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COVER STORY

THE SECOND COMING OF THE AMERICAN SMALL TOWN

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Today most Americans inhabit the suburbs, living in places that seem to have been designed with everything but community and the human element in mind. Suburbanites know that something is wrong, but they don't know what. **Andres Duany** and **Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk** propose that the search for a livable alternative should take us back to the town designs of our forebears.



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The end of communism in the Soviet Union is not the end of the Russian writer's problems, **Tatyana Tolstaya** argues.

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Cover: A detail from *American Village*, a 1912 oil painting by Edward Hopper (1882-1967). From the Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

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Editor's Comment

The best ideas often seem so simple. The most fruitful innovations sometimes turn out to be the tried and true. The soundness of both of these propositions was recently brought home to us when we discovered the work of architect-planners Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, a husband-wife team that lives and works in Miami, Florida. Viewing the videotape of a lecture that Mr. Duany delivered at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, we were so impressed by his critique of the suburban living arrangement (one in which most Americans today live) and by his suggestions for modifying it to make it both livable and attractive—indeed, for making it a real community, rather than a simulacrum thereof—that we immediately wanted to bring these ideas to our readers. Proudly, we do so in this issue (pp. 19–50). The subject is town planning, and the theme, simply put, is a call for a return to the human and communal elegance of the small town. But, in truth, what Duany and Plater-Zyberk talk about has so many implications for the way we live that to call their essay a treatise on town planning would be absurdly narrowing. What both architects are really concerned with is regaining control over our communal existence, which, among other things, is the first step toward addressing national and even global problems.

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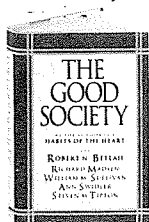
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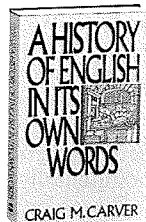
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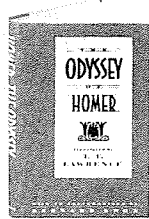
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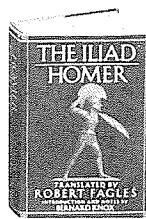
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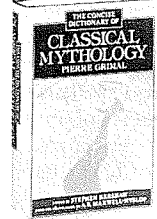
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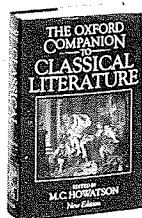
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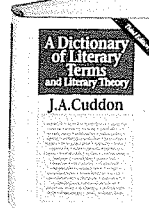
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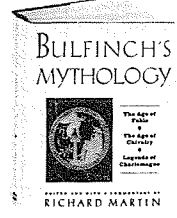
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From the Center

According to diplomatic folklore, Metternich, upon learning that the Russian envoy to the Congress of Vienna of 1814–15 had died of a heart attack, responded, “Hmm... what could have been his motive?”

The mystery of motive has always fascinated students of diplomacy. For historians of the Cold War, the challenge of explaining Soviet intentions and behavior has proved especially daunting—not only because of the mutual secrecy and distrust and general virulence of the Cold War but more fundamentally because of the paucity of archival sources or candid oral histories from “the other side.” Now, with the collapse of communism from Berlin to Moscow, the opportunity is finally at hand for researchers to take advantage of archival openings in the former Soviet bloc. Such a new wave of Cold War history, using source materials from both sides of the ideological divide, may well shed light on questions that long have been subjects of speculation and contention.


Foremost among these is the origins of the Cold War itself. Was it the inevitable product of contending Soviet and American interests and ideologies, or did it stem from mutual misperceptions that could have been avoided through better communication between the superpowers and a greater willingness to accommodate each other's interests? Did the Kremlin harbor hostile intentions toward Western Europe, as Washington feared, or were its objectives limited to the creation of a defensive buffer in Eastern Europe, as the Soviets insisted? Were there missed diplomatic opportunities in the wake of World War II that could have prevented the division of Europe into two hostile blocs?

Other questions relate to the militarization and global extension of the Cold War. How did Soviet perceptions of the military balance, notably when the United States enjoyed a nuclear monopoly in the early postwar years, affect the Kremlin's policy calculations in Europe and beyond? Were nuclear weapons a “stabilizing force” that prevented war, as some have contended, or did they create additional uncertainties and dangers? How close did the world come to the brink of war during the Cold War crises in Berlin, Korea, Cuba, and the Middle East? Was a global conflagration avoided through judicious statesmanship or, in the words of Dean Acheson, “plain dumb luck”? How did the Third World become an arena of superpower competition—and what did Moscow perceive its stakes to be in these peripheral areas? How monolithic was the “communist bloc”? Was Washington correct in believing, for example, that the Sino-Soviet alliance was behind the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam?

To address this challenging scholarly agenda, the Woodrow Wilson Center has embarked on a multiyear project on the International History of the Cold War, an effort made possible by a generous grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Among the activities the grant will support are a quarterly newsletter to disseminate the findings of scholars from all disciplines working in this field; research fellowships for younger scholars from Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and China to study Cold War history and archival research techniques at American universities; and a variety of international meetings, conferences, and publications. General direction of the project will be provided by a distinguished Advisory Committee, chaired by John Lewis Gaddis of Ohio University and including William Taubman of Amherst College, Warren Cohen of Michigan State University, and Samuel F. Wells, Jr., deputy director of the Woodrow Wilson Center. The project coordinator is James Hershberg, a Cold War historian formerly of Tufts University.

Despite the dramatic changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, it remains unclear how quickly and completely archives will be opened. In some countries, access is hampered by shortages of staff and equipment caused by economic hardship; in others, a residue of “old thinking” keeps many doors closed. In China, the Tiananmen crackdown and its aftermath have dampened hopes for greater openness.

Amid these uncertainties, however, some valuable new information has already emerged. A young Russian researcher, for example, was recently able to review the Soviet ministry memorandum of an April 1945 meeting between Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov and President Harry S. Truman. In his memoirs, Truman wrote of a sharp exchange between the two over Soviet actions in Poland. According to Truman, a beleaguered Molotov exclaimed, “I’ve never been talked to like that in my life.” By contrast, the Soviet memorandum on the meeting indicates nothing of the sort—just a calm discussion with no hint of confrontation. This discovery exemplifies the promise of the Cold War project as well as the difficulties and confusion that may lie ahead for scholars when they finally do gain access to documentary sources.



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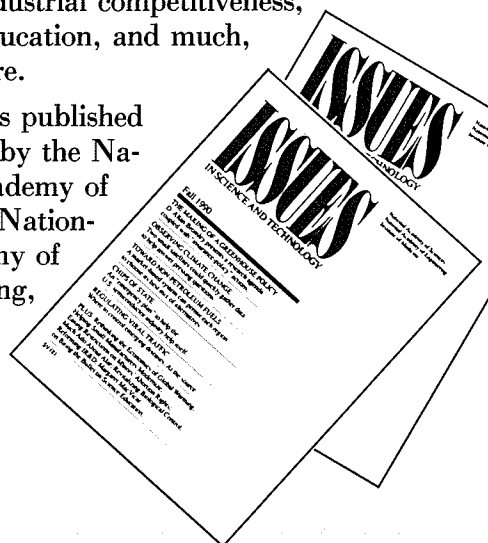
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Learning from Communism's Fall

A Survey of Recent Articles

From its birth in 1917 until its death last summer, Soviet communism had a profound impact on Western political thought and behavior. The Soviet Union was not just another nation, but history's first fully "socialist" society. The Russian Revolution, Martin Malia, a professor of Russian history at Berkeley, notes in *Commentary* (Oct. 1991), became "the great polarizing event in 20th-century politics," turning the division between Left and Right into a chasm. And a chasm it remained, despite all the evidence over the decades that the Soviet regime was on a moral plane with Hitler's Third Reich. As late in the Cold War as 1983, when President Ronald Reagan declared the Soviet Union an evil empire, many liberal Americans scoffed. Yet just a few years later, the masses of people who lived in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe made it clear that they had had quite enough of the great "socialist" experiment. Reagan was proven correct, U.S. Senator Robert Kerrey of Nebraska said last September in announcing his candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination; indeed, he added, "we are seeing that the evil was worse than most imagined." The final collapse of Soviet communism thus throws a harshly revealing light not only on what happened *there* during the decades past, but on what happened *here*, in the thoughts and actions of liberals and conservatives, of academics and makers of U.S. policy.

In recent decades, scholarly study of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and the Third World has been strongly influenced by "a [revisionist] school of thought that...exaggerated the achievements of communism and belittled its failures," Walter Laqueur of the Center for Strategic and International Studies contends in *Par-*

tisan Review (No. 3, 1991). "While Lenin's mistakes and Stalin's crimes were not denied, it was argued that by and large, and in a long-term perspective, these were less significant than the political, social, and economic achievements of the communist regimes." Such misjudgments, Laqueur says, were made not just by the Left but also by "the political and academic establishment, the media, and even Western intelligence—as shown, until very recently, by the erroneous estimates of the Soviet and East European economies."

When the Cold War was being fought, liberals did not always regard communist regimes with sympathy or sneer at "cold warriors." President John F. Kennedy, for example, on taking office in 1961, proclaimed U.S. willingness to "pay any price, bear any burden...to assure the survival and the success of liberty." And his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, plunged America into what was often described as "the liberals' war" in Vietnam. But after the 1960s, American liberals contributed little to the West's Cold War victory, argues *National Interest* editor Owen Harries in

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Commentary (Oct. 1991). "[T]oo many of them are on record as disputing the reality or the point of the Cold War, too many have argued for accommodation, too many have found it difficult to condemn the Soviet system—have even praised it and maintained it was not very different from ours—too many of them have done all these things for them now to be able to claim responsibility for the victory with any conviction."

One group that does deserve major credit, Harries says, is the U.S. policymakers of the mid- and late-1940s—Dean Acheson and the other "wise men," many of them liberals, who devised the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, NATO, the Bretton Woods agreement, and the strategy of containment. "There was nothing inevitable about containment, and there was nothing inevitable about the economic recovery of Europe and Japan and the phenomenal development of world trade—they were all politically contrived. If they had not been, there would have been nothing inevitable about the collapse of communism, either."

After the Vietnam War, however, it was mainly the conservatives who carried the ball. They staunchly supported deterrence and ample defense budgets, and, writes Harries, "never equated concern about the Soviet threat with 'paranoia' and 'obsession,' as many liberals did." Conservatives correctly perceived Soviet totalitarianism as "an unmitigated evil that had to be fought at all costs." Still, their vision was not perfect, he concedes. They "often exaggerated the extent and durability of Soviet power and the threat it represented."

In that exaggerated view of the Soviet bear, conservatives had many scholarly specialists for company. "In retrospect," writes University of Vermont historian Robert V. Daniels in the *New Leader* (Sept. 9–23, 1991), "perhaps Sovietology's greatest fault was grossly overestimating the strength of the Soviet bloc—its physical and economic capabilities as well as its political cohesion and psychological stamina." W. R. Connor, director of the Na-

tional Humanities Center at Research Triangle Park in North Carolina, contends in the *American Scholar* (Spring 1991) that Western Sovietologists peered at Soviet reality through the thin slit of social science and missed "the passions—the appeal of ethnic loyalty and nationalism, the demands for freedom of religious practice and cultural expression, and the feeling that the regime had simply lost its moral legitimacy."

In the 1970s, Laqueur notes, it became bad form in liberal academic and political circles even to use the term *totalitarianism* in reference to the Soviet system. In the Soviet Union itself, he observes, there is today no such reluctance.

It would be unrealistic, in Laqueur's view, to expect "a collective admission of guilt in Western revisionist thought. To own up to mistakes is a painful process." Many of those who argued for years that the United States was at least as much to blame for the Cold War as the Soviet Union will not soon abandon their position, he notes. "It has already been said that there have been no winners and losers, for America has ruined herself in the course of an unnecessary arms race—not to mention the domestic political and psychological damage that has ensued—resulting in the militarization of our thinking and our political culture." That view, Laqueur says, belongs in a satirical novel; it will not "cut much ice" outside the circles of those scholars and journalists who feel compelled to defend their record.

Leftist academics such as economist Samuel Bowles of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, are trying to accentuate the positive. The demise of communism in Eastern Europe, he writes in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Apr. 4, 1990), was "the end of a nightmare, not the death of a dream." No longer will the "bureaucratic centralism and official Marxism of Eastern Europe [be] an albatross around the necks of the Left in U.S. universities." U.S. socialists, he says, never had "public ownership [or] the end of the market [as their] objective They were a possible *means* to the end of fairness and democracy."

Sociologist Paul Hollander, writing in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 23, 1990), is not convinced. In academe, Marxism has come to serve "as a stick with which to beat Western pluralist-capitalist systems and their cultures Our Marxist academics knew little about existing socialist societies and were not in the least [eager] to learn more or to criticize them; they were afraid that such criticism might put them in the unsavory company of 'cold warriors' or 'red bashers.'" The fall of communism is no more likely to disturb their faith than did its dismal record of performance in decades past.

In the view of William G. Scott and David K. Hart, co-authors of *Organizational Values in America*, the collapse of communism ought to call into question the ideology of "managerialism." The communist regimes, they write in *Society* (Mar.-Apr. 1991), "were managed societies, and their managers proved incapable of satisfying the aspirations of the people We too

are a managed nation"

Be that as it may, it is the status of socialism that is now most at issue. Princeton's Paul Starr, co-editor of the liberal *American Prospect* (Fall 1991), is hopeful that liberals will now face up to that reality. It is finally time, he says, for liberals to cut loose from socialism, even socialism of the democratic sort. "It is now indisputable that communism impoverished the people who lived under it, and it is not clear how or why a more democratically planned socialist economy would do much better—or that such a system is feasible at all." Now, liberals must focus on the reform of capitalism. "Whatever the party of reform once may have had to learn from the ideas of socialism, it has already absorbed; indeed, some of what it learned, it ought to unlearn. Those who have believed socialism to be a higher stage of liberalism now need to take to heart, not the great vision of socialist theory, but the bitter disappointment of the practice."

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Dry Rot?

"The Fragility of Liberalism" by Christopher Lasch, in *Salmagundi* (Fall 1991), Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 12866.

In the very hour of its greatest triumph, in the very nation that has been its champion, liberal capitalism is in an alarming state of decay. "[T]he signs of impending breakdown are unmistakable," warns Lasch, an iconoclastic historian and author of *The True and Only Heaven* (1991). "Drugs, crime, and gang wars are making our cities uninhabitable. Our school system is in a state of collapse. Our [political] parties are unable to enlist the masses of potential voters into the political process." And the emerging U.S.-dominated global culture, far from reflecting a regard for human dignity and other liberal values, is "the culture of Hollywood, rock and roll, and Madison Avenue . . . a culture of hedonism, cruelty, contempt, and cynicism."

This dangerous state of affairs Lasch

partly blames on the allegiance of liberals—classical and modern—to the false god of unending progress. Their commitment led during the past century to the creation of a consumer society and to the centralization of economic and political power, which robbed citizens of their independence. But since the American Revolution, liberals have made another big mistake, in Lasch's view. They have imagined, with Virginia political theorist John Taylor (1753–1824), that a properly designed political system alone would ensure the health of American society, that a society's institutions "may be virtuous, though the individuals composing it are vicious."

By the 19th century, liberals were left with only one prop for civic virtue: The obligation to support a family, they

thought, would overcome the individual man's selfishness. Today, even "the higher selfishness of marriage and parenthood" is losing its influence.

"Liberalism promised progress, abundance, and above all privacy. The freedom to live as you please, think and worship as you please—this privatization of the good life was liberalism's greatest appeal. Having set definite limits to the powers of the state, at the same time relieving individuals of most of their civic obligations, liberals assumed that they had cleared away the outstanding obstacles to the pursuit of happiness." But they also unwittingly cleared away the foundations of civic life.

As today's overburdened state defaults on its assigned responsibilities, Lasch con-

tends, citizens will have to meet their own needs by, for example, patrolling their own neighborhoods. That is to the good, in Lasch's opinion, because it will help to revive the spirit of self-reliance and neighborly cooperation. Yet many Americans, living in cities or suburbs where the shopping mall offers the only "community," have lost the habit of self-help. To help them regain it, ironically, government action is needed: policies to strengthen families and initiatives, such as school vouchers, to give them more control over the professionals who so affect their lives. Indeed, Lasch says, "it is hard to see how the foundations of civic life can be restored, unless this work becomes an overriding goal of public policy."

Stressing The Negative

"Negative versus Positive Television Advertising in U.S. Presidential Campaigns, 1960-1988" by Lynda Lee Kaid and Anne Johnston, in *Journal of Communication* (Summer 1991), Univ. of Pa., 3620 Walnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104-6220.

As the countdown to the presidential election begins, Americans are bracing for an onslaught of "negative" political ads on television. That is what they got last time—and to an unprecedented extent, to hear many reporters and political pundits tell it. Especially offensive, said the critics, was President George Bush's 1988 campaign, with its notorious commercial about furloughed murderer Willie Horton. After examining 830 TV political ads aired in the eight presidential campaigns from 1960 through 1988, however, communication

specialists Kaid, of the University of Oklahoma, and Johnston, of the University of North Carolina, see a different picture.

The proportion of "negative" ads—i.e. those focused on the alleged defects of the opponent—reached its height, Kaid and Johnston found, not in 1988, but in 1964, when President Lyndon B. Johnson's campaign used the famous "Daisy Girl" commercial to suggest that Barry Goldwater would start a nuclear war. Forty percent of the political ads used in the general election campaigns that year were negative. In the 1976 Carter-Ford contest, by contrast, only 24 percent were. The proportion increased to 36 percent in 1980, when Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan squared off, but has hardly changed at all since. In 1988, Kaid and Johnston report, attack ads were 37 percent of the total.

Negative political ads are not all bad, the authors point out. In fact, they are more likely to contain information about political issues than the positive ones, which celebrate the supposed virtues of the sponsoring candidate.

The most surprising of Kaid and Johnston's findings, however, is this: In the



Many observers insisted that mud-slinging was the 1988 presidential candidates' main activity.

1988 election, 32 percent of Bush's ads were negative—compared with 41 percent of Democratic candidate Michael Duka-

kis's. The Republican's negative pitch that year clearly was a lot more memorable—and also, it seems, a lot more effective.

Rights Run Amok

“‘Absolute’ Rights: Property and Privacy” by Mary Ann Glendon, in *The Responsive Community* (Fall 1991), 714 Gelman Library, The George Washington Univ., Washington, D.C. 20052.

Under the spell of philosopher John Locke and the lectures on law of Sir William Blackstone, Americans from the beginning talked about property rights as if they were absolute. In practice there was a good deal of public regulation of property. The Fifth Amendment, for example, recognized the federal government's power of eminent domain. But the extravagant rights talk had a strong influence, Harvard Law Professor Glendon notes. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the U.S. Supreme Court's extreme view of property rights led it to reject much social legislation, delaying the nation's transition to a mixed economy and a welfare state until the Court reversed itself in the 1930s. In recent years, Glendon argues, absolutist rights talk has reappeared in the courts and passed into common discourse, only this time the rhetoric is about privacy, not property.

The Supreme Court and lawyers in general, Glendon says, have thought of the right of privacy “as marking off a protected sphere that surrounds the individual,” and dressed the new right up in the old property-rights rhetoric. Privacy emerged as a distinct constitutional right only in 1965, in the landmark Supreme Court decision, *Griswold v. Connecticut*. Justice William O. Douglas found in the “penumbras” of the Constitution, “a right

of privacy older than the Bill of Rights” protecting the “intimate relation of husband and wife” from state interference. In 1972, the Court extended the right beyond the family and elevated it to a full-fledged *individual* right. The following year, in *Roe v. Wade*, the Court decided that the right was “broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy.” But, as had happened with property rights, Glendon writes, the high court since then has experienced difficulties “in working out principled limitations on a right that seemed for a time to have no bounds.”

What's wrong with a little exaggeration about individual rights? For one thing, Glendon says, “no one can be an absolutist for *all* our constitutionally guaranteed rights, because taking any one of them as far as it can go soon brings it into conflict with another.” In addition, she says, absolutist rhetoric encourages conflict and discourages reasoned dialogue. It expresses “our most infantile instincts rather than our potential to be reasonable men and women. A country in which we can do ‘anything we want’ is not a republic of free people attempting to order their lives together.” Nor is it a country in which the responsibilities that must accompany rights get the attention they deserve.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

World Champion For How Long?

“The Democratic Moment” by Marc F. Plattner, in *Journal of Democracy* (Fall 1991), 1101 15th St. N.W., Ste. 200, Washington, D.C. 20005.

The liberal democratic ideal is now in the ascendancy around the world—but how long can this happy moment last? Democ-

racy's fate, says Plattner, coeditor of the *Journal of Democracy*, depends on whether a rival postcommunist movement

appears and can attain enough economic success and popular appeal to challenge it for the world's allegiance.

There is bound to be some backsliding into authoritarianism by some of the world's new democracies, Plattner notes. But as great a misfortune as that would be for the people involved, he argues, it would not necessarily mean the end of democracy's global prestige. Even if a majority of the new democracies failed, the presumption would still be that liberal democracy is the only form of government suitable for mature nations.

"Democracy's preeminence can be seriously challenged," Plattner maintains, "only by an ideology with universalist aspirations that proves capable of coming to power in an economically advanced or militarily powerful nation."

Nationalism does not qualify as such an ideology, because it is not universalist. Islamic fundamentalism, although "probably the most vital alternative to democracy to be found anywhere today," is unlikely to present a serious global challenge. Conversions outside the Islamic world have been few, and Islamic fundamentalism appears unable to serve as the basis for economically or militarily successful regimes. Revolutionary Iran no longer seems "even the Islamic wave of the future."

The most likely "seedbeds for the birth of a new antidemocratic ideology," Plattner believes, are the Soviet Union and China. Their size and power, as well as

their influence over Eastern Europe and East Asia, respectively, make what happens in those nations crucially important for democracy's future. "The emergence of a military-backed neoauthoritarian regime, possibly after a period of chaos or even civil war, may be as likely an outcome as a stable democracy in both [countries] And if such a regime were economically or militarily successful, it could quickly become an attractive model for other countries in its region and in the world."

Developments in Japan and the other noncommunist countries of East Asia also bear watching, Plattner says. Despite the apparent stability of democracy in Japan, the future might lead not to a greater convergence with Western-style liberal democracy but to "an increased emphasis on those features that distinguish East Asian societies from the West." A new ideology could gradually evolve, which, he speculates, given the "extraordinary economic and technological dynamism of the region, could become extremely attractive to other nations."

One other nation holds a key to democracy's future, Plattner adds: the United States. "[T]here are many reasons to worry about the political, economic, and cultural health of American democracy," he notes. "A serious social or economic crisis in the United States . . . would have a devastating effect on the fortunes of democracy worldwide."

Day of Infamy

"The Intelligence Failure of Pearl Harbor" by David Kahn, in *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1991-92), 58 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, shocked Americans out of the illusion that they were safely isolated from the rest of the world and prompted U.S. entry into World War II. Some historians have maintained that U.S. intelligence analysts possessed advance information about the attack but failed to understand it. Writers of a more conspiratorial bent have contended that President Franklin D. Roosevelt (or, in a different version, Brit-

ish Prime Minister Winston Churchill) learned from his intelligence services that the attack was coming but kept quiet in order to get the United States into the war. For once, however, says Kahn, author of *The Codebreakers* (1967), things are almost as simple as they appear.

In one of the more serious studies of the question, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (1962), Roberta Wohlstetter claimed that U.S. intelligence analysts failed to

anticipate the attack "not for want of the relevant materials, but because of a plethora of irrelevant ones." The "noise" of extraneous information, in other words, drowned out the "signal" of useful clues. In reality, Kahn states, there *was* a dearth of intelligence materials. "Not one [diplomatic or naval] intercept, not one datum of intelligence ever said a thing about an attack on Pearl Harbor."

Some critics, including Admiral Husband Kimmel, the naval commander at Pearl, have found it hard to reconcile the complete surprise of the attack with the fact that U.S. cryptanalysts in September 1940 had scored a great triumph: They cracked the Empire of Japan's most secret diplomatic cipher. The Americans dubbed it PURPLE. In the succeeding months, the intercepted Japanese diplomatic messages corroborated other evidence that a crisis was approaching. On July 31, 1941, for example, the foreign minister in Tokyo told Japan's ambassador in Washington that "There is more reason than ever before for us to arm ourselves to the teeth for all-out war." But, Kahn points out, "the Japanese

diplomatic PURPLE and other intercepts did not reveal military or naval plans. The [U.S.] Army had not solved any Japanese army codes because it could not intercept enough messages. The Navy had made scant progress on the main Japanese operations code"

After Pearl Harbor, Kahn notes, U.S. codebreaking played a vital role in the Allied war effort. The cracking of Japanese naval codes made possible "three critical American victories: the battle of Midway, the midair assassination of Japan's leading strategist and architect of the Pearl Harbor attack, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, and the strangling of the island empire through the sinking of its merchant marine." British-American exploitation of the German Enigma cipher machine helped defeat Germany's U-boats and land forces. And the breaking of PURPLE "later yielded astonishing insights into Hitler's plans, gleaned from the messages of the Japanese ambassador in Berlin." All that hastened the war's end, but the Allies had no knowledge that could have averted the tragedy at Pearl Harbor.

Why Nukes Will Not Spread

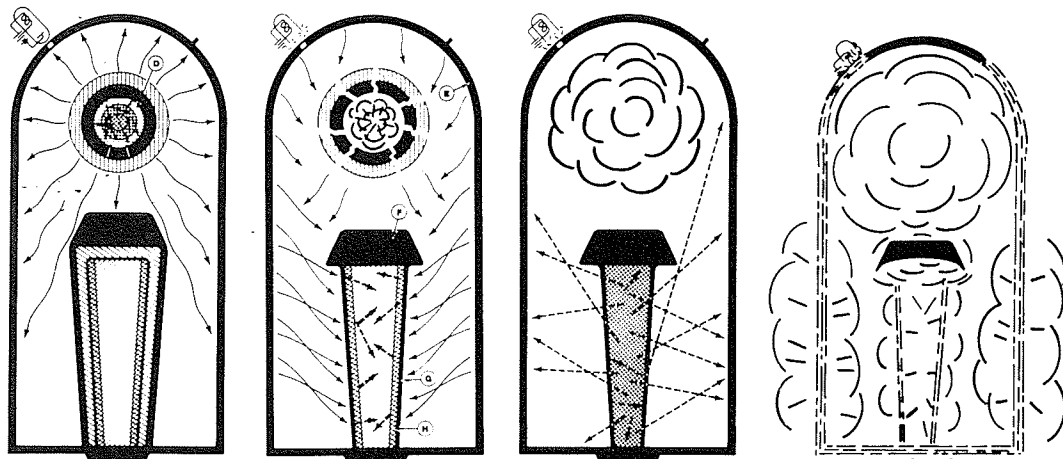
"Winning the Nonproliferation Battle" by Thomas W. Graham, in *Arms Control Today* (Sept. 1991), 11 Dupont Cir., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons now seems more urgent than ever. In recent months, the United States has been trying to prevent North Korea from joining the nuclear club, and it has pressured China and India not to sell reactors to Iran. Despite such challenges, Graham, a former official at the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency who is now with the University of California's Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation in San Diego, is confident that the spread of nuclear weapons can be halted.

Nuclear proliferation, Graham maintains, is a much less intractable problem than many strategists think. Past efforts to curb it, he points out, "have been extremely successful, especially given the meager resources . . . devoted to the task." Today, outside the five declared nuclear

powers, only a relatively small number of "problem countries" have or are close to having nuclear weapons. India, Israel, Pakistan, and South Africa, despite formal denials, have either nuclear weapons or the ability to build them within days or weeks. They are *de facto* nuclear powers. Four other nations—Argentina, Brazil, South Korea, and Taiwan—have the technical capability to build nuclear weapons within just a few years, although none now appears likely to do so. And five nations—Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea—seem to desire nuclear weapons, although getting them will not be easy.

There is no evidence that this list of "problem countries" is growing, Graham says. In fact, many nations that once were considering nuclear efforts—among them, Egypt, Indonesia, Spain, Sweden, and Tur-



These instructions showing how to trigger a hydrogen bomb were published amid much controversy in 1979. But actually building nuclear weapons remains extremely difficult.

key—no longer are. In the mid-1970s, the United States forced South Korea and Taiwan to reverse their nascent nuclear-weapons programs. In the early 1980s, the United States, using diplomatic pressure on other nations, was able to block Libya from buying nuclear technology abroad. More recently, thanks in part to international pressure, Argentina and Brazil, which under military rule had been pursuing a nuclear-weapons capability for decades, brought their nuclear competition to an apparent end. Since the Persian Gulf War, international attention on Iraq has made any effort to rebuild a covert nuclear-weapon program there extremely difficult. And South Africa, which has signed the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, could become the first former *de facto* nuclear-weapon state.

Some analysts worry that the end of the

Cold War could prompt new countries to seek nuclear weapons, but Graham says that such “abstract thinking” ignores the lessons of the past. In almost all cases—Britain and France being notable exceptions—nations that have “gone nuclear,” he says, have done so mainly because they faced “an *acute* security threat from a nuclear-armed adversary that also had a substantial conventional military capability.” Such a threat, he says, is unlikely to appear in Europe or—unless North Korea goes nuclear—in East Asia.

Moreover, building a nuclear bomb is no easy matter. It requires “a wide array of advanced technology, and a huge and expensive industrial infrastructure.” The long lead time involved gives outsiders time to cut off needed technology, exert diplomatic pressure, or take covert action to snuff out the nuclear efforts.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Help Wanted?

“The Myth of the Coming Labor Shortage” by Lawrence Mishel and Ruy A. Teixeira, in *The American Prospect* (Fall 1991), P.O. Box 7645, Princeton, N.J. 08543-7645.

The United States will soon face a serious labor shortage, with an increasing demand for highly skilled workers and a greatly in-

sufficient supply. So concluded *Workforce 2000*, the oft-quoted 1987 report done by the Hudson Institute for the U.S. Labor De-

partment. Mishel, research director of the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, and Teixeira, a sociologist with the U.S. Agriculture Department's Economic Research Service, share the Hudson Institute researchers' concerns about American competitiveness—but not their conclusions.

Workforce 2000 pointed with alarm to the fact that employment in technical and professional occupations, along with services, is increasing rapidly, while the labor force is growing slowly. It is true, Mishel and Teixeira say, that highly skilled occupations are in general growing fastest, but they account for only a small percentage of U.S. jobs. According to *Workforce 2000*'s own data, the top five such occupations, including law, medicine, natural and social science, engineering, and architecture, will provide just 6.1 percent of the nation's jobs in the year 2000.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projections, the authors say, indicate that overall pay levels will decrease in the coming years—hardly a sign of galloping demand for higher skills.

Meanwhile, the report neglects the expansion of lower-skilled service jobs. Jobs for cooks, waiters, household workers, janitors, security guards, and the like will account for nearly one-fourth of net new em-

ployment by the year 2000.

Will the *quality* of America's work force be adequate? The authors of *Workforce 2000* fretted about the growing number of undereducated women and minorities in the work force. "Only 15 percent of the new entrants to the labor force over the next 13 years will be native white males," they warned. Actually, say Mishel and Teixeira, about one-third of the entrants will be non-Hispanic white males, and another third will be non-Hispanic white females. The Hudson researchers reached their striking conclusion by looking at only *net* new workers, in effect not counting those who will fill existing positions. And *Workforce 2000*'s view of women as educationally deficient, Mishel and Teixeira add, "is belied by the fact that young women in the labor force are now more highly educated than men."

The real problem with the quality of the work force, as Mishel and Teixeira see it, has to do with education and training. It's not that the quality of U.S. education has declined, but rather that, with increased international competition, it stacks up poorly against the education in other advanced countries. "This is a competitive disadvantage that should be addressed," they say, "but it is a problem of the entire work force"—not just of new workers.

Another Bill For S&Ls

"S&L Borrowing Raised Interest Rates" in *The NBER Digest* (Sept. 1991), National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc., 1050 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

Bills for the savings-and-loan disaster of the late 1980s keep turning up like unwanted relatives. The latest: higher interest rates *before* the crisis hit.

Between 1926 and '81, report economists John B. Shoven of Stanford, Scott B. Smart of Indiana University, and Joel Waldfogel of Yale, the average real interest rate on short-term Treasury bills was only 0.1 percent; but during the 1980s, it was 4.7 percent. Huge federal deficits, tight monetary policy, and people's slowness to adjust to the sharp drop in inflation were partly to blame. But the three economists say that the thrifts' thirst for cash also con-

tributed. Lax federal regulation led many troubled S&Ls to undertake risky investments, financed by issuing high-interest certificates of deposit. Consumers, reassured by federal deposit insurance, snapped them up. Faced with this competition for credit, the federal government was forced to raise interest rates on Treasury securities. That probably forced up Treasury interest rates by a full percentage point, the authors estimate.

The result: Washington paid as much as \$146 billion extra in interest during the 1980s. That amount is larger than the entire federal deficit in 1982.

Those Who Can't . . .

The Harvard Business School is the high church of American-style business management. Reporter Alison Leigh Cowan's account in the *New York Times* (Sept. 26, 1991) of the latest events at the school's strife-ridden *Harvard Business Review* makes one wonder if that helps explain the woes of American business.

Few people could have seemed better suited to the task of gunning the motor of the scholarly journal and popular business magazine than the Review's new editor, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, the Harvard Business School professor who is a nationally prominent management consultant and an expert on organizational behavior. So far, though, things seem to have become worse . . .

In recent months, tempers at the 69-year-old Review have been running so high that two associate editors have quit in disgust. Hurt by staff shortages and internal political distractions, the bimonthly magazine has been coming out late . . . Professor Kanter has proved so unpopular a boss that her two top subordinates . . . led an unsuccessful in-

surrection in April . . .

Exasperated by what they considered her self-centered management style and unrealistic goals for the magazine, they also said they wanted her office moved off the premises of the Review's headquarters in Boston, leaving them in charge.

After spending much of the summer at her vacation home on Martha's Vineyard, where acquaintances said she was reviewing her options, Professor Kanter returned to the Review this fall. The situation, however, remains volatile . . .

The [most] common view is that Professor Kanter is simply a difficult person who, for all her technical brilliance, still has a lot to learn about managing people . . .

A star on the lecture circuit who earns up to \$26,400 a day for appearances and a bestselling author, Ms. Kanter is one of the school's biggest draws with corporate chieftains . . .

[S]he first came to Boston in the late 1960s, as a young sociologist studying communes and utopian societies at Brandeis University . . .

Edison's Other Genius

"Thomas Edison and the Theory and Practice of Innovation" by Andre Millard, in *Business and Economic History* (Fall 1991), Dept. of Economics, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va. 23185.

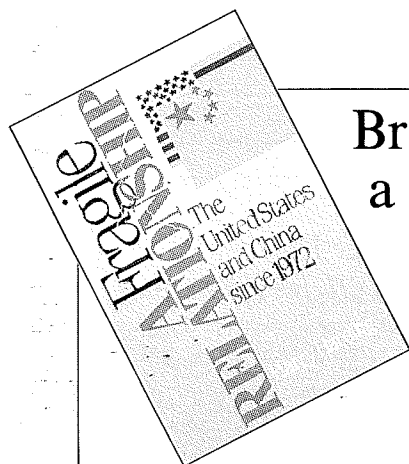
"Well, it's all gone, but we had a hell of a good time spending it!" Thomas Edison (1847-1931) exclaimed after losing his light bulb fortune in 1900 on a disastrous plan to mine iron magnetically. Henry Ford called his friend the world's greatest inventor and worst businessman, a reputation that has stuck unfairly, in the view of Millard, a professor at the University of Alabama, Birmingham. Edison, he says, pioneered many management techniques that are still in use today.

The inventor soon bounced back from his iron mining flop and rebuilt his empire around two new creations, phonographs and movie cameras. Unlike other inventors, Edison was not content merely to patent his ideas and then sit back and watch

the money roll in. From the beginning, he saw that the future lay in organized research and manufacturing. His "invention factory" in Menlo Park, New Jersey, created in 1876, served as the model for the modern industrial-research laboratory, now followed by major corporations from Standard Oil to Sony.

In 1886, Edison expanded to a new laboratory in West Orange, New Jersey. He wanted to concentrate on mass production and marketing, and rightly predicted surging demand for such consumer goods as sewing machines and electric fans. During these years, Edison made product diversity his company's main goal, working on hundreds of different projects at once. Most of these "stunts" came to nothing,

Periodicals continues on page 136



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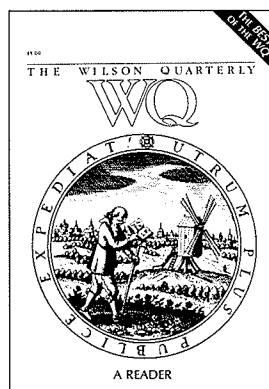
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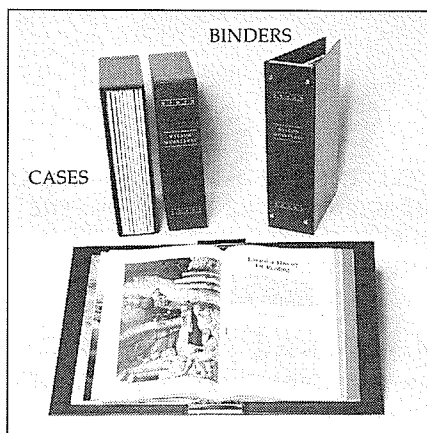
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THE SECOND COMING OF THE AMERICAN SMALL TOWN

by Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk

Until very recently, there were only two views of the American suburb: You either loved it or hated it. In the first camp were most suburbanites; in the second were most writers, planners, and architects. Now a new group of critics has launched a searching yet sympathetic reappraisal of the suburb, and the husband-wife architectural team of Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk are at the forefront. They see the postwar suburbs as a grand experiment gone awry, ruined less by consumers and developers than by the ignorance of local planners, zoning boards, and traf-



fic engineers. These experts molded suburbs for cars, not people, a catastrophic mistake whose costs we can measure today in traffic congestion, in air pollution, and in the vast sums of public money lavished on roads and infrastructure. But nothing compares to the damage done by the fragmentation of civic life and the radical economic segregation that have accompanied suburban sprawl. Americans long for community, the authors say, and they could have it. The future, they suggest, does not have to be imagined so much as remembered.

Three years ago, Dade County, Florida, sentenced itself to the absurd fate of perpetual urban adolescence. Responding to a state mandate, the county government adopted a package of "balanced growth" measures, conceding that traffic congestion and growing demands on the public purse for roads and other infrastructure had made it impossible for the city of Miami to grow any further in the old way. Most citizens were pleased. The reaction against growth has become a national phenomenon, although

elsewhere it is often much less organized and much more emotional. In California, that harbinger of everything to come in this country, it has reached near-suicidal proportions. In Santa Cruz County, restrictions on growth have crimped the tax base: Three bridges have been closed for lack of funds to pay for repairs. But the people of Santa Cruz apparently would rather endure such difficulties than grow.

This is unprecedented. Never before in American history has growth been so unwelcome. After all, growth signifies more people, more commerce, more prosperity, more culture. It is in the nature of cities and towns to grow, and when they grow no further, like all organisms, they begin to die. What is responsible for this bizarre antipathy is not growth itself but the particular kind of growth we have in the United States. Suburban sprawl is cancerous growth rather than healthy growth, and it is destroying our civic life.

Americans are only beginning to understand that this is so. Many Californians are no longer interested in building more highways to make traffic flow more smoothly; not unreasonably, they now simply want less traffic. The credit for this change belongs partly to the environmental movement, which has persuaded most Americans of the need to stop ravaging the landscape and polluting the atmosphere with ever more roads and cars. But Americans are also beginning to recognize an important fact. It is not only the atmosphere or the animal habitat that is endangered on this continent. The human habitat is threatened as well.

Growth gone awry can be seen anywhere in suburbia but nowhere more clearly than in the "planned communities," based on derivative versions of the planning ideals embodied in Reston, Virginia, or Irvine, California, that have proliferated on the suburban fringes since the 1960s. Examined piece by

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piece, these planned communities do seem to offer many of the things that Americans say they want: convenient workplaces, well-managed shopping centers, and spacious, air-conditioned houses full of the latest appliances. But why, when they get all of this, do Americans hate it so much that they want to stop more of it from being created? "No more of this!" they say. "It is ugly and it increases traffic." They are happy with



Illus. 1

the private realm they have won for themselves, but desperately anxious about the public realm around them. Because of the radical malfunctioning of the growth mechanism, the late-20th-century suburbanite's chief ideology is not conservatism or liberalism but NIMBYism: Not In My Back Yard.

Suburbanites sense what is wrong with the places they inhabit. Traffic, commuting time, and the great distances from shopping, work, and entertainment all rank high among their complaints. But all such inconveniences might be more bearable were suburbs not so largely devoid of most signs of "community." The classic suburb is less a community than an agglomeration of houses, shops, and offices connected to one another by cars, not by the fabric of human life. The only public space is the shopping mall, which in reality is only quasipublic, given over almost entirely to commercial ends. The structure of the suburb tends to confine people to their houses and cars; it discourages strolling, walking, mingling with neighbors. The suburb is the last word in privatization, perhaps even its lethal consummation, and it spells the end of authentic civic life.

Is there an alternative? There is, and it is close at hand: the traditional American town. This is not a radical idea—far from it. When the Gallup Organization asked Americans in 1989 what kind of place they would like to live in, 34 percent chose

a small town. Only 24 percent chose a suburb, 22 percent a farm, and 19 percent a city. One hardly needs an opinion poll to discover the allure of towns. The market reveals it. Americans have shown over and over again that they will pay premium prices to live in the relatively few traditional towns that remain, places such as Marblehead, Massachusetts, Princeton, New Jersey, and Oak Park, Illinois.

All of the elements of towns already exist in the modern American suburb. For various historical reasons, though, they have been improperly assembled, artificially separated into "pods" strung along "collector roads" intended to speed the flow of traffic. The pods are specialized: There are housing "clusters" (illustration 1), office "parks," and shopping "centers." These elements are the makings of a great cuisine, but they have never been properly combined. It is as if we were expected to eat, rather than a completed omelet, first the eggs, then the cheese, and then the green peppers. The omelet has not been allowed to become the sum of its parts.

The tragedy is that we could have been building towns during the 1970s and '80s. But all of that wonderful growth has been wasted, and it is doubtful that we will ever see anything like it again in our lifetimes. Misguided planning, not rapacious real-estate developers, is chiefly to blame for this gross miscarriage of growth. Left to their own devices, developers would have every incentive to build towns. Because towns are more compact than sprawl, the cost of land, streets, water and sewer lines, and other infrastructure is lower. And they can be built at lower risk, in small increments.

The town is a model of development well-suited to times of economic adversity, and it dominated American thinking until World War II. But postwar developers were guided by a new model that emerged out of government economic policy and planning legislation. Matters were complicated by the fact that each of the elements of the town emigrated to the suburbs at different times. First there was the great decanting of the urban population after World War II, encouraged by such well-meaning government programs as Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration mortgages and the construction of interstate highways. The supermarkets, small shops, and department stores followed, filling up the new

shopping centers and malls. More recently, the office and industrial parks have followed. As early as 1980, 38 percent of the nation's workers were commuting from suburb to suburb, and only half as many were travelling from suburb to city center. Meanwhile, the poor never joined the suburban migration, becoming ever more isolated in the city core, which has become their specialized habitat.

All of this suburban development occurred under the dominion of Euclidian zoning—zoning that requires the rigid segregation of housing, commerce, and industry. That approach to zoning is a residue of the Industrial Revolution, which made it seem desirable to move people's homes away from the dark satanic mills. Such distancing is no longer necessary, of course, since most contemporary office parks and electronics plants make extraordinarily benign neighbors. Nevertheless, every generation of planners attempts to relive that last great victory of the planning profession by separating more and more elements, more and more functions: Even doctors' offices today are kept strictly isolated from the people who use them.



Illus. 2

We believe, quite simply, that all of these elements should once again be assembled into traditional towns. But what goes into the design of a town?

This one (illus. 2) happens to be Alexandria, Virginia, but American towns share so many attributes that it could just as well be Manchester, New Hampshire, or Key West, Florida, or any number of other places. It contains neighborhoods of finite size and definite character which people can easily traverse on foot. Residential areas are seamlessly connected to the rest of the town, and they are not even exclusively residen-

tial. They boast corner stores, attorneys' offices, coffee shops, and other small establishments.

In the traditional American town, what is important is not what buildings are used for but the buildings' size and disposition toward the street. Buildings of similar size and characteristics tend to be compatible regardless of their use. Successful towns can be composed of little buildings, like Alexandria,

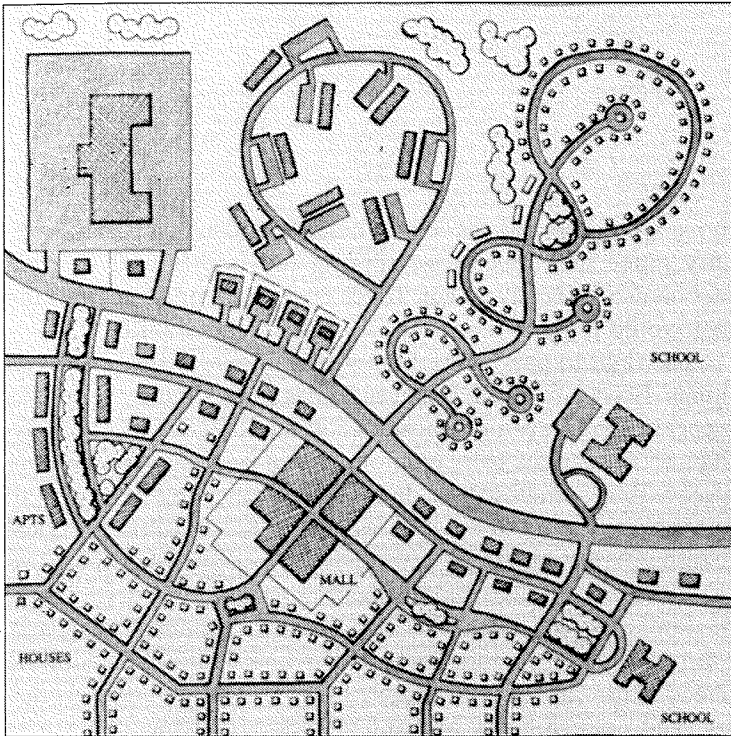
or of relatively big ones, like Washington, D.C., whose buildings are all roughly the same size (thanks to strict height restrictions) though they serve a variety of functions. Some are civic buildings, others house offices, and others contain apartments. In the typical planned community (illus. 3), the formula is completely reversed: The building sizes vary, but the building uses are completely homogeneous. Offices go with offices, for example, never with houses.



Illus. 3

Likewise, the streets in the two kinds of communities are conceived in completely different ways. In the planned community there are "collector streets," which are only for cars, and cul-de-sacs, which are hard to describe because while they are supposedly designed for people they are rarely used. In the traditional town, streets are complex things, usually laid out in grids, with lanes for cars to travel and lanes for cars to park; they are lined with sidewalks, trees, and buildings. This seems like a perfectly obvious description of a street, but the fact is that we no longer design such streets. Traffic engineers now refer to trees as FHOs: Fixed Hazardous Objects. Trees, sidewalks, and buildings impede the flow of traffic; if there must be houses nearby, they are walled off by "sound barriers."

Planned communities suffer from being too diagrammatically planned, and at the heart of their plans is the collector street. In the traditional town's network of streets, there are

*Illus. 4*

many ways to get from one place to another. In the planned community, there is only one way: A driver must make his way from his pod onto the collector, and from the collector onto the highway. Then he can go places. The difference is perfectly shown in illus. 4, with a traditional community (at the bottom) set off from pods (at the top) by a collector.

All of this becomes clearer when towns are viewed from the air. The town of Virginia Beach, Virginia, for example, apparently takes pride in what it has achieved through its planning code: "Becoming a showcase, Virginia Beach Boulevard Phase One celebrated its opening," says the caption of this picture (illus. 5) from the town's promotional brochure. This is a typical product of postwar American planning as expressed through hundreds of local planning, zoning, and public-works codes. In every community, the code is a kind of constitution that lays out the rules that will order the life of the city, the rules that describe the form of urbanism that will emerge, just as the American Constitution contains within it the lineaments of American society. In Virginia Beach, as in most American communities, it is quite easy to conclude that the single most important constitutional principle is that cars must be happy. There are to be many, many lanes of traffic so that cars can

move with ease and speed and negotiate turns with extraordinary grace and quickness, sparing the brakes and steering mechanism excessive wear. There is to be no on-street parking that would impede the progress of the blessed auto.

The right to park is the First Amendment in this scheme of things. Every American believes he has a constitutional right to a parking spot, even on those hectic days between Thanksgiving and Christmas. If he cannot get that parking spot, he concludes that something is dreadfully wrong and converts to NIMBYism. So there must be vast parking lots (illus. 6). Local planning codes describe with loving precision what the parking lots are to be like: the number of cars, the type of drainage, the kind of lights that go on them, the size of the parking space, even the paint. Our codes are extraordinarily precise about the needs of the car. But the needs of the human are another matter. The code reflects no understanding of what being in a parking lot feels like for a human being.

Everything in the Virginia Beach scheme of things is monofunctional: All of the buildings shown in the photograph house commercial enterprises—branch banks, food emporiums, discount stores—with housing and other functions carefully excluded. This is an ecological system. When all commercial activities are grouped together, the multilane roads and vast expanses of asphalt parking lot become a necessity.

Attempts have been made to repair the excesses of suburban development, and Virginia Beach illustrates some of them. There are ordinances that eliminate ugly signs, that require the preservation of trees or the planting of new ones, or that mandate the construction of sidewalks. But these efforts are largely cosmetic. Sidewalks are good for the conscience of planners, but they turn out to be so uninviting when dropped into landscapes like this that to be a pedestrian is to be considered a pariah. Driving by in a car, one might charitably offer a ride to a well-dressed person who had wandered onto this sidewalk; otherwise one would assume that a person on foot was indigent, mad, or both.

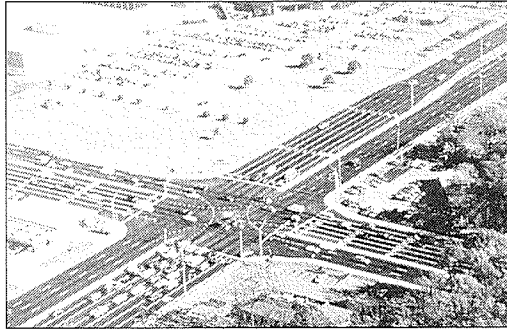
The token sidewalk reveals its absurd and perilous character most dramatically in the suburban office park (illus. 7), where the pedestrian is exposed to double jeopardy. On one side is roaring traffic, on the other a sea of cars. The traffic

roars because the code forbids on-street parking. A line of parked cars would slow traffic and serve as a buffer of metal between the pedestrian and the moving car, providing an indispensable element of psychological comfort. Without it, the pedestrian feels too exposed. He will not use the sidewalk. Even in Paris, the great city of walkers, stores began to fail when certain avenues were stripped of their parking during the presidency of Georges Pompidou (1969-74). The hapless pedestrian is confronted by another barrier on his other side: the parking lot. It is there because the code requires it. The code requires that the building be set back a great distance from the street, and that means that the parking lot has to be placed in front. The poor pedestrian is thus deprived even of the potential interest of the building which, however miserable a structure it might be, is more interesting than the hood ornaments of cars.

There are people alive today who have never even laid eyes on the alternative to suburbia, people, in other words, who have never seen a real town. Fortunately, the American film and television myth-machine continues to do its part by churning out various simulacra of the American small town. So at least the image survives.

Authentic urban experience has become such a rarity that many places have become tourist attractions simply by virtue of being real towns. Visitors drive hundreds of miles to spend a weekend in places like Sonoma, California (illus. 8), just for the sake of experiencing the pleasures of small-town living.

Pondering the case of world-famous Sonoma, one realizes how pathetically easy it is to make such a place. What, after all, is Sonoma? A few very basic buildings attrac-



Illus. 5



Illus. 6



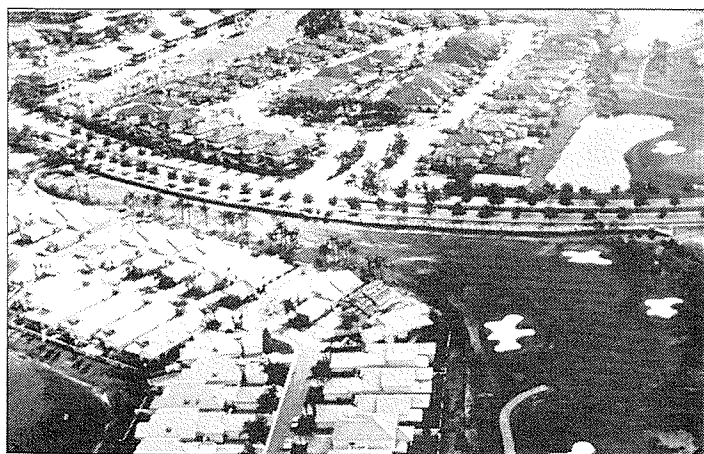
Illus. 7



Illus. 8

rides as they do wandering along Main Street, USA, and through the multinational urban constructions of Epcot, getting the civic kicks that they cannot get at home.

Most critics of suburbia dwell on its ugliness, yet the chief defect of the suburbs is not so much aesthetic as the fact that as civic environments they simply do not work. Some of the newer and more attractive develop-



Illus. 9

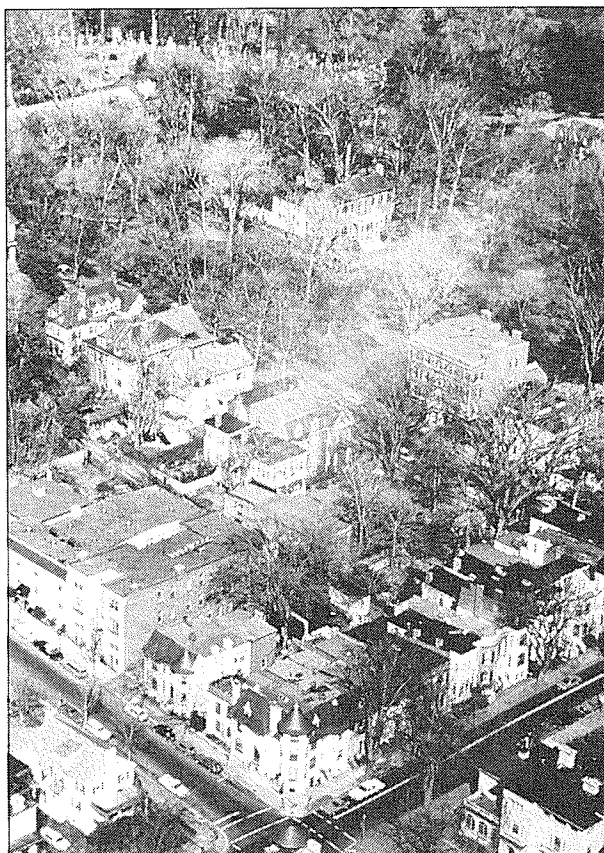
tively arranged. Yet tourists flock to Sonoma and places like it all over the country. Mount Dora, Florida, another tourist attraction, has two good blocks. Winter Park has four. Yet they are like magic. People come and wander around, entranced by the magic of urbanism that is denied them in the conventional suburb. This also explains the success of Disneyland and Disney World. Visitors do not spend as much time on the

ments, such as this one in Palm Beach, Florida (illus. 9), may appear beautiful, but they have insidious social effects. In this typical version of residential planning, all of the housing in each pod is virtually identical. The houses in the pod in the background sell for about \$350,000. Everybody who lives in those houses belongs to an economic class distinct from the one of people who live in the pod of \$200,000 houses and

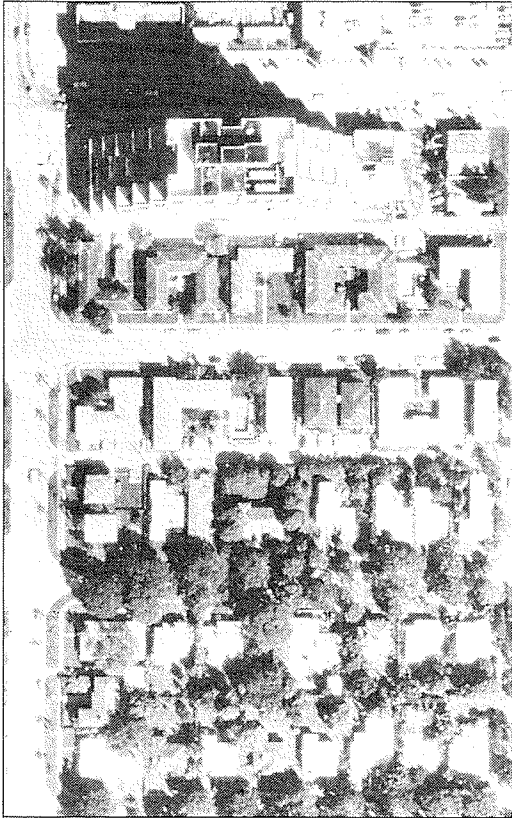
from the one of the people who live in the pod of \$100,000 apartments. The development's layout makes random personal contact among people from different economic groups highly unlikely. No longer do we openly sanction the good old American segregation by race and ethnic group; now we have segregation by income level. It is minutely executed in the suburb, and it is consciously promoted through snob-ap-peal advertising. It is so extreme that the people in the \$350,000 houses would rise up in arms if somebody proposed to build a \$200,000 house in their pod.

Such economic segregation has far-reaching effects. A whole generation of Americans has now reached adulthood cut off from direct contact with people from other social classes. It is now entirely possible for a child of affluence to grow up in such a class ghetto, attend an Ivy League university and perhaps a top law school, and enter the working world without acquiring any firsthand knowledge of people unlike himself or herself. As a result more and more Americans regard one another with mutual incomprehension and fear, and that accounts for no small share of the tension in our national political life.

Economic segregation is not the American way. The more traditional arrangement, shown here in Georgetown, in Washington, D.C. (illus. 10), allows people of different economic levels to live together. (It should be noted, however, that in Georgetown the variety is now reduced, for the simple reason that this sort of neighborhood is such a rarity and in such high demand that the poor, the elderly, and most young families have been priced out of the market.) There are small apartment buildings, relatively more expensive town houses, and single-family houses that are substantially more expensive.



Illus. 10



Illus. 11

Across the street is a great estate. People of diverse income levels, in other words, can live very close together.

The planning techniques that make such diversity possible are simple, but most of them have fallen into disuse. One method is to match the size and mass of buildings. A large slab-like apartment building in the middle of a street of smaller dwellings instantly signals to passersby that the people living there are different from—either richer or poorer than—their neighbors. Make all the buildings roughly similar in size, however, and the size of the residents' paychecks matters much less.

Coral Gables, Florida (illus. 11), built during the 1920s, demonstrates another valuable planning technique. The system of the "street address" makes use of the fact that street-level perceptions are what matter. Single-family homes exist side-by-side with

larger units, but because the mass of each apartment building is tucked away behind a facade roughly equal in height and width to the houses, the differences are noticeable only from the air. A visitor driving down one of these streets would not be aware that two building types—as well as different types of people—are sharing the same geography.

The current suburban fashion, however, is to lay out sites in almost random manner. The arrangement looks more like the result of a train wreck than of a conscious design (illus. 12). Because the buildings face every which way, they have no real fronts or backs. Consequently, all of the buildings in the pod must be homogeneous, and that means that the people must be alike (at least in terms of income) as well.

On a traditional street, even fairly glaring differences between dwellings can be softened by close attention to architectural details. In places like Annapolis, Maryland (illus. 13), for example, a great historic house worth \$1 million or more sits comfortably (on the left) next to a pair of tiny 12-foot-wide townhouses. The marriage works because the two structures

share architectural expressions. The little townhouses have windows that are like those of the bigger house, doors that are elaborated like those on the neighbor's house, similar roofs, and other common details.

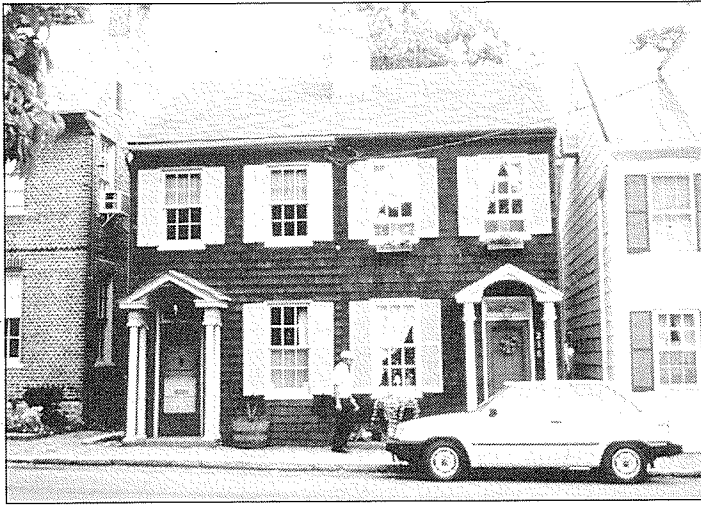
Housing the poor in structures that look different from those of the middle class is a catastrophic mistake. Unfortunately, architects are often tempted to experiment on poor people, dreaming up novel designs for public housing. Architectural experiments should be restricted to the rich. As we discovered with the well-intentioned public-housing projects of the 1960s and later decades, people who are reminded they are different—perhaps only a few of them, but enough to have a large effect—will act differently, and before long the buildings will be in ruins.

Affordable housing must be provided in small increments and must be closely interspersed with market-rate housing. Even when it looks very much like middle-class housing, as it does in Reston, Virginia, housing for the poor quickly reproduces the conditions of the ghetto if it is concentrated in one place. On Cape Cod, there is now a requirement that 10 percent of the housing in large new developments must be affordable, which seems to be about the right ratio for achieving a mix without diminishing the value of surrounding properties.

One obstacle to spreading out affordable housing has always been the high price of land. But actually there are plenty of low-cost locations all over America. One such place is "over the store," which in older towns such as Siasconset, Massachusetts (illus. 14), has long provided apartments for the clerks, cooks, or waiters who work below. It is not the American Dream to live over the store, of course, but it works. Every new shopping center built in the affluent suburbs causes a social



Illus. 12



Illus. 13

problem, because the less well-off are forced to travel great distances to work or shop. Requiring developers to build housing above the shops would by itself put a large dent in the affordable-housing problem.

Another source of land is the vast buffer strip so characteristic of suburban development. It is a reflex of modern planners to separate anything "undesirable"—office buildings, high-traffic streets, parking lots—from the rest of the landscape with a broad swath of green buffer. Why not fill in these spaces with small places (illus. 15) designed for people who cannot afford the



Illus. 14

BUILDING NEOTRADITIONAL TOWNS

The first step in creating a new town is to find a developer who is willing to think of himself as a town founder rather than a builder of houses. When they designed their first town in the late 1970s Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk were fortunate to find one who went considerably beyond that requirement. Robert Davis today serves as de facto mayor of the town built on his land, Seaside, Florida, now about half completed on 80 acres of Gulf beachfront on the Florida Panhandle. Seaside won Duany and Plater-Zyberk national acclaim, as well as high praise from Britain's Prince Charles, a prominent and outspoken campaigner against the dominion of sterile modernist architecture.

Some 40 town designs later—six of which are under construction—Duany and Plater-Zyberk, who are husband and wife, have developed a trademark working style. A team of well-briefed designers, planners, draftsmen, and engineers from the Miami office of their firm (DPZ, for short) descends upon the site for an intensive, nearly week-long *charrette*—literally meaning “cartload,” an apt word for their unique approach, which brings the planners and their materials directly to the site. The *charrette* begins with a tour of the surrounding area for clues to regional history, architectural styles, and living patterns, as well as for a study of the site. As the team sets to work (often on computers) there are rounds and rounds of intensive meetings with the developer, officials of local government, interested citizens, local architects, environmentalists, real-estate agents, and many others. The team divides into smaller groups that work on the plan sequentially, adding fresh ideas as they go.

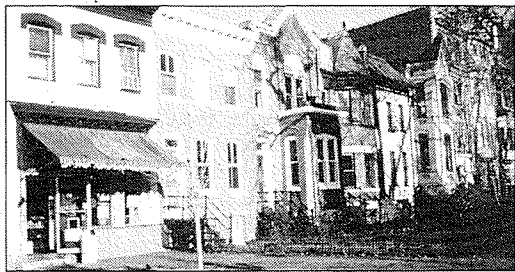
The idea is not to plan a new town down to the last detail—Duany and Plater-Zyberk rarely design houses or other structures for their towns—but to create a template from which it can grow. The secret is in the codes. If suburban sprawl is chiefly the product of ill-conceived planning, zoning, and public-works codes, Duany and Plater-Zyberk reason, then the solution is a better code. Since Seaside, they have developed a simple code and regulations governing everything from architecture to landscaping. The so-called TND (for Traditional Neighbor-

hood District ordinance) can be adapted to local conditions. During the *charrette*, the streets are carefully laid out, the lot sizes are specified, and even permissible building heights and materials are spelled out (i.e. no vinyl siding) to reflect local styles. But the design of individual houses is left to local builders and architects in order to encourage diversity.

At the end of the *charrette* (sometimes two are required), one of the pair makes a public presentation of the detailed plan and dozens of drawings. Then begins the long and often painful process of winning various official permits to build what has become a very unconventional idea—a small town.

Over the years, their creations have ranged from Tannin, on 70 acres in Alabama, to 3,050-acre Nance Canyon in California. A few years ago, in Mashpee, Massachusetts, they even helped create a new downtown core built around a “retrofitted” strip shopping center. At Kentlands, on a 352-acre tract in the Washington, D.C., suburb of Gaithersburg, Maryland, the two planners designed a new community around a group of 19th-century farm buildings but also incorporated a new 1.2-million-square-foot shopping mall. From the highway, it will look like any other suburban mall; to the town, it will present a more civic-minded face. There are to be offices and 1,600 houses for some 4,500 people, mostly built close to the street on lots that are 44 or 66 feet wide, quite narrow by suburban standards. The codes encourage construction in the prevailing local Georgian and Federal styles.

Duany and Plater-Zyberk are unusually pragmatic by the standards of their profession. They “operate best in the trenches, admonishing, cajoling, occasionally shaming those most responsible for producing the suburban landscape,” writes a sympathetic architect. Developers may be won over by their sensitivity to market forces, yet the Duany-Plater-Zyberk pitch for the small-town idea seems to appeal to something unusual in their field as well: idealism and romanticism. That partial reversal of roles may help Duany and Plater-Zyberk escape from being two more “interesting theoreticians,” the fate that has befallen many town planners before them.



Illus. 15

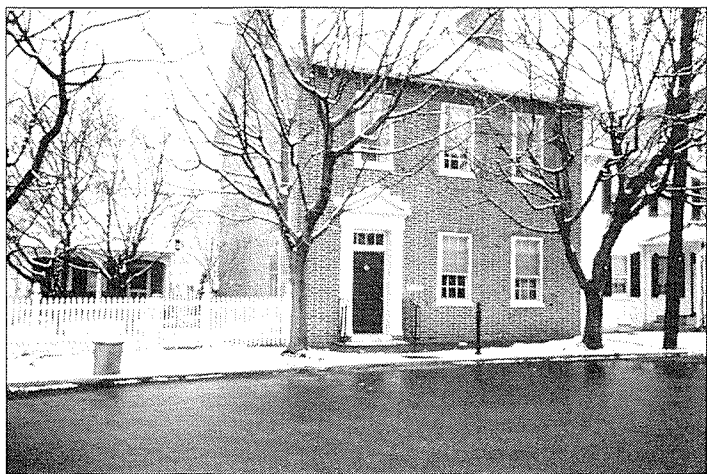
American Dream?

One of the oldest and most powerful tools for integrating affordable housing into communities is the humble outbuilding. In colonial Williamsburg (illus. 16), the house of the master sat on the front of the lot, and behind it might be a smaller house for his children and a little bit farther back the servants' quarters: all on the same piece of real estate. Residential outbuildings (illus. 17), such as backyard cottages and garage apartments, remained a standard feature of residential neighborhoods well into the 20th century.

An outbuilding is really a bedroom pulled out of the house and equipped with a small kitchen and bath. Because children grow up and leave home, America has millions of empty bedrooms. Had some of them been built as outbuildings, they would now be available for elderly relatives, nannies, students, and many others. But suburban zoning codes completely forbid occupied outbuildings. A homeowner who submits a plan for an outbuilding will find it very thoroughly scrutinized to make sure that he cannot somehow covertly slip in a kitchen and bath. Planning authorities in other countries take precisely the opposite approach. In Canada and Australia, outbuildings are called "granny flats," and government encourages homeowners to build them by offering tax breaks and even grants.

But here we ban them.

All of this economic segregation has not even allowed us to create an Eden for those who can afford the American Dream. The modern version of the American Dream is a McMansion, which may have a well-conceived and appointed interior yet almost always lacks the advantages of a neighborhood. The McMansion is both pretentious and isolated, an island in a sea of strangers and cars. Even the



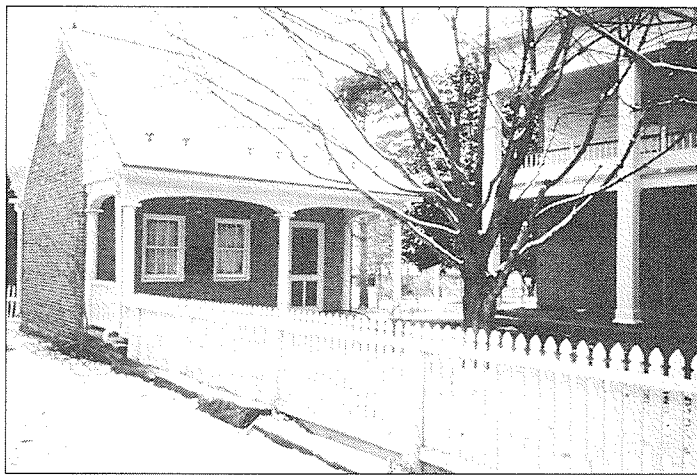
Illus. 16

much-cherished suburban yard offers no more than a cartoon version of country living, utterly lacking the privacy that it promises, in part because planners have been deprived of the tools to create it.

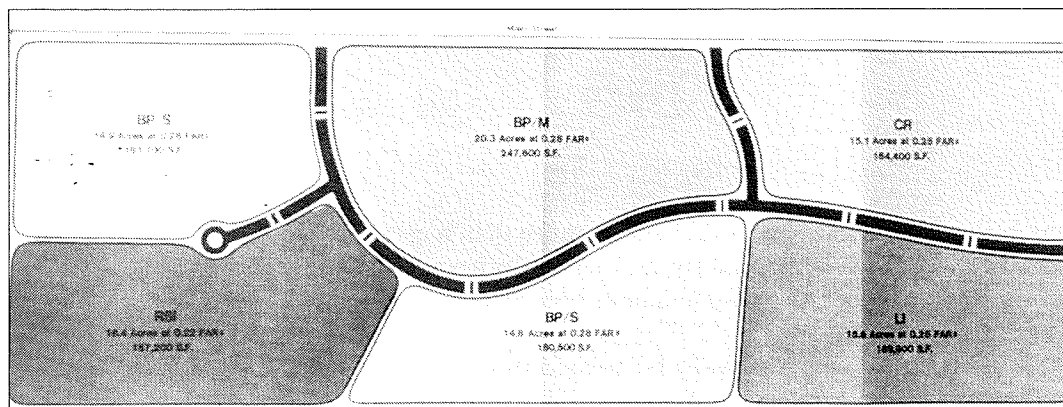
Americans do not deserve to be treated this badly. They work very hard to achieve the American Dream. Yet in other countries with more sophisticated notions of urban design, people with incomes much lower than those of most Americans enjoy a significantly higher quality of life—not the pseudo-quality of life measured in appliances and cars but quality of life understood in terms of privacy and community. There is a renewed appreciation of these values in America, but the very tools that would allow designers to help revive them have been sacrificed to suburban sprawl.

One of the great mysteries of the American suburb is this: How with such low-density development have we produced such extraordinarily high traffic? How have we achieved the traffic of a metropolis and the culture of a cow town? That, too, has been accomplished by the miraculous postwar planning device of the collector street, festooned with its variety of pods: shopping centers, office parks, schools, and residential areas, each with an independent connection to the collector. This arrangement guarantees that nobody can go to lunch, go shopping, or get to work or school without driving.

In Orlando, Florida, it has been estimated that each single-family house generates an average of 13 car trips a day and thus vast amounts of pollution. Enormous concern about air pollution has prompted California authorities to ban charcoal-lighter fluid for home barbecues. But we keep driving. Still, it is not the 13 car trips a day that



Illus. 17

*Illus. 18*

congest the streets. Asphalt abounds in the suburbs. The problem is that most of it is barely used. Instead, the suburbanite who wants to get anywhere has to make a beeline for the collector. It is on the collectors that the clogging occurs. In fact, in downtown Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and other cities that still have 19th-century grid systems of streets, the best way to shave time off a trip is to get off the collector and use the sidestreets. Why? Because traffic is diffused through capillaries, rather than confined to arteries.

Compare a recent collector plan (illus. 18) to the development strategies of the 1920s, exemplified here by Coral Gables, Florida (illus. 19). In Coral Gables, the closely interspersed shadings show different uses: residential, commercial, and so on. The roadways form an extraordinary capillary system that allows residents to get around easily, even on foot if they choose. Today, Coral Gables has no traffic problems to speak of, while late-vintage developments to the west of Miami, such as Kendall, are so choked with traffic that real-estate values were dropping even before the current recession. And the extraordinary thing is that the traffic from Kendall must flow through Coral Gables to get to downtown Miami.

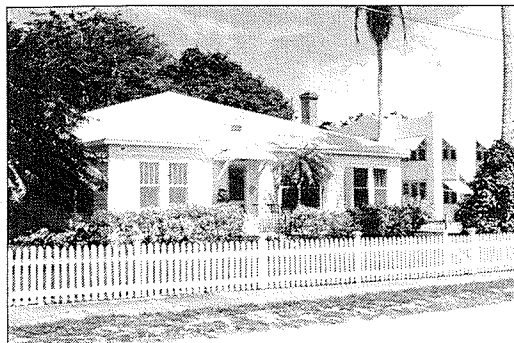
Although some are beginning to alter their views (and their computer software), many traffic engineers refuse to believe that the old street-grid model works better.* When they feed data on grid networks into their computers, the results almost always predict overloading at the intersections. In reality, the intersections are not congested at all.

An intelligently designed street system is only the first step in the creation of a workable town. The next is to figure out

*Two engineers, Chester Chellman of Ossipee, New Hampshire, and Walter Kulach of Orlando, Florida, are completing studies of traditional towns that demonstrate the superiority of networks. And the Institute of Traffic Engineers is soon to issue a supplementary manual on designing streets for traditional neighborhoods.

The image displays a grid of 20 small, square, black-and-white photographs arranged in two horizontal rows of ten. The top row features several images with numerical labels: '1' through '10' are visible, along with 'CIRCLE' and 'MIRACLE'. The bottom row also contains numbered images ('1' through '10') and includes the label 'ALHAMBRA'. The photographs depict architectural elements, possibly windows or building facades, under varying conditions. The entire set of images has a grainy, high-contrast appearance characteristic of older film photography or low-quality digital reproduction.

WQ WINTER 1992



Illus. 20



Illus. 21

going to the stores on the other side. Design decisions are just that delicate.

Designers need to gain the same kind of insight into the design of housing in order to encourage pedestrian traffic on the streets. We believe that houses like this (illus. 20) generate pedestrian traffic. They do so because they project the human presence *within* the house to those passing on the street. There is, after all, nothing more interesting to humans than other humans. While suburban developments often have a variety of pleasant features (illus. 21)—attractive landscaping, tidiness, compatible colors—they still fail miserably at the vital task of being interesting. The reason, in this case, is that the only information these two houses put forth to passersby is that cars live there. That may give passing cars a nice feeling, but it does not do much for people. It does not encourage them to get out and walk.

At bottom, this is a problem of urban design: When housing achieves a certain density but parking remains a necessity, the car's house (the garage) overwhelms the human's house. No architect is skillful enough to make human life project itself on the facade of a house when 60 percent of it is given over to garage doors. Without them, even a mediocre architect can create a satisfactory design.

The way to banish the garage from the facade is to create an alley behind the house. This humble invention of the 19th century (illus. 22) has completely disappeared from the lexicon of planning codes. (We once designed alleys in a Florida project but had to label them jogging "tracts" to get them accepted.) Alleys also yield an important fringe benefit: They allow residents to take their trash off the street. The decline of the alley was completed when the plastic bag was invented. Once Americans no longer had to worry about the stink of garbage, they could put it in front of their homes, which has

greatly contributed to the decay of urbanism.

Alleys address another problem: where to put the “services,” the gas, electric, water, sewer, and telephone lines. Merely sinking such things underground in the street in front of the house does not solve the problem, in part because utility companies require easements that are two to 10 feet wide. Add that requirement to others—traffic lanes, sidewalks, planters for trees—and the streets become so wide that they destroy the feeling of neighborhood intimacy.

At stake in the design of streets, alleys, and other facets of the suburb, some writers say, is something they call “sense of place.” Planners are in hot pursuit of this elusive commodity, yet they seldom manage to achieve it. They seem to think that sense of place can be created by a combination of decorative landscaping, exciting architecture, varied pavement textures, elegant street lights, and colorful banners. We think that achieving a “sense of place” is a much simpler matter, better thought of in terms of sense of *space*. The designer’s chief task is the making of space that draws people out from their private realms to stroll and loiter with their neighbors: public space.

The ubiquitous “California-style” townhouse development (illus. 23) is a classic case of the search for sense of place gone awry. The architect wiggles the units back and forth as much as the budget will allow to individualize each one, but the result is that each unit becomes an object. They do not form a wall, and without a wall no space can be defined or demarcated. Here there is no public space; there is only a parking lot. And it should not be surprising that people flee such spaces for their homes as soon as they park their cars.



Illus. 22



Illus. 23

Long ago in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, the same elements—townhouse, asphalt, cars—were put together in a much more sensible fashion (illus. 24). The buildings were lined up to form a wall, which defines the street as space. Each unit is distinguished by slightly varying the heights—a far more economical form of articulation. This is very simple, yet it is very rare in suburbia.

The superiority of the Alexandria model is not purely theoretical; the market shows that people are willing to pay several times as much to live in Old Town Alexandria as they are to live in a modern townhouse in a typical development, several times as much for termite-ridden beams and parking that on a good day is two blocks away. That shows how strong is the human appetite for sense of space. Any architect or planner who does not deliver such good public spaces, easy as they are to create, is not only

doing our society a grievous disservice. He is doing the developer he works for a financial disservice.



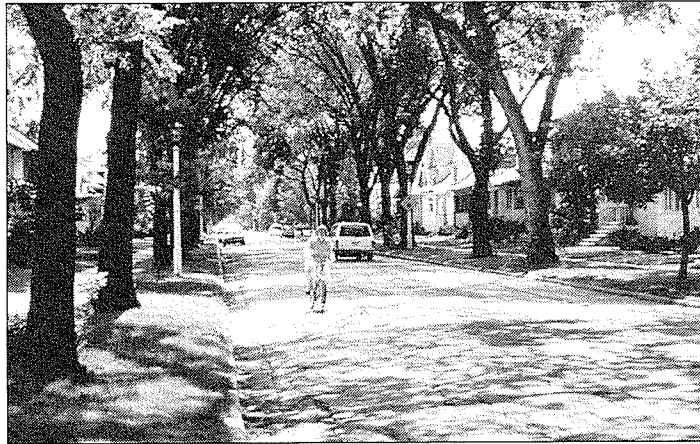
Illus. 24

Aligning buildings will not by itself yield sense of space. It is also important to maintain a certain ratio of height-to-width. From classic texts and our own direct studies of places that seem to possess this ineffable quality, we have derived a good operational rule for creating sense of space: For every foot of vertical space,

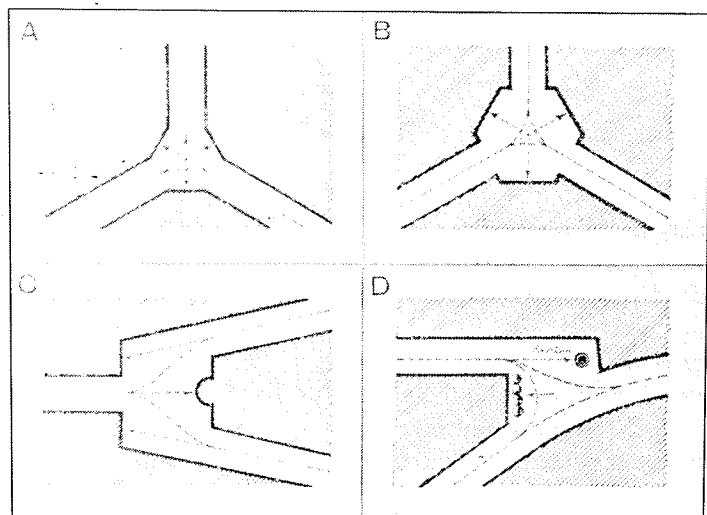
there ought to be no more than six feet of horizontal space. In other words, the street width as measured from building front to building front should not exceed six times the height of the buildings.

One reason a sense of space is so rarely achieved in this country is that Americans like their houses low and their front yards deep—a formula for exceeding the ratio. But even this can be mitigated, as it is in many older suburbs, by the use of trees to humanize the height-to-width ratio. The woman riding her bicycle in this picture (illus. 25) is having a more pleasant day because somebody long ago had the good sense to plant rows of trees. That underscores the fact that in the suburbs, landscaping is not just a form of decoration; it is a social necessity. In traditional town planning, landscape architects first correct the spatial problems created by the planners and architects and only then make pretty scenes. Yet today most of them would rather die than line up trees in a row. It is considered uncreative. They would rather design beautiful naturalistic clusters, hoping to foster the illusion that a forest had somehow sprouted in the middle of the city.

Another obstacle to a sense of space is the curvilinear street, perhaps the most common feature of the suburban subdivision. On a perfectly flat piece of land, the roads twist madly, as if they were hugging the side of a mountain. Streets ought to be laid out largely in straight segments, as they were until the 1940s. After all, the vast majority of our successful towns and cities, from Cambridge to Portland, were laid out this way. Yet we have twice been summarily fired by developers when we submitted plans that included grids. Upon reflection, we realized that the developers had a valid concern, one related to the shopping-center developers' understanding that



Illus. 25



Illus. 26

human beings do not like endless vistas. People do not like to look down a street without being able to focus on its end.

The curvilinear street seems a natural solution, since it constantly closes the vista. But it has unfortunate side-effects. A landscape of curvilinear streets is disorienting (which is why the vis-

itor to the suburbs constantly has the feeling of being lost). Curvilinear streets also prevent the eye from focusing on anything for longer than a fraction of a second. And since the human eye needs at least two or three seconds to perceive architectural gestures—the memorable pediment or facade, the steeple—architects do not bother to provide them. Without such landmarks, the neighborhood becomes a featureless mass of buildings.

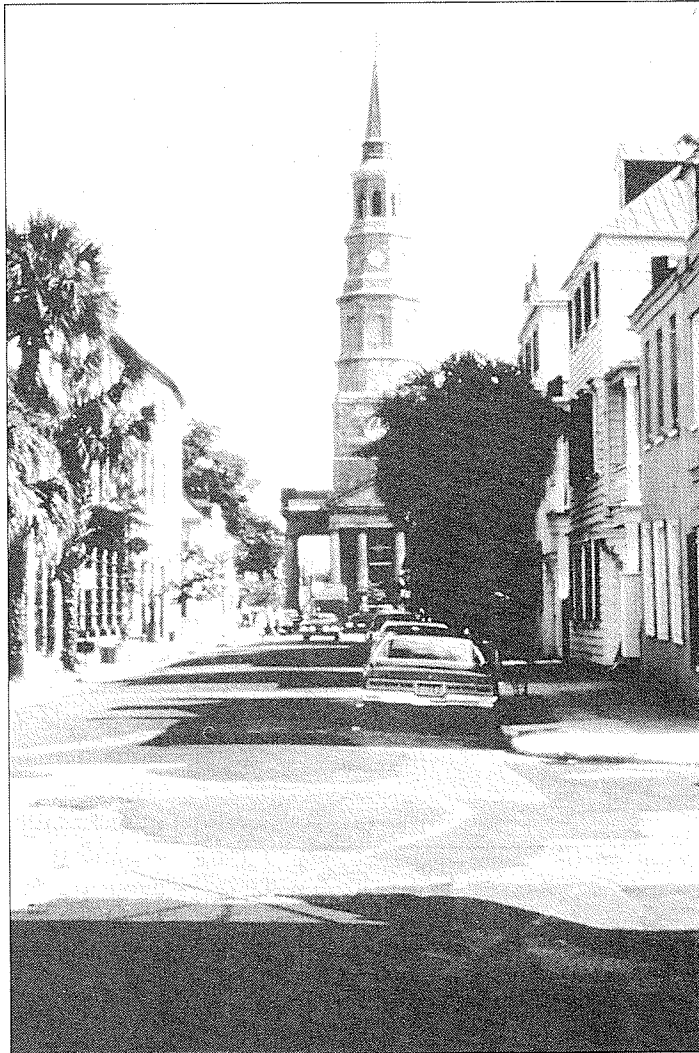
Again, it requires no great creative gift to discover alternatives that work with grids. One notable town-planning manual published in 1909, Raymond Unwin's *Town Planning in Practice*, contains page after page of illustrations showing the many ways that intersections can be cleverly used to terminate vistas (illus. 26). In the memorable American cities, such as Charleston, South Carolina (illus. 27), our ancestors even used intersections as sites for churches, civic buildings, and other special structures, and these are the very sites that have become famous and that draw tourists from all over. Today, it would be impossible to build such intersections, because they have been outlawed as threats to public safety at the behest of the traffic engineers.

In fact, it is often the odd intersections that produce the fewest accidents. When we drew up a master plan for Stuart, Florida, the authorities immediately proposed straightening out the town's "confusion corner," an intersection so tangled that a picture of it graces a postcard. But our research showed that "confusion corner" ranked only 20th for traffic accidents in Stuart. The 19 more dangerous intersections were built to

contemporary engineering standards. In Washington, D.C., according to one local architect, 11 of the 12 most dangerous intersections conformed to such modern standards. It is not hard to guess the explanation. A driver on the enormous streets that are now mandatory is more likely to be bored and inattentive (and possibly speeding) than is a driver on a "dangerous" older street.

Grids, intersections, and other devices are important, but other details must be attended to in order to bring people out into the civic realm. One of the most important is the curb radius at intersections. At the now standard 25–40 feet (illus. 28), the curb radius allows the driver of a car travelling 35 miles per hour to negotiate the corner without having to slow down much. That poses an intimidating challenge for a pedestrian attempting to cross the street. Moreover, the gentle curve of the sidewalk, so kind to the car, nearly doubles the pedestrian's crossing distance. A 24-foot-wide road widens to 40 feet where pedestrians cross. Priority has been given to the car, not the pedestrian.

Pedestrians count in places like Boca Raton, where a typical curb radius is eight feet (illus. 29). In Boston, radii of eight or six or even three feet are very common. A typical traffic



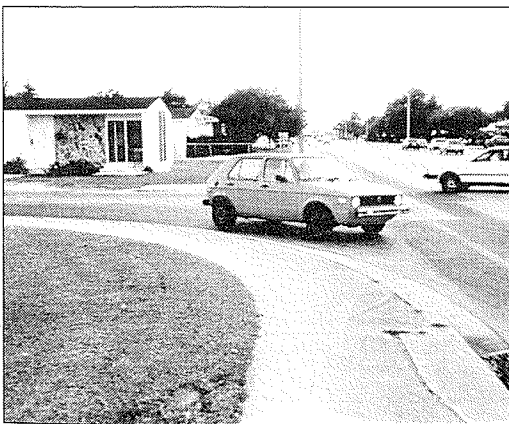
Illus. 27

engineer will swear that such a thing is no longer possible, that it will cause accidents. But it does not.

Common sense has evaporated from the traffic-engineering profession, and the huge costs of its absence are measured in economic as well as aesthetic terms. In America, thanks to the traffic engineers, we push highways right through the middle of cities, as this cover of Florida's Department of Transportation annual report proudly demonstrates (illus. 30). By giving a little four-lane road in Orlando the characteristics of a highway, the state turned it into a monster. Highways destroy cities. When it enters a town or city, a highway should become a boulevard. A typical French boulevard (illus. 31) actually has more lanes than the Orlando highway (this one has 12), but an entirely different effect. The elements and engineering "geometries" of the boulevard are completely different. Buildings and trees line the boulevard and cars park along its length, inviting pedestrians to stroll along its sidewalks.

American taxpayers would be astounded if they realized the true costs of their highways, costs that far exceed the price of construction. Avenues help pay for themselves by enhancing the value of buildings in the vicinity and thus enlarging the tax base. But highways destroy market value and shrink the tax base, forcing local authorities to raise tax rates. Their hidden costs probably run into billions of dollars.

In the United States, we invest too much in "horizontal infrastructure" and not enough in "vertical infrastructure," too much in asphalt on the ground for cars and not enough in buildings for people. Our planning codes and regulations demand a gold-plated asphalt infrastructure, leaving little money for the human infrastructure. The unhappy results are all around us. Some of us have become quite accustomed, for example, to sending our children to schools that are nothing more than trailer parks with fences around them. But the highways are built to ever higher standards; they are wider, the curbs are softer, the concrete more elaborate. Everything gets better for the cars; we do not



Illus. 28

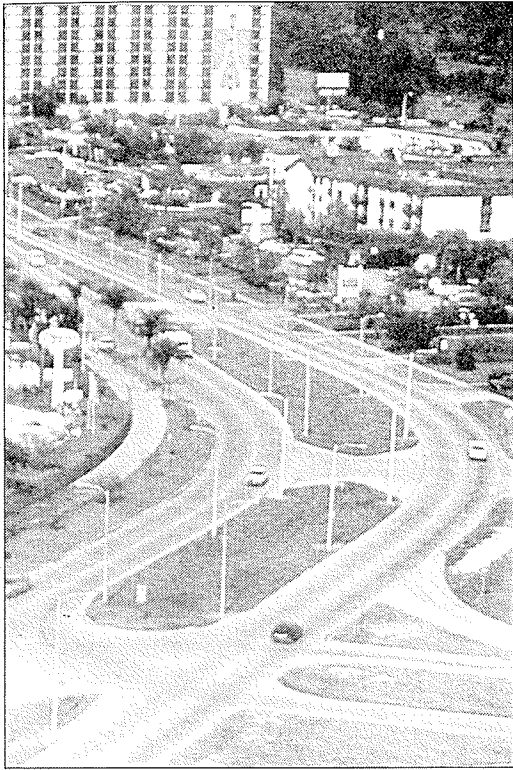
*Illus. 29*

dream of denying our automobiles anything.

Building more highways to reduce traffic congestion is an exercise in futility. Whenever it is done, more people are encouraged to take to their cars, and before long the roads are as clogged as ever. We cannot continue to spend as extravagantly on roads as we did during the postwar decades of affluence. We must revert to planning approaches from the days when America was a poorer but smarter nation. The only permanent solution to the traffic problem is to bring housing, shopping, and workplaces into closer proximity.

Reining in the auto would also help solve the problem of affordable housing. At MIT, architects are going to great lengths to find ways to make housing cheaper, developing prefabricated components, spacing wall studs further apart, and using rubber hoses for plumbing. In the end, all of these efforts do not add up to very much—perhaps a \$10,000 or \$20,000 savings. Nothing can be done that rivals making it possible for a family to get by with one less car. That extra car, so necessary in today's suburb, costs about \$5,000 *annually* to operate. That is a highly leveraged sum, large enough to supply the payments on a \$50,000 mortgage at 10 percent interest.

The tyranny of the auto reaches into every corner of American life. Why is the U.S. Postal Service perennially bankrupt?



Illus. 30

One reason surely is that it has to deliver mail all over the continent in broken down jeeps. The auto's worst victims, however, are the very young and the very old. Every year, hundreds of thousands of people move to Florida and many thousands move out. Many of those emigrants are people who moved to Florida to retire but found after a few good years that they had to go elsewhere. The suburb, they discovered, is poorly suited to the elderly. A suburbanite who loses his or her driver's license—perhaps because of failing eyesight—ceases to be a viable citizen. That person cannot go shopping, visit friends, or get to the doctor's office. He cannot take care of himself. In a town, he can. He may be too old to drive, but he is not too old to walk. Unfortunately, only a few senior citizens are wealthy enough to

afford to live in the rare towns that exist—some of these have been dubbed Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities, or NORCs, by demographers. For the less-fortunate majority, nursing homes are frequently the only alternative.

Children are the other great victims of the suburbs. Families move to the suburbs precisely because they are supposed to be "good for the kids." And the fresh air and open spaces are good for them. Suburban sprawl is not. Children in the postwar suburbs are kept in an unnaturally extended state of isolation and dependence because they live in places designed for cars rather than people.

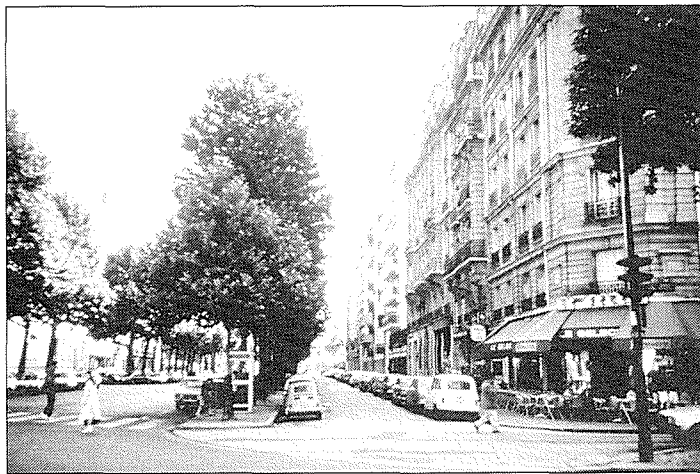
The school is the social center of the child's life, but the routine of the typical suburban school is governed by the school bus. The children are bused in at eight o'clock in the morning and most of them are bused home at three o'clock, regardless of what they are doing, warehoused in front of television sets until their parents come home from work. If the parents do not want their children to lead that kind of life, one of them (almost always the mother) has to stay home to take care of them. And that often amounts to little more than exchanging a career for a new job as an unpaid chauffeur. Imag-

ine how the lives of children would change if the suburban house and yard were assembled in the form of a traditional neighborhood so that kids could visit friends, go out for a hamburger, or walk to a library on their own.

All of us suffer. The eight-hour workday was the great victory of the past century, but we have squandered our gains by expanding our commuting time. Instead of spending two more hours a day with our families and friends, or forging bonds of community over the backyard fence or at the town hall, we have chosen to spend them competing with our fellow citizens for that scarce commodity called asphalt. That is yet another example of how the public realm has been transformed into an arena of hostility and competition.

Americans are ready for the return of the town. The signs of a revival of interest in community on a smaller scale are everywhere. In major cities, policemen are deserting their patrol cars and walking the sidewalks, not just responding to crises but actually getting to know the people on their beats. The experts have dressed this up by calling it "community policing." New York City is studying the possibility of decentralizing its courthouse system, creating 75 precinct courthouses so that the legal system is brought closer to all citizens. Corporations are moving to small towns; Los Angeles yuppies by the thousands are leaving the city's sprawl for the more traditional neighborhoods of Portland and Seattle.

Developers are starting to catch on to this reality. During the 1960s, most of their advertising appealed to snobbism; during the '70s it emphasized security; now "community" sells. The marketing experts at Arvida, the largest and probably the most sophisticated developer in Florida, have promoted one of their new developments, Weston, by calling it a "hometown" and



Illus. 31

advertising various "lifestyle attractions." But developers are cautious because Americans seem to have been so happy buying houses strewn amid suburban sprawl. Arvida, like other developers that have taken this tack, did not actually build a town. Weston is much the same as any other suburban planned community, with the usual shopping and housing pods connected to collector streets.

Building real towns will require changing master plans, codes, and road-building standards, and, above all, attitudes. The mindless administration of rules enshrining the unwisdom of the past half century must cease; the reign of the traffic engineers must end. Americans need to be reacquainted with their small-town heritage and to be persuaded of the importance of protecting the human habitat every bit as rigorously as the natural habitat. Architects and planners and developers can be leaders and educators, but ordinary citizens will have to insist that the happiness of people finally takes precedence over the happiness of cars, that the health of communities takes precedence over the unimpeded flow of traffic. As the great architect Louis Sullivan wrote in 1906:

If you seek to express the best that is in yourself, you must search out the best that is in your people, for they are your problem, and you are indissolubly a part of them. It is for you to affirm that which they really wish to affirm. Namely the best that is in them. If the people seem to have but little faith, it is because they have been tricked so long. They are weary of dishonesty, more weary than they know, much more weary than you know. The American people are now in a stupor. Be on hand at the awakening.

These were hopeful words in 1906. Nearly a century later, they are urgent.

BACKGROUND BOOKS

THE SECOND COMING OF THE AMERICAN SMALL TOWN

City and town planning is not a profession that many parents would encourage their children to enter. Especially since the disillusionments of the 1960s, the profession has fallen into popular and intellectual disfavor. One recent history, Diane Ghirardo's **Building New Communities: New Deal America and Fascist Italy** (Princeton, 1989), even suggests that the intentions of New Deal town builders were little different from those of their fascist counterparts.

In **Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century** (Basil Blackwell, 1988), Berkeley's Peter Hall offers a more generous yet still discouraging summary of the influence of the great modern planners, from Ebenezer Howard in the last century to Clarence Stein in this one:

Most of them were visionaries, but [many of] their visions long lay fallow, because the time was not ripe. The visions themselves were often utopian, even millenarian: they resembled nothing so much as secular versions of the 17th-century Puritans' Celestial City set on Mount Zion When at last the visions were discovered and resuscitated, their implementation came often in very different places, in very different circumstances, and often through very different mechanisms, from those their inventors had originally envisaged It is small wonder that the results were often bizarre, sometimes catastrophic.

Today, town planning seems positively un-American to many, even though history shows that Americans have had long experience with it. That history is explored in **Town Planning in Frontier America** (1965, reissued by Univ. of Mo., 1980) by John Reys, a Cornell architect. George Washington, after all, helped survey the grid street system of Alexandria, Virginia, in 1749 and was the prime mover behind the new national capital. Washington, D.C., designed by Pierre L'Enfant, was unusual in that it departed in various ways from the utilitarian grid that

was to prevail through much of American history. One 19th-century European writer, though finding much to commend in the "perfect regularity" of the ubiquitous grid, nevertheless concluded that the Americans had made a fetish of it, sacrificing "beauty to prejudice."

The grid, like virtually all other design ideas of the time, was a purely European import. The first major American contribution to city design came with the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Architects Daniel Burnham and Charles F. McKim and landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted married Beaux Arts architecture to the monumental design principles of Georges-Eugène Haussmann, who had laid out the grand boulevards of Paris in the mid-19th century. Their design expressed in its sweeping power America's arrival on the world stage—America's imperialism, many critics would say—yet also made a grab for Old World respectability through the architectural classicism of its civic buildings. The episode is recalled by Mario Manieri-Elia in **The American City: From the Civil War to the New Deal** (MIT, 1979).

The Exposition gave birth to the City Beautiful movement, which stressed the creation of boulevards, public spaces, and civic buildings. Burnham, propelled to national prominence by the success of the Exposition, chaired a federal commission in 1901 that oversaw the restoration of L'Enfant's plan for Washington. Grand schemes for the revamping of Chicago and San Francisco followed, but little came of them, thanks in part to the sense of financial reality bred by the panic of 1907. The movement also had more profound difficulties. The City Beautiful was a place of *public* spaces; it could accommodate neither the automobile nor the skyscrapers made possible by, among other things, the invention of the elevator. Still, the movement left a legacy of parks and regal civic structures.

Even these were not always appreciated. In **Sticks and Stones** (1924), Lewis Mumford at-

tacked the whole movement, contrasting the "sedulously classic" new Lincoln Memorial of Burnham's Washington with "the America that Lincoln was bred in, the homespun and humane and humorous America that he wished to preserve."

Mumford represents a more powerful current of thought in American planning, one that traces its origins to England's Ebenezer Howard. Reacting to the squalor of the industrial cities, Howard sketched in **Garden Cities of Tomorrow** (1902) a compelling vision of self-sufficient new towns scattered across the countryside. His Garden City Association sponsored the construction of the first Garden City in Letchworth, England, and spread his ideas to the Continent and across the Atlantic. (One of Letchworth's designers was Raymond Unwin, whose 1909 book, **Town Planning in Practice**, is now enjoying a revival.)

In the United States, writes Jonathan Barnett in **The Elusive City: Five Centuries of Design, Ambition and Miscalculation** (Harper, 1986), the Garden City idea influenced a number of planners, including Clarence Stein and Henry Wright. American versions of the Garden City include Lake Forest, Illinois (1916) and a number of company towns, such as Kohler, Wisconsin (1913). Among the innovations of the era was the curving "bucolic" street. Stein later wrote in **Toward New Towns for America** (1957) that the planner must think of himself as creating "a theater for the good life." The most ambitious efforts to fulfill the Garden City ideal were in Radburn, New Jersey, which foundered during the Great Depression, and in the town-building program of the New Deal's Resettlement Administration, which was killed by Congress.

All of these Garden Cities failed in many ways to live up to the ideal—none remained self-sufficient, for example—and for many reasons. But the coming of the auto must top any list of explanations.

Because they promoted the idea of decentralization, the Garden City advocates are often blamed for paving the way for the dominion of

the auto and the creation of suburban sprawl. In **The Death and Life of Great American Cities** (1961), Jane Jacobs lumped them together with the imperious modernists inspired by the Swiss-born architect Le Corbusier, who championed a Radiant City of monumental towers strung along superhighways. But historians tell somewhat different stories.

In **Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States** (Oxford, 1985), widely regarded as the definitive work on its subject, Kenneth T. Jackson argues that the flight to suburbia began before there was any thought of a Garden City. (Brooklyn Heights, New York, linked to Manhattan by a ferry in 1814, was the first suburb, he says.) It was motivated by a peculiarly American desire among this country's rich to separate themselves from the rest of society. Robert Fishman takes issue with Jackson in **Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia** (Basic, 1987), arguing that the exodus began somewhat later, inspired by Victorian ideas about home and family that made it seem imperative to flee urban vices.

In any event, there is general agreement that the suburban future was not sealed until after World War II, when the federal government built the interstate highway system and provided low-interest mortgages for new homes but nothing for the renovation of city dwellings.

Where are we now, nearly half a century later? Beyond central cities, beyond suburbs, and largely beyond planning, argues Joel Garreau in **Edge City: Life on the New Frontier** (Doubleday, 1991). Along with Fishman (see "America's New City," *WQ*, Winter 1990), he believes that the suburb is being transformed into a new kind of city: unfamiliar, decentralized, and based on the auto, but a city nevertheless. The two part company over the issue of planning. Garreau regards the rebirth of planning as unlikely; Fishman sees it as essential. But they are united in their optimism about the possibilities of the new frontier that lies before us.

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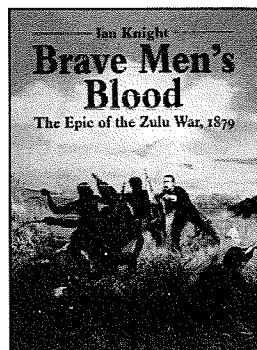
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AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND THE AMERICAN CREED

Despite the great civil-rights triumphs of the 1960s, the politics of race once again occupies center stage in American life. Yet what appears to be a conflict between blacks and whites, Seymour Martin Lipset argues, is more a struggle between the American public and the nation's political elite over the true meaning of equality.

by Seymour Martin Lipset

No achievement of 20th-century American politics surpasses the creation of an enduring national consensus on civil rights. This consensus was forged during the past quarter century by a civil-rights movement that compelled Americans finally to confront the wide gap between their treatment of blacks and the egalitarian values of their own cherished national creed.

In recent years, however, the leaders of the civil-rights movement have shifted the focus from the pursuit of equal opportunity to the pursuit of substantive equality through policies of preferential treatment. This has brought matters to a difficult pass, because most Americans, including many blacks, have not shifted with the leaders of the movement. The reason is not hard to find. While the civil-rights movement of the 1960s asked Americans to live up to a single unassailable ideal, today it sets up a conflict between two core American values: egalitarianism and individualism.

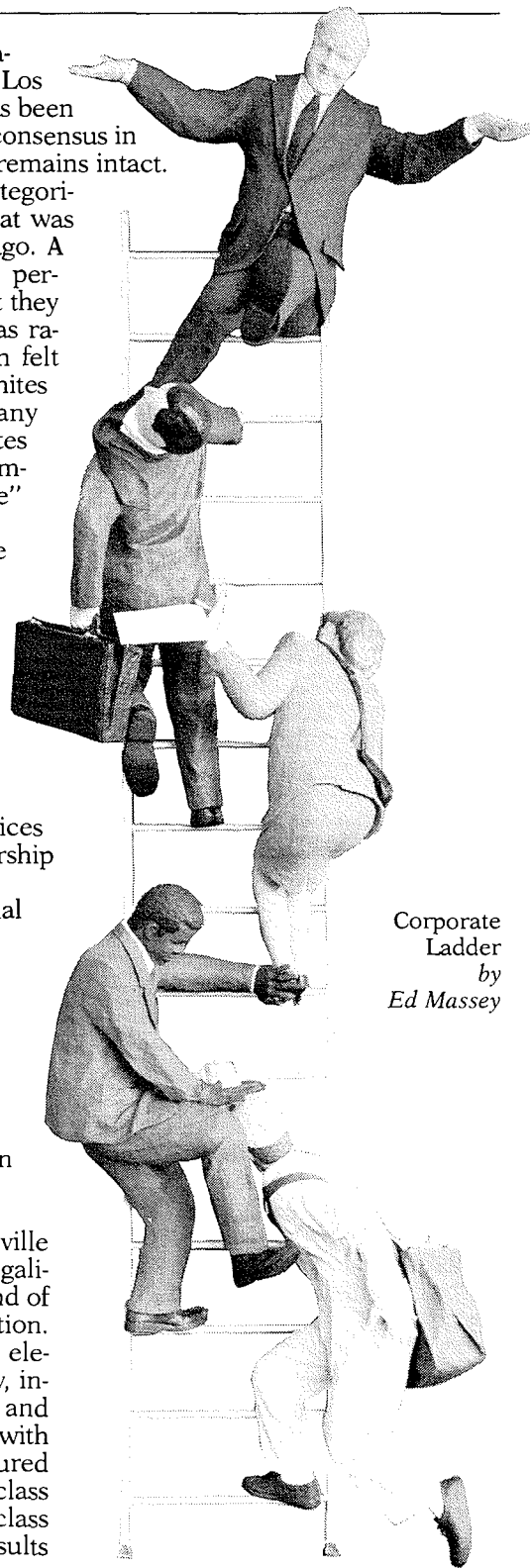
Affirmative action was born in 1965 in the spirit of the first civil-rights revolution. Soon thereafter it was transformed into a system of racial preferences, and today affirmative action is rapidly polarizing the politics of race in America. The editorial and op-ed pages bristle with affirmative action polemics and analyses. In the 1990 contest for the governorship of California, Republican Pete Wilson focused on the "quota" issue in defeating Diane Feinstein. In the same year, Senator Jesse Helms won reelection in North Carolina with the help of the quota issue, and in Louisiana ex-Klansman David Duke exploited it to gain a majority of white votes while losing his bid for a Senate seat. His failed campaign for the governorship last fall became a national drama. When Congress began its 1991 session, the first bill introduced by the Democratic leadership in the House of Representatives was a civil-rights bill described by its opponents as "quota" legislation. Even after a version of that bill became law in November, controversy over its meaning and import continued.

Ugly political campaigns and even uglier racial incidents everywhere from Bensonhurst to Los Angeles sometimes make it appear that there has been a resurgence of racism in America. But the old consensus in favor of civil rights and equality of opportunity remains intact. Americans, including many southern whites, categorically reject the kind of racial discrimination that was common in this country only a few decades ago. A 1991 Gallup-*Newsweek* poll reported that "72 percent of blacks and 52 percent of whites said that they would prefer to live in a neighborhood that was racially 'half and half'—more on both sides than felt that way three years ago." Over two-thirds of whites and four-fifths of blacks claim to "know many members of another race well." Almost no whites (six percent) report that they would feel "uncomfortable working with members of another race" or "for a boss of another race."

At the same time, most Americans endorse some forms of compensatory action to help blacks and other disadvantaged groups perform at the levels of competition set by the larger society: Head Start and other special educational programs, federal aid for college students, job training, and community development. But a large majority of whites and roughly half of all blacks draw the line at preferential treatment, at suspending standards and adopting quotas or other devices that favor citizens on the basis of their membership in groups.

If most Americans oppose such preferential treatment, who backs it? As it turns out, the support comes largely from a segment of the national leadership class. Indeed, the policy was conceived and is still promoted almost entirely by political and social elites, Republicans as well as Democrats, against the wishes of a majority of the American public. The struggle over preferential treatment is in reality less a conflict between whites and blacks than between people and their leaders.

More than 150 years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that the American version of egalitarianism emphasized equality of opportunity and of respect, rather than equality of result or condition. This version of equality is one of five related elements in the American Creed, including liberty, individualism, populism (the rule of the people), and laissez faire. In the Europe of Tocqueville's day, with its heritage of feudalism, societies were structured in strict social classes. The emerging working class of 19th-century Europe therefore viewed the class system as immutable and sought equality of results



Corporate
Ladder
by
Ed Massey

as a group, through socialism. But in America—or at least in *white* America—the purest bourgeois and classically liberal society in the world, class has been treated as an economic construct, and the solution to inequality has been seen as economic opportunity:

During the late 1820s, when the first stirrings of socialism were barely being felt in Europe, Workingmen's parties emerged in New York, Philadelphia, and other American cities. But the Workingmen were not socialists; they believed in private property and wanted people to strive to get ahead. The New York party rejected as inadequate the idea of common (i.e. public) schools then favored by many egalitarian reformers, proposing instead the creation of state-financed boarding schools. The only way to create the proverbial level playing field, the Workingmen reasoned, was by raising the young of all classes in a common atmosphere 24 hours a day.

The American emphasis on individualism was reinforced early on by the country's religious commitment to the "nonconformist" Protestant sects that stress voluntarism with respect to the state and a personal relationship to God, one not mediated by hierarchically organized churches, as in Europe and elsewhere. The American embrace of liberalism and the market also favored a different approach to equality. The market calls for meritocracy and the rejection of nepotism and other forms of favoritism. Hiring the best qualified person, whether he or she be black or white, Jewish or Gentile, native or foreign born, is the best way to maximize economic return.

The implications of the differences between Europe and America were concisely put by political scientist Walter Dean Burnham: "No feudalism, no socialism: With these four words one can summarize the basic sociocultural realities that underlie American electoral politics in the industrial era."

But another reality, too, is undeniable: Blacks represent the terrible exception to

the common American experience. They spent their first two-and-a-half centuries in this country as slaves and another 100 years after the Civil War serving as a strictly segregated lower-caste group—social arrangements that were, in both cases, much more explicitly hierarchical and hereditary than anything in European feudalism. White America's treatment of blacks focused on group characteristics, on defining and treating people not according to their personal merits but according to their ancestry, their race, and their ethnic identification.

Stressing group characteristics encourages group solutions. In Europe, the importance of one's station promoted class consciousness among the lower strata and, to some extent, a sense of *noblesse oblige* among the privileged. Both the lower-class-based social democratic Left and upper-class conservative leaders, such as Disraeli in Great Britain and Bismarck in Germany, favored government efforts to improve the lot of the less affluent without necessarily changing their position in the social order: welfare, public housing, public employment, state medical care. Europe's social democrats have frequently held power since the 1930s, and they have done much to improve the lives of workers. But in most countries they have neither dismantled the elite high schools nor significantly expanded opportunities for working-class youths to gain a university education.

Americans, by contrast, have always put more emphasis on expanding individual opportunity through education. From early in the 19th century the United States has led the world in the proportion of its population completing elementary and high-school educations. Horace Mann and other education reformers of the 1830s and '40s who proselytized for the concept of the common school insisted that the schools should be open to all, rich and poor, children of immigrants and of natives—though not blacks. Such reformers rejected the European class-differentiated education system, scorning the German *gymnasia*, the

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French *lycées*, and the English "public" schools, which educated at most only the top 10 percent of the population.

The transatlantic differences today are most striking in higher education. As of 1987, 65 percent of all Americans 20–24 years old had been exposed to some form of postsecondary education. No West European country was close. Only 31 percent of the French and 30 percent of West Germans, for example, had any experience in a college, university, or other educational institution after high school.

The United States spends proportionately much more public money on education than does any European nation, while Europe spends more on welfare. In 1985, American educational outlays amounted to 6.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). The average figure for 17 West European countries was 5.1 percent. As of 1981 about one-fifth of the American GDP was devoted to social expenditures (including education), as compared with over one-quarter in the 24 industrialized countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

It would be hard to overstate the continuing importance of the American cultural emphasis on achievement. Most Americans believe that hard work, rather than "lucky breaks or help from other people," is what enables people to move up. Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) from 1983 through 1990 found that around two-thirds of respondents consistently agreed that "people get ahead by hard work." Eighty-eight percent said "ambition" is essential or very important "for getting ahead in life." The vast majority of Americans, including most blacks, believe that the United States is still a land of opportunity, a meritocracy in practice as well as in theory. Asked in 1988 whether they have a good chance of improving their standard of living, 71 percent of Americans told NORC that they did. By contrast, 43 percent of Italians, 36 percent of Germans and Britons, and only 23 percent of the Dutch thought so. And although Americans are already much more likely to go to college than are people in any other country, close to two-thirds (65 percent) believe that opportunities for higher education ought to be increased still further. By comparison,

only 55 percent of Britons and 31 percent of Germans feel this way.

Most white Americans now believe that the nation's success ethic applies to blacks and women as well. And while understandably ambivalent about the promise of America, most blacks are also committed to the belief that hard work and educational attainment will enable them to get ahead. A Gallup poll conducted in 1991 found that "69 percent of whites and 68 percent of blacks say that African-Americans should focus most of their energy on improving [their] education."



The black condition has challenged the nation's values from the very beginning. "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just," Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1781. If the country broke up over the question of slavery, a friend of George Washington's reported in 1791, Washington "had made up his mind to move and be of the northern." Jefferson foresaw that the promise in his ringing phrase, "all men are created equal," would have a continuing effect on American politics and would ultimately undermine slavery.

In 1944, following the logic of Jefferson's observation, Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal noted in *An American Dilemma* that white Americans, including most southerners, deeply believed in the Creed, even as they grossly violated it with "Jim Crow" and other segregationist practices. The Creed was so strong, he concluded, that if blacks were to organize to defend their rights, whites would have to yield. The political successes of the civil-rights movement in the 1960s showed Myrdal to be right. But in yielding politically, the white male political elite agreed not only to the extension of individual rights to blacks but to unprecedented group rights.

Affirmative action has had two incarnations in America, and in its first, during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, it reflected a more or less traditional American approach to the problem of inequality. Perhaps the best statement of the logic of this variety of affirmative action was offered by President Lyndon Johnson in a speech at Howard University in 1965:

You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, "you are free to compete with all the others," and still justly believe that you have been completely fair . . . Men and women of all races are born with the same range of abilities. But ability is not just the product of birth. Ability is stretched or stunted by the family that you live with, and the neighborhood you live in—by the school you go to and the poverty or the richness of your surroundings. It is the product of a hundred unseen forces playing upon the little infant, the child, and finally the man.

LBJ's solution was the War on Poverty, which included heavier spending on education through such programs as Head Start, expansion of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and a host of other initiatives. These efforts were reinforced by legislation designed to eliminate discrimination in the workplace, housing, the schools, and eventually in such areas as club memberships, which affected social relationships. The extension of full political citizenship to blacks through the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and later legislation and judicial decisions meant that blacks, like whites, could press for their legal rights as individuals in the courts and administrative tribunals.

Affirmative action underwent a major transformation—one whose consequences we are grappling with today—when national leaders became convinced that the first approach was working too slowly. Ironically, the change was made by the conservative Nixon administration. It was not a reaction to specific demands made by blacks or the American Left but seemed to represent an innovative effort by parts of the white elite to fulfill the goals of the civil-rights movement.

In October 1969, Nixon's secretary of labor, George Schultz, issued an administrative order imposing a quota for the hiring of black apprentices on federal contractors in the Philadelphia construction industry, whose employers and unions were cooperating to deny jobs to blacks. The policy was soon extended to other cities and ultimately to other fields. Looking back, Laurence Silberman, who as Schultz's solicitor had written the brief jus-

tifying the Philadelphia Plan under the Fifth Amendment's due-process clause, recalled that he and his colleagues were disturbed by the ambiguity surrounding the Johnson administration's affirmative-action order. And because they were "uncomfortable with the image the party of Abraham Lincoln had developed," Silberman, later a Reagan judicial appointee, wrote, "and most of all because the GOP was anxious to expand employment opportunities for blacks, we launched what I have come to see as a fundamentally unsound policy."

The new affirmative action was strongly opposed by Comptroller General of the United States Elmer Staats (a Johnson appointee), the national trade union leadership, and most congressional Democrats. Clarence Mitchell of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People denounced it as a "calculated attempt coming right from the President's desk to break up the coalition between Negroes and labor unions. Most of the social progress in this country has resulted from this alliance." Speaking for the administration, George Schultz criticized civil-rights leaders for not backing the quota plan.

Opponents objected that the anti-discrimination clause of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title VII, explicitly outlawed "affirmative discrimination." Staats quoted Senator Hubert Humphrey's pledge that nothing in the Act "will give any power to the [Equal Employment Opportunity] Commission or to any court to require hiring, firing, or promotion of employees in order to meet a racial 'quota' or to achieve a racial balance," and the agreement by its liberal Senate floor managers that there would be no "consideration of color . . . [in] the decision to hire or promote." In December 1969, however, Congress rejected a rider to an appropriations bill that would have explicitly banned quotas. Republicans voted against the ban, 124 to 41, while Democrats voted for it, 115 to 84. "The Democrats are token oriented—we are job oriented," Nixon said. The parties were soon to reverse roles.

Nixon and his successors, Republicans and Democrats alike, gradually extended "communal rights" to other minorities, as well as to women. Yet such gestures were hardly appreciated by the American public.

Opinion polls have repeatedly shown that overwhelming majorities of whites—both men and women—and often more than 50 percent of blacks oppose them.

Many American elites seem to feel that the individualistic emphasis of the American Creed needs to be amended. Of the many arguments for preferences during the 1960s, the most notable was made by a black scholar, Harold Cruse, in *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1967). Given the oppression of the past and continuing discrimination in the present, he argued, blacks require recognition as a unique national minority. They also merit group rights over and beyond those sought by other minorities and the non-black poor. Cruse compared the black situation to that of the Jews, arguing that although Jews had faced great discrimination, all they needed to prosper was an end to discrimination and the application of meritocratic policies to themselves. Having won that, Jewish organizations made a fetish of the American Creed, insisting that all minorities and immigrants needed only similar treatment. Black leaders came to argue that they could rightfully claim group rights, in part as reparations for 350 years of unparalleled exploitation by white society. After all, they now say, Congress has compensated Japanese-Americans for their incarceration during World War II and the West German government paid reparations to Jews and Israel.

Furthermore, long before affirmative action, Americans deviated from the meritocratic principle in the treatment of war veterans. As compensation for their service, veterans received preference in the civil-service hiring process as well as special assistance in financing higher education and home mortgages.

In many ways, of course, the United States has never been a perfect meritocracy. In the job market and other fields, people tend to favor relatives, friends, and members of their own ethnic, religious, communal, or cultural groups. And universities, though meritocratic and universalistic in their explicit values, have always favored the children of alumni and faculty, not to mention athletes, in their admissions policies. They also award special scholar-

ships and fellowships limited to applicants from particular regional, gender, ethnic, or religious backgrounds—though some of these practices are now outlawed. To a large extent, blacks have been excluded from these networks of privilege.

Women and most other minorities have required only genuine equality of opportunity, not special help, in order to make a place for themselves in American society. Indeed, the Jews, the “Confucian” Asians, and the East Indians have done better on average than old-stock white Americans with similar skills and education. Roughly 40 percent of Mexican-Americans hold white-collar or other high-level positions today, even though most of them were not born in the United States. In any case, immigrants generally have no claim on American society. Whatever handicaps they have—inadequate education, lack of skills, inexperience with the ways of the cities—are not the fault of American society.

Blacks clearly do have a claim on this society. As I wrote in 1963 in *The First New Nation*: “Perhaps the most important fact to recognize about the current situation of the American Negro is that *equality is not enough to assure his movement into the larger society.*” The question is, what will?

One of the more novel proposals is advanced by Brandeis University’s Lawrence Fuchs in *The American Kaleidoscope* (1990). He argues for a system of preferential treatment in employment that varies according to the type of job. Fuchs points out that in many, if not most, occupations employers chiefly require competence, not superior performance. Seniority rights, legislation outlawing compulsory retirement ages, and tenure for school teachers are all justified by the assumption that general competence is a sufficient qualification for employment. Thus, Fuchs contends, efforts to increase the number of minority workers among the less-skilled—“fire fighters, machinists, computer operators, and candidates for dental school”—can reasonably include numerical goals, permitting “race to be counted as one of many factors . . .” in filling jobs. But he argues that fields in which high achievement matters a great deal—scholarship, medicine, sports, airline pilots, and management—should not be subject to quotas and special preference

policies, apart from special recruitment and training efforts.

Whatever the merits of Fuchs's distinction, people who work in these less-exalted fields do not accept such disparaging estimates of their worth. Poll after poll finds that white workers see no reason that meritocratic standards and universalistic rules should not apply to them. In fact, more support (or at least acceptance) of special preferences is found among elite whites, who begin with much more economic and status security.

Mass opinion remains invariably opposed to preferential treatment for deprived groups. The Gallup Organization repeated the same question five times between 1977 and 1989:

Some people say that to make up for past discrimination, women and minorities should be given preferential treatment in getting jobs and places in college. Others say that ability, as determined by test scores, should be the main consideration. Which point of view comes close to how you feel on the subject?

In each survey, 10 or 11 percent said that minorities should be given preferential treatment, while 81, 83, or 84 percent replied that ability should be the determining factor. When the 1989 answers were broken down by the respondents' race, blacks were only somewhat more supportive of preferential treatment than whites (14 percent to 7 percent); a majority of the blacks (56 percent) favored "ability, as determined in test scores." Women, it should be noted, had the same response as men; 10 percent supported preferential treatment, and 85 percent ability.

Gallup, working for the Times Mirror Corporation, presented the issue somewhat differently in 1987 and 1990: "We should make every effort to improve the position of blacks and other minorities even if it means giving them preferential treatment." This formulation was supported more strongly. Twenty-four percent agreed in both years, while 71 to 72 percent disagreed. Blacks were more favorable than whites by 32 to 18 percent, but again it is notable that over two-thirds of the blacks rejected preferential treatment. And while over four-fifths of the Republicans surveyed

were against preferences, so were two-thirds of the Democrats. A relatively high proportion of those who identified themselves as "strong liberals," 43 percent, endorse preferential treatment, but they constituted only 10 percent of the total sample.

Last spring, a *Newsweek*-Gallup poll posed the issue in terms of persons of equal qualifications: "Do you believe that because of past discrimination against black people, qualified blacks should receive preference over equally qualified whites in such matters as getting into college or getting jobs?" Only 19 percent of whites responded positively, 72 percent said no. But preference secured a plurality of 48 percent among blacks, with 42 percent opposed.

Preferential treatment does somewhat better when it is justified as making up for specific past discrimination, when ability is not posed as an alternative, and when it is limited to blacks and applies only to employers that have actually discriminated. The *New York Times* national poll asked in May and December of 1990: "Do you believe that where there has been job discrimination against blacks in the past, preference in hiring or promotion should be given to blacks today?" Both times, roughly one-third of those polled said yes. But small majorities, 51-52 percent, rejected preferential treatment even under these conditions.

By June 1991, during the debate on the new civil-rights bill that Republicans attacked as quota legislation, support for preferences dropped to 24 percent, while opposition rose to 61 percent. One month later, a poll of blacks taken by *USA Today* to test their reaction to Clarence Thomas's nomination to the Supreme Court found that they rejected quotas. They were asked, "Thomas has said that racial hiring quotas and other race-conscious legal measures damage blacks' efforts to advance. He emphasizes self-help instead. Agree or disagree?" More blacks agreed with Thomas, 47 percent, than disagreed, 39 percent, while 14 percent replied "don't know."

Both whites and blacks, however, will support a policy described as "affirmative action" if it explicitly does not involve quotas, as an NBC News-*Wall Street Journal* poll found in July 1990. Two-thirds of whites (66 percent) and 84 percent of

blacks responded favorably to the question: "All in all, do you favor or oppose affirmative action programs in business for blacks, provided there are no rigid quotas?"



Americans make a critical distinction between compensatory action and preferential treatment. To return to Lyndon Johnson's image of the shackled runner, they are willing to do more than remove the chains. They will go along with special training programs and financial assistance, enabling the previously shackled to catch up with those who are ahead because of earlier unfair advantages. But they draw the line at predetermining the results of the competition.

In some measure, the distinction between "compensatory action" and "preferential treatment" parallels the distinction drawn between "equality of opportunity" and "equality of results." Compensatory action is probably seen as a way to enhance equality of opportunity. Because blacks have been discriminated against in the past, it is fair to give them special consideration so that they will have a better chance in the future. Preferential treatment, on the other hand, probably sounds to most whites like an effort to predetermine the outcome of the competitive process.

The heaviest support for preferential treatment seems to come from the liberal intelligentsia, the well-educated, the five to six percent of the population who have gone to graduate school, plus those who have majored in the liberal arts in college.* Support is also strong among the political elite, particularly Democrats but including many Republicans (though not many prominent officeholders). The Democrats in Congress increasingly support these policies, a change which may flow from the fact that the proportion of Democratic members who can be classified as liberal on the basis of their voting record has in-

creased steadily since the 1960s.

Democratic leaders are increasingly out of step with public opinion, and it is hurting them. The Republicans, their creation of quotas long forgotten, now vigorously emphasize meritocratic standards. Democrats are faced with a dilemma: how to respond to pressure from civil-rights groups and the intelligentsia on the one hand, and on the other, how to prevent the party's identification with quotas from alienating its traditional base of support among whites in the working class and the South. Lyndon Johnson anticipated the problem in 1965, when he said in private White House discussions about civil rights, "We have to press for them as a matter of right, but we also have to recognize that by doing so we will destroy the Democratic Party."

This is precisely what is happening. A *New York Times*-CBS News poll conducted in mid-year 1991 found that 56 percent of Americans said the Democratic Party "cares more about the needs and problems of blacks," while only 15 percent believed the Republicans do. More significant may be the finding that, when asked the same question about "the needs and problems of whites," 45 percent answered that the GOP cares more, only 19 percent said the Democrats do, and 14 percent said both parties care equally about both races.

Affirmative action is widely seen as reverse discrimination. Many less-affluent whites believe that the number of jobs available for them has declined as a result of preferences for blacks. Two studies undertaken in 1985 and 1987 by Stanley Greenberg of the Analysis Group for the Michigan Democratic Party indicate that negative reaction to affirmative action has played a major role in the defection of white male blue-collar voters from the party. "Much to the surprise and dismay of both Greenberg and his sponsors," one writer noted, "white fury over affirmative action emerged as a top voter concern in both of his reports. Democratic campaign themes such as 'fairness,' 'equity,' and 'justice' were perceived—not without justification—as code words for quotas."

National polls indicate the same concern. Two surveys, one conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research in 1986 and the other by NORC

*Universities themselves continue to press for numerical goals or special preferences, reflecting the greater strength of liberalism in academic than in other realms of American life. And not surprisingly, the most extensive application of numerical targets in higher education can be found in the humanities and "soft" social sciences, the most left-leaning disciplines.

in 1990, found large majorities of whites replying that it is "very likely" (28 percent in both) or "somewhat likely" (48 and 42 percent) "that a white person won't get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified black person gets one instead." Two-fifths of the whites in the 1986 study believed that they or someone in their family would experience job discrimination. A 1991 report on a poll sponsored by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights concludes that "civil-rights laws are seen by a substantial number of voters as creating unfair advantages, setting up rank or class privilege in the labor market."

"White Americans . . . do not see themselves as racists, or as opponents of equal opportunity and fundamental fairness," observes columnist William Raspberry. "What they oppose are efforts to provide preferential benefits for minorities . . . How could we expect them to buy a product we [blacks] have spent 400 years trying to have recalled: race-based advantages enshrined in law?"

Misperceptions have much to do with the polarization of racial politics. The best research shows, for example, that there is in reality little reverse discrimination in the competition for lower-skill jobs. Recently, Urban Institute researchers sent equally qualified whites and blacks to apply for general labor, service, retail, and clerical positions in Chicago and Washington, D.C. Whites were treated better in job interviews in 20 percent of the cases; blacks were treated better seven percent of the time. Whites were more likely to be hired. One finding is heartening: There was no discrimination in three-quarters of the interview situations. But blacks are still more likely to suffer from racism in working-class job markets than whites are to experience reverse discrimination.

If whites overestimate the extent of reverse discrimination, whites and blacks alike badly underestimate the extent of black economic progress during the past several decades. The general ignorance of black success is due in part to the reluctance of black leaders to admit it. In opinion polls during the mid-1980s, three-fifths of the black leaders told pollsters that blacks were "going backward," while two-thirds of a national black sample said they

were "making progress." (Support for the optimistic view declined somewhat in the latter years of the Reagan era. In early July 1990, an NBC News-*Wall Street Journal* poll reported that 60 percent of all blacks said that, compared to 10 years ago, blacks in America are "better off," while 29 percent said "worse off.")

The refusal of some black leaders to admit improvement is understandable. The worse things appear, and the greater the gulf seems between themselves and others, the more they can demand. Yet the repeated emphasis on how little progress has been made also helps sustain the argument that government efforts to benefit blacks simply do not work, that there are factors inherent in the black situation that prevent blacks from getting ahead. And many blacks as well as whites tend to swallow that argument. NORC found that during 1985-89, an average of 62 percent of whites and 36 percent of blacks agreed that the reason blacks on average have worse jobs, incomes, and housing than white people is that "most blacks just don't have the motivation or will power to pull themselves out of poverty." An ABC News-*Washington Post* poll in October 1989 found that 60 percent of both whites and blacks agreed with the statement: "If blacks would try harder, they could be just as well off as whites."

Such beliefs feed racist stereotypes and black self-hatred. In early January 1991, NORC released the results of a survey taken in 1990. They indicate that most whites believe that blacks are less intelligent, lazier, more violence-prone, and more inclined to prefer to stay on welfare than whites and several other ethnic groups.

The damage is compounded by the news media's relentless focus on the social pathologies of the ghettos, which creates the impression that most blacks live wretched existences. Yet social scientists estimate that the underclass, both black and white, is actually fairly small. William Julius Wilson, the social scientist most responsible for focusing attention on the question, now identifies one-sixth of the nation's 30 million blacks as ghetto poor, a term he prefers. (These are people who live in "areas of extreme poverty, that is, those in which 40 percent of the people are poor.") An Urban Institute group arrives at

a lower estimate of the underclass: two or three million people in 1980, about two-thirds of them black, one-fifth Hispanic.

Meanwhile the total proportion of blacks living in poverty—many not afflicted by the pathologies of the underclass—has declined radically. While there is a great deal of debate about the definition of poverty, census data indicate that the percentage of blacks living in poverty declined from 55 percent in 1959 to 33.5 percent in 1970. In 1990, a recession year, it was 31.9 percent.

The “invisible man” of the 1990s, to borrow Ralph Ellison’s phrase, is the successful black working- and middle-class suburbanite. Living in stable families outside traditional black areas, the new “invisible man” is removed from the experience of ghetto blacks and largely ignored by whites. The black suburban population grew by 70 percent during the 1970s, fed primarily by an exodus from central cities. During the 1980s the number of black suburbanites swelled from 5.4 million to 8.2 million. Between 1986 and 1990, 73 percent of black population growth occurred in the suburbs.

Economists James P. Smith and Finis R. Welch, analyzing the changes in the situation of blacks since World War II, concluded in 1986 that “the real story of the last forty years has been the emergence of the black middle class,” which “as a group . . . outnumbers the black poor.”

The majority of blacks have steady jobs and are either middle class or members of what may be called the yeoman regularly employed working class. They are married or in stable long-term relationships. The income of married blacks is 77 percent that of comparable whites, up from below 60 percent two decades ago. The proportion of blacks who are high school dropouts has fallen, from 31 percent in 1970 to 18 percent in 1988, while that of whites (14 percent) has not changed.

These drastic social and economic changes have led to growing differentiation within the black community. By the early 1980s, a 1989 National Academy of Sciences panel found, black men aged 25 to 34 with at least some college earned 80 to 85 percent as much as their white counterparts. At the other extreme, one-quarter of

their black peers had not even finished high school and were thus condemned to lives at the margins of society.

The two largest groups in the black class structure, the authors say, are now “a lower class dominated by female-headed families and a middle class largely composed of families headed by a husband and wife.” The problem is that most black adults live in stable family and economic situations, but most black *children* do not. They are the offspring of the large number of black women who are single mothers. The proportion of black children born in female-headed households was 23 percent in 1960, 28 percent in 1969, 45 percent in 1980, and is 62 percent today. Living in such a household frequently guarantees being poor. The poverty rate for black single-parent families with children was 56.3 percent in 1988. That for two-parent black families with children was 12.5 percent.

The popular impression is that an explosion of illegitimacy among blacks is to blame for the growing impoverishment of black children. But Christopher Jencks of Northwestern University calculates that if married black women had borne as many babies in 1987 as they did in 1960, the proportion of black babies born out of wedlock would have risen only from 23 percent to 29 percent during those years. The proportion is much higher because married blacks now have fewer children.

Whatever the causes of childhood poverty, affirmative action is no remedy. Preference policies or quotas are not much help to the illegitimate black ghetto youth who grows up in poverty and receives an inferior education. As William Julius Wilson writes, they are more likely to benefit “minority individuals from the most advantaged families . . . [who are] most qualified for preferred positions—such as higher-paying jobs, college admissions, promotions and so forth. Accordingly, if policies of preferential treatment for such positions are conceived not in terms of the actual disadvantages suffered by individuals but rather in terms of race or ethnic group membership, then these policies will further enhance the opportunities of the more advantaged without addressing the problems of the truly disadvantaged.”

The conflict between different versions

of equality, between an emphasis on the individual and on the group, will continue here and abroad. Societies long organized along group lines of caste or language—India, Pakistan, and Canada—have deeply entrenched group-quota systems that are unlikely to change much. But the failure of different varieties of socialism and the growing acceptance of the market as the source of economic growth, not only in Europe but in Latin America and Africa as well, suggests that much of the world will see a new emphasis on competitive meritocracy and individualism.

Civil-rights leaders, liberals, and Democrats are swimming against a strong tide. At home, white opinion and, as we have seen, even much black sentiment are against them. Shelby Steele, a black writer once active in Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition, concludes that "affirmative action has shown itself to be more bad than good and that blacks . . . now stand to lose more from it than they gain." He rejects it because it leaps "over the hard business of developing a formerly oppressed people to the point where they can achieve proportionate representation on their own . . ." He fears that affirmative-action quotas undermine black morale, contributing to "an enlargement of self-doubt" by raising the implication that successful blacks have not earned their positions. More than a century ago, in 1871, the celebrated black abolitionist Frederick Douglass made some of the same points. He ridiculed the idea of racial quotas as "absurd as a matter of practice," noting that it implied blacks "should constitute one-eighth of the poets, statesmen, scholars, authors and philosophers." Douglass emphasized that "natural equality is a very different thing from practical equality; and . . . though men may be potentially equal, circumstances may for a time cause the most striking inequalities." On another occasion, in opposing "special efforts" for black freedmen, Douglass argued that they might "serve to keep up the very prejudices, which it is so desirable to banish."

From Thomas Jefferson to Hubert

Humphrey, the American Left has stood for making equality of opportunity a reality. By a supreme irony, the man most vigorously reviled by Democrats, Richard Nixon, created a situation that has placed them on the wrong side of the issue.

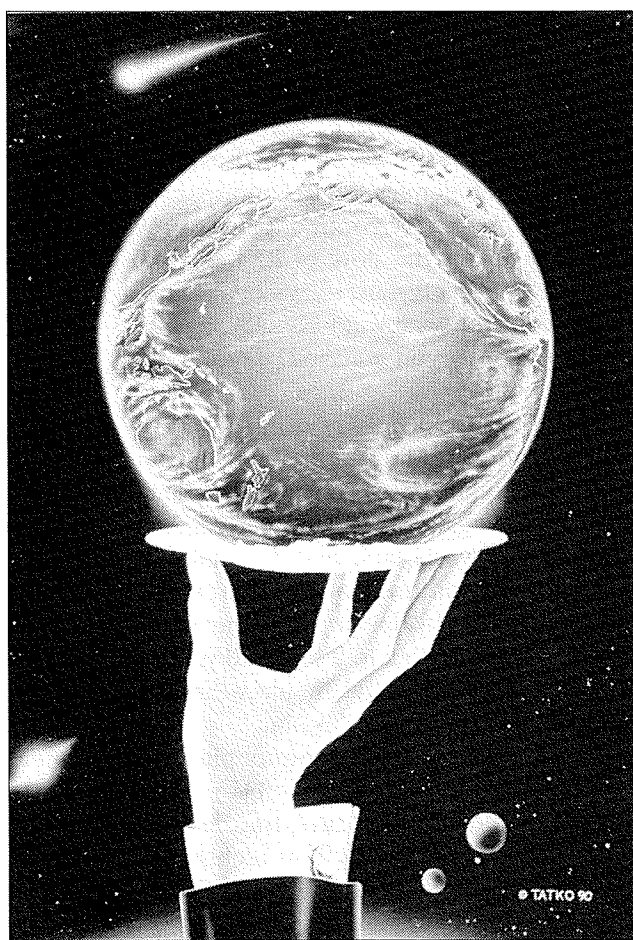
To rebuild the national consensus on civil rights and racial justice, affirmative action should be refocused, not discarded. Quotas and special preferences will not help the poorly educated and unskilled secure good jobs. Success in postindustrial society requires a good education. Extending and vastly improving education in the ghettos, establishing very early Head Start programs as well as financial incentives for students, teachers, and successful schools, and expanding apprentice programs, are the directions to be followed. Such programs should be offered to all less-privileged people, regardless of racial and ethnic origins.

The whole society can also learn from the experience of blacks in the military, which has offered blacks career training and a chance for stable employment and upward mobility. That record argues in favor of a large-scale national-service effort. If all American youth are encouraged to volunteer for national service, those with inadequate education and skills can receive job training while they and their peers help rebuild the nation's infrastructure and deliver social services.

Moving away from policies that emphasize special preferences need not—indeed, must not—mean abandoning the nation's commitment to guaranteeing equal opportunity for disadvantaged citizens. The concept of individual rights remains integral to the American Creed, and racial injustice and caste-like divisions blatantly contradict it. The American dilemma is still with us, and it imposes upon us a moral obligation to ensure that race is neither a handicap nor an advantage. Until black Americans are absorbed fully into our nation's economy and society, we should, in Jefferson's words, continue to fear a just God.

Pacific Prospects

With the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor only recently behind us, it may seem odd to contemplate the prospects of a coming Pacific Century. In fact, the moment could not be more fitting. After all, current hopes for Pacific cooperation rest largely upon the example of Japan and what it accomplished, with U.S. assistance and the U.S. market, during the years after World War II. Japan's postwar miracle inspired similar takeoffs in other Asian economies, with the result that the Asia-Pacific is fast becoming the most vibrant economic zone in the world. An important question, though, is whether such developments augur the emergence of a Pacific-wide region, bound together by trade, cultural commingling, and mutual security arrangements. Another question is whether the United States should look to the Pacific as its future. Considering these and related questions, our two contributors, Frank B. Gibney and James Clovis Clad, take opposing views. While Gibney sees a Basin brimming with possibilities, Clad finds something far less than overflowing.



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THE PROMISE OF THE PACIFIC

by Frank B. Gibney

In his pioneering work on the Mediterranean world in the age of Spain's Philip II, historian Fernand Braudel claims that the Mediterranean region lacked any unity apart from that "created by the movements of men, the relationships they imply and the routes they follow The whole Mediterranean," Braudel continues, "consists of movement in space. Anything entering it—wars, shadows of war, fashions, techniques, epidemics, merchandise light or heavy, precious or commonplace—may be caught up in the flow of its lifeblood, ferried over great distances, washed ashore to be taken up again and passed on endlessly, maybe even carried beyond its shores."

The Mediterranean world that Braudel evokes, with its trading galleys, Phoenician and Greek alphabets, colonizing Crusaders, Venetian merchants and their fleets, Byzantine and Arab scholars, and Renaissance bankers, took centuries of commerce and communication to develop. All the more remarkable, then, that in a mere 30 years a similar evolution has taken place among the peoples of the Pacific Basin.

Of course, it is now commonplace to note how the jet aircraft, the TV screen, and the semiconductor have transformed our old ideas of geography, how technology has compressed time and space. But living with these new realities is not so easy as talking about them. Braudel's Mediterranean peoples had many generations in

which to get used to their neighbors across the water. By contrast, Japanese and Americans, Australians and Indonesians, Chinese and Canadians are learning Braudel's unities in a hurry—almost by the hour.

Like the postmedieval Mediterranean, the Pacific Basin came to life as a marketplace. Some Americans regarded it as such during the last century. Yet even those Yankee traders of the clipper-ship era considered Pacific commerce little more than a footnote to the main action in the continental United States and across the Atlantic in Europe. Now the scenes have shifted. By 1979 American trade with Pacific Rim countries had grown greater than that with Europe. By 1989 our \$297 billion commerce with the East Asian countries was more than one-third heavier than our total trade with Europe—and growing. It has become exceedingly complex as well. Besides the flood of automobiles, textiles, microchips, and electronic gear coming in from the Pacific, as aircraft, agricultural commodities, and computer software go out, an interlocking network of investments, joint ventures, and offshore manufacturing has grown up among the Pacific countries. For better or for worse, we are becoming part of a vast shared economy in which it is increasingly hard for individual countries to legislate or otherwise enforce protective barriers, or for that matter to retain their economic sovereignty.

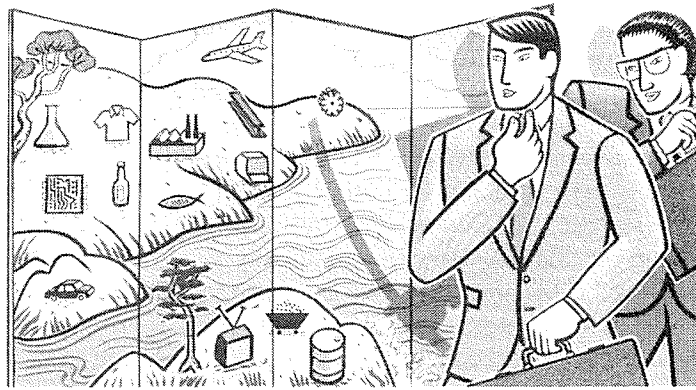
Japan's postwar success story was what first made people contemplate a Pacific

flowering, but the rise of Japan as an economic superpower was not an isolated phenomenon. It was followed during the 1970s by the meteoric growth of the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore as trading and manufacturing powers. Now Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia are registering similar gains in exports and gross national products (GNPs). Even mainland China, for all its post-Tiananmen political posturing, has irrevocably shattered its old Maoist command economy, with Guangzhou (Canton) and the free economic zones as virtual capitals of a new free market. The absorption of free-wheeling Hong Kong in 1997 is likely to further loosen China's economy. The huge changes, social and economic, taking place along the western shores of the Pacific amount to modern Asia's jet-age version of the Industrial Revolution. Such changes are having an impact on the United States—and Europe—comparable to the 19th-century assault of Western colonialism on Asia.

The impact transcends the expansion of trade and investments. Asian-Pacific people are now America's fastest-growing source of immigrants, and a large proportion of them are skilled. (More than 2.6 million came here during the 1980s, comprising almost half of the U.S. immigration in that period. By the 1990 census fully eight percent of California's population was of Asian descent.) We are importing the cultures and philosophies of Asians along with their goods. The growth of Chinese and Japanese language study in American high schools and universities during the last 15 years has exceeded all expectations. Translations of Japanese and Chinese books are finally being widely

and seriously reviewed. The very word "Confucian," once a virtual synonym for obscurantism, is now used admiringly to describe the cohesiveness of group-minded Asian capitalists.

The Asian-Pacific take-off did not happen by accident. Following Japan's example during the 1960s, but with marked individual variations, East Asians threw out the self-defeating import-substitution policies and command economies so favored by Third World countries elsewhere. Taking advantage of traditional reliance on group loyalties, plus an almost religious regard for education, they showed themselves willing



If current patterns continue, says the Economist, by the mid-21st century the locus of global economic power will shift from "Europe and North America to the western side of the Pacific Rim."

to work hard and save for the prospect of long-term gain. Although keenly competitive in head-to-head struggles with rival companies, East Asian businessmen were willing to take direction from their governments. (They generally had little choice.) In a sense, engineers and economic planners played the didactic role that Confucian mandarins had played in an earlier day, leading their countries in intensive export drives, based on extraordinarily high levels of personal savings and capital investment.

One newly industrializing country learned from another, in what Saburo Okita, the doyen of Japan's official develop-

ment economists, called the "flying geese" pattern of shared growth. Borrowing the term from the writings of another Japanese economist, Akamatsu Kaname, Okita used the image of the V-formation of geese to demonstrate how an economic latecomer adopts the techniques of more advanced countries to catch up, in the process using its own distinctiveness to support itself. As Okita has pointed out, this is neither the horizontal-type integration of equals of the European Community nor the classic vertical relationship between industrialized countries and the underdeveloped commodity-suppliers. It is often unapologetically imitative. Witness the similarities between Japan's redoubtable Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) and similar government organs in Korea and Taiwan.

Almost all of the Asian economic upsurges were directed by authoritarian regimes, albeit enlightened ones (at least in economic affairs). However politically repressive, these governments gave private business every possible support. Business and finance worked closely with government to expand existing markets and promote research and development. They were all well-advertised market economies, answering to the name of free enterprise. Yet the "guidance" that governments imposed on their manufacturers and traders made for a unique version of capitalism, worlds away from the adversarial free enterprise of American definition. The political economist Chalmers Johnson has very aptly categorized these economies as "capitalist development states." They represent a new kind of capitalism indeed, which in its progress has already stood Adam Smith,

David Ricardo, and today's neoclassical economists on their collective head.

The model for these burgeoning Asian economies was Japan's Meiji Restoration of 1868. More properly called a cultural revolution, Meiji was Japan's self-propelled drive to modernize itself and become, economically as well as politically, an East Asian version of the 19th-century European nation-state. To succeed, the Japanese had to play "catch-up" ball all the way. Lacking modern banks or capitalists, the new Meiji government privatized industries after it developed them but continued to be supportive—lest the new Japanese businessmen be swallowed up by their more experienced European competitors. The resultant capitalist development state was the unique amalgam of microeconomic free enterprise and macroeconomic government guidance that Japan largely remains today.

As other East Asian nations gained their independence, Japan's business-government symbiosis served as an obvious economic model. South Korea's dour dictator, President Park Chung Hee, made clear his debt to this model when he announced his first economic Five Year Plan in 1962: "The basic economic system . . . respects as much as possible the freedom and creativity of private individuals With regard to key industries, however, the government must take a direct or indirect part [I]n other words an enterprise leadership system has been adopted."

Under the watchful eyes of the new Asian bureaucracies, the free enterprisers of the capitalist development states expanded according to government plan—and had their domestic markets protected while doing so. Their technology was bor-

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rowed mainly at bargain prices from the United States, where most of the Asian technocrats had earned their advanced degrees. For their markets they also looked eastward. Without the combination of American invention and American buyers, the Pacific recovery would have sputtered out shortly after it began.

American military power guaranteed the security of postwar East Asian polities. As Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's leader from 1959 to 1990, acknowledged, even the ultimately disastrous American intervention in Vietnam kept his and other Southeast Asian countries safe from threats of conquest or subversion during a critical period of economic growth.

More immediately, American aid and commercial loans—not to mention U.S. offshore military spending—were key factors in building up the economies of Japan, Taiwan, and many of the Southeast Asian nations. The motive for such aid was far from altruistic. Throughout East Asia—from the 1960s to the late 1980s—American policymakers winked at these countries' economic protectionism and turned a blind eye to their political repression, in return for their loyalty in the Cold War struggle against communism.

The real hero of the Pacific economic take-off was the American consumer, who bought and bought and bought. The huge trade imbalances that resulted surely gave the lie to the old dependency theory, according to which developed capitalist countries inexorably turn the underdeveloped nations into helpless raw-material suppliers and markets for their own manufactured goods.

Quite to the contrary, American consumers readily bought the manufactures of their Asian trading partners, while the U.S. government erected only minimal tariff barriers against the endless flow of goods.

Similarly, American businesses, little concerned about their own work forces, were quick to build their plants offshore, wherever labor was for the time cheap. Any thought of reciprocity was long delayed. Thus the United States became quite literally the engine of growth for the whole Pacific area. From textiles to high-tech, the huge Asian GNP rises were generally based on expanding sales to North America.

In a wider sense Americans have been the leading instrument of the Asian-Pacific world's political and cultural modernization. If Japan was the working exemplar, the United States was the teacher. Asian students have assiduously studied English and many have gone to America to earn degrees in science and engineering. (Only recently has Japan's xenophobic university system opened its gates, ever so slightly, to other Asian students.) In their modernization efforts Asians have been guided, for better or worse, by American pop culture—fashions, movies, and music. More seriously, they have studied American ideas of law and democratic government.

Here, in the realm of political ideals and practice, American influence has proved effective in the long run, despite the egregiously uncritical U.S. support of despots who dutifully toed the anticommunist line. Economic success brought rising social and political expectations with it. This in turn brought pressure for greater political and social freedom, pushed by an emerging new middle class, confident and increasingly self-assertive. Even to those Asians who as students denounced U.S. "imperialism," America remained a powerful model of a working democracy. In the late 1980s popular movements toppled authoritarian regimes in South Korea and the Philippines, and the United States played a vital, if belated, role in both countries' move toward greater democracy. Increasing popular pressure is at last forcing the democrati-

zation of rich Taiwan, again with U.S. encouragement.

Not even Asia's communists are impervious to change. In Vietnam and even in Kim Il Sung's Stalinist satrapy in North Korea, as in China itself, the police rule of old ideologues cannot indefinitely dam up a rising tide of popular aspiration and discontent. As Japan's socialist leader Eda Saburo said prophetically in the 1970s: "The age of ideology is dead." To which one might add that an age of democratic political pragmatism is dawning.

Modernization and democracy, however, do not automatically mean "Americanization" or even "Westernization." A knowledge of the Federalist Papers, John Dewey, the *Divine Comedy*, or Kant is not necessary for learning the computer—still less for running the new business collectives of the capitalist development state. Nevertheless, the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions, the optimism of the Enlightenment, and the empiricism of the scientific method are legacies available to all of mankind. The Japanese, among others, have shown that they can be grafted onto older Asian thought and culture without doing much damage to the intellectual ecology.

Influences flow in both directions, of course. New Asian ideas and adaptations in business and the arts are being studied and followed by many Americans, as this Asian Industrial Revolution swings back full circle. With this has come a healthy, if sudden, appetite for traditional Asian culture, among at least some in this society. The influx of Asian immigrants has added a new element to American culture—and not just in California. Cars, sushi bars, television sets, Buddhist philosophy, *tai chi* exercises, tennis rackets, video games, financing for new factories and U.S. government bonds, and new Asian entrepreneurs in the Silicon Valley—all these come to us from across

the Pacific. They contribute to a dawning sense of Pacific community.

But when we speak of a Pacific community—present or future—what do we really mean? Physically speaking the Pacific Basin includes all those countries bordering the Pacific littoral—from the United States, Canada, and Mexico and the Pacific Latin American countries on the eastern shore to the Asian nations on the western, from Japan and the Soviet Union in the north to Indonesia in the south, with the significant addition of Australia and New Zealand farther south. As distinguished from the oft-used "Pacific Rim," however, the Basin also includes the Pacific island nations scattered across the ocean and, at least in prospect, the significant if untapped resources of the ocean floor—which remain a subject for international discussion and cooperation.

If we go back to Braudel's idea, however, that a civilization is based on the movements of people and their relationships, the number of significant players in the Pacific drastically diminishes. The United States and Japan are of course most prominent in the economic and, to a great extent, the political intercourse of the entire area. China is inevitably part of Pacific "movements"—as are Korea (both North and South), Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei, and, perhaps in the near future, Cambodia and Vietnam.

The Soviet Union—or at least the Russian Republic—must now be counted a participant. In fact, Russian economists and new businessmen of both the Gorbachev and Yeltsin persuasions are doing their best to interest Asian nations in the development of Siberia. Here the Republic of Korea has been a particularly active player; Japan may soon follow. The triangular trade between Southeast Asian

countries, Japan, and the United States is constantly expanding.

Australia and New Zealand also play significant roles here. Prime Minister Bob Hawke was not indulging in hyperbole when he repeatedly claimed during the 1980s that Australia is an "Asian country." (His pronouncements met with some understandable skepticism: "They don't look much like Asians to me," said one Japanese economist.) The Anglo-Saxon commonwealths "down under" have done their best not merely to keep up trade relationships—Australia, rich in oil, iron, and other commodities, is one of the few countries to enjoy a favorable trade balance with Japan—but have also increased Asian immigration, once prohibited, and shown themselves to be promoters of Pacific cooperation.

Of the Latin American nations, Mexico has shown by far the most interest in the Pacific connection. It has played an increasing role and will continue to expand. This is true not only of direct trade and investments: Mexico is also the active host to a variety of *maquiladora* companies, mostly Japanese and American, which operate across the border and export to the United States and to Asia—even back home. (The local Sanyo company in Mexico, for instance, is now exporting vacuum cleaners to Japan.) Chile and Peru—the latter with a president of Japanese descent—have also expressed considerable interest in the transpacific connection.

The first real thinking about Pacific economic cooperation came from Japan. The distinguished Japanese economist, Kojima Kiyoshi, set forth the idea of an emergent



On the New Guinea island of Manus, tribesmen ride in a Toyota truck. Asia finds its biggest new market is Asia itself—and the western Pacific. Will the eastern Pacific stay in the game?

Pacific community in a series of essays that first began to appear in 1967. In that same year, primarily for security reasons, five Southeast Asian nations—Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia (later to be joined by Brunei)—formed the Association of East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Given urgency by the intensification of the Vietnam War, the ASEAN group later turned more to economic cooperation. Even with their own communication difficulties—they have yet to iron out a welter of intramural trade restrictions—the Southeast Asian nations' working partnership showed how people of very disparate cultures, races, and political make-ups could get together in the common interest.

In 1978, Japan's newly installed prime minister, Ohira Masayoshi, became the first statesman to promote the ideas of economist Kojima. Ohira found a strong supporter in Australia's prime minister, Malcolm Fraser. At a 1980 meeting in Canberra, sponsored chiefly by the Australians and Japanese, the backers of the Pacific-community concept formed what is now called the Pacific Economic Coopera-

tion Conference (PECC), an organization that today includes 20 nations.

The United States joined the Canberra Conference and subsequent meetings with enthusiasm. By the early 1980s, in fact, American academics and businessmen were active in two organizations, PECC and the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC). While PBEC consists entirely of businessmen, the national delegations of PECC contain equal numbers of businessmen, academics or professionals, and government officials.

To be sure, the Pacific Basin community is no Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and it is doubtful that it will ever become a counterpart of the European Community. In part this is because the peoples of the Pacific nations exhibit the widest disparities of history, race, and background. And radically different stages of development exist not only among Pacific nations but also within them. Several historic "time zones" separate businessmen in the luxurious corridors of the White Swan Hotel in Canton (Guangzhou) from the impoverished peasants in the communities of Guizhou a few hundred miles away.

All of Okita's "flying geese" in East Asia have moved at different paces and in different ways. The Japanese example is, of course, preeminent—with its purposeful coordination of government, finance, and business. Others are equally interesting, however. The Koreans produced their own catch-up device of economic expansion in large *chaebol* conglomerates, which concentrated from the first on export business—beginning with overseas construction work and reaching a higher level of sophistication with electronic and automotive exports. Their ascent involved a high-risk policy of accumulating heavy foreign debt, gambling that their industry could export enough to pay it off in the end. The

gamble paid off when the Korean balance of payments went over into the black in the late 1980s (although there has been slippage since then).

In Singapore and Taiwan more reliance was put on attracting foreign companies—American, European, and Japanese—to build offshore plants. The idea was to offer cheap labor and facilities provided by the government to get foreign companies to create the nucleus of a local industry. Indonesia, on the other hand, offers the classic example of a single-commodity economy purposefully changing to reliance on exports in other fields.

It is precisely because of all these differences among Basin nations that some sort of Pacific economic organization was necessary. With all the countries on the rim of the Pacific practicing vigorous aggressive export-led economics, the United States, along with mercantilist Japan, has been moved to retaliate with its own form of protectionism. There was clearly a need for some kind of organization to play international traffic cop or at least to advise all these different economies of some general rules of the road.

PECC set out to do just this, and it has met with some success. With its member governments cooperating at the foreign-ministry level, PECC created various task forces to deal with matters such as energy resources, science and technology, transportation and communications, and trade problems throughout the Pacific Basin. These have proved to be indispensable forums where people from different countries with vastly different backgrounds and problems can meet to discuss the inevitable collisions that occur among them. The more such forums proliferate, the less chance that these lumbering economic recovery buses will run into each other—or at least end up in serious gridlock.

The great cities of the Pacific littoral have their similarities. Tokyo, Los Angeles, Seattle, Seoul, Singapore, Shanghai, and Sydney are big, brash trading cities. They have much in common—not least a general veneer of American-type pop culture. But the hinterlands behind them are far different. The job of organizations like PECC is to bring the people of the hinterlands—and the politicians who reflect their concerns—ever closer together.

Although there is little possibility of cultural homogenization with so many strong local cultures involved, there is good reason to hope that such regional organizations can promote at least a general internationalist view among businessmen, statesmen, and academics throughout the Basin. Starting with trade, these networking bodies have made people aware that they have to think on a multilateral, rather than a merely bilateral, basis.

Some say that these groups have no real muscle, that the agreements they reach have little binding effect on the governments, even though one-third of the representatives in PECC are government people. Nevertheless, the process of multilateral consultation has mitigated many problems that would have become impasses in bilateral dealings. (A largely bilateral approach is, in fact, one of the reasons for the bitterness on both sides of the Japanese-American conversation.) By and large, multilateralism in the Pacific has been encouraging. As a former U.S. trade negotiator observed a couple of years ago at a PECC conference, "There is really much more of a discussion process on Pacific trade problems than there is in Europe. When we go to Europe, we are almost immediately involved in confrontational tactics with the EC people. In the Pacific we can talk things over first. This paves the way for some reasonable solutions."

One fruit of Pacific multilateral dealings

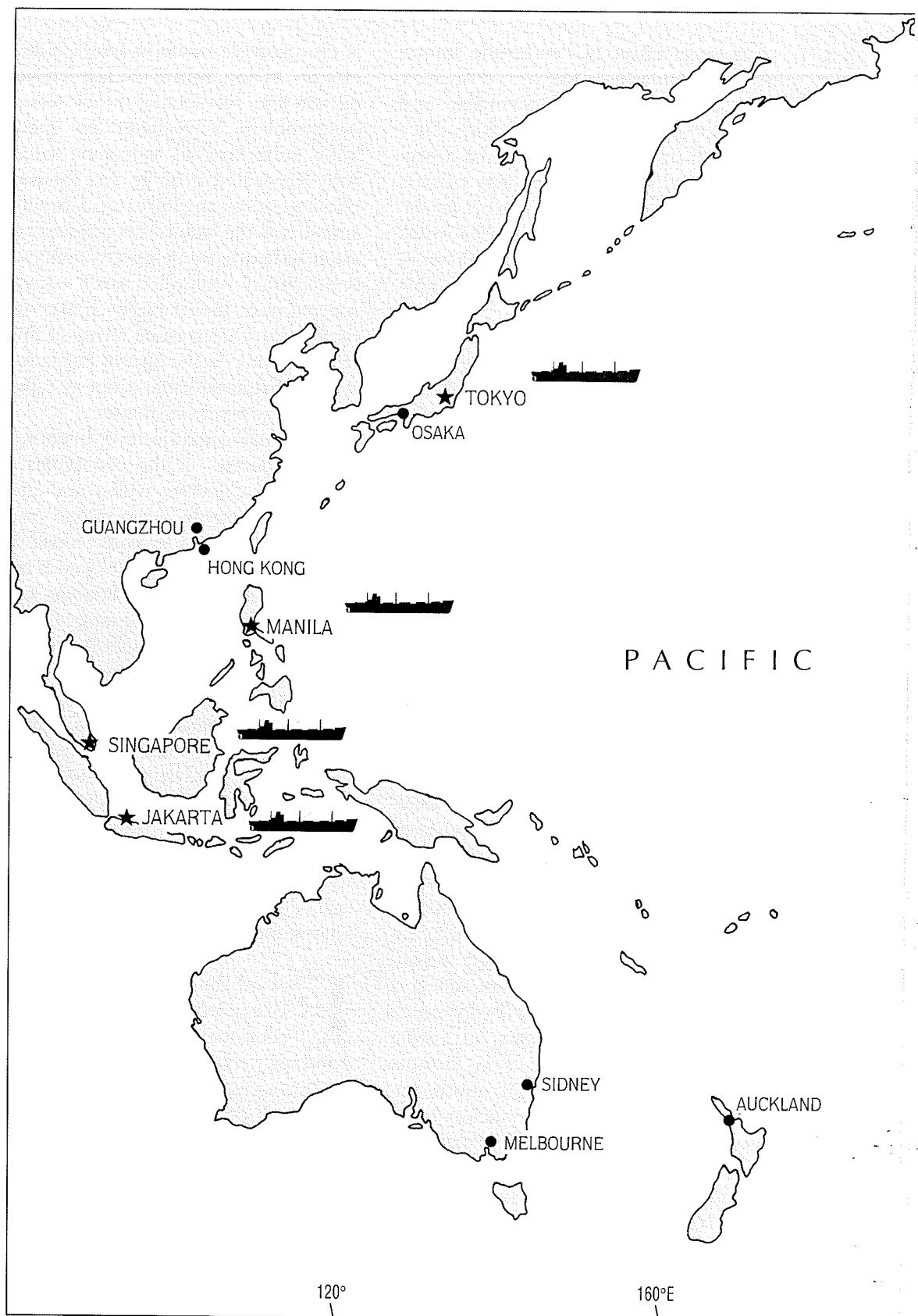
is the progress made in intellectual property protection during the last few years. A decade ago, intellectual piracy was a serious problem. It occurred not merely in book publishing or videotape sales—the Jolly Roger flew proudly over thousands of bootleg stores in Taipei and Seoul—but spread into the high-stakes business of computer software. Some governments winked at this piracy. After all, it was a way of helping many of their citizens make windfall profits. But the constant airing of this matter in various Pacific forums began to make it clear that intellectual property rights protection was a serious matter.

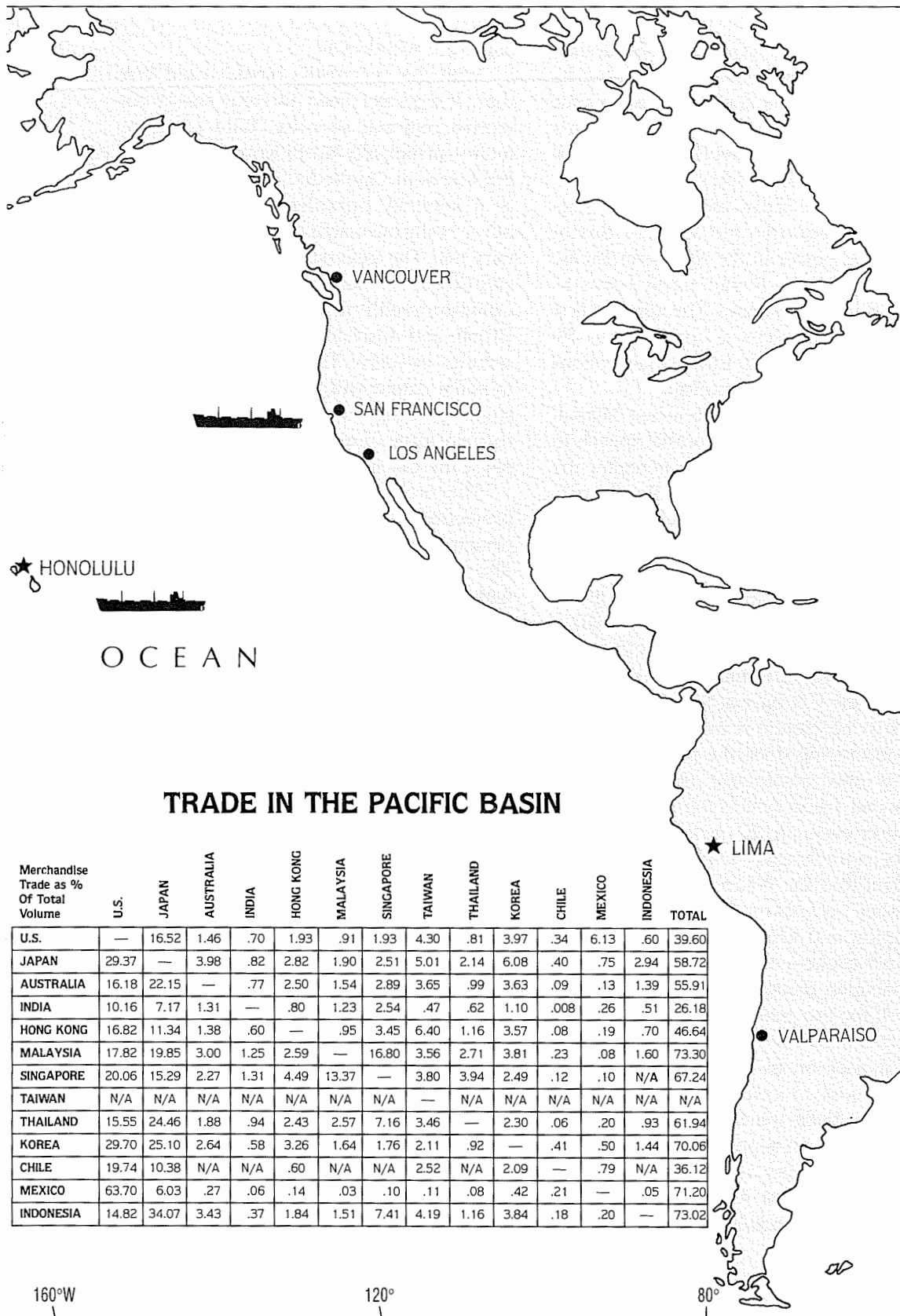
Regional organizations become even more important as the economies of the Asian-Pacific nations widen and diversify. Many of the newly industrialized countries of the Pacific Basin have developed considerable domestic demand for goods and services. This includes more imports. In countries such as Korea, for example, domestic demand is now very heavy. A great deal of the economy is devoted to satisfying it, including much production that was previously concentrated on exports. This comes just in time. Not even the American consumer would have been able to support the continuing flow of products making its way eastward across the ocean. As trade and investments increase in other Pacific countries, a leveling takes place—and this leveling demands discussion and arbitration among the parties involved.

For all the promise of a coming Pacific Century, two major problems continue to trouble the Pacific relationships: security and trade imbalances.

During most of the postwar era, the Soviet Union or its communist surrogates remained the region's major security threat (although for the past 20 years, the People's Republic of China has been more of a paper tiger than a real menace). Not only did

PACIFIC PROSPECTS





Moscow put the starch in Kim Il Sung's aggressive posturings in North Korea, but its constant fleet and air activity off Japan's sea lanes—plus the occupation of Japan's northern islands since World War II—continued to worry the world's new economic superpower. American bases seemed necessary as a counter not only to Soviet home-based power in the Northeast Pacific but to such huge Soviet naval bases as Camranh Bay in Vietnam. Through the first half of the 1980s, Soviets continued to denounce various Pacific Basin organizations as fronts for "U.S. imperialism."

All this changed in 1986, when Mikhail Gorbachev made his memorable speech in Vladivostok, announcing that hereafter the Soviet Union wanted "in" on Pacific economic cooperation and hoped to play a constructive and cooperative role. Now, as the Cold War becomes a thing of the past, both external and internal pressure grows on Americans to cut back on their military strategic investment in the Pacific. The Philippine Senate's refusal to renew the leases for the U.S. base at Subic Bay merely served to accelerate a tendency that had been developing since the perestroika era.

It is now quite clear that the Soviet Union and Japan will reach some accommodation even on the vexed issue of the "northern territories," while South Korean president Roh Tae Woo's successful "northern policy" of making friends with the Soviet Union and China has moved the two principal backers of Kim Il Sung's aggressive one-man dictatorship in North Korea to work for the peaceful unification of the divided nation. The United States inevitably will cut back on its military expenditures, which served to counter a threat that is now gone. Even the Security Treaty commitment to Japan is no longer as certain as it once was. Many argue that, from the standpoints both of Americans and Japanese, it would be better if U.S. forces in Ja-

pan were withdrawn.

With the end of the bipolar Cold War, there is a greater need for some sort of collective regional security. Wild cards remain—principally North Korea and the Pol Pot forces in Cambodia. Although founded as a security organization, ASEAN has never really been able to develop close military ties. The interest with which Malaysia and Singapore have kept up long-standing Commonwealth military relationships with Britain and Australia suggests a continuing security concern. The American presence to some extent will remain, but a consensus is growing that some sort of regional security force or alliance is necessary to replace the old superpower confrontation.

The problem of trade imbalances and protectionism is more immediate. Here the principal complainant is the United States. The chronic \$40–50 billion trade deficit with the Japanese has grown little better. As of this writing there is something over a \$7.2 billion deficit with China. U.S. negotiators continue to press South Korea, Taiwan, and, increasingly, the Southeast Asian nations both to open their markets and to put teeth into some regional trade reciprocity agreements.

American pressure here cannot be ignored. On the average, the United States absorbs more than 23 percent of all exports from the East Asian nations. Thus the engine of growth, although sputtering in protest, continues to service these developing economies. By contrast, Japan, although a huge exporter to the United States, South Korea, and the Southeast Asian countries, absorbs on the average only about 16 percent of other Asian nations' trade. There is a growing demand from such countries as South Korea that Japan let their exports in. Only rarely can one find a Hyundai or Daewoo car on Tokyo's streets.

It is too late in the game, even with recession-inspired political pressures, for the

United States to adopt outright protectionism. The Pacific economies are far too closely linked for that. For one thing, close to 50 percent of the exports from Singapore and Taiwan to the United States are made by offshore branches of American companies. Both the Japanese sales and profits of American companies such as IBM are most impressive. And then, of course, we have the swollen U.S. budget deficit, propped up by Japanese lenders.

The close integration of Japanese *keiretsu* conglomerates with Southeast Asian companies has caused considerable worry, especially when maverick statesmen like Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad frankly suggest a genuinely "Asian-Pacific" trade block without American participation at all. For that matter, Asians in their turn are worried about the new North American trade bloc, with Mexico joining Canada and the United States.

Most of these trade issues are many-sided. It is hardly the best policy for the United States to continue operating on a bilateral basis, invoking the punitive "301" clause against single countries which seem to be abusing the trade relationship. It is better to put teeth into existing economic organizations like PECC—of which both China and the Soviet Union are now members—and the new official Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) association. The Japanese themselves are nervous about appearing to promote a new Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. Ever more aggressive activity is serving to provoke anti-Japanese rather than pro-Japanese reactions among many smaller countries. If Americans have been less economically competitive than the Japanese, Americans are regarded as politically safer.

Although the new Asian economies are developing consumer societies of their

own—spending a lot of money on infrastructure and domestic demand—and showing increasing receptivity to American imports, we can hardly expect them to change their idea of the capitalist development state to fit American standards. It would be healthier and more productive in the long term for America to get its own act together, reduce its vast deficit, and think of an industrial policy with the same intensity that it devoted to military planning during the past 50 years. If the United States expects the Asian-Pacific countries to unlock some of their remaining protectionist doors, it must also establish for itself a new set of national priorities in which economic security and the development of living economic relationships, rather than the building of Star Wars and stealth systems, become the primary goals of American policy. Japan in turn must behave more like an engine of growth than a hungry predator, for the United States can no longer sustain the locomotive function all by itself.

During the last quarter century of Pacific cooperation we have watched a steady widening of educational, cultural, and technological interchange among the Basin nations. The revolution of rising expectations is well on its way among the Pacific nations, China included. As prosperity is distributed, purchasing power will increase with it. The trading cities of the littoral—Los Angeles, Tokyo, Vancouver, Shanghai, Sydney, Seattle, Hong Kong, and Singapore—will become less national ports than regional capitals of an expanding Pacific economic community. This community—unique in its growth attainments over the last 30 years—can well become, as Saburo Okita has suggested, "the driving force for dynamism in the world economy."

THE HALF-EMPTY BASIN

by James Clovis Clad

I was born in New Haven, Connecticut, scarcely a year after World War II ended, a child of the G.I. Bill that financed my father's education at Yale. Soon afterward my parents moved to California, taking me along at the tender but obliging age of two years. My earliest memories therefore hang on Pacific horizons—glimpses of beach cliffs from toddler's eye-level just above the back seat of a 1940 Ford.

Westward movement was to become the constant of my life, a journey ever farther into what we now call, with practiced ease, the "Asia-Pacific." My family pulled up stakes after my father died suddenly, and my mother ventured yet farther from her roots in Westchester County, New York. She took us to another New World land having another recycled Old World name.

New Zealand became our new home. My three younger sisters, all California-born, and I trekked off to school in blazers and ties, carrying hockey sticks and cricket bats. We each went on to have careers in Asia and the Pacific, in my case as a diplomat and journalist.

Grappling successively with Malay and Tagalog, Chinese and Hindi, I have lived, worked, and (at times) run for my life in Asia during the last 20 years. Watching the wash of money, I have spent much time writing about Asian economies, trudging through more financial and trade data than I ever thought digestible.

Now living once more in America, I

look back perplexed at this maze of experience, loyalty, and affinity. I feel more at home in Southeast Asia's tropical cities than I do in Washington, D.C., where I now live. Even New Zealand's antipodean flag—a Union Jack facing a red-starred Southern Cross in a field of deep Pacific blue—still elicits emotions close to those stirred by my native country's broad stripes and bright stars. As much as anyone, I feel plausibly well primed for the coming "Pacific Century."

There is just one problem: I don't believe in it. To be more precise, I distrust the hyperbole surrounding this heavily anticipated era-to-be. That immense economic changes have occurred in some countries riparian to the Pacific cannot be denied; that these necessarily portend a chummy, free-marketeering "region" reaching from Mexico to Thailand and preeminent in the world is by no means settled.

Such dissent may strike many as needlessly cautious, even a bit mean-spirited. It certainly runs counter to nearly three decades of sedulous insistence that in the huge expanse of Asia and the Pacific Rim there exists very much (with apologies to Gertrude Stein) a "there there." Rather than tilt foolishly against the incontrovertible evidence of Asian success, however, I would simply urge more circumspection. If my picture of the Pacific region-to-come is less glamorous than that of Pacific Centurians in the business and academic communities, it is, I think, more plausible.

At the very least, it leaves room for surprises, failures, and reversals of fortune.

Sounding a tardy reveille to America's slumbering national consciousness, the U.S. House of Representatives' Ways and Means Committee conducted a workshop in June 1988 to discuss the East Asian competitive threat. Out of these sessions came a report entitled "East Asia: Challenges for U.S. Economic and Security Interests in the 1990s."

The document opens by announcing that "it has become commonplace to say that the world is on the verge of a Pacific Century." It then proceeds to survey East Asia's commercial dynamism, concluding that all the financial and technological indicators now show the "fulcrum of world business activity increasingly shifting toward East Asia."

The congressional report added yet more paper to an already sizeable mountain of books and articles dealing with East Asian success. For over a decade, books such as Ezra Vogel's *Japan As Number One* and Kent Calder and Roy Hofheinz, Jr.'s *Eastasia Edge* have focused on East Asia's export-oriented policies, especially those of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Other titles have emphasized the motivated and skilled workforce in those countries, or their characteristically close business-government linkages. Still other articles and books dwell on thrifty habits which subordinate the instant gratification of consumerism to the discipline of saving and long-



The Pacific Basin, merging the economies and cultures of the Occident with those of the Orient, is a notion as bewildering to some as it is attractive to others. Painting by Nagatani/Tracey.

term investment. Add to all these widely celebrated virtues yet another ingredient—the receptivity to foreign investment displayed by the smaller East Asian economies—and you have the makings of a breathtaking success story.

The numbers cited to support the story are indeed impressive. During the last 20 years, annual growth rates in Hong Kong, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand have only rarely slipped below five percent; in the light industrial and service economies of Hong Kong and Singapore, the rates have sometimes surpassed 10 percent during the last decade.

The longer view is just as compelling. Since the 1960s, the Japanese, South Ko-

rean, and Taiwanese economies have averaged some 7-9 percent annual growth in gross domestic product (GDP). Manufactured exports have long achieved preeminence in the export "spread" of these economies, and they are now doing so in tropical Southeast Asia, where an equally impressive spread of commodities, ranging from oil to rubber, adds to the export profile. Per-capita income has soared. The middle classes have grown. Industrialization has accelerated. And now even Western-style consumerism is booming.

Much writing about the Asia-Pacific in America puts a strong, even alarmist emphasis on the competitive challenge posed by Asia, particularly by Japan. But growing attention to the trade success of so-called newly industrialized economies (NIEs) has also spawned books and articles anticipating an inconceivably rich region-in-the-making, one from which America stands to gain if it becomes a shrewder, more decisive player. The notion of an impending if still inchoate Pacific Region also picks up speed from books of the "gee-whiz" genre, including Joel Kotkin and Yoriko Kishimoto's *The Third Century*, which describes America's transformation into a Pacific country.

Optimism about a new Asian-Pacific era received a strong boost during the Reagan era, when confidence in pure market methodology soared. The economic dynamism in East Asia reflected, for some, the Universal Truth of market capitalism and the abiding wisdom of free trade. James Riedel of Johns Hopkins University has described how the "superlative performance" in East Asia, "combined with the relatively poor record of other countries adhering more closely to inward-looking policies,

[prompted] a 'new orthodoxy' in development economics"—an orthodoxy which Riedel says amounts, "in essence, to mainstream, neo-classical economics."

Whatever their emphasis, nearly all accounts of the looming Asian-Pacific era carry a heavy economic accentuation. This bias also colors the popular treatment in press and film about the impending "Pacific Century." "Western companies will have to hurry to catch up in Asia," says a breathless but illustrative piece of prose in the October 7, 1991, edition of *Fortune* magazine.

It is easy to be dazzled by the parade of figures. After all, nearly all the graphlines plotting the growth of East Asia's GDP, capital flows, direct foreign investment, trade volumes, air-passenger miles, cross-Pacific business migration, banking, trade surpluses, technological prowess, or telecommunications show ballistic trajectories. Because the point of intersection of these lines lies in Asia or, more generally, within the Pacific Basin, the resulting web provides conclusive evidence that an epochal region is in the making, one which will have the same effect on world history as the Mediterranean once had on the late medieval world.

Or so the argument goes. In support of such views, we often hear that the overall volume of foreign trade among countries bordering the Pacific now exceeds the volume exchanged among those riparian to the Atlantic. Intra-Asian trade is also rising. More anecdotally, we learn from State Department officials that the volume of telephone traffic between the United States and Malaysia has grown by 69,000 per cent since 1975. With such figures, the case, apparently, is made.

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But do dynamic growth patterns, on their own, make for an automatic regional temperament and inevitable association? As far as I can tell, they do not. I cannot equate what is happening around the Pacific Rim to the wide, full-bodied civilizations or cultural coherence of Europe or North America.

The more thoughtful Pacific Centurians, such as Mark Borthwick (who directs the U.S. National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation in Washington, D.C.), accept that incremental politics among the Asian-Pacific countries must fashion this diffused economic achievement into a truly regional reality. But even a glance at the extent and record of existing pan-Asian institutions suggests we must drastically scale down our expectations.

For an area to which the world's center of gravity has already shifted, East Asia is puzzlingly slow to behave regionally. Far fewer regional organizations exist in East Asia than elsewhere on the globe. Those with real influence are fewer still, while those with even a hint of supranational authority do not exist.

Because Pacific Rim optimists ground their argument in commercial affairs, Asia's lack of serious transnational economic institutions is telling. No mechanisms even remotely similar to the European Commission exist in Asia. The North American free-trade association between Canada and the United States remains light years ahead of Asian economic collaboration. Whether in financial matters or in broader commercial concerns, regional collaboration in East Asia remains fitful.

For almost 25 years now, the six-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations (known as ASEAN and grouping Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) has been promising ever more ambitious re-

gional economic collaboration. The results, as I recently argued in *Behind the Myth: Business, Money & Power in Southeast Asia* (1989), have been disappointing. I am not alone. Most descriptions of ASEAN focus on what the group has *not* achieved. As vocal as the six member nations have been about the importance of their association, their intragroup trade amounts to no more than 17 percent of their total external trade. Take away large, single-deal sales of oil and rice, and this drops below 10 percent.

Much is made of ASEAN's clout in trade diplomacy. Yet "the ASEAN countries have been free riders," as the economist R. J. Langhammer writes, referring to their habit of "receiving concessions negotiated by [bigger countries] rather than by their being equivalent negotiators" in the international trade system. Numerous ASEAN plans for industrial complementarity have gone nowhere. Likewise nearly all the grouping's joint industrial projects. In December 1987 the ASEAN heads of government (who have managed to meet at summit level just three times in 25 years) announced plans for a trading community by 1995. Next to nothing has happened. Similar plans to be implemented by the year 2000 won endorsement this year from ASEAN foreign ministers meeting in Kuala Lumpur. It might be unwise to bet on any real outcome.

The Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) remains one of the oldest pan-Asian groupings. It has over 40 members, including the United States. Proud of its position as the world's richest regional multilateral financial institution, it also remains one of the world's most hidebound and bureaucratic organizations, criticized by its own staff as "intellectually sterile." Over the years, the bank has been used most successfully by Japanese construction and heavy-industry contractors who garner new contracts through its aid projects.

Private business groupings in Australia, East Asia, and North America are the more vocal and diligent exponents of the coming era-to-be. Most prominent among them are the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) and the Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference (PECC). After years of maneuvering, the diplomats have responded by creating, in November 1989, an even wider group, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) initiative.

APEC groups the United States, Canada, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and the ASEAN states as well as Taiwan and Hong Kong. Yet APEC to some appears as a loose and woolly forum replete with task groups and committees superimposed upon the insubstantial and more narrowly regional fluff of ASEAN. Discussing the shadow battles among these acronyms, a business editor in Singapore cites an old Chinese adage: "Hollow drums make the most noise."

Most pan-Asian organizations, other than environmentalist groups, steer well clear of such hard issues as runaway demographics, creation of a customs union, free movement of labor, or rationalization of such services as air and shipping lines. Only collective efforts to address such problems would mark the emergence of a truly embryonic region.

Although cultural explanations for some of East Asia's success stories have recently become fashionable among writers stressing the implications of pan-Pacific migration, the possibility that culture might serve as a glue for our common Pacific Destiny receives far less attention. Several factors account for this timidity. Throughout East Asia, the linguistic, migratory, and commercial trends appear to show as much divergence as convergence. As the Australian writer William O'Malley observes, "Culture has not been

popular in recent years in explanations of development. Culture, after all, is a soft concept, neither easily pinned down nor absolutely distinguishable in its workings."

True enough, but the almost organic "fit" of Northeast Asian institutions with business and export policy has attracted much interest. For example, the Confucian explanation for Northeast Asian success has received convincing support from journalists and academics.

As a code of social conduct stressing ethics and hierarchy, Confucian principles exert most influence in the societies of Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Chinese-dominated Singapore. The family itself becomes a guiding metaphor for political and economic relationships within the wider society. Respect flows upward from the youthful to the old, and from female to male.

Marry this system to the ingrained, consensual habit within powerful bureaucracies and (the theory goes) we soon reach a point where, as Chalmers Johnson says of Japan, "the state needs the market and the private enterprise needs the state; once both sides recognized this, high speed growth occurred." Yet O'Malley and other commentators are rightly skeptical about any deterministic Confucian causality running effortlessly from the cultural milieu straight to export-orientation and on to government-guided, corporation-led economic success.

The Confucian temperament, moreover, animates only the northern angles of the Asian-Pacific arc. Southeast Asia's many cultures display Buddhist, Hispanic Roman Catholic, Hindu, and Muslim influences. Yet this diversity may count less than a common Southeast Asian habit of patrimonial commerce. Traditions inimical to indigenous technological innovation flourish in Southeast Asia, coexisting comfortably beside often dizzying economic expansion.

The two phenomena are not incompatible. The dynamism of the world economy (rather than Southeast Asia's own dynamism) has delivered Southeast Asia's success: Outsiders' markets, outsiders' ideas, outsiders' capital, and outsiders' skills still account, in large part, for the economic "miracle" in Southeast Asia, much as they have for nearly five centuries.

Despite hopes for the transfer of technology, the dependence of Southeast Asian economies upon foreign skills has never been greater. Efforts to lift the technological competence of local populations earn little praise—as surveys of Japanese and Korean managers based in Southeast Asia reveal. Major projects remain turn-key in nature, and resource extraction and commodities still account for a large percentage of foreign earnings. The value-added in much of Southeast Asian production comes to far less than in Japan or South Korea. This technological gap *within* Asia is growing mightily.

Indeed, signs abound that the "easy" phase of Southeast Asian growth may be ending. In the October 13, 1991, edition of the *New York Times*, correspondent David Sanger describes how footloose foreign investors are now seeking less costly places than Singapore to conduct their assembly operations. One remedy: develop "growth triangles" involving adjacent areas in Malaysia and Indonesia, which both have cheaper labor and raw materials. Singapore would supply managerial expertise.

"Singapore is hardly alone in facing these problems," Sanger says. "They echo throughout the 'Four Dragons,' the name

attached to the world's fastest-growing economies in the 1980s: Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan." Sanger reports that there was once much talk about the Little Dragons soon "replicat[ing] the success of postwar Japan, a goal that always seemed . . . over-ambitious. Now, none of the four is so new anymore, and growth rates, while still impressive, are not likely to see the pace of the 1980s return."

Many of the Southeast Asian nations have something else in common: a highly secretive business culture, in which public



In Shanghai, a billboard advertises a video system that few mainland Chinese can afford. The economic dynamism of the Asia-Pacific may not offset abiding political obstacles to regionalism.

and private interests mix as effortlessly as the shuffled halves of a deck of cards. The habits of Southeast Asia's rulers rest upon centuries of experience by petty kings and sultans, who levied tolls on river or seaborne commerce. Governance in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand still mirrors these passive wealth-generating habits.

To dismiss this as "corruption" misses the point. Patrimonial politics are intertwined with protected monopolies for favored cronies. Those so privileged carry different names in each country: Indonesians

call the local Chinese middlemen benefiting from patronage *cukongs*. In Malaysia, the word *towkay* is more often heard.

The Malay scholar Shaharuddin Maaruf, in his 1984 book *The Concept of a Hero in Malay Society*, has scathing words for the type of ruler exemplified in his country's past and still honored today. "Among the negative ideals of the dominant Malay elite," Shaharuddin says, "is the love of gain, the desire to get rich at all costs, a craving for material comfort and easy living, regardless of ethics."

Even in India, the phrase *baboo-neta raj* (literally "bureaucrat-trader rule") sums up both a type of economy and a frame of mind just as prevalent among Southeast Asian nations. The only difference is what economists call a far better "efficiency factor" among the latter: Most investors in Thailand or Malaysia face a one-time, factorable cost of corruption, not continuing demands on the purse.

These practices are not simply hiccups in an otherwise smoothly running capitalist engine sweeping all before it across East Asia. In his recent book, *God's Dust: A Modern Asian Journal*, Ian Buruma addresses a wider, more perplexing set of "cultural" questions. In Asia, Buruma explains, "modernity came from the outside, imposed by or imported from an alien world." Discussing eight countries, he describes how the apparent modernity in Asia may disguise as much as it reveals. Most of East Asia's Western admirers see the window dressing of central-business-district modernity adorning Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Seoul, or dozens of other Asian cities. But the rhythms of commerce, and the unobserved decision-making which determines its conquests, have no convincing parallel with what we find familiar. For example, during the 1980s governments in Malaysia, Indonesia, and elsewhere in Southeast Asia privatized many of their public corporations, a move

that won praise from the Western business press. Yet the effect was rarely to widen the ambit of "popular capitalism" by spreading share-holding throughout the population. On the contrary, insider advantages favored the politically powerful, reinforcing their position. "Crony privatization" might be a better description of what really happened in these countries.

Just as we must qualify such words as privatization, so must we ask whether "entrepreneurship" or the "market economy" mean the same thing to Asians as they do to Americans or Australians—or, for that matter, whether they mean the same thing to all Asians. Clearly, they do not. Japanese and Koreans make little effort in private to disguise their contempt for the "soft" cultures to their south; the Northeast Asians recognize free riding when they see it.

Beyond such intraregional cultural differences lie larger issues that run counter to a fully shared Pacific Identity. Examine the varying interpretations given to the word "democracy" and "human rights," for example. In the August 27, 1991, edition of the *Los Angeles Times*, Jim Mann describes a sharp dividing line between European and American dismay over human-rights abuses in Burma (and in other Asian countries such as Indonesia) and attitudes among Asian countries. Most Asian leaders fear and resent Western moves to devise a doctrine justifying intervention in a country's domestic affairs if minimal standards are not kept. Japan more often tries to equivocate rather than take a position on these questions.

Early in 1991, the European Community's foreign ministers collided with their ASEAN counterparts over the Burmese leadership's disgraceful human-rights record. This disagreement reflects a sharp divide over the permissibility of criticizing even the most repressive Asian regimes.

In Asia, economic and political plural-

ism do not necessarily go together. Consider Thailand, which enjoys an altogether too benign image in the West. In 1991, the Thai military overthrew a corrupt but democratic government. The Thai generals are perfectly content to deal with Burma's rulers. With Rangoon's acquiescence, Thai generals connive in logging the remaining stands of Burmese tropical timber. Many among the Thai military happily traffic in endangered species of wildlife, despite international conventions against such trade. They also traffic in heroin, and for more than a decade they have been indifferent to the Khmer Rouge's controlling and terrorizing a string of camps housing Cambodian refugees along the Thai-Cambodian border. All of this coexists perfectly well with Thailand's economic miracle.

As these and other examples show, the Asian-Pacific region contains a mixture of confusing or countervailing trends. We see liberalizing economies but few truly liberal political systems. We also see persistent ethnic strife and authoritarian temperaments. Beneath the easy slogans of common economic purpose lie old enmities. Koreans of whatever allegiance distrust Japan. Chinese hegemonism is feared throughout Southeast Asia. Unresolved territorial disputes remain an irritant, while ethnic separatism still plagues a wide swath of territory from Burma to eastern Indonesia.

Many southern Thais remain Malay Muslim in orientation and identity, resentful of Thai overlordship. Some of the East Timorese forcibly incorporated into Indonesia during 1975-76 still resist Jakarta's occupation, while ethnic Melanesian separatists continue a lonely struggle in the western half of New Guinea which passed in 1963 into Indonesian sovereignty. The Malaysian state of Sabah remains disputed by the Philippines. None of the claimant

countries to islands in the South China Sea accepts the others' claims. Hostile armies face each other on the Korean peninsula, always a hair-trigger's pull from war.

In far too many "miracle economies," deep social conflicts could quickly eliminate our confidence that the East Asians are securely on track. Even in the best years, ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia remit billions of dollars to outside havens in Perth, Vancouver, San Francisco, and other favored abodes. Just one serious anti-Chinese riot in Malaysia—say, a repetition of the May 1969 Kuala Lumpur disturbances—would puncture Singapore's bubble of confidence. Similar anti-ethnic Chinese pressures exist in Indonesia.

Diplomatically, the ASEAN countries wonder how to contain Vietnamese dynamism after Hanoi's reintegration into the world economy. Taiwanese separatism could become a flashpoint in Taipei's ties to Beijing. Centrifugal tendencies are on the rise in south and west China. Australia and New Zealand are having Eurocentric second thoughts about the desirability of their East Asian future, as resentment against Asian immigrants and investment rises. And these are only some of the obvious political question marks hanging over East Asia and the Pacific.

But aren't such difficulties likely to be smoothed over as economies become more diversified and as Asians fan out along the Pacific Rim? Writers such as Norman Palmer chart a "mounting tide of contacts among officials, businessmen, professional people, scholars, students, tourists and others [which] is reaching new heights with every passing year." After all, China now deals routinely with South Korea, while Vietnam could soon re-enter world commerce.

I would still argue that this range of people-to-people contact owes more to the

globalization of Asian economic interests and less to an emerging regional mentality. Choice of language, choice of tertiary education, choice of popular culture, choice of intellectual inspiration—all these still point Westward. Indeed, one of the more damaging rebuttals of the touted Asian-Pacific regionalism is the very narrow appeal that Japan or South Korea have for the privileged youth of the rest of Asia. Despite huge investment by Northeast Asian firms throughout Asia, the lifestyle preferences of urban youths in Asia (including Japan and South Korea) remain fixed on American or European trends. Nor do Asians (other than poor migrant workers) clamor to move into Northeast Asia's homogeneous and often xenophobic societies. In Southeast Asia, both capital and the cream of cosmopolitan-minded people (particularly ethnic Chinese) head instead for havens in Europe, Australia, and North America.

Pacific regionalists counter by saying that the creation of Asian migrants' enclaves in Vancouver (now known among some Canadians as "Hong-couver"), Perth, or Los Angeles simply adds to regional momentum. Watching the gathering reaction to Asian migration and its isolation from the rest of the host economy in countries of migration, I am not so sure.

Because the Japanese understand regional limitations far better than Americans do, their trading houses and firms have played a better hand in their Asian-Pacific investments. Japan's Confucian mix, its convergent governmental and corporate policies, and its geographical proximity to the rest of Asia all "work" within an environment which, moreover, has one immense, extra benefit—American security.

If we take Japan's heavy emphasis on domestic economic rehabilitation, its impressive capital and research investment, and its careful cultivation of external markets during the past 45 years, it should not

really surprise us that Japan has become the preeminent trading partner and source of direct investment in all but a very few Asian economies.

The extent and pace of Japanese investment in countries as far apart as Pakistan and Australia have attracted much attention since the yen dramatically appreciated against other traded currencies after 1985. Yet several earlier phases of Japanese investment had also made a mark: Beginning in the 1950s and '60s, the Japanese invested in natural resources and fisheries. In the 1970s, this emphasis shifted to investing in consumer durable manufacturing, especially in motor transport, for the domestic Asian markets. Some labor-intensive industries also moved out of Japan into other Asian locales to export their product to the North American and European markets.

Now Japan's grip is well cemented. Throughout Asia, Japanese influence extends into commercial banking, real estate, resorts and hotels, and into more sophisticated assembly operations. Given such trends, does this ascendancy by Japan prefigure the shape of things to come—a new and improved version of Tokyo's hoped-for Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, with Japan, of course, at the center?

It is here that we must confront an important question: What exactly is our region-in-waiting? Is it, in the widest sense, the "Asia-Pacific" including South Asia? Or the "Pacific Rim"? Or perhaps East Asia without North America? Or even a narrower slice of East Asia without the Russians at the north or the Australians, New Zealanders, and assorted Pacific islanders at the southern extremity? If it is to be the "Pacific Rim," should we err on the side of inclusiveness, and bring in Mexico, Peru and Chile? Why not all the South Pacific microstates? And what about Burma?

This is not merely an academic exer-

cise: The future direction of APEC, PBEC, and other Basin organizations turns on such questions. Much energy goes into wrangles over which country comes next, if at all, into APEC. The United States favors the inclusive approach. So also, for the time being, does Japan. But others want a stiffening of the East Asian backbone and eschew a woolly, Pacific-wide grouping embracing English-speaking settler nations, transplanted European Latins, Polynesians, Andean Indians, and Mexican Latinos. To some Asian nostrils, such inclusiveness carries an unpleasant, mongrel scent.

Those who feel this way would position the six ASEAN nations as the core of an "East Asian Economic Caucus" within APEC. They would expand their caucus to include Japan, South Korea, and China, but would exclude the North Americans, Australasians, the Latin Americans, and others such as Papua New Guinea.

A lot of heat arises from this debate, but it receives little mention in even our major metropolitan press. The small slice of official Washington that pays attention to the matter is grumbling more and more audibly over the behavior of Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia's prime minister and chief proponent of the Palefaces-Out School. Mahathir is the author of the caucus notion (itself a spin-off of a plan for an altogether separate East Asian grouping); before the United Nations General Assembly in September 1991, he asked whether "racist" reasons might lie behind Washington's objections to his plan. This was an interesting reaction from the premier of a country that institutionalizes separate treatment for non-Malays and other ingeniously defined "indigenous people."

Quite apart from diplomatic tempests, it is hard to discount the enthusiasm many Americans show for a coming Pacific Century, and harder yet to predict the consequences of such zeal. Not surprisingly,



Samurai businessman: All the talk about Pacific regionalism, some skeptics say, is only a cover for Japan's economic ambitions.

American West Coasters, geographically distant from the conceits and preoccupations of effete easterners and living chock-a-block with Asian migrants, feel much more acutely the tug of the transpacific promise.

This, in itself, has a long history. At the beginning of the 20th century, a number of California railroad magnates, newspaper proprietors, and West Coast politicians espoused the notion of a continuing westward destiny. "The Atlantic is the ocean of the past," declared Los Angeles developer and railroad man Henry Huntington in 1912. "Europe can supply its wants; we shall supply the wants of Asia." With changing demographics and rising transpacific business, the West Coast's peculiar tone has grown even more optimistic. David Rieff, in his recent urban profile, *Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World*, captures this promotional fervor in the words of a California political consultant:

"... Business looks to the Pacific here. They know that's where the real growth is going to be in the 21st century. With Europe uniting, they'll have everything they need, whereas Asia...." His voice trailed off. "Did you know there are a hundred million middle-class people in India?" he asked me.

In rethinking my own Pacific journey, I have tried to understand why we in the United States have become so receptive to the vague goal of a Pacific Century. We have, I think, partly because of West Coast enthusiasm and partly because of our anxieties about economic decline and competitiveness. Partly, too, we yearn for the stability of clearly defined regions in a time of unnerving change, when the very notion of national sovereignty is coming under sharp challenge. But I also believe we are now in a bit of a typically American muddle.

Large numbers of articulate Americans now pretend that they do not, after all, inhabit a relatively new settler nation that owes its creation and abiding temperament to European expansion and European ideas. Like it or not, in public discourse, in attitudes to authority, or in notions of aesthetic appreciation and justice, we are still children of the Occident. And that is just as true of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, where similar soul-searching is going on. (In more complicated ways, Latin American nations are having to find their own identities in relation to the Old World; few, if any, see the solution to their search in the Pacific horizon.)

Ultimately, I find, in my own journey home, a uniqueness to America that I would not like to see lost. Our urge to dip into the Pacific Basin is, after all, rather an old idea, driven by the dynamic of westward expansion and Manifest Destiny. But to discard the "Atlantic" and to embrace instead the "Pacific" results only in further

misunderstanding about our special place in the world. As Daniel Hamilton and I recently argued in the *Washington Quarterly*:

[T]remendous possibilities of leverage await the United States: Despite talk of U.S. decline, the nation remains the principal partner for both Europe and Japan. It retains better ties with each than they do with each other. Americans find themselves courted by Europeans to join an "Alliance of the Occident" against the economically menacing Orient. At the same time, the Japanese and Northeast Asians talk about *Nichibei*, or a type of condominium in association with the United States that will dominate the world economy. Either way, the broker is being wooed.

The broker should continue to keep his distance from both suitors. If we are primarily Western in outlook, we are Westerners who can turn our national visage in more directions than any other Western country. But it is quite enough for us to recognize East Asia's competitive challenge, to learn from it what we can, and to do our best to encourage the security and prosperity of the Pacific nations; we need not buy into the notion of the Pacific region as our salvation and future.

Placing too much credence in the Pacific Century could even distract us from addressing problems at home—rebuilding our infrastructure, educating our young, retraining our workforce, paying off our huge national debt. (Is it really wise to keep expecting the Japanese to underwrite the U.S. deficit?) Basin fever could also interfere with efforts to forge regional ties with our closer neighbors to the north and south. It would be foolish indeed, for the sake of a dawning Pacific Century, to abandon the idea of a new American Century, in a more inclusive, continental sense of the phrase.

By all means, applaud the Pacific momentum, but steer clear of the propaganda.

BACKGROUND BOOKS

PACIFIC PROSPECTS

Just 15 years ago, readers interested in contemporary affairs would have been puzzled by any reference to the "Asia-Pacific," let alone to an anticipated "Pacific Century." In the late 1970s, repercussions of the American defeat in Vietnam, uncertain prospects for stability elsewhere in Southeast Asia, and the still mixed record of industrial growth in many Asian economies scarcely portended a tidal shift in world trade toward the countries arrayed about the Pacific Rim. Few statesmen, and only the rare economist, harbored notions of trans-pacific collaboration.

Today, the number of books dealing with the Asia-Pacific and the Pacific region-to-come is steadily growing, although it still lags behind the journalistic coverage of *Fortune*, *Business Week*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Economist*, and other business-oriented newspapers and magazines.

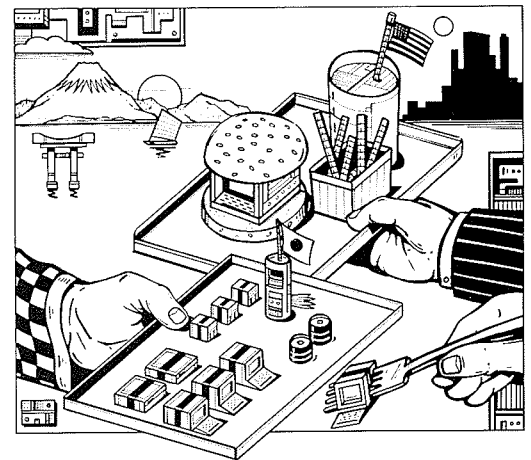
The reason for the interest of the business press is obvious. Just as the term "Southeast Asia" emerged during World War II to denote a theater of military operations, so the phrase "Asia-Pacific" has come to have an equally narrow meaning: a theater of economic operations. In almost Marxist fashion, economics has been the engine behind the regional dynamism.

The locomotive was Japan—fueled by U.S. assistance in the early postwar years. Sociologist Ezra Vogel's **Japan As Number One: Lessons for America** (Harvard, 1979) and Frank Gibney's **Japan: The Fragile Superpower** (Norton, 1975) stand out among the explanations of the defeated Axis power's postwar ascent. "The spectacular rise of 'Japan, Inc.' in 35 years from postwar destitution to a gross national product of more than \$1.2 trillion will go down," Gibney writes, "as the world's fastest-moving, if not its greatest, economic success story."

Soon to follow Japan's example were the newly industrialized economies of Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, a group that journalists dubbed variously the "Four Dragons" or the "Four Little Dragons." Among the better group portraits of these fast-learners are Kent Calder and Roy Hofheinz, Jr.'s **The**

Eastasia Edge (Basic, 1982) and Ezra Vogel's more recent **The Four Little Dragons: The Spread of Industrialization in East Asia** (Harvard, 1991). Questioning, though not rejecting, the Confucian factor in these countries' industrial development, Vogel places equally strong emphasis on "situational factors," including land reforms that weakened the grip of traditional rural elites who stood in the way of economic transformation.

Noteworthy studies of the individual "Dragons" include Alice H. Amsden's **Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization** (Oxford, 1989), Thomas Gold's **State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle** (M. E. Sharpe,



1986), Kevin Rafferty's **City on the Rocks: Hong Kong's Uncertain Future** (Viking, 1989), and R. S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy's **Singapore: The Legacy of Lee Kuan Yew** (Westview, 1990). The point Amsden makes repeatedly about Korea—that it was an industrial "learner" rather than an innovator—holds for the other "Dragons" as well.

The four largest countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines—earned the epithet "Four Farms" because of their commodity-based exports. More recently, because of their expanding spread of manufactured exports, three of the "Farms" have been renamed. In **Asia's New Little Dragons: The**

Dynamic Emergence of Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia (Contemporary, 1991) business consultant Steven Schlossstein points to the impressive strides made by the "New Little Dragons," but he does not gloss over the corruption and political instability that still plague these newly industrialized nations.

Other observers are far more pessimistic about this sub-region. Kunio Yoshihara in **The Rise of Ersatz Capitalism in Southeast Asia** (Oxford, 1988) and James C. Clad in **Behind the Myth: Business, Money and Power in Southeast Asia** (Unwin Hyman, 1989) see patrimonial business practices and the lack of technological innovation as clouds on the Southeast Asian horizon.

The question, of course, is whether East Asia's economic dynamism will lead to strong ocean-wide affiliations (for security as well as for trade) or even to greater regional consciousness among the Pacific peoples. Although often informative, the books that announce an emerging regionalism tend to disappoint in two ways. Either they do little more than recapitulate the East Asian success stories, or they wander anecdotally throughout the wider Pacific Basin and come to hopeful conclusions. Robert Elegant's **Pacific Destiny: Inside Asia Today** (Crown, 1990) exemplifies the former tendency; Simon Winchester's **Pacific Rising** (Prentice Hall, 1991), the latter. That said, Winchester's vision of Pacific unities—including his depiction of the overseas Chinese communities as the "silken web that holds together the edges of the new Pacific"—is often persuasive.

Gerald Segal's **Rethinking the Pacific** (Oxford, 1990) is perhaps the best scholarly assessment of the region. His goal is to integrate "the narrower aspects of culture, ideology, economics, and military affairs into a wider appreciation of the patterns in the international politics of the region." Segal, a fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, is thorough and cautious: "On the balance," he notes in his discussion of Basin geography, "the size of the Pacific remains more a barrier than a binding force for states along its rim." And he believes that even "if there was once a chance for a Pacific Economic Community, the time has now certainly past."

That may be too dire, but Segal's views are informed by a strong sense of history and comparative politics. Harvard historian Akira Iriye displays the same strengths in **Across the Pacific: An Inner History of American-East Asian Relations** (Harcourt, 1967), a lucid survey of American-East Asian relations from the late 18th century up to the Vietnam War. Despite the idealism of early American missionaries and of later Wilsonian internationalists, Iriye believes U.S.-Asian relations have been repeatedly marred by mutual misapprehensions. Nevertheless, he holds out hope that greater "intellectual communication" across the ocean will create at least a "peaceful Pacific."

Iriye takes his survey up to more recent times in his contribution to **The United States and the Pacific Basin: Changing Economic and Security Relationships** (Woodrow Wilson Center, 1991), edited by Mary Brown Bullock and Robert S. Litwak, program directors at the Woodrow Wilson Center. Several essays in this collection look at the U.S. role in the Pacific from the perspectives of Japan, Korea, and the Philippines. Philosopher Yersu Kim, as well as sketching a fascinating history of Korean perceptions of America, points to current sources of tension between Seoul and Washington: "Many Koreans see Korean exports to the United States as carefully tailored to the needs of the American consumer market, while the goods the United States is promoting for import to Korea are largely irrelevant to the needs of the Korean market and sometimes even harmful to the well-being of the Korean people."

Considering the larger Pacific future—and America's role in it—Iriye perorates with a blend of realism and optimism: "Economically, if a Pacific common market is premature, at least efforts should be made to facilitate the movement of people, goods, and capital across national boundaries. Culturally, the United States should continue to exercise leadership in promoting democracy and human rights. All this will be an enormous undertaking, but the visions underlying it are those that inspired traditional American-Asian relations as well as Wilsonianism."

Modest as it is, this view of Pacific possibilities is not a bad one on which to build.

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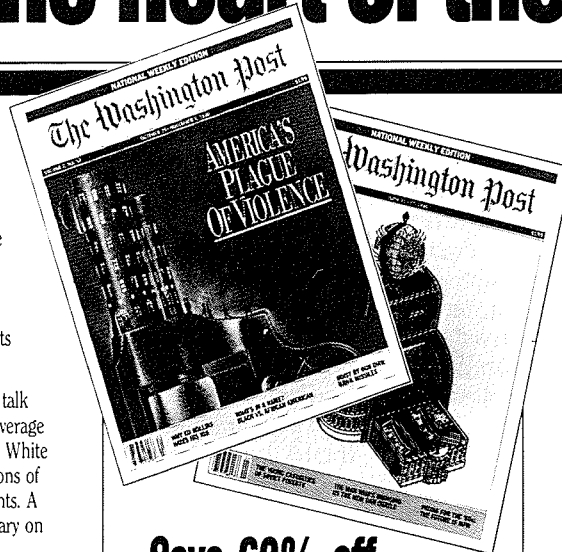
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CURRENT BOOKS

Mean Street

by Michael M. Thomas

A review of recent books dealing with American finance

Joseph Schumpeter, the theorist of capitalism, espoused a view of intellectuals that has become well-known: "Intellectuals are not a social class . . . ; they hail from all the corners of the social world, and a great part of their activities consists in fighting each other and in forming the spearhead of class interests not their own One of the touches that distinguishes them . . . is the absence of direct responsibility for practical affairs . . . , the absence of that first-hand knowledge of them which only actual experience can give."

I quote this passage not only for its truth, of which there is a great degree, but because of Schumpeter's importance as posthumously anointed "head boy" in the ideological pantheon assembled by apologists for what has been going on in Wall Street for the last decade. Schumpeter feared that the opposition of intellectuals, from whatever motive, would destroy capitalism. What he did not foresee is that the negligence of intellectuals might encourage capitalism to ruin itself.

I have been writing about Wall Street for roughly a dozen years. I have had an advantage over many of my fellow journalists in that, for a quarter-century beginning in 1961, I worked in investment banking, eventually at the "highest level" or in the "innermost circle." I suppose this qualifies as "direct responsibility for practical affairs"; certainly it left me with a solid grounding in what Wall Street does and how it goes about its often devious work. Wall Street does much of its lucrative work in code, rather in the spirit of those World War II films in which a disembodied BBS voice intones "the rain is falling in the East" over the wireless and a dozen *maquisards* promptly make arrangements to be in Nantes on the following Tuesday. I

know the *lingua franca* of the "Street."

The beginning of my Wall Street career coincided with the great 1960s stock-market boom, which prepared the ground for its more bumptious 1980s successor. The critical difference was that the '60s boom occurred in a political atmosphere dominated by presidents who encouraged respect for government and its mandated powers, rather than exactly the opposite. You might say that Wall Street got rich in the '60s in spite of itself, reluctantly yielding to legal and ethical inhibitions that two decades later no longer applied.

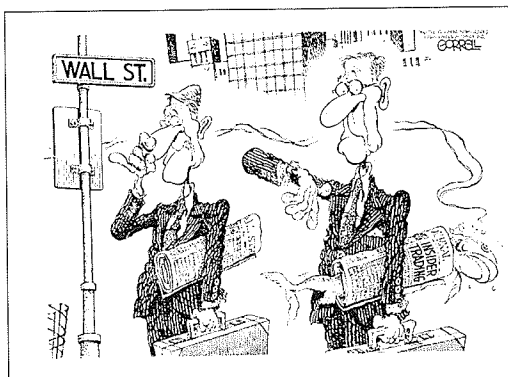
James B. Stewart's **Den of Thieves** (Simon & Schuster) establishes with a virtual certainty that Wall Street corruption of the 1980s, symbolized by the market manipulations of Dennis Levine, Ivan Boesky, and Michael Milken (the Street icons of the decade), amounted to something more than the overreaching of chaps who were fundamentally decent if a tad too ambitious. The pattern that Stewart, an editor at the *Wall Street Journal*, describes for the 1980s appears to be one of pervasive and calculated lawlessness. The recent discovery of Salomon Inc.'s peculations in the Treasury market only reinforces this impression, as does the revelation, even as I write, that Merrill Lynch may have engaged in the rankest sort of deceptive book-cooking with a busted Florida savings-and-loan.

Now if this were all a zero-sum game limited to Wall Street, it wouldn't matter. The thieves would be stealing from each other, and at the end of the day some would be flush and others broke and the rest of us could get on with our lives. Unfortunately, the worst depredations, whether outright illicit (Milken *et al.*) or only horrifying (the junk-bond takeover mania), depended on access to what I define as "the Public Capital." By Public Capital I mean financial sureties, commitments, and subsidies from the American

taxpayer that were legislated into being, usually without our knowledge, by our elected representatives. This Public Capital was made freely available to finance the most outrageous (and frequently illegal) private speculations. In the savings-and-loan collapse, the sureties have translated into a hard cost to our own and coming generations of over \$500 billion—enough to fight six Gulf Wars, except it is we and not the Saudis, Kuwaitis, and Japanese who will be footing the bill. I might add that a half-trillion dollars may prove low; the meter is still running. Moreover, the need to finance these sureties, to come up with the cash to make good on the guarantees, has required levels of federal borrowing that distort the very structure of the U.S. political economy. Whatever we spend to pay for the S&L bailout we won't be spending to finance infrastructural improvements or investments in education and national health.

The dirtiest work was done on Wall Street. The Street works most profitably when it functions as a world entirely unto itself. Wall Street thus likes to promote the general impression that its work is of an eye-glazing complexity, light-years beyond the grasp of the intelligent general public. Our ignorance, in other words, is Wall Street's bliss.

I beg to disagree. The public costs alone argue that finance is too important to be left to financiers. Unfortunately, the mass media cannot capture the process in a web of soundbites and truncated column inches. Yet there once was a time when the best minds in America looked hard at Wall Street and wrote about the goings-on in the shade of the buttonwood tree. I am thinking in particular of *Chapters of Erie* (1870) by Charles Francis Adams and Henry Adams, which scathingly describes the extraordinary contest for control of the Erie Railroad by Jay Gould and Jim Fisk on one hand and Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt on the other, as well as the amazing tale of Gould's attempt to corner the gold market in 1869, in which he attempted indirectly to enlist the complicity



of President Ulysses Grant.

Chapters of Erie is a model of writing about financial chicanery: informed, intelligible, and sauced with ethical outrage. It doesn't lose its moral sense in audience-grabbing revelations of personalities, as do recent best-sellers like Bryan Burrough and John Helyar's *Barbarians at the Gate* (Harper & Row) and Michael Lewis's *Liar's Poker* (Norton). There, the essential points get lost in the gossip.

Fortunately, there exist a number of recent books to which the intelligent, concerned reader can turn for genuine enlightenment as to the ways by which a nation of 250 million people were robbed of something close to a trillion dollars by probably fewer than ten thousand financiers or, as they styled themselves during the fat years, "financial entrepreneurs." We desperately need such enlightenment and, may I add, outrage—outrage which translates into political action—to preserve and reconstitute capitalism so that it serves most of the people most of the time.

These are books about the way Wall Street really works. Doomsday scriptures need not apply for a place on this list, nor manuals of investment strategy, nor almost anything by economists. (I concur with Joseph Schumpeter's opinion that economists are responsible for "practically every nonsense that has ever been said about capitalism.") Nor are books like Kevin Phillips's *The Politics of Rich and Poor* on my list. They are full of useful facts and charts, and they sell lots of (unread) copies, but ultimately fall flat as stories

and lose their capacity to incite outrage in the reader or a need to know more.

The best books resonate beyond the particular episodes with which they deal. Stewart's *Den of Thieves* does this not by editorializing but by *showing* vividly that what we confront in the matter of Milken *et al.* is not simply individual high jinks carried too far but the systemic corruption of the wellsprings of American finance.

The way to begin to understand the mind of Wall Street is in terms of the troubles it's seen. Despite a superficial impression of "*plus ça change . . .*," Charles Kindleberger's **Manias, Panics and Crashes** (Harper Torchbooks) and Robert Sobel's **Panic on Wall Street** (Dutton) reveal that the law Tolstoy applied to unhappy families in the opening lines of *Anna Karenina*—that each is different—is true too of convulsions in the markets: Financial crises are sufficiently different to blind their participants to the lessons of history. In any case, Wall Street takes an essentially consoling view of its own history. The function of the past is to comfort, not to instruct. That something happened once legitimates its happening again. And again and again.

Moving forward to the dire present, Bernard Nossiter's **Fat Years and Lean: The American Economy since Roosevelt** (Harper & Row) locates the Greed Decade of the 1980s in some sort of cyclical context. The abiding legacy of the 1960s boom—still improperly understood, yet indispensable to comprehending the successful depredations of the junk-bond, leveraged-buyout gang—was the "institutionalization" of the ownership of American business: the shift from small stockholders inclined to patience, often ill-advised, to large pools of capital (pension funds, mutual funds, etc.) aggressively managed for maximum short-term gain, since it was on the basis of this gain that the money managers were compensated and made personally wealthy. Columbia University finance professor Louis Lowenstein's **What's Wrong With Wall Street** (Addison-Wesley) is a good intro-

duction to the demons which crouched red in tooth and claw beneath the lid of this particular Pandora's Box.

Foresight used to be a virtue, but we have become a nation so obsessed with topicality that the public only applauds as foresighted what it in fact already knows. The trick, of which Tom Wolfe is the master, is to write so closely on the heels of an event as to seem actually to have predicted it. Books published ahead of their allotted Warholian moment, when the public is still not ready to believe, might as well not have been published.

One such was **Selling Money** (Grove Weidenfeld) by S. C. Gwynne, recounting the writer's (now West Coast bureau chief for *Time*) undistinguished adventures as a young banker lending to the Philippines in the Marcos years. It is better and more telling than another young investment banker's book, Lewis's *Liar's Poker*, but it appeared at a time when no one wanted to believe the sort of tales Lewis subsequently retold when the public was prepared—yea, anxious—to think the worst. Gwynne's was one of the two best books about '80s-style commercial banking. The other was *New Yorker* writer Mark Singer's **Funny Money** (Knopf) about the 1982 collapse of the Penn Square Bank, a dinky Oklahoma operation which brought down the mighty Continental Illinois Bank. Singer's book contains a memorable line that Michael Milken should have read: "No matter what many of us often insist on believing, thieving conspiracies can almost never be built to last."

Each Wall Street decade is unique in the types of transactions which exemplify its emergence, flowering, and eventual fall from financial grace. During the 1920s there were stock-pooling operations, culminating in pyramidal investment trusts; during the 1960s, acquisition-driven conglomerates, a form of corporate organization based on the false premise that an MBA degree equips a person to manage any kind of business. During the 1980s there was the leveraged buyout.

To understand the era of the leveraged buyout, I recommend, in addition to Stew-

art's *Den of Thieves*, a short shelf of six books. Some enterprising book club should offer them together as a package.

The Money Wars (Dutton), by Roy C. Smith, gives a good Gibbonian overview, even though Smith, as a former investment banker, is a mite too kindly in his estimate of the damage to America's industrial infrastructure wrought by his old colleagues. For what the carnage looks like close up, there is no more appalling record than Washington journalist Max Holland's **When the Machine Stopped** (Harvard Business School Press), the sad tale of how one of America's most technologically adept builders of machine tools, Houdaille Industries, was reduced by a leveraged buyout to a pathetic shell. Holland asks the vital question: How many jobs is an extra percentage point of junk-bond interest worth?

Of all the decade's humongous deals, whose multimillion-dollar fees attracted investment-banking and legal parasites in droves, the 1984 imbroglio involving Pennzoil, Texaco, and Getty Oil takes the cake. It is a more interesting dogfight than RJR Nabisco, the subject of *Barbarians at the Gate*, because everyone involved was at the top of his game and more evenly matched. Two good books about Pennzoil-Texaco-Getty are Steve Coll's **The Taking of Getty Oil** (Atheneum) and Thomas Petzinger, Jr.'s **Oil and Honor** (Putnam). As a study in financial parasitology, journalist Connie Bruck's **The Predator's Ball** (Penguin) is, I think, the richest account we are likely to get of Milken and his Age. Bruck casts her net wider than Stewart did and includes sinners whom justice and censure have so far spared. Finally, *New York Times* financial writer Sarah Bartlett's **The Money Machine: How KKR Manufactured Power and Profits** (Warner) provides the closest look so far into the era's money men of choice, Henry Kravis and his cousin George Roberts. Bartlett is worthwhile because she digs into KKR's money sources,

in particular the firm's relationships with various public-sector pension funds. These relationships were formed, Bartlett shows, through techniques that sound like what in my days on the Street we at least had the frankness to call "bribery."

Bartlett's question is fascinating: Where did the money come from? It is an issue at the heart of the savings-and-loan debacle, which in retrospect reads like an evolved conspiracy—a dangerous combination of feckless misjudgment and sinister calculation by ranking powers in the public and private sectors—to defraud the American taxpayer of the best part of a trillion dollars. The best of the S&L crisis books are Martin Mayer's **The Greatest Bank Robbery Ever** (Scribners) and **Inside Job** (McGraw-Hill) by Stephen Pizzo, Mary Fricker, and Paul Muolo. *Inside Job* also examines the role of organized crime in the looting of the S&L industry. It is a big story, even now only dimly understood. With the cocaine industry generating an estimated \$300 billion a year worldwide, it seems inconceivable that Wall Street—with its technology of funds transfer now more efficient and secretive than ever—did not find a way to channel this torrent of illicit capital to its own benefit.

"Love," a good ol' boy once advised me, "is wonderful, but if it costs over \$100, it's expensive." Wall Street is doubtless wonderful too, but when it starts costing us hundreds of billions and we get so little in return, it's too expensive to ignore or to be ignorant about. The books listed above will leave no reader ignorant or innocent. Only when the general public is informed—and outraged—will it be possible to do something about Wall Street.

—Michael M. Thomas was a top corporate finance partner at Lehman Brothers and Burnham & Co. The author of five novels set in the world of '80s high finance, he writes "The Midas Watch," a column on getting and spending, for The New York Observer.

The Rise of Intolerance

by John Boswell

SEX, DISSIDENCE AND DAMNATION: Minority Groups in the Middle Ages. By Jeffrey Richards. Routledge. 179 pp. \$29.95

Until the middle of this century, premodern European history consisted principally of the doctrines of the Christian church and of the political and military activities of kings and aristocrats. That this added up to a severely restricted, if not grossly distorted, view of European society had become apparent by the 1940s, when this narrow text was vigorously emended by the *annalistes*, the French group of social historians who strove to retrieve from the margins of history the scribbled lives of the poor, the ordinary, the unaristocratic, the nonstrategic, the apolitical.

The *annalistes* thus prepared the way for an even more daring historical enterprise during the 1980s: the effort to recover the ideas, lives, and feelings of those not merely unimportant or overlooked in their own day but actively oppressed, silenced, or hidden from view. In recent years dozens of fine studies have focused high-intensity beams on the underside or outside or invisible inside of premodern European life: D. S. Bailey's work on homosexuality, John Noonan's splendid *Contraception*, J. B. Russell's studies of heresy and the devil, a half-dozen surveys of European Jewish life and anti-Semitism, as well as numerous recent studies of women, children, and the inner life of the family.

Synthesizing these separate studies and incorporating them into the framework of conventional history will be the enterprise of the next generation of historiographers. It will not be easy. Within each emerging subfield there are historical and epistemological controversies, many of them explosive and highly charged, which pose a problem of conflicting trajectories not unlike the quest for unity in a Europe now freed from totalitarian rule in the East but increasingly fragmented by local ethnic

and cultural animosities.

The historiography of premodern homosexuality, for example, is plagued by bitter feuding about what "gay" means and whether it is a category that existed in other times or is merely a sexual label (and understanding) peculiar to modern society. Scholarship on medieval Judaism is paralyzed by disagreement over whether anti-Semitism should be attributed to Christian theology (the traditional view), the economic role of the Jews (which seems more "scientific" but too closely related to ancient and discredited libels), or to local popular prejudices. Writings about heresy continue to struggle with the largely insoluble problem that nearly everything we know about heretics is derived from the writings of their bitterest enemies—"orthodox" Catholic clerics or Inquisitors dedicated to eradicating them—who felt no obligation to "objectivity" when describing them. The study of women is torn between old-fashioned objectivist approaches (women were excluded from power, except for a few queens and noblewomen) and radical critiques that ask, What is "power" anyway, and why does it matter? And can writers in male-dominated societies really provide unbiased answers to such questions? Such debates are useful as starting points, but they can easily derail historical inquiry before it ever gets out of the station.

Certain broad and important trends, however, have emerged. For decades most medievalists have recognized that there was a profound change in European society between the 12th and 14th centuries, from social structures one might loosely categorize as "tolerant" or "open" to much more rigid, more exclusionary, and more punitive ones. Whereas early medieval society evinced, for example, very little awareness of or concern about racial characteristics, by the later Middle Ages hostile stereotypes of "blackamoors" and other darker peoples had become motivat-

ing themes in literary works and highly effective propaganda for whipping up religious and social antagonism to Muslims. While Roman Catholics, Arian heretics, and pagans could peaceably maintain rival churches in some areas of early medieval Europe, any and all dissent was severely punished in the Europe of the High Middle Ages, and non-Catholics were branded or burned or exiled. The Jews, who had lived relatively peacefully in Europe in the millennium preceding the first Crusade (1095), were in the following four centuries physically attacked, forcibly converted, systematically exploited, and ultimately hounded out of most of Europe.

What remains mysterious in the present state of research is what occasioned this great shift. Indeed, should this shift be applied collectively to all "minority groups," or must it be understood as a set of separate historical developments, all of which *happened* to occur more or less simultaneously? At a number of conferences I have attended lately, again and again the puzzled audience has asked the speaker to speculate on what caused this shift. I have heard no convincing answer.

Enter Jeffrey Richards's *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation*. A professor of cultural history at the University of Lancaster and the author of several works on medieval Christianity, Richards would understand that shift by tracing medieval attitudes towards sex in general and toward heretics, witches, Jews, prostitutes, homosexuals, and lepers in particular. Richards acknowledges at the outset that he is attempting "an avowed work of synthesis" of materials otherwise too difficult to access or too technical for nonspecialists. Unfortunately, this appealing simplicity is bought at the cost of accuracy. Richards's book is riddled with errors such as misdating the conciliar rules against Christians eating with Jews by almost three centuries or placing the rise of ghettos in Europe about 500 years too late. Perhaps any effort to deal with problems of this complexity for all of Europe over a period of 1500 years is bound to collapse many—

too many—distinctions. Most readers would find hardly persuasive an analysis of modern Europe that lumped together sources from all countries from the early 16th to the late 20th centuries.

How then does Richards explain Europe's transformation from its relatively tolerant culture into what the English historian R. I. Moore has called "a persecuting society"? First, he focuses on intellectual trends, notably millenarianism, which—although the date kept being postponed—anticipated an imminent end to the world. At the center of this medieval apocalyptic worldview, Richards writes, was the need to defeat the Anti-Christ and for impure elements to be cast out before the final judgment. This apocalyptic view was intensified by a series of devastating plagues: The Black Death (1347–49) wiped out in certain places one third of the population; the plague of 1361–62 destroyed another third. Someone had to be blamed, Richards says, and "there were wild bursts of hysterical scapegoatism which culminated in horrific massacres of Jews."

Richards's explanations, while expressing commonly accepted stereotypes of the Middle Ages, hardly bear close examination. Millenarianism cannot have had much impact on the masses, who had no idea what year it was. And although the plagues' effects were disastrous, they postdate, by and large, the shift in question.

The real cause of medieval paranoia was, in all probability, economic. One of the few clear features in the notoriously treacherous and unmapped economic landscape of premodern Europe is a general decline beginning in the 13th century—almost exactly coincident with the rise of prejudice and hostility toward Jews, gay people, Muslims, racial minorities, and women in positions of power. Inflation soared out of control (despite royal edicts to control it); land values rose astronomically, making it more and more difficult to support a family. Real wages dropped and food production leveled off; famine became common in many areas, leaving the population much less resistant to ordinary illness and wholly defenseless before the

plague. It was almost certainly the perception that the world was "going to hell" on a daily basis that provoked Europeans to look at those who might be going to hell in an eschatological scheme as a possible cause of their problems. Once it had been established that Jews or sodomites were the source of general anguish and suffering, it required a generous soul or a perspicacious mind to resist efforts to punish or eradicate them.

Although Richards describes the paranoia that created a need for scapegoats, he does not at all explain the moral, social, scientific, or aesthetic taxonomy that identified and determined who the scapegoats should be. Richards perpetuates the naive

ment by Christian leaders? Why would the Spanish Inquisition ignore papal excommunication of its officials to enforce its bloody vision of religious orthodoxy? Why would most European states enact death penalties for homosexual acts but impose no sanctions whatever against masturbation or theologically comparable nonprocreative heterosexual activities?

Not having proposed these questions, it is hardly surprising that Richards has no answers to them. One possible explanation, however, is that the program of repression resulted from popular *misunderstandings* of Christian theology, not from faithful implementation of Church policy. Today, in an age of much greater literacy,

only a minority of modern Catholics can accurately distinguish between the Immaculate Conception and the Virgin Birth. Richards himself misunderstands many of the niceties of medieval Christian morality. He claims, for example, that Dante "consigned homosexuals to the Seventh Level of Hell." Anyone who reads the entire *Divine Comedy* knows that the group of persons unmistakably punished for homosexual sodomy are to be found



idea that the intolerance of Christian society corresponds somehow to a theological program. It was, however, popes, high-ranking prelates, and Christian kings—those in authority in "Christian" Europe—who most consistently opposed, condemned, and punished anti-Semitic outbreaks. The Church always shrank officially from imposing physical punishment on heretics. And in the eyes of the scholastics who formulated Catholic sexual doctrine, masturbation was morally equivalent to homosexual behavior, and some common heterosexual activities were even worse than most same-sex acts. So why would the "Christian" populace kill or forcibly convert Jews in the face of explicit condemnations and even severe punish-

in the seventh terrace of Purgatory, the spot nearest to Paradise in Dante's schema. These "sodomites" stand just outside the gates of heaven, on the terrace of those guilty of too much love, above the great masses of humanity gathered on the six terraces of Purgatory and nine circles of Hell, and this bespeaks a much greater ambivalence and complexity in Dante's (and his audience's?) attitude than Richards admits or apparently even notices. Possibly Dante's audience, like Richards, read Catholic moral teachings carelessly, and was more apt to recall an association of homosexuality with damnation than to remember that sexual sins are much less serious than most other kinds of sins. Within a century of *The Divine Comedy*,

Italian states would be hanging those guilty of homosexual offenses, while the vast majority of the human failings that Dante and other moral theologians catalogued—and ranked more grievous—would pass unnoticed or at least unpunished by the same Christian society.

This leads almost ineluctably to the suspicion that something else, something less analytical and more visceral, motivated the sudden increase of intolerance. Here the historian may yield to other disciplines, such as psychology and sociology, more capable of testing and reporting on how humans decide which variations from the norm—as they perceive it—constitute desirable rarity (exceptional athletic ability, uncommon virtue, unusual hair color), which are unimportant (lack of religious belief, low sex drive, peculiar culinary tastes), and which are threatening or sinister (the “wrong” religious beliefs, minority sexual preferences, dark skin color). Historians can only inform such researchers that these norms are not constant in human populations and that there is dramatic change in periods like the later Middle Ages where one can study these shifts actually happening.

There may be, ultimately, no satisfactory answer to the question that underlies Richards’s muddled text: What was the

dark force that turned Europe from the diverse and relatively tolerant mixture of cultures and peoples of the early Middle Ages into the fanatical, narrow-minded rigidity of the later Middle Ages? The problem yields to analytical scrutiny no more readily than the more recent and familiar horrors of the Holocaust. When the many proffered explanations have been adduced, compared, and added up, the evil seems inexplicably greater than their sum, and one yearns to view its perpetrators as mindless minions of some clear-cut, irresistible devil rather than persons like us, caught in a complex interaction of cultural, social, and economic pressures. By looking for a simple explanation, we are in a way recreating precisely what they did—looking for a scapegoat—and we would learn a more valuable lesson from history by accepting the dismaying, uncontrollable complexity of human existence and remaining determined to be decent, humane, and compassionate in spite of it.

—John Boswell is chairman of the history department of Yale University and the author of *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (1989).

What's Really Wrong with the University

by Denis Donoghue

THREE RIVAL VERSIONS OF MORAL ENQUIRY. By Alasdair MacIntyre. Univ. of Notre Dame. 241 pp. \$24.95

It is well known, but perhaps not well understood, that American colleges and universities have again become noisy places. Not noisy or violent as they were in the Vietnam years: There is no sign of blood in the classroom or the cafeteria, or of demonstrations, sit-ins, and strikes. But there is a good deal of irritation in the corridors, and there is a lot of resentment.

Think of the feelings aroused by such considerations as gender, race, “the canon,” authority, feminism, “aesthetic ideology.”

I am not sure that I can contribute much enlightenment to any of these issues. But I have been doing a little reading in their vicinity and have been thinking about the current situation in higher education generally, so far as I have any sense of it.

One of the books I have been reading is Alasdair MacIntyre’s *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*. MacIntyre’s conclusions

here are in line with those of an earlier book, *After Virtue* (1981), in which he argued that the reason discussion of moral issues is interminable and inconclusive is that all the concepts which inform our moral discourse "were originally at home in larger totalities of theory and practice in which they enjoyed a role and function supplied by contexts of which they have now been deprived." It is impossible to have a fruitful discussion about abortion, for instance, because the terms of the rival discourses are fragments broken off from earlier vocabularies—such as those of ancient Greece, medieval Christianity, and the Enlightenment—which are no longer sustained by the systems of value and belief in which they once participated. In *Three Rival Versions*, MacIntyre finds the same incorrigible situation in our universities and wonders what (if anything) we can do about it. He finds teaching and scholarship—especially in our humanities and social-science departments—to have these four characteristics:

There is first a remarkably high level of skill in handling narrow questions of limited detail: setting out the range of possible interpretations of this or that short passage Secondly: there is the promulgation of a number of large and mutually incompatible doctrines often conveyed by indirection and implication Thirdly, insofar as the warfare between these doctrines becomes part of public debate and discussion, the shared standards of argument are such that all debate is inconclusive. And yet, fourthly and finally, we still behave for the most part as if the university did still constitute a single, tolerably unified intellectual community

Frankly, MacIntyre leaves me bewildered at this point. If what he says about the fourth characteristic is true, why do we find it impossible to agree on anything? Presumably his answer is that we merely pretend to be rationalists. Under pressure we revert to our real convictions and prejudices.

But later in his argument, MacIntyre suggests a more persuasive reason, and it

touches upon one of the means by which universities keep going and, for the most part, going in peace. We talk about the intellectual community, but we don't believe in it. We conspire to let the idea of such a community remain entirely abstract and hypothetical; in practice, we have settled for the dispersal of a community into several autonomous constituencies. Each of these goes its own way and minds its own business. Pluralism is the ideology which enables me to consult my pedagogical interests and you to consult yours. So long as I don't interfere with you or (even more to the point) you with me, our rival constituencies can live under one roof.

MacIntyre thus appears to imply that the conditions of discourse are constitutionally hopeless. Each of us is a partisan for his or her own system of values. We can't even imagine what it would mean to hold a different system:

The neutrality of the academic is itself a fiction It is not that the adherent of one particular standpoint cannot on occasion understand some rival point of view both intellectually and imaginatively, in such a way and to such a degree that he or she is able to provide a presentation of it of just the kind that one of its own adherents would give. It is that even in so doing the mode of presentation will inescapably be framed within and directed by the beliefs and purposes of one's own point of view.

If MacIntyre means what he says, he would have us believe that the privilege conventionally given to the imagination is specious. We normally say that the imagination is the mind operating under conditions of freedom, freedom not absolute but sufficient for most human purposes. If I can imagine being different from myself, or from my sense of myself, I can enter with sympathy (or envy, of course) into the life of another person. That makes sympathy possible; if sympathy, then communication; if communication, then participation in a community. MacIntyre appears to say that this sequence is impossible because the first act in it, the imagining of

difference, is impossible.

I would be loathe to agree with MacIntyre on this momentous issue. It would make nonsense of every claim I have made for the merit of art and literature. It would mean that not only the aesthetic imagination but the moral imagination is an illusion: I cannot imagine being other than I am. I'm not sure whether MacIntyre intends to disable me to that extent. But I recognize, belatedly indeed, that theorists of the imagination—I include Immanuel Kant, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and John Keats—have rested their arguments upon the assumption that the imagining of difference is possible and that the resultant feelings are genuine. They have not pressed the assumption very far or asked what precisely it entails.

It is my prejudice that the imagining of difference is possible not only to great poets like Shakespeare but, within our limits, to you and me. But I'm sorry that I have taken it for granted; I should long ago have tried to examine the evidence and to determine the status of an imagined thing. Perhaps it is not too late. It would be appalling if it turned out that the act of imagining is a self-delusion, that what I take to be the imagining of difference is merely a self-bewildering imagining of the same, myself returned to myself.

David Bromwich, a professor of English at Yale, has glanced at one aspect of this matter in a recent essay in *Raritan* called "Higher Education and Group Thinking." Bromwich is replying to Henry Rosovsky, the Dean of Harvard, who, at a Lionel Trilling Seminar at Columbia University, told his audience, *The University should not expect more harmony than exists in the real world*. Bromwich draws out the implications in Rosovsky's remarks.

...what [he] means is: people want to study that which they already are by birth, or have come to be by custom and habit. And so, women's studies for women, Judaic studies for Jews, Afro-American studies for Afro-Americans, Asian-American studies for Asian-Americans. The list is easy to round out even

though there is no clear place for it to stop. But the contents of the list all point in one direction; this is a genetic code for intellectual identity. It says, I am what I came from (what my parents or their parents were). And to the extent that my background does not absolutely define me, the objects of my culture absolutely do.

Bromwich calls this "the reflection theory of education," and he rejects it. So do I. It is an insult to students; in effect it says to them: You have no interest in knowing anything else or in questioning what you take yourself to be.

Reading Bromwich's article, I found myself recalling an essay written by Lionel Trilling in 1961. In "On the Teaching of Modern Literature," Trilling wondered about college teaching in the humanities and about "the relation of our collegiate education to modernity." The unargued assumption of most curricula, Trilling said, is "that the real subject of all study is the modern world; that the justification of all study is its immediate and presumably practical relevance to modernity; that the true purpose of all study is to lead the young person to be at home in, and in control of, the modern world." The assumption, put like that, seems hard to question. But Trilling confessed that in practice it drove him to something like despair. Trilling hoped that there might still be, in each of his students, a certain force of will, reluctant to be domesticated: a force of will, in the impervious form of personal density or gravity, which would question every proffered form of piety.

It may occur to you to wonder how the power of will, which Trilling ascribes to his ideal young man and which we would now also ascribe to the ideal young woman, came to establish itself as a force independent of acculturation and ready to declare its independence. I don't understand how such a force of will could have arisen in our student, and how it escaped the assimilating grasp of cultural formations and their sustaining dialects. Perhaps Trilling felt impelled to posit such a force, because he couldn't bear to think that it

might not have survived, might not have maintained its recalcitrance.

Later in his essay, Trilling speaks with desolate eloquence of a form of education he did not think he would live to see in place. He had been reading Thomas Mann's story "Disorder and Early Sorrow" and thinking about Mann's Professor Cornelius "with his intense and ambivalent sense of history":

For Professor Cornelius, who is a historian, the past is dead, is death itself, but for that very reason it is the source of order, value, piety, and even love. If we think about education in the dark light of the despair I have described, we wonder if perhaps there is not to be found in the past that quiet place at which a young man might stand for a few years, at least a little beyond the competing attitudes and generalizations of the present, at least a little beyond the contemporary problems which he is told he can master only by means of attitudes and generalizations, that quiet place in which he can be silent, in which he can know something—in what year the Parthenon was begun, the order of battle at Trafalgar, how Linear B was deciphered: almost anything at all that has nothing to do with the talkative and attitudinizing present . . . founded upon the modern self-consciousness and the modern self-pity.

It is easy to patronize Trilling in that paragraph and to say that he was just tired, he needed a sabbatical, he was weary of listening to the same rigmarole, the same themes, the same complaints. But what seems to me not to be taken lightly is its sense of the curriculum as being all the better for not being continuous or contiguous to the lives of the students. We cannot ask our students to imagine difference if we don't offer them access to forms, rhythms, ideas, and facts utterly separate from the daily interests of their lives. It might be asked, What's so special about the order of battle at Trafalgar or even about the deciphering of Linear B? But the themes don't matter, except that they locate an interest beyond immediate interests: Let us call this an intrinsic interest, an interest in the theme for its own sake and

not for my sake or yours.

I am aware that Trilling's idea of a university—which in this respect also appears to be Bromwich's idea of a university—is based on the value ascribed to the teaching of subjects which have no immediate bearing, and perhaps no producible bearing at all, upon the lives of the students. I recall from my school days being taught algebra, trigonometry, and coordinate geometry, subjects I found interesting precisely because they were remote, because they did not importune me to respond to them as live issues. All the better for that, I say now and hope I thought then.

It follows that mathematicians are in a more fortunate position than we who teach literature. They can interest their students in certain mathematical procedures because they know what an intrinsic interest is. Trilling evidently thought that knowledge, getting to know something one's daily life doesn't need, might provide the conditions of an educated and active force of will. He doesn't seem to have noticed that his three instances of something worth knowing—the Parthenon, Trafalgar, Linear B equations—are themselves acculturated: They have issued from the cultural interests of a class, a group, a constituency. They are not exempt from considerations of power, however long I may wish to postpone those considerations. I still hope to retain a sense of the intrinsic, and propose to appease it in terms mainly aesthetic, but I am aware that this proposal, too, is compromised and might be shown to conceal a political program. There is no winning in these situations.

So where are we? I don't want to add my murmuring to the noise in the universities. Except for a final word. When I urge the imagining of difference, I don't mean the consideration which is appeased by current talk of "pluralism." Indeed, someone might innocently assume that pluralism refers to the imaginative acts by which a person or group comprehends and connects to quite different persons. But in educational practice today, pluralism

works by giving students occasions of meeting other students whom they regard as already kin. They have immediate interests in common. They make what I have called a constituency. The contents of their courses are designed to minister to that interest and to keep the students together. If

pluralism has a more exacting meaning, I am afraid I have failed to understand it or to recognize it when I see it.

—*Denis Donoghue, a former Wilson Center Fellow, holds the Henry James Chair at New York University.*

OTHER TITLES

Arts & Letters

SOCRATES: Ironist and Moral Philosopher.
By Gregory Vlastos. Cornell. 334 pp. \$57.50

Can someone profess to be ignorant—to have “no wisdom, great or small”—and still be considered an important thinker, indeed one of the founders of Western culture? This is the paradox of Socrates (470?–399 B.C.), who, in fact, wrote nothing himself. Scholars studying Socrates must decipher the thought of someone they haven’t read but have only had second-hand glimpses of—in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, in Aristophanes’s satirical burlesque in *The Clouds*, and, of course, in Plato’s “reproduction” of his conversations in the *Dialogues*.

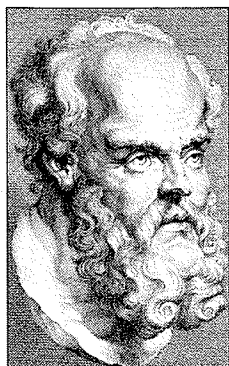
Socrates’s supposed ignorance provides the starting point of Vlastos’s study, a 40-year labor of love. (Vlastos, professor emeritus at Princeton, died last October, shortly after the publication of *Socrates*.) Socrates’s profession of igno-

rance, Vlastos says, must be taken ironically, suggesting only that all knowledge is questionable and must be justified by rational argument. Yet Socrates’s refusal to give his philosophy a “positive content,” to accept any human notion as a given, hardly gives an individual much to go on. Vlastos attempts to

locate in Socrates a solid philosophical foundation by examining two key concepts: virtue and happiness.

Most scholars have argued that Socrates saw happiness and virtue as one, suggesting that no real evil can come to the truly virtuous man. Such an identity hardly makes sense to Vlastos, who says that a virtuous “inmate of a Gulag” would then be “as happy as an equally virtuous inmate of a Cambridge college.”

Rather, Vlastos thinks that Socrates held that virtue, while not identical with happiness, was the *sufficient* cause of it (although other things—health, fortune, family—make “some tiny but appreciable contribution to the design”). Socrates manifested his own virtue in the *Dialogues* through a process of reasoning that was incorruptible and independent of all outside influences. In the *Phaedo* he treated his own imminent death—ordained by an unjust judicial sentence—as little more than the occasion for such a rational discussion. This aloof, calm Socrates has for 2,000 years set a model of the intellect as coolly thinking and judging, unmoved by such unworthy considerations as fear, affection, pity, or revenge. Recently, however, both the political commentator I. F. Stone (in *The Trial of Socrates*, 1988) and the psychologist Marie-Louise von Franz (in *On Dreams*, 1991) have objected that Socrates’s detached reasoning is irrelevant to much of what human beings do. Although Vlastos admired Socrates for more than half a century, here, in his final evaluation, he too concludes that a Socratic sufficiency within oneself is insufficient for living well—and compassionately.



PAUL CELAN: A Biography of His Youth. By Israel Chalfen. Trans. by Maximilian Bleyleben. *Persea*. 214 pp. \$24.95

PAUL CELAN: Holograms of Darkness. By Amy Colin. *Indiana Univ.* 211 pp. \$35

The horrors of the Holocaust are often termed unspeakable or indescribable, even though the endless stream of memoirs, fiction, academic studies, films, and TV documentaries about them belies such claims. Almost alone, the poet Paul Celan (1920–70) has registered the Holocaust *linguistically*, within language itself—in a stony fragmentary language that makes the work of other minimalists seem verbose. Celan abandoned speech and grammar as we know them, writing in a German without logic or syntax, often without connections or verbs, where the “meaning” must be eked out of individual words and sometimes even syllables. Nietzsche observed that if you want to kill God, you must also kill grammar. Perhaps because of his experiences in a labor camp, where God seemed absent, Celan has broken the old contract between the word and the world.

One might think a poet writing in difficult, enigmatic fragments would enjoy little popularity in his own language and be impossible to translate into others. Yet in Germany he is the most honored poet to have published after World War II; by 1989, in Europe and America, there were more than 3,000 books and articles about him. When the translated *Poems of Paul Celan* came out two years ago, the critic George Steiner declared in the *New Yorker* that they altered “my inward existence as only the greatest art [can] . . . [L]et him enter your life. At risk. Knowing that he will change it.”

Even taken out of context, some lines of Celan’s early poetry make sense: “Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night/we drink you at noon death is a master from Germany/we drink you at sundown and in the morning we drink and we drink you/death is a master from Germany his eyes are blue[.]” Yet it is probably more accurate to suggest, as Steiner did, that to “get” Celan you must train your sensibility to a new register, in much the way that the early audiences of abstract painting and atonal music had to learn a different kind of appreciation.

Two new books can assist in that education. Chalfen, Celan’s biographer, elucidates the con-

nection between the life and the poems. He narrates the sad tale of a precocious Jewish youth in Bukovina (now in Romania) who was sent to one forced labor camp while his parents were dispatched to another, where they died. Celan settled in Paris after the war. There, Chalfen relates, the poet exercised his gift for languages, translating 23 major authors, including Shakespeare and Emily Dickinson, from and into a half-dozen languages. (In German, *Celanified* is now a word, meaning to translate and compress at the same time.) Colin, a Germanicist at the University of Pittsburgh, analyzes Celan’s poems, even though she recognizes the irony of doing so: “The critic,” she writes, “inevitably employs a language of which Celan’s texts have already freed themselves.”

Although sorrowful and difficult, Celan’s poems are not without some “faith,” struggling as they often do to shape a language of “still songs to be sung on the other side of mankind.” In 1970, however, Celan became one of the camp survivors (the writers Primo Levi, Jerzy Kosinski, Jean Amiere, and Piotr Rawicz would be others) who chose to survive no longer. Their suicides make more poignant the lines by Celan that appear to refer to God’s absence in the camps:

No one
bears witness for the
witness.

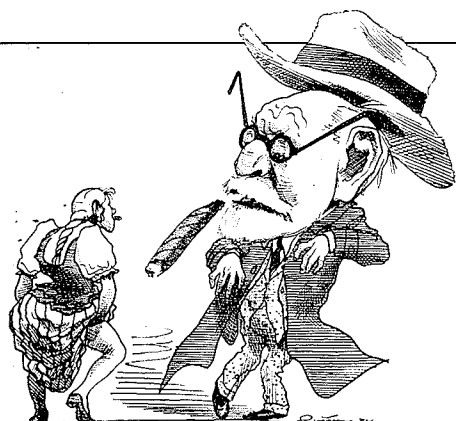
But Celan, through his poetry, has created—and is still creating—his own witnesses.

THE SECRET RING: Freud’s Inner Circle and the Politics of Psychoanalysis. By Phyllis Grosskurth. *Addison-Wesley*. 245 pp. \$22.95

MOTHERS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS: Helene Deutsch, Karen Horney, Anna Freud, Melanie Klein. By Janet Sayers. *Norton*. 319 pp. \$24.95

Sigmund Freud used to hint that the key text of psychoanalysis, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), was his secret autobiography. Taking this clue, two new works attempt to understand psychoanalysis afresh by investigating the characters of its early practitioners.

For both Grosskurth and Sayers, psychoanalysis is a family romance. But for Grosskurth,



professor of psychoanalytic thought at the University of Toronto, the family is predominantly male. She hones in on the Secret Committee in Vienna, which operated as a palace guard to protect Freud and to defend his theories. Not surprisingly, these theories often implied the superiority of men over women. (Possession of that magical instrument, the penis, was considered proof.) Freud's adopted "sons"—Karl Abraham, Max Eitingon, Sandor Ferenczi, Ernest Jones, Otto Rank, and Hanns Sachs—are here pictured bickering with each other while serving their idealized father, Freud. The Freud who emerges in Grosskurth's account hardly deserves all the attention. He is a cold, manipulative narcissist. What made him so unpleasant? Grosskurth offers an answer: Freud received so little tenderness from his mother that "his ability to empathize was frozen."

The figure conspicuously absent from Freud's male family thus becomes the key to his personality. Grosskurth's suggestion is certainly in line with current trends in psychoanalysis, which have shifted from a patriarchal and phallocentric orientation to mother-centered theories. The vocabulary of analysts and therapists reflects this change. While formerly they spoke of resistance, repression, and castration, today they talk of identification, introjection, and deprivation. For this change, argues Sayers, the chair of the Women's Section of the British Psychological Society, we have four women to thank—Helene Deutsch, Karen Horney, Anna Freud, and Melanie Klein. Sayers shows how they drew on their own experiences as mothers (or, in Anna Freud's case, on her wartime work in orphanages) to challenge the centrality of male-oriented theories, such as the castration complex. The irony is that none of these therapists (according to their children)

was a good mother, and their approach—which is called "object-relations theory" and concentrates on the child's earliest relations with his mother—appears to emphasize the mother mainly in order to blame her.

Grosskurth and Sayers both intend to challenge the original "operating principles" of psychoanalysis, but in most ways they remain exponents of them. Neither author questions the familial model on which both the old father-centered and the new mother-centered psychoanalysis are based. They never consider whether our views of early infantile experience are shaped by our *cultural* stereotypes of maternal and paternal roles—that is, by culture itself. As long as "mother" and "father" remain the idealized and blamed sources for human psychology, we will be served by simplistic explanations for our behavior in a complex and increasingly violent society.

History

LABOR WILL RULE: Sidney Hillman and the Rise of American Labor. By Steven Fraser. Free Press. 688 pp. \$29.95

This is at once a history of industrial America and a personal success story to outrival anything in Horatio Alger. During the 1930s, Sidney Hillman (1887–1946) was Franklin Roosevelt's adviser on labor policy, memorialized in FDR's quip, "Clear it with Sidney." For a man who had been a revolutionary agitator in Russia during his teens, Hillman had come some distance.

Hillman's rise from an immigrant cutter working in Chicago's garment trade to a national leader of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was exceptional. Labeled a conservative within the labor movement, Hillman tended to avoid direct confrontation; yet his pragmatism won him the rank-and-file's confidence. (CIO members even went along when he recommended wage cuts in the early years of the Depression.)

Fraser, executive editor of Basic Books, is less concerned with Hillman's personal story than with his role in defining the character of modern American liberalism. Along with reformers such as Hull House founder Jane Ad-

dams, Justice Felix Frankfurter, and Senator Robert Wagner (D.-N.Y.), he envisioned an "industrial democracy" that would soften the socially destructive consequences of the competitive marketplace. During the New Deal and World War II, the victories of Hillman's CIO and other industrial unions—often supported by a sympathetic, activist government—seemed to resolve the century-old "labor problem": Relatively peaceful collective bargaining eased many of the conflicts between management and labor, while the higher wages won at the bargaining table tempered the age-old grievances of workers.

A generation ago most scholars of the labor movement applauded such accomplishments. Fraser, however, casts a more skeptical eye on the extent of Hillman's achievement. Fraser points to the racial and ethnic divisions that limited Hillman's appeal even within the industrial working class. Antagonisms between blacks and Appalachian whites defeated Hillman's attempt to organize textile workers in the South. In the North, an almost feudal hierarchy within many factories (Irish and German foremen on the top, Slavs and Italians in the middle, blacks on the bottom) often opposed the CIO. And, paradoxically, the success of labor may have proved its undoing. As the living standards of American workers improved, they demanded less insistently that their voice be heard. Indeed, the bureaucratically structured system of industrial relations that Hillman tirelessly championed—with its grievance procedures, rules for collective bargaining, and reliance upon union lawyers—had little to do with the shop-floor solidarities and socialist visions that had once inspired the young immigrant.

A NATION OF ENEMIES: Chile Under Pinochet. By Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela. Norton. 367 pp. \$24.95

September 11, 1973, is an unforgettable date in Latin American history. On that day, Chile's Marxist president, Salvador Allende, was murdered, and General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte proclaimed the victory of what was to become one of the world's more brutal military regimes. Chile's 150 years of democratic rule—

the most stable democracy on the continent—had come to an abrupt end.

Why, then, did many Chileans greet Pinochet's coup with jubilation? In 1973 Chile was suffering from an inflation rate of 300 percent, and the government was rationing goods. (The sorry state of Chile's economy resulted partly from an international economic blockade organized by the Nixon administration and partly from Allende's ineptitude.) Despite having Allende's blood on his hands, Pinochet arrived as a hero to many.

If this double-image of Pinochet, dictator and hero, seems an enormous incongruity, that is how Constable, a *Boston Globe* correspondent, and Valenzuela, director of Georgetown University's Center for Latin American Studies, present him. Pinochet was obsessed with the gaudy trappings of power—red-lined capes, a fleet of bullet-proof Mercedes, medallions of himself. At the same time, he was a workaholic who abstained from drink, avoided personal scandals, and harbored an unshakeable sense of moral righteousness. With that belief in his own righteousness, he organized Latin America's most efficient secret police and tortured thousands of political prisoners, even while his market reforms made Chile's economy the second strongest in South America. His "Chicago Boys"—Chilean economists who had imbibed Milton Friedman's free-market theories at the University of Chicago—instituted a capitalist shock treatment that forced Chilean industry to modernize. In 1981, the economy grew by 5.1 percent, while exports increased five-fold over levels recorded less than a decade before.

Chile's economic miracle, however, was a miracle for the few: Many groups—civil servants, teachers, skilled laborers—were left worse off, if not unemployed. When the economy—upheld by debt, high interest rates, and speculation—collapsed in the worldwide recession of 1988, Pinochet held a plebiscite to demonstrate support for his regime. To his astonishment he was voted out of office, though not by



much. (He received 42 percent of the vote.) With the inauguration of his democratically elected successor, Patricio Aylwin, the authors write, a chapter in South American history has closed: "After the ceremony ended and Pinochet stepped into his open limousine between rows of matching white horses, the last of South America's modern-day dictators was pelted with tomatoes and eggs."

Contemporary Affairs

SAVAGE INEQUALITIES: Children in America's Schools. By Jonathon Kozol. Crown. 262 pp. \$20

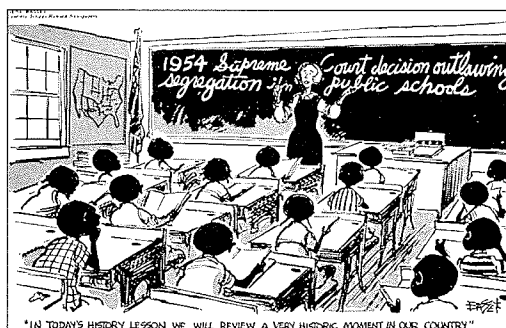
In American cities from New York to San Antonio to East St. Louis, the wasteland and the promised land are next-door neighbors. Cross a bridge or descend a hillside, and well-groomed yards and two-car garages give way to tenements, liquor stores, and lottery agents. The schools show no less stark a contrast.

William Bennett, Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Education, declared that throwing money at the schools would not solve our education problems. Kozol, who has aroused indignation about public schools ever since his *Death at an Early Age* (1967), here shows just what money can do. In Illinois, the richest school districts spend five times more on each student than the poorest districts do, and Kozol compares two such contrasting districts. At New Trier High in affluent Winnetka, a student advisor deals with 25 students; at Du Sable High in nearby North Lawndale, an advisor has approximately 420 charges. Ninety-three percent of New Trier seniors go on to four-year colleges; 75 percent of Du Sable students don't even graduate.

Kozol's story is not, theoretically, about race: White Appalachian children in overcrowded schoolrooms in Cincinnati fare as badly as do black students in the worst ghetto schools. Yet since most of the problem urban schools that Kozol visited were "95 to 99 percent non-white," *Savage Inequalities* is, in fact, a study of segregation. Thirty-seven years ago, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court found segregated schools inherently unequal and therefore unlawful. But the educational policies of the current and previous administra-

tions, Kozol argues, have retreated not 38 but 100 years, to *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) with its "separate but equal" doctrine and its separate but unequal reality.

Why do we tolerate these disparities in education while in other areas we do not? As political scientist Andrew Hacker has pointed out, we expect fire departments to speed as readily to tenements as to affluent suburbs. Again, Kozol's answer comes down to finance and funding—to the arcane machinery through which local property tax supports public educa-



tion. Wealthy homeowners generally pay a smaller percentage of their incomes but still collect far more to pay for their better schools. As of May 1991, 23 states had lawsuits challenging the fairness of this method of funding schools. Kozol proposes replacing property tax with a progressive income tax to generate school revenues. But to make such a proposal into law, Americans would have to be persuaded to care about children other than their own. If this does not happen, Kozol concludes, "apartheid might end in South African schools before it ends in ours."

A CHINESE ODYSSEY: The Life and Times of a Chinese Dissident. By Anne F. Thurston. Scribners. 440 pp. \$24.95

Two and a half years after Tiananmen Square, the streets in China's cities are calm, and Communist Party leaders boast that socialism is alive and well. Of course, nobody believes them. Only the personal prestige of Deng Xiaoping and his octogenarian colleagues—the last of the revolutionaries who accompanied Mao on the Long March—is holding the facade to-

gether. Deng's reforms—which placed agriculture in private hands and dotted the cities with individual entrepreneurs—have undermined the communist economic system, while the collapse of Marxism-Leninism at its source, in Russia, has eroded the legitimacy of the ideology within China.

The big question looms: What will happen when the 87-year-old Deng dies? Thurston, the author of *Enemies of the People* (1987), provides some possible clues in her story of a contemporary Chinese dissident. Born in 1945, Ni Yuxian's life roughly coincides with that of the People's Republic of China. As a teenage soldier during Mao's Great Leap Forward, Ni witnessed the greatest famine in world history, one that killed 25 to 30 million people. He composed a protest letter, expecting Mao to do something. Mao did: Ni was dismissed from the Army. Ni's subsequent career as a protester and dissident earned similar recognition. He was declared a "nonperson" in 1970 and later spent two years on death-row. In 1986, feeling the noose tighten again, Ni outwitted the authorities, secured a false passport, and escaped directly to New York. Ni's outspoken, revolutionary approach, Thurston believes, is as courageous as it is exceptional. In China the traditional response to unjust politics is to retreat into private pursuits. Unlike Ni, China's other leading dissidents—the physicist Fang Lizhi and the journalist Liu Binyan—follow nonpolitical careers.

As much as Thurston admires Ni's bravery, she doubts whether he could—or even should—come to power in a postcommunist China. Ni's political style typifies that of China's highly splintered opposition: His Chinese Liberal Democratic Party spends more time feuding with other dissident organizations (of which there are hundreds) than opposing the regime in power. And for all Ni's talk of democracy, free elections, and a free press, "the structure of [his] party is disturbingly Leninist, duplicating in many respects the structure of the Communist Party itself." "Democracy for Ni," Thurston observes, "is more a way of overthrowing the Communist Party than an end in itself." But then, she reminds us, "China has no democratic political culture, no tradition of democratic institutions to guide those who lead the country to a more democratic future."

A reader puts down *A Chinese Odyssey* with a sad foreboding of *après Deng, le deluge*—or rather the *luan*, the Chinese word for the descent into disorder, chaos, and violence. One hopeful possibility, Thurston suggests, is that the next government may quietly permit the fragmentation of China into economic regions. But the Chinese themselves see their history as cyclical, and many now view the present days as a replay of the collapse of the Qing dynasty, which brought on the internal warfare of the 1920s and '30s. Yet who dares to imagine a civil war in the China of today, a country of 1.2 billion people?

THE OVERWORKED AMERICAN: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure. By Juliet Schor. Basic. 336 pp. \$23

Economists during the 1950s predicted for the near-future a "24-hour week, a six-month workyear, or a standard retirement age of 38." Increased automation and productivity would make work all but disappear. These prophecies appear in one way partially fulfilled: American workers today produce in six months the same quantity of goods that it took an entire year to manufacture in 1948. Yet greater productivity has not led to shorter work-weeks. During the last 20 years, Americans have, on average, increased their time at work by a month. American manufacturing employees currently work 320 more hours annually—at least two months more—than their counterparts in West Germany or France.

It is a myth, claims Harvard economist Schor, that the Industrial Revolution has led to declining human toil. Prior to the 18th century, agrarian labor was accompanied by far more leisure, thanks to fluctuations of weather, customary holidays, and the simple fact that poorer health and nutrition rendered people less able to work long hours. Once workers moved from the fields to the factories, however, they learned the iron law of industry: Profit depended on "operating [machinery] as continuously as possible." Corporate employers still want to operate their human machinery in the same way, Schor argues.

But even if employers favored it, could America afford to reduce work hours in a period of

intense international economic competition? After all, America's chief manufacturing rivals are not Germany or France but such Asian nations as Japan, where workers typically log six-day weeks and sometimes work even on Sundays. Schor finds that the Japanese model is not necessarily an ideal to emulate, not with the frequent reports of *karoshi*—"death by overwork"—among the salarymen. Recent studies, moreover, suggest that reducing work hours can actually increase productivity. In one Minneapolis firm, employees who worked 36-hour weeks for 40-hour pay produced more, thanks to lower absenteeism and increased morale. Similarly, a Texas insurance company saw sales dramatically rise despite—or because of—a shortening of work hours. Yet the "overwork ethic" will end only, Schor believes, with a different vision of society, one in which management varies its strategies and workers value free time as highly as increased wages. But such a change, she concedes, involves "altering a way of life and a way of thinking."

Science & Technology

IN THE PALACES OF MEMORY: How We Build the Worlds Inside Our Heads. By George Johnson. Knopf. 255 pp. \$22.95

Each of us remembers millions of things, important or trivial. Yet scientists cannot explain how we do so—how we can recall, say, that Voltaire lived in the 18th century or why, when we order a hamburger, we know it won't taste like tuna fish. Now, however, biologists, psychologists, physicists, and philosophers are knocking down disciplinary barriers to create a science of memory—one that will account for how both neurons *and* people behave.

To portray this "science in the making," Johnson, a science journalist at the *New York Times*, compares the work of a biologist, a physicist, and a philosopher. Gary Lynch, a neurobiologist at the University of California, hypothesizes that when a neuron in the brain is stimulated, channels in its cell membrane open and calcium flows in. This stimulates an enzyme which breaks down the cytoskeleton (the cell's frame), allowing buried receptors to surface and possibly to form a new synapse that

encodes memory. Leon Cooper, who won the Nobel Prize in 1972 for his theory of superconductivity, uses computer simulations to show that memory depends on the specific speed and intensity with which neurons fire in response to stimulation. Patricia Churchland, a philosopher tired of arid speculations about the nature of knowledge, went to medical school to discover how real human brains work. Her model of memory is a "Rube Goldberg machine," an evolutionary neural patchwork that translates sensory data into mental constructs which, because they can then be remembered, help ensure survival.

In addition to being unproved, these hypotheses have something else in common: They fly in the face of "received wisdom." Most ordinary people—and also such philosophers as John Searle—believe the human mind cannot be reduced to a biological machine. Yet it is hardly surprising that Lynch, Cooper, and Churchland all contend that mental states and brain states are one and the same. When the elusive consciousness of memory reduces to a matter of stimuli, neurons, and even computers, then scientists—and would-be scientists—are ready to get down to work.

THE CULTURE OF PAIN. By David Morris. Univ. of Calif. 342 pp. \$29.95

The writer C. S. Lewis was often accused of being a reactionary, yet he offered an eloquent one-word defense of the modern world: anaesthesia. Try to imagine what life was like before surgeons used ether or chloroform, he said, when doctors sawed through the limbs of fully conscious patients—as they did well into the 19th century. The conquest of acute pain, with "wonder drugs" ranging from simple aspirin to morphine, is considered the glory of modern medicine.

It may come as a surprise then to learn that 90 million Americans suffer from a "newer" kind of pain, from *chronic* pain, and that they spend almost \$90 billion annually trying to relieve their suffering. To understand this "invisible crisis at the center of contemporary life," Morris, the author of *Alexander Pope: The Genius of Sense*, ventured into hospitals and pain clinics; more importantly, he examined history

itself to identify the startlingly different responses to pain in other eras.

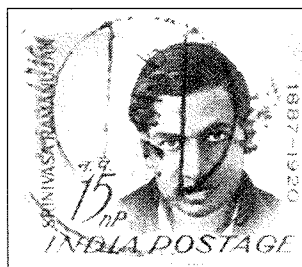
Stoics in antiquity considered pain ennobling, as did Christian flagellants in the Middle Ages. Romantics from John Keats to Friedrich Nietzsche believed pain the source of great art. Such attitudes lie worlds away from today's medical diagnoses. Physicians now are handicapped, Morris argues, by subscribing to the "myth of two pains," one physical, the other mental. Such a division is proven inadequate at every turn, by amputees who feel burning sensations in lost limbs, by lobotomized sufferers no longer bothered by pain, by patients registering relief from placebos, and by sadomasochists who relish every hurt.

Pain today, Morris writes, "is now officially emptied of meaning and merely buzzing mindlessly along the nerves." Physical suffering is thus stripped of the cultural significance by which people once dealt with more pain despite having fewer medical resources. *The Culture of Pain* is, however, more than a historical investigation. It joins Arthur Kleinman's *The Illness Narratives* (1988) and Eric Cassell's *The Nature of Suffering* (1991) as an appeal to physicians to end the distinction between illness and disease, between persons and bodies, and to create a new approach which treats pain not as a symptom of various diseases but as the thing itself that must be diagnosed and healed.

THE MAN WHO KNEW INFINITY: A Life of the Genius Ramanujan. By Robert Kanigel. Scribners. 438 pp. \$27.95

In 1913 a desperately poor Indian clerk in Madras wrote to Cambridge's leading mathematician, G. H. Hardy. Srinivasa Ramanujan was then a 23-year-old autodidact, untrained in such mundane matters as standard notation or rigorous proofs. But the bizarre mathematical formulas his letter contained had to be true, Hardy reasoned, since no one would have had the imagination to concoct them.

Thus began what Kanigel, who teaches literary journalism at Johns Hopkins University, calls one of the more romantic collaborations in the history of mathematics. Hardy brought Ramanujan to England and Cambridge, and together in 1916 they devised the general formula



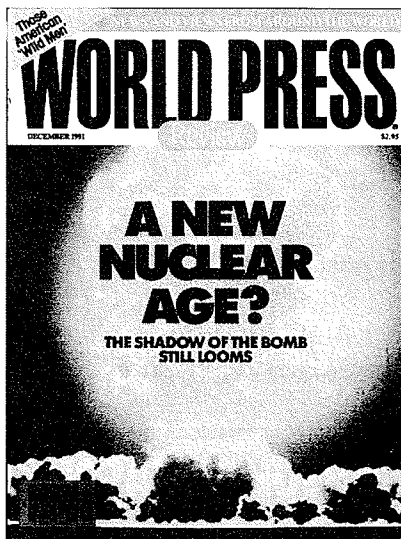
for finding all possible ways of adding up integers to obtain a certain number—a formula that advanced the study of, among other matters, molecular combination. Mathematics was no dry, technical discipline to Ramanujan; it was instinct with life. Hardy once happened to comment that the taxi which had brought him to Ramanujan's lodgings was #1729—"rather a duller number." "No, Hardy," Ramanujan immediately exclaimed. "It is a very interesting number. It is the smallest number expressible as the sum of two cubes in two different ways." ($1,729 = 1^3 + 12^3 = 9^3 + 10^3$.)

Through Hardy's unstinting efforts, Ramanujan received professional renown in Britain, including election to the Royal Society. But while their association was an exceptional meeting of the minds, it was little else. Hardy never included Ramanujan in his Bloomsbury circle, never even realized that Ramanujan ate alone in his room because his strict Hindu diet made virtually everything served at High Table untouchable. Just barely in his thirties, Ramanujan—homesick, overworked, and suffering from tuberculosis—returned to his own country in 1919 to die. He is now considered the "Einstein of India."

Mathematicians to this day are still "proving" Ramanujan right, and his work continues to be studied for its applications in plastics and atomic research. But how Ramanujan came upon his insights, without the aid of computers, without proofs, and initially with only a few out-of-date 19th-century texts, remains a mystery. His own explanation appears perplexingly unhelpful: "An equation for me has no meaning, unless it expresses a thought of God." Yet his casual acceptance of the amalgamations and odd associations in Hinduism, Kanigel suggests, did allow Ramanujan's mind to make the bizarre leaps and analogies that led to his startling discoveries in number theory.

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REFLECTIONS

Mozart and the Wolf Gang

This past December marked the 200th anniversary of the death of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91). Here, novelist and sometime composer Anthony Burgess offers a tribute to a musical genius whose work all but defies description.

by Anthony Burgess

What can a mere writer say about Mozart? Music is the art that takes over from words when words prove inadequate, and I've spent much of this bicentennial year trying to devise a verbal approach to Mozart which should not abet this inadequacy. A mere

writer can deal only with the externals or superficialities of a musician's achievement. The *Life of Mozart* has been delineated far too often, sometimes with melodramatic falsehoods. The truth is mostly banal and has a great deal to do with money. I set up for myself a dialogue between Woferl and his father Leopold which portrays how shameful this banality is:

LEOPOLD: A born musician should also be a born mathematician. The two faculties, for some reason that no doubt Pythagoras has explained somewhere, spring from an innate numeracy, notes themselves being vibrations that obey strict mathematical laws.

WOFERL: But what has mathematics to do with money?

LEOPOLD: Little perhaps except counting. You have still to get it into your thick skull that 10 Viennese *gulden*, or *florins* as they should rightly be, are worth 12 Salzburg *gulden*. When you are offered sums of money for performances, you should know precisely what you are getting. A *thaler*, which the Americans call a dollar, is two *gulden*.

WOFERL: That I knew.

LEOPOLD: That you knew. But do not confuse a *speziesthaler* or common *thaler* with a *reichsthaler*. One *reichsthaler* is worth only one and a half *gulden*. Three *reichsthaler* are one *ducat* and amount to four and a half *gulden*. And, as you should have remembered from Paris, a *Louis d'Or* or *pistole* is worth seven and a half *gulden*. You have to know these things.

WOFERL: And if I go to Venice?

LEOPOLD: One Venetian *zecchino* will be what you will get for five *gulden*. But you will not be going to Venice. Nor, I think, to London, where they will give you two English shillings for a *gulden*.



Mozart sits at the keyboard with his sister Nannerl in this 1780 portrait. His father Leopold, holding the violin, exerted a strong influence throughout the composer's life.

WOFERL: Money is complicated. Music is simple.

LEOPOLD: Yes, music is the simple sauce to the gamy meat of a noble or royal or imperial court. And simple servants of the court must provide it. Break out on your own and you will be cheated. A regular salary, however modest, is to be preferred to the hazards of the itinerant musician's life. As you ought to know.

This is shameful. It answers no purpose. I wondered what purpose would be served by setting Mozart's life to his own music. I received, very belatedly, a commission from Salzburg itself, asking me to provide a

libretto for such a setting. At least I could present Mozart caught in a net of musical rhythms, even if they were not his own. Let us imagine the set-up. (Needless to say, nothing has come of the proposal.)

ACT I

The scene is an indeterminate hall in the Vienna palace of the Prince Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo of Salzburg. Male and female servants scrub, polish, bring logs for the huge ornate fireplace. Mozart, as court musician, warms himself gloomily. The servants sing in a minor key.

SERVANTS:

Humble humble humble humble
 Servants of his princely grace,
 Fashed and fagged we groan and grumble,
 Outcasts of the human race.
 Humble humble humble humble
 Burdened boasts that know their place.
 See us fumble, see us stumble,
 See the bitter bread we crumble
 And the skilly that we mumble.
 Dare to look us in the face,
 Helots of his high disgrace.
 Hear our empty bellies rumble
 Treble Alto Tenor Bass.

Mozart sings. He is a tenor.

MOZART:

Slavishly begot,
 Slavery's your lot.
 Luggers in of logs,
 You are less than dogs.
 Dogs at least are fed
 Bones as well as bread.
 Lowly born,
 Accept my scorn.

SERVANTS:

Humbly humbly humbly humbly
 May we ask if it's a crime
 Dumbly dumbly dumbly dumbly
 (Yes, we know that doesn't rhyme)
 To be born beneath a star
 Burning with malignant fire?
 Humbly dumbly we enquire
 Who the hell you think you are.

MOZART:

I was not born beneath a star. I
 Am a star.
 Leaning across the heavenly bar, I
 Fell too far.
 The crown of music on my head was
 Knocked awry.
 Fingering keys to earn my bread was
 By and by
 Ordained to be the life I led and
 Still must lead.
 So will it go till I am dead and
 Dead indeed.

SERVANTS:

Humbly humbly humbly humbly
 May we ask you what you mean?
 All you said was soft and crumbly;

Words should cut as keen and clean
 As the whip the gruff and grumbly
 Major domo, rough and rumbly,
 Lays on us to vent his spleen.

MOZART:

I played the harpsichord at four
 And scribbled symphonies at five.
 I played and played from shore to shore.
 I labored—never bee in hive
 Buzzed harder at its sticky store—
 To keep the family alive.
 For Leopold my father swore
 I'd fiddle, tinkle, sweat, and strive
 Until the name the family bore
 Should gather honor and survive
 Two centuries and even more.
 But infant prodigies arrive
 At puberty. Must we deplore
 Our beards and balls, though noses dive
 And patrons stay away or snore?
 I serve his highness now, contrive
 To play the postures of a whore.
 Too meanly paid to woo or wive,
 I sink and sink who used to soar.
 Grant me your pity, friends, for I've
 Heard slam that ever open door,
 Been forced to kiss the nether floor,
 Who once kissed queens—

SERVANTS:

Kissed queens?

MOZART:

Kissed queens. Not any more, not any
 more. My scullion companions, I've run
 out of hope. Also rhymes. To work. I hear
 steel heels and the crack of a whip.

*The major domo enters, also the Prince
 Archbishop's private secretary.*

SERVANTS:

Humble humble humble humble
 Servants of his princely grace,
 Hear our empty bellies rumble
 Treble Alto Tenor Bass.

MAJOR DOMO:

Scum. Go on. Hard at it.

SECRETARY:

Mozart, fifty new contredances were or-
 dered for the next court ball. Fifteen only
 have been delivered. The *Te Deum* for the

Anthony Burgess is the author of more than 50 works of fiction and nonfiction. He delivered a version of this essay at the Wilson Center's Mozart Symposium. Copyright © 1992 by Anthony Burgess.

impending return to Salzburg of His Grace has still to be composed. And the flute exercises for His Grace's nephew are awaited with impatience.

MOZART:

Surely you mean His Grace's eldest bastard.

SECRETARY:

Insolence, insolence.

MOZART:

Perhaps, but I know that His Grace is an only child. His mother's womb bore once and once only. To have produced siblings to compete with His Holy Uniqueness would have been the true insolence.

SECRETARY:

I let that float past me like flatulent air. If you seek dismissal through my mediacy you will not get it. You have been paid for work not yet done. Do it.

MOZART:

Music cannot be ordered like a pound of tripe. But it will be done. It is being done now. In my head. But I hope the *Te Deum* can be postponed a month or more. Why will he not stay in Vienna?

And now, of course, they sing opposed words in a duet. This I cannot present in written form. But I'm reminded of what the writer most envies the musician. We're limited to the monodic, while the composer has polyphony to play with. I think it was the rage of this envy that drove James Joyce

SECRETARY:

His responsibility is in Salzburg.

MOZART:

There is no place like Vienna.

The dust of Vienna,
The lust of Vienna
Swirls round my brain.
Erotic phantasmas
And putrid miasmas
That rise from each drain.
Its filth is creative.
The stink of each native
Olfactory song.
So I wish to stay here
And I wish to play here.
It's where I belong.

SECRETARY (who is a baritone):

But Salzburg is pretty
And it is no pity
There's little to do.
A munch at an apple,
A prayer in the chapel
Should satisfy you.
Erotic temptation
And free fornication
Pass everyone by,
And it is no wonder
For everyone's under
His Highness's eye.

to compose *Finnegans Wake*, where there is the illusion of several strands of dream-melody proceeding at the same time. Perhaps the best tribute to Mozart that a writer can make is, if not to achieve his harmony and counterpoint, at least to learn something from his form.

This year I've been trying to write a novel entitled *K. 550*. If, like myself, you have difficulty remembering what Köchel number applies to which work, I'll decode this into the Symphony no. 40 in G Minor. Here is how the first movement started:

The squarecut pattern of the carpet. Squarecut the carpet's pattern. Pattern the cut square carpet. Stretching from open doors to windows. Soon, if not burned, ripped, merely purloined, as was all too likely, other feet other feet other feet would. Tread. He himself he himself he

himself trod in the glum morning. From shut casement to open door and back, to and to and back. Wig fresh powdered, brocade unspotted, patch on cheek new pimple in decorum and decency hiding, stockings silk most lustrous, hands behind folded unfolded refolded as he trod on squarecut pattern's softness. Russet the hue, the hue russet. Past bust of Plato, of Aristotle's bust, Thucydides, Xenophon. Foreign voices trapped in print (he himself he himself he himself read) and print in leather, behind glass new polished, ranged, ranged, ranged, the silent army spoke in silence of certain truths, of above

all the truth of the eternal stasis. Stasis stasis. The squarecut pattern of the carpet. He trod.

Towards window, casement, treading back observed (he himself he himself he himself did) ranged gardens, stasis, walk with: poplars, secular elms elms, under grim sky. But suddenly sun broke, squeezed out brief lemon juice, confirmed stasis, a future founded on past stasis, asphodels seen by Xenophon, rhododendra of Thucydides. The mobs would not come, the gates would rest not submitting to mob's fury. He himself he himself he himself smiled.

Triumph of unassailable order. Everything in its everybody in his place. Place. Place. Plate ranged catching sun's silver. That other triumph then possible? But no,

what triumph in right assertion of right? Church rite, bed rite. This much delayed. He himself he himself he himself did. Not assert. Not assert. Not assert. Yet in moment when sun broke salutary to assert. Hurt, no. Assert, yes. Brief hurt ineluct ineluctable in assert, yes, in assert.

Out of door. Wide hall. Two powdered heads bow. Wide stairs. High stairs. And yet (magic of right, of rite, of lawful assert?) no passage noted, he himself he himself he himself stands by her door by her door by her door. Assert assert insert key. By foul magic wrong key. Not his key. Yes, his key. But lock blocked. Billet doux spittled pulped thrust (not trust lust, though right, rite) in lock, in lock? Anger hurled from sky? But no. Watery sun smiles still....



A facsimile of the original manuscript to Symphony no. 40 (K. 550).

Let me now throw away these masks and speak in my own voice. Let me talk of Mozart and myself.

When we were young, a lot of us were rather sour about Mozart. We were jealous about his having so much talent and disclosing it at so early an age. Ordinary young

people care little for infant prodigies. We were told that his ear was so sensitive that he fainted at the sound of a trumpet, and that his sense of pitch was so acute that he could distinguish a fifth from a sixth of a tone. He composed pretty little things at the age of four and played like an angel on

the harpsichord. Complimented by the Empress Maria Theresa, he leapt onto her lap and kissed her. So charming, with his little wig and his brocade and silk stockings. A milksop.

Even as a young man, I found it difficult to fit Mozart into my sonic universe. I was not alone in that. The reputation of Mozart is now at its highest and will presently suffer a reaction, but he was no demi-god in the 1930s. Musicians like Edward Dent and Sir Thomas Beecham had much to do with the promotion of a periwigged historical figure into the voice of a Western civilization that was under threat from the very race of which Mozart was a member. (Salzburg, his birthplace, was an independent city-state; he never saw himself as an Austrian national.) To appreciate him, it was necessary to hear a good deal of Mozart, and this was not easy. One could, of course, play the keyboard pieces, but, to a piano pupil or a self-taught pianist like myself, there was little that was attractive in the scale passages one fumbled over, or in the conventional tonic-dominant cadences. A boy born into the age of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912) and Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913)—I was born five years after the first, four years after the other—found it hard to be tolerant of the Mozartian blandness.

One great war and the threat of another justified barbaric dissonance and slate-pencil-screaming atonality. I needed the music of my own time—Hindemith, Honegger, Bartók. In the Soviet Union, Alexander Mosolov produced his *Factory* (1926–28) and *Dnieper Power Station*, and those banal chunks of onomatopoeia at least spoke of the modern world. The symphony orchestra had, following Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss, evolved into a virtuoso complex capable of anything. Mozart had been unlucky with his valveless horns and trumpets: He had been enclosed by the technically primitive. So, anyway, it seemed.

I wanted modernity, but where did modernity begin? Probably with Debussy's *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* (1894), which had entranced my ear when, as a boy of 13, I had fiddled with the cat's whisker on my homemade crystal set, heard a silence punctuated by a cough or two, and then

was overwhelmed by that opening flute descending a whole tritone. This was as much the new age as Mosolov's machine music: It denied the hegemony of tonic and dominant, exalted color, wallowed in sensuality. Debussy promised a full meal, well-sauced. Mozart offered only bread and water.

The appetite for the modern did not exclude the ancient. I read Peter Warlock's study of Cecil Gray and Philip Heseltine's *Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, Musician and Murderer* (1926), and was led to the perusal of madrigals I was not yet permitted to hear. The harmonic sequences looked hair-raising. The 17th century was closer to my own epoch than the ages in between. Henry Purcell broke the rules that the textbooks were eventually to make petrific. The baroque was acceptable if it meant Bach and Handel. Ezra Pound was yet to resurrect Vivaldi. Stravinsky had sounded the "Back to Bach" call, and the composer of *Le Sacre* could do no wrong. But this was, as Constant Lambert was to point out in *Music Ho* (1967), sheer evasion. Stravinsky was a "time traveler," prepared to go anywhere so long as it was not in the direction of neo-romanticism. To Stravinsky there was something salutary in clockwork rhythms, the inexpressive deadpan, an eschewing of the dynamic. But true baroque was something different.

Its charm lay in its exaggeration, and Bach's counterpoint went too far. It imposed on the listener the task of hearing many voices at the same time. The effect was of intellectual rigor, and intellectual rigor was, in a curious way, analogous to physical shock. The approach to both the baroque and the modern was not by way of the emotions. Romantic music, reaching its apogee in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* (1865), depended on its capacity to rend the heart. Young people distrust emotion, indeed are hardly capable of it unless it takes the form of self-pity. Sir Thomas Beecham promoted English composer Frederick Delius as much as Mozart, and the death-wish element in *The Walk to the Paradise Gardens* (1900–01) was acceptable to the misunderstood young.

But why this rejection of Mozart, the charming but unromantic, the restrained, the formal? He seemed too simple, too scared of the complex. He made neither an

intellectual nor a physical impact. Bach, after a day's slaving at six-part counterpoint, would say: "Let's go and hear the pretty tunes." He meant plain sweet melody with a chordal accompaniment. He was not disparaging such art, but he recognized that it was diversion more than serious musical engagement. It was an art waiting to be turned into Mozart.

Looming behind modernism, but in a sense its father, was the personality of Ludwig van Beethoven. My benighted age-group accepted the Beethoven symphony as a kind of musical ultimate, something that the composers of our own age could not aspire to because they had been forced into abandoning the key-system on which it was based. The key-system was worn out; it could linger in the dance or music hall, but modernity meant either a return to the Greek or folk modes, as with Bartók or Vaughan Williams, or the total explosion of tonality. Atonalism recognized no note of the chromatic scale as being more important than any other, but the diatonic scale that was good enough for Beethoven had a hierarchical basis: No. 1 of the scale, the tonic, was king; No. 5, the dominant, was queen; No. 4, the subdominant, was jack or knave. It spoke of a settled past, but Beethoven was not always easy in it. His sonatas and symphonies were dramas, storm-and-stress revelations of personal struggle and triumph. The Messiah from Bonn, of whom Joseph Haydn, not Mozart, was the prophet, belonged to a world striving to make itself modern. Beethoven moved forward; Mozart stayed where he was.

The term *rococo* got itself applied to Mozart's music, and the associations were of prettiness, sugary decorativeness, a dead end of diversion. We were not listening carefully enough to his Symphony no. 40 in G minor. We heard pleasing sounds, but we were not conscious of a language. If we talk of a musical language at all, it must be only in a metaphorical sense, but there was an assumption that Beethoven and his successors were sending messages while Mozart was merely spinning notes.

Music can properly have meaning only when language is imposed upon it, as in song, opera, oratorio, or other vocal genres, or when language is applied laterally—in the form of a literary program, as

in Strauss's tone poems. And yet we assume that instrumental music has meaning: It is organized, as language can be, to an end that, if not semantic, is certainly aesthetic, and it produces mental effects as language does. It differs from the other arts, and spectacularly from literature, in being non-representational. Limited to metaphorical statements of a sort, it can have only a semantic content through analogy.

As Ezra Pound pointed out, poetry decays when it moves too far away from song, and music decays when it forgets the dance. In the music of the 18th century, it may be said, the spirit of the dance was raised to its highest level. That spirit progressively deteriorated in the 19th century, and in the music drama of Wagner it may be said to have yielded to the rhythms of spoken discourse. Paradoxically, in a work specifically intended for ballet, the dance spirit seems to have been liquidated. *Le Sacre du Printemps* reduces the dance to prehistoric gambolling, unsure of its steps. But in Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, we hear a fusion of dance and sonata form and, in the traditional third-movement minuet, the invocation of a specific dance form. But these dance movements are not intended for the physical participation of dancers. The dance becomes an object of contemplation and, in so being, takes on a symbolic function.

The dance as a collective activity, whether in imperial courts or on the village green, celebrates the union of man and woman and that larger union known as the human collective. The Haydn or Mozart symphony asks us to take in the dance in archetypal *tempi*—moderately rapid, slow, furiously rapid, two or three or four to the bar—and meditate on their communal significance. The sonata or the string quartet or the concerto or the symphony becomes symbolic of human order. With Mozart it seems evident that the more or less static tranquility of the Austro-Hungarian Empire is being celebrated. Thus the music is objective, lacks any personal content of a Mahlerian or Straussian kind, and, through that irony, which is a corrective to the complacency of social order, works through the alternation of stress and resolution. The heart is the organ that it imitates, but it is the heart of the community. There may be a

modicum of personal inflection of the objective structure—comic in Haydn, pathetic in Mozart—but any large incursion of idiosyncratic symbols has to be resisted. In Mahler, banal barrel-organ tunes may grind because of adventitious associations, but the Mozart symphony remains aloof from such egotistical intrusion.

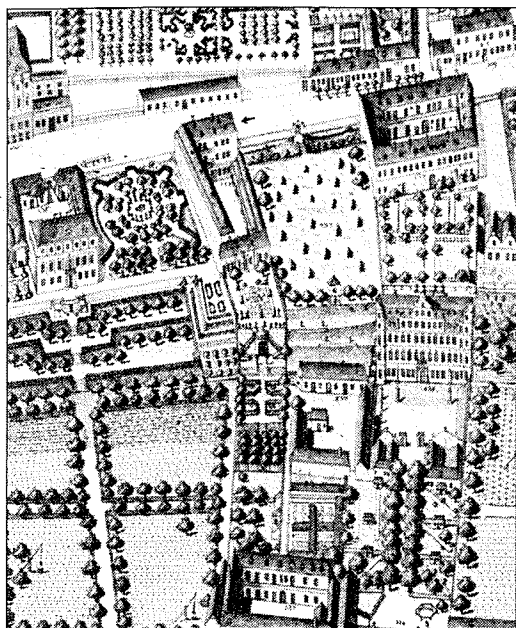
It seemed in my youth that the Austro-Hungarian Empire was hopelessly remote. It had collapsed in World War I; before that collapse Freud and Schoenberg recorded the turmoil of individual psyches, microcosms of a larger confusion. It was easy to forget that, in respect to its art, that Empire was still with us. A failed Viennese architect was to tyrannize Europe; in the Adriatic port of the Empire, James Joyce began to revolutionize world literature; Rainer Maria Rilke affirmed poetic modernity in the *Duino Elegies* (1923). And, of course, in music, atonality and serialism portended a major revolution. Everything happened in Vienna. If Mozart seemed to stand for a kind of imperial stasis, it ought to have been clear to the close listener that a chromatic restlessness was at work and that, within accepted frameworks, the situation of an individual soul, not an abstract item in the citizenry, was being delineated. Mozart was as Viennese as Freud.

I must beware of overpersonalizing an art that manifests its individuality in ways of managing pure sound. One aspect of Mozart's greatness is a superiority in disposing of the sonic material that was the common stock of composers of his time. Sometimes he sleeps, nods, churns out what society requires or what will pay an outstanding milliner's bill, but he is never less than efficient. Clumsiness is sometimes associated with greatness: The outstanding innovative composers, like Berlioz and Wagner, are wrestling, not always successfully, with new techniques. Mozart is never clumsy; his unvarying skill can repel romantic temperaments. "Professionalism" can be a dirty word. He touched nothing that he did not adorn. If only, like Shakespeare, he had occasionally put a foot wrong—so some murmur. He never fails to astonish with his suave or prickly elegance.

It is his excellence that prompts disparagement. The perfection of his work has perversely inspired denigration of his

personality. There is a mostly fictitious Mozart whom it is convenient to call Amadeus—a name he was never known to use. This is the man whom an equally fictitious Salieri wished to kill from a variety of motives—clear-headed recognition of his excellence stoking jealousy, the horror of the disparity between his genius and a scatomaniacal infantilism, a Christian conviction of the diabolic provenance of his skill. This makes compelling drama but bad biography. In personal letters the whole Mozart family discloses a delight in the scatological, harmless, conventional, not untypical of an Age of Reason that gained pleasurable shocks from the contrast between the muckheap of the body and the soaring cleanliness of the spirit. All the evidence shows a Mozart who obeyed most of the rules of Viennese propriety, accepting the God of the Church and the Great Architect of the Freemasons. An attempt to mythologize Mozart's end—the mysterious stranger with the commission to compose a Requiem, the pauper's grave, the desertion of the coffin in a sudden storm—collapses under scrutiny of the recorded fact. Meteorological records, the imperial decree to cut down on funeral expenses through the use of common graves, the not uncommon plagiarisms of amateur musicians with more money than talent, all melt the mythology into banality. The heresy of indecorous probing into an artist's life has been with us for a long time. Few can take their art straight.

I began my artistic career as a self-taught composer who, because of insufficient talent and a recognition that music could not say the things I wished to say, took, almost in middle age, to the practice of a more articulate craft. Yet the musical background will not be stilled, and the standards I set myself owe more to the great composers than to the great writers. It has always seemed to me that an artist's devotion to his art is primarily manifested in prolific production. Mozart, who produced a great deal of music in a short life, knew that mastery was to be attained only through steady application. His literary counterparts—Balzac in France, H. G. Wells and Arnold Bennett in England—have often been reviled for what is termed



Mozart lived with his wife and son in this house (indicated by arrow) in the Alsergrund suburb of Vienna from June 1781 until early 1789.

"over-production." To discover virtue in costiveness was a mark of Bloomsbury gentility. Ladies and gentlemen should be above the exigencies of the tradesman's life. But art is a trade that ennobles itself, and the consumer, by giving more than is paid for. The market is served but also God. Mozart wrote for money, which E. M. Forster did not have to do: His scant production is as appropriate to a *rentier* as Mozart's fecundity is right both for a serious craftsman and a breadwinner. Ultimately artists must be judged not merely by excellence but by bulk and variety. The musician is, however, luckier than the writer: It is always possible to produce an acceptable minuet, rather more difficult to achieve a story or a poem.

The celebration of Mozart cannot be accomplished in words, except those of stringent technical analysis with ample music-type illustration. We can only celebrate by listening massively and then emitting some almost pre-verbal noise of approval, amazement, or exaltation. But, to the artist in whatever medium, Mozart presents an example to be followed, that of devotion to craft. Without craft there can be no art.

Those of us who practice, as I still inadequately do, the craft of music cannot easily stifle envy. It is not envy of individual genius so much as a bitterness that the cultural conditions which made Mozart possible have long passed away. The division between the music of the street and that of the salon and opera house was not so blatant as it now is. Bach could end his Goldberg Variations with a quodlibet based on the popular tunes of his day. Conversely, melodies from Mozart's operas could be whistled, and not solely by aristocrats dressing for dinner. Till quite recently the ghost of the sense of a musical community lingered. A Mozart sonata could be popularized, though condescendingly, as "In An Eighteenth-Century Drawing Room"; Frank Sinatra, in his earliest film, could sing *La ci darem la mano*. Simple tuneful melody was something of a constraint. Stravinsky tried to make money by converting a theme from *L'Oiseau de Feu* into a pop ballad. But what was popularized came from the classical or romantic past: no music by Schoenberg, Webern, or Bartók could hope to entrance the general ear. The gulf between the serious and the merely diverting is now firmly fixed.

A serious composer commissioned to write, say, an oboe concerto will feel dubious about using tonality with occasional concords; he is uneasy about critical sneers if he does not seem to be trying to outdo Pierre Boulez. There are various modes of musical expression available, perhaps too many, but none of them can have more than a tenuous link with the past. Atonality, polytonality, polymodalism, postmodality, Africanism, Indianism, minimalism, Cageism—the list is extensive. No composer can draw on the heritage that united Monteverdi and Mozart. Alban Berg, in his Violin Concerto (1935), could quote Bach's chorale *Es Ist Genug* only because its tritonal opening bar fitted, by accident, into his tone-row. Perhaps only the neurotic Mahler, last of the great tonal Viennese, provides the bridge between a dead and a living society. Mozart can be parodied or pastiched, as in Stravinsky's mannered *The Rake's Progress* (1951), but we cannot imagine his wearing a lounge suit, as we can imagine Beethoven coming back in stained sweater and baggy flannels.

We have to beware of approaching Mozart while polishing the spectacles of historical perspective. Nostalgia is behovely, but it is inert. The vision he purveys must not be that of a long-dead stability for which we hopelessly yearn. In a world which affronts us daily with war, starvation, pollution, the destruction of the rain forests, the breakdown of public and domestic morality, and the sheer bloody incompetence of government, we may put a Mozart string quartet on the compact disc apparatus in the expectation of a transient peace. But it is not Mozart's function to soothe: He is not a tranquilizer to be taken out of the bathroom cabinet. He purveys an image of a possible future rather than of an irrecoverable past.

As a literary practitioner I look for his analogue among great writers. He may not have the complex humanity of Shakespeare, but he has more than the gnomic

neatness of an Augustan like Alexander Pope. It wouldn't be extravagant to find in him something like the serene skill of Dante Alighieri. If the paradisa is more characteristic of him than the infernal or even the purgatorial, that is because history itself has written the *Divine Comedy* backwards. He reminds us of human possibilities. Dead *nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*—in the middle of the road of our life—he nevertheless presents the whole compass of life and intimates that noble visions exist only because they can be realized.

I refuse to end on a grandiloquent note. Mozart himself wouldn't have liked it. So I come down to the ground level of the smell of ink, of greasepaint and stage lights. Works have to be written before they can excite ecstasy or vilification. The humus from which they arise can be accidental. Let's go to the cinema.

SCENE 20. INTERIOR. NIGHT. THE BURGTHEATER

There is an opera in progress. The auditorium candles remain lighted. The audience is not over-attentive. There is chatter, flirtation. The opera is not by any composer we know. The composer presides at the harpsichord in the pit. On stage a soprano sings a cabaletta and falters on her high notes. Rotten fruit and bad eggs are hurled. A member of the audience stands to inveigh.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE:

Never mind about *her*. Throw something at *him*.

He points an accusatory finger at the cowering composer.

He's a thief. He stole that from Sacchini. Or it might be Paisiello.

The opera continues with difficulty.

21. INT. NIGHT. A VIENNESE COFFEE HOUSE

Vicente Martin Soler takes coffee with Giovanni Paisiello.

SOLER:

Outrageous behavior. Yet it may be taken as enthusiasm. For the *genre*, that is. There is certainly no indifference.

PAISIELLO:

It's the rage for the ever-new that one finds oppressive. Operas are like newspapers. You know how many I have written?

SOLER:

Twenty would be too much.

PAISIELLO:

Over a hundred. The maw of what you would call the *aficionados* is insatiable. You, me, Salieri, Cimarosa, Guglielmi, Sarti. And there's Mozart pretending to be an Italian.

SOLER:

Touché.

PAISIELLO:

Oh, you're a Latin. Very nearly an Italian. These Viennese can't tell the difference.

SOLER:

Your *Barbiere di Siviglia* exemplifies our internationalism. A Spanish setting, a French play, an Italian operatization.

PAISIELLO:

Your *Una cosa rara* is pure Italy. It's knocked out poor little Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro*. The insolence. Figaro's my property.

SOLER:

The man's an instrumentalist. His woodwind fights the voices. There's a certain talent there, but it's not operatic. Will he last?

PAISIELLO:

Will any of us? And does it matter? Come, we're going to be late for *La Grotta di Trofonio*. Salieri will never forgive us.

22. INT. NIGHT. THE BURGTHEATER

Salieri's insipid work is in progress. The camera pans over a moderately attentive audience. It reaches Mozart, who stands gloomily at the back. His inner voice speaks over the unmemorable music.

MOZART (voiceover):

And does it matter? Not to be understood? None of us shall see posterity. There's no advantage in working for the yet unborn. If my music dies with my death, I shall be in no position to complain. Am I serving the age I live in, live in very precariously, or am I serving God? Of God's existence I remain unsure, despite my choral praises. Does God manifest himself in the world in trickles of music? I don't know. The quest for perfection, even when perfection is unwanted. This is the crown of thorns. It cannot be rejected. God or no God, I must avoid blasphemy. I am only a little man whose health is not good and whose coffers are empty. Counting each *kreuzer*. Wondering whether I can afford the pulling of a tooth. The fingers of my right hand are deformed with the incessant penning of notes. And the true music remains unheard, taunting, demanding birth like a dream child. God help some of us. There are some who need no help.

He looks at the stage, where the opera is coming to an end.

23. INT. NIGHT. THE BURGTHEATER STAGE

The final ensemble comes to an end. Tonic and dominant. The audience bows. Salieri rises from the harpsichord and takes his bow. He smiles. Flowers are thrown.

I take my bow too. You will throw no flowers. I hope I've demonstrated adequately enough that there's nothing to say.

Oh—one last thing. My title—"Mozart and the Wolf Gang." It is we who are the wolves, ganging up to devour the *corpus*

verum of the master. But he cannot be devoured. His musical flesh is eucharistic and bestows grace. And if that is blasphemy, God, whom Mozart, perhaps at this very moment, is busy teaching about music, will forgive it.

Is There Hope For Pushkin's Children?

Russian writers are now free to write anything. Why then do so many feel hesitant and confused? Their dilemma, as Tatyana Tolstaya explains, is one that has vexed Russia's finest artists for centuries.

by Tatyana Tolstaya

Certain tricky questions arise from time to time in literary circles. No one knows who first asked them, and they often seem a pointless game. For instance: Would you, as a writer, continue to write if you ended up on an uninhabited island and it seemed that no one would ever read your work? Many writers answer: Yes, of course I would, I don't need a reader, I'm my own reader, I'm incapable of *not* writing, I am my own source of inspiration, no one should come between me and God, and so forth. It's impossible to judge the sincerity of such feelings. After all, there aren't any uninhabited islands left, are there?

In fact, more and more Russian writers seem to have found themselves on just such islands.

To understand how they arrived there, we might consider a few well-known points. Throughout the entire history of Russian literature, the Russian writer has never been seen by the reading public as "simply" a poet, journalist, philosopher, or scribbler—that is, as a person freely expressing his or her own thoughts and feelings or merely entertaining the reader. The Russian writer has always been seen as a prophet or preacher, a dangerous free-

thinker, or a revolutionary. The very ability to manipulate words and to articulate one's thoughts placed the individual in a suspect position. The word was seen as a weapon far more fearsome than poison or a dagger. A murderer might be sentenced "only" to long-term hard labor, but a person could



Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837)

receive the death penalty for reading forbidden poems. Even one's unproven presence in a place where a song insulting to the government had allegedly been sung could lead to exile. This is precisely what happened at the beginning of the 19th century to the writer and dissident Alexander Herzen, who was forced to emigrate and spend the rest of his life in exile. Such has always been the situation in Russia, but it acquired a particularly threatening aspect with the birth of a genuine, full-blooded literature in the early 19th century. And this threat has persisted right up to this day.

This is a wonderful point of view. It proclaims the primacy of literature over life, of dreams over reality, of imagination over facts. It says: Life is nothing—a fog, a mirage, *fata morgana*. But the word, whether spoken or printed, represents a power greater than that of the atom. This is an entirely Russian view of literature, without parallel in the West. And everyone in Russia, it seems, shares it: the tsars and their slaves, censors and dissidents, writers and critics, liberals and conservatives. He who has articulated a Word has accomplished a Deed. He has taken all the power and responsibility on himself. He is dangerous. He is free. He is destructive. He is God's rival. And for this reason, all of these daring, bold, outspoken, powerful magicians, from Alexander Radishchev in the late 18th century to Andrei Sinyavsky in the 20th century, have been playing with life and death.

Naturally, when such power is attributed to the Word, the writer begins to feel a particular responsibility. Not surprisingly, most great Russian writers and poets have not only accepted this responsibility but have used the power of their words to address the most important social and political problems of their day: freedom (or, more accurately in Russia, the lack of it), the individual, human rights, and so on. A line from the 19th-century poet Nikolai Nekrasov is often quoted: "You're not required to be a poet, but a citizen you're obliged to be." This formulation harked

back to the executed Decembrist Ryleev, who said: "I am not a poet, I am a citizen." But, in essence, it was part of Nekrasov's polemic with Alexander Pushkin, the father of all our contemporary literature.

Pushkin was a poet who is remarkable for, among other things, the fact that from the outset he stood above this flat, pragmatic point of view, which is so seductive in Russia. Pushkin's point of departure was that the writer should teach no one and make no appeals but be free to sing as best he could, whatever came his way, and to listen to his inner voice—in short, to create on an uninhabited island. Pushkin himself lived on a sort of uninhabited island, but his manuscripts, sealed in the bottle of time, floated on the waves into the future and are still out there. His small circle of admirers and contemporary readers didn't appreciate him as he deserved. People read much into his works but did not see everything that was there. They didn't see the most important thing—his inner freedom. (In order to understand this idea fully, one must, it seems, possess one's own inner freedom, and that is one of the most difficult things to acquire on this earth.) Pushkin's contemporary readers appreciated the harmonious beauty of the poet's verse and the dry precision of his transparent prose, they understood his hatred of slavery and his defense of simple, oppressed people, and they saw his profound comprehension of Russian history, his delight in female beauty, his encyclopedic knowledge and astonishing ability to describe Russian life. They praised his humor, his alternately lighthearted and melancholy frame of mind, the tragic nature of his worldview—and quite rightly, for all this was in his verse. But the motif of inner freedom remained in the shadows, as if obscured behind opaque glass.

After Pushkin's death, this motif became downright unpopular. What inner freedom could there be when despots ruled, when there were no laws and human beings were traded like cattle, and when whole peoples

Tatyana Tolstaya is the author of two short-story collections available in English translation, On the Golden Porch (1989) and Stranger in a Fog (1992). Her stories and essays appear regularly in the New Yorker, the New Republic, and the New York Review of Books. Copyright © 1992 by Tatyana Tolstaya.

and classes were doomed to a brutal life? The only freedom that could be discussed was social—and a number of writers took it upon themselves to call for revolutionary changes or peaceful reforms (in accordance with their individual temperaments and political views), while others turned their attention to the moral reeducation of man, seeing salvation in the process of self-perfection, in religion, in the search for national roots, or in a special mission for Russia and the Russian people. These were marvelous writers, great writers, writers of international renown: Nikolay Gogol, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Leo Tolstoy.... But not one of them possessed that inner freedom, and none was able, or dared, to allow himself that inner freedom. Instead, they voluntarily donned the fetters of moral duty: service to the tsar, to God, or to the People. It was only Pushkin, who described himself humorously as “that homely descendant of Negroes” (one of his ancestors was from the royal family of Ethiopia, kidnapped as a child and brought as an exotic entertainment to Russia, where he subsequently was made a nobleman), who was able to formulate the sole ordinance of inner freedom that an artist can accept. It was only Pushkin, whom his contemporaries thought an empty, worldly, frivolous man, a philanderer and naughty child, who had dared to ask the question: “Whether it depends on the tsar or depends on the People—isn’t it all the same to you?” The irony is that after his death admiration for Pushkin grew and grew, until he himself became, for many Russians, God, tsar, and the People, an idol, an icon, holy writ. Mindlessly repeating Pushkin’s idea about freedom as a magic formula, an incantation, no one bothered to delve into its essence. Not one of Pushkin’s admirers would allow you to be free of Pushkin himself.

This, by the way, was what happened in our own time with one of the few genuinely free Russian writers, Andrei Sinyavsky. Desiring to be dependent neither on the tsar nor the People, Sinyavsky, a descendant of the Russian nobility, hid under a Jewish pen name, Abram Tertz, and sent his manuscripts out of Russia to the West, until his identity was uncovered and he was sent to the camps by an enraged government. To many people, this made him a hero, the

mouthpiece of freedom. But in the camp, Sinyavsky decided to write a book about Pushkin, which he also published in the West after he emigrated. And suddenly the defenders of freedom ostracized Sinyavsky, simply because he had dared to address Pushkin as a mere mortal. (The most amusing mistake was made, as always, by Solzhenitsyn, who unleashed the full weight of his *malleus maleficarum* on his fellow prisoner but landed right on the icon. He accused Sinyavsky of printing an “obscene street poem” about Pushkin, not suspecting that the mildly ribald little ditty was composed by Pushkin, who was writing ironically about himself in the third person.) And so it is: God is free, but that’s his own business, and all of you, who love God, are obliged to be his slaves.

Submitting to a moral but not to a creative imperative, Russian writers condemned themselves to all manner of suffering and torment. It was not only that the authorities and society cruelly punished the love of freedom—that goes without saying. The problem was also that the struggle of the poet and the citizen within any given writer usually resulted in the death of the poet. The brilliant Gogol, seeing his vocation as pointing people toward the true path to moral salvation, wrote the second volume of *Dead Souls*, in which, apparently, he tried to create a morally uplifting image of the positive hero. We aren’t certain what he wrote, since, unhappy with the results, Gogol burned the manuscript and then went mad, falling into a state of religious gloom. But the sparkle of Gogol’s early works dims and dies out toward the end of his life. In the last years of his life Leo Tolstoy also ceased to be a brilliant artist, having driven himself into the narrow, cramped cage of forced morality. He didn’t stop being a brilliant personality, but his preaching, the primitive pieces for children, and the moralizing tracts for peasants are no more than a curiosity against the background of his great novels. Fortunately, Dostoyevsky avoided such an inglorious end—perhaps he was saved by the indomitable passions that raged in his soul. Nevertheless, the ideological slant of all his works is obvious. Writers of a lesser stature surrendered more quickly. And the very few who did not wish to sacrifice art on the

altar of service to the Fatherland, Truth, or the People were subjected to such ferocious criticism by the "progressive thinking" sectors of society that they were literally terrorized, as though they had committed the most heinous of crimes against humanity. Dostoyevsky's indignation at Afanasy Fet's innocent lyrics, "Whispers, timid breath, the nightingales trilled," is well known. This is simply disgraceful, wrote Dostoyevsky indignantly, and he speculated what an insulting impression such empty verses would have made if they'd been given to someone to read during the Lisbon earthquake!

Some people protested: Yes, of course, Dostoyevsky is right, but we aren't having an earthquake, and we aren't in Lisbon, and, after all, are we not allowed to love, to listen to nightingales, to admire the beauty of a beloved woman? But Dostoyevsky's argument held sway for a long time. It did so because of the way Russians perceive Russian life: as a constant, unending Lisbon earthquake....

And then these civic passions started to wane, and there began to appear here and there poets and artists for whom freedom and beauty had more meaning than truth and morality. The break began at the end of

the last century, just when the great literature of ideas seemed to have degenerated into banal journalism and liberalistic concoctions on politically correct themes—the women's question, the improvement of mores, popular education, health care, etc. Suddenly all this began to dim. In the Chekhovian, unpoetic *fin de siècle*, when, as many thought, the giants had all died and only the dwarfs were left, the shoots of a new, unfamiliar art, which at first irritated many people, began to sprout. Despite the pressing "needs of the people," modernism was born in Russia, and it was all the more striking for its utter lack of practical application.

Many people considered it a form of madness and delinquency. Leo Tolstoy himself, who at the time sought his moral peace by covering the roofs of neighboring peasant huts with straw thatch and plowing the peasants' poor land, tore himself away from his unproductive, voluntary labor to condemn the "decadents" with what he thought were venomous reproaches. And, of course, the "new art" was at first ridiculed by the entire previous generation of liberally inclined professors, teachers, political figures, lawyers, and other respectable people. This was a generation that read literature only to find "artistic" confirmation of what it already knew: that the peasants feed us, and we must therefore love them; that women are also human beings; that poverty is bad; that we must help the poor and somehow re-organize society. But there were also readers bewitched by the unusual qualities in the new writing. The Russian Europeans, who believed in the formula "Light comes from the West," could not help but eventually respond to the new appeals and new voices. And just as 18th-century Russians experienced the influence of the French Enlightenment and 19th-century Russians were affected by the French Revolution, so early 20th-century Russians imbibed and transformed the new French art—impressionism in painting, symbolism in poetry. (Isn't this why writers and artists flocked to Paris after the catastrophe of 1917—to the prom-



"In the beginning was the word" opens the Gospel of St. John, from an 11th-century Cyrillic Bible. In Russia, words even today have the sanctified status of an icon.

ised land of art and freedom—only to discover that no one needed them there?)

During the years before the revolution, the arts flourished in an extraordinary manner; and Pushkin's weighty words suddenly sounded with renewed force and acquired fresh significance. The "new art" discovered that the word is magical in and of itself and not only because people are willing to kill for it. This art discovered, or rediscovered, that man is not only a member of society but a strange animal with five senses, with a variety of often untamed sexual needs, a capricious, whimsical being with unruly moods, hysterics, and perversions; that the world is large and unfathomable; and that there is such a thing as the delight of exotic, unseen countries and islands—Africa, Egypt, Ceylon, India, Japan—which are interesting not only for their statistical profiles, their undeveloped industries, and oppressed working people but for their religion, history, philosophy, mysticism, aromas, fiery sunsets over the water, snakes, lotuses, kimonos, tea ceremonies, hashish, and the unusual beauty of their women and men.

The new art fell in love with camellias and tuberoses, the colors lilac and green, sea shells, bracelets, sails, the smoke of bonfires and the dust of the road, dreams and ravings, mystical illuminations and divination by cards and palmistry; it fell in love with the carnival, the theater, ancient Greece, and the ascetics; it was enchanted by languor, anguish, and tears, and it cried not because it had no money to buy a cow or to pay the money-lender but because the Ideal was unattainable, because dream and reality were divided by an insurmountable wall, and because the soul strives to reach something somewhere out there, far away, in the clouds: It strives for death, the past and the future, and the loquacious numbers and weighty objects have already foretold the approaching destruction of the world, foretold plague, death and affliction, revolution and apocalypse.

Now, when we look back with a feeling of sorrow and loss at that legendary time, which seems separated from us by a transparent but impassable barrier, when we hear the dim, underwater voices of those people—their debates and quarrels, their

amorous admissions, their unrealized and realized prophecies—we have a vision of the *Titanic* floating in the night and gloom on its way to destruction, a vision of a huge ship brightly illuminated, full of music, wine, and elegant people, a bit afraid of the long ocean voyage, of course, but hoping that the journey will end well. After all, the ship is so large, strong, and reliable!

Russia perished just as quickly as the *Titanic*. And, likewise, only a handful of people survived.

Alexander Blok, a brilliant poet who possessed truly prophetic gifts, whom Anna Akhmatova called "the tragic tenor of the era," had a premonition of the fall of the former Russia. He foresaw the revolutionary squall ("the unheard of changes, unseen storms") and even predicted the coming destruction and catastrophe ("O, if you knew, children,/The cold and gloom of the coming days! . . ."), but he didn't know and could not imagine that instead of the cleansing though perhaps deadly wind for which he was prepared, a thick, malodorous mist would descend over the land. Blok says he wrote poetry by listening to an inner music, which he would then transform into verse. When the revolution came, Blok at first listened greedily to the new sounds: "Listen to the revolution with your whole heart!" He wrote a poem in which, he thought, this new music sounded, and then suddenly he went "deaf." According to his contemporaries, he complained of this "deafness" as a physical rather than metaphysical calamity: "I've gone deaf, I've gone deaf, I don't hear anything any more!" he told his friends and his diary. He—a productive, marvelous poet—wrote no poetry in the last three, postrevolutionary years of his life. To be more exact, he did write one poem. In it he said farewell to the world as he departed "into the darkness of night," as he called it. And it was none other than Pushkin whom he remembered and mentioned precisely in connection with that inner freedom, which, it seems, was his own "music" and which had left him during those fearful months.

Pushkin! We sang the *secret* freedom
Following in your footsteps.
Give us your hand in foul weather,
Help us in the mute struggle!

After this came silence. Blok, who was by and large a mystical poet, died mysteriously in 1921: He had an unknown illness that resembles AIDS. He began to dry up, to go deaf; he became emaciated and weak, and, once dead, he lay unrecognizable in his coffin, frightening those who had known him.

But not all of Russian literature had been killed. The government was distracted by more important forms of destruction, and Russian artists managed to shine for a short, frightful moment before going down in the abyss of the Soviet night.

Russian literature of the early Soviet period (as well as Russian émigré literature, which is thematically distinct from Soviet, but stylistically close) continued to dramatize the theme of the Poet and the Citizen. Those who decisively chose the Citizen drowned in oblivion, and those who chose the path of the Poet surfaced alive. Of course, this theme, which is latent throughout the entire history of Russian literature, has never manifested itself in pure form. Feelings of civic duty were not alien to the great Russian poets of the frightful Soviet period; likewise, stylistic beauty and creative discovery were not entirely unknown to the writers who sold out to the regime and tried to be model Soviet citizens.

One such writer, Andrei Platonov, who passionately believed in communism, wrote a series of novels that he thought glorified the new era and new ideas. But his creativity, his unusual train of thought, and his unprecedented style constituted a devastating attack against the regime. There is no more anticommunist literature than Platonov's: Paradoxically, his rejection of communism is achieved not by way of open accusations but through his linguistic visions.

But most of them—the young and the old, the smart and the stupid, those who tried to fit in and didn't know how, those who tried to protest, not knowing that it was useless—were sent to different prisons and camps, or shot, or frightened nearly to death, or exiled from the country, or brought to suicide, or forced to exalt their tormentors. Their manuscripts were confiscated and burned, their libraries were destroyed, their archives were taken away and lost, and for a quarter-century the country was submerged in communist gloom.

The end of the 1950s—Khrushchev's "Thaw"—brought a new wave of "civic" literature. Writers, especially poets, "spoke the truth," and hundreds of thousands gathered to hear that truth. It was then that the poets Andrei Voznesensky and Yevgeny Yevtushenko became well known. The latter, paraphrasing Nekrasov, coined the famous saying "In Russia the Poet is more than a poet." Cynics, noting how swiftly civic passions in the literary arena were replaced by mercantile passions, repeated these words, adding: "That's why the poet needs more money and privileges." This short-lived dawn of civic literature was replaced, as ever, by a new twilight; the hopes for social reform were extinguished, and from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, we lived through the period that it is now fashionable to call "the era of stagnation," a period that one must condemn at all costs.

Oh, yes, things were very bad for the citizen during these years. But artists, poets, and writers—miracle of miracles!—flourished in this stifling era, and never has so much been written or read as during these dismal, static, prevaricating years. Literature was valued above everything. Books became a common form of currency. In order to acquire certain rare books, people would spend huge sums or laboriously retype the books themselves on old typewriters. Soviet censorship—the most refined in the world—placed the stamp of interdiction not only on meaning but on style as well, and state presses, instead of cashing in on the huge demand for books and journals, artificially limited the print runs. People stole journals from their neighbors' mailboxes. Thieves broke into apartments in order to carry away books. It was a surprising, paradoxical time—and who could have foreseen that it would be this way? Who would have thought, after the lobotomy Russian culture underwent in the 1930s–1950s, that living, functioning cells still existed? The external pressure grew stronger, and, as before, words could land you in jail, hard labor, or the madhouse: They could even cause your death. But the writers and readers became more and more cultivated and enlightened; they protected their treasure—the word—from the outside world with ever greater agility and inventiveness. They placed ever greater

hopes on this bright, fragile, frightened, self-willed butterfly. Both writers and readers dreamed of external freedom, for, it seemed to them, they had had their fill of Pushkin's and Blok's secret freedom. They could not guess that external freedom might prove disastrous and their inner freedom imaginary.

The wide world which had once been open to the Russian had long since contracted to the dimensions of his apartment. Distant and not very distant lands—Paris and China, London and Ceylon, the seas, islands, nighttime streets of far-off capitals, bright with lights and cars—seemed to be pretty, fabricated fairy tales, in whose existence it was difficult to believe. The Russian tendency to indulge in dreams and fantasy mingled the foreign and unreal in a whimsical cocktail, in which it was difficult to distinguish what had already been, what was invented, and what had happened (but not to us). At this time, the literature of the fantastic thrived, as did “village” literature, which was more and more inclined to idealize the lost world of the Russian village, attributing to “the soul of the people” rare virtues that had never existed in reality.

The painful rupture in culture—the artificial, forced darkness that divided the literature of the 19th-century Golden Age and the early 20th-century Silver Age from our barbaric iron period—was traumatic for literature and all the other arts. The *Titanic* seemed to have sunk along with its baggage, and if from time to time corpses floated up to the surface, their facial features were distorted and unrecognizable.

When an epoch is buried
No psalms sound at graveside.
It will have to be garnished
With nettle and thistle.
And only the gravediggers labor
Nimbly. For this cannot wait!
It's so very, very still, Lord,
You can hear time passing.
And later the epoch will surface
Like a corpse in a spring-swollen river,
But by then the son won't know his
own mother,
And the grandson will turn back in sorrow.

This is what Anna Akhmatova wrote about occupied Paris in 1940, but it was not truly Paris that she had in mind.

The books of the Silver Age of Russian literature—the books of Russian émigré writers and the Soviet literature that never reached its readers—all of this would have been lost if not for the love and enthusiasm of Western publishers, who stubbornly and meticulously gathered and published Russian writers, without hope of any great commercial success. They were subjected in the press to the insults and condemnations of the Soviet government and official Soviet literature specialists. These books made their way into the Soviet Union in the suitcases of diplomats, courageous foreigners, and KGB agents who made money on reprints and the resale of books. It was dangerous to read these books in a public place—in the park or on the bus or subway—because the extremely white paper and dark, well-printed letters that distinguished Western books from the yellow-gray Soviet books could be seen from afar, tempting the alert passerby to raise a fuss and denounce the reader. Many incautious people paid with their freedom—or at least with their jobs.

The Russian books of Nabokov, published by the small press Ardis, infiltrated Russian literature in this way. Nabokov was the most mysterious and beloved writer of our day, and the publishers of Ardis—Carl and Ellendea Proffer—acquired the status of quasi-mythical omnipotent beings. Whether we were able to enjoy this divine prose or were condemned to shiver in the dark of ignorance was up to them. Besides Nabokov, the Proffers published many other authors, as did numerous other Western publishers—but Nabokov had the most magical effect of all on Russian readers of the 1970s. And no word sounded so enchanting to the Russian ear as the mysterious source of books, Ardis.

Then came the time we all know about, when Gorbachev and his like-minded colleagues were obliged by intense public pressure to allow “glasnost.” And the word flooded the land.

The circulation of literary journals jumped to a million. Then to two million. Then four million. Instead of controlled doses and cautious judgments, all manner of opinion was suddenly available, from the intelligent to the bizarre; all possible viewpoints appeared in print, from the most

democratic to the most fascistic and misanthropic; all kinds of prose, from heavy, traditional realism to the extreme avant-garde; all kinds of poetry, and religious tracts, astrological charts and calculations, the prophecies of Nostradamus, the mystical texts of Daniil Andreev, pornography, the platforms of dozens of political parties, cooking recipes, rules of good taste from the 1880s, exposés, memoirs, autobiographies—all of it overwhelmed the reader, who was accustomed to hiding, looking cautiously around, pulling the curtains closed, whispering or pretending to be blind, mad, or devoted to the cause of communism (which amounts to the same thing). The word, which had seemed unique and rare, was published in editions of millions and lost its magical qualities. The reader, elated at first, was eventually overwhelmed and then disappointed. A collector of rare coins might feel the same thing if he suddenly realized that the pride of his collection was no more than the most ordinary coin to be found in any department store. Everything was lost, everything was desacralized in one fell swoop. Writers—formerly a caste of priests, connoisseurs of clandestine rituals—were no longer any different from anyone else. If previously a poet could take pride in the deft use of an Aesopian language, employed in order to hint at political views or to express secret civic protest against the authorities, and if the reader could take pleasure in his own acuity in decoding these poetic cryptograms, now people started to wonder: What was the point of all this? Now anyone who wanted to could take a piece of paper, write a lewd ditty in large letters, curse or insult the regime, and go out on the square to all-around approval, holding the poster high above his head.

The regime itself was desacralized. The veil of secrecy was torn from the Kremlin's inhabitants; their saints, their idols, and their beliefs were ridiculed and scorned. And, as is always the case, it turned out that the emperor had no clothes, the temple was empty, and it wasn't even a temple but a third-rate brothel.

The poet no longer had to be a citizen. Citizens took this responsibility upon themselves. The poet could quietly return to poetry. And, lo and behold, it turned out that

there was no place for writers to return to: All their fuel reserves had already been placed on the Altar of the Fatherland, and there was nothing with which to light one's own fireplace. Those who still had a bit of kindling found themselves on an uninhabited island alone, bewildered and flustered.

When literature develops naturally, even sudden changes in the age—such as those that took place when modernism arose within the depths of a tired and oversatiated “realistic” literature—are not damaging. Memory and continuity are retained, and even if the new art completely breaks with the old, it still sees and remembers what it broke with, what exactly it was negating. But when everything that had once been is destroyed and trampled, amnesia sets in. Literature directs its senile gaze toward the mirror in the morning and doesn't recognize itself; it tries to understand who it is, where it came from, and whether yesterday existed or was only a dream. It starts everything anew, gets muddled and repeats itself in viscous, uncompliant words: It invents what was already invented long ago, stares at linguistic designs in amazement, not understanding where they come from and what they mean. Such a literature moves in circles, tries to remember last night's dreams, doesn't understand its neighbor's language, grows irate, and, in its torment, accuses its ancestors. This scenario is now being played out on the ruins of Russian art.

One idea that is currently quite popular is that literature is to blame for all the woes of Russian society. The accusations vary, but for the most part can be divided into two groups. The first holds that Russian letters was involved in shady deals: It taught people how to light fires, throw bombs, called Russia to take up the axe, confused the peasants and accused the ruling class of parasitism, of sucking the people's blood and gnawing on the people's bones. It gave the revolutionaries a shove—and they lunged. And then you get the Gulag. And then you get 60 million people tortured.

The second version, by contrast, accuses Russian letters of inaction. Instead of looking for the bright side of reality, pointing out the positive and shoring up the healthy elements of society, it listened to the trill of the nightingales, wept in a

drunken ecstasy over gypsy songs, drank itself away in bars, allowed itself to be carried off to sunset distances, promised that everything would perish, grow deaf, grow thick with duckweed, and plunged into a deep melancholy, pessimism, and fatalism. And there is some truth to this. Who, after all, are the heroes of Russian literature? Idiots, epileptics, consumptives, thieves, murderers, drunkards, fallen women, idlers, dreamers, fools, nihilists, three sisters whining away for two hours straight on a stage. They loll about on the sofa in stained robes, cut up frogs, lose millions at cards, corrupt minors. They go off with axes to kill old ladies. They slit people's throats once, and then they do it again. Their heads are shaved and they're sent to distant farms. Their heads are shaved and they're sent to the army. They set dogs on children. They hang themselves. They drown themselves. They shoot themselves. Yes, an impressive panopticon! And then you get the Gulag. And then you get 60 million casualties.

The accusations take opposing tacks but come to the same conclusion. But the most remarkable thing about these bitter nihilistic accusations—sounding from the right and the left, from nationalistically inclined government officials as well as from democrats appealing for the equality of all thinking minorities and the recognition of the sovereignty of virtually every village, if each so desires—is that it represents the very same, antiquated, but nonetheless indestructible belief in the power of the word, in the primacy of the word over life, of the dream over reality, and of imagination over facts. Here is the old belief in the idea, that if you can just compose it correctly, then life will be correct, it will be healthy, wealthy, and wise.

Of course, this is naive—to imagine that Russia's pragmatic merchants cut down their poetic cherry orchards because that's what Chekhov wrote: When the orchard meets the merchant it is the orchard, alas, that perishes. Yet now in Russia some of

the most intelligent, educated, and talented people—whose cultural ambivalence readers of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy will recognize—claim that literature should not exist at all, since it goes against God, that the writer is sinful by nature for he competes with the Absolute, that we dare not know, risk, and desire, but should only make our peace, pray, and read Holy Scriptures. These people are frightening because they know precisely what God needs: He needs control over the Word.

The "People," in whose name these new critics of Russian literature speak, do not, of course, listen to these accusations and are not overly interested in philosophical debates. The "tsar" has lost control over current events and has no time for literature. "Isn't it all the same to you—whether to depend on the tsar or on the People?" The words of the poet come to mind ever more often. And it seems that he's laughing, that he knew all this in advance.

What should we write about? What should we speak about? To whom should we appeal? To whom call out? Whom should we amuse and frighten, and to whom should we complain? And how to find one's own voice? And what should we do? Destroy? But everything has already been destroyed. Build? What kind of dwelling and for whom, if the wind is so strong that it will demolish any structure? And when the wind dies down, who is to say what it will leave in its place: snow drifts, desert sands, forest, swamp, or open seas?

The Russian writer at the end of 1991 feels like a senile old man on an uninhabited island in the company of indifferent goats and mindlessly cawing parrots. He doesn't know what to do. Make paper boats and fashion hooks from ball-point pens? Look for a ship to show up over the horizon with people from the other world? Wait until he's carried away by a wave? Or simply sit still until there arise, perhaps because of an earthquake, bare new islands, worthy of his imagination.

—Translated by Jamey Gambrell

REFLECTIONS

The Fuss About Ideology

Everything is "ideological"—or so many in and around the academy would now have us believe. To accept the proposition, however, is to move toward the position that there is no moral or critical knowledge, only opinion. George Watson explains why this is "no place to be and no place to stay."

by George Watson

The world of thought is bothered and bewildered about ideology: the world of education above all. Distortions of the vantage point, such as Eurocentricity or linear logic, it fears, invalidate everything that historians, critics, even scientists have ever done or may ever do.

In seminars the word acts like a silencer. It can bring rational debate to a stop, and the fear of its use can inhibit critical debate even before it begins. Softened, at times, into vague, emollient talk about structures of feeling, the word still has enormous subversive power. It bears within it the killing implication that assertions about morality and the arts are only seemingly certain, that the matter would look entirely different if one were to use a different language or start the argument from somewhere else, that all belief is in any case conditioned and, for that reason alone, easily discredited. A Victorian philosopher, John Grote, aptly called skepticism in that style, almost as familiar to his century as to ours, "running to history," the skeptic being confident he can ascertain *how* con-

cepts arose but never whether they are true or false. In the introduction to his half-forgotten book *Exploratio philosophica* (1865)—a book William James knew and admired—Grote called positivism of that sort "blinking the great and real questions" about mankind, noting and deploring its trivializing effects on the critical mind.

Ideology is a term familiar in literary debate, too. "It is all ideology," a literary colleague once remarked to me about critical judgments, adding that until theorists cleared the problem up he would find himself unable to take the academic study of literature seriously. Ideology is the bugaboo of humane studies in our time. Even everyday experience, a group of British structuralists wrote triumphantly in the *Guardian* some years ago, "is culturally produced." That state of mind can lead to a sort of half-despairing whimsy highly characteristic of certain schools of advanced thought. "They are afraid to look at what they are doing," a friend remarked the other day of his colleagues in a literary department in which he worked, noting a profound pessimism characteristic of critical theory since the fashion for deconstruction in the 1960s.

Such pessimism cannot be reassured, since it is prone to believe in advance of all argument that no assurance is to be had.

That is no place to be and no place to stay. The trouble is that ideology, as a term, has been ill-famed almost from the start, and it finds it hard to live down its disreputable past. Its ultimate origins in late-18th-century France may have been respectable, when it meant no more than the formal study of ideas. But Napoleon, shortly after, is said to have used the word to dismiss the failed revolutionary theorists he supplanted in 1799, and in the 1840s Marx and Engels confirmed the slighting sense of the word by using it only with reference to their enemies. Since then ideology, like bad breath, has been something noticed only in others.

I have explored the early, disreputable history of the word in *The Certainty of Literature* (1989); what matters here is that *ideology*, along with its derivatives like *ideologue* and *ideological*, has for more than a century been known only as a term of contempt. To commit Grote's mistake, one could be content to run to history here, identify sources, and call that contempt Napoleonic or Marxist. But that is not enough. It is to blink the great question, which is why it is so easily assumed that no ideology could ever be true.

But even to ask that question takes a lot of courage, and it means running counter to all known academic and political debate. In Britain, for example, the Labor Party, once accustomed to being called ideological by its enemies, has been throwing the insult back across the floor of the House of Commons since 1979 (when Margaret Thatcher became prime minister), usually with monetarism in mind. Mrs. Thatcher, plainly stung by the charge, would commonly reply that monetary restraint was not ideology at all but "just common sense." That suggests that the word is by now past all possibility of respectability. "It is just common sense not to spend more than you have," she once told an interviewer. If it had indeed been ideological not to print or borrow more money, she plainly implied, her policies might have been open to reasonable criticism.

There are two powerful implications in all such arguments, whether political or academic, that are seldom questioned. One is



The Philosopher and the Poet (1915-16), by Giorgio de Chirico.

that all ideologies are false, that all vantage points distort, that all total claims about the world are no more than prejudices of their place and time. It is easy to make such an assumption in an age where celebrated ideologies like fascism and Marxism have lately scored spectacular failures, and it is an assumption that offers endless opportunities for easy argumentative victory. If ideologies are expressed as "isms," then all isms are false, in which case it is enough to construct a new abstract term to dismiss a view, sometimes with powerful practical consequences. Racism—discrimination between races—is wrong. Therefore discrimination between sexes is wrong, once it is called sexism; or between ages, once it is called ageism; therefore nobody can be retired against his will. That example shows how potent a force the terror of ideology is in public policy. To speak up against it would take real audacity.

"Our own society," a theorist has written, "is no different from any other in having its own local beliefs," concluding that there are no timeless concepts, as we once thought, but "only the various different concepts which have gone with various different societies." Our own society has

placed "unrecognized constraints" upon our imaginations; "We are all Marxists to that extent." Let us hope not. That is Quentin Skinner in an article called "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas" in *History and Theory* (1969), and later events and later reflection may well have altered his view about an all-conquering Marxism.

Presumably, too, he would now accept that, if he and his friends have already noticed that our imaginations are constrained by social pressures, then those restraints cannot reasonably be called unrecognized. Given the familiarity of the point by 1969, they might better be called over-recognized. What is unrecognized, on the whole, is that some constraints—the law of non-contradiction, for example—are beneficial, even indispensable, to the due exercise of critical and historical thought.

If the constraints in question were unrecognized, after all, then one could not know they were there. And if such timeless concepts as are formed by time and place are on that ground alone undependable, then in order to discount them the historian would need some reliable way of distinguishing those that are socially imposed from those that are not. If they cannot be recognized, it is hard to see how he can even begin. Like most relativistic arguments, this one is as leaky as a sieve. Why, in any case, should concepts formed by a given time and place be less credible than those that are not? Presumably $2 + 2 = 4$ is a timeless concept. But it was formed by a time and place—perhaps ancient Babylon—and nobody, I imagine, supposes that it is to be discredited simply by identifying its origin. That would be an instance of Grote's running to history reduced to its ultimate absurdity. But in truth the argument is absurd all along the line. All beliefs have origins, after all. Even the two-times table was thought of by somebody. So running to history, as Grote saw, is running away from the whole business of truth-seeking. It is blinking the issues.

The other unquestioned assumption here is that ideology always underlies, and never overlies, our perception of values. It

is seldom allowed that general beliefs about morality, politics, or the arts might be an effect rather than a cause (or an effect as much as a cause) of what one knows about the world. But why not? Ideological beliefs, in other words, may be postconceptions rather than preconceptions. Either way, they are nothing to be ashamed of. "Most people," Terry Eagleton remarked in *Ideology: An Introduction* (1991), "would not concede that without preconceptions of some kind . . . we would not even be able to identify an issue or situation, let alone pass judgment upon it." One wonders whom the theorist has been talking to. Who in the world would deny that? One might more sensibly boast of it. A view offered without preconceptions, or in total ignorance, would surely be a view not worth having.

All this is odd, in the sense that it runs counter to instances that are common, familiar, and easily called to mind. Consider slavery. The moralists who decided some two centuries ago that slavery was wrong knew a great deal about slavery and the slave trade, whether directly or by report. No doubt they had moral preconceptions too about the value of human dignity and the rights of man under God and the law, and it was a perceived conflict between that moral consensus and the facts of the trade that made reformers of them. Idle to try to answer the question whether the ideology or the facts came first; but equally idle to assume that the ideology can only have come first. One of William Wilberforce's friends, the Reverend John Newton (1725–1807), supplied him with facts about the slave trade based on experience he had acquired at sea after becoming a clergyman; so it is a matter for speculation whether Newton's moral views preceded his acquaintance with the facts or vice versa. I make no assertion here either way, but only suggest that the assumption that ideology is where we start and never where we end is enormously unsafe. It is independent, in any case, of the question whether a given ideology is true or false. A view might be acquired on no experience at all, as most people acquire the view that murder

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is wrong on no experience of murder, and yet prove dependable.

The assumption that ideologies always and necessarily underlie what individuals and communities believe is an aspect of the foundationist fallacy, or the notion that all knowledge needs to be grounded on agreed or mutually agreeable propositions before it can be allowed to count as that. Since all knowledge is not propositional, such as a knowledge of how familiar foods taste, that assumption too is rash. The foundationist fallacy is nonetheless potent in schools and colleges. "How do you know?" and "What are your criteria?" are challenges usually taken seriously, whereas in fact they are often merely impertinent. One can know, and certainly know, without being able to answer any questions in that form. Consider the question "How do you know you are eating an apple?"

The matter goes far further than simple sensory perception. We know, for example, and certainly know, that everybody has had two parents: so certainly that any case claiming to be an exception would be dismissed, and rightly dismissed, out of hand, and any evidence claiming to validate it as an exception would instantly discredit itself. That example shows that it is not always culpably dogmatic to believe without evidence, or to refuse to consider counter-evidence when it is offered.

The proposition that murder is wrong, or slavery, is an instance of justified certainty too. It is not that nothing can usefully be said in defense of such propositions, or against them. But what is said is seldom, if ever, a sufficient ground for believing in them. One would continue to believe that murder and slavery were wrong without any supporting arguments, and any argument designed to force an abandonment of those certainties would rightly be seen as discreditable even before it was heard.

The foundationist assumption about knowledge now urgently needs to be replaced, if only as a child whose favorite toy has been removed needs to be distracted with another. Theorists need a new toy. What can helpfully replace it is not a new idea, strictly speaking, but an old one reworked. That idea is coherence theory, which proposes that beliefs are seen to be true when they cohere with other views

one already holds and accepts. It is horizontal, so to speak, whereas foundationism is vertical; it asks not for grounds or criteria but for consistency. It accepts that certainties may be unfounded, such as the belief that everyone has had two parents, and yet certain. Such certainties are confirmed by the cases one knows—by an understanding of how human beings are born, and by a general sense of probability. Coherence theory accepts that, in speaking of morality and the arts, we know what to value and are not, in condemning or commending, merely pontificating, revealing truths about our social origins and education, or trying to cheer ourselves up.

Coherence theory is ancient and medieval as well as modern, but instances from the last 100 years or so may serve best here, and in order to link them to the rest of the argument I shall expand and offer them in paraphrase.

John Henry Newman never circumnavigated his native island of Great Britain. He was convinced, nonetheless, and with certainty, that it was an island. The foundationist would ask on what sufficient ground he, or anyone else in such a situation, could lay claim to such certain knowledge. There is after all no convincing single foundation to that claim, unless satellite photographs are accepted in evidence, and even then one would have to be very sure they were photographs of Britain. Cardinal Newman, in any case, lived before the space age. But he could reply with a series of considerations none of which, as he knew, was singly sufficient: that he had seen maps of Britain; that he had heard of people who had sailed around it and even met one or two; that he had often heard it spoken of as an island and read that it was. All rather thin, it might be objected by the skeptic, since atlases are fallible and travelers lie. But Newman was surely right to argue, in *A Grammar of Assent* (1870), that his certainty was not irrational, and it is not even clear that it would have been reinforced if he had sailed around Britain.

William James, in a similar way, never went to Japan, and for similar reasons he was utterly convinced that it existed. Skeptics are driven to desperate whimsy in denying that such matters are certain and un-

touched by considerations of ideology. Of course Japan is there. Such cases as Newman's defense, or James's, illustrate how coherence theory in practice works, how rational beings believe and rightly believe what they do even when no single consideration is sufficient and when they know that to be so. Our deepest beliefs about morality and the arts, in a similar way, like the wrongness of slavery or the greatness of Michelangelo, need not be grounded on any single argument or set of arguments. To the foundationist challenge "How do you know?" or "What are your criteria?" one need only answer that no answer to that challenge is necessary. We know because the numerous considerations that bear on the matter cohere and fit.

A recent incident reminded me vividly of the marked superiority of coherence theory. On publishing an article on Nazism, I received letters from a number of total strangers who (I hope) will remain that, enclosing pamphlets meant to prove that the Holocaust never occurred: Survivors had lied, the camp sites were faked, and the alleged victims had emigrated and assumed new identities. Perhaps there is no single argument by which one could rebut that farrago of nonsense. But if I have to choose between the traditional view that the exterminations happened and the neo-Nazi view that it was all a Zionist invention, I choose the traditional view without hesitation. The weight and number of the considerations I should have to give up—the veracity of refugees, the camps themselves, and the evidence of witnesses at the war-crimes trials—easily outweigh, as a whole, the claims of small and sinister pressure groups. If asked if the Nazis committed genocide, I reply unhesitatingly, Yes. If asked how I know, I reply not with a single answer but, as William James might have done when asked about Japan, with a series of inconclusive answers that hang together and fit.

To all that the earnest and persistent skeptic may reply that he is still not convinced, and his refusal to be convinced usually takes one of two forms.

The mirror of the world. The skeptic may reply that my beliefs about morality and the arts fail, time and again, to reflect the real world. History, he will say, and above all the

history of criticism, shows there is no such thing as the One Correct Interpretation of any work of art. Other civilizations as well as other individuals hold distinct views about virtue and beauty, slavery and murder, and any certainties in such matters are no more than one view among many. Judgments may cohere, in short, as a system of beliefs; but they still fail to mirror the untidy facts of human preference and human behavior across time and space.

The mirror-image view of truth is potent, in the sense that it is widely accepted. It is also known as "correspondence theory." Telling the truth about anything, it is often assumed, including the truth about the moral life, must mean offering accounts that correspond to the real world and explaining how things are what they are. But though plausible, the assumption is inadequate and ultimately false. Consider this counter-instance. I am playing chess and ask the advice of a friend who, unlike me, is an expert, about the best move, and he tells me what it is, though I fail to take his advice. Situations in chess are infinite; so it may be further supposed that the proposed move has never been made in the entire history of the game. The right answer to the question "What is the best move?" in that event, was known but never acted on. In that case it corresponds to something that has never existed in the world. It is still the right answer.

Answers can be true, then, without corresponding to anything in the world; the objection to moral and critical certainties that they fail to do so is not, in itself, an objection to their certainty.

Vantage points. The other difficulty concerns ideology and vantage points more directly. It is often supposed that truth requires some ideal vantage point from which alone it can be seen. Usually the implication is that, as in viewing a building, there is no single point from which the whole is to be seen, that perspectives inevitably change as one moves, and that the truth, in consequence, or at least the whole truth, is not to be had. The critical skeptic who demands the One Correct Interpretation of *Hamlet* and bases his skepticism on the undoubted fact that there is none would be an example of the vantage point thinker. Quentin Skinner, for example, con-

demns the view that history allows anyone to assume that the best moral vantage point must be that of his own age and time, but he does not doubt that a vantage point is what there must be. In *The View from Nowhere* (1986), similarly, Thomas Nagel, without making any special play with the term ideology, remarks that the problem of objectivity is "to combine the perspective of a single person inside the world with an objective view of that same world," which implies at the outset that a single vantage point is always unobjective. He goes on to puzzle at length over how to "transcend" an individual view and see the world as a whole. It is simply assumed, in other words, that personal and particular views are partial, inadequate, and false.

There are several difficulties here. One, unremarked by Nagel, is self-regarding: If all personal views are unobjective, then his view of objectivity, being personal to him, would be that too. In *The Certainty of Literature* I have called such claims arguments-against-themselves, since they require a rigorous self-exemption, and it is not clear why any such exemption should be claimed or granted.

Another difficulty is the emphasis on wholeness. The skeptic is right to insist, like the non-skeptic, that in critical and moral issues the whole of everything is never told. But critical or moral objectivism is not a claim to know everything, or even most things; it is merely a claim about the logical status of such questions. Of course the best view of the Taj Mahal, if there is one, is still only one view among many; of course the best view of *Hamlet* still leaves things out.

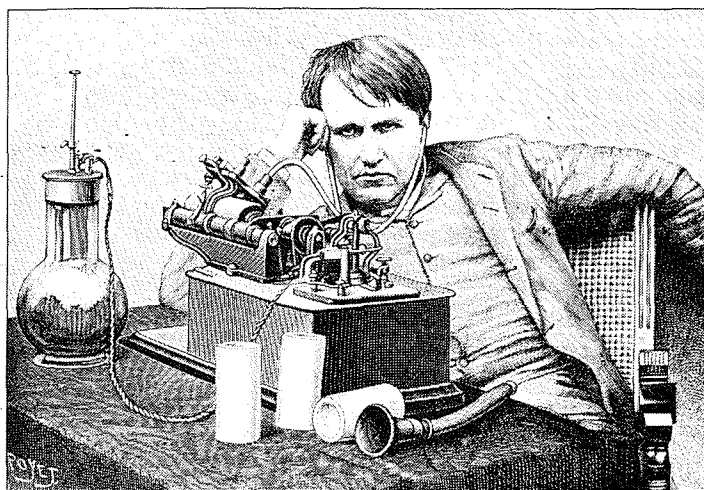
The fuss about ideology is ultimately a fuss about leaving things out, and it is not always noticed that it can be a good idea, in offering descriptions, to leave things out. Maps do, after all, and they would be useless if they did not. So does justice, in the sense that the judge rightly sides with the law against the criminal. There is no impartiality, as Lord Acton memorably remarked in his Cambridge in-

augural *The Study of History* (1895), like that of a hanging judge. Knowing that murder is wrong, as I do, and still more mass-murder, I am still (the skeptic might complain) failing to take the historical background of others into account: the history of Central Europe, for example, and its centuries-old tradition of anti-Semitism that might put Nazism in a different light. The next step, for the foundationist, would be to challenge me to explain why my view is any better grounded than Hitler's; and if I reply in terms of coherence rather than foundations—civic rights, for example, and what it costs communities and peoples to lose them—he is unlikely to be impressed by an explanation so long-winded and palpably inconclusive.

That impatience is characteristic of the skeptic in all ages. Francis Bacon (1561–1626) wrote: "'What is truth?' said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer." Demanding an answer, and yet not staying when one is offered, is how the skeptic satisfies himself that there is in truth no such thing as moral or critical knowledge, only opinion, and how he hopes to satisfy others that there is none. Skepticism is argument in a hurry. "How do you know *Middlemarch* is better than *Betty Blue*?" a student militant once defiantly wrote in a manifesto sent to the chairman of a literature department at the university where I worked. That was less a question than a challenge, and its simplistic implications are unmistakable: that only a single ground or foundation would do to convince *him* that anyone could be certain George Eliot was a greater novelist than the author of some trifling children's story.

The business of convincing the skeptic that certainties of judgments neither have nor need foundations might easily take more time than he would be willing to give. He will not stay for an answer. But he might be relieved of his fear of ideology and set on the right road, at least, if his blunt question were countered with another: "How do you know that we need an answer to that in order to know?"

Continued from page 16



Edison, shown listening to a phonograph, thought that it would be used for dictation and that its recorded cylinder—the phonogram—would replace the letter and memo in American business.

but it took only one success to pay for all the failures, notes Millard.

Once a product showed signs of success, Edison moved quickly. By 1910, Thomas A. Edison Incorporated (TAE) was making phonographs, film projectors, electric fans, and storage batteries. Edison was also an early practitioner of "vertical integration": His company controlled each stage of production, from the raw materials to the finished product. To better serve his

diverse customers (ranging from railroad companies to filmmakers), he created a separate division for each major product, with separate managers and finances. This divisional structure "became the standard of business organization in the 20th century," starting with General Motors and DuPont.

Unfortunately, says Millard, "Although TAE Inc.'s divisional structure was years ahead of its time, Edison remained firmly committed to personal leadership in the mold of the 19th-century family business." His control al-

lowed him to impose his old-fashioned tastes on TAE. Because he hated jazz, his company completely missed the great boom in popular music of the 1920s. Edison also hired professional managers and then overruled their decisions, costing him his technological leadership. Edison died in 1931, but thanks to his strategy of diversification, his company weathered the Great Depression. His reputation for business acumen, however, did not.

SOCIETY

Why Infants Die

"America's Infant-Mortality Puzzle" by Nicholas Eberstadt, in *The Public Interest* (Fall 1991), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

One of America's great shames is its unusually high infant-mortality rate. Although the rate has been steadily declining for many years (from 12.6 deaths per 1,000 infants in 1980 to 9.1 in 1990), it is still much higher than in other developed nations, notes Eberstadt, a researcher with the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies. In 1987, for example, it was almost 20 percent higher than the rate in Norway, nearly 50 percent

higher than in the Netherlands, and twice as high as in Japan. Yes, some countries underreport, Eberstadt says, but Australia and Canada, whose reporting practices are similar to those in this country, also have markedly lower infant-mortality rates.

Poverty, the chief culprit in most analyses, is not the real problem, Eberstadt finds. According to one study, for example, child-poverty rates in Australia and the United States were virtually identical

in 1980, yet the U.S. infant-mortality rate was nearly one-fifth higher. The explanation also does not appear to be inadequate health care. At any given birth weight, he notes, American infants have a *higher* survival rate than do Japanese or Norwegian babies. The problem is that Americans, white as well as black, have a high incidence of risky, low-weight births.

Some argue that biology may be a factor, since the proportion of low-birth-weight babies born to blacks is roughly twice as high as for whites. But Eberstadt blames irresponsible parental attitudes and behavior. A 1982 survey by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) found that low birth weight has a much lower correlation with poverty than with heavy smoking by pregnant women. Ba-

bies born to mothers who smoked 15 or more cigarettes a day had an incidence of low birth weight three times greater than those born to nonsmokers.

Bearing a child out of wedlock is another symptom of irresponsibility, Eberstadt notes, and it too significantly reduces an American child's chances of survival. A college-educated woman who bore an illegitimate child in 1982, for example, was more likely to lose her baby within a year than was even a grade-school dropout who was married.

If the parents' attitudes and behavior are important in determining infants' chances of surviving, Eberstadt concludes, then the prospects for bringing down the infant-mortality rate through government action may not be very good.

The Liberation Of 'White Trash'

"Poor Whites in the Occupied South, 1861-1865" by Stephen V. Ash, in *The Journal of Southern History* (Feb. 1991), Rice Univ., P.O. Box 1892, Houston, Texas 77251.

Although American historians have lavished attention on the freeing of the slaves during the Civil War, they have virtually ignored the fact that the North's conquest also "began the liberation" of the South's poor whites, writes Ash, an historian at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

The antebellum South's impoverished whites were mostly agricultural folk—tenant farmers, overseers for large planters, hired hands on yeoman farms, and squatters "who eked out a bare existence on the unclaimed lands of the piney woods, the sand hills, the swamps, or the mountains." Their patrician betters looked down on them as "poor white trash," devoid of honor and little better than slaves. In the eyes of the Union soldiers who marched into Dixie, however, the poor whites seemed, at first glance, to be oppressed wretches eagerly awaiting deliverance.

Many poor whites did welcome the northern soldiers as liberators. The number of whites who fled to the Yankees may well have equaled or exceeded the number who sought sanctuary behind Rebel lines. A Yankee general leading his troops through hill country in Tennessee in 1863

wrote that poor white men who had been hiding from Confederate conscription "rushed into the road and joined our column, expressing the greatest delight at our coming." Some poor whites enlisted in Union armies.

For most of the impoverished, simple survival was the main concern, but many nevertheless became determined to seize the opportunity afforded by invasion and occupation to better their lot. "Some settled temporarily in refugee camps and then went north to work," Ash writes. "Others found employment on plantations recently deserted by slaves. But many had a more ambitious goal: securing land of their own. Without federal assistance or encouragement, poor whites in considerable numbers began occupying abandoned land in and near Union lines."

Like the newly emancipated slaves, the poor whites "defied their oppressors . . . and voted with their feet for liberty and opportunity." For a moment, Ash says, "white society in the South seemed to stand on the brink of vast upheaval." But the moment passed and poor whites' militancy ebbed. The Confederate surrender at

Telling Histories

More professional historians are at work today than ever before, observes Harvard historian Simon Schama in the *New York Times Magazine* (Sept. 8, 1991), and yet American youths do not seem to be learning much about the past. Historians, he argues, must rediscover their muse.

The tension between popular historians and the arbiters of professional decorum is itself ancient history. Many of the most enduring historians—Voltaire, Gibbon, Macaulay, Carlyle and Trevelyan—wrote not just outside the academy but in self-conscious defiance of it....

For all these writers, history was not a remote and funereal place. It was a world that spoke loudly and urgently to our own concerns. How can their sense of the dramatic immediacy [of the past] be revived? In the first place, history needs to be liberated from its captivity in the school curriculum, where it is held hostage by that great amorphous, utilitarian discipline called social studies. History needs to declare itself unapologetically for what it is: the study of the past in all its splendid messiness. It should revel in the past-

ness of the past, the strange music of its diction....

G. M. Trevelyan put it best: "The poetry of history lies in the quasi-miraculous fact that once, on this earth, on this familiar spot of ground walked other men and women as actual as we are today, thinking their own thoughts, swayed by their own passions but now all gone, vanishing after another, gone as utterly as we ourselves shall be gone like ghosts at cockcrow."...

History is an indispensable form of human self-knowledge.... History's mission... is to

illuminate the human condition from the witness of memory. Yet the truths likely to be yielded by such histories will always be closer to those disclosed in great novels or poems than the abstract general laws sought by social scientists.

To this end, the... pressing task [is to restore] history to the forms by which it can catch the public imagination. That form, as Ken Burns's stunning PBS series on the Civil War demonstrated, ought to be narrative; not to discard argument and analysis, but to lend it proper dramatic and poetic power.



Appomattox Court House in April 1865, meant, ironically, a resurgence of southern aristocrats' authority in Union-occu-

pied regions. They soon did their best to put the poor whites, as well as the newly freed slaves, back in their places.

Seduction or Date Rape?

"Rape in Feminist Eyes" by Norman Podhoretz, in *Commentary* (Oct. 1991), 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

In the space of a few years, "date rape" has emerged as a major national concern, discussed in campus seminars and on TV talk shows. This, says Podhoretz, *Commentary's* editor-in-chief, is a great victory for a feminist campaign to redefine seduction as

rape and thus to brand nearly all men as rapists.

For millennia, he points out, there was no question about the definition of rape. It occurred when a man used violence or the threat of it to force a woman into sex.

Rape has always been viewed as one of the most abhorrent of crimes. The new category of date or acquaintance rape expands the definition to cover a multitude of situations in which, as the editors of *Acquaintance Rape: The Hidden Crime* (1991) put it, "verbal or psychological coercion" is used to "overpower" the woman. Overcoming a woman's resistance with words, Podhoretz observes, "has in the past been universally known as seduction."

But to many feminists, he says, "a woman's no always means no, her maybe always means no, and even . . . her yes often means no." Harvard Law School's Susan Estrich says: "Many feminists would argue that so long as women are powerless relative to men, viewing 'yes' as a sign of true consent is misguided."

Why have the front lines of the war between the sexes been stretched so far? Podhoretz believes that feminism emerged in reaction to the sexual revolution of the 1960s, in which women shed many traditional feminine prerogatives along with their inhibitions. "Wanting to say no again but having signed on to an ideology that deprived them of any reason or right to say it, women were desperately looking for a way back that would not seem regressive

or reactionary." They found it in the movement for women's liberation and the belated discovery that the sexual revolution had been just "another in the long history of male conspiracies to degrade and dominate women." From there it was but a short step to "the conclusion that sex itself—heterosexual sex, that is—was the mother (or rather the father) of all these conspiracies." Shunning men altogether being too radical a solution for most feminists, they adopted the seemingly more moderate objective of working toward "a wholesale change" in the relation between the sexes. In the new sexual dispensation, women would call the shots. Hence, "any instance of heterosexual coupling that starts with male initiative and involves even the slightest degree of female resistance at any stage along the way" was deemed illegitimate.

But the "date-rape" campaign, in Podhoretz's view, faces a formidable enemy: Mother Nature. Most young men and most young women still will play "their naturally ordained parts in the unending and inescapable war between the sexes, suffering the usual wounds, exulting in the usual victories, and even eventually arriving at that armistice known as marriage."

PRESS & MEDIA

News We Can't Use

"Why the News Makes Us Dumb" by John Sommerville, in *First Things* (Oct. 1991), Inst. on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Ave., Ste. 400, New York, N.Y. 10010.

Journalists often bemoan the fact that Americans do not seem as interested in the news as they once were. Probably only about one-quarter of those under 35, according to a 1990 survey, read yesterday's paper. Sommerville, a University of Florida historian, is unmoved. The whole idea of "news" that must be ingested daily, he argues, is deeply flawed.

The "news," Sommerville points out, is only "what has happened since yesterday's paper or broadcast." Yet when information is sold on a daily basis, each day's report must be made to seem vitally impor-

tant—even when, as is often the case, it is ephemeral. Today's news is made to seem significant mainly by reducing the importance of yesterday's—the historical context of events.

USA Today, with its bite-sized stories, colorful charts, and obsession with celebrities and factoids, has often been condemned for trivializing journalism. In reality, he argues, it just accelerates existing trends. *USA Today* shows that news is "a concentration on the ephemeral—the flotsam and foam on the surface of history."

There is no room in news reports for

"real thinking," he says. "So news is made up of statements rather than arguments." In place of genuine debate, the news offers just a clash of opinions. "As a result, we forget how to carry on a debate, and fall back on polls." A "flippant relativism," in which truth is lost to view, is encouraged by the "evenhandedness" of the news, he contends. "The idea that all 'viewpoints' are somehow equal is the reason that we

do so badly in arguing our great social issues." Yet at the same time, the news media—in the absence of any agreed upon *scale* of values—may arbitrarily make some particular value or cause, such as helping the homeless, supremely important. But only for the moment. Tomorrow's news is almost sure to bring some newer and more urgent concern.

The "news," at bottom, is anything that sells newspapers. In the past, however, Sommerville says, editors "took a more high-handed approach and gave the public what they thought grown-up, serious-minded people would want to know about." Today's newspeople have wised up. They know "that deep down, we don't care if our daily news is entirely authentic so long as it is entertaining—like pro wrestling." The *National Enquirer*, he believes, shows where even the most respectable newspapers are headed.

Are Americans who have ceased distracting themselves with the "news" devoting their attention instead to more substantive subjects, such as philosophy, history, or religion? Sommerville is doubtful. "[T]he damage our spirits have sustained through news addiction makes it unlikely. But the first step back to health is still to Just Say No."

Booboisie Media

Novelist and wit Gore Vidal, writing in the *Nation* (Aug. 26–Sept. 2, 1991), not only finds much to admire in journalist H. L. Mencken (1880–1956), but thinks he had a keen understanding of the mass audience.

Mencken's ideal popular paper for that vast public that "gets all its news by listening" (today one would change "listening" to "staring"—at television) would be "printed throughout, as First Readers are printed, in words of one syllable. It should avoid every idea that is beyond the understanding of a boy of 10" on the ground that "all ideas are beyond them. They can grasp only events." But they will heed only those events that are presented as drama in "the form of combat, and it must be a very simple combat, with one side clearly right and the other clearly wrong. They can no more imagine neutrality than they can imagine the fourth dimension." Thus Mencken anticipates not only the television news program but the television political campaign, with its combative 30-second commercials and soundbites. Movies were already showing the way, and Mencken acknowledged the wisdom of the early movie magnates, whose simple-minded screened agons had made them rich . . .

Today, Mencken's boisterous style and deadpan hyperboles are very difficult even for "educated" Americans to deal with, and are Sanskrit to the generality. Although every American has a sense of humor—it is his birthright and encoded somewhere in the Constitution—few Americans have ever been able to cope with wit or irony, and even the simplest jokes often cause unease, especially today when every phrase must be examined for covert sexism, racism, ageism.

The TV Teacher

"As the Third World Turns" by Erik Hagerman, in *World Watch* (Sept.–Oct. 1991), 1776 Mass. Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

A famous Shakespeare scholar, upon being told that he was expected to teach a graduate seminar every Wednesday evening, stared at his young department chairman

in disbelief and said, "Sir, surely there's been some mistake? Wednesday night is *Dynasty* night."

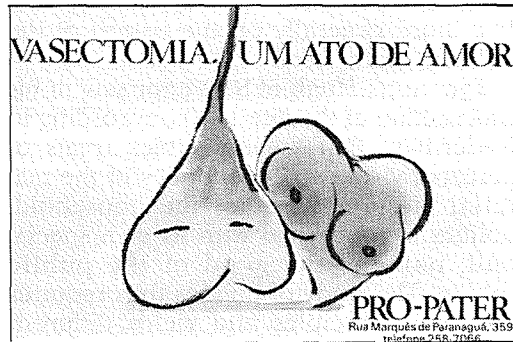
The story may be apocryphal, but no

matter: The point is that soap operas are notoriously addictive. In the Third World, a growing number of family-planning advocates are counting on just that.

In the last decade, the number of television receivers in Third World homes has doubled (to 350 million, or one for every 12 people), turning television into a major force. The idea of using TV drama to promote family planning was born in 1977, when Miguel Sabido, a producer at a commercial Mexican network, created a soap opera that dramatized the need for birth control. "Accompáñame" ("Come Along With Me"), according to the network's follow-up survey, "was one of the chief reasons for a 32-percent increase in visits to Mexican family-planning clinics in 1978," writes Hagerman, a researcher at a Washington-based environmental think tank, the Worldwatch Institute.

Sabido's idea found its way to Nigeria, where the birth control message was integrated into a popular TV show. Visits to family-planning clinics rose by 47 percent, and almost two-thirds of the new clients credited the program as the catalyst for their visits.

Other countries have since begun to use television to promote family planning and other social causes, including several Latin



Vasectomies increased in Brazil after a pro-vasectomy TV spot featuring animated "male" and "female" hearts was aired in 1989.

American countries, Kenya, Turkey, and India. In the Philippines, to encourage sexual responsibility among young people, a U.S.-Philippine coalition of population-control groups organized a campaign around music videos.

Many of these early efforts have been made by government-sponsored or government-owned networks, and Hagerman worries that advertisers will corrupt any future attempt to broaden them. That governments may be tempted to use TV for less politically correct propaganda appears not to bother him at all.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

When Politics Became a Science

"Aristotelianism and the Origins of 'Political Science' in the Twelfth Century" by Cary J. Nederman, in *Journal of the History of Ideas* (Apr.-June 1991), Univ. of Rochester, Rochester, N.Y. 14627.

Scholars regard the rediscovery of Aristotle's *Politics* in the mid-13th century as the spark that ignited an intellectual revolution. Medieval political thought gave way to modern forms, eventually including Machiavellian amorality, as the realm of politics was defined for the first time as a branch of knowledge separate from theology, law, and other fields. In a curious way, says Nederman, of the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, Aristotle's influence was even greater than scholars have

commonly supposed.

Although thinkers in the 12th century did not enjoy direct access to Aristotle's text, Nederman says, they did read works such as Boethius's *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge* and Cassiodorus's *Institutes* that propounded the Aristotelian scheme of classification of the sciences and the place of political inquiry within it. Many 12th-century thinkers, he says, not only recognized "that politics was a separate and distinct subject matter for inquiry but

they also sometimes attempted to speculate more generally on the nature of the political realm itself. . . ."

The monk Hugh of St. Victor saw in his *Didascalion* of the late 1120s, according to Nederman, that "where ethics treats of personal virtue and economics of the material circumstances of the household, politics is concerned with its own special end, namely, the good of the public sphere. The study of politics thus requires different principles and yields different sorts of conclusions. . . ." And in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (1159), a central assumption, notes Nederman, is that "political questions may be treated in separa-

tion from moral and theological issues, even if there exists an ultimate interconnection among them."

If the Latin translation and circulation of Aristotle's *Politics* about 1250 thus really had no *revolutionary* impact on medieval thinking, that is not because Aristotle's ideas had no effect. On the contrary, Nederman says, his thought "exercised a far more pervasive influence upon philosophical inquiry into politics during the Middle Ages than has hitherto been suspected." The lessons of Aristotle's *Politics* were readily absorbed after 1250, not because they were new but because they reinforced existing beliefs.

The Limits of Toleration

"On Toleration and Tolerance" by Maurice Cranston, in *Quadrant* (Mar. 1991), 46 George St., Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065, Australia.

Voltaire (1694–1778), battling religious extremism in France but lacking any influence on government or politicians, sought to persuade his countrymen to exercise more personal tolerance. English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704), by contrast, championed *toleration* as public policy—but thought it had limits. Locke's biographer, Maurice Cranston, believes that both men's views are relevant today.

A revival of anti-Protestant fanaticism among French Catholics—"not entirely unlike the fanaticism we observe in Islam today," Cranston says—prompted the elderly Voltaire to write his *Treatise on Toleration* (1763). Posing in the work as an obedient Catholic, Voltaire argued that man is unable fully to understand events in his own life, let alone know the mind of God. As no church can prove it has the true religion, it is best to put up with the other sects, however mistaken they may seem. Voltaire hoped to change people's attitudes, and in that way "to shame their rulers, and especially the religious authorities, out of the practice of persecution," Cranston writes.

Locke, on the other hand, appealed directly to government leaders. In a paper he wrote in 1677 for the Whig leader, the first Earl of Shaftesbury, the philosopher

argued that all Protestant dissenters should be tolerated because their beliefs and forms of worship, however offensive to England's ruling Anglicans, did not disturb the nation's tranquillity. Roman Catholics, however, were another matter, Locke insisted. England was being brought to the edge of civil war by the question of whether King Charles II's Roman Catholic brother, James, should be allowed to accede to the throne in the event of Charles' death. Catholics, Locke claimed, did not merit official toleration because their opinions were "destructive of all governments except the Pope's." They were, in effect, a subversive political movement.

Today, Cranston maintains, "[T]he Islamic faith has become the sort of subversive positive force, and menace, that the Catholic church was, rightly or wrongly, in Locke's eyes." The death sentence imposed on novelist Salman Rushdie by the Ayatollah Khomeini and "accepted as authoritative by the Muslims living in England," Cranston says, provides "an example of what Locke called 'obedience to a foreign prince.'" Muslim leaders in England have even demanded a separate parliament. In these circumstances, Cranston says, Locke's message, as well as that of Voltaire, remains pertinent. "We must cul-

tivate the spirit of tolerance in our hearts; but we should not allow the policy of toleration to be exploited and abused by

fanatical sectarian groups which are subversive political movements in ecclesiastical disguise."

Religion As Therapy

"Saving Therapy: Exploring the Religious Self-Help Literature" by Wendy Kaminer, in *Theology Today* (Oct. 1991), P.O. Box 29, Princeton, N.J. 08542.

Millions of Americans read religious self-help books. M. Scott Peck's first tome, *The Road Less Traveled* (1978), was on the best-seller list for years, and works by such authors as Charles (Grace Awakening) Swindoll and Gordon (*Renewing Your Spiritual Passion*) MacDonald also have worldwide audiences. Such books, reports Kaminer, a lawyer and visiting scholar at Radcliffe, "are marketed as primers on personality development and psychotherapy, child rearing, spouse abuse, depression, and despair, as well as the search for love, happiness, and salvation." The books portray God as a loving parent, and advise readers to acknowledge their dependence on Him, to reject individualism, and to love themselves as well as their neighbors.

Nineteenth-century liberal Protestantism, for all its faults, at least encouraged people to act to shape their environments, Kaminer says. "Now popular religion, like a 12-step [recovery] group, [tells] us that we're powerless." Most of the pop religious literature is devoid of "thoughtful discussion of moral behavior." The writers provide "a laundry list of moral wrongs—abortion, homosexuality, adultery, athe-

ism, and rebellion—but no guidance in resolving moral dilemmas."

The writers usually "claim a fellowship with their readers, admitting their own fallacies, sins, and neuroses." MacDonald devotes a whole book to his own repentance of adultery. But they also set themselves up as authorities, even as they disclaim any higher expertise. Peck, for example, "bemoans our tendency to 'let our authorities do our thinking for us,'" but clearly regards himself as an authority. He speculates that people who "slip away" from his workshops "just cannot bear that much love." Individuals who challenge him, Kaminer says, are almost always presented in his books as wrong.

Peck and the other Protestant writers all stress strongly the need to surrender one's self to God. Peck maintains that "only two states of being [exist]: submission to God and goodness or the refusal to submit to anything beyond one's own will, which refusal automatically enslaves one to the forces of evil"—a proposition Kaminer finds "chilling." In people's "eagerness to submit," she remarks, "not everyone can distinguish God from the devil."

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Crying No Wolf

"Biodiversity Studies: Science and Policy" by Paul R. Ehrlich and Edward O. Wilson, and "Extinction: Are Ecologists Crying Wolf?" by Charles C. Mann, in *Science* (Aug. 16, 1991), American Assoc. for the Advancement of Science, 1333 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Ecocatastrophe is not too strong a word for the specter raised by biologists Paul Ehrlich of Stanford and Edward Wilson of Harvard. The destruction of tropical rain forests and other natural habitats, they as-

sert, is accelerating the extinction of precious species of animals, plants, and microorganisms. Tropical deforestation alone, they calculate, now causes the loss of at least .2 percent of all species in the

forests annually—a loss of 4,000 species per year if there are 2 million in the forests, and 40,000 if there are 20 million.

Biodiversity is important for more than moral and aesthetic reasons, they say; it provides “enormous direct economic benefits... in the form of foods, medicines, and industrial products.” To save “our fellow living creatures and ourselves in the long run,” Ehrlich and Wilson propose a radical worldwide ban on the development of “relatively undisturbed” land. That would require massive aid for the Third World and a “cooperative worldwide effort unprecedented in history.”

But some scientists, reports freelance writer Charles Mann, aren't so sure that ecological doomsday is just around the corner.

To begin with, nobody even knows how many species there are. Ehrlich and Wilson say the number might be 100 million. But scientists have actually identified only 1.4 million. That, writes Mann, puts doomsday prophets “in the awkward position of predicting the imminent demise of huge numbers of species nobody has ever seen.”

Moreover, Ehrlich and Wilson's extinction rates are based on the assumption that habitats are like islands; as the island shrinks, parts of the habitat and some of

the species in it are utterly lost. But the analogy is imperfect. Habitats only roughly resemble islands. One study showed that almost half of the more than 11 million hectares of virgin tropical forest cut each year did not become wasteland (i.e. “water” around the “island”) but secondary forest that still supported some plant and animal life. It does not support as much biodiversity as virgin forest, but it is not necessarily barren, either.

The assumed relationship between an area available for wild populations and the number of species that area can support also runs into criticism from some scientists. A loss of area, they say, may reduce just the *extent*—not the diversity—of an ecosystem. Some of today's habitat destruction may not translate into any loss of species.

The experience of Puerto Rico, one of the few tropical places where long-term biological records have been kept, gives further reason to doubt the doomsayers, Mann says. The island, now thickly covered with trees, “was almost completely stripped of virgin forest at the turn of the century. Yet it did not suffer massive extinctions.” Of 60 bird species, for example, only seven disappeared. This was a “painful” loss, he observes, but not “an ecocatastrophe.”

Fudging Or Fraud?

“Scientific Fraud” by David Goodstein, in *The American Scholar* (Autumn 1991), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

In yet another highly publicized case of scientific fraud, Nobel Prize-winning biologist David Baltimore finally conceded last spring that a paper on transgenic mice he had been defending for five years might well contain false data concocted by a co-worker. The revelation gave more ammunition to politicians and journalists who contend that fraud in science is more common than we think. Even some scientists have begun to have doubts. Caltech physicist David Goodstein replies that science, like other areas of human activity, has little “hypocrisies and misrepresentations” built into the way it is done. They should

not be confused with fraud.

Journalists William Broad and Nicholas Wade fell into that trap in their 1982 book, *Betrayers of the Truth*. Among the scientists they implicated in “Known or Suspected Cases of Fraud” were Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727) and American physicist Robert A. Millikan (1868–1953).

Newton was trying to explain the propagation of sound waves in air. His theory, Goodstein says, “was so good he was able to calculate the speed of sound and then compare it with measurements. When he did, they disagreed by about 20 percent.” Although this represented a great intellec-

Environmentalism's Limits to Growth

A Survey of Recent Articles

Greenpeace 20 years ago was just the name that a small band of activists in Vancouver, British Columbia, gave to an old fishing vessel they used in a failed attempt to block a U.S. nuclear-bomb test. Today, reports Tom Horton in *Rolling Stone* (Sept. 5, 1991), Greenpeace is the world's largest and wealthiest environmental organization—"a rich, planet-saving, lawbreaking, in-your-face, semi-anarchistic, multinational corporation." But for Greenpeace, as for other, less radical, environmental groups, growth and success have brought their own special problems.

Based in Amsterdam, Greenpeace now has offices in 23 nations, projected revenues for 1991 of \$160 million, and nearly five million contributors, half of them in the United States. It has a satellite communications network (Greenlink) and a companion database (Greenbase). It has a fleet of eight imposing ships. It even has a small diplomatic corps of specialists in international law and foreign policy, who represent the organization in treaty conferences and conventions that regulate such activities as whaling and ocean dumping.

Yet Greenpeace, Horton writes, is now "in a state of turmoil about its future, agonizing over whether success has dulled its cutting edge. Is it poised to become a truly global force . . . or is it in grave danger of becoming overextended? Is it becoming too comfortable and bureaucratic to take the risks that have been Greenpeace's stock in trade?"

The organization built its radical reputation with dangerous confrontational stunts. In 1985, Greenpeace's *Rainbow Warrior*, on a voyage to protest French nuclear tests in the South Pacific, was sunk in New Zealand by French-government agents, and one activist was killed. Recently, however, Greenpeace refused to endorse a boycott of tuna canners to protest the slaughter of dolphins caught in tuna fishermen's nets. Greenpeace held back, Horton says, because of its efforts to expand into Latin America, which depends on tuna exports for precious hard currency. (Even so, after large U.S. tuna canners agreed to market only "dolphin-safe" tuna, Greenpeace reportedly tried to claim credit.) Steve Sawyer, executive director of Greenpeace International, told

Horton: "Yes, life is more complicated when you look at the whole world, but that's what Greenpeace has to do now."

Other environmental organizations also have been facing the dilemmas of growth. The rising popularity that many of them experienced during the 1980s, *Newsweek's* (June 24, 1991) Sharon Begley observes, "brought a huge influx of members and donations, saddling the groups with gargantuan overheads and staffs." The recession has forced some groups to cut back. The National Wildlife Federation, for instance, laid off 56 employees—seven percent of its staff—early in 1991, *Outside's* (July 1991) Bill Gifford notes.

Expansion can lead to more than just financial woes. It also can mean a weakening of the special purpose for which the organization was set up. "The National Audubon Society used to be the strongest organization protecting birds and wildlife, and now it is not," Roger Tory Peterson, the well-known writer and painter of birds told Dyan Zaslowsky in *Harrowsmith Country Life* (Sept.-Oct. 1991). The 87-year-old society used to concentrate on such traditional conservationist activities as running bird sanctuaries, taking bird censuses, and leading efforts to save birds from extinction. But now, Peterson said, "It is deemphasizing nature and emphasizing trash and pollution because it just wants to grow larger. John James Audubon would be absolutely bewildered by it."

Peter A. A. Berle, president of the Audubon society, contends in *Audubon* (May 1991) that "Today nature is defined by human activity." Since he became the society's head in 1985, Zaslowsky reports, Berle "has involved the organization in the gamut of ecological causes." The elegant egret that had long been the society's symbol was replaced in 1991 by a small blue flag.

The environmental movement, declares former *Audubon* editor Les Line, fired by Berle after 25 years in the job, is "now more interested in collecting garbage and putting a brick in the toilet than in examining nature. The naturalists have been replaced by ecocrats who are more comfortable on Capitol Hill than in the woods, fields, meadows, mountains, and swamps."

tual triumph, Newton was not satisfied. He had elsewhere insisted that the test of a theory was its conformity with precise observations. And so he "came up with all kinds of arguments . . . now known to be wrong." He "made little fixes"—e.g., hypothesizing that there was water vapor in the air that for some reason affected sound waves—"until he finally got his theory in agreement with the experiment." Newton was not behaving very differently from theorists today, Goodstein says. "In hindsight, Newton's fixes are funny and his motive revealing." But they do not add up to fraud.

Millikan was measuring the electric

charges of drops of oil. He wanted to prove the charges came in definite units; a rival scientist contended otherwise and criticized Millikan's results. Millikan went back to his lab to get better data and later published a paper in which he claimed to be providing the data from all the drops observed. In fact, Millikan's notebooks show that he had *not* published everything. Data on drops that didn't fit his theory had been left out. "Millikan did not simply throw away drops he didn't like," Goodstein notes. "That would have been fraud by any scientist's standard. To discard a drop, he had to find some mistake that would invalidate that datum." So he did. It

was not fraud, Goodstein says, just exercise of scientific judgment.

The fine line between "harmless fudging" and real fraud is an important one, Goodstein maintains. If the work, and everything that flowed from it, of Newton, Millikan, Ptolemy, Hipparchus of Rhodes, Galileo, John Dalton, and Gregor Mendel—all accused by Broad and Wade of involvement in cases of fraud—were expunged from the body of scientific knowledge, "there would not be much left."



Pitdown man provided science with a "missing link"—until 1954, when it was exposed as a fake. The ape jaw and human cranium were "discovered" in an English gravel pit some 40 years earlier.

How to Limit Population Growth

The world's population is increasing by a quarter of a million people every day. Population-control advocates demand a global solution to what they see as a global crisis. But efforts to impose communal control on the fertility of parents keep running up against the European tradition of individual freedom and religious principles (Catholic and Hindu), not to mention the simple reluctance of many people the world over to limit family size to 2.3 children. No way out of this dilemma has been

found. But Garrett Hardin, author of the seminal 1968 essay, "The Tragedy of the Commons," says that even in the absence of a "total answer," progress can be made.

Hardin, a professor emeritus of human ecology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, recommends "the incremental approach, adopting partial measures that will slow the population growth, giving us more time to look for more general solutions." Fortunately, he says, the world is divided into nearly 200 nations:

"Conspicuous Benevolence and the Population Bomb" by Garrett Hardin, in *Chronicles* (Oct. 1991), The Rockford Inst., 934 N. Main St., Rockford, Ill. 61103.

They can all serve as laboratories in which different experiments are carried out. But, he adds, each nation must "experiment only with itself, so it can speedily observe whether an experiment is successful or not."

For rich nations such as the United States, Hardin contends, "the most feasible partial solution is an immediate restriction of immigration." Because immigration accounts for about half of the country's [one percent] annual population growth, he notes, "the potential for progress . . . is great."

Restricting immigration here, he argues, would also help other nations. "No nation that can foist off its extra people onto other nations," he says, "is likely to take its population problem seriously."

Controlling immigration means controlling borders, of course—and that, Hardin says, offends people who cherish the ideal of "One World, Without Borders." But while "religious prophets and secular scholars" have promoted universal loyalty, more practical individuals "have favored the limited loyalties of family, tribe, and nation." There is truth, he says, in the old adage, *Good*

fences make good neighbors. Effective borders are needed to keep antagonistic ethnic groups apart. "A peaceful, borderless global village is an impossibility. But a *globe of villages* can, if we keep our fences in repair, endure and enrich our lives." And perhaps even help to control the globe's population growth.

Environmental Mystics

Gonzaga University's John P. Sisk plumbs the depths of "deep ecology" in the *Georgia Review* (Summer 1991).

Behind . . . "deep ecology," as it is now called, is the conviction . . . that "rights" must be extended beyond human beings. Once [they are], of course, people end up on a moral level with redwoods, earthworms, Cape fur seals, and the nearest alley cat. . . . [For radical environmentalists,] a range of problems—nuclear pollution, acid rain, ozone depletion, the destruction of Amazonian rain forests and coral reefs—become darling issues in a new and intransigent morality, so that the green rage of Earth First! is a holy rage, and humanity, as Earth Firster Dave Foreman has put it, "is a cancer on nature." What's more, in the Earth First! perspective, humanity is no less cancerous when its efforts to repair or reclaim the environment are motivated primarily by the selfish anthropomorphic desire to make the environment more available for human sport and comfort. . . .

Among environmentalists Earth Firsters are plainly a minority, but they are out on the cutting edge of the issue where the publicity is cheap and abundant, and where the opposition, no longer sure of its own rights, is easily shouted down. . . .

[U]neasy and guilt-stricken in our abundance, [we are] easy prey to cynical denigrations of our nurtured well-being—and to apocalyptic predictions that we are about to lose everything or to become so overheated in a greenhouse universe that everything might as well be nothing.

ARTS & LETTERS

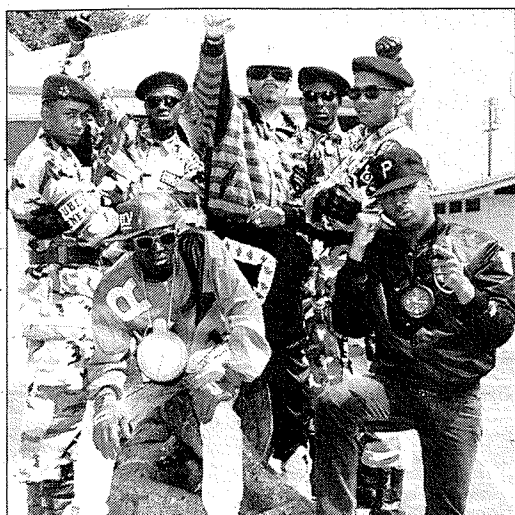
Corrupting Rap

"The Rap on Rap" by David Samuels, in *The New Republic* (Nov. 11, 1991), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Hailed by many critics as authentic street music and damned by others for the same reason, rap music has taken the country by storm. Last summer, *Niggaz4life*, a celebration of gang rape and other violence by the

group N.W.A., or Niggers With Attitude, was the best-selling record in America.

In the past, notes Samuels, a Mellon Fellow at Princeton, black music (such as jazz and R&B) has been modified to appeal to



Despite the rap group Public Enemy's militant style, its members grew up not on inner-city streets but in suburban Long Island towns.

white audiences. But promoters found a more noxious formula for putting rap on the map. The music's roots are in "toasting," a Jamaican style of music that was born in the mid-1960s. A decade later, lower-class blacks in New York pioneered rap, speaking whimsical lyrics over the heavy beat of "hip-hop" dance music, and it soon spread to other cities. Then, starting in the early 1980s, Samuels says, "a tightly knit group of mostly young, middle-class, black New Yorkers, in close concert with white record producers, executives, and publicists, [began] making rap music for an audience . . . primarily composed of white suburban males."

Rap's chief impresario, according to Samuels, is Rick Rubin, "a Jewish punk rocker from suburban Long Island" who

masterminded rap's first million-selling album, *Licensed to Ill* (1983), by the Beastie Boys, a white punk rock band that Rubin transformed into a rap group.

But Samuels writes that Rubin and others soon found that "the more rappers were packaged as violent black criminals, the bigger their white audiences became Rap's appeal to whites rested in its evocation of an age-old image of blackness: a foreign, sexually charged, and criminal underworld against which the norms of white society are defined, and, by extension, through which they may be defied." So Rubin served up Public Enemy, one of a number of groups now offering "a highly charged theater of race in which white listeners became guilty eavesdroppers on the putative private conversation of the inner city." Putative because Public Enemy's members are actually the sons of black middle-class professionals who grew up in New York's Long Island suburbs.

"A lot of what you see in rap," says Harvard's Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "is the guilt of the black middle class about its economic success, its inability to put forth a culture of its own. Instead they do the worst possible thing, falling back on fantasies of street life. In turn, white college students . . . buy nasty sex lyrics under the cover of getting at some kind of authentic black experience."

Already, Samuels believes, rap's popularity among inner-city blacks is waning. But the hit machine grinds on, churning out vastly popular songs and videos that glorify misogyny, anti-Semitism, and racist stereotypes of black criminality—a corrupt commerce in which blacks and whites are both complicit.

Argentina's 'Southern' Writer

Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986), whose luminous *ficciones* combine playful metaphysical musings with tight plots, considered "perhaps my best story" to be "The South." It can be read as a straightforward narrative, he said, and also "in another

"The Journey to the South: Poe, Borges, and Faulkner" by John T. Irwin, in *The Virginia Quarterly Review* (Summer 1991), One West Range, Charlottesville, Va. 22903.

way"—which he did not reveal. Irwin, a professor of humanities at Johns Hopkins, suggests that the story offers a figurative account of the Argentinian's own career as a writer.

In "The South," the main character,

Juan Dahlmann, after an accidental brush with death and his discharge from a sanitarium, heads for a ranch he has inherited in the south of Argentina. Along the way, he gets into a confrontation with three drunken toughs. An old gaucho—"in whom Dahlmann saw a summary and cipher of the South (his South)—threw him a naked dagger, which landed at his feet. It was as if the South had resolved that Dahlmann should accept the duel," one he is fated to lose.

The "South" of the story obviously is much more than just the pampas of Argentina. And just as the fictional Dahlmann, upon recovering from his accident, journeyed to that symbolic region, so Borges on his recovery from a similar accident in 1938 embarked on his career as a writer of fiction. In this parallel journey, Irwin says, Borges's sense of himself as a "southerner" seeking to move into the realm of North American literature was very important.

At the time, the bookish Borges, who had been educated in Europe, looked to Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49) as "a model of how one could achieve literary self-definition through a kind of antithetical regional identification." Although Poe was born in Boston, he was raised in Virginia and came to consider himself "a Southern gentleman, even something of an aristocrat." This distinguished Poe, in his own mind, from "the largely Northern literary establishment in which he moved."

Borges, as he immersed himself in North American literature, felt a strong kinship with Poe for other reasons as well. Like Poe (and like the imaginary Dahlmann), Borges had a grandfather who was a military hero, and like Poe, he was early drawn to the military life (although that was impossible for the nearsighted and rather frail Argentinian). The American South has a strong military tradition, Irwin notes, and there was in the Civil War an image of the southerner "as the aristocrat who is both soldier and poet."

The first story Borges wrote in 1939, after his near death from blood poisoning, was "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Qui-*

xote." In it, a minor French poet and essayist sets out to produce a new *Don Quixote*. Just as Menard was seeking to "double" the work of Cervantes (like Poe, a former soldier), so the then-minor poet and essayist Borges was trying at the time to "double" several of Poe's detective stories.

Poe's influence, probably reinforced by the work of another eminent writer from the American South whom Borges admired, William Faulkner, sharpened Borges's "sense of his own southernness," Irwin says. By making the most of that, Borges was able to achieve the originality that made him one of the century's great fiction writers.

Articles We Never Finished Reading . . .

As postmodern ethnography de-familiarizes the genre of life-writing into a voracious apparatus of textualized selfhood, the underlying cultural function of biography, at least as a Western genre, can be seen to insinuate and extend what James Clifford has called "the myth of coherent personality." That is, by means of a massive life-writing consuming and producing selves from George Washington to Cary Grant and Alice James, the primary function of biography is to disseminate a plethora of selves who might instantiate this integrity of selfhood as achieved against a more or less recessive social background, what Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, and Althusser have theorized (less blithely) as the overdeterminations of mythic structures, libidinal codes, and economic base. Hence, in contracting to document and amass the thematics of such a particularized self, the biographer enters the terms of a genre in which he or she contracts to deliver the individual as a tormented journey toward coherent unity, striking personality, and expressive selfhood . . .

—From "Producing American Selves: The Form of American Biography" by Rob Wilson, in *boundary 2* (Summer 1991). Wilson is an English professor at the University of Hawaii.

The Play's The Thing

"The Case for Oxford" by Tom Bethell and "The Case for Shakespeare" by Irvin Matus, in *The Atlantic* (Oct. 1991), 745 Boylston St., Boston, Mass. 02116.

No fewer than 58 individuals have been proposed at one time or another as the true author of the works attributed to William Shakespeare (1564–1616) of Stratford. The anti-Stratfordians' current favorite is Edward de Vere (1550–1604), the 17th Earl of Oxford, a courtier who was a scholar, athlete, and poet. Journalist Tom Bethell contends the available evidence supports their claim, but independent scholar Irvin Matus firmly insists that the plays and sonnets were written by the man from Stratford.

In the eyes of anti-Stratfordians, there exists a vast, unbridgeable gap between the apparently unlettered Stratford man and the glorious works that now bear his name. "To credit that amazing piece of virtuosity [*Love's Labour's Lost*] to a butcher boy who left school at 13 or even to one whose education was nothing more than what a grammar school and residence in a little provincial borough could provide," declared J. Dover Wilson, editor of the *New Cambridge Shakespeare*, "is to invite one either to believe in miracles or to disbelieve in the man of Stratford."

Two characteristics in the Shakespeare canon, Bethell argues, "suggest powerfully that its author was not a small-town burgher [such as Shakespeare] but rather a well-traveled nobleman [such as De Vere]. One is the very attitude. The author displays little sympathy for the class of upwardly mobile strivers of which [the Stratford man] was a preeminent member.... Shakespeare's frequent disgust with court life

sounds like the revulsion of a man who knew it too well." Also, Bethell says, there is "the author's apparent knowledge of foreign lands.... [It] is implausible that the Stratford man ever went abroad." However, while the man who wrote the plays set in Italy was evidently familiar with its topography, Matus notes that the playwright's characters "are always of contemporary England."

Matus says that "very little in Shakespeare's plays... required knowledge beyond materials that were publicly available." Formal schooling was not really a necessity. Ben Jonson (1573–1637), for example, "could not... have had much more than a few years of rudimentary schooling before he was put to work, probably at his stepfather's trade, bricklaying. Nevertheless, Jonson would become... Britain's most admired playwright in the 17th century" and a leading scholar of the classics. "Evidently," Matus observes, "there may be more to both scholarship and literary genius than a formal education."

The partisans of De Vere and other candidates, Matus says, have failed to demonstrate how any of them gained "the intimate knowledge and experience of theater and drama to create plays that remain the standard by which all other stage works are measured. Those qualifications are possessed uniquely by the man who was an active member of an extraordinary theatrical ensemble—William Shakespeare, gentleman of Stratford."

OTHER NATIONS

China's Generation Gap

"Chinese Youth: The Nineties Generation" by Beverley Hooper, in *Current History* (Sept. 1991), 4225 Main St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19127.

Since the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989, little news of open dissent by Chinese university students has reached

the West. But some young people, reports Hooper, of the Asia Research Center at Murdoch University in Western Australia,

have found another way to protest: rock music with anti-establishment lyrics. Teen-age rock idol Cui Jian's latest album, "Jiejue" (Resolve), for example, begins with these lines: "There are many problems before us;/There's no way to resolve them./But the fact that we have never had the chance/Is an even greater problem."

Its enthusiasm for defiant rock lyrics, Hooper says, is but one manifestation of the fact that the current generation of Chinese youth is openly behaving in ways that run counter to both socialist and traditional Confucian values.

The nation's 300 million young people (ages 14-25) constitute one-fourth of the population. With almost no memories of the Maoist cult of austerity, Hooper writes, they have "taken to consumer culture with a vengeance." The youths' spare *yuan* have attracted both local manufacturers and multinational corporations. Like their Western peers, young Chinese now crave VCRs, computer games, and stereo systems, "not to mention brand names from Adidas to 'Fun' faded denim." The generation gap is especially wide when it comes to clothing, Hooper adds.

In TV and magazine ads, glamorous young women "drape themselves over motorbikes, sip expensive canned drinks, and tout the latest beauty products." Youth magazines such as Shanghai's *Youth Generation* and Guangzhou's *Golden Generation* now dwell on young romance. Pre-

marital sex is still officially frowned upon, Hooper says, but cohabitation has become widespread among the privileged *gaoganzidi* (the children of high Communist Party officials.) Most Chinese high-school students now attend sex education classes.

Young performers, fashion designers, restaurateurs, and others, Hooper says, make up an "economic and social elite" among the new generation. Most young people live far away from the "glamorous world of hotel bars and health clubs." But television has made many rural youths aware of the seductions of urban life, and millions of them have been pouring into China's big cities—only to find their employment prospects limited. Even high-school graduates face a tight job market, Hooper notes. Officials for years have spoken of *daiye qingnian* ("youth awaiting job assignment"), but they now acknowledge that China has a serious unemployment problem.

China's aging leaders tolerate the new youth culture in the hope that it will serve as an escape valve for the underlying "restlessness and edginess" which they fear "might boil over into demands for change or simple strife." However, before many more years have passed, Hooper believes, the rising economic, social, and political aspirations of China's young people are going to present a powerful challenge to that nation's rulers.

Pacifism in One Country

"Germany, Japan, and the False Glare of War" by Daniel Hamilton and James Clad, in *The Washington Quarterly* (Autumn 1991), Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1800 K St. N.W., Ste. 400, Washington, D.C. 20006; "Japan's Response to the Gulf Crisis: An Analytic Overview" by Inoguchi Takashi and "The Japanese State of Mind: Deliberations on the Gulf Crisis" by Ito Kenichi, in *The Journal of Japanese Studies* (Summer 1991), Thomson Hall DR-05, Univ. of Wash., Seattle, Wash. 98195.

American leaders have looked to Japan as a major partner in shaping and maintaining a "new world order." But the Persian Gulf War showed that—like Germany, the other major partner in the U.S. scheme—the Asian nation is reluctant to assume

such a role. Japan only slowly and spasmodically gave financial aid (about \$10 billion, ultimately) to the U.S.-led multinational forces, and then Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu's proposal to provide token military support to the war effort was with-

Europe's Quest for Unity

A Survey of Recent Articles

Visions of a European "superstate" received an enormous boost from the end of the Cold War. As late as summer 1990 it appeared that the need to rely on U.S. military power was fast disappearing. In the emerging world order, economic strength would be what counted most. The 12-nation European Community (EC) was already moving toward a much improved common market by the end of 1992. A newly unified Europe, with Germany as its economic dynamo, would soon, along with that other economic powerhouse, Japan, be joining the United States at the summit of international affairs.

That was the dream, but, as Giuseppe Sacco in *Commentary* (Sept. 1991) and other analysts say, it did not last long. The awakening began in August 1990, when Iraq invaded Kuwait. The Gulf crisis, writes John Newhouse in the *New Yorker* (Sept. 2, 1991), "obliged the United States to do what only it could do, and reminded the European nations of their dependence on that special role." The crisis also displayed, as Sacco writes, a European Community unable "to

shape even the slightest role for itself." Nor did the individual European nations, "preoccupied . . . with the balance-of-power situation within the European theater itself," do what the Community could not. Germany, in particular, not wanting to complicate its relations with the Soviet Union, then considering ratification of German reunification, aligned itself with the U.S.-led coalition only at the last minute. Even Britain, in appealing to its European partners to join in supporting the United States, "had its eye on the future architecture of *European* security, to which it wished to keep the Americans moored as strongly as possible."

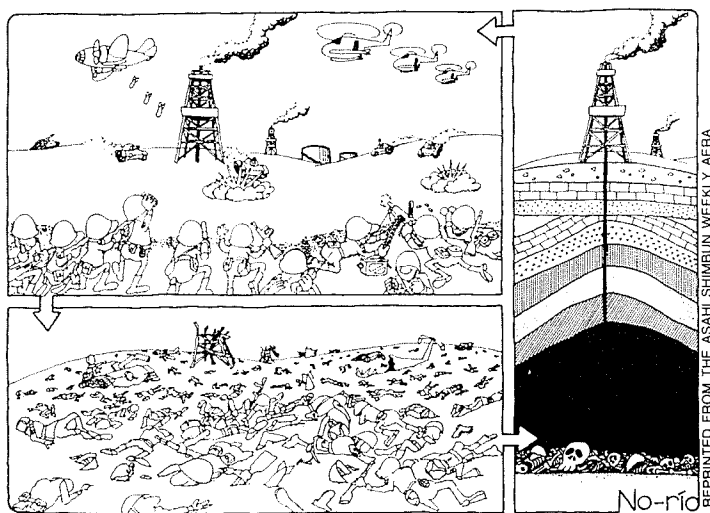
The European Community resolved to do better in the next crisis—which came last spring, when Yugoslavia started sliding toward civil war. As the crisis unfolded, however, European disunity became painfully apparent. Dissent by one nation or another always blocked Community action. Germany threatened to recognize Slovenia or Croatia, notes *Süddeutsche Zeitung* foreign editor Josef Joffe, writing in the *New York*

drawn in the face of loud political opposition at home. The war stimulated "overdue" internal debate about Japan's future

global responsibilities, assert Hamilton and Clad, senior associates at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and

Japan deserves credit for its financial and diplomatic contributions. But, they add, the United States should think twice before pushing it into a military role. Leaving aside Asia's anxiety about a revival of Japanese military power, there is the fact that the "trauma of defeat" lingers in the Japanese memory.

Japanese public opinion is strongly against taking on such a burden, notes Inoguchi, a political scientist at the University of Tokyo. More than two-thirds of the Japanese surveyed in one poll believe that their nation should become more



A Japanese view of the Gulf War: Skepticism about use of military power was widespread among the Japanese during the war.

Times (Aug. 28, 1991), but France and Britain, fearing a Teutonic power play, refused to go along. The Cold War's end, he says, "has . . . loosened the political bonds forged in the West," and left Western Europe looking like "a bunch of teenagers suddenly forced to fend for themselves."

Yet European unification is not all illusion. The Community has been rapidly moving toward removal of customs and other barriers as part of the effort to create a single market after 1992. Agreement reached in October between the Community and the seven-member European Free Trade Association means that Western Europe's 380 million people will be joined together in a powerful trading bloc. There has also been progress toward monetary union. But reaching a consensus on a *political* union that does not have a defense component that would undermine NATO and send Americans packing is proving no easy task.

Trying to "deepen" the European Community is hard enough, Newhouse says, but doing so while also "widening" it to take in aspiring new members from Central and Eastern Europe and Scandinavia, may be impossible. Austria, Hungary, Poland,

Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Turkey, Cyprus, and Malta are already knocking on the Community's door. Some members, such as France, want only to deepen the Community; others, such as Britain, would rather enlarge it. The Germans profess to be devoted to *both* operations. Their position reflects their need "to prove themselves 'good Europeans' and so have a political license from their partners to concentrate . . . on absorbing 17 million new citizens [and] helping most of Eastern Europe move toward market economies and . . . democracy."

German reunification, Sacco says, "has altered the balance within the very heart of the EC, bringing back to the surface certain unsavory qualities of nationalism and political rivalry." That makes a united Europe just as urgent a goal now as before the Cold War.

Newhouse sees "cause for optimism." The "pivotal relationship" is between France and Germany, and each harbors doubts about the other's willingness to build a united Europe. The success of the December 1991 EC summit meeting comes not a moment too soon. The EC, Newhouse says, is "Europe's last best hope of containing its furies."

involved in world affairs, but in ways in keeping with its pacifist constitution. Japan, in other words, "should continue to [focus] on commercial activities and endeavor to make financial, technological, and scientific contributions to keep the world safe from hunger and war."

Ito, a professor of international politics at Aoyama-Gakuin University who advocated sending Japan's Self-Defense Forces abroad during the Gulf War, decries "the emotion of 'one-country pacifism' in which the Japanese want to be the only ones who avoid all the risks." This deep-seated outlook, he says, "is rooted in our experience of the utter horror of World War II, including the atomic bomb." But, he argues, "now that the situation is one of 'having to do something for the sake of others,' Japan's postwar pacifism must confront its own logical bankruptcy and is losing its moral foundation . . . Japan has become too important a nation to be the world's conscientious objector."

Inoguchi insists that the Japanese are not being selfish. From their reading of history, they have derived a "deep skepticism about the utility of military power, especially as projected onto foreign terrain for a prolonged period of time." Many Japanese suspect that "more enduring regional factors will diminish the long-term impact" of the Gulf War victory. Moreover, Inoguchi adds, the Japanese are constrained by *others'* reading of history. The prospect of Japanese military involvement in the Gulf War aroused the suspicions of the Chinese and other Asians who had suffered from past Japanese aggression.

Hamilton and Clad urge the United States to tread cautiously. Were Japan to become a military force again, "the balance of power would change dramatically, instantly destabilizing the [region] and transforming . . . Japanese domestic politics." Japan's leaders do not want this; nor do its neighbors. "Neither should the United States."

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions

"National Guard: Peacetime Training Did Not Adequately Prepare Combat Brigades for Gulf War."

U.S. General Accounting Office, P.O. Box 6015, Gaithersburg, Md. 20877. 55 pp. No charge. (GAO/NSIAD-91-263)

Since the mid-1970s, the U.S. Army has been critically dependent on its reserves. Not only was the Army Reserve given vital *support* responsibilities (e.g., transportation) but Army National Guard *combat* units were assigned to "round out" certain active Army divisions—to be deployed shortly after they were in the event of war. In the Persian Gulf War, however, reports Congress' General Accounting Office, the plans to use the roundout brigades fell apart.

After Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, two active Army divisions—the 24th Infantry and the 1st Cavalry—were sent to the Gulf without their designated Guard roundout units. (Other active Army brigades went in their stead.) The Guard units were not even called up, because federal law restricted reservists to a maximum of 180 days of active duty. In November and December, after that law was lifted, three Guard brigades—each with about 4,000 soldiers—were activated. In February 1991, after extensive training, only one of the

three—the 48th Infantry Brigade—was pronounced ready for combat. That was on the day the Gulf War ended.

What accounts for the sorry performance?

When the roundout Guard units' "weekend warriors" first went on active duty in November, their commanders badly underestimated the amount of training needed to get them combat-ready. Many—from 15 percent in the 155th Armor Brigade to 19 percent in the 48th Infantry—had not been fully trained to do their assigned jobs. Nearly 600 soldiers had to be given formal schooling in more than 42 different specialties; earlier training would have taken time away from their civilian jobs.

Many Guard soldiers also lacked battlefield survival skills, the GAO says, because the battlefield exercises in the Guard's annual two-week training stints were in most cases unrealistic. Moreover, the Army found that about one-third of the soldiers in the three roundout brigades had either dental conditions or in-

complete dental records that, according to Army regulations, would have prevented them from being deployed. (In most cases, however, the regulations could have been waived.) An undetermined number of other Guard members, mostly over age 40, had serious medical ailments, such as ulcers or chronic asthma. More than 250 in the 48th Brigade had to be sent to Fort Stewart, Georgia, for treatment.

There were other problems. For example, many Guard officers and NCOs were found lacking in basic leadership skills. One brigade's NCOs, the GAO reports, suffered from "a lack of initiative, of discipline, [and] of proficiency in basic soldiering skills, and [had] a 'so what' attitude."

The various reserve *support* units—including many from the Guard—had fewer snafus. Some 147,000 Army reservists were called up, and 74,000 were sent to the Persian Gulf. But the Army, reports the GAO, is now reassessing "the future role of its reserve roundout units."

"Policy Implications of Greenhouse Warming."

National Acad. Press, 2101 Constitution Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20418. 127 pp. \$14.95.

The broiling summer of 1988, coming just three years after the discovery of a hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica, created global alarm about "the greenhouse effect"—the accumulation in the atmosphere of carbon dioxide and other gases that might cause global warming. Many envi-

ronmentalists warned of shifting weather patterns, rising ocean levels, and other dire consequences.

Yet, according to this report by a National Academy of Sciences panel, much uncertainty exists among scientists. During the last 100 years, the average global temperature has in-

creased by between 0.5 and 1.1 degrees F, but how much, *if any*, of that increase was due to greenhouse warming scientists do not know. By the year 2030, computer simulations project, temperatures could rise by 3.4–9.4 degrees F. At the upper end of that range, the average global climate would be

warmer than at any time in the last million years. But the simulations all use "untested and unvalidated hypotheses."

Nevertheless, the threat should be taken seriously, the panel says. It believes that in the United States—if not in poor countries or ones with fewer climate zones—people "could probably adapt to the likely changes." In some regions, the changes would be for the worse; in others, for the better.

U.S. industry would be little affected; farmers are used to adjusting to climate changes; and valuable forests could be managed so as to adapt.

Changes in water supply could be offset by various means, one being price hikes to encourage conservation. Protecting coastal cities against storms if sea levels rose would be costly but feasible.

Most vulnerable would be coastal swamps and marshlands, already threatened by development and pollution, and natural ecosystems of plants and animals. Some ecosystems probably would be shattered. New species would likely become dominant; some species might become extinct.

Even though Americans could probably adapt, the panel concludes, the costs of

adaptation and the possibility of "extremely unpleasant surprises" make it prudent to take out low-cost "insurance"—i.e. to take inexpensive measures to reduce or offset greenhouse-gas emissions. These include improving energy efficiency and cutting use of chlorofluorocarbons (often used in refrigeration equipment). The panel believes that the United States could cut emissions of greenhouse gases at very low cost—in some cases, perhaps even at a net savings. But, for now at least, the panel says, very expensive measures to ward off global warming are "not justified."

"Traffic Safety and the Driver."

Van Nostrand Reinhold, 115 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10003. 405 pp. \$51.95.

Author: *Leonard Evans*

In 1975, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration predicted that U.S. traffic deaths would soar from 44,525 to 72,300 by 1985. The logic seemed unassailable: More (and lighter) vehicles on the road would mean more fatal accidents. Yet traffic deaths fell by two percent, to 43,825.

In fact, notes Evans, a researcher at General Motors Research Labs, there has been a long decline in traffic death rates, from 150 fatalities per billion kilometers driven in 1921 to fewer than 15 in 1988.

Obviously, traffic laws and new auto-safety technology (e.g., seat belts) have contributed, but Evans says that the biggest single factor has been changes in human behavior—a wider acceptance of the mores of the road. Thus, the United States, whose citizens

have the longest experience with the auto, has the lowest traffic death rate (.24 per 1,000 vehicles) of 21 countries studied. (The highest rate: Liberia's 36 fatalities per 1,000 vehicles).

An obvious example of changed behavior is drunk driving, once viewed with indifference, but now, thanks largely to citizens groups' efforts in the 1980s, universally condemned. By 1987, Evans estimates, reduced drunk driving cut fatalities by 6,000. Still, alcohol is a factor in 22,000 traffic-related deaths annually.

"The problem of traffic crashes," Evans points out, "is much more one of drivers doing things that they know they ought not to do, than of drivers not knowing what to do." Thus, youngsters who take driver-education classes are just as likely to be involved in

accidents as are their unschooled peers.

Human nature being what it is, it is hard to predict the effects of changes in traffic conditions. Thus, fatalities drop in rain or snow; crashes are more numerous, but because drivers compensate for the conditions they are less severe. Yet one five-year study of painted crosswalks found that pedestrians using them were twice as likely to be hit by a car as were those using unmarked ones. Evans believes that the painted crosswalks created a sense of security in the pedestrians not matched by an increase in driver caution.

The road to greater safety? Evans favors promoting driver courtesy, ending Hollywood's glamorization of hot-rodders, and strengthening efforts to curb drunk driving.

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.

Romanticizing the Establishment

After referring to an aspect of my work as "comical," the editor of this snobbish journal had enough grace or gall or guilt to invite me to comment on the three pieces on "The American Establishment" [WQ, Autumn '91] in 300 words or fewer. First, the fact that no social scientists were asked to contribute is a commentary on the condescending attitude of precious humanists toward political sociology. Second, the piece by Max Holland on John McCloy ["Citizen McCloy"] is an excellent historical contribution that adds greatly to our understanding of the American power elite and corroborates everything I ever claimed in *Who Rules America* (1967), *The Higher Circles* (1970), or *The Powers That Be* (1979).

Third, the piece by John Judis ["Twilight of the Gods"] is old hat through the mid-1970s, thanks to Laurence Shoup and William Minter's *Imperial Brain Trust* (1977), and wrong for the '80s. Judis romanticizes the past by overlooking the degree of dissension there actually was, and overemphasizes the degree of fragmentation there is today because he is too (breathlessly) close to the action. Fourth, it is ridiculous to include Schrag's *The Decline of the WASP* and Christopher's *Crashing the Gates* on any serious book list. Fifth, the list lacks social science books: it should include Michael Useem's *The Inner Circle* (1984), Beth Mintz and Michael Schwartz's *The Power Structure of American Business* (1985), and my own *The Power Elite and The State* (1990), at the very least.

Finally, the comment about my work shows a lack of understanding of the use of indicators of upper-class standing in studies of large groups of decision-makers. The use of such indicators is explained in chapter one of *The Higher Circles* and on pages 44-49 of my *Who Rules America Now?* (1983).

Only the Holland piece was worth the price of admission.

Professor G. William Domhoff
Dept. of Psychology and Sociology
Univ. of Calif., Santa Cruz

Justifying the Means

Your articles on the rise and fall of the American

Establishment will further fuel the nostalgia for the good old days, when a few wise men ran the show. There is, to be sure, some reason for nostalgia. A Bud McFarland is a sorry successor to a Bob Lovett. But I am reminded of a letter I saw in James Forrestal's papers at Princeton. As I recall the letter, Forrestal, who had been Navy Secretary in World War II, wrote Jack McCloy after the war that it was a good thing the United States won—because he and McCloy would both be in jail if they had lost. Like Ollie North and McFarland, men like McCloy and Forrestal stretched the law in furtherance of their cause. The difference, of course, is that the cause was more worthy in World War II, and that the old guard was clever enough to win—and not get caught.

Evan Thomas
Washington Bureau Chief
Newsweek

New World Order—or Disorder?

Commencing under progressive-era presidents (Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson), the Establishment came of age in the administration of the second Roosevelt. For him the Establishment managed World War II; for his successor it wrote the ground rules for the Cold War (1947-1989). With these rules it supervised a global security regime. All went well until the Vietnam War, a conflict from which the Establishment suffered serious damage.

It was fundamentally an elite meritocracy. Obviously, if you were a WASP and well-born you had a head start, but children of less well-off families won admittance (John McCloy, Clark Clifford, Dean Rusk) to be followed by the classic outsiders—Catholics, Jews, and blacks (Zbigniew Brzezinski, Henry Kissinger, and Andrew Young). Dominated by men, it did not reject women (Clare Booth Luce, Jeane Kirkpatrick).

Both authors see disarray, a lack of mission. Arguably, those who operated a security regime should be able to forge a new collaboration, the trade regime that will either be built in this decade, resulting in an ordered world, or won't be built, resulting in a new world disorder. With the Cold War over, the three surviving platforms of

wealth—North America, Northeast Asia, and Northwest Europe—need governing elites with an enforceable international consensus. It won't be easy: Japan has plenty of power but no purpose, the United States has some purpose but not enough power, and Europe has plenty of internal problems. But time will not wait for the three. Either they work together, a difficult task for Americans who like to rule alone, or they fall separately, something Japanese and German elites have experienced.

Patrick Lloyd Hatcher
Dept. of Political Science
Univ. of Calif.-Berkeley

Establishing Values

Here we go on another lap around the track of the American Establishment, a derby American scholars have been running ever since E. Digby Baltzell wrote *The Protestant Establishment* in 1964. The course of analyses which follows Baltzell's lead is familiar: They start their subjects at prep school, follow them down the backstretch into the Ivy League, flash through Wall Street on the clubhouse turn, and thunder into the State Department at the finish. Max Holland and John Judis make as interesting a race of it as possible, considering the fact that we have seen it so many times before.

Readers who crave a little variety should begin by asking themselves why the values of the old Establishment are assumed to have been the property of the upper class. Surely the most interesting and poignant detail in Mr. Holland's essay is the fact that McCloy's parents—a Scotch-Irish actuary and a Pennsylvania Dutch hairdresser—"believed firmly in the Victorian virtues of thrift, duty, morality, struggle, and self-improvement."

If these convictions were instilled only at Groton, the elder McCloy's would not have held them. Where then did they come from? This question leads us back to such subjects as low church Protestant piety, Whig politics, perhaps even the *Autobiography* of Benjamin Franklin. Large and elusive matters—but they provide a nexus for understanding American history as a whole, not just the history of the elite.

It's time we understood Mr. and Mrs. McCloy, as well as their son—for without them, we wouldn't have him. Without latter-day versions of them, we will not get the successors to him that Mr. Judis craves.

Richard Brookhiser
Author, *The Way of the WASP*
(The Free Press, 1991)

Stop Blaming Columbus

Criticism enveloping the approaching quincentennial celebration of Columbus's famous voyage ["Columbus and the Labyrinth of History," *WQ*, Autumn '91] commonly overlooks the fact that even if Columbus had not sailed in 1492, other European vessels would have discovered lands on the other side of the Atlantic—and within a very narrow time frame at that. Cabral's encounter with Brazil en route to India in 1500 proves that European techniques of navigation had reached a level that made transatlantic crossings inevitable.

A further implication of this circumstance is that once ocean crossings started, Old World infections were bound to devastate the disease-inexperienced populations in the New World. Epidemiological vulnerability is what destroyed Indian populations and cultures, not European weapons or intentions. The cost was heavy indeed for Native Americans to bear, but no greater than other previously isolated populations suffered when the outer world broke in upon them.

Only by undoing the ecosystem, of which Columbus's critics are particularly fond, could the disaster to native American populations have been prevented. Moreover, in the half millenium since transoceanic contacts began, initial shocks to the world's biological and cultural systems have settled into a global process of interaction whose net effect has been the enlargement of human knowledge, power, and wealth.

We should recognize the very heavy costs paid by previous isolated populations when global communications exposed them to new buffetings. But we should also celebrate the gains that have come to humanity as a whole and to the peoples of the United States in particular across the past 500 years as a result of the same process of globalization. This, I submit, is the only appropriate response to the Quincentenary of 1992.

William H. McNeill
Colebrook, Conn.

Revealing the Labyrinth

Mr. Wilford's chief difficulty, it seems to me, is that he has no real feeling for the true labyrinth of history that his article purportedly examines. If he had he would understand that things are much more complex, and usually more interesting, than he makes them out to be, and that much of what he retails as fact is questionable and unproven, in the delightful way that history is likely to be seen.

There are countless examples of his bold statements that are simply unproven, and a number

quite unlikely: that Columbus came from "humble and obscure origins" in Genoa (the birthplace issue has by no means been settled, or that the Genoese "Christofforo Columbo" is the same as the Spanish Cristóbal Colón); that Columbus and his officers "dropped to their knees in prayer" after their landfall (nothing about this in the log, and the only source is Fernando Colón, who wasn't there); that Columbus had an obsessive, "daring scheme" to sail west from Europe and was the "first with the stubborn courage to stake his life" on it (there is no evidence prior to 1492 of such a scheme and Portugal had sent out many a courageous seaman on perhaps two dozen voyages into the Atlantic between 1431 and 1486). And so on, throughout the article. Not, mind you, that I am claiming that Mr. Wilford is necessarily wrong, only that he cannot be absolutely sure, nor can we, for the historical record here is murky—and labyrinthine.

But on two substantial issues this careless assertion of fact is quite important in matters Columbian and deserves a little more attention.

First, he blandly asserts that Columbus was going to "the fabled shores of the Indies" celebrated by Marco Polo. As I tried to show in my book (*The Conquest of Paradise*, 1990), the reasons for doubting this far outweigh the reasons for supposing it. In fact the supposition rests on the evidence of the prologue to the first log, and that only, and it is a highly suspicious document that may well have been written on the voyage home, not on the way out, and in order to deceive his sovereigns, as he often did. Against that there are the indisputably authentic exchanges with those sovereigns saying only that he was sailing to "Islands and Mainlands" in the Ocean Sea that he shall "discover," meaning unknown lands, obviously. The fact that he went on that first voyage with only trifling trading truck—certainly nothing you would swap with the potentates of the East—and without so much as a single soldier to protect him as he went around "taking possession of" island after island, certainly nothing you would do if you thought you were on territory controlled by those mighty rulers, backs up this claim. It is time that historians stopped pushing Fernando Colón's heroic view of his father and instead faced the known facts that clearly suggest, even if they cannot prove, that Columbus went sailing for nothing more than unknown lands and the treasures they would contain.

Second, Wilford states flatly that "Columbus insisted to his dying day that he had reached the Indies" (though a few pages later he says we "cannot be sure" of that traditional story. Again as I have showed, this idea of Columbus's was fairly short-lived, useful mostly to convince the sovereigns to give him a second journey, and by the third voyage

he knows (and on the fourth confirms) that he has found a new continent (South America), hitherto unknown, an "*Otro Mundo*" so important that he conjures up angels from God to tell him how important it is. Far from never recognizing "he had found something other than Asia," he makes his geography quite explicit in his *Lettera Rarissima* of 1503 and refers directly to the West Indies in his *Book of Privileges* of 1501-2; by the time he died in 1506 he well knew, in the words of the master Columbian historian John Boyd Thacher "that between the country of the Great Khan and the shores of Europe lay great continental lands and that he—Christopher Columbus—and none other was their discoverer."

The labyrinth of history can sometimes be confusing—but it is also sometimes a great deal of fun.

I do not want to seem churlish to Mr. Wilford—his book, after all, owes a great deal to my own, particularly in its treatment of Columbus's reputation over the centuries, and I only wish he had had time to read it more closely—but permit me to close by correcting a few matters where I think we can say with some certainty that he has passed beyond the unproven to the erroneous. Columbus did not sail to Central America "instead" of Santo Domingo on the fourth voyage, and indeed sailed directly to and would have put in there had he not been refused entry by the governor; not all the Taino dugouts were long enough to hold 40 men, though some were; Santangel was not the "chief financial adviser" to the court, though he was *escribano de racion* (household treasurer) for Ferdinand and did use his influence apparently to get money for the first voyage; and history books certainly did not ignore Columbus after his death, considering that he appeared in 142 works in 385 editions in the century after his death, including all the major works of history from the *Paesi novamente ritrovati* in 1507 to George Abbot's *A Briefe Description* in 1599.

It is all right for Mr. Wilford to attempt to stake out ground for himself as a dispassionate journalist in the Columbian fields, suggesting that my own work is somehow off to one side where people are judged by "anachronistic" standards, but if he wants to be a real historian instead of a mere journalist he will have to allow his gaze to range a bit wider and his attention to delve a bit deeper into the real complexities of what history is and how we surmise it. Of course he might then discover the real labyrinth, and that may be more than a journalist has time for.

Kirkpatrick Sale
Author,

The Conquest of Paradise
New York, N.Y.

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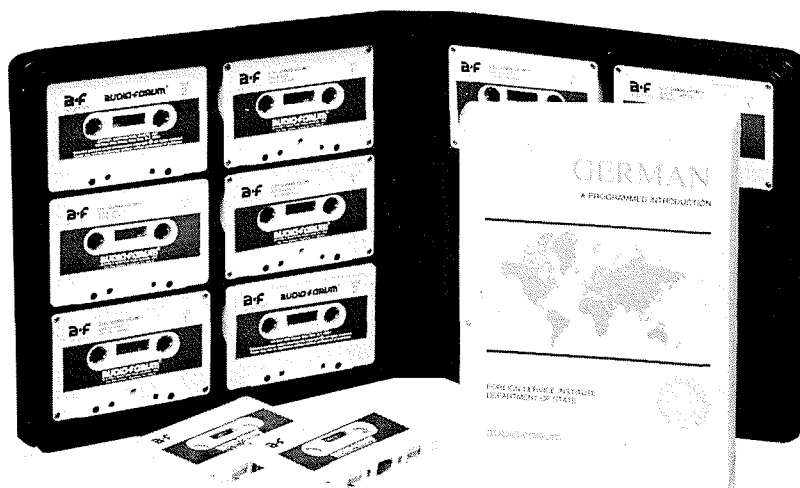
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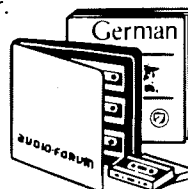
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