

Review

Nathan Glazer, *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* (Cambridge, Mass, and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 192 pages, ISBN 0-674-94851-3, \$19.95 hardback

This book is a timely antidote to the anger in the often contentious 'culture wars' by the retired Harvard sociologist best known for co-authoring *Beyond the Melting Pot* with Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Approaching a book written by a senior Jewish academic who served on the infamous New York State curriculum committee with Arthur Schlesinger, this reviewer expected it to echo Schlesinger's vituperative attack on 'multiculturalism' in *The Disuniting of America* (1991). Instead, while sharing some of Schlesinger's discomfort with Afrocentrism and other multicultural excesses, Glazer writes a calming book that is conciliatory toward the people Schlesinger damned. The difference stems from Glazer's reluctant conviction that poor urban African-Americans are in a uniquely frustrating position. Glazer maintains that the immigrant model is working for those recently arrived from Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America, but not for African Americans. Thus 'multiculturalism is the price America is paying for its inability or unwillingness to incorporate into its society African Americans' (147).

Glazer was embroiled in the battles over New York State's curriculum that brought 'multiculturalism' into the national spotlight and helped spark the 'culture wars.' The word was virtually unknown in American parlance before the late 1980s, having been the province of Canadian and Australian discourse. By the early 1990s the phrase was raising blood pressures across the United States.

Unlike Schlesinger, Glazer changed some of his views as a result of the New York State curricular wars. The controversy began with Gov. Mario Cuomo's selection of Thomas Sobol as State Superintendent of Schools when many Black and Hispanic leaders expected the post to go to one of their own. To assuage them, Sobol placed a number of potential enemies on a Task Force for Minorities. Its intemperate report, *A Curriculum of Inclusion*, denounced mainstream education as 'Eurocentric' and called for separate curricula tailored to each ethnic group. Having lumped Europeans into one group and made dubious historical claims of sub-Saharan African achievements, *A Curriculum of Inclusion* was savaged by historians, politicians, and journalists. Sobol then appointed the New York State Social Studies Review and Development Committee; including Glazer and Schlesinger, to try again. This committee was broadly representative and less contentious. Glazer believes its call for a moderate form of multiculturalism would have passed without much attention if taken on its own merits. It avoided the intemperate language of the first report, was supported by white 'upstate' educators, and echoed much already being taught in New York State's social studies classrooms. But the controversy surrounding the previous report guaranteed scrutiny, and publication of Schlesinger's articulate dissent engendered emotional debate. *Time*, *New Republic*, and Governor Cuomo quickly attacked the report.

Unlike Schlesinger, Glazer was willing to live with it. He had been sobered by

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Committee members from elementary and secondary schools who viewed the report as uncontroversial and found its theoretical debates irrelevant. Educators were already putting much of it into practice and wanted practical help. When Glazer asked one for an explanation, the answer was that the real issue was to get students to read at all. The depressing reports from the educational trenches convinced Glazer that solutions he once championed had failed. His self-deprecating reflections result in one of the gentlest volumes in the 'culture wars.'

Unlike many commentators, he clearly separates the cultural issues for elementary and secondary schools from those for higher education. For the former he accepts that there must be an agreed narrative; to focus on the process of ascertaining truth is too much to ask in the public schools. But who will control that narrative? Glazer urges his colleagues in higher education to relax. He is willing to have scholarly truth occasionally violated to make room for constructive and well-meaning myths. Schlesinger's fear of national disunity strikes Glazer as overwrought, especially when American cultural differences are compared to such fragile societies as Canada: or in the dismembered Yugoslavia and Soviet Union. As a Jewish student in New York City of the 1930s, Glazer didn't see his ethnic group represented in the curriculum and acknowledges that highly achieving Asian students of today don't seem to need such cultural recognition. Yet he is willing to entertain the possibility that Black, and possibly some Hispanic, students may have a different need at the moment.

The battle over social studies curricula bounced from New York State to California to the national stage. The California standards were less contentious than those in New York, but they set the stage for a national battle when their authors became leaders in writing the National Standards for American history. These included some imbalances, notably excessive emphasis on Africa. And university scholars imposed specialists' knowledge and preoccupations upon elementary and secondary teachers that could not possibly be translated into their classrooms. Despite these reservations, Glazer is tolerant of the National Standards. He attributes these failings not to attempts to break up the United States, but to a desire by excluded groups for inclusion. Better to accept moderate multiculturalism with its excesses than to deny these cries he reluctantly concludes.

Multiculturalism often suffers from historical amnesia. Glazer points out that cultural battles for control of the schools are not new in the 1990s, but have periodically gripped America. Protestants and Catholics battled over the King James Bible and funding of parochial schools throughout the 1800s. Germans and other groups successfully attained bilingualism in public and parochial schools. The 1890s were more fundamentally multicultural than the 1990s. But World War I and the Red Scare discredited cultural pluralism and rapid assimilation of European immigrants followed. The decline in immigration, Americanization pressures of World War II, and post-1945 anti-Communism all militated towards relative cultural homogeneity. By the 1950s a widespread cultural consensus had developed among European-Americans with remarkable speed. This was reinforced in the 1960s by the Civil Rights Movement whose leaders demanded access for all to the mainstream culture and to the existing educational system that had trained them. Thus today's multiculturalism reacts against a few decades of uncommon cultural homogeneity. By ignoring the earlier waves of diversity and assimilation in America's

past, Glazer believes, many multiculturalists incorrectly reason that we live in unique conditions that will lead inevitably toward a new pluralist cultural model.

To explain the inspiration for 1990s multiculturalism Glazer offers a surprising answer. He does not attribute it primarily to the dramatic immigration of the last two decades. Asians essentially accept the existing educational system in which their achievement surpasses that of Whites. Hispanics, except for Mexican-Americans in the borderlands, have asked only for some bi-lingualism and cultural recognition. 'Blacks are the storm troops in the battles over multiculturalism' (94). The failure of civil rights to lead to full participation for many African-Americans and the resulting pent up frustration is the essential force behind multiculturalism. Contrary to the assertions of many multiculturalists, Glazer asserts that assimilation is 'still the most powerful force affecting the ethnic and racial elements of the United States' (97), but that it has been obscured by the failure to fully integrate African-Americans.

Glazer admits that he has backed some solutions that have failed. He now recants the case he made in *Affirmative Discrimination* that Affirmative Action was not necessary. The curative forces in society and the government programs have had little effect. Although there has been racial progress in politics and the workforce, residential concentration has not declined. Inter-marriage rates for American-born Blacks are dramatically lower than for any other group. The continuing separation has increased differences in the use of English, and academic achievement is stigmatized by many Black youth as 'White'. The only solution is to 'pass through a period in which we recognize difference, we celebrate difference ... and we raise up for special consideration the achievements of our minorities and their putative ancestors' (159).

Although the tone is conciliatory, the book will still annoy many who glorify cultural diversity based on race and predict that it is America's future. Glazer rejects both. He is willing to live with temporary excesses of racial pride to cure past failures. Unlike many of the more strident voices in the 'culture wars,' his is humane, thoughtful, and grounded in the failures of America's urban public schools. But to Glazer multiculturalism is a temporary penance rather than a desirable or likely future. He believes America neither will nor should emulate truly multicultural societies such as Canada, Russia, or India. He is willing to give latitude to multiculturalists because he believes their ultimate goal is inclusion. When past racial injustices are corrected, multiculturalism will be reduced 'to a passing phase in the complex history of the malting of an American nation from many strands' (161).

Glazer stresses that the essential drive in American society, whatever the exclusions at various times, has been inclusion, a progressive expansion of the groups considered to be full fledged 'Americans'. While that category steadily expanded beyond the original ethnic stock(s) of the Founders, non-whites were beyond the pale. The racial divide was finally crossed in the 1960s and the African-American middle class began moving into the mainstream. Asian-Americans and Caribbean-Americans soon were more advantaged than the average White American. The racial caste system had fallen. But poorer Blacks and Hispanics were left behind, many trapped in increasingly unlivable cities. Thus the assertion in Glazer's title that 'We are all Multiculturalists now' does not use a definition that will satisfy most who carry the banner. His title means that multiculturalism is already

a reality in the nation's classrooms. In his stint on the New York State curriculum coininittee he found that textbooks had become multicultural. In colleges and universities non-White authors and cultures have been in vogue for a quarter century on class readings lists and research agendas. Glazer urges calm. He believes that those who champion a multicultural future and those who believe it threatens American society both ignore America's social realities and history.

Reading this book over four thousand miles and eleven months away from the United States makes this reviewer nod strongly in agreement with Glazer's skepticism that America is or ever will be truly multicultural. From such a distance the pervasiveness of America's broad-based mainstream culture is striking. As a Danish colleague said, 'I can see an American coming.' Most Americans share so many cultural references; styles, and assumptions that claims of 'multiculturalism' seem to miss the forest for the trees. Multiculturalists correctly point to America's considerable diversity but fail to offer international comparisons on which to evaluate their claims that America is 'multicultural' and will be so in the future. Compared with Denmark or other Scandinavian countries the United States appears multicultural. But in comparison with Belgium or Canada? Or, more appropriately, in comparison with the other largest countries: China, India, Russia, and Indonesia? Rather than America being multicultural, on a world scale the opposite is true, The United States stands out internationally as a model of relative cultural homogeneity. Where else on earth do so many people share a common language as well as the same television, movies, sports, consumer items, brand names, educational system, professional networks, and economic structure? And most critically for predicting the future, no other society has such a powerful, relatively homogeneous youth culture. Finally, intermarriage rates for Asians of about one in three and for Hispanics of about one in four make it unlikely that these groups will transmit truly distinct cultures very far into the future.

One could argue that homogeneity is the force that should be feared. In less than a half century America went from the extraordinary multiculturalism of the early 1900s to the cultural consensus of the 1950s. The reach of modern media and consumerism adds to forces destroying traditions and encouraging homogeneity. Suburbs, which decimate cultural diversity, expand daily. From this perspective, the multicultural battles are skirmishes that divert our attention from more pervasive social change.

The centrality of curricular debates in the 'culture wars' must baffle most Europeans. Although the cultural content of the curriculum is contested in every country, the late age of specialization gives American educational institutions a unique cultural role. About ninety per cent of American youth attend comprehensive high schools until they are eighteen; taking relatively similar English and social studies courses from nationally distributed textbooks published by companies seeking to please educators in California, New York, and Texas. The nearly half of all youth who continue into higher education encounter two years of 'general education' programs which have contested cultural content. In addition, American high school and college campuses have enveloping student cultures that give American schools social roles unparalleled in Europe.

Glazer's urban focus virtually excludes the Census Department's racial category that encompasses the deepest separation from the mainstream: 'American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut.' This is a reminder that many of the most truly culturally distinct groups in America

are in rural areas and many are white, such as the Amish, Mennonites, and Hutterites. Thus we must be careful about focusing excessively on urban populations and on equating racial differences with cultural diversity.

What will the America of the future look like? The racial mixture has been irrevocably altered by recent Asian and Hispanic immigration. But race does not necessarily convey culture. Other than Native Americans, only Chicanos along the Mexican border live with the conditions necessary to maintaining a culture: residential propinquity and an enduring connection to an alternative culture. But for most Americans, history supports Glazer's belief that cultural diversity based on ethnicity or race will be 'a passing phase'.

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I. Bernard Cohen, *Science and the Founding Fathers: Science in the Political Thought of Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams & James Madison* (New York: Norton, 1995), 368 pp. \$25.00 (hard cover)

Reading I. Bernard Cohen's work reminded me of seminars that I once attended given by Henry Steele Commager. Both men are of the same generation, both focused much of their scholarship on the eighteenth century, and many of Cohen's examples I first heard from Commager. In 1943 Cohen received the first American doctorate in the history of science, and like Commager he has remained productive in retirement with this, his 22nd book. As the subtitle suggests; chapters are devoted to four of the most important political figures of the Revolutionary period. Each chapter can be read on its own, for this is less a cumulative argument than a series of close readings of particular documents, each carefully situated in context. Cohen knows precisely which scientific books Franklin, Adams, Madison, and Jefferson had at their disposal, and what is more, Cohen clearly has read them himself, including Newton's *Principia* in its original Latin. When Jefferson penned the *Declaration of Independence*, for example, Cohen shows that he echoed the specific language of Newton in its first two sentences. Likewise, he shows that Jefferson was a better mathematician than Washington (who was a surveyor) or Hamilton (a businessman). Jefferson devised a system for apportioning seats in Congress that was superior to the others put forward, and he used calculus to design an improved plow.

Cohen reprises his earlier work on Franklin, who was not just a well-known experimental scientist, but the formulator of the first widely accepted theory of electricity and also one of the founders of the field of demography, inventing theories of population growth and decline similar to that Malthus later became known for. As these examples suggest; the book focuses on specific examples more than overarching theories. It is written in a clear and lively style, though at times it becomes a little repetitive. His work is far removed from the sweeping claims of the history of science that Michel Foucault introduced twenty years ago. Cohen works out of an earlier tradition. Close to his documents and versed in the scientific controversies of the time, he describes, as it were, individual trees but takes for granted that the reader already has an overview of the forest and knows the usual haunts of the *philosophes* in that woods. Cohen spends considerable

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space detailing the scientific education of each of his four subjects, but only quickly sketches the theories of Kepler, Newton and other major figures, on the assumption that most readers interested in this subject will have sufficient background. Colzen describes not the science of the day, but rather the ways in which it undergirded political assumptions and provided powerful metaphors to statesmen. A student of Newton could claim that certain truths were self-evident (or axiomatic). By appealing to "the laws of (Newton's) nature" the *Declaratioiz* was given an aura of unquestioned finality.

Woodrow Wilson, when still an active political scientist, mistakenly promoted the view that the conception of the balance of power was a Newtonian idea and that it lay behind the *Constitution*. But as Cohen demonstrates, Wilson and the hundreds who have relied on this argument simply did not know enough science. "The balance of forces, equilibrium or equipoise, is a part of physics known as statics, the science of forces at rest. Newtonian physics...is concerned with a different subject, dynamics, the physics of forces and accelerations." (216) John Adams was well aware that the idea of a political balance of power was an older idea, which he traced to Machiavelli. The most common source was the writings of John Harrington, who not only wrote a generation before Newton but attacked the idea that sciences provided models for politics. Cohen finds that "A close reading of Madison's minutes of the Constitutional Convention ... does not disclose a single example in which the physical and the biological sciences provided an important concept, model, power, or restriction used in framing the principles of the new government." (258) Likewise, in the *Federalist Papers* Cohen finds nothing that would "even vaguely suggest" Newtonian science. The conclusion: dynamic Newtonian physics is embodied in the *Declaration of Independence* but had little bearing on the *Constitutioiz* or its adoption.

A new scholar in the field, with the same materials, would no doubt write much more about slavery, Native Americans, women's rights, and other inequalities of the time and how these same thinkers dealt with them. Cohen does not avoid these topics and at times has interesting things to say about them, but they are clearly secondary to him, as he focuses on the central documents that founded the United States. I am willing to grant him that. A more serious fault is the failure to synthesize his many findings into a larger pattern. The concluding sections on the significance of political metaphor are too brief, and do not draw together the myriad examples and observations. All in all, however, the book is a fascinating supplement to our understanding of American political thought in the age of revolutions.

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Richard H. King and Helen Taylor (eds.), *Dixie Debates: Perspectives on Southern Cultures*. (New York: New York University Press, 1996). 242 pages, ISBN 0-814-74684-5, \$17.95 paperback

Although the American South is constantly experiencing rapid and radical economic and political changes, its mental image and cultural reality still heavily rely on the past. Even certain fields of contemporary culture, some of them as distinct from each other as the

upper-middle-class life-style periodical *Southern Living* or the raucous; hard-nosed Southern rock of Lynyrd Skynyrd, make vigorous use of myths of the past. However, the Southern past is not a unified one, nor is the South today; it is characterized by an abundance of intermingled and contradictory cultures and values which simply cannot be discussed in unison. This is the main idea behind this book and provides an excuse for its eclectic nature.

In addition to the editors' introduction and Richard Gray's afterword, *Dixie Debates* consists of twelve expanded conference papers originally presented at the first European interdisciplinary Southern cultural studies conference at Warwick in September 1994. The topics range from Alice Walker to Cajun identity, from Elvis Presley to black-oriented radio, from D. W. Griffith to African-American visual art. The areas touched upon include literary studies, musicology, sociology, history: art, almost anything regarded as part of cultural studies. The book is loosely organized into three sections – Southern Cultures; Southern Music, and Southern Images – but the division is by no means strict, or even noticeable.

In 'African and European Roots of Southern Culture: The 'Central Theme' Revisited,' Charles Joyner addresses the most pivotal controversy of the South, the racial issue. With ample evidence from the history of popular music he shows how the 'white' as well as the 'black' forms of music have actually developed interdependently. Even the stereotypically white redneck country music pays great homage to blues. It is only with the black and white strings interwoven together that the Southern fabric has received its characteristic color – not just in music but in all other aspects as well.

Paul Binding and Maurie Lauret both take a look at Southern literature. Binding reads it as reflecting the two-sided nature of Southern mentality through historical and seasonal time, especially well displayed in the reworkings of Southern myths by William Faulkner and Eudora Welty. Lauret deals with blues and literature as expressed and created by African-American women. Challenging the current orthodoxy she sees the two art forms not as equivalents but as genres of their own. However, she also sees them both as carrying universal features which enable Billie Holiday fans as well as Alice Walker readers from any ethnic background to gain a better understanding of some of the special characteristics of the black women's reality.

In 'L'Acadie Retrouvée: The Re-making of Cajun Identity in Southwestern Louisiana, 1968-1994,' Robert Lewis depicts the vicissitudes of the French-oriented, though usually no longer French-speaking, Cajun minority of Louisiana with a historian's precision. Although the ties between modern Cajun people and Old Acadia have grown weaker, the ethnic consciousness, now strongly related to Cajun food and music, has been revitalized, at the same time as multiculturalism has been promoted by political and educational measures. This is largely due to the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), founded in 1968 by the state legislature. Lewis's text as such is informative but would have benefitted from a few maps, since it is full of geographical references.

Diane Robets ironically describes how *Southern Living*, one of the most profitable magazines in the USA today, makes conscious use of the idyllic image of the Confederate plantation life, while at the same time turning a blind eye to the divisive and difficult political issues of the present. The method seems to pay, since the popularity of this Southern lifestyle bible among white upper-middle-class Southern women is guaranteed.

Simon Frith criticizes the way Elvis Presley has to a large extent been neglected by academic scholars. Elvis fans have been studied more than the man himself and many of the academic references to the 'King,' including some of Frith's own, only repeat conventional views without a slightest attempt at a proper scholarly research on the subject. In other words, 'The Academic Elvis' – the title of Frith's paper – scarcely exists. Partly this is due to the unfortunate fact that Elvis studies are often done by people who do not recognize the true nature of the artist's talent, because they lack true affection for his work. With this observation Frith's article expands into a more general criticism against any kind of academic research without genuine interest in its subject. According to Frith, such study is worthless.

As a man who is committed to Southern Boogie and the bottle of Jack Daniel's, Paul Wells is easily able to avoid Frith's critique; he is fully entitled to analyze the thematic modes characteristic to his favorite bands, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Doc Holiday, Charlie Daniels Band, .38 Special, Allman Brothers Band and the like. In his article, Wells shows in explicit terms how the values of the white South, embodied in the idealistic and mythical figure of 'the Rebel', have preserved themselves in the slightly infantile world of masculine Southern rock.

Racial issues, so rarely dealt with in Southern rock, are brought to the fore again by Brian Ward and Jenny Wallter. In "Bringing the Races Closer?": Black-Oriented Radio in the South and the Civil Rights Movement,' they make a distinction between commercial and non-profit-making black-oriented radio stations. The former, whether black- or white-owned; are mainly dedicated to the musical entertainment of their audience, although at times they have contributed to the growing sense of black identity and produced educational programs. The non-profit-making broadcasters, however, are the ones that today provide the best news and information services for the black community.

New Orleans is known as the birthplace of jazz and the scene of a continuous fireworks of music, and the image is dearly cherished by the local tourism promoters of the present. However, as Connie Zeanah Atkinson in almost sarcastic tones observes, the musical community of New Orleans and the local tourist business seem to have less understanding for each other today than ever before, even though some of the earlier conflicts between the musicians and the municipal authorities have long since been forgotten.

Richard Dyer's and Jane Gaines's articles on cinematic reflections of the South function as comments on each other. While Dyer concentrates on D. W. Griffith's emblematic film, *The Birth of a Nation*, Gaines compares the classic with its recently rediscovered black equivalent by Oscar Micheaux, *Within Our Gates*. Both movies represent an attempt to come to terms with the nation their makers are part of, although with somewhat amusing results as these thorough analyses reveal. Despite its evidently opposite aims *The Birth of a Nation* succeeds in showing how the white South is not really as white as the white supremacists want it to be. The black and white history of the region is mixed, not only at a communal level but also at the level of individual families. Micheaux legitimizes the black heritage of the nation by pointing out that the African-American population actually arrived before the Irish; the Italian, and the Chinese – and the blacks were never immigrants.

As Judith McWillie points out, in 'Traditions and Transformations: Vernacular Art from

the Afro-Atlantic South,' there are certain peculiar forms of Southern visual art that manifest the African influence of the Congo region that still survive today. An original union of ordinary, commonplace objects and spirituality continues to express itself in objects of art and imaginatively decorated graves and private yards that have been met with perplexed reception; while local sheriffs at times destroy yard shows as a result of complaints by neighbors and passers-by: some of the better-known artists of the same tradition are able to sell their work for as much as \$120,000.

As expected, the picture of the South created by *Dixie Debates* is fragmentary and incoherent, or, to put it nicely, multiplex. There is not a single theme or perspective touched upon by all, or even most, of the articles, and, in this sense, anyone looting for a thorough package of information on some special field of interest will most likely be disappointed. However, as the book is not meant to be an in-depth study of a special problem but rather a platform of interdisciplinary discussion on the peculiarities of the South, it deserves to be read by anyone interested in Southern studies. By bringing out the diversified nature of the South and its cultures the anthology will surely offer new perspectives for most of its readers; in fact, it is even more true to the nature of its subject than a more unified work might be.

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John Gerard Ruggie, *Winning the Pence. America and World Order in the New Em* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996) 222 pp. ISBN 0-231-10426-X. Cloth \$27.95

After the demise of the Soviet Union; America's leaders face an old American dilemma: how to interest an unconcerned country, the Congress as well as the public, in America's role in the world? Without the Soviet military threat and the anticommunist ideological fervor as driving impulses, the policymaking community has become confused and deeply divided by disagreements about how best to frame the calculation of U.S. interests and how most effectively to pursue them. Should the U.S. pursue enlargement of what President Clinton terms "the family of free-market democracies" and consolidate "the democratic peace", should it pursue an isolationist foreign policy, or should it follow a doctrine of *realpolitik*, i.e., simply pursue America's interests in international power politics?

John Rerald Ruggie, a professor at Columbia University, has written a lucid and compact book about America's problems as it is facing the post-Cold war era. After a short review of America's prominent role in building the post-World War II multilateral order and during the Cold War, Ruggie considers more closely two aspects of the problems facing the United States: the security agenda and the economic agenda.

Concerning the security agenda, Ruggie focuses on America's dilemma as the leading country in NATO. What during the Cold War basically was a competitive security system has in the 1990's been translated into a system marred by cooperative security, and today the central issue is how to balance the two with regard to Central and Eastern Europe. If NATO is expanded to include countries from Central Europe it may enhance some aspects

of cooperative security in the area, primarily by dampening the resurgence of ethno-nationalism and intra-regional conflicts. Yet, any expansion of NATO, combined with whatever readiness to meet Russian security needs/nervousness/paranoia – pick your label – means that elements of competitive security will also have a clear role in the post-Cold War security order in Europe. The critical problem, however, is that a development towards a more cooperative security system in Europe is not solely a matter of NATO displaying and opting for a distinctly cooperative policy. As NATO displays readiness to meet Central European countries' security needs/nervousness/paranoia – again, pick your label – about residual threats of Russian aggressiveness, it is tempting – but shallow – when opting for a policy to present it as obviously *the* correct one.

To some observers the most delicate question concerns the credibility of NATO's commitments to the new members from eastern Europe. Throughout the cold war era there ran a debate about the credibility of the American commitment to Western Europe, and this problem might become more urgent in relation to Eastern Europe. However, U.S. policymakers are right to stress a far broader set of objectives than the credibility of the defense commitment, namely projecting stability by strengthening fragile democracies and economic reforms, and promoting civil as opposed to ethnic nationalism, crisis management, and peacekeeping, thereby fostering peaceful change within and among the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. For the new members joining NATO, expansion is less an issue of security than of identity politics, an affirmation that they belong to "the West". Focusing on the credibility issue is missing the point of enlargement.

Concerning the economic agenda Ruggie turns his attention to, among other things, the multilateral trade regime and the dangers caused to it by the unilateral trend in America's trade policy since the 1970's, but he warns against exaggerating what his colleague from Columbia University, Jagdish Bhagwati, has termed America's "aggressive unilateralism". More attention should be paid to the potential danger of what Ruggie terms "society's vulnerability to increasingly disembedded market forces" (p. 135).

In the final chapter Ruggie contends that the widespread realist-inspired idea of always focusing on an emerging international power balance offers a poor guide to preparing U.S. post-cold war foreign policy. Another dangerous route is the rise of a populist and highly volatile pool of disaffected voters clamoring for "social protection" against globalization. This is potentially significant, particularly because the U.S. government does a poor job in helping the American workforce prepare for the new global economy.

Thus future neo-isolationist scenarios are elaborated as closely related to internal American developments concerning the strife over educational and health-care policies. Simply to "slash and trash", rather than review and redesign, social safety nets; would invite a populist upsurge of protectionism.

Ruggie's book is an incisive presentation and discussion of America's many troublesome and sometimes impalpable problems as it faces a "Third Try at World Order". Ruggie's own preferences are openly presented, but they never interfere with a perspicacious analysis of the issues.

Godfrey Hodgson: *The World Turned Right Side Up; A History of the Conservative Ascendancy in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996), 365 pages. Cloth, \$27.50 (ISBN: 0-395-82294-7); paper \$13.00 (ISBN: 0-395-82293-9)

In the April 1994-issue of *American Historical Review*, Leo Ribuffo asked the question 'Why Is There So Much Conservatism in the United States and Why Do So Few Historians Know Anything About It?'¹ Since then a number of bootls have attempted to fill the information gap. The best contribution so far comes from British historian and journalist Godfrey Hodgson, a lteen observer of American politics, whose previous production includes the popular *America in Our Time* (New Yorlt: Random House, 1976). Hodgson traces the evolution of conservatisin from its status as a discredited political philosophy in the early postwar years to its ascendancy and apparent triumph in the Reagan years. Eventually, however, he questions the notion of a 'Reagan Revolution,' and in the light of the current impasse under the banners of Newt Gingrich, he atteimpts to explain why conservative dreams of political hegemony have so far ended in disappointment.

Apart from a number of interviews with leading conservative figures, the book is solely based on secondary sources. For readers who are familiar with bootls such as George H. Nash's *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (New York, 1976), Martin Anderson's *Revolution* (New Yorlt, 1988), and Thomas & Mary Edsall's *Chain Reaction; The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York, 1992), Hodgson's book may hold only a few surprises, but it is a compelling and extremely well-written synthesis of the existing literature. In separate chapters, Hodgson attempts to trace the many streams flowing into the conservative delta. On the way he serves up amusing anecdotes, brief but precise biographical sketches of ltey conservative players, as well as a few largely unknown episodes. One is the story of how forty democratic members of Congress in the Christmas holidays of 1972-1973 seriously contemplated an informal Republican invitation to join the GOP. This near-realignment, which Hodgson calls 'one of the great untold tales of American politics,' became a non-event when the Watergate scandal suddenly hit the front pages.

Among the myths that Hodgson attempts to eradicate is the notion that the new religious Right was first of all triggered by *Roe vs. Wade* and the issue of abortion. What really started their involvement in politics, Hodgson argues, was the Internal Revenue Service's denial of tax exemption to Christian schools on the grounds that they were *de facto* segregated, and thus violated the Fourteenth Amendment. This clash with the regulatory powers of the Federal government allegedly made many fundamentalists realize that they could not continue to isolate themselves from the nation's political life, and they accordingly joined the anti-statist chorus of the conservative movement.

Regardless of all its many qualities, Hodgson's book does have its weaknesses. The

1pp. 438-449. In all fairness, it was actually Alan Brinkley who in the same issue of AHR opened the discussion about conservatism as an underexplored issue in American history ('The Problem of American Conservatism,' pp. 409-429), Ribuffo's article was a response.

author describes it as 'the story of how many indigenous conservative traditions came together as a united political movement,' but does not attempt to define in what sense these different strains constitute a movement, and in the second half of the book he clearly loses interest in conservatism as both an intellectual and a political movement. There are only passing references to the continuing discussions among the various intellectual strains of conservatism, and the struggles within the Republican Party are largely ignored. Hodgson claims that Nixon's opening to China was welcomed by conservatives: 'It was better still [for conservatives] to see an American president in China, always dear to conservative hearts as the place where there would one day be the most souls to save and the most business to be done.' In fact, Nixon's trip to China made part of the Republican Right revolt and support the nomination of Congressman John Ashbrook as a conservative challenger to the president – a significant event in the history of the conservative movement, yet something that Hodgson doesn't mention at all.

In a sense, the real subject of Hodgson's book is not the conservative movement, but the collapse of liberalism. It is not the story of a triumphant movement which in time would win over large segments of the American public, but rather an account of a series of developments which since the great upheaval of the 1960s have altered public attitudes towards social and religious issues, and towards the respective roles of government and business. According to the book, race has been at the center of this process since the early days of the civil rights movement. Southern politics have become nationalized, and the Democratic Party's near-monopoly in that region has ended, but in return national politics have also become 'Southernized,' and race-related issues have been allowed to dominate the political agenda, albeit often disguised as 'cultural' issues.

While a good part of the book is devoted to the issue of how racial tensions have helped the conservative ascendancy, another part of the book concerns the consequences of the so-called Reagan Revolution. Hodgson obviously has affection for Reagan, both as president and as a private person, but contends that 'Reaganomics' with its blend of monetarism and supply-side economics was a disaster which made the United States the most indebted nation on earth and caused a rapid growth in social and economic inequality. In the process, conservatives brought back something many thought long dead: the politics of class. Reagan's optimism, charisma and unabashed nationalism sugar-coated the conservative pill, while the inclusion of the religious right not only further shifted the focus of the political debate away from the politics of rich and poor, but also provided a link between the fiscal conservatism of the elites and the populism of the excluded. The formula worked fine for a while, Hodgson argues, but it never fulfilled conservative dreams of a new Golden Age. The notion of a decisive blow to the welfare state was quickly abandoned, and as for the evangelicals, they were simply taken to the cleaners.

Since the Reagan years, Hodgson argues, the conservative movement has declined because it has allowed itself to become the mere defender of suburban economic privilege. Its vision has eventually proven to be too narrow and non-inclusive. One is tempted to add here that although the conservative *movement* may have reached an impasse, conservative *ideas* are still doing fine. Now they are not merely being forwarded by self-proclaimed conservatives, but also by people who have leapt up the appearance of being liberals.

Regardless of some minor objections, I am truly impressed by *The World Turned Right*

Side Up. With its broad scope it is highly recommendable, not just to people with an interest in American conservatism, but to anyone with an interest in American politics. It will also make an excellent addition to the syllabus of anyone teaching U. S. history since 1945.

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Sacvan Bercovitch (ed), *The Cambridge History of American Literature, Vol. II: Prose Writing 1820-1865* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 907 pages, ISBN: 0-521-30106-8, \$74.95 cloth

One might perhaps have thought, in this day and age of post-consensus squabbles and post-modernist fragmentation, that the writing of a national American literary history would no longer be possible. And not surprisingly, the General Editor of *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, Sacvan Bercovitch, in his Introduction to the second volume of the projected eight-volume series, *Prose Writing 1820-1865*, starts off by problematizing the nature of both 'history,' 'American,' and 'literature.' Fortunately for the reader, however, he decides to take the cacophony of competing and opposing voices that have defined literary criticism in the United States in recent years as a challenge rather than as a barrier to the construction of another narrative of American writing. And we are reminded how few such comprehensive narratives there have been in the history of American literature. Since the pioneering *Cambridge History of American Literature*, published during World War One, we have only had Robert Spiller's seminal *Literary History of the United States* from 1947, before the *Columbia Literary History of the United States* (1988; General Editor Emory Elliott) – and now the new *Cambridge* make an attempt to define our perception of the American literary terrain, old and new, at the end of the twentieth century.

The editorial strategies of these two new works, as well as their scope, differ greatly. The *Columbia* is a one-volume, 1200-page collection that tries to capture the multifariousness of our current critical climate through the contributions of some seventy sub-editors and contributors, while retaining a fairly conventional structure in terms of sub-divisions by periods, genres, and individual authors or groups of authors. The result is predictably uneven and fragmented, full of stimulating insights but without any overarching sense of national narrative or dialogic coherence.

The scope of the *Cambridge* is much wider in terms of pages, since Sacvan Bercovitch and his crew have eight volumes in which to accomplish what Emory Elliott et al. had to do in one. But an even more important difference lies in the decision of the *Cambridge* editors to limit their major chapter divisions and corresponding contributors to a handful. In the second volume, under review here, there are only four 'master narratives' that make up the almost 800 pages of text. Michael Davitt Bell writes about the 'Conditions of Literary Vocation,' Eric J. Sundquist is responsible for 'The Literature of Expansion and Race,' while Barbara L. Paclter taltes on 'The Transcendentalists,' and Jonathan Arac provides a formalist perspective in his chapter on 'Narrative Forms.' This way a deliberate attempt is made to develop a fourfold perspective on the period in question: social, cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic, with each narrative related to the others through

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common themes and concerns.

Even if one might be instinctively skeptical (to put it mildly) of the catalogue blurb that pronounces this to be 'an achievement that will remain authoritative for our time,' this reviewer must confess that he has found the polyphony of narrative voices that constitute this history to be a brilliantly successful way to retain the basic canon of writers of this period (those dead white males, so enthusiastically vilified in certain quarters), while at the same time introducing and taking seriously the achievements of a large group of writers who have not traditionally been accorded much space or respect in earlier chronicles of American literature.

This is not just a question of giving Native Americans and other minorities their due, but just as much an extension of the range of what kinds of writing will count as 'literary' in a history of this kind. Historians like Bancroft, Parkman, and Prescott loom large here, and a generous amount of space is given to that 'damned mob of scribbling women' whose best-selling success so exasperated Hawthorne at the beginning of the 1850s. The Southwestern humorists come alive in their particular contexts, and 'minor' Transcendentalists like Margaret Fuller and Bronson Alcott are shown to be much more significant and interesting than has commonly been assumed. Throughout, one is struck by how it is possible to preserve a canon and rewrite it at the same time.

Perhaps the most important common denominator for all four chapters is the theme of expansion. All the contributors, not just Sundquist who has it as his chosen topic, manage to suggest and adumbrate the uniquely exciting experience of unprecedented growth that characterized the United States during this period. The spirit of Manifest Destiny is seen to be not just a program for geopolitical expansion, but rather a master metaphor for developments in a variety of fields. It is certainly easy enough to see Emerson's Transcendentalism as one aspect of such an orientation, and Arac sees the development of the genre of personal narrative in the 1840s as another answer to the same spirit. Expansion created the crucial dilemmas of wilderness versus civilization, expansion made the Civil War unavoidable, expansion gave American literary history new games, new voices, new tensions.

For anyone interested in this seminar period in American life and letters, this book is a regular cornucopia of information and observation, both literary and non-literary. Its easy accessibility is another of its strengths, since the pretentious gobbledegook of much recent literary criticism is totally missing from its pages. If this is a harbinger of the other volumes to come, Americanists of all persuasions have a lot to look forward to.

The only shortcomings worth mentioning here seem to me to be unavoidable consequences of editorial policy. It is obviously a problem that Whitman's poetry cannot be treated as part of the Transcendentalist movement, since this is a volume reserved for prose. The treatment of Poe also suffers from this schizophrenia. Furthermore, the decision not to have separate chapters for even the most central names necessarily means that in-depth treatment of writers and texts becomes difficult to achieve. Still, seeing these authors from two to three different angles to a certain extent makes up for this, while more extended analyses are of course readily available elsewhere.

To this reviewer, reading the second volume of *The Cambridge History of American Literature* has been an exhilarating experience, and a timely reminder of how stimulating

and provocative a period we are here dealing with. In what other literary history would you find out that in the 1854 Massachusetts elections, the Know-Nothing Party received sixty-three per cent of the vote (and 377 out of 379 seats in the legislature)? Or that James Freeman Clarke tirelessly championed the Transcendentalists in *The Western Messenger* in St. Louis? Or that the symbolic haunted house of American Gothic fiction and the homes of the domestic novel can be seen as mirror images of each other? Finally, developing out of this wealth of facts and figures that configure this era of powerful progress, in and out of literature, there is a sense of the vitality and viability of the American mosaic, no matter how divisive and tragic many of the bits and pieces may be.