
ers—have made it virtually impossible to agree on objective standards for judgments about truth and quality. This perplexing situation, says Marcus, a professor of English at Columbia University, is not wholly unlike the one that Victorian poet and critic Matthew Arnold (1822–88) confronted in his famous *Culture and Anarchy* (1869).

Witnessing reform agitation and the broadening of the franchise in England, as well as the rise of nonconformist Protestant sects, Arnold worried about increasing anarchy, both social and spiritual. In *Culture and Anarchy*, he addressed the question of how to reconcile progress or change with order and continuity. He offered two related remedies. The first, Marcus notes, was increased education for middle- and working-class children. “The second, which in some sense includes the first, is the inculcation by a variety of means of the ideas, attitudes, practices, and habits of temperament and sensibility that are implicit in his master term, ‘culture.’” Salvation, Arnold said, was “a harmonious perfection only to be won by cultivating many sides in us.”

These recommendations could be given “such a high spiritual priority,” Marcus points out, only on the presupposition that revealed religion, specifically Christianity, was no longer “the ultimate authority or standard of values and spiritual ordering, and that modern societies must, in this primary sense, make do without it.”

Yet the “credent certitude” carried by the truths of revealed religion could hardly be

matched. By supposing that they could, that “culture” could take the place of Christianity, Marcus says, Arnold built *Culture and Anarchy* on a foundation of sand. Paradoxically, however, this “logical vulnerability and impairment” of the work strengthen it, give it “historical relevance and life.” Just as the sacralization of art and the artist that was taking place during the same period in Europe led eventually to “destructive negation, subversion, and disintegration,” so Arnold’s sacralized culture led eventually to “aridity, triviality, and anomic despair.”

To the problem of finding “‘a source of authority,’ a ground upon which we can establish some ‘strict standard of excellence,’” Arnold gave an answer that is “pragmatic, anecdotal, and experientially, if not logically, convincing,” Marcus writes. “He asserts that there can be something like ‘a certain centre of correct information, taste and intelligence,’ and that we can be nearer to or farther away from such an ideal in our opinions.”

Culture was the province of those able to rise above the constrictions of social class, Arnold believed. Culture, he wrote, “does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere. . . . This is the *social idea*; and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality.”

OTHER NATIONS

Mighty MITI?

A Survey of Recent Articles

For a long time after the Tokyo stock market crash of 1990, all the news out of Japan was about that nation’s unaccustomed economic aches and pains, and the scribes who once avidly debated the sources of Japan’s marvelous economic success were little heard from. Lately, however, with the advent of a new American administration seeking a more active

role in shaping industries and markets, the what-is-their-secret debate has been revived. It has sprawled over successive issues of several publications and consumed dozens of pages.

The debate, rife with blustery assertions and accusations, comes down to a single question: How much credit does Japan’s famed Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) de-

serve for the country's economic success? Next to none, says Karl Zinsmeister, an adjunct scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, in the *Policy Review* article (Spring 1993, excerpted in the *Wall Street Journal*, March 11, 1993) that kicked off the latest fracas.

"Many of Japan's strongest businesses—[including] consumer electronics, cameras, robotics, precision equipment, pianos, bicycles, watches and calculators, numerically controlled machine tools, and ceramics—developed mostly on their own, without much help from MITI or other agencies," Zinsmeister asserts in *Policy Review*. "And where government mandarins have intervened most actively—[for example, in] shipbuilding, agriculture, petrochemicals, and aerospace—they often have done little more than provide costly life support to fossils and failures."

During the 1950s, Zinsmeister says, MITI tried (unsuccessfully) to eliminate competition in Japan's auto industry by turning it into a single company. The ministry also initially refused a request from a small company named Sony for permission to buy transistor-manufacturing rights from Western Electric; Sony founder Akio Morita "eventually badgered the bureaucrats into giving Sony the go-ahead." A more recent failure of industrial policy involves high-definition television (HDTV). Twenty-five years ago, Tokyo began to set targets for a new HDTV broadcasting standard, and in 1991, after more than \$1 billion was spent, the state-owned NHK television network put the world's first working HDTV system into operation. U.S. industrial-policy advocates were envious, but they shouldn't have been, Zinsmeister says. "In their office-bound wisdom, the [Japanese] targeters picked the wrong—and now seriously obsolete—technology. American companies, following consumer and market signals, have developed a far more advanced digital HDTV standard, and are now poised to dominate video transmission and reception in the coming decades."

But press reports about Japan reeling from one economic disaster to another in recent years have been greatly exaggerated, Irish journalist Eamonn Fingleton asserts in the *Atlantic Monthly* (May 1993). Japan is in "robust economic health," he says. Yes, says Zinsmeister, but not

quite as robust as Fingleton imagines. The weaknesses of Japan's economy go unreported by him and others, while the true strengths are ignored.

The real credit for Japan's economic health, Zinsmeister contends, lies "with her strong, serious primary education system; with the extraordinarily high savings rates of her people and all the government policies that encourage that; with her low inflation and low tax policies; and with her powerfully cohesive families that allow youngsters to grow into productive citizens and workers."

Zinsmeister's springtime sally provoked an unusually strong response. James Fallows, author of *More Like Us* (1989), along with 32 others representing "a broad spectrum of views about Japan's policies—and about appropriate responses for the United States," wrote a lengthy rejoinder in *Policy Review* (Summer 1993) and the *American Prospect* (Summer 1993). In the latter forum (but not the former), Zinsmeister's "misinformation and bogus claims" were said to have come largely from editorials and op-ed pieces in the *Wall Street Journal* (which refused to print most of the rebuttal).

"Had Mr. Zinsmeister known more about MITI's history and its policies," Fallows and associates write in one of their numerous, point-by-point responses, "he would have realized that there were other and more probable explanations for its attitude toward Sony" in refusing permission to buy the transistor-manufacturing rights. "In those days, MITI routinely vetoed applications for imports of technology on the grounds that the price was 'too high.' Thus, MITI's role, among others, was to provide the Japanese buyer with a no-lose pretext to negotiate further concessions from foreign technology suppliers, who then were principally Americans."

The evidence, they insist, is "overwhelming" that MITI and the Japanese state were instrumental in Japan's postwar success in steel, autos, semiconductors, and supercomputers.

Zinsmeister, needless to say, disagrees, and does so at great length in the same summer issue of *Policy Review*. What is more interesting, perhaps, is that, according to him, the Japanese also disagree. He quotes Sony's Morita: "MITI has not been the great

benefactor of the Japanese electronics industry that some critics seem to think it has." And today, Zinsmeister asserts, the Japanese "are discarding industrial policy and government man-

agement of their economy—a widely underreported fact in the West." Fact or not, it does not seem to have ended the raucous debate over industrial policy in the United States.

Democracy in Africa

"Democratisation in Sub-Saharan Africa" by Carol Lancaster and "The Failure of Democratic Reform in Angola and Zaire" by Keith Somerville, in *Survival* (Autumn 1993), International Inst. for Strategic Studies, 23 Tavistock St., London WC2E 7NQ.

Progress toward democracy in the 47 African nations south of the Sahara has been widespread, if uneven, in recent years. Fifteen African nations can now be regarded as democracies, notes Georgetown University's Lancaster, an adviser to the U.S. Agency for International Development, and at least some political liberalization

has taken place in 24 others. Only five countries—two of them, Somalia and Liberia, without any functioning governments whatsoever—have made no progress at all. In three other nations, however—Angola, Zaire, and Togo—democratization has been cut short by violence. Do similar fates await Africa's other nascent democracies?

Somerville, a BBC specialist in African affairs, is quite pessimistic. Hopes for Angola and Zaire, he notes, were high just a few years ago. People danced in the streets of the Angolan capital of Luanda on May 31, 1991, in celebration of a peace agreement ending a 16-year civil war. In Zaire, a new democratic constitution was to be drafted by a national conference, in accordance with the promise made in April 1990 by President Mobutu Sese Seko. Today, however, Angola's civil war has resumed and Zaire is in near-chaos.

Mobutu, who agreed only grudgingly to democratic reforms, has used his control of the security forces and the army to keep the government set up by the national conference, headed by Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi, from functioning. With Zaire's economy in ruins, Mobutu has relied on the black market, including the diamond trade, to pay his military and other supporters.

Since the 1991 cease-fire in nearby Angola, Zaire has continued to play a role there, backing Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and, to their mutual profit, serving as a middleman for the sale of diamonds smuggled out of Angola by UNITA and private individuals.

During the Cold War, Savimbi's rebel UNITA had U.S. backing, while the Angolan government of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) enjoyed



The successful Free Namibia Campaign used this optimistic print by Namibian artist John Ndevasia Muafangejo (1943-87).