations to the community. Rousseau's answer was to dissolve egoism by having each person surrender all his rights to the general will, which becomes the single moral person. At the other end was Jeremy Bentham, who said that the community was a "fiction," and that society is made up only of individuals whose desires are expressed by their utility preferences.

In the language of contemporary political philosophy, the issue has been posed as *right* versus *good*. Michael Sandel of Harvard, in his *Liberalism and Its Critics* (1984), criticizes the abstract individual of Rawls's fictional contract by claiming that in "the absences of common purposes" there is only "moral chaos," and that an individual can be treated only as a member of a community and the social ties in which he is embedded. Alasdair MacIntyre, a peripatetic philosopher who, having explored all 57 varieties of contemporary modernism, has come to rest in the Aristotelian bedrock of civic virtue, emphasizes the "socially established," "shared activities," and "shared understandings" of art and politics. The recurrent theme in these commitments is the underlying foundation of "the common good."

But in a plural society, how far do "shared understandings" extend, and how common is the common good? Some efforts have been made to establish what may be called "mediating positions." Michael Walzer, as I explained earlier, accepts the particularities of different realms and different principles of distributive justice, but seeks to prevent the conversion of positions in one realm into advantages in others. Robert Bellah, the influential sociologist at Berkeley, has, with his associates, in their book

The Good Society (1991), emphasized the need to strengthen *institutions*, which provide attachments to society, rather than the untrammelled claims of individuals. Yet the emphasis on commonality still may fail to answer the fears once expressed by Reinhold Niebuhr, that "collective egoism" (e.g., nationalism or syndicalism) may be worse than "individual egoism" in distorting the nature of distributive justice.

Liberal responses to these dilemmas are of two kinds. One is the argument of Isaiah Berlin that in every society there is, intrinsically, a plurality of ends or values that inevitably clash (such as a merit principle based on achievement and an ascriptive principle based on redress for past injustices, the basis for affirmative action) and that the central feature of any liberal society has to be the *procedural* frameworks that encourage negotiation. A different argument emphasizes the distinction between the public and private realms, and proposes, as this writer has done, a "public household" for the issues of distributive goods, and a private realm, of morals and personal conduct, left free to individuals.

Much of this debate has taken place in the abstract realms of political philosophy, but rarely have these rival positions led to consistent stands on matters of public policy such as pornography, drugs, affirmative action, the limits of expression in the arts, abortion, and the like. To the extent that one can identify some consistency, the line-ups would look like this:

- Liberals seek some regulation in the economy, but few restrictions on morals.
- Communitarians would seek regulation in the economic market but also some controls on social behavior and restriction of some rights.
- Neoconservatives want a free market in the economy, but social tutelage in morals.
- Libertarians want a free market in the economy and in all other spheres of private conduct.

What is important to stress, however, is that these debates are occurring within a very different context from the one in which the fevered ideological struggles of the previous 50 years over socialism and capitalism occurred. By and large there is a broad consensus on the idea of a civil society *and* a market economy. The market, necessarily, emphasizes the role of individuals and firms in responding to price signals and shaping allocations by their demands. The civil society emphasizes the role of institutions and voluntary associations outside the state, through which individuals can work collectively to achieve their common ends. The question, in all these instances, is what kind of balance can be struck amid the competing nature of the different ends.

3. *Multiculturalism, the canon, and political correctness.* In the past several years, the most rancorous cultural war has been over the questions—

or should one say labels—of multiculturalism, political correctness, the canon, Eurocentrism, deconstructionism, and similar recondite terms in what St. Augustine once called “the bazaar of loquacity.”

This has taken place principally in the universities, and there largely in the humanities, over the definition of “core” courses in civilization required of all students. In the primary and secondary schools, there has been a more focused conflict about curriculum, specifically concerning textbooks in American history, especially in the cities where minority groups (black and Hispanic) are in control. And in politics it has involved primarily the government institutions that fund cultural projects, such as the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Behind all this may be a larger change in the cultural climate, in which a cultural populism and even a cultural relativism have taken hold. This change is signified by the attack on “the canon,” the idea that there is a body of crucial moral and imaginative works that every educated person should know (or know of!), the erasure of the distinction between “high” culture and “low” culture, and the spread of the view (most strongly signified by deconstructionism) that there can be no authoritative reading of a text, that an author’s intention is irrelevant to the understanding of the text, and that the reader’s response is the starting point for analysis. That this is a caricature of serious work in hermeneutics, one of the oldest fields of exegetical studies, going back to early study of the Bible, or even of “deconstructionism,” is to some extent beside the point, for it is the vulgar voices that speak the loudest on their behalf.

Yet much of this also merges with the trendy term “postmodernism,” which, given its contradictory meanings in architecture, literature, painting, and the arts—the jumbling of styles from past and present in architecture, the mixing of figurative and abstract in painting, the self-conscious use of pastiche and parody in the arts, and the exuberant use of all modes to explode any and all definitions of genre—allows all of these meanings to be presented as equally relevant. But relevant to what?

While many of these fashions have been pervasive throughout Europe, in American culture—and in what other society could this have been possible?—there have been three distinctive turns:

- *aesthetic*—the spread of a relativism that denies the idea of standards and judgment in art;
- *sociological*—the replacement of class by race and gender as the meaningful terms for social divisions in society and the cruxes of power;
- *philosophical*—the denial of Western civilization as the source of our basic questions in epistemology, morals, and politics, and the rejection of required reading of classical works in the university curriculum.

In the debates that have wracked the cultural world in the last several years, deconstructionism, as first formulated by Jacques Derrida, has

been taken as the ultimate source of the nihilist temper. But this "construction" would be an intellectual mistake. Deconstructionism is but one of several intellectual streams that have emerged in recent decades that seek to set forth means of decoding a text. The question of meaning is the most vexing problem in the history of philosophy and literature.

In our time, there have been many efforts to restate a text in some extra-literary categories: Marxism with its "de-mystification" of formal or legal relations; psychoanalysis as the effort to uncover unconscious and sexual roots of displaced motivations; structuralism, from Saussure to Lévi-Strauss, in its statement of the formal properties of language itself to establish a system of literary and social relations.

With Derrida, there ensues what Morris Dickstein has called "the vertigo of interpretation." Deconstructionism is not, as its acolytes assert, "destruction," but de-construction, the effort to undermine both construction and destruction. Like a throwback to ancient Pyrrhonism, deconstructionism seeks to uncover the internal contradictions of a text, to undermine its coherence and reject any idea of a "privileged" meaning, and to overturn "hierarchies"—that of nature over culture, male over female, of writing over speech. Like every new cult, it has its own hermetic language that one must learn in order to partake in the Elysian mysteries—*différance*, absence/presence, *aporia* (the insoluble conflict between rhetoric and thought)—and a group of hierophants to instruct the initiates. A delicious way of having one's cake, and crumbling it.

Apart from the claim that the nature of figurative language is the primary clue to understanding (allowing some literary theorists to argue that science is only a "rhetoric" not an ordering of nature), what made deconstructionism attractive to others was its coupling by some writers with the work of Michel Foucault. Foucault sought to eliminate the Cartesian "subject" as an exemplary of the bourgeois ego, (to "de-construct" Man in his own language) and thus destroy humanism and the assertion of man's powers over nature. What gave deconstructionism its explosive public notice was the revelation in 1986 that Paul de Man, the mystagogue of deconstructionism in the United States until his death in 1983, had in his youth written more than 100 articles for a collaborationist magazine in Belgium, many of these attacking the Jews as alien to European culture and praising the "Hitlerian soul," and had never told this to any of his colleagues at Yale, many of whom were Jewish. The effort to link de Man's life with his theories became the object of furious controversies in American literary studies.

Movements such as deconstructionism have given rise to attacks on tradition and established thought. The most widespread has been the attack on "the canon," the view that there is a body of literature that stands apart from the vicissitudes of time and place and that transcends the particularities of culture and class. But this rejection

is more than a denial of any fixed body of works making claims to be masterpieces. It is the repudiation of the very idea that any canon, or any such set of judgments, is possible.

One of the novel sources of this view is the assertion that the canon is shaped by white, male, patriarchal literary standards. Barbara Herrnstein Smith of Duke, a former president of the Modern Language Association (the professional organization in the field), writes: "Minorities and women perceive and experience the world differently. These perspectives now collide with those of white males." *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* (1985) goes hunting through the centuries for evidence of the "intrinsic separateness and unique particularity" of women as writers. That there may be such evidence cannot be gainsaid, but what is eschewed is any judgment of quality, or Virginia Woolf's dictum that mind and imagination have no gender but are the common founts of the creative talent.

These attacks have been widened by Houston A. Baker, Jr., a black literary theorist at the University of Pennsylvania, and the new head of the Modern Language Association. He regards reading and writing as "technologies of control," and charges that the literature read in the schools "perpetuates Western hegemonic arrangements of knowledge." Choosing between Virginia Woolf and Pearl Buck, he has remarked, is "no different than between a hoagie and a pizza."

Yet what is striking is that "minorities" and "women" are taken as generic terms, as if no differences existed within these groups, the way, 60 years ago, "bourgeois" and "proletarian" were used in Marxist literary criticism to separate different categories of writers. (Who, today, recognizes the names of the "proletarian writers" of the 1930s, such as Jack Conroy, Robert Cantwell, Clara Weatherwax, Fielding Burke, Grace Lumpkin, the latter three being women, as against the "bourgeois" writers such as Hemingway, Faulkner, and Fitzgerald?) In the same way, any distinction between high culture and low culture is erased, and both, as well as films or painting, are interpreted as "reflections" of the age. What is ironic is that a vulgar sociology, driven out of the sociology of knowledge a generation ago, returns stridently through the prism of popular culture. But, then, historical memory has also been erased.

The politicization of these issues has arisen from the effort to introduce "multicultural" education into the schools, from the primary schools to the universities. As a nation of immigrants, America has been hospitable to such efforts, and particularly in recent years history textbooks have been revised to present the various immigrant experiences. But the agenda now is different, namely to attack Western civilization itself as "cultural imperialism." As one black writer states, liberation is impossible "until the white monopoly on Black minds is broken." The Eurocentric curriculum, asserts Molefi Kete Asante, is "killing our children, killing their minds."

Much of this has been given impetus by a work of the British sinolo-

gist now teaching at Cornell, Martin Bernal, in his book *Black Athena* (1987). Bernal has argued that what is called Western civilization began in Egypt, a part of Africa, and that Greek thought and other foundations of Western ideas were derivations of African civilization. This claim is now the basis for many Afro-American studies programs in U.S. schools.

All of this has become a "progressive orthodoxy" at many American universities, and efforts to challenge such views often run into what is now called "political correctness." More than a 100 universities, according to Dinesh D'Souza in his book *Illiberal Education* (1991), a conservative exposé of these issues, now have "speech codes" that prohibit racially or sexually "stigmatizing" or offensive speech. And the political and social atmosphere on most campuses, which are predominantly liberal in their outlook, discourages expressions of "sexist" or "homophobic" or "racial" remarks.

Even the First Amendment has come under suspicion. As Stanley Fish of Duke University, the loquacious leader of the literary guerrillas, has written in the *Boston Review*: "... words and phrases and concepts ... generative of [progressive left] politics have been appropriated by the forces of neoconservatism. This is particularly true of the concept of free speech [which] has been used to justify policies and actions that the left finds problematical if not abhorrent: pornography, sexist language, campus hate speech ... Free speech, in short, is not an independent value, but a political prize and if that prize has been captured by a politics opposed to [the Left] it can no longer be invoked in ways that further [the Left's] purposes and is now an obstacle to those purposes."

A strange echo, one must say, of the remarks of Herbert Marcuse almost 30 years ago, in *One Dimensional Man*, that bourgeois society practices "repressive tolerance" by giving artists freedom the better to control them.

V

How does one evaluate the seriousness of the developments in American intellectual life? Deconstructionism has already begun to diminish as an intellectual fashion. Its emphasis on a self-contained or contradictory set of internal differences in a text, rather than the relation of text to external reality, often ends in a logorrheic set of word games. As an interest, it is being replaced by the "new historicism," exemplified by the work of Stephen Greenblatt at Berkeley, which reads literary texts and history in relation to the linguistic conventions of the time. Whatever the problematic relation of the new historicism to radicalism (and that would be, if at all, a generational dimension) it is a return to literature and the world, rather than just another exercise in theory and tropes.

More directly, deconstructionism may have received an intellectual and ultimately mortal blow with the disclosure of Paul de Man's early anti-Semitic writings. It is true that doctrines may not be related integrally to the individual. T. S. Eliot made anti-Semitic remarks in his poetry, but these prejudices do not vitiate the power of his verse. And many of the practitioners of deconstructionism are Jewish, such as Derrida himself and Geoffrey Hartman at Yale. But one can apply a moral judgment to de Man only if we see that language decidedly refers to reality, that meanings are not necessarily indeterminate, that the "self" does exist and can be used to elucidate an author's intention, and that the truth can be established—all of which the deconstructionists have denied. And if one does deny that, then all moral discourse is meaningless.

The humanities "establishment" has become defensive about its activities. In 1989, the American Council of Learned Societies issued a long statement, "Speaking for the Humanities," signed by six directors of humanities centers in six universities, which sought to answer the criticisms of Allan Bloom as well as William Bennett, then the secretary of education, and Lynne Cheney, the director of the National Endowment for the Humanities. In defense, and in moderate tones, the authors pointed out that "Modern thought has—or ought to have—made us uncertain about the boundaries and limits of knowledge," and that modern social science has indicated "that all thought inevitably derives from particular standpoints, perspectives and interests."

This is true, but what is striking is the authors' failure to follow through from these premises. While modern thought has widened the boundaries of knowledge and expanded the nature of *experiences*, surely a useful point, that does not deal with the *judgments* one makes about the qualities of that knowledge or how they relate to the recurrent and perennial moral dilemmas of mankind. And while thought may *derive* from particular standpoints, the *truth* of a generalization does not necessarily depend upon that standpoint. What we have here is a confusion of epistemology. Worse, the Council statement says nothing about the extremist declarations of Barbara Herrnstein Smith, Houston A. Baker, Jr., Stanley Fish, and others, which are destructive of the humanities.

Inevitably the sweeping attacks on the cultural imperialism of the canon, the arbitrary classification of knowledge and literature as male versus female and as white versus black, and the reduction of literature to "hegemony" and "power" have provoked counterattacks. A book on de Man and deconstructionism by David Lehman, *Signs of the Times: Deconstruction and the Fall of Paul de Man* (1991), has ignited wide controversy and much soul-searching in the world of literature. The book by Dinesh D'Souza on "political correctness" has been praised by C. Vann Woodward, the most respected American historian, in the *New York Review of Books* and by Eugene Genovese, a onetime radical and foremost Marxist historian, in the *New Republic*. Irving Howe, the editor of *Dissent*, and one of the elders of American radicalism and a literary critic in the

Wilson, Trilling, Kazin tradition, defended the canon in a special issue of the *New Republic*, remarking, "The Bible, Homer, Plato, Sophocles, Shakespeare are central to our culture." And Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., the foremost liberal writer of the older generation, in the book *The Disuniting of America* (1991), criticizes a New York state report proposing a new multicultural curriculum for the public schools, saying: "Consider the present-day American literary canon: Emerson, Jefferson, Melville, Whitman, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Lincoln, Twain, Dickinson, William and Henry James, Henry Adams, Holmes, Dreiser, Faulkner, O'Neill. Lackeys of the ruling class? Apologists for the privileged and the powerful? Agents of American imperialism? Come on!"

As Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who has emerged as probably the leading black literary critic in the United States, has written in the *New York Times Book Review*, though ethnic or sexual identity is an integral aspect of a writer, "No human culture is inaccessible to someone who makes the effort to understand, to learn, to inhabit another world."

VI

The cultural issues that dominated American intellectual life in the mid-years of the century were primarily Modernism and Marxism. Modernism has been absorbed into cultural history, and its later unwinding trails have become simply trendy fashion. It is doubtful that anyone today takes the phrase *avant-garde* seriously. The very term postmodernism indicates the lack of a coherent definition, and its stylistic tricks have become the commonplace staple of television. Marxism has dissolved as an intellectual scheme, and facets of it are now becoming integrated into other perspectives in sociology and political theory. The 1950s saw an interest in existentialism and religion, questions raised by Sartre and Camus, by Tillich, Niebuhr, and Barth. None of these writers is discussed today. The 1950s also saw an effort to understand the complexities of American life through sophisticated sociological reportage, but this was swamped by the upsurge of radicalism in the late 1960s and only now is slowly beginning to return, in such work as Nicholas Lemann's *The Promised Land* (1991), a study of the northward migration of some black families.

The striking thing about the radicalism of the 1960s was its anti-intellectualism and the denunciation of imperialism, though what was propounded was a contradictory mixture of a Leninist theory of imperialism, which said that capitalism would spread throughout the world, and a neo-Marxist theory that capitalism would inhibit the growth of peripheral countries in order to enforce dependency. One looks in vain for any major theoretical innovation since the '60s, other than the "world-systems analysis" of capitalism of Immanuel Wallerstein (inspired by the histori-

cal work of Fernand Braudel), which foretold a socialist revolution sweeping the world in the 21st century but could not account for the decline of the international working class. (Perhaps the "external proletariat" will rise again.)

What is striking about the current intellectual scene is how few individuals have come to the fore as intellectuals speaking to a wide public audience. In 1974, the sociologist Charles Kadushin published a book, *The American Intellectual Elite*, in which he identified 70 people who had been named as "the most prestigious intellectuals" in 1970. Of the first group of 11, four have died, but the others retain their prominence today. Of the second group of 10, six remain prominent, indicating, perhaps, the early age when they began to write and be recognized.*

Of the major Left intellectual figures who emerged in the 1970s—Christopher Lasch, historian and moralist, and Eugene Genovese, historian and sometime editor of *Marxist Perspectives*—both are today disillusioned. Lasch remains skeptical of liberalism and espouses a faith in radical populism, even while he praises traditional family and religious ideals. Genovese, more deeply skeptical of all creeds, has come to appreciate the virtues of the conservative writers of the antebellum South.

To the extent that a group of public intellectuals has appeared, they are primarily journalists who write with a depth of historical or philosophical analysis: George Will, the conservative columnist; Leon Wieseltier, the literary editor of the *New Republic*; Garry Wills, a critic of the Establishment writing for the *New York Review of Books*; and Christopher Jencks, a onetime writer for the *New Republic* and now professor of sociology at Northwestern University, who has written the most careful and wide-ranging studies of poverty and inequality in the United States.

What is perhaps most surprising is that as radical historians have looked back, among them Sean Wilentz at Princeton and Richard Pells of the University of Texas at Austin, they have found a new appreciation of the once-scorned 1950s period in intellectual life. As Pells writes in his book, *The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age* (1984):

These intellectuals . . . all shared a disenchantment with the political and cultural radicalism of the 1930s, together with the need to ask new questions and explore new tensions of a 'post-industrial' society . . . [T]heir desire to act as free-floating intellectuals . . . offered more provocative and imaginative criticism of their society than one can find in the manifestoes of either the 1930s or the 1960s. Indeed, I regard Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*, William Whyte's *The Organization Man*, John Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society*, Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd*, Daniel Bell's "Work and its Discontents," Dwight MacDonald's *Against the*

*The first group of 11 (two tied for 10th place) were arranged alphabetically. The asterisks before their names indicate, sadly, the deceased: Daniel Bell; Noam Chomsky; John Kenneth Galbraith; Irving Howe; *Dwight MacDonald; Norman Mailer; *Mary McCarthy; Robert Silvers; Susan Sontag; *Lionel Trilling; *Edmund Wilson. Of the second group, numbers 11 to 20: *Hannah Arendt; Saul Bellow; *Paul Goodman; *Richard Hofstadter; Irving Kristol; *Herbert Marcuse; Daniel Patrick Moynihan; Norman Podhoretz; David Riesman; Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

American Grain, Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America*, Daniel Boorstin's *The Image*, and C. Wright Mills's *The Power Elite* as superior in quality to any comparable collection of works produced in America during other periods of the 20th century.

The intellectual life in the United States today is often quite vigorous and scholarly in specific realms. The most striking change is in political and moral philosophy. Thirty years ago, arguments over these questions had been ruled out of philosophy by a positivism that called them emotive or not subject to verification. But philosophical writing in recent years has challenged the normative/factual distinction, while constitutional debates have brought moral issues to the fore.

Richard Rorty has established a reputation for his repudiation of epistemology and his espousal of dialogue as the more meaningful mode of discourse. Hilary Putnam has proposed a modified ground of realism, and Bernard Williams (trans-Atlantic since he spends half the year at Berkeley) has proposed a radical skepticism in ethics. Thomas Nagel on moral questions, Charles Taylor on the nature of the self, and Judith Shklar on the role of ordinary virtues are names that have some public recognition.

In law, the proposed elevation to the Supreme Court of Robert Bork, a former Yale professor, provoked a stormy public debate when he challenged the extension of constitutional reasoning to the issues of privacy. Ronald Dworkin and Laurence Tribe write on public issues, often in the *New York Review of Books*. Some of the most vigorous writing on the law has come from a panoply of conservative writers such as Richard Epstein and John Hart Ely, and from some conservative judges sitting on high benches, such as Antonin Scalia on the Supreme Court, Frank Easterbrook and Alex Kozinski on the appeals courts, and the prolific Richard Posner, who has led the way in applying economic reasoning to legal questions.

Economists long ago entered the public arena. Nobel laureates such as Paul Samuelson, Milton Friedman, Robert Solow, and James Tobin, and a number of others have been deeply involved in public-policy questions, none more strikingly than 36-year-old Jeffrey Sachs of Harvard, who has been a major adviser to the governments of Poland and Russia on the conversion to a market economy. But the resolutions these economists propose are more technical than ideological and rarely extend, as debate did up to a decade ago, into the wider intellectual spheres.

Literary theory—other than the vulgar forays into pop sociology—has become virtually hermetic. Kadushin, in his study almost 20 years ago, listed 33 magazines read regularly by the elite intellectuals in his sample. Most of these—*Commentary*, the *American Scholar*, *Daedalus*, *Partisan Review*—have declined drastically in circulation; only the *New York Review of Books* retains a wide audience. If one identifies what today might be considered the leading literary journals, few would have any recognition outside the literary field, and it is doubtful that any are

even read outside the field.*

More to the point, the critics who 40 or so years ago wrote for the intelligent "common reader," such as Edmund Wilson, Lionel Trilling, Alfred Kazin, or Irving Howe, are now dismissed by the literary theorists as "amateurs," for one does not find in their writings the necessary recondite references to Greimas, Propp, Lottman, or other esoteric sources of phonology or semiology and other gnostic tracks into the lair of the Minotaur. Umberto Eco has no counterpart in the United States.

It is not only specialization that has fragmented the intellectual world. Today one finds enclaves that are focused largely on their own concerns and, in some instances, their own ideologies. The most obvious one is the body of feminist critics who have sought to re-interpret the entire range of imaginative writing from their particular perspective, scholarly critics such as Elaine Showalter (Princeton), Catharine Stimpson (Rutgers), Patricia Meyer Spacks (Virginia), Barbara Johnson (Harvard)—though a very powerful critic, Helen Vendler (Harvard), has protested the excesses.

The other major enclave is the black intellectuals. Twenty or 30 years ago, the claims to a special black sensibility were couched largely in nationalist language and were intended less in scholarly than in polemical terms. In recent years, a group of younger black thinkers has emerged, primarily in the university, who have quite thoughtfully begun to debate questions of identity, affirmative action, group coherence, and the like. Orlando Patterson, a sociologist at Harvard, has pointed out that blacks could not claim they have been crippled psychologically through historical disadvantage and at the same time claim the right to compete equally with whites. William Julius Wilson at Chicago has argued that the disadvantages of class, not race, better explain the persistence of black poverty. Conservative black economists such as Thomas Sowell and Glenn Loury reject government welfare programs as being more inimical to the black community and the black family than helpful. Stephen Carter of Yale has questioned the continuing validity of affirmative action, while Randall Kennedy of the Harvard Law School has launched a lively new magazine, *Reconstruction*, to provide a forum for all these questions. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., now at Harvard, a gifted and nimble critic, equally at home with technical literary lingo and with public forums, may now be the focus of Afro-American studies, inasmuch as he has become the head of the Du Bois Institute and the Afro-American studies program at Harvard.

The problems are those of *particularity* and *parochialism*. The claims of particular sensibilities are, like all claims to private language in philosophy, hermetic unless there are some public and shared understandings

*A list compiled by this writer, by asking various book publishers to identify the leading journals, includes: *Critical Inquiry* (Chicago), *South Atlantic Quarterly* (Duke), *Diacritics* (Cornell), *New Literary History* (Virginia), *Representations* (Berkeley), and *Raritan* (Rutgers). *Critical Inquiry*, which has been named as the most important, has a circulation of 3,700.

between readers and writers of different groups. Otherwise one is shuttled, as in the ancient theological debates, between the Monophysites and Nestorians, or is left hanging on the diphthong that separated Homousians from Homoiousians in the war of sects.

The parochialism of the intellectuals is a symptom of the breakdown of the larger cultural community. Fifty or so years ago, American intellectuals still sought eagerly to share in the cultural life of other countries and to maintain a relationship with European culture. Some of that was due to the huge influx of Europeans during the Nazi period into all fields of American culture—literature, painting, music, as well as the sciences—which gave American life a cosmopolitanism it had previously lacked. Some of it was still the mythos of the Hemingway-Fitzgerald generation seeking to escape the constrictions of American small-town life, some the insatiable curiosity of the New York intellectuals, children of an immigrant generation who sought to claim European culture as their legitimate legacy.

Now, almost all of those impulses and curiosities are gone. Few American writers know the names of counterparts in France, Italy, or Germany. Professional interests have multiplied and professional ties and travel have thickened in different scholarly fields, but the cultural ties have thinned. A sense of exhaustion marks intellectual life, if seen from that broad consideration. Among writers, the generation of Faulkner and Cummings, shaped by World War I, is gone, and that of Bellow and Malamud passing, and only Philip Roth has engaged in the heroic effort to introduce Central European writers to an American public. The next generation of American writers—such as Thomas Pynchon or J. D. Salinger—have retreated, some into silence. The younger writers, the post-Vietnam generation of Don DeLillo, Robert Stone, and Michael Herr, still fueled by rage, play out a phantasmagoria of American life, though Stone has recently become more reflective. For the rest, there are minimalist tricks (Ann Beattie), or *Vanity Fair* pursuits.

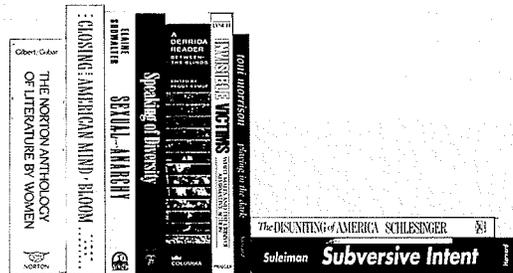
Perhaps there are no more surprises in the world of culture, as the muddle, jumble, tumble of postmodernism attests. As one once talked of the end of ideology, and even the end of history, there is also the theme (enunciated by Arthur Danto) of the end of art. But in the humanist tradition, or even in the philosophy of Hegel, the concept of *end* did not mean the vanishing of forms but of time, and therefore the re-introduction of philosophy, or *realized* form. One hears that new adventures in technology—mixed media, computer-generated images, radical juxtapositions of materials, virtual reality—will open up new horizons. It reminds one a little of the radical agitator who used to proclaim that communism was on the horizon, until he was told that the horizon is an imaginary line that recedes as you approach it.

All of this is past and present. The future, however, may be vastly different, for America itself is changing in far different ways than it has

before. Apart from the persistent problems of poverty and racial tensions, what may be happening is the unraveling of the middle class, and the erosion of its comfortable expectations about the American future. As the economist Robert Solow has written, this generation may be the first in American history that will leave its children poorer than itself. The economic foundation for culture is beginning to show cracks.

For the intellectuals, and the culture, there is another import. The "project" that framed intellectual life during the past 200 years in the West has been utopianism and universalism, the direction of history laid down by the Enlightenment. Those larger visions have now receded and, in a different sense, the terrain in the West is now occupied by a cultural nihilism, a melioristic liberalism, and a conservative defense of traditional values, all of which are oriented to present issues. Outside the West we see the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism that challenges all the values of the West.

All these create different sounds and furies and different kinds of cultural wars. We may be at the end of old ideologies and old History, but there are no unified sets of beliefs to take their place, only the splintering of cultures and political fragmentation. And that is the transition to the 21st century.



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CURRENT BOOKS

The Discrete Virtues of the Bourgeoisie

STILL LIFE WITH A BRIDLE: Essays and Apocryphas. By Zbigniew Herbert. Trans. by John and Bogdana Carpenter. Ecco Press. 162 pp. \$19.95

The title essay of this exquisite book of reflections on the cultural and artistic legacy of 17th-century Holland illustrates Zbigniew Herbert's unusual sensibility: far-ranging, ironic, and wise. The essay begins with Herbert visiting the Royal Museum in Amsterdam. He encounters a painting not previously known to him. Its subject is ordinary—a still life with some beakers, a wine glass, a piece of sheet music, and a bridle—but it catches his attention in a remarkable way. "I myself do not know how to translate my stifled shout when I first stood face-to-face with the 'Still Life' into comprehensible language, nor the joyous surprise, the gratitude that I was endowed beyond measure, the soaring

act of rapture." The painter's name is Torrentius. Years later, Herbert, still touched by the memory of the painting, delves into the obscure artist's biography and uncovers a mysterious, tangled, tragic life.

Torrentius, whose real name was Jan Simon van de Beeck, was born in Amsterdam in 1589. He was a dazzlingly successful painter: talented, handsome, charming, fashionable, wealthy. A star, we would say. But at the height of his career—he was 38—a cloud began to form over his head. It seems that Torrentius had begun to flaunt an unconventional, sybaritic, and, many thought, impious style. In sober Calvinist Holland, this was reckless behavior. He was arrested and accused of being a member, perhaps even a leader, of the secret society of the Rosicrucians and, equally damning, of being a libertine. There were other charges involving im-

moral and impious behavior, even heresy. It all came down to, as Herbert puts it, "whether Torrentius, against the background of the manners of his time, was a figure impossible to accept: a malicious type of moral monster."

Dutch justice in the 17th century, its so-called Golden Age, was callous. Torrentius refuted all the accusations and refused to admit his guilt; a panel of judges decided that torture was in order. The painter held fast to his innocence. "If something slips from my lips when you inflict suffering on me, it will be a lie," he shouted at his torturers. Finally, he was condemned



to burning at the stake. Then, an amazing intercession. Charles I, King of England, wrote to his cousin the Prince of Orange, regent of Holland, asking that Torrentius, out of consideration for his great talents as a painter, be released and exiled to the English court. Surprisingly, the prince agreed, and Torrentius was freed, on the condition that he leave for England immediately and never return to Holland. Cruelly, he was also required to pay the costs of his trial.

Torrentius spent 12 years in England; little is known of this period in his life, although Herbert surmises that he took up his old habits. Suddenly, inexplicably, recklessly, Torrentius returned to Holland. What happened next is predictable: He was arrested, tried again, tortured again, and died a broken man.

That is the end of Torrentius, but not of Herbert's essay, for he now turns his attention to the painting itself, which is the only surviving example of the artist's work. Herbert, heretofore chronicler, becomes detective. What does the painting mean? The painting contains what Svetlana Alpers has called a caption—two lines of text on the sheet of music: *Wat buten maat bestaat/Int onmaats qaat verghaat*. Herbert gives their meaning as, "What exists beyond measure (order) /In over-measure (disorder) will meet a bad end." Since Dutch painters and their clients delighted in allegories and symbolism, art historians have seen in Torrentius's painting the popular allegory *Vanitas*. This Herbert rejects, suggesting instead the allegory of one of the cardinal virtues, Moderation. He bases this interpretation on the symbolism of the judiciously half-filled wine glass and the presence of the bridle.

But Herbert is dissatisfied with this explanation also, finding it too simple, too transparent, too logical for such a mercurial talent as Torrentius. He scours Rosicrucian texts for clues, but to no avail. The painting that touched him so deeply refuses to give up its secret. A few years later he receives a copy of a paper on Torrentius by a Dutch scholar who ana-

lyzes the musical score that appears in the still life. He identifies a double fault in orthography and harmony; a misspelling and a false note occur in tandem, a deliberate violation of order. Can it be, the scholar suggests, that what appears to be an allegory of moderation is really exactly the opposite, a hidden paean to disorder?

At this point, Herbert brings his essay to an abrupt close. One senses an impatience with his own curiosity and with his own searching intellect. "After all, the painting does not live by the reflected glow of secret books and treatises," he writes. "It has its own light, the clear, penetrating light of clarity."

It's easy to understand what drew Zbigniew Herbert—who, along with Czeslaw Milosz, is usually described as one of the two most admired Polish poets now living—to the 17th-century Dutch painter. Herbert, born in 1924, studied art history, philosophy, and economics, and like Torrentius, at one point in his life he too found himself cast outside the pale for heresy. Herbert fought in the underground resistance against the Nazis, but after the end of the war, unlike many Polish intellectuals, he refused to join the new Stalinist order, and despite his academic qualifications he was reduced to menial and inconsequential employment. It was not until 1956, during the cultural thaw that followed Stalin's death, that the poetry he had continued to write for himself was published. His reputation as a poet grew quickly at home, and as he was translated—*Selected Poems* (1968) and *Report From the Besieged City and Other Poems* (1985)—he was recognized abroad.

In addition to being a poet, Herbert is also known as an essayist; *Barbarian in the Garden*, an earlier collection, appeared in English translation in 1985. *Still Life with a Bridle* is more than a collection of essays, however. It represents the author's attempt to use the poetic sensibility to penetrate the past. In these 16 pieces he covers various aspects of life in 17th-century Holland: the tulip mania of the 1630s, the economics of painting, the bourgeois themes of Dutch art. Herbert is a beautiful stylist,

at least judged by this very able translation by John and Bogdana Carpenter. Here he is on Dutch painters:

They can only be envied. Whatever their greatness and miseries, the disillusionments and failures of their careers, their role in society and place on earth were not questioned, their profession universally recognized and as evident as the profession of butcher, tailor, or baker. The question why art exists did not occur to anyone, because a world without paintings was simply inconceivable.

And casting a baleful eye on the present day, he adds:

It is we who are poor, very poor. A major part of contemporary art declares itself on the side of chaos, gesticulates in a void, or tells the story of its own barren soul.

Despite, or perhaps because of, his own experiences in the face of totalitarianism and his resistance to a dehumanizing regime, Herbert is particularly sympathetic to the bourgeois culture of the Dutch. In his own work, homey and solid "bourgeois" materials furnish a refuge from the grand-sounding lies and treacherous behavior of the totalitarian state. We see this theme crop up again and again in his poetry, nowhere more explicitly, perhaps, than in his prose-poem "Objects":

Inanimate objects are always correct and cannot, unfortunately, be reproached with anything. I have never observed a chair shift from one foot to another, or a bed rear on its hind legs. And

tables, even when they are tired, will not dare to bend their knees. I suspect that objects do this from pedagogical considerations, to reprove us constantly for our instability.

When he moves from his own poetry to a consideration of Dutch art, Herbert, not surprisingly, approves its avoidance of grandiose, heroic subjects:

Freedom—so many treatises were written about it that it became a pale, abstract concept. But for the Dutch it was something as simple as breathing, looking, and touching objects. It did not need to be defined or beautified. This is why there is no division in their art between what is great and what is small, what is important and unimportant, elevated and ordinary. They painted apples and the portraits of fabric shopkeepers, pewter plates and tulips, with such patience and such love that the images of other worlds and noisy tales about earthly triumphs fade in comparison.

Simon Schama, the author of a recent bestselling history of 17th-century Holland, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, has called for a revival of narrative history. In *Still Life with a Bridle* Herbert gives us that and something else, a sort of poetic history that is concerned not only with facts but with personalities, not only with events but with the human contained, but not trapped, by them.

—Witold Rybczynski teaches architecture at McGill University; his latest book is *Waiting for the Weekend* (1991).

Portrait of the Artist As an Artist

THE INTERIOR CASTLE: The Art and Life of Jean Stafford. By Ann Hulbert. Knopf. 430 pp. \$25

An advance review in *Publisher's Weekly* professed disappointment with Ann Hulbert's new biography of Jean

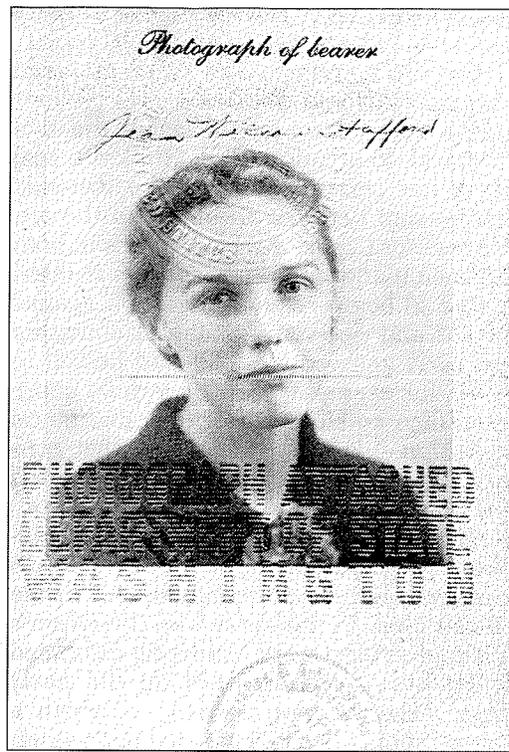
Stafford. Citing the self-destructive momentum of the writer's private life, the unnamed reviewer found Hulbert's treatment "flat," inadequate to the sensational attributes of her subject. In other words, Hulbert, a senior editor of the *New Republic*, had not Middlebrooked her Sexton,

hadn't Goldmanned her Elvis. And once again we find ourselves pondering the biographer's central dilemma: What are the limits of respect? How much do we deserve to know about another person, and what sorts of things? At what point in the investigative continuum does the subject become a private individual with rights?

It is not hard to see why a biographer would be drawn to Stafford. The apparent split in her life between high aesthetic control and private disaster proposes the very sort of enigma that lures the outsider forward. Stafford's inner life was one long calvary—it included difficult family relations, a tumultuous marriage to (and divorce from) poet Robert Lowell, alcoholism, and bouts with mental illness. Her published writings on the other hand, principally her three novels, *Boston Adventure*, *The Mountain Lion*, and *The Catherine Wheel*, and dozens of short stories, are vividly lyrical, often exacting in their ironies, and always cut to proportion as if with a gem-cutter's blade. Indeed, more than most, Stafford deserves to be called a "writer's writer."

The split between life and art is, however, ultimately illusory. Stafford, we learn, left mountains of unpublished manuscript in her archives, much of it representing her failed effort to give fictional shape to her own experiences. But never mind. It is the appearance of a puzzle that kindles the biographer's interest—the relation between the literary brilliance and the life that foundered in the background. Hulbert's is the third biography of Stafford since her death in 1979. Though hardly a household name, the writer has been documented more thoroughly than most of her famous contemporaries.

Stafford was born in 1915 in Covina, near Los Angeles. Her father, John Stafford, who dreamed of success as a writer of Westerns, moved the family to Boulder, Colorado, when Jean was six. There he squandered the remains of a family legacy, while his wife, Ethel, rented rooms to students and foraged for an income. Bright and bookish, and herself inclined to writ-



ing, Jean moved from an early adoration of her father to what would become a permanent shame at the foolish self-exposure of his endeavor. (Apparently his pseudonyms, Ben Delight and Jack Wonder, were not concealment enough.) But distance herself as she might, the man and his failures haunted her throughout her life.

From the time of her graduation from the University of Colorado in 1936, Stafford's writing career took on direction and velocity. She went off for a year of study to Heidelberg, Germany, and returned with the manuscript of a finished novel in her suitcase. Soon after, she starred at the annual writer's conference in Boulder, where she not only won high accolades from the presiding eminence, John Crowe Ransom, but also met, and fell in love with, the 20-year-old Robert Lowell. The two had a fierce transcontinental courtship, which hit its first tragic culmination during Stafford's 1938 Christmas visit to Boston. There Lowell crashed the car he was driving, smashing the bones

in Stafford's face; reconstructive surgery could not restore her fine-featured looks.

Stafford's young years were crowded with incident and influence, and Hulbert does a scrupulous job of laying the biographical foundation. But Hulbert's real gift is her understanding of the dynamic relationship between the life and the art. *The Interior Castle*, therefore, gains in both dimension and interest as soon as Hulbert is able to begin reading the work against the life, and vice-versa. Stafford's courtship and early married life (she wed Lowell in 1940), for example, are wonderfully counterpointed by Hulbert's critical discussion of *Boston Adventure*, the novel that Stafford had been working at steadily during this period. The class divisions which undergird the novel acquire a new significance when viewed in terms of Stafford's relations with the chilly bluebloods of the Lowell clan. In the same way, the writer's spiritual struggles are brilliantly exfoliated in Hulbert's commentary on the early story, "The Interior Castle," in which a young woman lies in a hospital bed gathering herself against the frightful intrusion of surgery. Looking closely at Stafford's stylistic shift—from mandarin to colloquial—within the story, Hulbert discovers the experimental mixing of "elevated and lowly diction and imagery" that was eventually refined as one of the trademark features of her prose. It was, she notes, Stafford's need to find a way to give expression to pain that animated these various forays into prose aesthetics.

The Lowell marriage was, to say the least, difficult. Lowell was at the time fervidly Catholic, and Stafford, try as she might to join him, failed to make the full religious connection. She retreated increasingly into drink, while Lowell—himself no mean drinker in later years—hurled sermons at her. There were other problems. Stafford's work found success before Lowell's did. And then Lowell had an affair with the ex-wife of his friend Delmore Schwartz. The union was dead.

Stafford fled their home in Damariscotta Mills, Maine, and headed for New York City, where she checked herself

in for the first of what would be many stays at the Payne Whitney psychiatric clinic. A pattern was established: long cycles of drink and depression—and, miraculously, work—broken by collapses and restorative hospitalizations. From the break-up of the marriage in 1946 until her death 33 years later, Stafford was never far from either the bottle or the place of repairs.

As with any artist who lives past first youth, there comes a point when the biographical focus shifts away from externals, when the story of the life must become the story of the work. This is certainly true in Stafford's case. Though she hardly stopped living after 1946—Stafford had two more marriages, the second of these to the celebrated writer and raconteur A. J. Liebling—Hulbert's account recognizes the displacement of energy from the crush of circumstance to the arena of the white page.

The success of Hulbert's reading of Stafford and her work results from her determined effort to avoid either of the easy paths that open before her. That is, she reads the fictional works neither as veiled acts of self-revelation nor as Eliotic attempts to extinguish the personality. The first approach would, in a sense, discredit Stafford's own artistic resolve—she tried all her life, with only partial success, to hew to Ford Maddox Ford's principle: "that portraiture drawn too directly from life was 'impolite . . .'" The second, of course, violates everything we know about the laws of creative psychology. Try as one might, one never escapes one's experience or the need to release private tensions through representation.

Hulbert, then, reads down the middle, taking both positions into account. If she is able to have it both ways, to an extent, it is because she has penetrated to the core of Stafford's own ambivalence and has there located the secret of her artistic treatment of experience: irony. Bringing Stafford's own pronouncements forward, she writes:

Stafford "had gone all the way back," but what is remarkable is the distance she maintained from the "angry,

wounded child." As the first part of *Boston Adventure* has shown, childhood was a subject that liberated Stafford's great gift: irony. She told an interviewer years later that "My theory about children is my theory about writing. The most important thing in writing is irony, and we find irony most clearly in children. The very innocence of children is irony." And echoing her New Critical teachers, she added, "Irony, I feel, is a very high form of morality."

Here, if anywhere, is the royal road that leads to this writer's sanctum. Stafford's whole career can be read as a product of the tension between the ever-active and unforgiving—if often sedated—pain that was the legacy of her childhood and the distancing strategy that allowed her to tap it. "Tap" is too conservative a word: Stafford took that pain and, in her best work, performed pirouettes with it. Her distancing, not to mention her various feints of displacement and transformation, freed her rage into knife-edged satire and her sorrows into lyricism. When she refused to use these same stratagems, however, when she tried to mine her experience directly—as she did in the mounds of material that remain unpublished—the tension evaporated. Stafford was sufficiently astute as a critic to know when she had failed. Still, that she would persist in the effort to write out of her life more directly, even though she knew better, suggests that displacements, transformations, and the like were but short-term expedients.

As for the wound itself—the hurt or hurts incurred in childhood years that we must suppose were the motive force of the art—Hulbert wisely refrains from hanging her reading upon any simple theory of psychological causation. Indeed, if I under-

stand her biographer's stance, which is never spelled out in so many words, it would be that to some measure all human lives must remain impenetrable and that all explanations are bound to be overdetermined. This is not to say that she does not present Stafford in full biographical dress—we learn a good deal about Stafford's problematic relations with her family, her father in particular—only that she refrains from what might be called the "interpretative fallacy." She chooses instead to let her subtle and inquisitive interpretations of the work echo against what she has been able to disinter about the circumstantial webbing of the life.

No, *The Interior Castle* is not the sensational portrait that some readers may wish it to be. We do not find Stafford limping from one alcoholic bout to the next, nor has Hulbert made any effort to extract catty or embarrassing anecdotes from surviving parties, some of whom surely would have obliged. Instead, we get a perceptive and dignified study, a work which recognizes from the outset how impossibly dense is the braiding of elements in an artist's life. The Stafford that emerges in these pages is not an individual of vivid exterior outlines. We are not regaled with interminable accounts of what she ate and how she dressed. Hulbert's Stafford is an interiorized figure, a complex and cloudy exhalation, a soul struggling to seize the root of the self and be free of pain. Only to the reader who cared for none of this would Hulbert's book seem flat.

—Sven Birkerts is a critic and essayist. His most recent book is *American Energies: Essays on American Fiction* (1992).

OTHER TITLES

History

CHINESE ROUNDABOUT: Essays in History and Culture. By Jonathan D. Spence. Norton. 400 pp. \$24.95

With China's old guard dying off and the country seemingly poised on the eve of a new era, many observers are now searching the nation's past for possible clues to its future. They could not hope for a more congenial guide than Yale's Jonathan Spence.

The historian's breadth, wit, and subtlety are all on display as he ranges from the Ming Dynasty in the 17th century to the tragedy of Tiananmen Square, from a Chinese scholar in 18th-century Paris to the contemporary poet of protest Bei Dao. *Chinese Roundabout* is something of a smorgasbord, one that even offers an essay on "Food." Reading Chinese history through its menus, Spence tells how, during the famines in the late Qing dynasty, the poor fed on ground leaves, sawdust, and peanut hulls, while the boy emperor P'u-i (immortalized recently in the film *The Last Emperor*) still followed the 17th-century imperial protocols of dining. "Processions of eunuchs brought tables of lavish dishes to his presence on his command, each silver dish placed upon a porcelain dish of hot water to keep it warm . . ." In fact, P'u-i's stomach was too delicate for the 900 pounds of meat and 240 chickens and ducks prepared each month for his nightly ceremonial banquets. After the official repasts, the boy emperor would consume a modest meal in his consort's kitchen.

Spence warns the reader to expect only "a certain overenthusiastic or even harebrained eclecticism" from his book. But through this eclecticism runs Spence's major theme: Western notions cannot be applied to Chinese history or society. Spence also overturns many a long-held idea about China's past. For example, greedy, unscrupulous Westerners are usually blamed for spreading opium through Chinese society. But the Chinese, Spence shows, had their own reason for smoking the drug: It made the bruising lot of the poor, the laborers and

rickshaw drivers, bearable. As for the rich, Spence tells of one aristocrat who encouraged his son to smoke in order to dampen his reformist zeal. (But how representative is this example? That is often the question about Spence's work.) Spence likewise challenges the conventional wisdom that communism was like a bomb that obliterated the old Confucian social order. He shows (as Harvard's Tu Weiming does elsewhere) that the basic Confucian family structure and hierarchy have survived Mao's revolutionary fervor.

John King Fairbank was the dean of a pioneering generation of China specialists who dealt with the general, the overview, the large subject. Spence belongs to a younger generation who treat the particular, the local instance, and the foibles of the past. Before he died last September, Fairbank praised Spence's *Search for Modern China* for giving "us the sense of immediacy, of almost personal contact with the subject . . . of history." The doyen seemed to be naming his successor.

DRIVEN PATRIOT: The Life and Times of James Forrestal. By Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley. Knopf. 587 pp. \$30

Michael Forrestal once observed of his father that if he had been more balanced, he would have been less interesting. Forrestal and his elite peers—Dean Acheson, Robert Lovett, and John J. McCloy, among others—served in World War I, helped steer the Allied effort during World War II, and then created the mechanisms to wage the Cold War. But while those others may have had their personal failings and career setbacks, only Forrestal broke under the pressure of real and imagined disappointments. He committed suicide in 1949, one year after becoming America's first sec-



retary of defense. Yet his tragedy illuminates more about modern American history than do the successes of his talented peers.

Forrestal's resume was, on the surface, typical of the era's elite: an Ivy League education (Princeton), followed by a brilliant career in finance (Forrestal's was at Dillon, Read, now a preeminent blue-chip banking firm, then something of an ambitious Wall Street upstart). In the 1940s, his formidable capacity was harnessed to a national purpose when, like so many of his Wall Street brethren, he moved to Washington to run the war bureaucracy. Eventually, as secretary of the navy, he directed what was possibly the largest navy in history. Known to all who mattered, Forrestal impressed everyone with his commanding presence and political savvy.

Whence came the wound? Like McCloy, Forrestal was from the wrong side of the tracks. But McCloy was at least a Protestant, while Forrestal was Irish Catholic, born in Beacon, N.Y., in 1892, the son of an immigrant. He believed it necessary to abandon both family and religion in order to succeed. (At Forrestal's funeral, the 29-year-old Michael met his father's relatives for the first time.) Forrestal used his power and renown to build not a network of social alliances but rather a wall of privacy around himself. He confided in no one, not in his wife (even before her alcoholism) nor in any of the succession of women he saw outside his marriage. Driving himself, he refused to take a badly needed respite from government work after the war (as many of his peers did). His triumph, his appointment as secretary of defense, was followed so closely by his tragedy that Washington and the nation were stunned.

Hoopes, who had a long career in government service, came to know Forrestal while working under him at the Defense Department. He and coauthor Brinkley, an historian at Hofstra, have produced a sympathetic yet unblinking portrait of the man. Beyond Forrestal's life story, they tell how government grew too large to be controlled by even the most towering of individuals. Before World War II, Washington was so small and informal that it resembled an 18th-century clique—far from the outsized bureaucratic maze that it started to become during the war. Effective infighter that he was, Forrestal nonetheless sidestepped the

growing complexities by adhering to overly simplistic loyalties. He took the Navy's side against military unification so effectively that he sabotaged the newly created Department of Defense. Then, when he was appointed its first secretary, he faced the herculean task of undoing his own damage. Men more at peace with themselves, with friends and family to comfort them, overcame worse blunders. Forrestal had no such resources. Late one evening in 1949, a Defense Department aide suggested to Forrestal that he go home. "Go home?" Forrestal replied. "Home to what?"

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL WRITINGS.

By Carl von Clausewitz. Edited and trans. by Peter Paret and Daniel Moran. Princeton. 397 pp. \$29.95

UNDERSTANDING WAR: Essays on Clausewitz and the History of Military Power. *By Peter Paret. Princeton. 229 pp. \$24.95*

The strategic analyst Bernard Brodie has declared that Carl von Clausewitz's *On War* is "not simply the greatest, but the only great book about war." On the face of it, this is slightly puzzling. The book—if that is the right word for the work-in-progress, unfinished when Clausewitz died at age 51 in the cholera epidemic of 1831—is really a set of essays riddled with gaps and inconsistencies. Given that *On War* also reflects the personal experience of a unique time and place—Clausewitz's familiarity with war was limited to fighting the Republican and then the Napoleonic French—the book might well have failed to live up to his hope that it "would not be forgotten after two or three years."

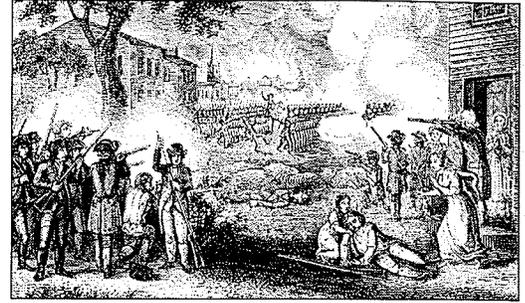
Yet anyone who reads Clausewitz will immediately see why he has endured. Both in *On War* and in the essays collected in *Historical and Political Writings*, Clausewitz reveals an endlessly invigorating capacity to transcend the limitations of his sprawling material in his attempt to study war systematically. Where other writers have tried to construct a science of war, Clausewitz does not disguise the recalcitrance of the subject. He announces his idea about "friction" (the tendency of things to go slightly wrong at every stage): "Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is very diffi-

cult." Throughout Clausewitz's writing runs the tension between war's inherent tendency to "absolute" violence and its social function as an instrument of politics. His celebrated statement that war is a continuation of politics by "other means" entailed the view—uncongenial to his fellow soldiers—that a purely military plan is an absurdity. Unlike his predecessors with their mechanistic prescriptions and rigid strategies, Clausewitz wanted to develop the capacity for flexible military judgment that would reckon not only with the enemy's forces but also with its resources and will to fight.

Paret, an historian at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, argues that Clausewitz's method was essentially humane, which is not to say humanitarian. Clausewitz was a Prussian officer who took pride in the profession of arms, and he saw war as more than just a regrettable necessity. Clausewitz's exact attitude toward war is indeed complex, at once realistic and romantic. He could assert the primacy of the psychological over the physical struggle but then, contradicting himself, insist on the centrality of battle to all military operations. Unfortunately, most of Clausewitz's successors have been anything but complex, concentrating almost exclusively on his *leitmotif* of battle and destruction. (In the once-standard German edition of *On War*, the passage advising ministerial control of military strategy was altered to prescribe exactly the reverse.) By demonstrating that Clausewitz's "respect for action" was balanced by skepticism and his deep awareness of the past, Paret presents a truer picture of the early 19th-century author who has become the most respected military theorist in the late 20th century.

THE RADICALISM OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: How a Revolution Transformed a Monarchical Society into a Democratic One Unlike Any That Had Ever Existed. By Gordon S. Wood. Knopf. 447 pp. \$27.50

Who were the true revolutionaries of the modern world? "We think of Robespierre, Lenin, and Mao Zedong," writes Brown historian Wood, "but not George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams." One of history's



larger ironies is that the revolutions that failed, the ones that ended in bloodbaths and reigns of terrors, with dictators and purges, are today considered the real revolutions, while the American revolution, which established a stable new form of government and society, is dismissed as hardly revolutionary at all.

Historians usually argue that America's was, at most, a conservative revolution—in reality, a constitutional defense of rights ("no taxation without representation")—fought not to change the existing society but to preserve it. Wood announces his counter-thesis in his subtitle: The American Revolution created a society for which there was no historical precedent.

The radicalism Wood describes is, however, quite different from that which Charles Beard and J. Franklin Jameson once argued for. Those Progressive historians, viewing the American conflict through the lens of the French Revolution, claimed that our Revolution was not only about "home rule" but also about "who was to rule at home" (in Carl Becker's famous phrase). Yet economic malaise or class unrest could hardly have incited the Revolution because, as Wood points out, 18th-century America lacked the poverty or economic deprivation that supposedly lie behind all social revolutions.

Unlike Beard and Jameson, who dealt with intentions, Wood locates the radicalism of the Revolution in its consequences, most of them unintentional and unanticipated. He presents a before-and-after picture. In 1760, less than two million Americans lived along the Atlantic seaboard, in a society governed by monarchical assumptions, patronage, and hierarchical dependencies. By 1810, nearly eight million Americans spanned an almost continent-wide nation, democracy had replaced aristocracy, and bustling, enterprising individuals had bro-

ken free of feudal arrangements. Wood minces no words: "Americans had become almost overnight the most liberal, the most democratic, the most commercially minded, and the most modern people in the world."

How was such a transformation possible without industrialization, urbanization, or even railroads? The engine of change, Wood says, was the republican ideology itself, the founding fathers' vision of a society free from corrupt patronage and servile dependencies. Yet Adams, Madison, and other leaders had expected the new republic to be governed, as ancient Rome's had been, by "notable geniuses and great-souled men"—that is, by themselves. They were both surprised and disheartened as they witnessed the egalitarian forces they had unleashed create not a classical republic but a messy Jacksonian democracy. That democracy would eventually free the slaves, emancipate women, and forge a commercial society of entrepreneurs, all pursuing their own definitions of happiness. Thus, Wood concludes, the Revolution was "the most radical and far-reaching event in American history."

Arts & Letters

HEAVEN AND EARTH: A Cosmology. By Albert Goldbarth. Univ. of Ga. 118 pp. \$20

WHAT WORK IS. By Philip Levine. Knopf. 77 pp. \$19

With newspapers, TV, and nonfiction claiming a monopoly on important public events, today's poets—among them Linda Pastan, Stephen Dunn, and Phyllis Levin—are turning to subjects private and elusive. If there is a "typical" American poem now, it involves a meditation about a seemingly inconsequential corner of one's personal life.

This year's winners of the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award, Philip Levine and Albert Goldbarth, respectively, provide exceptions to this poetry of domestic meditation. Levine is identified with a particular subject: work—unglamorous, blue-collar, industrial, assembly-line work. During the late 1940s and early '50s, when in his teens and twenties, Levine worked in the factories and warehouses of Detroit. Later he deter-

mined "to find a voice for the voiceless." In the title-poem of this collection, Levine addresses the reader: "You know what work is—if you're old enough to read this you know what work is . . ." The poet is outside the Ford Highland Park plant, waiting for work, vainly hoping to be hired for the day. Someone in the same line reminds him physically of his brother, who at that moment is at home sleeping off a miserable night shift at Cadillac. Levine realizes he has never told his brother how much he loves him and probably never will. Why not? "You have never done something so simple, so obvious," Levine merely comments, but the *you* is no longer the reader but himself—and everyone who has been too numbed by the toll of hard, repetitive labor to undertake life's other important tasks. No, Levine realizes, "you don't know what [real] work is."

Goldbarth rummages among the "big events" for his subject matter. In "Sentimental," for example, he describes a wedding "in the sap and flyswirl of July in upper Wisconsin." As it turns out, though, the wedding is not a real event but only a kitsch image his class is using to debate the nature of sentimentality. Goldbarth could be called a comic Hegelian (in the same way that Groucho could be called a Marxist). The movement of his poems is from thesis to antithesis to synthesis: He begins with a physical event like a wedding ("Earth"), then he negates its actuality by considering it as a concept ("Heaven"), but finally unites both event and concept in a synthesis or "Cosmology," one meaning of which is structure or organization. Goldbarth structures his poems by tracing his concept through the most dissimilar embodiments of it, in a wild roller-coaster ride through everything from intimate details of his sex life to quantum physics. After discussing the wedding, he then asks, "If a balled-up fidget of snakes/in the underbrush dies in a freeze is it sentimental? No./yes, maybe. What/if [it is] a litter of cocker spaniels? if we called them 'puppydogs' . . . ?" The freeze reminds Goldbarth of his father's funeral in coldest winter, but by this point, having catalogued all the connotations of sentimentality, he dares—as no other sane poet would—to liken his grief at the funeral to those puppydogs finding their natural voice.

No poet now writing has more fun with lan-

guage than Goldbarth. He observes that the Quechua in Peru have a thousand words for potato—"A thousand! For the new ones/with a skin still as thin as mosquito-wing, for/troll-face ones, for those sneaky burgundy corkscrews/like a devil's dick." Goldbarth envies the Quechua those thousand potato-words, each of which he would employ according to its precise meaning and sonorous sound.

THE LETTERS OF SAMUEL JOHNSON.

Vol. I: 1731-1772; Vol. II: 1773-1776; Vol. III: 1777-1781. Edited by Bruce Redford. Princeton. 431 pp.; 385 pp.; 399 pp. \$29.95 each; full set, \$90

The 18th century took particular delight in the familiar letter, and we still read the correspondence of its great practitioners with pleasure. The greatest wit of all, however, is usually not numbered among the epistolary giants. The impression we take of Samuel Johnson from Boswell's *Life* is that of a great talker, not a letter writer—an impression that Johnson himself did much to confirm: "I love to see my friends, to talk to them, and to talk of them; but it is not without a considerable effort of resolution that I prevail upon myself to write."

If we were to read only the letters Johnson wrote until age 59 (which require only half a volume in this new five-volume edition of his letters, three of which are now published), our



impression of Johnson as an *epistolier malgré lui* would be confirmed. His earlier letters were a stopgap measure for conducting business, accepting invitations, and begging favors. But around 1770 Johnson, secure financially and turning aside from strenuous public commitments, discovered a vocation for the form of writing he had earlier dismissed. Especially when writing to his benefactress Hester Thrale, Johnson celebrated matters private and occasional, and he learned to modulate his voice with subtler nuances. Although his earlier letters, even of condolence and sympathy, were full of sententious homily, the later ones express a simplicity and directness of feeling. "The perpetual moralist is present," writes Redford, the editor of the letters, but "he no longer speaks *ex cathedra*."

The purpose of this new edition—which contains 52 "new" letters and corrects errors in previously published ones—is, Redford says, "ultimately to provide the materials for a fresh assessment of Samuel Johnson." The common image of Johnson is that of a jowly, growly English Tory who was, in one description, "the literary embodiment of roast beef and no nonsense." This is hardly the person who wrote cheerfully to Hester Thrale, "I hope to find you gay, and easy, and kind, and I will endeavour to copy you, for what can come of discontent and dolour?" Johnson here comes across as the Christian who tirelessly examines his conscience, the good man who continually performs small kindnesses, a conservative certainly but one neither insular nor jingoistic. This new edition also allows a fresh assessment of Johnson as a practitioner of what he called "the great epistolick art." Far from being an inconsequential, dismissive production, Johnson's letters now seem, along with the *Lives of the Poets*, the great achievement of his literary career in its final phase.

Contemporary Affairs

A CONTINENT OF ISLANDS: Searching for the Caribbean Destiny. By Mark Kurlansky. Addison Wesley. 336 pp. \$22.95

Paradise! That's often how tourists, descending in planeloads, describe a Caribbean island with

its sparkling beaches, sunny weather, and friendly natives. The governments of these islands, living off tourist dollars, wish to preserve that view. "Jamaica, no problem," announces a Kingston-sponsored TV commercial that airs frequently in the United States.

But "no problem" includes poverty, AIDS, racism, unemployment, emigration, pollution, deforestation, and economic dependence on the United States. Half of Puerto Rico's sewage-contaminated coastline has been declared unfit for swimming by the Environmental Protection Agency. Haiti is virtually a desert, where, thanks to decades-long deforestation, rain has washed almost all of the topsoil into the sea. Unable to find work, 10 percent of Jamaica's population emigrated during the 1980s; in St. Kitts and Nevis, that figure was 26.4 percent. Even the tourists, whose spending helps support the island economies, are a problem. Countries such as the Bahamas, where tourists outnumber natives 14 to one, have difficulty developing a sense of nationhood.

Kurlansky, who writes on the Caribbean for the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*, here combines travelogue, social history, and political analysis to depict a region living in three centuries at once. Not so long ago the Caribbean islands were practically the last outpost of a 19th-century colonial world. Before 1962, only three islands—Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic—had their independence. (Even today 11 islands still remain colonies.) Today, all of these islands, with a combined population of 35 million, face the challenge of becoming, simultaneously, 20th-century nations and a 21st-century postnation-state community.

Regional integration seems the obvious answer to many of the Caribbean's problems. A sharing of resources would help solve the budgetary problems of small islands such as Grenada, which spends four percent of its government revenues simply to maintain its United Nations delegation; it would also solve the problem of international investors who hop from one island to the next in search of lower wages and looser environmental regulations. Yet the idea of regional integration enjoys little popular appeal. French-language islands don't identify with English-speaking ones, nor Caribbean Spanish-speakers with the Dutch. Never-



theless, as the Caribbean moves further into the 1990s, the idea of a federation appears to be gaining ground. At a Caribbean Community meeting in 1990, 13 English-speaking nations tentatively agreed to support a common external tariff system and to merge their stock exchanges. Jamaican President Michael Manley mixed doubt and hope in his cautious observation: "I am struck by how far we have come in what we think we can do." The Jamaican Reggae star Bunny Waller perhaps said it better: "Yea, mon, the Caribbean try to make countries. It's kind of magic. Making something from nothing."

TWO NATIONS: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal. By Andrew Hacker. Scribner's. 257 pp. \$24.95

Now largely submerged under the surface of American life, the remnants of racism often seem like those underwater plants that give sudden, rude shocks to swimmers at the seashore. To Hacker, a political scientist at Queens College, racism in America is neither so occasional nor so surprising: For him it is the barnacle-covered jetty thrusting through the waters

of our national life. "America's version of *apartheid*," he writes, "while lacking overt legal sanction, comes closest to the system even now being reformed in the land of its invention." Since the mid-1970s, he argues, American whites have increasingly opposed efforts to bring blacks into the mainstream, even while they have become more protective of their privileges and open in their racism.

Sifting reams of statistics, Hacker highlights troubling white-black differences in income, education, and other areas, intent upon refuting any explanation for such inequalities other than white racism. Many analysts cite *cultural* causes as well, observing, for example, that the number of black households headed by women has risen in the past 40 years from 17 percent to 56 percent. Hacker simply dismisses this staggering increase by noting that the ratio of black households to white households headed by women has remained a constant 3:1 ratio over these years.

To show that race is everything, Hacker must also argue that all blacks share essentially the same plight. Income data from 1970 to '90 documents the growth of the black middle class. Hacker, however, suggests that newly affluent blacks are still not really middle class. A "typical" black family with a \$60,000 income, he imagines, would be headed by a bus driver and a nurse, but in a comparable white family the husband would be an executive, his spouse a homemaker. For all his statistics, Hacker indulges in considerable speculation about the lives and feelings of whites and blacks, apparently without the benefit of personal interviews. In the process he creates his own condescending stereotypes: Whites are invariably unwitting racists; blacks are perpetual victims who owe their meager gains only to the sufferance of whites.

The verdict in the Rodney King case might appear to lend some plausibility to Hacker's vision of a racist America (although whites joined blacks in a nearly unanimous condemnation of the outcome). Yet Hacker seems to have doubts about his own thesis. After the first reviews of *Two Nations* pointed out flaws in its arguments, Hacker reversed the "spin" of his book by publishing an essay in the *New Republic*, entitled "The Myths of Racial Division." But that, too, does not quite get it right.

Science & Technology

MAPPING THE NEXT MILLENNIUM: The Discovery of the New Geographies. By Stephen S. Hall. Random House. 477 pp. \$30

Each month a single NASA satellite generates enough data to fill the present Library of Congress. A new "Library of Congress" every month? The human mind reels before so much information. Supercomputers must transform this data into visual patterns readable at a glance, or else it would remain a chaos of interminable detail.

Hall, author of *Invisible Frontiers: The Race to Synthesize a Human Gene* (1987), presents an arresting argument: The frontiers of the various sciences are best understood as efforts to organize mountains of information into maps. Just as the maps of Vespucci and Magellan once changed people's notion of the Earth, so today contemporary scientists creating maps of the ocean floor, areas of the brain, the interior of a fertilized egg, the Milky Way, and the location of electrons in atoms are changing our understanding of what the universe is like. Hall escorts us on a tour of 18 scientific disciplines by showing us their maps.

In 1978, for example, the satellite Seasat—in the three months before it ceased to function—fired off continued pulses of radar at the ocean's surface, producing 25 to 30 million measurements. No one knew quite what to do with them. Then William Haxby of the Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory produced a computerized map of the ocean's gravity field mimicking the topography of the ocean floor. Haxby's map confirmed for the first time the old hypothesis that much of the Earth's land mass had once formed one large continent.

From the bottom of the ocean Hall propels us to the high heavens. When Margaret Geller, John Huchra, and Valérie de Lapparent plotted the galaxies in the northern celestial hemisphere, they were confident that these galaxies reflected a predicted random distribution. Only after measuring 1,100 galaxies, Hall writes, "in a kind of push-button epiphany unique to our computer age, did they produce a picture of their data in the form of a map, and saw, with surprise bordering on stupefaction, that contrary to theory galaxies bunched up in bubbles

and other large-scale structures."

Are such patternings of information really maps? The 11th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1910) defined a map as "a representation, on a plane and a reduced scale, of part or the whole of the earth's surface." How far Hall has travelled from that definition is evident in the illustrated examples of his book, which resemble less "geographical" or even spatial representations than drug-induced hallucinations. Hall's cartographic metaphor does strain to include all recent scientific developments. Yet when Gregory Chudnovsky computed π out to the billionth digit—a figure which, if printed out by a computer, would require a stack of paper 12 stories high—he commented, "The usefulness of this information is only based on its physical, spatial correlations, *not* in this idiotic long sequential display of it." That remark, Hall believes, could serve as the coda to today's scientific world.

RUBBISH!: The Archaeology of Garbage. By William Rathje and Cullen Murphy. HarperCollins. 250 pp. \$23

The question of who we are has engaged the best minds of philosophy, literature, psychology, and . . . garbology? Yes, garbology. And the answer this new science offers is succinct: We are what we throw away.

The new science is, in most ways, not really that new. Archaeologists have analyzed garbage everywhere from the pyramids of Egypt to the lawns of Monticello for clues to the civilizations that produced it. The Garbage Project, founded at the University of Arizona in 1973, has simply adapted the investigative procedures of the older science to the study of contemporary trash. Since that year, teams of researchers have sifted through neighborhood trash cans and scoured landfills, braving smells and slime and scorning garbage disposers in order to sort and catalogue some 250,000 pounds of trash. As archaeologist Rathje, the Garbage Project's director, and Murphy, managing editor of *The*

Atlantic, relate, some of their discoveries have been startling.

The researchers found, for example, that the three big foes in the environmental wars—diapers, fast food packaging, and polystyrene foam—account for only three percent of landfill content. (One organization had earlier put the figure at over 70 percent.) The real enemy is paper, yard waste, and construction debris. Even plastic, the symbol into which "Americans seem to have distilled all of their guilt over the environmental degradation they have wrought," is less of a problem than previously thought. The cost-cutting practice of "lightweighting," by which manufacturers create the same product with less plastic (its use in milk jugs has been reduced by almost half), has dramatically lessened plastic's burden on landfills.

The Garbage Project found that many of the widespread myths about the disposal of our garbage were little more than rubbish. For example, millions of refrigerators, sofas, tables, chairs, and other household goods thrown away every year are recycled by scavengers. And contrary to common belief, the United States has plenty of room left for new landfills. If properly managed, full landfills can be employed in a range of other uses. In fact, as Murphy and Rathje remind us, many of our cities are already built on the garbage of the past, rising like Venice upon layers of buried trash. Large swaths of New York City and Boston's Back Bay neighborhood stand on covered dumps.

It seems that we never completely escape what we throw away. But in the end, according to the authors' shrewd and lively account, contemporary America, per capita, makes significantly no more garbage than other societies have—or do. (American households, on average, generate even less garbage than do households in Mexico City.) To be sure, many steps remain before Americans achieve "a truly rational garbage regime," but of the "ten commandments" the authors sensibly recommend, the first is that we abjure the notion that our garbage problems constitute a crisis.

Foot Notes

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Reflections on Travel Writing

Tourism has all but replaced real travel, and television's roving eye has left few spots on the globe unknown, but travel writing has never sold better than during the last two decades. Dervla Murphy ponders the art and appeal of a mysteriously flourishing genre.

by *Dervla Murphy*

Things were different when I was young. As I prepared, in 1962, to cycle from Ireland to India, no one thought to ask me if I was going in order to celebrate feminine autonomy, or to get my own country in perspective, or to acquire heroic standing in the public eye. Nobody inquired if I was attempting to escape from a world in which I felt a misfit or to test or find or run away from myself. People just thought that I was crazy and made no further comment. Thirty years ago my sort of travelling lacked glamour. Effortless mass-tourism had recently burgeoned, and sane folk flew to India, quite cheaply, in eight hours.

Therefore I set off happily, on January 14, 1963, unaware of the need for either a convoluted hidden motive or a Serious Purpose. I did of course have a frivolous purpose: to enjoy myself. I had been looking forward to this adventure for 21 years, ever since my 10th birthday, in fact, when my parents gave me a bicycle and my grandfather presented me with an atlas.

It proved to be a stimulating convergence of gifts. The glossy world atlas re-

vealed that there was very little water between Ireland and India; my first bicycle introduced me to the fact that pedalling was an agreeable mode of self-propulsion. For as long as I can remember I had wanted to travel long distances, alone and preferably through mountainous terrain. Five days later I decided to cycle—when grown-up enough—to India, a destination satisfyingly remote and (for one reared in an Irish village) exotic.

Now it is clear that that decision, which was even then a firm *decision*, not a childish whim, foreshadowed the structure of most of my future journeys. Although I was to become a professional writer, I have remained an amateur traveller. By nature I am only interested in wanderings that can be undertaken alone or with my daughter, unshackled by media subsidies or publishers' commissions, independent of newfangled equipment, and free of intrusive publicity. A certain amount of publicity is of course inevitable when books appear, such being the regrettable requirement of modern marketing. But that exposure, coming long after the journey, fails to taint it.

The now-fashionable probing of travel-

lers' motives or compulsions is a tiresome though understandable journalistic device. Interviewers have to earn a living by filling space and time, and since travel writing is now in vogue, they must interview people like me. Not much space or time would be filled, however, were the interviewers content with the honest answer, "I was born with an inclination to travel." It's curious, really. People with other congenital inclinations—stamp-collectors, dog-breeders, gardeners, golfers—are seldom required to delve deep into their subconsciousness to account for their dominant interests. What's different about travellers? Granted, a taste for solitary wandering through remote places is less common than an addiction to golfing or dog-breeding. Yet to me, it is as natural as gardening is to a gardener. Others' reactions have gradually brought me to realize that cycling to India or walking 1,300 miles through the Andes seems, to some, odd. But to me it feels perfectly normal.

Perhaps people are simply in search of heroes, daring souls who meet formidable challenges with supreme courage and resourcefulness—as travellers did in times past, when *exploring*. But my sort of travelling is a mere hobby. Alas, no fastnesses remain for the lone traveller to explore. The closest I came to "exploration" was in 1967, in the Tekazze Gorge of Ethiopia's Simien Mountains, where some locals had never before seen a white person. The misperception of my hobby as "daring" is, I fear, a measure of how artificial our mechanized, comfort-obsessed society has become.

My career in travel writing began modestly. Between 1963 and 1968 I wrote my first four books, all well reviewed but none keeping the wolf too far from the door. Then, in 1968, my daughter was born, and for five years I remained Europe-bound, believing she should be given a stable home life until old enough to cope with the wider world. When I returned to the publishing scene, with a book about Coorg in southern India, all had changed. Travel writing was no longer a minority interest. To the con-

trary, it was well on its way to becoming one of the more popular genres. And in a few years that bandwagon also began to roll in America. Why had public taste so suddenly changed?

And why, I wondered, had travel books become so popular just when they should



The author, on her preferred means of locomotion, passes through a village on her journey to India.

have become obsolete? After all, on television one can see every detail of the remote village—the local costumes, dances, burial customs, musical instruments. At a flick of the dial, one can visit places no normal traveller could ever hope to reach. Helicopter-borne cameramen provide stunningly beautiful views of mountain ranges, rain-

forests, deserts. Why, then, has there been no decline of interest in the laborious descriptions of travel writers?

There are, I think, two reasons. The first is that many readers relish the intimacy of sharing in the author's reactions to beauty, strange customs, hardship, or eccentric characters. The second is that readers sense the fundamental flaw in the television travel documentary: the fact that the arrival of the crew in a traditional village alters it profoundly, at least for the duration of the film-making and sometimes, even, forever. By happy contrast, the lone writer, arriving on foot, is a bizarre, inexplicable phenomenon—but not a disruption. If careful never to be seen taking notes, which might be misinterpreted in half a dozen different ways, he or she is soon accepted. And what the writer happens to bump into can be quite necessary to the stay-at-home reader. In 1957, in her essay "The Travelling Reader," Freya Stark observed:

Life in general requires a balanced diet, a variety of ingredients to make it healthy, and books are the easiest means ready to hand for the supplementing of any deficiency there may be The travel book opens a new horizon and is the best prescription for all prisoners—and how many of them there are! Not only the inactive, or the sick, but all who are tied down by duty, or riveted to a daily job, however interesting it may be: their diet suffers from constriction.

The reader may have begun to suspect that I do not like motor transport. A well-founded suspicion. In general I don't feel that I have been in a country unless I have propelled myself through it. Only in Madagascar is motoring, for me, an enjoyable experience. There a 390-mile journey can (and frequently does) take three days and two nights, travelling at an average speed of 12 m.p.h.—two miles less than my average cycling speed. In the southern desert, however, there is no alternative to trucking, although other parts of

Madagascar, such as the mountainous central highlands populated by some of the world's most loveable people, are a trekker's paradise.

Recently someone asked me, "You've been to Central America?" and automatically I replied, "No." Hastily catching myself, and feeling extremely foolish, I exclaimed, "Sorry! Yes I have, but only by bus from Panama to Mexico in 1979." My companion looked at me a little oddly, yet that first response was *emotionally* true.

It is now much too late for me even to try to adjust to the motor age. In fact my adaptability is strictly one-way. I can effortlessly go backward in time but I cannot go forward from where I started 60 years ago in an Irish village. This is only occasionally a handicap—as for example in October 1991, when I attended Toronto's Harbourfront Readings and found myself incarcerated for eight days in the Westin Hotel. Even the company of such illustrious authors as Doris Lessing, Maurice Gee, Caryl Phillips, Michael Ignatieff, Eric Newby, and Nicola Bouvier could not counteract the misery and apprehension induced by this hotel. The bedroom windows wouldn't open, and before breakfast people with glazed expressions might be observed lifting weights and pedalling stationary bicycles in overheated "keep-fit rooms." Only at the Toronto Westin did I fully appreciate why many Westerners regard my journeys as *odd*.

I could not enjoy travelling where one has to depend for survival on organized support from one's own world. Being dependent (while never sponging) on local people is quite different—an essential ingredient of a satisfying journey. Dependency is the fastest breaker of barriers. Depending upon the local people for finding food, drink, shelter, an approved place to defecate and urinate—needs as familiar to Afghan nomads as to European aristocrats—establishes a common ground. Yet dependency must never be total. Failing to arrive at some village by sunset, you must

Dervla Murphy has travelled on foot, mule, bicycle, and practically every other conceivable conveyance to nearly every geographic region imaginable. Her adventures are recounted in more than 10 books, including Full Tilt (1965), The Waiting Land (1969), On a Shoestring to Coorg (1976), Eight Feet in the Andes (1983), and Muddling Through in Madagascar (1989). Copyright © 1992 by Dervla Murphy.

have with you a tent and emergency rations. Unpredictability is the seasoning without which travel would be, in my view, insipid and almost pointless. To set off at dawn, having no idea where—or with whom—the dusk will find you is incomparably exciting, the best feeling in the world. Perhaps those who call me “a romantic traveller” are not far wrong.

Yet “romantic travelling” engenders its own problems. Because my first published book described cycling to India, my public image has remained indelibly CYCLIST, despite the fact that all my other major journeys were made on foot, with a pack-animal—in Ethiopia, with a mule; in Baltistan, a pony; in Mexico, a horse; in Peru, a mule, and in Cameroon, a horse.

Pack-animals involve an almost daily quota of stress. You may not care where you are when the sun sets, but your companion does. A suitable human campsite, offering level ground, clear water, and ample fuel, can be a disaster area for a hungry pack-animal. So you must press on, often to a place hardly fit for humans but providing adequate grazing for the beast. You can survive on half a tin of sardines, knowing that next evening, with luck, it will be possible to Eat Big in a village. So you do the mind-over-matter bit, while resolving never again to let supplies run so low. But your animal companion doesn't have that sort of mind. If there's no fodder at 6:30 P.M. on October 17, he cannot have consoling thoughts about stuffing it in at 6:30 P.M. on October 18. There is nothing more harrowing and guilt-provoking than seeing a pack-animal who has worked hard all day, *for you*, being denied sustenance.

Ninety-nine percent of my hate-mail is focused on my ill-treatment of pack-animals: How can I be so cruel! It's easy to visualize those letter-writers. Their dogs will wear cozy plaid jackets from October to April and be given chocolate drops, detrimental to canine health, thrice daily. Their cats will luxuriate on bean-bags in front of pseudo-log fires and wear bells to thwart their natural inclination to kill birds. Yes, I'm sometimes cruel to my pack-animals, because that's what life is like out there. But I always put them first. Whenever life is rough for them, it's even rougher for me. We have a nasty time to-

gether, as humans and animals have, travelling as partners in challenging territory, for millennia.

Plainly, travelling for fun and writing only travel books cannot be a lifetime's occupation. If it were, one might indeed have some of those neuroses for which media interviewers so hopefully grope. But labels are hard to avoid. For 30 years I have been labelled, “Travel Writer: Female.” My second and third books were mainly about working as a volunteer, an untrained medical helper, in Tibetan refugee camps in India and Nepal, but the settings were sufficiently unfamiliar for both volumes to be counted as hybrids—semi-travel books. Yet I have also written books about Northern Ireland's “Problem,” about Britain's race-relations (based on personal observations while living for a year in two inner-city ghettos), and about the nuclear power controversy. Still, I am known as “Travel Writer: Female.”

Indeed, when asked, “Which is the more important to you, travelling or writing?” I know the answer. Five years of confinement to Europe after my daughter's birth didn't frustrate me. The new joys and worries of motherhood easily compensated for this restriction. But to stop writing—an activity I have regularly engaged in since the age of eight—would be impossible.

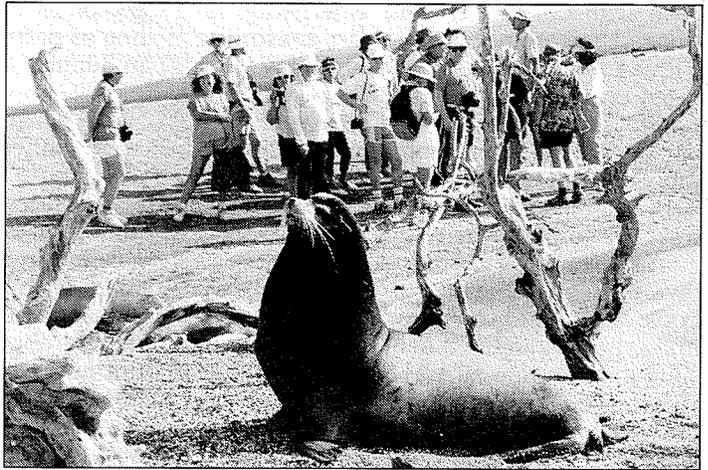
As for being a traveller, I find myself in 1992 resigned to becoming a dinosaur, doomed to extinction because unable to adapt to our fast-changing physical environment. In the past quarter century the world has been so “opened up” by motor roads that my natural habitat is becoming scarcer and scarcer. It's still there, to be sure. As late as 1987 I found it in Western Cameroon, where for three months I trekked with a splendid Fulani stallion as my pack-animal. But the rate of its shrinkage is alarming. The multinational tourist industry loses no time. Political changes and new highways expose areas previously shielded from that industry's depredations. Now tens of thousands of tourists-pretending-to-be-travellers are shepherded annually to regions that used to be the exclusive preserve of real travellers. Superbly illustrated brochures offer “Adventure in Nepal: 17 days from £1798.” (Any sensible traveller could

live in Nepal for at least six months on £1798.) Or "23 Days by Jeep from Islamabad to Kashgar. Ideal Tour for the Adventure-Seeker. £1055 Land Only." Or "England to Kenya by Truck: Overland Adventure! From £1360: See 5 countries in 6 weeks!" (Who in his right mind *wants* to see five countries in six weeks?) Or, most pathetic of all, "A new program of independent walking from inn to inn through the most beautiful countryside in Europe—the Hautes Vosges! We blend superb walking with pre-booked accommodation, while your baggage is transported safely to your next destination. 7 days from £431. Inns are set 10–12 miles apart."

By contrast with the traveller, whose rewards are hard-won, the tourist merely pays for a privilege that is inexorably destroyed by being attained—and destroyed for everyone. Hence we travellers sulk impotently when our natural habitat is invaded by jeep-loads of consumers. And we feel remorseful if, as writers or photographers, we have helped to draw attention to hitherto little-known regions. Tourism is intrinsically incompatible with travelling. The traveller's rewards are natural beauty—and silence, space, solitude—and also, no less importantly, spontaneous human-to-human contact with the locals, free of exploitation by either side. The traveller merges temporarily with a region and its people, as tourists cannot do.

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Like many travel writers, including Freya Stark and Jan Morris, I have never found "conventional" travel books—the sort I write—of much interest. Even as a youngster, when I was a would-be traveller thwarted by domestic ties, I enjoyed reading only supremely well-written accounts or those by authors for whom I felt a special affinity such as, among earlier travellers, Mungo Park and Isabella Bird Bishop and Mary Kingsley.



Tourists, following in the footsteps of Charles Darwin, annually flock to the Galapagos Islands to peer at wildlife up close.

During the past few decades, while reviewing hundreds of contemporary travel books, I have witnessed the genre breaking its bank and flooding out to include anything that doesn't happen in the author's native land—and some things that do happen there (like transplanting one's family from a city to a mountainside). An anthropologist among the equatorial pygmies, a sociologist in Rio de Janeiro, an archaeologist in the Trucial States, a philologist in Ban Mong Pong, a gynecologist in Palaycotai, a paleontologist in Karabudakhent—all are considered to have written travel books. And such authors evidently rejoice in the freedom which this new non-genre permits them. The travel book, then, has become a vehicle for conveying any combination of hilarious mishaps, spiritual reflections, political obsessions, ecological crusades, and autobiographical musings so long as the material is set in odd climates and on unfamiliar terrain. Thirty-five years ago, Freya Stark saw this trend beginning: "The handing on of promiscuous fact, which made the charm of the earlier travellers, is degenerating into the travelogue."

Recently I was asked whether I could name, among this swelling flood of travel books, the five 20th-century travel writers I think the best, the most excellent. I could not comply. My list of "the best" runs to 30 or so. Revealing my five favorites is easier, personal prejudice being implicit in the word "favorite." A travel writer's personal-

ity, as it emerges in his or her books, is more obviously important than the personality of a biographer, historian, or novelist. On page one we embark on a long journey with a companion whose temperament must be essentially congenial. If not, even the finest writing will bring on boredom. So my five favorites have little in common as travellers, although it may be no coincidence that they all combine conventionality, adaptability, and muted eccentricity in a way that is peculiarly English.

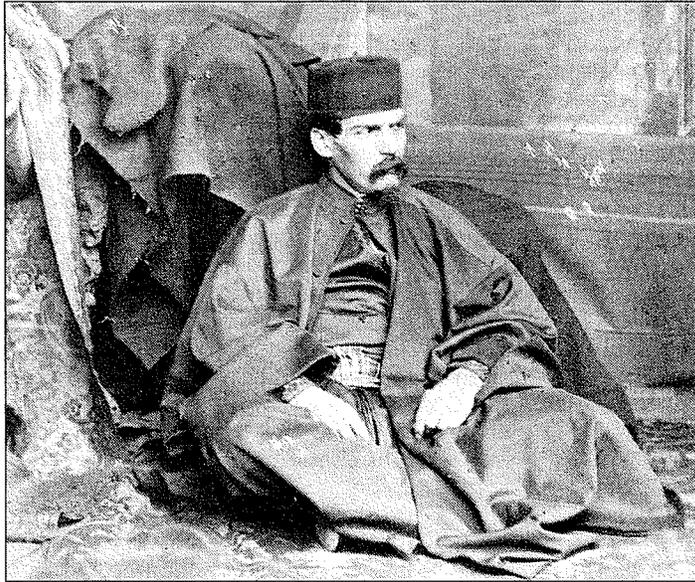
The first three are regarded as regional specialists: Freya Stark (b. 1893) on the Middle East, Dorothy Carrington (b. 1910) on Corsica, Patrick Leigh Fermor (b. 1915) on the Balkans. Colin Thubron (b. 1939) and Redmond O'Hanlon (b. 1947) represent the generation who, though collaborating in the world of documentaries and newspaper sponsorship, have carefully preserved their integrity as writers.

"Specialists" today are professional academics, but Freya Stark, Dorothy Carrington, and Patrick Leigh Fermor acquired their specialist reputations almost by chance, as the result of irresistible personal bewitchments. Freya Stark, who had no formal education, settled in the poorest quarter of Baghdad in the late 1920s to study Farsi in preparation for her journey to Luristan in Iran. (She had already mastered Arabic.) To supplement a meager private income, she wrote articles for the local English-language newspaper, and when these were noticed by Leonard Huxley, editor of *The Cornhill*, he exclaimed, "Here is someone who really can write!" After the publication of a collection of those articles, she remarked to a friend, "I find it's hard work to write to order and am not at all good at rapid modern journalism." The success of *The Valleys of the Assassins* (1934), describing her explorations on horseback in the gorges of the Pusht-I-Rūd, released her from journalism. Subsequently, in *The Southern Gates of Arabia* (1936), she roamed the Hadramawt on camel with her beloved people of the desert, developing a rare understanding of the Bedouin spirit. In *The Arab Island* (1945), she tells of working as an undercover agent during the Second World War. Equipped with film-projector and diesel engine, she insinuated herself, using a well-

tried blend of guile and charm, into a Yemen ostensibly closed to foreigners. After the war, in *The Lycian Shore* (1956), she sailed around the coast of Asia Minor in a tiny boat, dreaming of the voyages of Greeks and Persians. And, in *Alexander's Path* (1958), as an historian-sleuth she rode in the hoofprints of Alexander through Pamphylia and Chelidonis, attempting to unravel the significance of his friendship with the Queen of Caria. At the age of 83 she published the last of her 18 books, *A Peak in Darien* (1976), a collection of exquisitely crafted essays serenely reflecting on the final journey: "The explorers have an advantage in the fact that the thought of a frontier allures them . . ."

Dorothy Carrington, a polymath of the old school, led a very different life. Corsica so enchanted her during a casual holiday visit that she made it her home for some 20 years and then published *The Granite Island: A Portrait of Corsica* (1971). She perceived that Corsican culture spanned the millennia between the neolithic age and the 18th century in one unbroken arch. She was able to study folk art and traditions not with the absurd solemnity of a modern anthropologist doing "field work" but simply by observing the daily lives of people she loved and respected. In 1948 Corsica still formed a pre-industrial rural society; each village was an exceptionally tight-knit community of aloof individualists whose friendship had to be patiently earned. As a portrait of a place, *Granite Island* is as close to flawless as any human creation can be.

In 1933, when Kings's School in Canterbury expelled Patrick Leigh Fermor, he decided to spend the next three years walking from the Hook of Holland to Constantinople—for him an incomparably more educational experience than a university could have provided. From the perspective of middle age, in *A Time of Gifts* (1977) and *Between the Woods and the Water* (1986), Fermor circles like an eagle over the remembered landscapes of a Europe that soon was changed forever. These books are also fascinating for his journey through that other, inner landscape, his own self. When the Second World War broke out, Fermor became a liaison officer in Albania before



His ability to adopt native language and dress allowed 19th-century explorer Sir Richard Burton to be the first European to survive visits to the Muslim shrines of Mecca and Harer.

parachuting into German-occupied Crete. There his linguistic talents enabled him to survive for two years, disguised as a shepherd, while he organized the Resistance and finally the capture of the German Commander, for which the city of Herakleion made him an honorary citizen. Those years sharpened his curiosity about remote communities and obscure linguistic problems, a curiosity he has spent most of his life satisfying. He is shamelessly self-indulgent as a writer, leaving his narrative to wander down byways of lightheartedly learned speculation about the headgear of the Phanariots, the music of ancient Greece, or the derivation of Sarakatsán. His admirers lament his low output—eight books, of which three are slim—but perhaps this accounts for the unrivalled beauty of his prose. Or is “unrivalled” too strong? Many consider Colin Thubron his equal.

Already in his first book, *Mirror to Damascus* (1966), Thubron was writing with the assurance of a master, with a depth and breadth of erudition. Books on Lebanon, Jerusalem, and Cyprus followed, the author's personal adventures taking place against a rich, beguiling tapestry of fable, religion, architecture, archaeology, ethnol-

ogy. Novel-writing explains the nine-year gap between Colin Thubron's 600-mile walk around Cyprus and his 10,000-mile journey, in a decrepit motor-van, from the Baltic to the Caucasus. *Among the Russians* (1983) is a uniquely—a word I never use lightly—perceptive and compassionate account of everyday life in the Soviet Union. Then came *Behind the Wall* (1987), which tells us rather more about its gentle, modest, sensitive author than about China. As usual, Colin Thubron travelled alone and frugally, covering thousands of miles in prodigiously overcrowded, hard-bench trains. Disarmingly he shares with the reader his confusions, repulsions, and illogicalities, his abandoned

preconceptions and new prejudices. For all its personal revelations, there is in fact no better travel book about contemporary China than *Behind the Wall*.

Redmond O'Hanlon's *Into the Heart of Borneo* (1984) and *In Trouble Again* (1988) are the funniest books, in any genre, that I have ever read. My junior favorite was elected a Member of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History in 1982, by which date he had published *Changing Scientific Concepts of Nature in the English Novel* and *Joseph Conrad and Charles Darwin: The Influence of Scientific Thought on Conrad's Fiction*. It seems he then felt an understandable need to relax; so off he went in 1983, accompanied by his rash poet friend, James Fenton, and three Sea Dyak trackers, to find a mountain range untouched by any white man's foot since 1926. Their six-week journey in a small boat in Borneo extinguished for ever Fenton's exploratory instinct but inspired O'Hanlon to seek more of the same on a four-months trip up the Orinoco River and across the Amazon Basin. These books dexterously blend three ingredients: a remote rain-forest offering the hourly possibility of sudden (or worse, *lingering*) death from

one of a multitude of grotesquely horrible causes; an immense variety of flora and fauna rarely if ever glimpsed before by any Western eye; a small cast of local eccentrics whose interactions with the author afford much scope for hilarious dialogue. For all his humor, O'Hanlon does not discard his mortarboard. Original reflections on the relevant pioneers of natural history are interspersed with superb descriptive passages and much riveting information about the hoatzin, the Screaming Piha, the matamata, anhinga, dickcissel, cotinga, bocachico, yellow-handed titi, and coatimundi—to name but a few of the creatures observed en route.

One gift that unites this disparate quintet is sensuousness. It is obligatory for travel writers to describe how things *look*. But if readers are to be successfully transported to unfamiliar places, our other senses must be courted as well. We need to be made aware of a region's distinctive smells, sounds, and tastes; of the feel of the sun or the wind, the rain or the snow; of the sensations of stone or sand or mud or turf underfoot. All my favorites are graphically sensuous.

Another of their shared gifts may point to the mainspring of good travel writing. Each takes the reader along into *her* Arabia or Corsica, or *his* Greece or Russia or Armenia. This mysterious power has little to do with what reviewers like to call "the immediacy of the writing"—something not

unusual among competent authors and journalists. It is, I suspect, a result of the good travel writer's passionate involvement with the places and people written about, whatever one's obsession may happen to be. Several acclaimed modern travel writers seem failures to me simply because they lack this sense of involvement. To them a country and its people are merely raw material, to be detachedly observed and then fashioned into a book. They are indeed good *writers*, often quite knowledgeable, yet they are bad *travellers*, never allowing themselves to be absorbed and influenced by the unfamiliar. All writers are egocentric, but good travel writers spontaneously become less so during their journeys.

One final similarity unites my quintet: They do not tailor their material to fit "the market." I think of what Freya Stark wrote in *Beyond Euphrates*: "Even in my poorest days, finance has had nothing to do either with the planning or the writing of my books. What they have brought was welcome, but they were written for their own sakes, nor have I ever debated whether this thing or that might be what the public wants . . . I think of the public as friends, who are to like me for myself alone, and not as a Cerberus to whom cakes must be given to soothe it from biting."

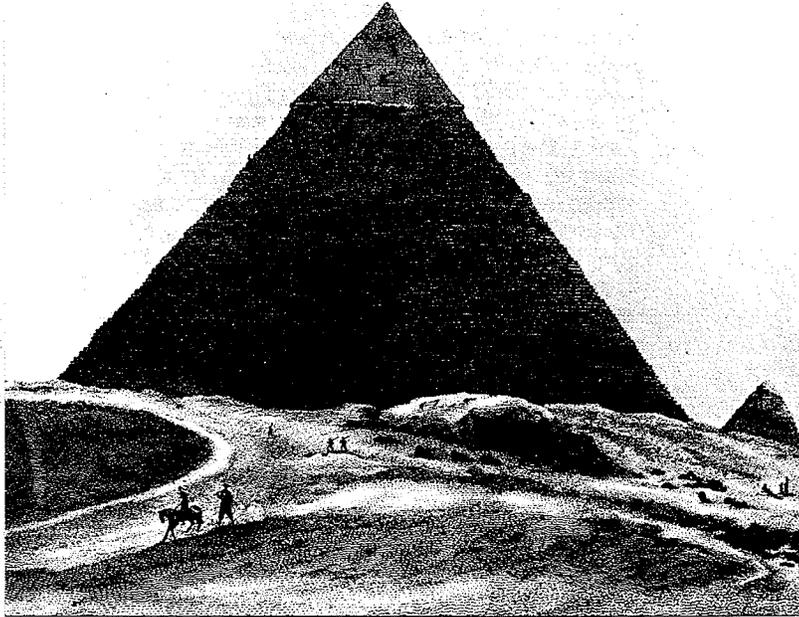
Those words should be drawn to the attention of all young authors—travel writers or otherwise—to encourage them to keep the flag of integrity flying in the battle against "market forces."



Afterlives of the Great Pyramid

by Daniel J. Boorstin

During the 1970s, *Time* and *Esquire* ran articles about the “healing energy” of *pyramid power*. A Nobel Prize-winning physicist bombarded the Great Pyramid at Giza with cosmic rays to discover its secrets. New Age devotees erected small pyramids in which to meditate and make love. Was this only one more passing fad? Perhaps not. Daniel Boorstin reveals that many respected figures in Western history—including Sir Isaac Newton and Napoleon Bonaparte—have been intrigued by the Egyptian pyramids. Their attempts to unravel the “mystery” of the Great Pyramid is the story of Enlightenment rationality gone astray, a tale of how easily the scientific mentality can slip into mystical speculations.



Napoleon's general staff reach the Great Pyramid at sunrise. The etching comes from the Napoleonic expedition's archaeological survey of the pyramids, published in 21 volumes.

The grandeur of the Great Pyramid at Giza challenged the young Napoleon's imperial imagination. When the ambitious 29-year-old general led his ill-starred expedition to Egypt in 1798, he visited Giza where he was awed by what he saw. Some of his officers climbed all 450 feet to the top of the Great Pyramid, but Napoleon remained below, drawing and calculating. We still have his sketches of the Giza pyramids and his notes. Napoleon reportedly informed his generals, after their descent, that the three pyramids contained enough stone to build a wall 10 feet high and one foot wide around all of France. Recalling Alexander the Great before him, Napoleon asked to be left alone in the King's Chamber inside the Great Pyramid. On coming out he was said to be pale, as though he had witnessed a mysterious vision. Napoleon never told what he had seen, but he repeatedly hinted at an epiph-

any that revealed his destiny. Seventeen years later, while a prisoner on St. Helena, he was tempted to reveal this experience to Emmanuel Las Cases, to whom he was dictating his memoirs, but he stopped abruptly, saying, "What's the use? You'd never believe me."

Awe of the Great Pyramid led Napoleon's savants to measure and describe the monument with unprecedented accuracy, providing solid data for generations of scientific fantasy. Retreating from Egypt, Napoleon left his scientists and artists to complete their work. They were captured by the British, who chivalrously allowed them to return to France with their notes and drawings. Their achievement, the first detailed survey of the monuments of Egypt, was also the first modern archaeological survey. Their nine large folio volumes of text and 12 volumes of plates, the *Description de l'Égypte* (1808–25) was

a monument in itself, described by admirers as "the most immortal conception and glorious performance of a book ever realized by man." One of Napoleon's officers found near Rosetta, at a branch of the Nile Delta, an unimpressive three-foot diorite slab. A quarter-century later, this stone—carved in hieroglyphics, cursive Egyptian, and Greek—provided the key for the precocious Jean-François Champollion's deciphering of the hieroglyphic language used by the ancient Egyptians. "The only true conquests," Napoleon once remarked with uncharacteristic humility, "are those gained by knowledge over ignorance." Despite the hasty retreat of his armies from Egypt, it was the site of one of Napoleon's more enduring conquests.

The creators of the pyramids unwittingly created the speculative science—and art—of Pyramidology. Since the Great Pyramid bore no inscrip-

tion revealing its meaning, archaeologists have sought other clues. The cryptic language of numbers has proved seductive. Could not the message of the Great Pyramid be carried by its dimensions? Even before there was a modern science of Egyptology, this hope enticed generations of earnest European scholars to Giza. The famous English astronomer and pioneer of Egyptian metrology, Charles Piazzi Smyth (1819–1900), explained:

[T]he Great Pyramid was never even remotely understood. . . . [But] it is able nevertheless to explain its grand, even Messianic, mission, most unmistakably. Not, indeed, in the usual manner of less ancient monuments, by the use of any written language, whether hieroglyphic or vulgar, but by the aid of the mathematical and physical science of modern times applied to show the significance residing in the exact amount of its ancient length, breadth, and angles; a means most efficacious both for preventing the parable being read too soon in the history of an, at first, unlearned world; but for insuring its being correctly read, and by all nations, when the fullness of prophetic time, in a science age, has at last arrived.

If the power of a work of creation is revealed in its iridescence—its capacity to inspire meanings unimagined by its creators—then the Great Pyramid has few peers.

These speculative fantasies have enlisted some of the best scientific minds of the English-speaking world, beginning with Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727). His demonstration of his theory of gravitation in Book III of his *Principia* depended on the shape and dimensions of the Earth. When the classic figures for the Earth's circumference provided by the Greek astronomer and geographer Eratosthenes (third century B.C.) did not fit Newton's propositions, he looked for something better. Newton's Biblical piety—reflected in his thousands of manuscript pages of theological speculation and his New System of Cosmology to

confirm the Biblical narrative—suggested another source for the data he needed.

Newton found encouragement in the work of a mathematician-traveler named John Greaves (1602–1652). To find the precise dimensions of the Earth, Greaves had gone to Egypt in 1638, seeking clues in the Great Pyramid. An enlightened suspicion then current among the learned held that the sciences did not all begin with the ancient Greeks. In particular, it was believed that the Greeks had learned their geometry from the Egyptians. Pythagoras himself was reputed to have said that the Greek units of measure had come from Egypt. And was it not plausible that the Egyptians used their grandest and most durable monument—the Great Pyramid—to embody and perpetuate their standard of measure?

This devious line of reasoning led Greaves, the brilliant young Oxford mathematician, to Egypt and into the Great Pyramid. With his measuring instruments, “creeping like a serpent” down the Pyramid's Descending Passage, he fired his pistols to clear away the cloud of bats, some a foot in length. He finally reached the Grand Gallery and the King's Chamber, where he examined the empty granite coffer, taking measurements as he went. Returned to England, Greaves became the Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford. Assembling his data in a little book, the *Pyramidographia*, he attracted the attention of the scientific community. Sir William Harvey, renowned for his theories of respiration, was puzzled that Greaves had not found any ventilating conduits for the Pyramid's interior chambers. The energetic Sir Isaac Newton then came up with his own *Dissertation upon the Sacred Cubit of the Jews and the Cubits of several Nations: in which, from the Dimensions of the greatest Pyramid, as taken by Mr. John Greaves, the ancient Cubit of Memphis is determined*. In this treatise, Newton displayed a dual interest—Biblical and scientific. Definition of the ancient cubits would clarify the Bible's obscure and mystical passages. For exam-

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recalled that Diodorus Siculus and Strabo had said the apothem of the Great Pyramid was precisely one "stade." Jomard also discovered that the opening end of the Descending Passage was pointed with startling accuracy in the polar direction and precisely oriented to see the transit across the meridian of a circumpolar star.

Everything Jomard measured seemed to open new possibilities. The empty sarcophagus in the King's Chamber appeared to embody the Egyptian cubit, which led Jomard to speculate that the pyramid might not have been primarily a tomb at all. The sarcophagus was empty, and there was no indisputable evidence that it had ever contained a corpse. Surely, he said, there must have been good reason for Egypt's reputation as the birthplace of geometry, repeated by the wisest of the ancients—Herodotus, Plato, Solon, and Pythagoras. Could not the Great Pyramid have been built on purpose to record their profound geometric and geographic science? Instead of a funerary monument for a dead pharaoh, perhaps they had intentionally left this monument of learning to be deciphered by distant generations.

Jomard's efforts were not wasted. His tantalizing suggestions were picked up by a most unlikely messenger, a pious and sedentary English man of letters, John Taylor (1781–1864). The son of a London bookseller, Taylor received at a provincial grammar school a solid foundation in Latin, Greek, and mathematics. Apprenticed as a bookseller at the age of 14, he later formed a small publishing house with a friend in London. His wit and omnivorous curiosity made him the center of a literary circle of marginal and neglected authors. Interest in literary puzzles made him the first to identify the probable author of the notorious *Junius* diatribes (1769–1771) against the government of George III. He penned religious tracts which even included finding a name for the great beast of the Apocalypse.

Among the marginal poets whom he sponsored was John Keats (1795–1821). To champion this odd young writer took some courage. *Endymion* (1818), Keats's longest poem, was dismissed in the leading literary magazines as an uncouth work of "the

Cockney School." Still Taylor remained Keats's publisher and his generous patron. He advanced £100 for the copyright to *Endymion*, then made it a gift to the author. When Keats's works were not selling, when he was besieged by creditors and deathly ill with consumption, Taylor sent Keats on his final trip to Italy to recover his health. He also tried to recover for Keats the money that Keats's brother had absconded with to America. Keats considered Taylor his close friend and principal patron.

Taylor never traveled to Egypt nor even out of Britain. But he arranged for the publication of his own *Emphatic New Testament* (1854), and he enjoyed travelers' accounts of Egypt. In 1859, the year of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Taylor made his own "attempt to recover a lost leaf in the World's History." His work on the origin of measures, according to his leading disciple Piazzi Smyth, was "the most precious discovery of the age for all mankind." Taylor's motto was his favorite passage from Deuteronomy (xxv, 15): "Thou shalt have a perfect and just Weight, a perfect and just Measure shalt thou have: that thy Days may be lengthened in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

Taylor's copious researches attempted to prove "that in the Great Pyramid the world now possesses a Monument of Inspiration, as it has long possessed a Book of Inspiration." Somehow concealed there was the perfect, divinely inspired standard of measure. This unit—intended to be a certain fraction of the Earth's circumference from which the whole could be calculated—was part of the original design of nature. By studying the angle of an original casing stone, Taylor calculated the original height of the structure and discovered the astonishing fact that the relation of the height to the circumference was almost precisely $1:2\pi$. Scholars had assumed that Archimedes (287–212 B.C.) was the first to arrive at the irrational number for the relation between the radius and the circumference of a circle. Now it appeared that, long before Archimedes, the Egyptians had solved this problem. What made this fact doubly gratifying, Taylor concluded, was that they appeared to have used the British inch. Or perhaps more accurately, the British were unknowingly perpetuating the di-

vinely inspired Egyptian inch.

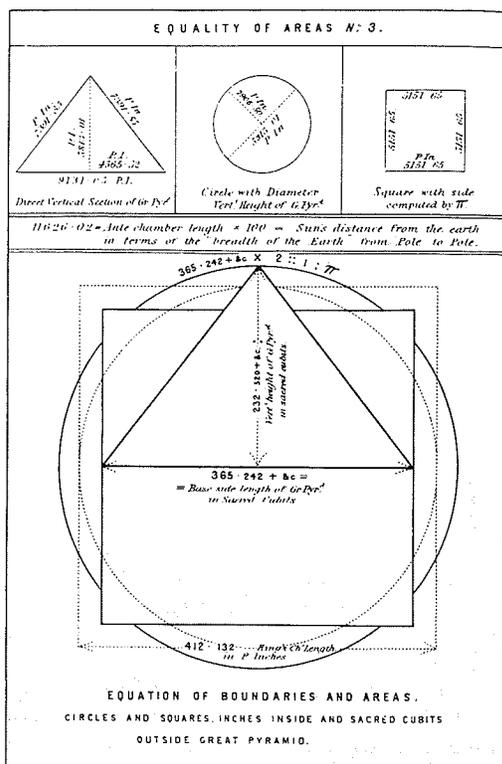
This seemed to lend credence to the appealing proposition of Richard Brothers (1757–1824), a religious fanatic and the self-proclaimed descendant of the Biblical David, that the British people were descended from the lost tribes of Israel. “Our Motto, from Deuteronomy,” Taylor explained, “points to a very important consideration: viz.—That the people who maintain a perfect and just weight, and a perfect and just measure, may expect lengthened days in the land which God giveth them. If any people were ever entitled to so great a favor it might be the Inhabitants of this Country. They have had the same measures of Length, Capacity, and Weight, from the earliest times; and they have been blessed with a long and unbroken series of peaceful Governments. Greater freedom from external foes, and from internal dissensions, has not fallen to the lot of any other nation.” Taylor’s thesis seemed to be supported by the backwardness of Egyptian science. Since their mathematics was too rudimentary (as later historians have confirmed) for them to have arrived on their own at the irrational number π , and since they plainly lacked the know-how to build so mathematically perfect a structure, “the Great Pyramid must have been erected under Divine instructions to its architect.” Which, of course, attached a divine aura to the British inch.

Richard Brothers’s Biblical prophecies, which included his demand that George III deliver up his crown to him as a descendant of David, prince of the Hebrews and rightful ruler of the world, led to his confinement as a criminal lunatic. John Taylor’s less implausible prophecies agitated the Royal Society and enlisted the enthusiasm of eminent scientists of the age. *The Great Pyramid: Why was it Built & Who Built it?*, which Taylor published at the age of 79, applied the English inch to the Biblical dimensions of Noah’s Ark, the Tabernacle, the Tower of Babel, the Temple of Solomon, and the height of Goliath. Taylor drew on supposed etymologies in Hebrew, Egyptian, Greek, and Latin. What his thesis lacked in plausibility it more than made up in learning. The American secretary of state John Quincy Adams, in his “Report upon

Weights and Measures” (1821), had earlier asked whether the curious decimal relation of the axis of the Earth to the diameter of the equator (333 to 334) was purely accidental. “It is not accidental,” Taylor observed, “but the result of the measurement made of the Earth’s diameter before the Deluge by the Sacred Cubit then in use, and of the same measurement after the Deluge by the corresponding cubit, the Itinerary Cubit of the Great Pyramid.” And so he enlisted Adams too as an ally of the British inch. “So complete,” Taylor concluded, “is the knowledge now obtained that it leaves scarcely anything to be desired.”

Taylor’s book luckily caught the attention of one of the more accomplished astronomers of the age, Piazzi Smyth, the Astronomer Royal for Scotland, Professor of Practical Astronomy at the University of Edinburgh. Smyth was born in Naples, the son of an eminent astronomer who immigrated to England and became an admiral in the Royal Navy. At 16 the precocious Smyth became assistant at the Royal Observatory at the Cape of Good Hope, where he drew the course of the great comets of 1836 and 1843. He was diverted to the earthly riddle of the Great Pyramid by his mentor, Sir John Herschel (1792–1871), who was at the time working at the new observatory at Cape Town. The versatile Herschel had achieved fame in mathematics, found new ways to use the telescope, and would later explore the infant science of photography as well as translate into English Dante’s *Inferno* and Homer’s *Iliad*.

Herschel had been reading British travelers’ descriptions of the Great Pyramid. He was intrigued by Herodotus’s suggestion that the Pyramid had an occult metrological significance. Herschel noted Taylor’s revelation that the figure for π derived from the Great Pyramid (if calculated in British inches) provided a convenient unit for measuring the circumference of the Earth. This relation between the British inch and the dimensions of the Earth proved to him that the British possessed a modular standard “more scientific in its origin, and numerically, very far more accurate than the boasted metrical system of our French neighbours.” In 1860, when Herschel pub-



Piazzi Smyth used diagrams to argue the Great Pyramid was built with "accurate knowledge of high astronomical and geographical physics."

lished his observations, he made the dimensions of the Great Pyramid a matter of public interest in Britain and also a weapon in the battle against the metric system and decimal coinage. Herschel helped delay the metric cause for at least a century.

The prestige of the "Einstein" of the age gave new momentum to Taylor's thesis. Fueled by popular opposition to the metric system, Taylor's speculations acquired a sudden respectability. When Piazzi Smyth read Taylor's works, he determined to make his own on-the-spot study of this "Monument of Inspiration."

In November 1864, Smyth and his wife sailed for Egypt. In Cairo they won the friendly support of the powerful Ismail Pasha (1830-1895), rebuildier of Cairo and promoter of the Suez Canal. The Pasha supplied donkeys and a camel train to take them to Giza and provided 20 laborers to clean the main chambers of the Pyramid

for their accurate measurements. The Smyths set up a cozy household in an abandoned tomb in a cliff of the Giza Hill.

Using instruments made to their order by a British optician, they noted every inside and outside dimension of the grand monument. To measure individual stones they used mahogany and teak rods tipped with brass and treated to prevent variation from humidity or temperature. Smyth's newly precise measurements showed that the builders really had incorporated in the relation between the altitude and the circumference of the Pyramid a value for π to the figure of 3.14159+. Further evidence proved that this figure incorporated in the building was a clue to the precise number of days in the year (because the Earth is a sphere and rotates once a day).

Smyth's measurements of the Great Pyramid, published in numerous volumes, brought him the gold medal of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. But some members of the scientific community objected to his extravagantly pious conclusions, which included Pyramid prophecies of the Second Coming of Christ. A skeptical colleague called Smyth's work "a series of strange hallucinations which only a few weak women believe, and perhaps a few womanly men, but no more." When the Royal Society of London refused his request to report his studies, he resigned from the Society and so added a martyr's crown to that of a prophet.

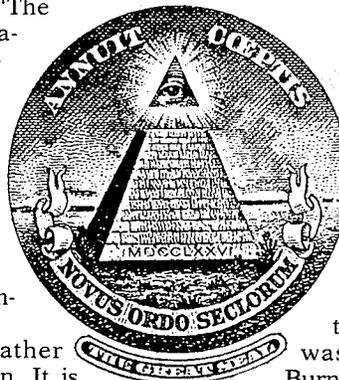
But there now came a delightful irony as well as a new kind of hero to the history of Pyramidology: William Matthew Flinders Petrie (1853-1942). Petrie would found a modern science of Egyptology and revolutionize the techniques of all archaeology. His grandfather, Matthew Flinders (1774-1814), was the famous circumnavigator of Tasmania, the pioneer cartographer of the Australian coast. His father, a mechanical engineer, had been so intrigued by the theories of Taylor and Smyth that he spent 20 years designing more precise measuring instruments for the Egyptian climate. Inspired by family tradition and by Smyth's book on the Great Pyramid, which he read at the age of 13, Petrie very early determined to pursue the history of the world's standards of measure. He became an expert surveyor, practicing on English

IS THAT A PYRAMID IN YOUR POCKET?

How many Americans have wondered what that curious-looking pyramid is doing on the U.S. dollar bill? Why did the Founding Fathers, democratic and forward-looking, choose for the back of the republic's Great Seal an ancient royal tomb with a radiant mystical eye at the top?

The Treasury Department provides a reassuring interpretation: "The pyramid stands for permanence and strength. The pyramid is unfinished, signifying the United States' future growth and goal of perfection. A sunburst and eye are above the pyramid standing for the Deity." The motto below the pyramid, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, or New Order of the Age, invokes the new American era.

There is, however, a rather more provocative explanation. It is associated with the Masons. Some of the Founding Fathers, including George Washington, were Freemasons, and, according to Manley Hall, an expert on Masonic lore, they received aid from a secret European group to establish the United States for "a peculiar and particular purpose known only



to the initiated few." The unfinished pyramid of the Great Seal symbolizes, says Hall, "the task to the accomplishment of which the U.S. Government was dedicated from the day of its inception." This task was kept a secret but hinted at by putting the Great Pyramid on the Great Seal and the Great Seal on the one-dollar bill.

This claim, with all its far-fetched causality, has seemed plausible to a number of people. Books such as Norman Frederick de Clifford's *Egypt, the Cradle of Ancient Masonry* (1902) trace the Masons back to an ancient brotherhood who, more skilled than modern architects, encoded their hidden wisdom in the geometry of the Great Pyramid. That wisdom was well-hidden indeed: Ton Burnés in *Secrets of Ancient Geome-*

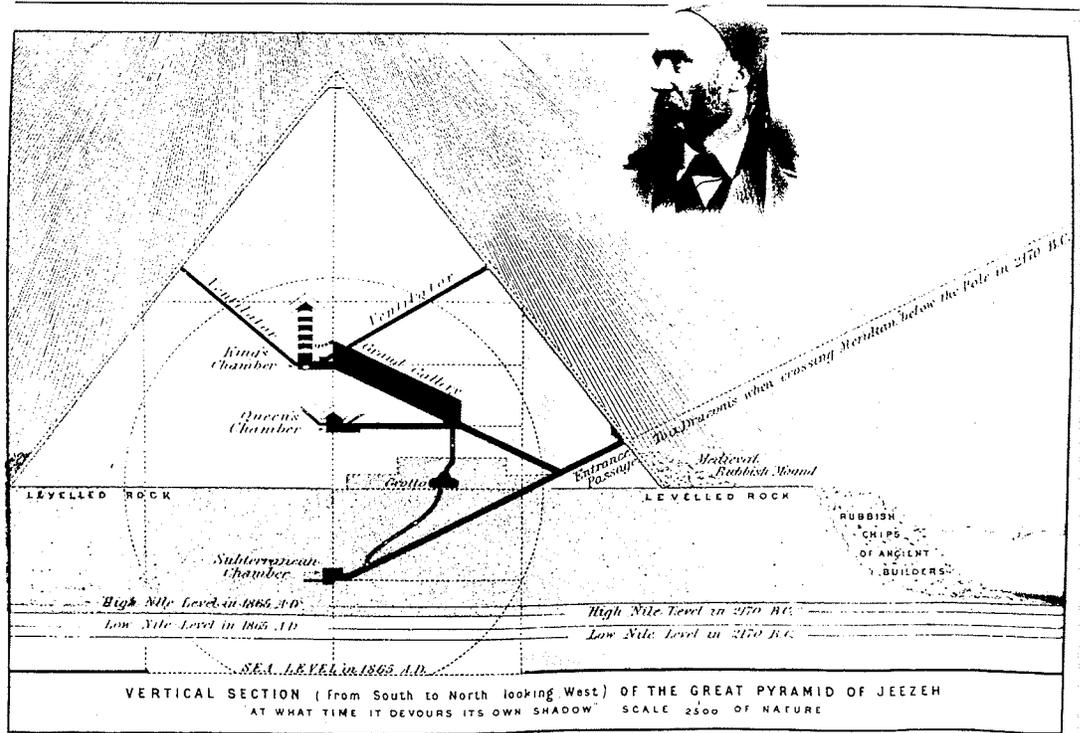
try, a book dedicated to the Freemasons, argues that the Pyramid's geometry was never fully decoded until, in fact, the publication of his own book in 1969. It may be that every person with a feverish imagination and a dollar bill to spend is a potential convert to Pyramid speculation.

churches and even on Stonehenge. Drawing on his field work, he published at the age of 24 his epoch-making *Inductive Metrology, or the Recovery of Ancient Measures from the Monuments* (1877), followed by his survey of Stonehenge (1880).

To make his own survey of the Great Pyramid, Petrie arrived in Egypt in November 1880, laden with his father's improved measuring instruments. He enlisted Ali Gabri, the genial Arab guide who 16 years earlier had helped the Smyths set up their household at Giza. Petrie, too, established himself comfortably in an abandoned tomb. For the next two years he surveyed and re-surveyed the Pyramid. Sometimes he spent a whole day repeating observations at a single station. Ali Gabri would hold a parasol over Petrie's theodolite, or surveyor's telescope, to keep the sunshine from making it expand unevenly. Petrie dis-

covered that the base line of the Pyramid should be measured not from the corner "sockets" used by Smyth but by the edge of the pavement 20 inches higher. This produced a figure for the baseline of the Great Pyramid of only 9,069 British inches (instead of Smyth's 9,140). Petrie later recalled his astonishment that the enthusiasm for Smyth's theory that had drawn him to Egypt had led "to the ugly little fact which killed the beautiful theory." His new figures destroyed the mathematical coincidences between the Pyramid, the days of the year, the circumference of the Earth, and the British inch, and so demolished the whole vast pyramid of speculation and fantasy. Only a few obstinate enthusiasts and fanatics would refuse to surrender.

Petrie would, more than anyone before him, clarify the real achievements of the Egyptians. He invented sequence dating,



Piazzi Smyth (inset), who first measured the pyramids using modern equipment.

developed the techniques of cross-dating (using shards of ancient pottery), and produced a revolution in the ways of archaeological excavation. Petrie noted in 1911, "Hitherto the comparatively brief outlook of Western history has given us only the great age of classical civilisation before modern times. We have been in the position of a child that remembers only a single summer before that which he enjoys."

The fertile afterlife of the Great Pyramid reveals a bizarre and little-known twist in posterity's capacity to misunderstand—or re-understand—the message of a work of art or architecture. It is common enough to force an original work of art to speak in the vocabulary of our generation, to see for example in *Julius Caesar* or *Coriolanus* the modern totalitarian dictator. In the afterlife of the Great Pyramid, too, we see the strenuous but pathetic effort of each later generation to make an ancient monument declare its

own modern wisdom. For over two centuries British scientists attempted to find in the Great Pyramid the divinely ordained yardstick that revealed the superiority of the British over the French ways of measuring. (And why not, too, the superiority of other things British?) Theirs was a touching faith in the powers of science to confirm the good opinion that God-fearing Britons held of themselves.

But we must not conclude that the afterlives of the Great Pyramid are only a gloss on the fallibility of mortal man in the search for truth. We can enjoy some providential optimism in the surprising "conclusion" of this story. For it was out of the effort to test the simplistic dogmas of earlier Pyramidologists and to settle the "Battle of the Standards" that the bold and brilliant Sir Flinders Petrie founded modern Egyptology and gave to ancient Egyptian life a new vividness. Once again we see the iridescent power of great works of creation to carry unintended messages.

Continued from page 16

baccalaureate degrees, reports Manhattan College sociologist Kevin Dougherty. These students tend to be less academically skilled, less ambitious, and from poorer families than students entering four-year institutions. But several studies have found that even students with similar disadvantages who begin at four-year schools are more likely to wind up receiving bachelor's degrees than their counterparts at community colleges.

The reason for the difference, according to Dougherty, is that community-college students encounter "institutional obstacles" all along the way. They rarely have the opportunity to live on campus—and thus have a weaker commitment to staying the course during the often-difficult early college years. Entering community-college students are 10–18 percent more likely to drop out than their counterparts at four-year schools. The next hurdle is transferring to a four-year institution. Many of these institutions are reluctant to take transfer students. Only half the baccalaureate aspirants manage to make the move—often without much help from community-college faculty or advisers, whose efforts are concentrated on vocational education. The students who do transfer then face further obstacles. They are often

denied financial aid and credits for community-college courses. The transfer students also frequently find themselves poorly prepared to meet the new academic demands, and often find it hard to fit into college social life. Eventually, several studies show, about one-third of the transferees drop out.

What is to be done? Clark Kerr and other prominent educators have recommended that community colleges more or less stop trying to do what they are not doing well and instead concentrate on what they do best: vocational education, adult and community education, and remedial education. But that, Dougherty says, "would leave many baccalaureate aspirants homeless." He proposes a different solution: Turn the community colleges into two-year branches of state universities. Nine states already have such arrangements. "Because of [the branches'] strong connections to the universities," he says, "[they] apparently make it much easier for students to transfer than do community colleges." And once they have transferred, the students encounter fewer difficulties. This would be good news for working-class and minority students, for whom the community college has become a gateway to higher education.

PRESS & MEDIA

Invisible News

"Black on Black" by Jim Strader, in *Washington Journalism Review* (Mar. 1992), 4716 Pontiac St., College Park, Md. 20740.

In its prime during the late 1940s, the *Pittsburgh Courier* claimed more than 400,000 readers and wielded enormous influence among blacks—not only in Pittsburgh but throughout the nation. Today the *Courier*, along with most other black newspapers across the country, is suffering from dwindling circulation, sagging advertising revenues, and diminishing prominence in the black community.

The basic problem, notes Strader, a wire service reporter, is that black newspapers such as the *Chicago Defender*, the *Atlanta Daily World*, and the *New York Amsterdam News* are no longer, in one editor's words, "the only place blacks [can] read about blacks. Now there's competition everywhere." National black magazines such as *Ebony* and *Emerge* have cut into the newspapers' readership. And the presence of blacks at many mainstream papers and in television news has made the "mainstream" press more attentive to the desires of black

readers and viewers, lessening the need for all-black news.

The black newspapers' audience has also changed. Many middle-class blacks have moved to the suburbs, where they are far removed from the newspapers' urban concerns. "There is a portion of the black community that is indifferent to the black press," asserts Roland Wolseley, author of *The Black Press, U.S.A.* "Editors don't like to be told this. They have a tough job holding the interest of middle-class blacks."

It wasn't always so hard. During the civil-rights movement, black newspapers (some with national distribution) were considered by many blacks their only reliable source of news and the newspapers helped reinforce a sense of collective identity. The papers publicized the goals of civil rights and equality, and had large circulations closely tied to political advocacy. In recent years, however, the *Chicago Defend-*

Here's Madonna with the News

Jon Katz, former executive producer of the *CBS Morning News*, announces in *Rolling Stone* (Mar. 5, 1992) that "straight news," as reported in daily newspapers and on TV network broadcasts, is becoming extinct.

In place of the Old News, something dramatic is evolving, a new culture of information, a hybrid New News—dazzling, adolescent, irresponsible, fearless, frightening and powerful. The New News is a heady concoction, part Hollywood film and TV movie, part pop music and pop art, mixed with popular culture and celebrity magazines, tabloid telecasts, cable and home video.

Increasingly, the New News is seizing the functions of mainstream journalism, sparking conversations and setting the country's social and political agenda. It is revolutionizing the way information reaches people and moves among them. It is changing the way Americans evaluate politicians and, shortly, elect them . . .

The modern news media—the Old News—was formed in the years after World War II. Major newspapers and instantly powerful network-news divisions chose Washington and New York as their headquarters, and presidential politics, the economy and foreign affairs—the Cold War, mostly—as their pre-

eminent beats. In its heyday, the Old News showed us the murder of John Kennedy, took us to the moon, then helped drive a president from office and end a war.

Other stories—the sexual revolution, the role of race, dramatic changes in the relationship between people and their jobs, the evolution of pop culture, a rebirth of spiritualism—were covered sporadically and incompletely by the Old News . . . They were a sideline, never the main event.

But for the New News—and for much of America—they were the event. Women, blacks, Hispanics, gays and Asians had launched an ongoing political and cultural revolution against middle-class white males, who continue to dominate most institutions, including the news media . . .

Mainstream journalism frequently checkmates itself. In worshipping balance over truth, objectivity over point of view, moderation over diversity, and credibility over creativity, the Old News gives consumers a clear choice. Consumers can have a balanced discussion, with every side of an issue neutralizing the other, or they can turn to singers, producers and filmmakers offering colorful, distinctive, often flawed but frequently powerful visions . . . More and more, Americans are making [their preference] clear.

er's circulation has declined to 30,000, one-tenth what it used to be, while the *Courier's* is down to 50,000, and the *Baltimore Afro-American* has dropped its national edition.

To woo readers back, some black newspapers are focusing on local issues and strengthening their base in the inner cities. The publish-

ers contend that black communities still need a local black perspective on the news and advocacy on black issues. While blacks trust CNN and *USA Today*, *Birmingham Times* publisher James E. Lewis says, "on the local level, black people do not trust the information that's in the local newspapers as it applies to them."

How Clark Kent Learned to Fly

The American news media emerged from the Watergate scandals with unprecedented power—founded, some press critics say, on illusions. As Edward Jay Epstein noted back in 1973, "What the press did between the break-in in June [1972] and the trial in January was to leak the case developed by the federal and Florida prosecutors to the public." Yet the myth that young *Washington Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein had toppled a disgraced president—a myth fed by their best-

"Watergate: A Study in Mythology" by Michael Schudson, in *Columbia Journalism Review* (May-June 1992), 700 Journalism Bldg., Columbia Univ., New York, N.Y. 10027.

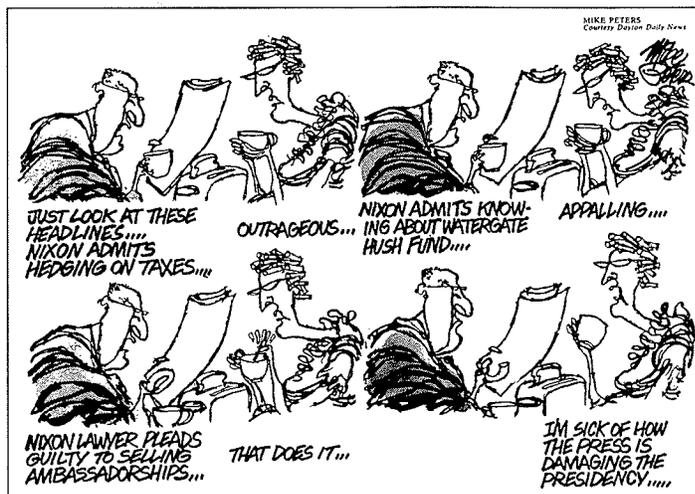
selling book, *All the President's Men* (1987) and the popular movie that was made from it—dies hard. That partly explains journalism's enhanced clout after Watergate. But Michael Schudson, author of *Discovering the News* (1978) and chair of the communication department at the University California, San Diego, sees another reason: the Nixon administration's relentless attacks on the news media.

From the beginning of Richard Nixon's presidency in 1969, he "insisted on treating the

press as the enemy and on identifying it as a distinct power center in American life rather than as a representative of the public or a medium through which other power centers speak," Schudson says. In early 1970, Nixon's chief of staff H. R. Haldeman pushed to get out the story that his boss, the champion of the Silent Majority, had overcome the "great handicaps" he had on entering office, namely, in Haldeman's words, "the hostile press epitomized by the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, etc., the hostile network commentators, the generally hostile White House press corps, the hostile Congress, etc."

As a result of the administration's attacks, Schudson argues, many Americans came to perceive the news media—whether admired or feared—as an independent source of power. And the perception of power is a form of power, especially "inside the Beltway." Journalists complained about the unfairness of attacks on the media but exulted in their newfound influence.

Today, the pumped-up image of the post-Wa-



The Nixon administration portrayed the news media as an independent and hostile power, and many Americans were persuaded.

tergate news media, Schudson says, serves the interests of both government and the news media. Political leaders can portray themselves as "unfairly besieged," and journalists are able to present themselves as "a brave and independent social force." Hidden from view, Schudson notes, is the mundane reality: "The relationship between public officials and the press in Washington is, for the most part, comfortable and cooperative."

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

In Defense Of Objectivity

Objectivity seems an almost unimpeachable scholarly virtue, yet in recent years it has come under vehement attack in certain academic and intellectual circles. Postmodernist critics such as University of Illinois communications professor James Carey claim that the idea of objectivity rests on a false epistemology. Reality, they insist, is "socially constructed" and no "true" reality exists to which objective knowledge can correspond. Nonsense, says Judith Lichtenberg, a research scholar in the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park.

The postmodernist critics, she says, claim that "because different people and cultures em-

"Objectivity and Its Enemies" by Judith Lichtenberg, in *The Responsive Community* (Winter 1991-92), 714 Gelman Library, The George Washington Univ., Washington, D.C. 20052.

ploy different categories and there is no way of deciding which framework better fits the world," objectivity is impossible. Yet the critics also claim that "particular stories or accounts of things perform an ideological function or represent the world in a partial or distorted way." These two claims are logically incompatible, Lichtenberg notes, since the charge of ideological bias implies "that other, better, more objective [views] are possible."

The assault on objectivity, she says, "threatens to discredit the possibility of knowledge by undermining even its most basic elements." Some questions, after all, do have definite right answers: "We ordinarily call these facts."

A Revival of Natural Law?

A Survey of Recent Articles

"There is in fact a true law—namely, right reason—which is in accordance with nature, applies to all men, and is unchangeable and eternal," declared Cicero (106–43 B.C.). Had the ancient orator—or Aristotle or Thomas Aquinas or John Locke or Thomas Jefferson or Abraham Lincoln or Martin Luther King, Jr.—testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee on the nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, the concept of natural law that he shares with them might have received more respectful treatment from the senators and other critics.

Harvard's Laurence H. Tribe, writing in the *New York Times* (July 15, 1991), maintained that Thomas's "adherence to 'natural law' as a judicial philosophy could take the court in an even more troubling direction" than the rightward one in which it was headed. Yet a few years before, in criticizing Robert H. Bork, an earlier nominee to the Court, for his belief that constitutional interpretation must be based on the original intent of the Framers, Tribe had expressed pride in our "200-year-old tradition establishing that people retain certain unspecified fundamental rights that courts were supposed to discern and defend."

"When liberal justices still had a shot at five votes," notes recent Yale Law School graduate Jeff Rosen in the *New Republic* (Sept. 9, 1991), "liberals encouraged them to discover rights

not explicitly listed in the Constitution Now that the conservatives are in control, the prospect of judges pulling natural rights out of a hat suddenly has liberals scared." Earlier in this century, after all, conservative justices invoking natural rights restrained unions, struck down minimum-wage laws, and resisted FDR's New Deal.

Amherst's Hadley Arkes maintains in *Policy Review* (Spring 1992) that those "laissez-faire" jurists—including Rufus Peckham (1895–1909) and George Sutherland (1922–1938)—were "grand expounders of natural rights" in the great tradition of the American Founders. Despite their bad-guy image, Arkes says, the conservative judges seldom "failed to sustain regulations of business that were aimed at the safety of workers and the health of the public." Thus, although Peckham wrote the oft-derided opinion in *Lochner v. New York* (1905), wherein the court struck down a New York law that limited bakery employees to a 60-hour work week, he was nevertheless willing to act to protect workers in more hazardous occupations. In an 1898 case, he upheld regulations limiting working hours in underground mines to eight hours a day. "It was precisely because the judges understood the moral ground for the rights of property that they understood, with the same precision, the moral limits on the uses of property," Arkes says.

There are good reasons to question individuals' or institutions' claims of objectivity. Biases of various sorts do exist. "To believe in objectivity is not . . . to believe that anyone is

objective," Lichtenberg says. But we must assume "both the possibility and value of objectivity," if we have any hope of understanding the world.

Modern Islam

Often depicted as medieval, patriarchal, and unchanging, the Islamic world is beginning to experience dramatic cultural shifts.

Less than two decades ago, notes Fischer, director of Rice University's Center for Cultural Studies, music and sculpture and even chess were forbidden for Shi'ite believers in Iran; radio, television, and movies were considered instruments of corruption. Today, all those views have been swept away. Iran's Islamic government has supported classical Persian music

"Is Islam the Odd-Civilization Out?" by Michael M. J. Fischer, in *New Perspectives Quarterly*, (Spring 1992), 10951 W. Pico Blvd., 2nd Floor, Los Angeles, Calif. 90064.

and promoted public sculpture; chess is no longer condemned as a form of gambling. Film is an accepted and popular medium, and even Islamic fundamentalists are making use of modern communications technologies.

Fischer also sees signs of an emerging Muslim feminism. As literacy among women increases, more and more of them are coming to be able "to read the Koranic and *hadith* ('saying' that indicates authoritative precedent for Islamic law) literature for themselves and [to]

Ironically, one of the critics who is most concerned about a possible revival of natural-law jurisprudence is Thomas's fellow conservative Robert Bork, now a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. "Having endured for half a century a court that seized authority not confided to it to lay down as unalterable law a liberal social agenda nowhere to be found in the actual Constitution of the United States," Bork writes in *First Things* (Mar. 1992), "conservatives must decide whether they want a court that behaves in the same way but in the service of their agenda."

In *Beyond the Constitution* (1990), Bork notes, Hadley Arkes "contends that moral reasoning not only illuminates the proper reach of existing constitutional principles but may properly be employed by judges to create new constitutional principles." Natural law could lead to judicial decisions that are not only arbitrary but contrary to the Constitution itself—slavery, to cite an obvious example, violated natural law, but was permitted under the Constitution. Making positive laws out of a natural-law judge's own perceptions, says Bork, "is where we legal positivists get off."

At the Senate hearings last year, Thomas seemed to get off there, too. He told the senators that he did not see "a role for the use of natural law in constitutional adjudication," although he did maintain that it was important to understand the belief of the Founding Fathers in natural law, or natural rights. In a sense, Russell Hittinger, a philosophy professor at the

Catholic University of America, writes in *First Things* (May 1992), the controversy over natural-law jurisprudence "rests upon what can be included in, or excluded by, this discernment about the intent of the Framers and ratifiers." A judge should not read his private theory of "nature" or "justice" into the Constitution, but a judge who "focuses on the natural law intent of the Framers" (emphasis added), Hittinger argues, ought not to be deemed a judicial activist.

For the first generation of American jurists, Hadley Arkes says, "the axioms of reason" were not mere "perceptions"—they were "part of the 'principles of law' and the discipline of judging," and they were "necessary and binding, regardless of whether they had been set down in the Constitution."

Over the centuries, of course, judges and philosophers have altered the understanding of what natural law requires. "It took humankind a very long time to recognize that slavery is contrary to [human] nature . . .," Rutgers' Paul Sracic notes in *Commonweal* (Oct. 25, 1991). But to natural-law advocates, that just indicates the limitations of human understanding. The proponents, he says, regard the theory "not as an answer machine but as a way of thinking that is 'connatural' to the human mind—and easily recognized as such by Americans, with their Jeffersonian conditioning to the concepts of 'unalienable rights' and 'self-evident truths.'" If so, then perhaps Justice Thomas did his fellow Americans a service by reminding them of the natural-law tradition.

show that patriarchal interpretations have been distorted and can be challenged on quite Islamic grounds." Some Islamic women have begun to insist on having their "right" to get further education or to have a say in where the family lives spelled out in their marriage contracts. "Through contract, and through the reinterpretation of traditional texts, Islam is being fundamentally reworked from a feminist and egalitarian point of view," Fischer maintains.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union is also likely to have an impact, as Muslims in Central Asia and elsewhere regain their religious identity. Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia are all jockeying for alliances with the new republics, with Western-oriented Turkey apparently having more appeal than Shi'ite Iran in the eyes of Shi'ite but Turkish-speaking Azerbaijan. "A predominantly secularist, modernizing set of Muslim states," Fischer observes, would be a

significant new factor in the Muslim world.

But perhaps the most important modernizing force, he says, is the migration of large numbers of Muslims to Europe and America to work, and to different countries within the Muslim world. Algerians and Moroccans are working in France, and there are Turks in Germany, Lebanese Shi'ites in West Africa and Brazil, Egyptians in Iraq and the Persian Gulf, Palestinians and Jordanians in Kuwait, Pakistanis in Saudi Arabia, and Afghans in Pakistan. Non-Muslim residents in the Middle East—e.g., the Americans, Indians, Filipinos, and Koreans working in Saudi Arabia—also are bound to affect Muslim views.

"[T]here is no doubt that fundamentalist movements in the Islamic world are strong and growing," Fischer concludes, but "at the same time dramatic cultural change [is] pervading these societies." That, he suggests, may be the more important fact for the Islamic future.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

*The Silence
Of the Birds*

"Why American Songbirds Are Vanishing" by John Terborgh, in *Scientific American* (May 1992), 415 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

The trills and calls of thrushes, warblers, tanagers, and other favorite American songbirds are heard less frequently in many cities and suburbs. A decline of the songbird population has been under way for decades. By the 1970s, for example, the number of breeding birds in Rock Creek Park, in Washington, D.C., was only about one-third what it was in the 1940s, and species that bred there but wintered in the tropics had fallen off by almost 90 percent. Similar declines were reported elsewhere in the country, with the most marked losses appearing east of the Mississippi.

Why have seemingly friendly environments such as Rock Creek Park become hostile to songbirds? The answer, which took years to discover, has two parts, according to Duke University environmental scientist John Terborgh. First, the songbirds' city and suburban habitats are also friendly to their predators. Raids on bird nests by blue jays, raccoons, and opossums have increased along with the predators' population. In an experiment to gauge the impact, Princeton's David S. Wilcove stocked artificial nests with quail eggs and set them out in rural and suburban woodlots, and at a "control" site in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. In the Smokies, only one "nest" in 50 was raided, whereas in the suburban and rural

woodlots the rate was, in some cases, 100 percent.

But predators are not the songbirds' only foe. Parasitic birds, especially the brown-headed cowbird, are another. They lay their eggs in the nests of other species, which often raise the resulting offspring as their own. Because the parasite's eggs typically hatch sooner than the host's, the hatchling parasite has a head start over its nest mates and is able to grab much of the food. Often, the host's own offspring starve. Researchers Margaret C. Brittingham and Stanley A. Temple of the University of Wisconsin found that nearly two-thirds of the nests on the edges of forest in southern Wisconsin had cowbirds' eggs in them.

Further studies in several states, Terborgh says, have confirmed that such predators and parasites are largely responsible for the songbirds' plight. The long-distance tropical migrants, such as orioles, warblers, and thrushes, are most vulnerable.

Alas, the decline of the songbirds in settled areas seems bound to continue, Terborgh concludes. To save the birds and their music, he writes, it will be necessary to consolidate and expand their safe havens in areas such as the Smokies, the Adirondacks, and the north woods of Minnesota and Maine.

The Comets' Tale

"Comets: Mudballs of the Solar System?" by Ron Cowen, in *Science News* (Mar. 14, 1992), 1719 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

For millennia mankind has been watching comets with fascination and even awe without knowing much about them. Only when it nears the sun can the exterior of a comet be seen. Even then, its nucleus is enveloped in a transparent coma (a faintly luminous cloud of dust and gas), and the comet sports a tail of tiny dust particles, as well as another tail of ions (charged gas molecules). What is beneath the coma remains a mystery.

In 1951, astronomer Fred L. Whipple of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Cambridge, Massachusetts, suggested that comets were like huge dirty snowballs—flying

pieces of ice mixed with small amounts of dust. Ice being a poor conductor of heat, *Science News* writer Ron Cowen notes, Whipple's theory helped to explain why comets passing close to the sun do not simply burn up. It also helped to account for those tails. "[A] blast of heat from the sun would vaporize ice on the surface of a comet, converting some of the frozen material into a jet of gas that could propel dust out of the comet—like sand lashed by a fierce windstorm. Pressure exerted on the dust by solar radiation then sweeps the dust into a tail; charged particles from the sun (the solar wind) sculpt some of the comet's expelled gas into a

separate, faint ion tail."

That has been the accepted view among astronomers for four decades. But new findings based on infrared images of cometary dust are modifying the theory. Mark V. Sykes of the University of Arizona in Tucson suggests that comets are more like frozen mudballs, with ice making up just one-fourth of their mass and one-half of their volume.

Sykes was a graduate student in 1986 when he noticed something odd in the infrared images formed from data gathered three years earlier by the Infrared Astronomical Satellite. "Telltale streaks in the images," Cowen writes, "revealed the presence of giant, never-before-seen trails of dust particles associated with three comets that visit the inner solar system every three to seven years." The trails' pebble-sized debris was larger than the extremely tiny

particles in the dust tails visible when comets move near the sun. That same year, the European Space Agency's Giotto spacecraft flew within 605 kilometers of Halley's Comet and detected about three times as much rock as ice in the famous visitor.

More recently, Sykes and Russell G. Walker of Jamieson Science and Engineering, Inc., in Scotts Valley, California, have done a new analysis of the infrared images and found a total of 17 dust trails. From the amount of dust in the trails, they calculated that rocky debris accounts for three-fourths of a comet's mass and half of its volume. The rock-to-ice ratios, Cowen notes, are about the same as for Pluto and Neptune's largest moon, Triton. This lends support to the theory, around since the early 1980s, that many comets were formed in that outer region of the solar system.

A 'Herstory' Of Evolution

"Female Choice in Mating" by Meredith F. Small, in *American Scientist* (Mar.-Apr. 1992), P.O. Box 13975, Research Triangle Park, N.C. 27709.

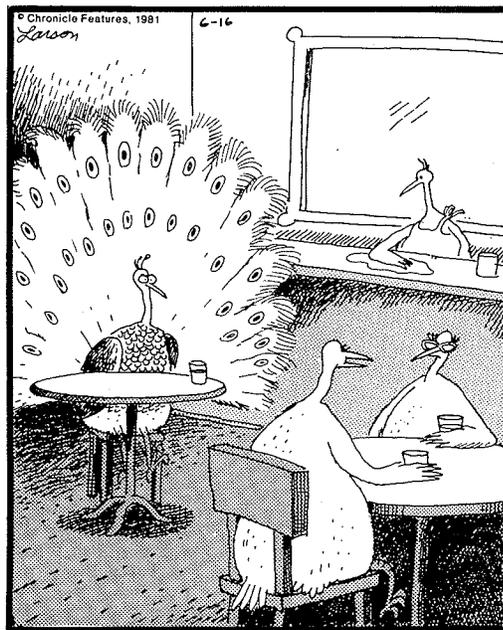
Charles Darwin thought there was a "passion gap" between male and female animals. The ardent males competed for females, evolving traits—massive horns in the case of bighorn sheep or protective manes in the case of lions—that helped them in contests with other males. Female animals were passionless and passive, just like "proper" Victorian ladies—and the impact of their choice of mates on the evolutionary process was, with rare exceptions, very minor.

Darwin has been proven wrong about the passion gap: Female animals are anything but sexually passive. But evolutionary biologists, under the influence of feminism, have gone even further in recent decades: They have embraced the idea that females' choice of mates is a significant evolutionary force. After studying the mating behavior of a group of monkeys, however, Cornell anthropologist Meredith Small has her doubts.

That female choice could have an evolutionary impact on males was recognized by Darwin. The peahen's attraction for males with lavish tails, to take an oft-cited example, led to the peacock's extravagant adornment. But a different sort of female choice was proposed by British scientist John Maynard Smith during the 1950s. Studying a ritualized courtship dance of male and female fruit flies, he noticed that inbred males proved clumsy dancers and were rejected as mates. Smith suggested that the dance had evolved as a result of the choice of

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"Don't encourage him, Sylvia."

The peacock's lavish tail has evolved for a simple reason: Peahens are attracted to it.

the female, acting in her own reproductive interests to screen out unfit suitors. The time was not right for Smith's suggestion, however, and

it attracted little attention. Not until the 1970s, and the rise of the feminist movement, did the scientific perspective on female behavior change.

In 1972, Robert Trivers of the University of California, Santa Cruz, argued that Darwin's dichotomy between competition as a male domain and mate choice as a female province made sense, not because of a passion gap but because of a difference in reproductive strategies: Males do best, in evolutionary terms, when they gain as many mates as possible (hence, their drive to compete), while females, who gestate and usually care for the infants, do best if they choose a mate who will enhance the survival of her offspring. This view has become the consensus among scientists.

But Small's observations of Barbary ma-

caques—and of 506 copulations, over the course of the monkeys' breeding season—led her to question the consensus. "Yes, female Barbary macaques do make choices," she writes, "but they seem to choose every male in the group, one after the other."

For female choice to have any evolutionary impact, Small notes, the choices must be consistent. Yet some female primates—perhaps just desperate to conceive—seem to mate with just about every male around. Scientists "have empowered the behavior of females by acknowledging their sexual assertiveness," Small writes, "but we often stop short of accepting that sexually assertive behavior might result in less than choosy behavior." Could it be that evolutionary biology is about to enter a postfeminist era?

ARTS & LETTERS

Defeating The Master

"Revision, Rewriting, Rereading; or, 'An Error [Not] in *The Ambassadors*'" by Jerome McGann, in *American Literature* (Mar. 1992), 304E Allen Building, Duke Univ., Durham, N.C. 27706.

"A curious error which probably has no parallel in the annals of American literature appears in all [currently in print] editions of Henry James's novel, *The Ambassadors* . . . : chapters [28] and [29] are in reverse order." So wrote Robert E. Young in an influential 1950 essay, "An Error in *The Ambassadors*." Jerome McGann, a University of Virginia English professor, contends that Young's statement was not true then—but is now.

As the two chapters were arranged in the authoritative New York Edition of 1909, and in the first American edition of 1903, Young pointed out in 1950, the chronological sequence of events seemed "out of joint." For example, in Chapter 28, the reader learns from a conversation between Lambert Strether and Maria Gostrey that Sarah Pocock is leaving that evening for Switzerland; yet in Chapter 29, Strether, in a conversation around midnight "that evening," speaks of his intention of seeing Sarah again before her departure.

The Master himself had proofed, corrected, and revised the text for the New York Edition, as well as for the earlier first American edition. But Young maintained that the involutions of James's prose style in *The Ambassadors* had prevented even the author himself from catch-

ing the error. James biographer Leon Edel defended the Master's prose style but accepted Young's main point—that the order of the two chapters was wrong. Edel noted that an earlier English edition of the novel had the chapters in the reverse order favored by Young. Young's argument prevailed. Today's editions of the novel have the chapters reversed, as they were in the English edition.

But McGann insists that Young failed to recognize that the conversation between Strether and Maria Gostrey, which occupies much of the New York Edition's Chapter 28, was actually a *flash-forward*. When that edition's next chapter opens with a reference to "that evening," McGann says, it is going back to the narrative position of Chapter 28's opening sentences. This arrangement of the chapters, he argues, makes the text more meaningful.

McGann points out that soon after the first English edition came out in 1903, Henry James noted in a letter that there was "a fearful though much patched over fault or weakness in it," which he said no one had noticed and which he did not reveal. When the first American edition came out later that year, the two chapters were reversed. James chose to work from the American edition when he revised the

Confronting Transcendence

Novelist Saul Bellow contemplates Mozart in *Bostonia* (Spring 1992), and finds in his music "a dimension . . . which prohibits final comprehension."

Some of my speculations on Mozart are notably unscientific. I often puzzle over the nature of his genius. How was it that it should appear so early and develop so swiftly and be so complete? Was it because his father was an educator of corresponding genius? Nobody ever suspected genius of any sort in Leopold. Neither do the educational or genetic contributions of his mother strike his biographers as exceptional. Mozart, to borrow a figure from William Blake, was a piece of ground already spaded and seeded. It looks, in other words, as if he had brought it all with him. And then I think of other prodigies born into mathematical or musical families. The mature forms assumed by these exceptional creatures are not to be accounted for by environmental or historical theories. They resemble the flowers or the insects, they have powers which astonish and physiological refinements or resources of intelligence too curious to be explained by probability theory or the ponderous slowness of time, or by trial and error. What they suggest is the intervention of invisible purposes. "To a certain ex-

tent," writes Alfred Einstein, "it is true that Mozart was only a visitor upon this earth. Mozart as a man was nowhere truly at home: neither in Salzburg, where he was born, nor in Vienna, where he died."

At the heart of my confession, therefore, is the hunch that with beings such as Mozart we are forced to speculate about transcendence and this makes us very uncomfortable, since ideas of transcendence are associated with crankiness or faddism—even downright instability and mental feebleness. These are the charges and the guilts you open yourself to when you confess that you find it impossible to dismiss such speculations . . .

Music, I assume (amateurishly), is based on a tonal code containing, inevitably, expressions of the whole history of feeling, emotion, belief—of essences inseparable from what we call our "higher life." I suggest also that this is where we tend to go when we have gone as far as we can in the new modern positive orthodoxies that keep us within bounds—the assumptions which our education and the business of the world have trained us to accept as normal, practical, and indispensable: the founding postulates of our scientific and technological achievements.

From all this a Mozart gives us an orderly and also emotional exit—an endlessly rich and exalted release.

text for the New York Edition. "As *The Ambassadors* passed into what James saw as its perfected final condition, the 'fearful' error was to be silently removed simply by avoiding the

English text altogether, which alone contained the 'reversed' chapters 28–29." But the Master, it appears, did not foresee what modern scholarship can do.

Mapplethorpe And the Museums

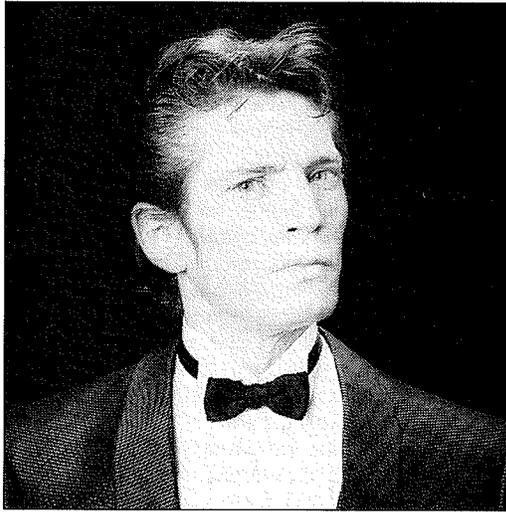
"Art, Morals, and Politics" by Robert Hughes, in *The New York Review of Books* (Apr. 23, 1992), 250 West 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10107.

The Robert Mapplethorpe affair—the fierce controversy over the museum exhibition of his photographs of sadomasochistic homosexual acts—did much more than poison relations between museums and government, contends *Time* art critic Robert Hughes. It revealed the utter bankruptcy of traditional American ideas about art.

Ever since the first American museums were opened in the 19th century, Hughes says, they have claimed to provide "education, benefit, spiritual uplift, and not just enjoyment or the recording of cultural history." By the 1880s, the

notion of art as quasi-religious uplift had begun to evolve into the more secular idea of art as therapy, personal or social. Great art, thought the wealthy founders of American museums, would alleviate the resentments of American workers.

In the decades after 1920, the emphasis on the therapeutic function of art increased. Cultivated Americans initially resisted modernism because it did not seem "spiritual" enough. But starting with the founding of New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1929, museums emphatically insisted that it was. "America came up



Robert Mapplethorpe's Self-Portrait, 1986.

with the idea of therapeutic avant-gardism, and built museums in its name. These temples stood on two pillars . . . aestheticism, or art for art's sake . . . [and] the familiar one of social benefit: though art for art's sake [put art] outside the frame of moral judgment, works of art were moral in themselves because, whether you knew it or not at first, they pointed the way to higher truths and so did you good."

The exhibition of Mapplethorpe's X portfolio exposed the wretched state of those two pillars, Hughes says. "[T]he truly amazing thing about the defenses that art writers made for these

scenes of sexual torture is how they were all couched in terms either of an aestheticism that was so solipsistic as to be absurd, or else of labored and unverifiable claims to therapeutic benefit." He cites critic Janet Kardon, "reflecting on one photo of a man's fist up his partner's rectum, and another of a finger rammed into a penis, and fluting on about 'the centrality of the forearm' and how it anchors the composition, and how 'the scenes appear to be distilled from real life,' and how their formal arrangement 'purifies, even cancels, the prurient elements.'" This, Hughes adds, is "the kind of exhausted and literally de-moralized aestheticism that would find no basic difference between a Nuremberg rally and [a] Busby Berkeley spectacular, since both, after all, are example[s] of Art Deco choreography."

Other writers, such as Ingrid Sischy and Kay Larson, took the therapeutic tack, and claimed that the Mapplethorpe images "teach us moral lessons, stripping away the veils of prudery and ignorance and thus promoting gay rights by confronting us with the outer limits of human sexual behavior." Similar images of women being degraded, Hughes observes, would not likely be greeted so calmly.

It is a great mistake, in Hughes' view, to think "that all taboos on sexual representation are made to be broken, and that breaking them has some vital relationship with the importance of art, now, in 1992." A museum that does not exercise artistic and intellectual discrimination is not doing its job, he says, "no matter how warm a glow of passing relevance it may feel."

The Modernist Golem

"Cynthia Ozick as the Jewish T. S. Eliot" by Mark Krupnick, in *Soundings* (Fall/Winter 1991), 306 Alumni Hall, Univ. of Tenn., Knoxville, Tenn. 37996-0530.

No contemporary writer can hope to match the cultural authority that T. S. Eliot had in America during the 1930s and '40s, but Krupnick, a professor of religion and literature at the University of Chicago, is reminded of Eliot when he reads Cynthia Ozick's fiction. Eliot, profoundly affected by the horrors of the Great War and what he saw as the artistic decadence of his day, sought, in such works as *The Waste Land* (1922) and *Four Quartets* (1943), to fashion a new cultural vision based on medieval Christian orthodoxy.

A similar calamity—the Holocaust—and view of culture infuses the work of Ozick. Author of numerous short stories, criticism, and novels (*The Messiah of Stockholm*), a New

Yorker and a Jew, she hopes in her fiction to recover "an ancient Jewish civilization . . . organized around Judaism as a universal religion."

Although Ozick, born in 1928, belongs to a generation of postwar novelists that includes Saul Bellow and Philip Roth, she is disenchanted "with the older kind of Jewish secular intellectualism and the assimilationism that went along with it," Krupnick writes. Bellow and Roth insisted on being regarded as *American* rather than as *Jewish* writers. In *The Bellarosa Connection*, for example, Bellow writes about Jewishness rather than Judaism. His concern is with American Jews' immigrant and post-immigrant experience—not with, as

Ozick puts it, what it means to be a Jew in principle. To Krupnick, Ozick's focus on religious traditionalism now seems more innovative than the secular outlook of Roth or Bellow.

Yet the example of Eliot exerts a cautionary influence on Ozick. Readers flocked to the poet, Krupnick notes, "in the spirit of acolytes, blurring the distinction between sacred and profane texts." That conflict between religious orthodoxy and the religion of art is central to Ozick's work. Time and again Ozick creates some object or character, imbues it with mystical significance or power, and then symbolically destroys it, rescuing her art from the imputation of idolatry.

In "Puttermesser and Xanthippe," for example, a bureaucrat fired from her job literally dreams up her revenge in the form of a golem

(an artificial being, endowed with life by supernatural means), who uses magic to transform New York City into what seems like a utopia. But this Paradise, like the original, is flawed: The golem's sexual awakening unleashes chaos on the city and Puttermesser finally must bury her creation in the earth. "Too much Paradise is greed," Puttermesser concludes.

Ozick "wants to have it both ways," Krupnick says. "She gives and then she takes away, imagining the story and then destroying it before our eyes. Before she can be punished for the presumption of setting up in competition with God, she disavows her own creation." This conflict between Ozick's Judaism and her commitment to art, Krupnick believes, will assure her of "steady work for as long as her strength—or her ambivalence—holds out."

OTHER NATIONS

Russian Nightmare

"Republic of Humbug: The Russian Nativist Critique of the United States, 1830-1930" by Abbott Gleason, in *American Quarterly* (Mar. 1992), Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 701 West 40th St., Ste. 275, Baltimore, Md. 21211.

Looking upon the United States as a hellhole of extreme individualism, rootlessness, greed, and violence was second nature to Soviet ideologues during the Cold War. But Brown University historian Abbott Gleason points out that they did not invent this nightmarish picture of America—they inherited it.

America's acquisitive individualism was anathema to the first generation of Slavophiles in 1830-61, most of whom were aristocratic landowners. Rejecting "a dying West dominated by secular plutocrats and consumed by the class struggle," critic Ivan Kireevsky and other Slavophiles embraced the communalism and Eastern Orthodox Christianity of "Holy Russia." Slavophile views, Gleason notes, "are still influential in Russian culture today, especially on the political Right. From Alexander Solzhenitsyn to the 'intellectuals' of *Pamiat'* (Memory), the force of Slavophile preachments is apparent."

In the quarter-century after

the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, conservative writers, notably Fyodor Dostoevsky, took up the Slavophile critique. Although he never visited America, Dostoevsky "thought that of all the wretched individualisms of the contemporary European world, that of the United States was the most crass, shallow, and vulgar." He wrote little about the United States directly, but



Tolstoy at the Plough (1887) reflects the continuing romanticization of Russian peasant life after the Slavophile movement waned, but Tolstoy also wrote about the harsher realities of that life.

the hateful idea of "running away to America"—and thereby deserting the Russian Church and the "God-bearing people," the Russians—appeared often in his fiction.

But the Slavophile portrayal of the United States, Gleason says, was less important than the anti-Americanism of radical intellectuals such as Peter Lavrov. Thoughts of the United States as the land of freedom were increasingly abandoned as the 19th century wore on. The corruption of the Gilded Age and the course of industrialization made it seem to Russian radicals that Americans were consumed by "the desire for individual material aggrandizement." At the same time, the radicals came to believe "that Russia had an extraordinary destiny . . . the development of a new and equitable socialist civilization, based on the spontaneous, if untutored, socialism of the Russian peasant." This vision of the Russian future was somewhat different from that of the Slavophiles, but Left and Right agreed on the evils of the American model.

Russians in the political center were not so prone to anti-Americanism. Many architects, teachers, and other new Russian professionals were quite interested in how their American counterparts operated. But it was the radicals' negative vision of America that informed Soviet ideology after the revolution of 1917.

Russians today, as at times in the past, Gleason notes, are disposed to admire Americans, their dynamism and technological

achievements. But, he warns, "the nativist critique of the United States—which is now being articulated only in nationalist and bureaucratic circles—will surely emerge in some recognizable form before too long."

Making Peace in El Salvador

After 12 years and more than 75,000 dead, the war in El Salvador finally came to an end last January with the signing of a peace treaty between President Alfredo Cristiani's government

and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). The "turning point on the road to negotiations," according to Stanford political scientist Karl, was the FMLN's unsuccessful

The Other God That Failed

Why did the collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire come as such a complete surprise to Sovietologists? Harvard historian Richard Pipes, in *Commentary* (Mar. 1992), says there were several reasons.

One [cause] was intellectual vanity. With the overwhelming majority of ordinary Americans hostile to communism, the expert was inclined to take a contrarian view, to argue that reality was different or, at the very least, more "complex." For what would be the point of being an expert if one knew no more than the untutored masses?

To qualify as an expert one also had to travel to the communist bloc, and this required the kind of access which totalitarian governments granted only foreigners whom it considered friendly. I heard not a few Sovietologists speak privately of the Soviet regime in terms of utmost contempt, but they never dared to do so in public . . .

But the failure of the profession was also perhaps most of all due to a "social-scientese" methodology which ignored history, literature, witnesses' testimonies, and all else that could not be explained in sociological jargon and buttressed with statistics. Playing scientists, they developed "models" which assumed that all states and societies were fundamentally identical because they were called upon to perform identical functions. Being imponderable and hence unquantifiable, the peculiar features of national culture escaped their attention. So, too, did the moral dimension of human activity inasmuch as scientific inquiry was expected to be "value-free." Human suffering was an irrelevant factor.

The fate of the Sovietological profession, which constitutes only one regiment in the army of social "scientists," should serve as a warning. Science in our day enjoys well-deserved prestige, but its methods cannot be applied to human affairs. Unlike atoms and cells, human beings have values and goals which science is incapable of analyzing because they never stand still and never recur. They are, therefore, the proper province of the humanities, and best studied by the methods of history, literature, and the arts.

"El Salvador's Negotiated Revolution" by Terry Lynn Karl, in *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1992), 58 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

November 11, 1989, military offensive. It was, she says, El Salvador's "Tet."

The war had become a stalemate as early as 1984. Until then, the FMLN had been winning, but the United States, determined not to permit a communist victory, increased its involvement. It promoted the drafting of a new constitution in 1983, poured \$1.8 million into El Salvador's 1984 presidential elections, won by Christian Democrat José Napoleón Duarte, and provided his government with up to \$1.2 million a day to fight the war.

The Reagan administration's commitment ruled out an FMLN victory, but the U.S. Congress's refusal "to condone either an open alliance with the violent ultraright or intervention by U.S. troops," says Karl, prevented the FMLN's total defeat. The war dragged on, costing tens of thousands of lives and devastating the economy. By September 1987, opinion polls indicated that more than 80 percent of the Salvadoran people wanted a negotiated end to the war.

Like the 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam, the FMLN's November 1989 offensive—in which the guerrillas carried out a wave of attacks in the capital city of San Salvador—was a military failure that nevertheless fatefully altered perceptions. [The Tet offensive in Vietnam, in fact, was misperceived as a U.S. "disaster."] The failure of the Salvadoran rebels' offensive demonstrated what most on the Left already knew:

that they did not have enough support for a widespread popular uprising. The opening of the Berlin Wall that same month and the Soviet Union's decision earlier in the year to cut off arms shipments to Nicaragua's Sandinista government also helped deflate rebel hopes. On the Right, Karl writes, "the rebel occupation of homes in the wealthy Escalón district [of the city] galvanized recalcitrant Salvadoran businessmen to support negotiations," despite the military's opposition to talks.

The Salvadoran army's murder of six Jesuit priests later in November was the final straw. "What died with the Jesuit priests was a [U.S.] foreign policy consensus based on the twin premises that the [Salvadoran] army had successfully contained the FMLN and that democracy was being constructed." Opposition by Democrats on Capitol Hill made it clear that U.S. aid to El Salvador's armed forces would soon be shut off. On February 1, 1990, U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker came out for "a negotiated settlement which guarantees safe political space for all Salvadorans," thus reversing U.S. policy. The stage was set.

Two years later, the peace treaty was signed in Mexico City. Conservative President Cristiani "strode across the podium to shake hands with all five FMLN commanders as participants on both sides cried openly." Yet "fear and uncertainty" are bound to persist, Karl says, at least until the March 1994 presidential elections.

Saudi Democracy?

"Saudi Arabia: Culture, Legitimacy and Political Reform" by Joseph McMillan, in *Global Affairs* (Spring 1992), International Security Council, 1155 15th St. N.W., Ste. 502, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Oil wealth has brought rapid increases in urbanization, education, and overall living standards in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in recent decades. Does all of this material progress mean, as some Americans wanted to believe after the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War, that Saudi Arabia is moving inevitably toward democracy? Not at all, says Joseph McMillan, former U.S. Defense Department country director for Saudi Arabia.

The cornerstone of the Saudi political system is the Islamic faith, he points out. It—not the will of the people—is for Saudis the ultimate authority in the land, which the monarch must uphold. The Saudi population is wholly Muslim and overwhelmingly Sunni; no more than seven percent of the Saudis—about 550,000—are Shiites. Democracy has made inroads in

other Muslim nations—notably, Pakistan, Turkey, Jordan, and Egypt—but that does not mean that Saudi Arabia is its next likely stop. Saudis set themselves apart from other Arabs and Muslims. Regarding themselves as the most Islamic of Muslims, Saudis take pride in their strict adherence to a distinctively Saudi fundamentalist form of Islam called Wahhabism, named after Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, an 18th-century religious reformer. Government's main purposes, in the Wahhabi view, are to guarantee the purity of the faith, to protect and defend the faithful, and to preserve order in the Muslim community (*ummah*). If the *ulama* (religious scholars) pronounce the ruler un-Islamic, then the subjects have a positive duty to disobey him.

This means that the monarchy has to share

Canadian Health Care: Cure or Disease?

A Survey of Recent Articles

Americans are usually not much concerned with what happens in Canada, but in recent years one feature of Canadian life has attracted a great deal of notice: its health-care system. Canada provides universal access to high-quality medical care and seems to be controlling costs better than the United States is. In consequence, health care Canadian-style has been extravagantly praised, fiercely attacked, and sometimes even closely examined.

Americans are unhappy with the soaring cost of U.S. health care, surveys indicate, and their consciences also may be somewhat nagged by the fact that an estimated 37 million of their fellow citizens under 65 have no health insurance at all. Searching for an answer, they wonder if Canada has found it. The American Medical Association insists that it has not—and has spent millions of dollars on advertisements attacking the Canadian system. The Health Insurance Association of America has joined in. And President Bush last February called Canada's approach "a cure worse than the disease." Yet public opinion surveys in Canada consistently indicate overwhelming support for that "cure." Canada may not have created utopia, but Theodore R. Marmor, a professor of public policy and management at Yale, says in *Current History* (Dec. 1991) that it is doing better than the United States at providing broad access to health care and managing the costs. In 1990, according to the *New York Times* (Feb. 17, 1992), per capita health-care spending (in U.S. dollars) was \$1,991 in Canada and \$2,566 in the United States. And the Canadian system, Marmor writes, "is as adaptable to American circumstances as one could imagine a foreign model to be."

Until 1971, when Canadian Medicare was first fully in place, the patterns and styles of medical care in the two countries were almost

identical. Today the 10 Canadian provinces provide coverage for all necessary hospital and medical care for all their citizens, with no limits on necessary services and no extra charges to patients for them. There are federal guidelines, and Ottawa pays 40 percent of the system's costs. The provincial governments negotiate with the hospitals and doctors every year to determine hospital budgets and set physicians' fees. Much as in the United States, doctors engage in private practice and are paid on a fee-for-service basis. Patients choose their own doctors, but doctors bill the province.

Because the provincial ministry of health is the only source of payment for all covered health services within each province, and because the rules for coverage and reimbursement are uniform, the costs of health-care administration are greatly reduced.

In the United States, administrative costs accounted for an estimated one-third of physician and hospital expenses in 1991, according to analysts John F. Sheils, Gary J. Young, and Robert J.

Rubin of the Washington-based consulting firm Lewin/ICF. Much of the cost of administering U.S. health care, they say in *Health Affairs* (Spring 1992), "can be traced to the fact that insurance is provided through roughly 1,500 separate private and public sources of coverage, each with [its] own rules, forms, and provider reimbursement policies." Usually, the provider must bill two parties: the insurer and the patient. The Canadian system eliminates both the complexity of diverse insurer rules and the multiple billing. (Canadian hospitals send no bills at all but work from their annual operating budgets.)

Estimates of potential savings if the Canadian system were adapted here vary widely. Estimates by Steffie Woolhandler and David U. Himmelstein in the *New England Journal of*



power. The Saudi *ulama* are often depicted as having lost much clout in recent years, but radical Wahhabi leaders still have been able to derail major government moves toward modernization. During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, King Fahd and the royal family took pains to placate the religious leaders.

Being alone able to challenge royal power,

the *ulama* "would almost certainly oppose any serious democratization of Saudi life," McMillan notes. Although, shortly after Operation Desert Storm, *ulama* leader Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz and other prominent religious figures did call for King Fahd to establish a consultative council of senior officials, this was hardly a manifesto for democratic reform. Nothing was

Medicine (May 2, 1991) suggest that the Canadian approach might have cut the U.S. health-care bill in 1991 by more than \$100 billion. Sheils and his colleagues put the savings at \$46.8 billion. But they add that such savings would have been more than offset by a \$78.2 billion spending increase resulting from greater use of the "free" comprehensive care. (Only \$11.1 billion of that increase would represent increased use by previously uninsured persons.)

Although proponents of the Canadian approach may be overselling its advantages, Canada does appear to have done a good job controlling health-care costs. In the early 1960s, before it moved to universal health insurance, Canada spent about six percent of its gross national product (GNP) on health care—slightly more than the United States' 5.5 percent. In 1989, U.S. health-care spending, as a share of GNP, had risen to 12 percent, while Canada's was only nine percent.

This Canadian achievement is just an illusion, contends Heritage Foundation analyst Edmund F. Haislmaier in *Policy Review* (Fall 1991). Echoing a 1990 Health Insurance Association of America argument, he says it is "misleading" to use percentage of GNP as a basis for comparison. Canada's ratio of health-care spending to GNP is lower, he says, only because its GNP grew more rapidly. Using another gauge, he notes that between 1967 and '87, per capita health-care spending, adjusted for inflation, increased by 4.38 percent annually in the United States—and 4.58 percent in Canada.

That argument cuts no ice with Morris L. Barer, director of the Centre for Health Services and Policy Research at the University of British Columbia, W. Pete Welch of the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C., and Laurie Antioch of the Australian Treasury. Writing in *Health Affairs* (Fall 1991), they say that share of GNP is the only reasonable gauge of a nation's relative success in containing health-care costs. It cannot be measured, they say, by comparing trends in real costs per capita. Canada's econ-

omy grew more rapidly than the U.S. economy in 1967–87. In the long run, economic growth means higher wages in the health-care sector, as in others. But that, they say, surely is not evidence of a failure to control costs.

Moreover, they point out, the 1967–87 period, which was chosen by Haislmaier for examining growth in real costs per capita, includes four years in which the Canadian system was still being developed and put in place. During 1971–87, U.S. real per capita costs rose slightly *faster* than those in Canada, despite the fact that Canada had more rapid real economic growth. In 1988 and '89, the rate of real growth in per capita health-care costs *declined* in Canada while *increasing* in the United States.

What about the short supply of some high-tech medical equipment, the long waits for urgently needed surgery, and other horrors of the Canadian system often dramatized in the news media? It is true that magnetic resonance imaging and certain other types of advanced technology are not as readily available in Canada as they are here. However, Marmor points out, "If... quality [of care] is defined by results rather than by the use of high technology, then there is no evidence of a Canadian disadvantage." In fact, in terms of life expectancy and infant-mortality rate, Canada has the advantage.

As for those lengthy waits by patients, Ottawa resident Jordan Bishop tells in *Commonweal* (Mar. 27, 1992) what happened to a colleague who suddenly needed coronary artery bypass surgery. "He lived in Nova Scotia and underwent the bypass operation in Toronto—1,600 miles away—four days later. It was successful. This picture, most Canadians would say, is far more typical than delays for urgent treatment. What is much more important to most Canadians is that ordinary, essential, and routine things such as prenatal care, childbirth, and postnatal care are effectively and efficiently provided to everyone who needs them." Perfect it may not be, but Canada's health-care system is hardly a cure worse than the disease.

said about elections.

Religious resistance to serious democratization extends well beyond the *ulama*, McMillan says. "Other than in the veneer-thin layer of the mercantile technocratic elite, there is no indication of widespread dissatisfaction with the Kingdom's Wahhabi culture."

Yet if democracy does not seem to be in the

cards for Saudi Arabia soon, all is not dark. "[W]hile far from a democracy, Saudi Arabia is not a tyrannical police state of the kind so prevalent in the Middle East." Most Americans would find life there oppressive (as do some Saudis), McMillan says, but at least the Saudi government "is fundamentally decent and [shows] a civilized regard for human dignity."

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions

"Poverty, Joblessness, and Family Structure in the Inner City: A Comparative Perspective."

Paper delivered at Chicago Urban Poverty and Family Life Conf., sponsored by the Univ. of Chicago's Grad. School of Public Policy and the Social Science Research Council, Oct. 1991.

Author: *William Julius Wilson*

In his much-noted 1987 book, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, University of Chicago sociologist William Julius Wilson pinned on the economy much of the blame for the troubling rise in mother-only families among black Americans. Today, 51.1 percent of black children live in such families. In roughly half of those families the parents were never wed. Joblessness among black males, Wilson argued, meant that young black women faced "a shrinking pool of 'marriageable' (i.e. economically stable) men." Now, however, after examining the contrasting patterns of behavior of poor inner-city African Americans and Mexican Americans, Wilson concludes that changed attitudes among blacks toward sex, marriage, and family have also contributed to the problem.

Mexicans (and non-Hispanic whites) in the same inner-city environments, survey data indicate, are much more likely than blacks to marry after the birth of their first child. In Chicago, for example, that likeli-

hood is 180 percent greater. (Puerto Rican fathers, however, have the same postpartum marriage rates as blacks.)

There remains a strong connection between male employment and marriage, Wilson contends. If a black man has a job, the likelihood of marriage after a child is conceived increases by more than 50 percent. But, he says, it now appears that "[the] stronger the norms against premarital sex, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, and single parenthood, the less that economic considerations affect decisions to marry."

Mexican Americans take a traditional perspective on the family, Wilson notes. Although extramarital affairs by men are tolerated, there is great anguish when an unmarried woman becomes pregnant—and relatives on both sides press the couple to marry.

That is not what happens in inner-city black neighborhoods, Wilson observes. Young single fathers, who usually regard matrimony as a constraint to be avoided, feel

little pressure to wed. The women's expectations of getting married are usually low.

This was not always true of the black community. "In both inner-city Chicago and at the national level," Wilson's colleague, Mark Testa, has written, "black men born during or just after World War II were more than 2.5 times more likely to marry after their child's conception, regardless of economic and educational status, than men born during the late 1950s who became fathers at a similar age." The likelihood was even greater when the comparison was with men born in the '60s. In the Chicago inner city today, only about 30 percent of black single fathers ultimately marry the mother of their child.

What has happened to the black family in the inner-city, Wilson says, is but "an extreme version" of what has been happening to the American family—and of what is likely to happen among Mexican immigrants "the longer they remain in the United States."

"The Tax Decade: How Taxes Came to Dominate the Public Agenda."

Urban Inst., 4270-A Boston Way, Lanham, Md. 20706. 239 pp. \$45 (cloth), \$18.50 (paper)

Author: *C. Eugene Steuerle*

Campaign '92 is haunted by the tax reforms of the 1980s, especially the Reagan "supply side" tax cuts of 1981, which, conventional wisdom has it, are largely responsible for today's massive federal budget deficits.

The 1980s did bring unprecedented tax changes, declares Steuerle, a Senior Fellow at

the Urban Institute, but their role in today's budget crisis is not what it appears. The 1980s, after all, was also a decade of unprecedented tax increases. In 1990, federal tax receipts—from income, social security, and other levies—neared 19 percent of gross national product (GNP), up from 17.4 per-

cent in 1976 and, for that matter, 17.3 percent two decades before that. The personal income tax claimed 7.94 percent of GNP in 1976, yet never fell below 8.05 percent of GNP during the Reagan years.

In any event, Steuerle believes that tax cuts of Reaganesque dimensions

(which reduced federal receipts by \$323 billion in fiscal 1990, not counting the offsetting tax hikes) were inevitable. Washington had been feeding off inflation-driven "bracket creep" and other invisible revenue-raisers for years; Washington eventually would have had to give much of the gains back. As Steuerle notes, "the entire revenue loss due to individual provisions in 1981 could have been achieved by nothing more than indexing the tax code for inflation from about 1979 onward."

In fact, Steuerle argues, the

true (and then largely unrecognized) revolution wrought in 1981 was indexing future tax brackets to inflation. This deprived Washington of most of the automatic revenue increases that helped fuel government expansion after World War II. The end of "the Easy Financing Era" meant that every increase in outlays would require concrete decisions about taxes.

Steuerle has much to say about subsequent tax increases and especially the "revenue neutral" tax reform of 1986 (of which he, as a U.S. Treasury

Department official, was a principal architect). Looking back, he marvels at how much the decade was dominated by tax measures and how little was accomplished on the spending side. This, he suggests, was not just a matter of politics, but of government organization. Control over taxes is concentrated, especially in the House and Senate tax-writing committees, while authority over spending is diffuse. Getting the budget deficit under control, he says, likewise will be as much a problem of organization as politics.

"The Population of North Korea."

Ctr. for Korean Studies, Inst. of East Asian Studies, Univ. of Calif., Berkeley, Calif. 94720.
145 pp. \$12

Authors: *Nicholas Eberstadt and Judith Banister*

In 1963, North Korea's communist regime began to impose an almost total blackout on release of demographic data to the outside world. The move coincided with the government's *chuch'e* campaign, which fashioned a cult of personality around North Korean leader Kim Il Sung and his son (and designated heir), Kim Jong Il, and stressed national self-reliance. In 1989, however, in order to qualify for assistance from the United Nations Population Fund, the regime lifted the curtain a little. For the first time in decades, researchers got a statistical glimpse at one of the world's most tightly closed societies.

North Korea has a population of about 21.4 million (as of mid-1990) and under communism has traveled far in the transition from a rural agricultural society. Sixty percent of the populace now lives in cit-

ies, and only one-quarter of civilians 16 and older are engaged in farming. Education for children ages 6-15 is compulsory, and more than 500,000 people were enrolled in institutions of higher education in 1987.

North Koreans had a projected 1990 life expectancy of 69 years, and infant mortality was relatively low. Fertility dropped steadily in the 1970s and the "total fertility rate" in 1987 was only 2.5 births per woman. This may indicate a hidden antinatalist policy, say Eberstadt, a researcher at the American Enterprise Institute, and Banister, chief of the Census Bureau's China branch.

The most important finding, the authors say, is that, as of 1987, an estimated 1.25 million men—six percent of North Korea's entire population—were in the military. That made North Korea "the

most militarized country in the world in terms of proportion of population in the armed forces." No more than five other nations—the Soviet Union, China, the United States, India, and Vietnam—had armed forces of 1.25 million or more in 1987, and the smallest of those countries, Vietnam, had a population three times as large as North Korea's. Eberstadt and Banister's estimates buttress scholarly reports of an extraordinary military buildup during the 1970s and '80s.

They project that the number of 16-28-year-olds will fall from 3.26 million in 1990 to 2.78 million in the year 2000. That, they point out, may force hard choices on North Korea's leaders. A military of such huge proportions will not be sustainable if North Korea is to expand its labor force and its economy.

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.

Genetic Warnings

In his superb article, "Controlling the Genetic Arsenal" [*WQ*, Spring '92], Dan Kevles addresses a critical question: Could our increased genetic knowledge lead to a "new eugenics?" He suggests that the democratic nature of social institutions and awareness of the historical abuses of eugenics safeguard us against repetition, that eugenic programs are more likely in authoritarian states than in nations with a robust political democracy. I want to suggest, however, that certain beliefs, revealed in contemporary American popular culture, are conducive to a new eugenics with elements that *can* flourish in a society stressed by racial tensions and dwindling economic resources. My study of genetic themes in popular culture lays bare these beliefs.

I have found, for example, many explicit statements that "the poor breed more," that welfare subsidies encourage poor people ("welfare mothers") to reproduce, while employment opportunities discourage affluent and educated women from having children. Those preoccupied with such trends believe that traits such as intelligence, productivity, and violence are genetic attributes, so that differential reproduction will "water down" the gene pool.

Some popular literature blames social problems on the reproductive practices of certain groups. The "slippage" in American productivity, the high costs of social services, the state of the environment, and urban violence have all been blamed on the rising birthrate among the poor or among immigrants from poor countries.

The language of crisis, catastrophe, and survival used to describe such problems is striking. One environmental magazine advocates mandatory sterilization, tax penalties for children, and programs to control "the right to breed." Some writers, struggling to define a new understanding of the right to reproduce, have suggested an obligation to pass on "good genes." The idea that bearing an abnormal child is "wrong" can be a powerful form of social control. In addition, many mainstream journalists have been sympathetic to suggestions to limit subsidies to mothers on welfare, or to provide bonuses for using Norplant. Fiscal responsibility is thus linked to reproductive responsibility.

Finally, neo-Nazi and other hate groups with ex-

plicitly eugenic programs have emerged from obscurity in recent years, spreading racist messages in the gentrified contexts of college campuses and even mainstream politics. They have built on the racial tensions in the United States, revealed in the tragic consequences of the Rodney King verdict.

The increased visibility of racism coincides with the popular interest in scientific innovations that increasingly define human differences in genetic terms. The "gene" has a ubiquitous presence in contemporary popular culture and is used to account for an extraordinary range of traits that are assumed to be "hard-wired" and controlling. Such understanding contributes to the increased acceptability of medical control of the human genetic constitution. Earlier forms of eugenics are not likely to be duplicated—they reflected specific historical situations. But in an era of declining resources and racial tensions, we cannot be complacent when scientific advances converge with popular ideas that have redefined humans as genetic products with biological obligations to society. For that is the essence of eugenics.

*Dorothy Nelkin
Dept. of Sociology
New York Univ.*

Your collection of pieces on "The Fateful Code: Genes and Human Destiny" is intriguing as a group for the very reason implied by the title. None, however, really comes to grips with the projection of human controlled genetic change into the future.

What was missing from your essays was a feeling for the consequences of irreversible genetic decisions and their implications for future generations. This absence is particularly telling for applications of genetic selection that preclude the survival of de-selected species or that favor those deemed to represent greater human benefit (e.g., newly created herbicide-resistant hybrid tomatoes). Many of the decisions to forgo propagation of some genotypes in favor of others, or to create novel transgenic types of animals, may forever change the face of the biosphere.

The substitution of human judgment over natural selection is a major frame shift in the evolution of species on the planet. While domestication and agricultural practices achieved a modicum of such changes in the past, the present rate of substituted

species and genotypes has no precedent. Since August Weismann's seminal essays in the 1890s on the "Continuity of the Germplasm," two principles of genetic control have been paramount. One is the relative invulnerability of the genotype (as contrasted to the phenotype) to environmental or external influence. The other is the slow, lock-step-like cadence by which chunks of genetic material have been projected into the future as the result of sexual recombination and reproduction.

These historical realities are being challenged by the newest developments in genetic engineering. Scientific entrepreneurs are pre-emptively selecting new genotypes before they are winnowed by natural selection and short-cutting sexual recombination by clonal selection, propagation, and gametic selection. Agricultural activities and politically motivated human practices (such as the eugenic program in Singapore or sex-selection practices in India and Pakistan) are already selecting genotypes to ensure that certain descendants and not others populate the Earth.

Americans may also wish to weigh the head-in-the-sand attitude that holds genetic determination to be a non sequitur in favor of the conviction that "interactions" with the environment and "human will" are the major forces that shape development. While interaction is important, no amount of earnest effort will overcome certain genetic deficits like Lesch-Nyhan syndrome, nor will complex human attributes like aggression, intelligence, emotionality, and creativity be any less hereditary tomorrow than they are today (e.g., four generations of the Bach family) just because we do not like or know how to handle strong genetic determination. What is needed is a thoughtful projection of genetic concepts to the human sphere before the advent of the new avalanche of genetic knowledge. To say the genome is not going to tell us anything about what it means to be human is to miss the picture entirely: The genome of any species is the ultimate arbiter of evolutionary options. To think it will prove any less so for humans is foolhardy.

Marc Lappé, Ph.D.

Dept. of Health Policy and Ethics
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Adding Up the Sound Bites

Ah the Media! The Monster that inspires a hundred St. Georges. I'm afraid your dragon slayer Daniel Hallin ["Sound Bite Democracy," *WQ*, Spring '92] has galloped off in the wrong direction. Let's talk about sound bites. When the bean counters solemnly add up the seconds of network news coverage in the 1960s and the '90s, what exactly are they

proving? That people were more informed in the supposed good old days? Does the research design take into account Nightline, McNeil-Lehrer, CNN, C-Span, and all the other changes and, yes, improvements in TV news since the 1960s? And what of newspapers, magazines, radio, books? The American electorate does not lack for information—it is there, if people look, read, reach, work for it. Such "research" treats Rather-Brokaw-Jennings as if they were the only important news outlet when, the fact is, they are just easy for communications professors to study on their VCRs.

Edwin Diamond
New York Magazine

Richard Nixon already has enough trouble searching for his place in history. He shouldn't be identified as the barrier blocking presidential debates with Hubert Humphrey during the 1968 campaign, as Robert J. Donovan and Ray Scherer assert in their otherwise splendid article ["Politics Transformed," *WQ*, Spring '92].

Whether Nixon (or Humphrey) welcomed or avoided broadcast debates is largely irrelevant, since they could not be arranged under the then-existing interpretation by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) of the Communications Act of 1934.

Section 315(a) of that statute embodies the "equal time" rules for political candidates. It requires a broadcast licensee to afford precisely equal opportunities to all legally qualified candidates—federal, state, or local—if it permits any candidate for such office a "use" of the station. As a general rule, any use, however slight, of broadcast facilities by a legally qualified candidate triggers the equal-time obligation.

Despite the severity of the basic provision, the law does specify four instances in which equal time is not required, even though a use has occurred. These exemptions are: a candidate's appearance in a bona fide newscast; a candidate's participation in a bona fide news interview; a bona fide news documentary, if the appearance of the candidate is incidental to the presentation of the subject; and on-the-spot coverage of bona fide news events.

Since broadcast debates did not qualify for these exemptions under long-standing FCC interpretation, the equal-time rule would have applied. Faced with the possibility of dozens of minor-party presidential candidates demanding equal air time, broadcasters shied away from controversy (and lost revenue) by pre-emptively closing the door on any type of Nixon-Humphrey debate.

No doubt some confusion arises since in 1960, a series of historic broadcast debates between John

Kennedy and Richard Nixon took place, as the authors describe in rich detail. This was because Congress, on a one-time only basis, passed a joint resolution suspending the application of mandatory free equal time to candidates for president and vice president.

That 1960 action clearly demonstrated that the suspension of the equal-time requirement reduces the inhibition of broadcasters against granting free air time. Kennedy and Nixon received nearly 40 hours of free network air time during the campaign. In contrast, Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater received less than five hours of comparable air time in 1964, when the equal-time requirement was again in full force.

It was not until 1975 that the FCC decided to reverse course, extending the exemption for bona fide news events to cover live debates between qualified political candidates initiated by non-broadcast entities, such as the League of Women Voters, in non-studio settings. This ruling, while narrow, was enough to provide broadcasters with sufficient comfort to air the Ford-Carter debates, again the stuff of American political history.

As the above explanation suggests, the FCC has had an enormous, albeit often overlooked, influence on how presidential campaigns are presented on radio and television. Richard Nixon, who distrusted the electronic media, recognized this symbiotic relationship all too well. One of his first appointments after taking office in 1969 was that of Dean Burch to serve as chairman of the FCC. Burch had previously been chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Stuart N. Brotman
Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
Tufts Univ.

Your cluster of articles, "The Media Make The Campaign," for all its emphasis on presidential imagery, failed to address the central question of the last six presidential elections, the collective concern again reflected in this campaign: Do Americans want the status quo, or do they want change?

Since the bellwether campaign of 1960, presidential elections have been evenly divided on this question. Election outcomes from '60, '68, '76, and '80 have called for change. Those of '64, '72, '84 and '88 affirmed the status quo. Regardless of the wizardry of the principal candidates' media manipulators, it becomes more and more apparent with each passing day that the '92 presidential election will ultimately be about change.

This election mimics more than others those of '68 and '80. Both the '68 and '80 campaigns turned out the incumbent party, and both featured signifi-

cant contributions by a populist third party candidate. Both also reflected great unhappiness among the masses. In '68, national discontent resulted from war, political assassinations, and civil upheaval. In '80, it was due to bad economic times, inability to deal effectively with the world oil cartel, and concern over hostages in Iran.

The '92 election will doubtless be a national referendum on the matters most dear to the hearts of middle- and working-class Americans: continuing unemployment and recession, a federal government more attentive to special interests than constituent needs, disenchantment with elected officials' behavior, redirecting the peace dividend, and managing dangers intrinsic to the burgeoning federal budget deficit.

Using history as a guide, one would conclude that incumbent president George Bush, who is perceived as either unwilling or unable to engineer these changes, will be turned out of office.

Larry VanDeSande
Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council
Lansing, Mich.

The Rest of Reality

In "Mapping the New Reality" [WQ, Spring '92], Sven Birkerts says that we are in a new, bleak era and that fiction writers have a duty somehow to represent the pervasive melancholy. What is the root of our despair? Actually, the answer to the question is the same answer to all new, bleak eras: technology. In other words, the world is changing. And some people fear the change.

Mr. Birkerts claims that writers must clarify his vision of "our growing sense of social and political inconsequence." Of course, he then goes on to show all the unsavory aspects of contemporary technological change: nuking our food in the microwave; staring into our TVs; our growing dependence on the impersonal communication of the telephone and answering machine.

But, like a novel half-finished, Mr. Birkerts tells only one side of the story of contemporary life. Perhaps a great writer may also show the exciting developments of technology, such as when scientists—using the power of computer modeling—cure diseases; when brave revolutionaries use fax machines and computers to topple communist governments and help spread democracy; or even when computer programmers create applications, such as word processors, which allow more people to write.

Tom C. Taulli
Monrovia, Calif.

A Few Words of Praise

As an inveterate reader of periodicals—*Harvard Magazine*, *Smithsonian*, the *London Times Literary Supplement*, et al.—I must tell you that your Winter 1992 issue is the best single publication I have ever read. The contents were stimulating and rewarding to this reader. I particularly liked your lead article on "Small Towns." The article by Seymour Martin Lipset was excellent, "Pacific Prospects" painted a fine picture of that part of the world, and Watson on ideology was well done. Your reviews and reports were up to your usual standards. All in all, it was a fine performance.

I am of the opinion that the *Wilson Quarterly* is just about the best journal in the United States today. Please keep up the good work.

Jack H. Mower
Washington, D.C.

Corrections

Due to a typographical error, some lines of text were dropped from the Spring '92 issue. On page 31, in the article "Politics Transformed," the sentence at the bottom of the left-hand column should have read, "Republican veterans created television commercials and photo opportunities on emotional subjects such as blue-collar crime, prisons, patriotism, and the welfare state. The Republicans effectively branded Dukakis a 1960s-style liberal and, *ipso facto*, soft on crime, committed to heavy civilian public spending, and niggardly on defense appropriations." On page 119, in the article "Impoverished Children: A Survey of Recent Articles," the last sentence should have read, "But mutual recrimination does little to help children."

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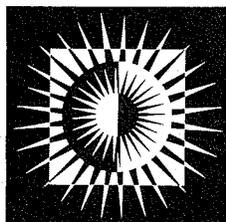
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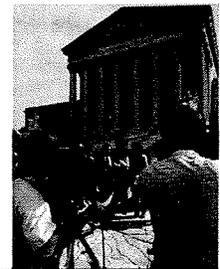
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