

tionships among Communist leaders . . . minus the retoucher's distortions."

But Pipes puts it mildly. The unretouched picture is raw indeed.

These documents establish Lenin's direct connection with—in fact, his eager stewardship of—the terror that directly followed the Russian Revolution. Instead of a stern idealist shedding blood for the future of humanity, the author of these letters and memoranda comes off as a vindictive, bloody-minded zealot who took grisly glee in bribing, manipulating, and intimidating his erstwhile comrades. Unwelcome advice was scorned—"We always manage to get shit for experts." And dissent was diagnosed as insanity long before Stalin's forced institutionalization of dissidents became an international scandal.

Toward his perceived enemies, Lenin was simply brutal. Ordering the confiscation of the property of the Orthodox Church, he ordered all priests who resisted shot—"the more the better." With regard to the kulaks, or propertied peasants, his instructions were clear: "Hang (hang without fail, so the people see) no fewer than one hundred."

The Unknown Lenin does not pretend to be definitive. Pipes is careful to say that he has not "seen all or even the bulk of previously unpublished Lenin documents." Perhaps future selections will mitigate the harshness of this initial glimpse. But it seems unlikely. The opening of this archive has summoned Lenin's ghost and left it to unsettle a new generation of historians.

—*Jessica Sebeok*

THE OPENING OF THE AMERICAN MIND:

Canons, Culture, and History.

By Lawrence W. Levine. Beacon. 240 pp. \$20

One of America's most accomplished historians, Levine has made a distinguished career out of championing subjects—the world of William Jennings Bryan, the culture and consciousness of black slaves, the vitality of popular culture—long ignored or disdained by traditional historians. In his new book, Levine provides a spirited apologia for that career, and a celebratory defense of the modern university—accompanied by a fierce polemic against those, ranging from Allan Bloom to C. Vann Woodward, who (it seems) would like nothing better than to consign such subjects to the outermost darkness.

The results are, to say the least, uneven. As a brief for the opening of historical and literary studies to nontraditional topics and perspectives, based upon an appreciation of the fluidity and dynamism of American society, the book is convincing. Though much of what is offered here is a more-than-twice-told tale, it is good to be reminded of how unendurably narrow and stupefying most "higher education" has been throughout American history—and how long it took for American authors, even such now-canonical writers as Herman Melville and Walt Whitman, to be taken seriously within the Anglophile precincts of the academy. Measured against such a cramped standard, and considering the limited range of human types permitted to attend college in those days, today's universities look very attractive indeed.

In addition, Levine correctly points out that many of the contemporary critics of higher education have themselves been guilty of sloppy research and excessive rhetoric. He is right that the accusation of "political correctness" is used far too promiscuously and that talented students have always found—and will always find—ways to work around the peeves and prejudices of their teachers. Moreover, it is surely a salutary thing to have the experience of those who are not members of "hegemonic elites" represented in the historical record of a nation as diverse as this one.

But Levine repeatedly goes overboard in fulminating against critics and traditionalists. In the end, he damages his own credibility by disparaging such people as mere case studies of what Richard Hofstadter once called "the paranoid style," rather than acknowledging the elements in their critique that are accurate. For example, he dismisses as perfervid fantasy the notion that the historical professoriate is dominated by the radical Left. He argues that the fragmenting of the subject of history into countless multiculturalist pieces is something that had to happen, because historical writing always "reflects reality"—in this case, "the *Zeitgeist*" of a changing America. But if these assertions are true, then why has the growing political and social conservatism of the American people, consistently reflected in electoral results and polling data for nearly three decades, been so unreflected in the academy, where the opinion trends have

over those years run dramatically in the opposite direction? Levine would have done better to address himself frankly to such dis-

parities, rather than to airily proclaim that they do not exist.

—Wilfred M. McClay

Science & Technology

DEMONIC MALES: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence.

By Richard Wrangham and Dale Peterson. Houghton Mifflin. 350 pp. \$24.95

Why are men aggressive? For centuries, there have been only two explanations: original sin and human culture. Now come Wrangham, professor of anthropology at Harvard University, and Peterson, a professional writer, to offer a third possible explanation: the biological heritage we humans share with the great apes.

The authors begin with Wrangham's observation, in 1973, of a party of male chimpanzees raiding a neighboring community and savagely killing a lone male. Not food, not sex, not even territory was at issue; the act was simple murder. Over the years, researchers in four different African locations have identified similarly lethal raids. "In all four places the pattern appears to be the same," write the authors. "The male violence that surrounds and threatens chimpanzee communities is so extreme that to be in the wrong place at the wrong time from the wrong group means death."

While most people know that chimpanzees have humanlike qualities, it is only since 1984, when researchers developed the technique known as DNA hybridization, that chimps have been shown to be genetically closer to humans than to the other great apes. Chimps are more like us than they are like gorillas or gibbons, and not just in killing: males will also rape and batter females. To draw the nexus even tighter, Wrangham and Peterson cite the American anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon's studies of the Yanomamö tribe of the Amazon Basin. Despite having "not yet been pacified, acculturated, destroyed, or integrated into the rest of the world," the Yanomamö "are famous for their intense warfare." Their



frequent raids on neighboring villages produce a rate of violent death among young males that is roughly the same—about 25 percent—as it is among chimps.

Among chimps, the size of each gang is determined by the amount of food available. When the best food is scattered, wider-ranging travel is necessary and the gangs are smaller. Females, weaker and burdened by young, cannot keep up. So, with occasional exceptions, the gangs are all male.

Yet gang formation is not universal among the great apes. Among a rare species, the bonobos, there is no rape, battering, or warfare. The reason, says Wrangham, is the abundance of food in the bonobos' territory, which allows females to travel with males and keep them from forming gangs. The females band together, form their own strong attachments (often involving homosexual behavior), and protect themselves from errant males.

The sole weakness of this book is its neglect of the neurobiology of primate violence. The crucial role of differing serotonin levels in both human and monkey behavior is well known. Individuals with low levels of serotonin exhibit high levels of aggression, and vice versa. It would be useful to know whether similar findings exist with regard to the great apes, but the authors of this otherwise lucid and compelling book do not mention such research.

The authors strongly suggest that human gangs, known to have been present throughout recorded history, are hardly the product of drugs, shoot-'em-up television shows, or bad government policies. Faced with this dispiriting conclusion, the authors explore some ideas about how to control male violence but find few to be effective. Indeed, there is only one reliable method: marriage. When men are married to women, and women have (through countless means, including courts and democratic voting sys-