The Clash of Civilizations?

Samuel P. Huntington

THE NEXT PATTERN OF CONFLICT

WORLD POLITICS IS entering a new phase, and intellectuals have not hesitated to proliferate visions of what it will be—the end of history, the return of traditional rivalries between nation states, and the decline of the nation state from the conflicting pulls of tribalism and globalism, among others. Each of these visions catches aspects of the emerging reality. Yet they all miss a crucial, indeed a central, aspect of what global politics is likely to be in the coming years.

It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.

Conflict between civilizations will be the latest phase in the evolution of conflict in the modern world. For a century and a half after the emergence of the modern international system with the Peace of Westphalia, the conflicts of the Western world were largely among

SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON is the Eaton Professor of the Science of Government and Director of the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University. This article is the product of the Olin Institute's project on "The Changing Security Environment and American National Interests."

princes—emperors, absolute monarchs and constitutional monarchs attempting to expand their bureaucracies, their armies, their mercantilist economic strength and, most important, the territory they ruled. In the process they created nation states, and beginning with the French Revolution the principal lines of conflict were between nations rather than princes. In 1793, as R. R. Palmer put it, "The wars of kings were over; the wars of peoples had begun." This nineteenth-century pattern lasted until the end of World War I. Then, as a result of the Russian Revolution and the reaction against it, the conflict of nations yielded to the conflict of ideologies, first among communism, fascism-Nazism and liberal democracy, and then between communism and liberal democracy. During the Cold War, this latter conflict became embodied in the struggle between the two superpowers, neither of which was a nation state in the classical European sense and each of which defined its identity in terms of its ideology.

These conflicts between princes, nation states and ideologies were primarily conflicts within Western civilization, "Western civil wars," as William Lind has labeled them. This was as true of the Cold War as it was of the world wars and the earlier wars of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the end of the Cold War, international politics moves out of its Western phase, and its centerpiece becomes the interaction between the West and non-Western civilizations and among non-Western civilizations. In the politics of civilizations, the peoples and governments of non-Western civilizations no longer remain the objects of history as targets of Western colonialism but join the West as movers and shapers of history.

THE NATURE OF CIVILIZATIONS

DURING THE COLD WAR the world was divided into the First, Second and Third Worlds. Those divisions are no longer relevant. It is far more meaningful now to group countries not in terms of their political or economic systems or in terms of their level of economic development but rather in terms of their culture and civilization.

What do we mean when we talk of a civilization? A civilization is a cultural entity. Villages, regions, ethnic groups, nationalities, reli-

gious groups, all have distinct cultures at different levels of cultural heterogeneity. The culture of a village in southern Italy may be different from that of a village in northern Italy, but both will share in a common Italian culture that distinguishes them from German villages. European communities, in turn, will share cultural features that distinguish them from Arab or Chinese communities. Arabs, Chinese and Westerners, however, are not part of any broader cultural entity. They constitute civilizations. A civilization is thus the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species. It is defined both by common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people. People have levels of identity: a resident of Rome may define himself with varying degrees of intensity as a Roman, an Italian, a Catholic, a Christian, a European, a Westerner. The civilization to which he belongs is the broadest level of identification with which he intensely identifies. People can and do redefine their identities and, as a result, the composition and boundaries of civilizations change.

Civilizations may involve a large number of people, as with China ("a civilization pretending to be a state," as Lucian Pye put it), or a very small number of people, such as the Anglophone Caribbean. A civilization may include several nation states, as is the case with Western, Latin American and Arab civilizations, or only one, as is the case with Japanese civilization. Civilizations obviously blend and overlap, and may include subcivilizations. Western civilization has two major variants, European and North American, and Islam has its Arab, Turkic and Malay subdivisions. Civilizations are nonetheless meaningful entities, and while the lines between them are seldom sharp, they are real. Civilizations are dynamic; they rise and fall; they divide and merge. And, as any student of history knows, civilizations disappear and are buried in the sands of time.

Westerners tend to think of nation states as the principal actors in global affairs. They have been that, however, for only a few centuries. The broader reaches of human history have been the history of civi-

lizations. In *A Study of History*, Arnold Toynbee identified 21 major civilizations; only six of them exist in the contemporary world.

WHY CIVILIZATIONS WILL CLASH

CIVILIZATION IDENTITY will be increasingly important in the future, and the world will be shaped in large measure by the interactions among seven or eight major civilizations. These include Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African civilization. The most important conflicts of the future will occur along the cultural fault lines separating these civilizations from one another.

Why will this be the case?

First, differences among civilizations are not only real; they are basic. Civilizations are differentiated from each other by history, language, culture, tradition and, most important, religion. The people of different civilizations have different views on the relations between God and man, the individual and the group, the citizen and the state, parents and children, husband and wife, as well as differing views of the relative importance of rights and responsibilities, liberty and authority, equality and hierarchy. These differences are the product of centuries. They will not soon disappear. They are far more fundamental than differences among political ideologies and political regimes. Differences do not necessarily mean conflict, and conflict does not necessarily mean violence. Over the centuries, however, differences among civilizations have generated the most prolonged and the most violent conflicts.

> The conflicts of the future will occur along the cultural fault lines separating civilizations

Second, the world is becoming a smaller place. The interactions between peoples of different civilizations are increasing; these increasing interactions intensify civilization consciousness and awareness of differences between civilizations and commonalities within civilizations. North African immigration to France generates hostility among Frenchmen and at the same time increased receptivity to immigration by "good" European Catholic Poles. Americans

react far more negatively to Japanese investment than to larger investments from Canada and European countries. Similarly, as Donald Horowitz has pointed out, "An Ibo may be ... an Owerri Ibo or an Onitsha Ibo in what was the Eastern region of Nigeria. In Lagos, he is simply an Ibo. In London, he is a Nigerian. In New York, he is an African." The interactions among peoples of different civilizations enhance the civilization-consciousness of people that, in turn, invigorates differences and animosities stretching or thought to stretch back deep into history.

Third, the processes of economic modernization and social change throughout the world are separating people from longstanding local identities. They also weaken the nation state as a source of identity. In much of the world religion has moved in to fill this gap, often in the form of movements that are labeled "fundamentalist." Such movements are found in Western Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism, as well as in Islam. In most countries and most religions the people active in fundamentalist movements are young, college-educated, middle-class technicians, professionals and business persons. The "unsecularization of the world," George Weigel has remarked, "is one of the dominant social facts of life in the late twentieth century." The revival of religion, "la revanche de Dieu," as Gilles Kepel labeled it, provides a basis for identity and commitment that transcends national boundaries and unites civilizations.

Fourth, the growth of civilization-consciousness is enhanced by the dual role of the West. On the one hand, the West is at a peak of power. At the same time, however, and perhaps as a result, a return to the roots phenomenon is occurring among non-Western civilizations. Increasingly one hears references to trends toward a turning inward and "Asianization" in Japan, the end of the Nehru legacy and the "Hinduization" of India, the failure of Western ideas of socialism and nationalism and hence "re-Islamization" of the Middle East, and now a debate over Westernization versus Russianization in Boris Yeltsin's country. A West at the peak of its power confronts non-Wests that increasingly have the desire, the will and the resources to shape the world in non-Western ways.

In the past, the elites of non-Western societies were usually the

people who were most involved with the West, had been educated at Oxford, the Sorbonne or Sandhurst, and had absorbed Western attitudes and values. At the same time, the populace in non-Western countries often remained deeply imbued with the indigenous culture. Now, however, these relationships are being reversed. A de-Westernization and indigenization of elites is occurring in many non-Western countries at the same time that Western, usually American, cultures, styles and habits become more popular among the mass of the people.

Fifth, cultural characteristics and differences are less mutable and hence less easily compromised and resolved than political and economic ones. In the former Soviet Union, communists can become democrats, the rich can become poor and the poor rich, but Russians cannot become Estonians and Azeris cannot become Armenians. In class and ideological conflicts, the key question was "Which side are you on?" and people could and did choose sides and change sides. In conflicts between civilizations, the question is "What are you?" That is a given that cannot be changed. And as we know, from Bosnia to the Caucasus to the Sudan, the wrong answer to that question can mean a bullet in the head. Even more than ethnicity, religion discriminates sharply and exclusively among people. A person can be half-French and half-Arab and simultaneously even a citizen of two countries. It is more difficult to be half-Catholic and half-Muslim.

Finally, economic regionalism is increasing. The proportions of total trade that were intraregional rose between 1980 and 1989 from 51 percent to 59 percent in Europe, 33 percent to 37 percent in East Asia, and 32 percent to 36 percent in North America. The importance of regional economic blocs is likely to continue to increase in the future. On the one hand, successful economic regionalism will reinforce civilization-consciousness. On the other hand, economic regionalism may succeed only when it is rooted in a common civilization. The European Community rests on the shared foundation of European culture and Western Christianity. The success of the North American Free Trade Area depends on the convergence now underway of Mexican, Canadian and American cultures. Japan, in contrast, faces difficulties in creating a comparable economic entity

in East Asia because Japan is a society and civilization unique to itself. However strong the trade and investment links Japan may develop with other East Asian countries, its cultural differences with those countries inhibit and perhaps preclude its promoting regional economic integration like that in Europe and North America.

Common culture, in contrast, is clearly facilitating the rapid expansion of the economic relations between the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and the overseas Chinese communities in other Asian countries. With the Cold War over, cultural commonalities increasingly overcome ideological differences, and mainland China and Taiwan move closer together. If cultural commonality is a prerequisite for economic integration, the principal East Asian economic bloc of the future is likely to be centered on China. This bloc is, in fact, already coming into existence. As Murray Weidenbaum has observed,

> Despite the current Japanese dominance of the region, the Chinese-based economy of Asia is rapidly emerging as a new epicenter for industry, commerce and finance. This strategic area contains substantial amounts of technology and manufacturing capability (Taiwan), outstanding entrepreneurial, marketing and services acumen (Hong Kong), a fine communications network (Singapore), a tremendous pool of financial capital (all three), and very large endowments of land, resources and labor (mainland China).... From Guangzhou to Singapore, from Kuala Lumpur to Manila, this influential network—often based on extensions of the traditional clans—has been described as the backbone of the East Asian economy.[1]

Culture and religion also form the basis of the Economic Cooperation Organization, which brings together ten non-Arab Muslim countries: Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. One impetus to the revival and expansion of this organization, founded originally in the 1960s by Turkey, Pakistan and Iran, is the realization by the leaders of several of these countries that they had no chance of admission to the European Community. Similarly, Caricom, the Central American Common Market and Mercosur rest

[1]Murray Weidenbaum, *Greater China: The Next Economic Superpower?*, St. Louis: Washington University Center for the Study of American Business, Contemporary Issues, Series 57, February 1993, pp. 2-3.

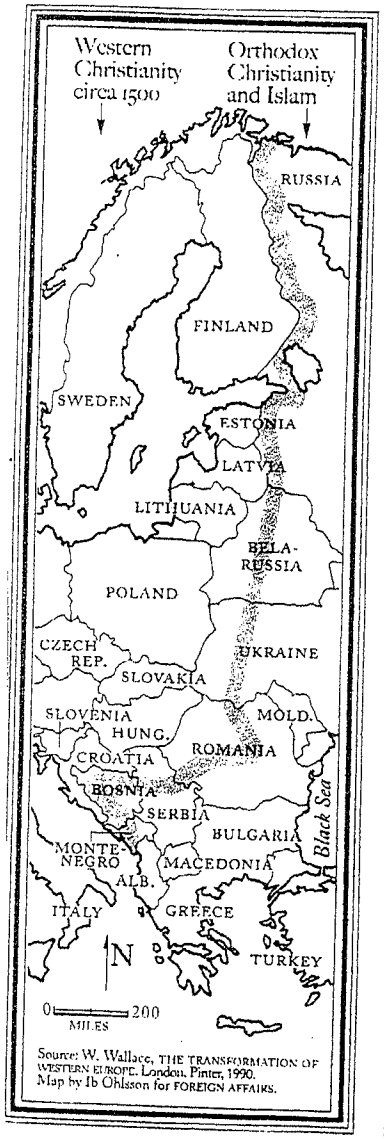
on common cultural foundations. Efforts to build a broader Caribbean-Central American economic entity bridging the Anglo-Latin divide, however, have to date failed.

As people define their identity in ethnic and religious terms, they are likely to see an "us" versus "them" relation existing between themselves and people of different ethnicity or religion. The end of ideologically defined states in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union permits traditional ethnic identities and animosities to come to the fore. Differences in culture and religion create differences over policy issues, ranging from human rights to immigration to trade and commerce to the environment. Geographical propinquity gives rise to conflicting territorial claims from Bosnia to Mindanao. Most important, the efforts of the West to promote its values of democracy and liberalism as universal values, to maintain its military predominance and to advance its economic interests engender countering responses from other civilizations. Decreasingly able to mobilize support and form coalitions on the basis of ideology, governments and groups will increasingly attempt to mobilize support by appealing to common religion and civilization identity.

The clash of civilizations thus occurs at two levels. At the micro-level, adjacent groups along the fault lines between civilizations struggle, often violently, over the control of territory and each other. At the macro-level, states from different civilizations compete for relative military and economic power, struggle over the control of international institutions and third parties, and competitively promote their particular political and religious values.

THE FAULT LINES BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS

THE FAULT LINES between civilizations are replacing the political and ideological boundaries of the Cold War as the flash points for crisis and bloodshed. The Cold War began when the Iron Curtain divided Europe politically and ideologically. The Cold War ended with the end of the Iron Curtain. As the ideological division of Europe has disappeared, the cultural division of Europe between Western Christianity, on the one hand, and Orthodox Christianity



Source: W. Wallace, THE TRANSFORMATION OF WESTERN EUROPE. London, Pinter, 1990.
Map by Ib Ohlsson for FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

and Islam, on the other, has reemerged. The most significant dividing line in Europe, as William Wallace has suggested, may well be the eastern boundary of Western Christianity in the year 1500. This line runs along what are now the boundaries between Finland and Russia and between the Baltic states and Russia, cuts through Belarus and Ukraine separating the more Catholic western Ukraine from Orthodox eastern Ukraine, swings westward separating Transylvania from the rest of Romania, and then goes through Yugoslavia almost exactly along the line now separating Croatia and Slovenia from the rest of Yugoslavia. In the Balkans this line, of course, coincides with the historic boundary between the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires. The peoples to the north and west of this line are Protestant or Catholic; they shared the common experiences of European history—feudalism, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution; they are generally economically better off than the peoples to the east; and they may now look forward to increasing involvement in a common European economy and to the consolidation of democratic political systems. The peoples to the east and south of this line are Orthodox or Muslim; they historically belonged to the Ottoman or Tsarist empires and were only lightly touched by the shaping events in the rest of Europe; they are generally less advanced economically; they seem much

less likely to develop stable democratic political systems. The Velvet Curtain of culture has replaced the Iron Curtain of ideology as the most significant dividing line in Europe. As the events in Yugoslavia show, it is not only a line of difference; it is also at times a line of bloody conflict.

Conflict along the fault line between Western and Islamic civilizations has been going on for 1,300 years. After the founding of Islam, the Arab and Moorish surge west and north only ended at Tours in 732. From the eleventh to the thirteenth century the Crusaders attempted with temporary success to bring Christianity and Christian rule to the Holy Land. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Turks reversed the balance, extended their sway over the Middle East and the Balkans, captured Constantinople, and twice laid siege to Vienna. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as Ottoman power declined Britain, France, and Italy established Western control over most of North Africa and the Middle East.

After World War II, the West, in turn, began to retreat; the colonial empires disappeared; first Arab nationalism and then Islamic fundamentalism manifested themselves; the West became heavily dependent on the Persian Gulf countries for its energy; the oil-rich Muslim countries became money-rich and, when they wished to, weapons-rich. Several wars occurred between Arabs and Israel (created by the West). France fought a bloody and ruthless war in Algeria for most of the 1950s; British and French forces invaded Egypt in 1956; American forces went into Lebanon in 1958; subsequently American forces returned to Lebanon, attacked Libya, and engaged in various military encounters with Iran; Arab and Islamic terrorists, supported by at least three Middle Eastern governments, employed the weapon of the weak and bombed Western planes and installations and seized Western hostages. This warfare between Arabs and the West culminated in 1990, when the United States sent a massive army to the Persian Gulf to defend some Arab countries against aggression by another. In its aftermath NATO planning is increasingly directed to potential threats and instability along its "southern tier."

This centuries-old military interaction between the West and

Islam is unlikely to decline. It could become more virulent. The Gulf War left some Arabs feeling proud that Saddam Hussein had attacked Israel and stood up to the West. It also left many feeling humiliated and resentful of the West's military presence in the Persian Gulf, the West's overwhelming military dominance, and their apparent inability to shape their own destiny. Many Arab countries, in addition to the oil exporters, are reaching levels of economic and social development where autocratic forms of government become inappropriate and efforts to introduce democracy become stronger. Some openings in Arab political systems have already occurred. The principal beneficiaries of these openings have been Islamist movements. In the Arab world, in short, Western democracy strengthens anti-Western political forces. This may be a passing phenomenon, but it surely complicates relations between Islamic countries and the West.

Those relations are also complicated by demography. The spectacular population growth in Arab countries, particularly in North Africa, has led to increased migration to Western Europe. The movement within Western Europe toward minimizing internal boundaries has sharpened political sensitivities with respect to this development. In Italy, France and Germany, racism is increasingly open, and political reactions and violence against Arab and Turkish migrants have become more intense and more widespread since 1990.

On both sides the interaction between Islam and the West is seen as a clash of civilizations. The West's "next confrontation," observes M. J. Akbar, an Indian Muslim author, "is definitely going to come from the Muslim world. It is in the sweep of the Islamic nations from the Maghreb to Pakistan that the struggle for a new world order will begin." Bernard Lewis comes to a similar conclusion:

> We are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations—the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.[2]

[2]Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *The Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 266, September 1990, p. 60; *Time*, June 15, 1992, pp. 24-28.

Historically, the other great antagonistic interaction of Arab Islamic civilization has been with the pagan, animist, and now increasingly Christian black peoples to the south. In the past, this antagonism was epitomized in the image of Arab slave dealers and black slaves. It has been reflected in the on-going civil war in the Sudan between Arabs and blacks, the fighting in Chad between Libyan-supported insurgents and the government, the tensions between Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the Horn of Africa, and the political conflicts, recurring riots and communal violence between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. The modernization of Africa and the spread of Christianity are likely to enhance the probability of violence along this fault line. Symptomatic of the intensification of this conflict was the Pope John Paul II's speech in Khartoum in February 1993 attacking the actions of the Sudan's Islamist government against the Christian minority there.

On the northern border of Islam, conflict has increasingly erupted between Orthodox and Muslim peoples, including the carnage of Bosnia and Sarajevo, the simmering violence between Serb and Albanian, the tenuous relations between Bulgarians and their Turkish minority, the violence between Ossetians and Ingush, the unremitting slaughter of each other by Armenians and Azeris, the tense relations between Russians and Muslims in Central Asia, and the deployment of Russian troops to protect Russian interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Religion reinforces the revival of ethnic identities and restimulates Russian fears about the security of their southern borders. This concern is well captured by Archie Roosevelt:

> Much of Russian history concerns the struggle between the Slavs and the Turkic peoples on their borders, which dates back to the foundation of the Russian state more than a thousand years ago. In the Slavs' millennium-long confrontation with their eastern neighbors lies the key to an understanding not only of Russian history, but Russian character. To understand Russian realities today one has to have a concept of the great Turkic ethnic group that has preoccupied Russians through the centuries.[3]

The conflict of civilizations is deeply rooted elsewhere in Asia. The historic clash between Muslim and Hindu in the subcontinent

[3]Archie Roosevelt, *For Lust of Knowing*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1988, pp. 332-333.

manifests itself now not only in the rivalry between Pakistan and India but also in intensifying religious strife within India between increasingly militant Hindu groups and India's substantial Muslim minority. The destruction of the Ayodhya mosque in December 1992 brought to the fore the issue of whether India will remain a secular democratic state or become a Hindu one. In East Asia, China has outstanding territorial disputes with most of its neighbors. It has pursued a ruthless policy toward the Buddhist people of Tibet, and it is pursuing an increasingly ruthless policy toward its Turkic-Muslim minority. With the Cold War over, the underlying differences between China and the United States have reasserted themselves in areas such as human rights, trade and weapons proliferation. These differences are unlikely to moderate. A "new cold war," Deng Xaioping reportedly asserted in 1991, is under way between China and America.

The crescent-shaped Islamic bloc, from the bulge of Africa to central Asia, has bloody borders.

The same phrase has been applied to the increasingly difficult relations between Japan and the United States. Here cultural difference exacerbates economic conflict. People on each side allege racism on the other, but at least on the American side the antipathies are not racial but cultural. The basic values, attitudes, behavioral patterns of the two societies could hardly be more different. The economic issues between the United States and Europe are no less serious than those between the United States and Japan, but they do not have the same political salience and emotional intensity because the differences between American culture and European culture are so much less than those between American civilization and Japanese civilization.

The interactions between civilizations vary greatly in the extent to which they are likely to be characterized by violence. Economic competition clearly predominates between the American and European subcivilizations of the West and between both of them and Japan. On the Eurasian continent, however, the proliferation of ethnic conflict, epitomized at the extreme in "ethnic cleansing," has not been totally random. It has been most frequent and most violent between groups belonging to different civilizations. In Eurasia the great historic fault

lines between civilizations are once more aflame. This is particularly true along the boundaries of the crescent-shaped Islamic bloc of nations from the bulge of Africa to central Asia. Violence also occurs between Muslims, on the one hand, and Orthodox Serbs in the Balkans, Jews in Israel, Hindus in India, Buddhists in Burma and Catholics in the Philippines. Islam has bloody borders.

CIVILIZATION RALLYING: THE KIN-COUNTRY SYNDROME

GROUPS OR STATES belonging to one civilization that become involved in war with people from a different civilization naturally try to rally support from other members of their own civilization. As the post-Cold War world evolves, civilization commonality, what H. D. S. Greenway has termed the "kin-country" syndrome, is replacing political ideology and traditional balance of power considerations as the principal basis for cooperation and coalitions. It can be seen gradually emerging in the post-Cold War conflicts in the Persian Gulf, the Caucasus and Bosnia. None of these was a full-scale war between civilizations, but each involved some elements of civilizational rallying, which seemed to become more important as the conflict continued and which may provide a foretaste of the future.

First, in the Gulf War one Arab state invaded another and then fought a coalition of Arab, Western and other states. While only a few Muslim governments overtly supported Saddam Hussein, many Arab elites privately cheered him on, and he was highly popular among large sections of the Arab publics. Islamic fundamentalist movements universally supported Iraq rather than the Western-backed governments of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Forswearing Arab nationalism, Saddam Hussein explicitly invoked an Islamic appeal. He and his supporters attempted to define the war as a war between civilizations. "It is not the world against Iraq," as Safar Al-Hawali, dean of Islamic Studies at the Umm Al-Qura University in Mecca, put it in a widely circulated tape. "It is the West against Islam." Ignoring the rivalry between Iran and Iraq, the chief Iranian religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, called for a holy war against the West: "The struggle against American aggression, greed, plans and

policies will be counted as a jihad, and anybody who is killed on that path is a martyr." "This is a war," King Hussein of Jordan argued, "against all Arabs and all Muslims and not against Iraq alone."

The rallying of substantial sections of Arab elites and publics behind Saddam Hussein caused those Arab governments in the anti-Iraq coalition to moderate their activities and temper their public statements. Arab governments opposed or distanced themselves from subsequent Western efforts to apply pressure on Iraq, including enforcement of a no-fly zone in the summer of 1992 and the bombing of Iraq in January 1993. The Western-Soviet-Turkish-Arab anti-Iraq coalition of 1990 had by 1993 become a coalition of almost only the West and Kuwait against Iraq.

Muslims contrasted Western actions against Iraq with the West's failure to protect Bosnians against Serbs and to impose sanctions on Israel for violating U.N. resolutions. The West, they alleged, was using a double standard. A world of clashing civilizations, however, is inevitably a world of double standards: people apply one standard to their kin-countries and a different standard to others.

Second, the kin-country syndrome also appeared in conflicts in the former Soviet Union. Armenian military successes in 1992 and 1993 stimulated Turkey to become increasingly supportive of its religious, ethnic and linguistic brethren in Azerbaijan. "We have a Turkish nation feeling the same sentiments as the Azerbaijanis," said one Turkish official in 1992. "We are under pressure. Our newspapers are full of the photos of atrocities and are asking us if we are still serious about pursuing our neutral policy. Maybe we should show Armenia that there's a big Turkey in the region." President Turgut Özal agreed, remarking that Turkey should at least "scare the Armenians a little bit." Turkey, Özal threatened again in 1993, would "show its fangs." Turkish Air Force jets flew reconnaissance flights along the Armenian border; Turkey suspended food shipments and air flights to Armenia; and Turkey and Iran announced they would not accept dismemberment of Azerbaijan. In the last years of its existence, the Soviet government supported Azerbaijan because its government was dominated by former communists. With the end of the Soviet Union, however, political considerations gave way to religious

ones. Russian troops fought on the side of the Armenians, and Azerbaijan accused the "Russian government of turning 180 degrees" toward support for Christian Armenia.

Third, with respect to the fighting in the former Yugoslavia, Western publics manifested sympathy and support for the Bosnian Muslims and the horrors they suffered at the hands of the Serbs. Relatively little concern was expressed, however, over Croatian attacks on Muslims and participation in the dismemberment of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the early stages of the Yugoslav breakup, Germany, in an unusual display of diplomatic initiative and muscle, induced the other 11 members of the European Community to follow its lead in recognizing Slovenia and Croatia. As a result of the pope's determination to provide strong backing to the two Catholic countries, the Vatican extended recognition even before the Community did. The United States followed the European lead. Thus the leading actors in Western civilization rallied behind their coreligionists. Subsequently Croatia was reported to be receiving substantial quantities of arms from Central European and other Western countries. Boris Yeltsin's government, on the other hand, attempted to pursue a middle course that would be sympathetic to the Orthodox Serbs but not alienate Russia from the West. Russian conservative and nationalist groups, however, including many legislators, attacked the government for not being more forthcoming in its support for the Serbs. By early 1993 several hundred Russians apparently were serving with the Serbian forces, and reports circulated of Russian arms being supplied to Serbia.

Islamic governments and groups, on the other hand, castigated the West for not coming to the defense of the Bosnians. Iranian leaders urged Muslims from all countries to provide help to Bosnia; in violation of the U.N. arms embargo, Iran supplied weapons and men for the Bosnians; Iranian-supported Lebanese groups sent guerrillas to train and organize the Bosnian forces. In 1993 up to 4,000 Muslims from over two dozen Islamic countries were reported to be fighting in Bosnia. The governments of Saudi Arabia and other countries felt under increasing pressure from fundamentalist groups in their own societies to provide more vigorous support for the Bosnians. By the

end of 1992, Saudi Arabia had reportedly supplied substantial funding for weapons and supplies for the Bosnians, which significantly increased their military capabilities vis-à-vis the Serbs.

In the 1930s the Spanish Civil War provoked intervention from countries that politically were fascist, communist and democratic. In the 1990s the Yugoslav conflict is provoking intervention from countries that are Muslim, Orthodox and Western Christian. The parallel has not gone unnoticed. "The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina has become the emotional equivalent of the fight against fascism in the Spanish Civil War," one Saudi editor observed. "Those who died there are regarded as martyrs who tried to save their fellow Muslims."

Conflicts and violence will also occur between states and groups within the same civilization. Such conflicts, however, are likely to be less intense and less likely to expand than conflicts between civilizations. Common membership in a civilization reduces the probability of violence in situations where it might otherwise occur. In 1991 and 1992 many people were alarmed by the possibility of violent conflict between Russia and Ukraine over territory, particularly Crimea, the Black Sea fleet, nuclear weapons and economic issues. If civilization is what counts, however, the likelihood of violence between Ukrainians and Russians should be low. They are two Slavic, primarily Orthodox peoples who have had close relationships with each other for centuries. As of early 1993, despite all the reasons for conflict, the leaders of the two countries were effectively negotiating and defusing the issues between the two countries. While there has been serious fighting between Muslims and Christians elsewhere in the former Soviet Union and much tension and some fighting between Western and Orthodox Christians in the Baltic states, there has been virtually no violence between Russians and Ukrainians.

Civilization rallying to date has been limited, but it has been growing, and it clearly has the potential to spread much further. As the conflicts in the Persian Gulf, the Caucasus and Bosnia continued, the positions of nations and the cleavages between them increasingly were along civilizational lines. Populist politicians, religious leaders and the media have found it a potent means of arousing mass support and of pressuring hesitant governments. In the coming years, the

local conflicts most likely to escalate into major wars will be those, as in Bosnia and the Caucasus, along the fault lines between civilizations. The next world war, if there is one, will be a war between civilizations.

THE WEST VERSUS THE REST

THE WEST IS NOW at an extraordinary peak of power in relation to other civilizations. Its superpower opponent has disappeared from the map. Military conflict among Western states is unthinkable, and Western military power is unrivaled. Apart from Japan, the West faces no economic challenge. It dominates international political and security institutions and with Japan international economic institutions. Global political and security issues are effectively settled by a directorate of the United States, Britain and France, world economic issues by a directorate of the United States, Germany and Japan, all of which maintain extraordinarily close relations with each other to the exclusion of lesser and largely non-Western countries. Decisions made at the U.N. Security Council or in the International Monetary Fund that reflect the interests of the West are presented to the world as reflecting the desires of the world community. The very phrase "the world community" has become the euphemistic collective noun (replacing "the Free World") to give global legitimacy to actions reflecting the interests of the United States and other Western powers.[4] Through the IMF and other international economic institutions, the West promotes its economic interests and imposes on other nations the economic policies it thinks appropriate. In any poll of non-Western peoples, the IMF undoubtedly would win the support of finance ministers and a few others, but get an overwhelmingly unfavorable rating from just about everyone else, who would agree

[4]Almost invariably Western leaders claim they are acting on behalf of "the world community." One minor lapse occurred during the run-up to the Gulf War. In an interview on "Good Morning America," Dec. 21, 1990, British Prime Minister John Major referred to the actions "the West" was taking against Saddam Hussein. He quickly corrected himself and subsequently referred to "the world community." He was, however, right when he erred.

with Georgy Arbatov's characterization of IMF officials as "neo-Bolsheviks who love expropriating other people's money, imposing undemocratic and alien rules of economic and political conduct and stifling economic freedom."

Western domination of the U.N. Security Council and its decisions, tempered only by occasional abstention by China, produced U.N. legitimation of the West's use of force to drive Iraq out of Kuwait and its elimination of Iraq's sophisticated weapons and capacity to produce such weapons. It also produced the quite unprecedented action by the United States, Britain and France in getting the Security Council to demand that Libya hand over the Pan Am 103 bombing suspects and then to impose sanctions when Libya refused. After defeating the largest Arab army, the West did not hesitate to throw its weight around in the Arab world. The West in effect is using international institutions, military power and economic resources to run the world in ways that will maintain Western predominance, protect Western interests and promote Western political and economic values.

The very phrase "world community" has become a euphemism to give legitimacy to the actions of the West.

That at least is the way in which non-Westerners see the new world, and there is a significant element of truth in their view. Differences in power and struggles for military, economic and institutional power are thus one source of conflict between the West and other civilizations. Differences in culture, that is basic values and beliefs, are a second source of conflict. V. S. Naipaul has argued that Western civilization is the "universal civilization" that "fits all men." At a superficial level much of Western culture has indeed permeated the rest of the world. At a more basic level, however, Western concepts differ fundamentally from those prevalent in other civilizations. Western ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state, often have little resonance in Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Buddhist or Orthodox cultures. Western efforts to propagate such ideas produce instead a reaction

against "human rights imperialism" and a reaffirmation of indigenous values, as can be seen in the support for religious fundamentalism by the younger generation in non-Western cultures. The very notion that there could be a "universal civilization" is a Western idea, directly at odds with the particularism of most Asian societies and their emphasis on what distinguishes one people from another. Indeed, the author of a review of 100 comparative studies of values in different societies concluded that "the values that are most important in the West are least important worldwide."[5] In the political realm, of course, these differences are most manifest in the efforts of the United States and other Western powers to induce other peoples to adopt Western ideas concerning democracy and human rights. Modern democratic government originated in the West. When it has developed in non-Western societies it has usually been the product of Western colonialism or imposition.

The central axis of world politics in the future is likely to be, in Kishore Mahbubani's phrase, the conflict between "the West and the Rest" and the responses of non-Western civilizations to Western power and values.[6] Those responses generally take one or a combination of three forms. At one extreme, non-Western states can, like Burma and North Korea, attempt to pursue a course of isolation, to insulate their societies from penetration or "corruption" by the West, and, in effect, to opt out of participation in the Western-dominated global community. The costs of this course, however, are high, and few states have pursued it exclusively. A second alternative, the equivalent of "band-wagoning" in international relations theory, is to attempt to join the West and accept its values and institutions. The third alternative is to attempt to "balance" the West by developing economic and military power and cooperating with other non-Western societies against the West, while preserving indigenous values and institutions; in short, to modernize but not to Westernize.

[5]Harry C. Triandis, *The New York Times*, Dec. 25, 1990, p. 41, and "Cross-Cultural Studies of Individualism and Collectivism," Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, vol. 37, 1989, pp. 41-133.

[6]Kishore Mahbubani, "The West and the Rest," *The National Interest*, Summer 1992, pp. 3-13.

THE TORN COUNTRIES

IN THE FUTURE, as people differentiate themselves by civilization, countries with large numbers of peoples of different civilizations, such as the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, are candidates for dismemberment. Some other countries have a fair degree of cultural homogeneity but are divided over whether their society belongs to one civilization or another. These are torn countries. Their leaders typically wish to pursue a bandwagoning strategy and to make their countries members of the West, but the history, culture and traditions of their countries are non-Western. The most obvious and prototypical torn country is Turkey. The late twentieth-century leaders of Turkey have followed in the Attatürk tradition and defined Turkey as a modern, secular, Western nation state. They allied Turkey with the West in NATO and in the Gulf War; they applied for membership in the European Community. At the same time, however, elements in Turkish society have supported an Islamic revival and have argued that Turkey is basically a Middle Eastern Muslim society. In addition, while the elite of Turkey has defined Turkey as a Western society, the elite of the West refuses to accept Turkey as such. Turkey will not become a member of the European Community, and the real reason, as President Özal said, "is that we are Muslim and they are Christian and they don't say that." Having rejected Mecca, and then being rejected by Brussels, where does Turkey look? Tashkent may be the answer. The end of the Soviet Union gives Turkey the opportunity to become the leader of a revived Turkic civilization involving seven countries from the borders of Greece to those of China. Encouraged by the West, Turkey is making strenuous efforts to carve out this new identity for itself.

During the past decade Mexico has assumed a position somewhat similar to that of Turkey. Just as Turkey abandoned its historic opposition to Europe and attempted to join Europe, Mexico has stopped defining itself by its opposition to the United States and is instead attempting to imitate the United States and to join it in the North American Free Trade Area. Mexican leaders are engaged in the great task of redefining Mexican identity and have introduced fundamen-

tal economic reforms that eventually will lead to fundamental political change. In 1991 a top adviser to President Carlos Salinas de Gortari described at length to me all the changes the Salinas government was making. When he finished, I remarked: "That's most impressive. It seems to me that basically you want to change Mexico from a Latin American country into a North American country." He looked at me with surprise and exclaimed: "Exactly! That's precisely what we are trying to do, but of course we could never say so publicly." As his remark indicates, in Mexico as in Turkey, significant elements in society resist the redefinition of their country's identity. In Turkey, European-oriented leaders have to make gestures to Islam (Özal's pilgrimage to Mecca); so also Mexico's North American-oriented leaders have to make gestures to those who hold Mexico to be a Latin American country (Salinas' Ibero-American Guadalajara summit).

Historically Turkey has been the most profoundly torn country. For the United States, Mexico is the most immediate torn country. Globally the most important torn country is Russia. The question of whether Russia is part of the West or the leader of a distinct Slavic-Orthodox civilization has been a recurring one in Russian history. That issue was obscured by the communist victory in Russia, which imported a Western ideology, adapted it to Russian conditions and then challenged the West in the name of that ideology. The dominance of communism shut off the historic debate over Westernization versus Russification. With communism discredited Russians once again face that question.

President Yeltsin is adopting Western principles and goals and seeking to make Russia a "normal" country and a part of the West. Yet both the Russian elite and the Russian public are divided on this issue. Among the more moderate dissenters, Sergei Stankevich argues that Russia should reject the "Atlanticist" course, which would lead it "to become European, to become a part of the world economy in rapid and organized fashion, to become the eighth member of the Seven, and to put particular emphasis on Germany and the United States as the two dominant members of the Atlantic alliance." While also rejecting an exclusively Eurasian policy, Stankevich nonetheless

argues that Russia should give priority to the protection of Russians in other countries, emphasize its Turkic and Muslim connections, and promote "an appreciable redistribution of our resources, our options, our ties, and our interests in favor of Asia, of the eastern direction." People of this persuasion criticize Yeltsin for subordinating Russia's interests to those of the West, for reducing Russian military strength, for failing to support traditional friends such as Serbia, and for pushing economic and political reform in ways injurious to the Russian people. Indicative of this trend is the new popularity of the ideas of Petr Savitsky, who in the 1920s argued that Russia was a unique Eurasian civilization.[7] More extreme dissidents voice much more blatantly nationalist, anti-Western and anti-Semitic views, and urge Russia to redevelop its military strength and to establish closer ties with China and Muslim countries. The people of Russia are as divided as the elite. An opinion survey in European Russia in the spring of 1992 revealed that 40 percent of the public had positive attitudes toward the West and 36 percent had negative attitudes. As it has been for much of its history, Russia in the early 1990s is truly a torn country.

To redefine its civilization identity, a torn country must meet three requirements. First, its political and economic elite has to be generally supportive of and enthusiastic about this move. Second, its public has to be willing to acquiesce in the redefinition. Third, the dominant groups in the recipient civilization have to be willing to embrace the convert. All three requirements in large part exist with respect to Mexico. The first two in large part exist with respect to Turkey. It is not clear that any of them exist with respect to Russia's joining the West. The conflict between liberal democracy and Marxism-Leninism was between ideologies which, despite their major differences, ostensibly shared ultimate goals of freedom, equality and prosperity. A traditional, authoritarian, nationalist Russia could have quite different goals. A Western democrat could carry on an intellectual debate with a Soviet Marxist. It would be virtually

[7]Sergei Stankevich, "Russia in Search of Itself," *The National Interest*, Summer 1992, pp. 47-51; Daniel Schneider, "A Russian Movement Rejects Western Tilt," *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 5, 1993, pp. 5-7.

impossible for him to do that with a Russian traditionalist. If, as the Russians stop behaving like Marxists, they reject liberal democracy and begin behaving like Russians but not like Westerners, the relations between Russia and the West could again become distant and conflictual.[8]

THE CONFUCIAN-ISLAMIC CONNECTION

THE OBSTACLES TO non-Western countries joining the West vary considerably. They are least for Latin American and East European countries. They are greater for the Orthodox countries of the former Soviet Union. They are still greater for Muslim, Confucian, Hindu and Buddhist societies. Japan has established a unique position for itself as an associate member of the West: it is in the West in some respects but clearly not of the West in important dimensions. Those countries that for reason of culture and power do not wish to, or cannot, join the West compete with the West by developing their own economic, military and political power. They do this by promoting their internal development and by cooperating with other non-Western countries. The most prominent form of this cooperation is the Confucian-Islamic connection that has emerged to challenge Western interests, values and power.

Almost without exception, Western countries are reducing their military power; under Yeltsin's leadership so also is Russia. China, North Korea and several Middle Eastern states, however, are significantly expanding their military capabilities. They are doing this by the import of arms from Western and non-Western sources and by the development of indigenous arms industries. One result is the emergence of what Charles Krauthammer has called "Weapon

[8]Owen Harries has pointed out that Australia is trying (unwisely in his view) to become a torn country in reverse. Although it has been a full member not only of the West but also of the ABCA military and intelligence core of the West, its current leaders are in effect proposing that it defect from the West, redefine itself as an Asian country and cultivate close ties with its neighbors. Australia's future, they argue, is with the dynamic economies of East Asia. But, as I have suggested, close economic cooperation normally requires a common cultural base. In addition, none of the three conditions necessary for a torn country to join another civilization is likely to exist in Australia's case.

States," and the Weapon States are not Western states. Another result is the redefinition of arms control, which is a Western concept and a Western goal. During the Cold War the primary purpose of arms control was to establish a stable military balance between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allies. In the post-Cold War world the primary objective of arms control is to prevent the development by non-Western societies of military capabilities that could threaten Western interests. The West attempts to do this through international agreements, economic pressure and controls on the transfer of arms and weapons technologies.

The conflict between the West and the Confucian-Islamic states focuses largely, although not exclusively, on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, ballistic missiles and other sophisticated means for delivering them, and the guidance, intelligence and other electronic capabilities for achieving that goal. The West promotes nonproliferation as a universal norm and nonproliferation treaties and inspections as means of realizing that norm. It also threatens a variety of sanctions against those who promote the spread of sophisticated weapons and proposes some benefits for those who do not. The attention of the West focuses, naturally, on nations that are actually or potentially hostile to the West.

A Confucian-Islamic connection has emerged to challenge Western interests, values and power.

The non-Western nations, on the other hand, assert their right to acquire and to deploy whatever weapons they think necessary for their security. They also have absorbed, to the full, the truth of the response of the Indian defense minister when asked what lesson he learned from the Gulf War: "Don't fight the United States unless you have nuclear weapons." Nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and missiles are viewed, probably erroneously, as the potential equalizer of superior Western conventional power. China, of course, already has nuclear weapons; Pakistan and India have the capability to deploy them. North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Libya and Algeria appear to be attempting to acquire them. A top Iranian official has declared that all Muslim states should acquire nuclear weapons, and in 1988 the president of

Iran reportedly issued a directive calling for development of "offensive and defensive chemical, biological and radiological weapons."

Centrally important to the development of counter-West military capabilities is the sustained expansion of China's military power and its means to create military power. Buoyed by spectacular economic development, China is rapidly increasing its military spending and vigorously moving forward with the modernization of its armed forces. It is purchasing weapons from the former Soviet states; it is developing long-range missiles; in 1992 it tested a one-megaton nuclear device. It is developing power-projection capabilities, acquiring aerial refueling technology, and trying to purchase an aircraft carrier. Its military buildup and assertion of sovereignty over the South China Sea are provoking a multilateral regional arms race in East Asia. China is also a major exporter of arms and weapons technology. It has exported materials to Libya and Iraq that could be used to manufacture nuclear weapons and nerve gas. It has helped Algeria build a reactor suitable for nuclear weapons research and production. China has sold to Iran nuclear technology that American officials believe could only be used to create weapons and apparently has shipped components of 300-mile-range missiles to Pakistan. North Korea has had a nuclear weapons program under way for some while and has sold advanced missiles and missile technology to Syria and Iran. The flow of weapons and weapons technology is generally from East Asia to the Middle East. There is, however, some movement in the reverse direction; China has received Stinger missiles from Pakistan.

A Confucian-Islamic military connection has thus come into being, designed to promote acquisition by its members of the weapons and weapons technologies needed to counter the military power of the West. It may or may not last. At present, however, it is, as Dave McCurdy has said, "a renegades' mutual support pact, run by the proliferators and their backers." A new form of arms competition is thus occurring between Islamic-Confucian states and the West. In an old-fashioned arms race, each side developed its own arms to balance or to achieve superiority against the other side. In this new form of arms competition, one side is developing its arms and the other

side is attempting not to balance but to limit and prevent that arms build-up while at the same time reducing its own military capabilities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WEST

THIS ARTICLE DOES not argue that civilization identities will replace all other identities, that nation states will disappear, that each civilization will become a single coherent political entity, that groups within a civilization will not conflict with and even fight each other. This paper does set forth the hypotheses that differences between civilizations are real and important; civilization-consciousness is increasing; conflict between civilizations will supplant ideological and other forms of conflict as the dominant global form of conflict; international relations, historically a game played out within Western civilization, will increasingly be de-Westernized and become a game in which non-Western civilizations are actors and not simply objects; successful political, security and economic international institutions are more likely to develop within civilizations than across civilizations; conflicts between groups in different civilizations will be more frequent, more sustained and more violent than conflicts between groups in the same civilization; violent conflicts between groups in different civilizations are the most likely and most dangerous source of escalation that could lead to global wars; the paramount axis of world politics will be the relations between "the West and the Rest"; the elites in some torn non-Western countries will try to make their countries part of the West, but in most cases face major obstacles to accomplishing this; a central focus of conflict for the immediate future will be between the West and several Islamic-Confucian states.

This is not to advocate the desirability of conflicts between civilizations. It is to set forth descriptive hypotheses as to what the future may be like. If these are plausible hypotheses, however, it is necessary to consider their implications for Western policy. These implications should be divided between short-term advantage and long-term accommodation. In the short term it is clearly in the interest of the West to promote greater cooperation and unity within its own civi-

lization, particularly between its European and North American components; to incorporate into the West societies in Eastern Europe and Latin America whose cultures are close to those of the West; to promote and maintain cooperative relations with Russia and Japan; to prevent escalation of local inter-civilization conflicts into major inter-civilization wars; to limit the expansion of the military strength of Confucian and Islamic states; to moderate the reduction of Western military capabilities and maintain military superiority in East and Southwest Asia; to exploit differences and conflicts among Confucian and Islamic states; to support in other civilizations groups sympathetic to Western values and interests; to strengthen international institutions that reflect and legitimate Western interests and values and to promote the involvement of non-Western states in those institutions.

In the longer term other measures would be called for. Western civilization is both Western and modern. Non-Western civilizations have attempted to become modern without becoming Western. To date only Japan has fully succeeded in this quest. Non-Western civilizations will continue to attempt to acquire the wealth, technology, skills, machines and weapons that are part of being modern. They will also attempt to reconcile this modernity with their traditional culture and values. Their economic and military strength relative to the West will increase. Hence the West will increasingly have to accommodate these non-Western modern civilizations whose power approaches that of the West but whose values and interests differ significantly from those of the West. This will require the West to maintain the economic and military power necessary to protect its interests in relation to these civilizations. It will also, however, require the West to develop a more profound understanding of the basic religious and philosophical assumptions underlying other civilizations and the ways in which people in those civilizations see their interests. It will require an effort to identify elements of commonality between Western and other civilizations. For the relevant future, there will be no universal civilization, but instead a world of different civilizations, each of which will have to learn to coexist with the others.

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FEATURE STORY | October 22, 2001

The Clash of Ignorance

by EDWARD W. SAID

Samuel Huntington's article "The Clash of Civilizations?" appeared in the Summer 1993 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, where it immediately attracted a surprising amount of attention and reaction. Because the article was intended to supply Americans with an original thesis about "a new phase" in world politics after the end of the cold war, Huntington's terms of argument seemed compellingly large, bold, even visionary. He very clearly had his eye on rivals in the policy-making ranks, theorists such as Francis Fukuyama and his "end of history" ideas, as well as the legions who had celebrated the onset of globalism, tribalism and the dissipation of the state. But they, he allowed, had understood only some aspects of this new period. He was about to announce the "crucial, indeed a central, aspect" of what "global politics is likely to be in the coming years." Unhesitatingly he pressed on:

"It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future."

Most of the argument in the pages that followed relied on a vague notion of something Huntington called "civilization identity" and "the interactions among seven or eight [*sic*] major civilizations," of which the conflict between two of them, Islam and the West, gets the lion's share of his attention. In this belligerent kind of thought, he relies heavily on a 1990 article by the veteran Orientalist Bernard Lewis, whose ideological colors are manifest in its title, "The Roots of Muslim Rage." In both articles, the personification of enormous entities called "the West" and "Islam" is recklessly affirmed, as if hugely complicated matters like identity and culture existed in a cartoonlike world where Popeye and Bluto bash each other mercilessly, with one always more virtuous pugilist getting the upper hand over his adversary. Certainly neither Huntington nor Lewis has much time to spare for the internal dynamics and plurality of every civilization, or for the fact that the major contest in most modern cultures concerns the definition or interpretation of each culture, or for the unattractive possibility that a great deal of demagogy and downright ignorance is involved in presuming to speak for a whole religion or civilization. No, the West is the West, and Islam Islam.

The challenge for Western policy-makers, says Huntington, is to make sure that the West gets stronger and fends off all the others, Islam in particular. More troubling is Huntington's assumption that his perspective, which is to survey the entire world from a perch outside all ordinary attachments and hidden loyalties, is the correct one, as if everyone else were scurrying

around looking for the answers that he has already found. In fact, Huntington is an ideologist, someone who wants to make "civilizations" and "identities" into what they are not: shut-down, sealed-off entities that have been purged of the myriad currents and countercurrents that animate human history, and that over centuries have made it possible for that history not only to contain wars of religion and imperial conquest but also to be one of exchange, cross-fertilization and sharing. This far less visible history is ignored in the rush to highlight the ludicrously compressed and constricted warfare that "the clash of civilizations" argues is the reality. When he published his book by the same title in 1996, Huntington tried to give his argument a little more subtlety and many, many more footnotes; all he did, however, was confuse himself and demonstrate what a clumsy writer and inelegant thinker he was.

The basic paradigm of West versus the rest (the cold war opposition reformulated) remained untouched, and this is what has persisted, often insidiously and implicitly, in discussion since the terrible events of September 11. The carefully planned and horrendous, pathologically motivated suicide attack and mass slaughter by a small group of deranged militants has been turned into proof of Huntington's thesis. Instead of seeing it for what it is--the capture of big ideas (I use the word loosely) by a tiny band of crazed fanatics for criminal purposes--international luminaries from former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi have pontificated about Islam's troubles, and in the latter's case have used Huntington's ideas to rant on about the West's superiority, how "we" have Mozart and Michelangelo and they don't. (Berlusconi has since made a halfhearted apology for his insult to "Islam.")

But why not instead see parallels, admittedly less spectacular in their destructiveness, for Osama bin Laden and his followers in cults like the Branch Davidians or the disciples of the Rev. Jim Jones at Guyana or the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo? Even the normally sober British weekly *The Economist*, in its issue of September 22-28, can't resist reaching for the vast generalization, praising Huntington extravagantly for his "cruel and sweeping, but nonetheless acute" observations about Islam. "Today," the journal says with unseemly solemnity, Huntington writes that "the world's billion or so Muslims are 'convinced of the superiority of their culture, and obsessed with the inferiority of their power.'" Did he canvas 100 Indonesians, 200 Moroccans, 500 Egyptians and fifty Bosnians? Even if he did, what sort of sample is that?

Uncountable are the editorials in every American and European newspaper and magazine of note adding to this vocabulary of gigantism and apocalypse, each use of which is plainly designed not to edify but to inflame the reader's indignant passion as a member of the "West," and what we need to do. Churchillian rhetoric is used inappropriately by self-appointed combatants in the West's, and especially America's, war against its haters, despoilers, destroyers, with scant attention to complex histories that defy such reductiveness and have seeped from one territory into another, in the process overriding the boundaries that are supposed to separate us all into divided armed camps.

This is the problem with unedifying labels like Islam and the West: They mislead and confuse the mind, which is trying to make sense of a disorderly reality that won't be pigeonholed or strapped down as easily as all that. I remember interrupting a man who, after a lecture I had given at a West Bank university in 1994, rose from the audience and started to attack my ideas as "Western," as opposed to the strict Islamic ones he espoused. "Why are you wearing a suit and tie?" was the first retort that came to mind. "They're Western too." He sat down with an embarrassed smile on his face, but I recalled the incident when information on the September 11 terrorists started to come in: how they had mastered all the technical details required to inflict their homicidal evil on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the aircraft they had commandeered. Where does one draw the line between "Western" technology and, as Berlusconi declared, "Islam's" inability to be a part of "modernity"?

One cannot easily do so, of course. How finally inadequate are the labels, generalizations and cultural assertions. At some level, for instance, primitive passions and sophisticated know-how converge in ways that give the lie to a fortified boundary not only between "West" and "Islam" but also between past and present, us and them, to say nothing of the very concepts of identity and

nationality about which there is unending disagreement and debate. A unilateral decision made to draw lines in the sand, to undertake crusades, to oppose their evil with our good, to extirpate terrorism and, in Paul Wolfowitz's nihilistic vocabulary, to end nations entirely, doesn't make the supposed entities any easier to see; rather, it speaks to how much simpler it is to make bellicose statements for the purpose of mobilizing collective passions than to reflect, examine, sort out what it is we are dealing with in reality, the interconnectedness of innumerable lives, "ours" as well as "theirs."

In a remarkable series of three articles published between January and March 1999 in *Dawn*, Pakistan's most respected weekly, the late Eqbal Ahmad, writing for a Muslim audience, analyzed what he called the roots of the religious right, coming down very harshly on the mutilations of Islam by absolutists and fanatical tyrants whose obsession with regulating personal behavior promotes "an Islamic order reduced to a penal code, stripped of its humanism, aesthetics, intellectual quests, and spiritual devotion." And this "entails an absolute assertion of one, generally de-contextualized, aspect of religion and a total disregard of another. The phenomenon distorts religion, debases tradition, and twists the political process wherever it unfolds." As a timely instance of this debasement, Ahmad proceeds first to present the rich, complex, pluralist meaning of the word *jihad* and then goes on to show that in the word's current confinement to indiscriminate war against presumed enemies, it is impossible "to recognize the Islamic--religion, society, culture, history or politics--as lived and experienced by Muslims through the ages." The modern Islamists, Ahmad concludes, are "concerned with power, not with the soul; with the mobilization of people for political purposes rather than with sharing and alleviating their sufferings and aspirations. Theirs is a very limited and time-bound political agenda." What has made matters worse is that similar distortions and zealotry occur in the "Jewish" and "Christian" universes of discourse.

It was Conrad, more powerfully than any of his readers at the end of the nineteenth century could have imagined, who understood that the distinctions between civilized London and "the heart of darkness" quickly collapsed in extreme situations, and that the heights of European civilization could instantaneously fall into the most barbarous practices without preparation or transition. And it was Conrad also, in *The Secret Agent* (1907), who described terrorism's affinity for abstractions like "pure science" (and by extension for "Islam" or "the West"), as well as the terrorist's ultimate moral degradation.

For there are closer ties between apparently warring civilizations than most of us would like to believe; both Freud and Nietzsche showed how the traffic across carefully maintained, even policed boundaries moves with often terrifying ease. But then such fluid ideas, full of ambiguity and skepticism about notions that we hold on to, scarcely furnish us with suitable, practical guidelines for situations such as the one we face now. Hence the altogether more reassuring battle orders (a crusade, good versus evil, freedom against fear, etc.) drawn out of Huntington's alleged opposition between Islam and the West, from which official discourse drew its vocabulary in the first days after the September 11 attacks. There's since been a noticeable de-escalation in that discourse, but to judge from the steady amount of hate speech and actions, plus reports of law enforcement efforts directed against Arabs, Muslims and Indians all over the country, the paradigm stays on.

One further reason for its persistence is the increased presence of Muslims all over Europe and the United States. Think of the populations today of France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Britain, America, even Sweden, and you must concede that Islam is no longer on the fringes of the West but at its center. But what is so threatening about that presence? Buried in the collective culture are memories of the first great Arab-Islamic conquests, which began in the seventh century and which, as the celebrated Belgian historian Henri Pirenne wrote in his landmark book *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (1939), shattered once and for all the ancient unity of the Mediterranean, destroyed the Christian-Roman synthesis and gave rise to a new civilization dominated by northern powers (Germany and Carolingian France) whose mission, he seemed to be saying, is to resume defense of the "West" against its historical-cultural enemies. What Pirenne left out, alas, is that in the creation of this new line of defense the West drew on the humanism, science, philosophy,

sociology and historiography of Islam, which had already interposed itself between Charlemagne's world and classical antiquity. Islam is inside from the start, as even Dante, great enemy of Mohammed, had to concede when he placed the Prophet at the very heart of his *Inferno*.

Then there is the persisting legacy of monotheism itself, the Abrahamic religions, as Louis Massignon aptly called them. Beginning with Judaism and Christianity, each is a successor haunted by what came before; for Muslims, Islam fulfills and ends the line of prophecy. There is still no decent history or demystification of the many-sided contest among these three followers--not one of them by any means a monolithic, unified camp--of the most jealous of all gods, even though the bloody modern convergence on Palestine furnishes a rich secular instance of what has been so tragically irreconcilable about them. Not surprisingly, then, Muslims and Christians speak readily of crusades and *jihads*, both of them eliding the Judaic presence with often sublime insouciance. Such an agenda, says Eqbal Ahmad, is "very reassuring to the men and women who are stranded in the middle of the ford, between the deep waters of tradition and modernity."

But we are all swimming in those waters, Westerners and Muslims and others alike. And since the waters are part of the ocean of history, trying to plow or divide them with barriers is futile. These are tense times, but it is better to think in terms of powerful and powerless communities, the secular politics of reason and ignorance, and universal principles of justice and injustice, than to wander off in search of vast abstractions that may give momentary satisfaction but little self-knowledge or informed analysis. "The Clash of Civilizations" thesis is a gimmick like "The War of the Worlds," better for reinforcing defensive self-pride than for critical understanding of the bewildering interdependence of our time.

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Thomas L. Friedman, The Lexus and the Olive Tree (NY: Anchor, 2000).

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The Backlash

Ray Boyd: "What's wrong, Mommy?"
Dorothy Boyd: "First class, that's what's wrong. It used to be a better meal. Now it's a better life."

—*from the movie* Jerry Maguire

The annual Davos World Economic Forum is as good a barometer of global affairs as you can find. Every February the world's great globalizers gather together in the Swiss mountain retreat to celebrate and debate globalization. The meeting is attended by top industrialists, political figures, economists, technologists, scientists and social scientists from every corner of the world. Each year, one or two individuals stand out as the trendsetters. One year it was China's economic czar Zhu Rongi; one year it was Yasser Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres; another year it was the Russian reformers; another year the battered Asian economic leaders. In 1995 the star of the Davos World Economic Forum was George Soros, the billionaire financier. I know because I was invited to attend a press conference, at which representatives of all the world's major media organizations gathered around a conference table and interviewed Soros as if he were the president of a superpower. And he seemed to think he was. Reporters from Reuters, Bloomberg, AP–Dow Jones, *The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Times* of London and the *Financial Times* grilled Soros on his views about Mexico, Russia, Japan and global economic trends, and then ran out of the room to file his remarks by telephone. His opinions were carried on the front pages of the *International Herald Tribune* and many other newspapers the next day.

Watching this scene, I felt that I was witnessing an important transition. Soros personified the Electronic Herd. He was a lead bull. Maybe *the* lead bull. And this was just around the time when many people were

beginning to realize that this Electronic Herd was replacing the Soviet Union as the other superpower in our two-superpower world. Only a few years earlier Soros had administered a stunning economics lesson to British Prime Minister John Major. Major thought the British pound was properly valued. Soros did not, and in September 1992 Soros led the herd in a campaign to force the British pound down to its "right" level. Major scoffed at Soros, then sneered at him, then resisted him, then raised a white flag and devalued the pound by 12 percent. Soros walked away with a profit of $1 billion from a couple of months' work. Goodbye, Soviet Union. Hello, Electronic Herd.

Interestingly enough, a year after first seeing Soros hold court with his own news conference in Davos, I went back to Davos, eager to see who would be the star in 1996. I was standing at a computer terminal in the main hall retrieving my E-mail messages when I noticed George Soros walk by. But what struck me was that this year no one was paying any attention to him at all. In fact, he seemed to be all alone. What a difference a year makes. I don't think he could have hired a news conference that year. Why? Who was the star of Davos 1996? None other than Gennadi A. Zyuganov, the head of the Russian Communist Party!

The Davos Forum is the ultimate capitalist convention. How could this dinosaur from the Jurassic era of the Cold War—Gennadi Zyuganov—have been the man of the hour? Because the business and political elites gathered in Davos that year were understanding, many for the first time, that this powerful phenomenon called globalization was also producing an equally powerful backlash in some circles. At that time it looked like Zyuganov was actually going to defeat Boris Yeltsin for the Russian presidency, and therefore the backlash forces were actually going to take power in a major country. So all the executives at Davos wanted to talk to Zyuganov—the "beast of the backlash"—and find out what he was going to do with private property, the Russian budget and ruble-dollar convertibility. I interviewed Zyuganov at the time, and it was clear to me that *he didn't have a clue* what he was going to do. He seemed to be spending most of his time hiding from the Western business elites. Like other ideological backlashers against globalization, Zyuganov had more attitude than workable programs, more ideas about how to distribute income than about how to generate it.

Since then, though, the backlash against globalization has become

more apparent and widespread. Let there be no doubt, globalization has fostered a flowering of both wealth and technological innovation the likes of which the world has never before seen. But this sort of rapid change, as the previous chapters indicate, has challenged traditional business practices, social structures, cultural mores and environments and, as a result, has generated a substantial backlash—with one of its loudest and most visible manifestations coming at the World Trade Organization summit in Seattle in late 1999. This is not surprising. Markets generate both capital and chaos; the more powerful markets become as a result of globalization, the more widespread and diverse their disruptions.

Beyond this general sense of disruption and dislocation, the opponents of globalization resent it because they feel that as their countries have plugged into the globalization system, they have been forced into a Golden Straitjacket that is one-size-fits-all. Some don't like the straitjacket because they feel economically pinched by it. Some worry that they don't have the knowledge, skills or resources to enlarge the straitjacket and ever really get the gold out of it. Some don't like it because they resent the widening income gaps that the straitjacket produces or the way it squeezes jobs from higher-wage countries to lower-wage ones. Some don't like it because it opens them to all sorts of global cultural forces and influences that leave their kids feeling alienated from their own traditional olive trees. Some don't like it because it seems to put a higher priority on laws to promote free trade than it does on laws to protect turtles and dolphins, water and trees. Some don't like it because they feel they have no say in its design. And some don't like it because they feel that getting their countries up to the standards of DOScapital 6.0 is just too hard.

In other words, the backlash against globalization is a broad phenomenon that is fed by many different specific emotions and anxieties. This backlash expresses itself in different forms, through different characters in different countries. This chapter is about those different emotions, forms and characters, and how they have come together to create a whirlwind that—for the moment—is only buffeting the globalization system but one day might become strong enough to destabilize it if we don't take the serious backlashers seriously.

As I mentioned earlier, in the summer of 1998 I took a tour of Brazil with Conservation International, which had built an ecopark in the Atlantic Rain Forest in cooperation with people from the nearby town of Una, in an effort to help them create a tourist industry that might be able to spawn enough jobs for them to quit logging. Conservation International invited Dejair Birschner, the forty-eight-year-old mayor of Una, to show me around and to explain how all this was affecting his town. The mayor was a Paul Bunyan type, whose father and grandfather had been loggers, but now the environmentalists had basically put him out of business. As we walked through the rain forest, Mayor Birschner patted every other tree. He knew each tree species in the rain forest by its Brazilian name. I took an immediate liking to this Brazilian lumberjack. There was something very solid about him. After our walk, we sat on a picnic table on the edge of the Atlantic Rain Forest and talked about the challenges facing the mayor. The mayor explained to me that intellectually he understood that logging was not sustainable anymore. But as much as he knew this, he also knew that his little town was not prepared for life without logging. We talked for about thirty minutes, and when I was done interviewing the mayor, I thanked him and started to pack up my IBM ThinkPad laptop, when he said to me, "Now I want to ask you something."

"Please," I answered, "ask anything you like."

The mayor then looked me in the eye and said, "Do we have any future?"

His question hit me like a fist in the stomach. It almost brought tears to my eyes, looking across the table at this proud, sturdy man, a mayor no less, asking me if he and his villagers had any future. I knew exactly what he was asking in his question: "My villagers can't live off the forest anymore and we're not equipped to live off computers. My father and grandfather made a living off logs and my grandchildren might make a living off the Internet. But what are all the rest of us in between supposed to do?"

I cobbled together an answer, trying to explain in simple terms that he and his people did have a future, but they needed to start making a transition from an agro-economy to a more knowledge-based economy, beginning by better educating the town's children. The mayor listened, nodded his head, thanked me very politely and then got up to go to his car. As he was leaving, I pulled the interpreter aside and asked him if he could ask

the mayor, when they got to the mayor's car, what he thought of my answer.

A few minutes later, the interpreter returned. He reported back that the mayor just wanted to remind me of something he had alluded to in our interview: When he gets to the office every morning he has two hundred people waiting for him, asking for jobs, housing and food—not to mention out-of-work loggers threatening his life. If he can't provide them with jobs, housing and food, they will eat the rain forest—whether that's sustainable or not.

"He just wanted you to understand that," the interpreter said.

Mayor Birschner represents a whole generation of people around the world today who feel threatened by globalization because they fear that they just don't have the skill sets or the energy to make it into the Fast World. I call them them "the turtles." Why? Because high-tech entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley always like to compare their supercompetitive business to the story about the lion and the gazelle in the jungle. Every night the lion goes to sleep in the jungle knowing that in the morning, when the sun comes up, if it can't outrun the slowest gazelle, it will go hungry. Every night the gazelle goes to sleep in the jungle knowing that in the morning, when the sun comes up, if it can't outrun the fastest lion, it's going to be somebody's breakfast. But the one thing that the lion and the gazelle both know when they go to sleep is that in the morning, when the sun comes up, they had better start running.

And so it is with globalization.

Unfortunately, not everyone is equipped to run fast. There are a lot of turtles out there, desperately trying to avoid becoming roadkill. The turtles are all those people who got sucked into the Fast World when the walls came down, and for one reason or another now feel economically threatened or spurned by it. It is not because they all don't have jobs. It is because the jobs they have are being rapidly transformed, downsized, streamlined or made obsolete by globalization. And because this global competition is also forcing their governments to downsize and streamline at the same time, it means many of these turtles have no safety net to fall into.

In the Broadway musical *Ragtime,* there is a scene in which Henry Ford explains the genius of his assembly line. I always remember the

verses because they capture so well the world that was once safe for turtles—but is no more. The Broadway version of Henry Ford sings:

> See my people? Well, here's my theory
> Of what this country is moving toward:
> Every worker a cog in motion.
> Well, that's the notion of Henry Ford.
> One man tightens and one man ratchets
> And one man reaches to pull one cord.
> Car keeps movin' in one direction.
> A genuflection to Henry Ford!
> (Speed up the belt, speed up the belt, Sam!)
> Mass production will sweep the nation,
> A simple notion the world's reward.
> Even people who ain't too clever
> Can learn to tighten a nut forever,
> Attach one pedal or pull one lever . . .

Today, alas, people who ain't too clever can't learn to make microchips forever. Good jobs require many skills. I once did a story about how the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), which usually works to provide job training and economic assistance to developing countries in Africa, was trying to use some of its techniques to help revitalize the inner-city slums of Baltimore. Or as the headline in the *Baltimore Sun* put it: "Baltimore To Try Third-World Remedies." One reason Baltimore had summoned AID was that its own turtles simply couldn't make it in the Fast World. One city official explained the problem succinctly: In the 1960s, she said, the biggest employer in Baltimore was Bethlehem Steel Corp. You could get a job at the steel plant with a high school education or less, make a decent living, buy a house, raise your kids and send them to college. It meant the American dream was open to turtles from even the most disadvantaged neighborhoods. Today the biggest employer in Baltimore is Johns Hopkins Medical Center. Unless you want to be a janitor, you can't even get a job interview at Johns Hopkins without a college degree. Turtles need not apply. And you certainly can't apply for a job there if you are one of the 150,000 Baltimore residents—out of 730,000—who are functionally illiterate. (Baltimore officials kept wondering why the urban poor were not taking fuller advantage of the well-funded social programs in the city, when they discovered that most of them couldn't read the signs. This was one reason they summoned AID: it had developed a whole series of cartoon characters and other visual devices to bypass illiteracy in Africa. "You want to know what the real irony is?" Dr. Peter Beilenson, Baltimore's Commissioner of Health, said to me when I came to interview him. "The company that develops these communications programs for AID is from Baltimore. Its office is about three blocks from here.")

As globalization progresses, replacing many manual repetitive jobs with machines and requiring more skills to do the jobs that are left, the number of good jobs available to turtles becomes fewer and fewer. A *Washington Post* story from June 1998, about the General Motors strike in Flint, Michigan, told the reader everything about the plight of turtles today. It read: "In the past 20 years, GM has cut employment in Flint to 35,000 workers from 76,000, and it says 11,000 more jobs could be eliminated over the next few years . . . Among its total U.S. workforce, GM has trimmed 297,000 hourly jobs over the past 20 years, cutting the overall number of jobs to 223,000 . . . Some of the jobs were moved to Canada and Mexico, where plants were either more efficient or less costly, *but the bulk of the people were simply replaced by machines* [italics mine]."

The same article quoted George Peterson, president of AutoPacific Inc., a California-based auto industry research and consulting firm, who said that in non-UAW plants in the United States—such as the Marysville, Ohio, factory of Honda Motor Co.'s U.S. subsidiary—workers have multiple skills and are capable of performing multiple tasks. This kind of versatility, he said, helps Honda cut production costs. "It's still possible to have a full-time job in this industry, *if you are willing to do more than one job* [my italics]," Peterson said, referring to the UAW's concerns over job security.

So not only do you need more skills than ever if you want to get a job in manufacturing today, but you need multiple skills to keep your job from going to a robot. This makes it very hard on the turtles.

Analysts have been wondering for a while now whether the turtles who are left behind by globalization, or most brutalized or offended by it, will develop an alternative ideology to liberal, free-market capitalism. As noted earlier, in the first era of globalization, when the world first experienced the creative destruction of global capitalism, the backlash eventually produced a whole new set of ideologies—communism, socialism, fascism—that promised to take the sting out of capitalism, particularly for the average working person. Now that these ideologies have been discredited, I doubt we will see a new coherent, universal ideological reaction to globalization—because I don't believe there is an ideology or program that can remove all of the brutality and destructiveness of capitalism and still produce steadily rising standards of living.

Another reason the backlash against globalization is unlikely to develop a coherent alternative ideology is because the backlash itself involves so many disparate groups—as evidenced by the coalition of protectionist labor unions, environmentalists, anti-sweatshop protestors, save-the-turtles activists, save-the-dolphins activists, anti–genetically altered food activists and even a group called "Alien Hand Signals," who came together in December 1999 to protest globalization at the Seattle WTO summit. These disparate groups are bound by a common sense that a world so dominated by global corporations, and their concerns, can't help but be a profoundly unfair world, and one that is as hostile to the real interests of human beings as it is to turtles. But when it comes to actually identifying what the real interests of human beings are and how they should be protected, these groups are as different as their costumes. The auto workers, steelworkers and longshoremen, who were in Seattle to demand more protectionism, doubtlessly couldn't care much whether America allows imports of tuna caught in nets that also snare turtles. Indeed, I wouldn't want to be the turtle that gets in the way of one of those longshoremen offloading a boat in Seattle harbor. This makes the power of the backlash hard to predict, because while all the groups can agree that globalization is hurtful to them, they have no shared agenda, ideology or strategy for making it less so for all.

That's why I suspect that the human turtles, and many of those who simply hate the changes that globalization visits on cultures, environment or communities, are not going to bother with an alternative ideology. Their backlash will take a variety of different spasmodic forms. The

steelworkers will lobby Washington to put up walls against foreign steel. Others, such as the radical environmentalists who want to save the rain forest, will simply lash out at globalization and all its manifestations, without offering a sustainable economic alternative. Their only message will be: STOP.

As for the poorest human turtles in the developing world, those really left behind by globalization, they will express their backlash by simply eating the rain forest—each in their own way—without trying to explain it or justify it or wrap it in an ideological bow. In Indonesia, they will eat the Chinese merchants by ransacking their stores. In Russia, they will sell weapons to Iran or turn to crime. In Brazil, they will log the rest of the rain forest or join the peasant movement in the Brazilian countryside called "Sem Teto" (Without Roofs), who simply steal what they need. There are an estimated 3.5 million of them in Brazil—agricultural people without land, living in some 250 encampments around the country. Sometimes they live by the roads and just close the roads until they are paid or evicted, sometimes they invade supermarkets, rob banks or steal trucks. They have no flag, no manifesto. They have only their own unmet needs and aspirations. That's why what we have been seeing in many countries, instead of popular mass opposition to globalization, is wave after wave of crime—people just grabbing what they need, weaving their own social safety nets and not worrying about the theory or ideology.

But while this backlash may be a bit incoherent and only loosely connected, it is very real. It comes from the depth of people's souls and pocketbooks and therefore, if it achieves a critical mass, can influence politics in any country. Societies ignore it at their own peril.

In almost every country that has put on the Golden Straitjacket you have at least one populist party or major candidate who is campaigning all the time now against globalization. They offer various protectionist, populist solutions that they claim will produce the same standards of living, without having to either run so fast, trade so far or open the borders so wide. They all claim that by just putting up a few new walls here and there everything will be fine. They appeal to all the people who prefer their pasts to their future. In Russia, for instance, the communist members of the Duma continue to lead a backlash against globalization by telling the working classes and pensioners that in the days of the Soviet Union they may have had lousy jobs and been forced to wait in bread-

lines, but they always knew there would be a job and always knew there would be some bread they could afford at the head of the line. The strength of these populist, antiglobalization candidates depends to a large degree on the weakness of the economy in the country that they are in. Usually, the weaker the economy, the wider the following these simplistic solutions will attract.

But these antiglobalization populists don't only thrive in bad times. In 1998, a majority of the U.S. Congress refused to give the President authority to expand NAFTA to Chile—little Chile—on the argument that this would lead to a loss of American jobs. This wrongheaded view carried the day at a time when the American stock market was at a record high, American unemployment was at a record low and virtually every study showed that NAFTA had been a win-win-win arrangement for the United States, Canada and Mexico. Think of how stupid this was: The U.S. Congress appropriated $18 billion to replenish the International Monetary Fund, so that it could do more bailouts of countries struggling with globalization, but the Congress would not accept expansion of the NAFTA free trade zone to Chile. What is the logic of that? It could only be: "We support aid, not trade."

It makes no sense, but the reason these arguments can resonate in good times as well as bad is that moments of rapid change like this breed enormous insecurity as well as enormous prosperity. They can breed in people a powerful sense that their lives are now controlled by forces they cannot see or touch. The globalization system is still too new for too many people, and involves too much change for too many people, for them to have confidence that even the good job they have will always be there. And this creates a lot of room for backlash demagogues with simplistic solutions. It also creates a powerful feeling in some people that we need to slow this world down, put back some walls or some sand in the gears—not so I can get off, but so I can stay on.

And don't kid yourself, the backlash is not just an outburst from the most downtrodden. Like all revolutions, globalization involves a shift in power from one group to another. In most countries it involves a power shift from the state and its bureaucrats to the private sector and entrepreneurs. As this happens, all those who derived their status from

positions in the bureaucracy, or from their ties to it, or from their place in a highly regulated and protected economic system, can become losers—if they can't make the transition to the Fast World. This includes industrialists and cronies who were anointed with import or export monopolies by their government, business owners who were protected by the government through high import tariffs on the products they made, big labor unions who got used to each year winning fewer work hours with more pay in constantly protected markets, workers in state-owned factories who got paid whether the factory made a profit or not, the unemployed in welfare states who enjoyed relatively generous benefits and health care no matter what, and all those who depended on the largesse of the state to protect them from the global market and free them from its most demanding aspects.

This explains why, in some countries, the strongest backlash against globalization comes not just from the poorest segments of the population and the turtles, but rather from the "used-to-bes" in the middle and lower-middle classes, who found a great deal of security in the protected communist, socialist and welfare systems. As they have seen the walls of protection around them coming down, as they have seen the rigged games in which they flourished folded up and the safety nets under them shrink, many have become mighty unhappy. And unlike the turtles, these downwardly mobile groups have the political clout to organize against globalization. The AFL-CIO labor union federation has become probably the most powerful political force against globalization in the United States. Labor unions covertly funded a lot of the advertising on behalf of the demonstrations in Seattle to encourage grass-roots opposition to free trade.

One of my first tastes of this middle-class backlash against globalization came by accident when I was in Beijing talking to Wang Jisi, who heads the North America desk at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. We drifted from talking about America to talking about his own life in a China that was rapidly moving toward the free market, which many Chinese both welcome and fear. "The market mechanism is coming to China, but the question is how to impose it," said Wang. "I depend on my work unit for my housing. If all the housing goes to a free-market system, I might lose my housing. I am not a conservative, but when it comes to practical issues like this, people can become conservatives if they are just thrown onto the market after being accustomed to being

taken care of. My driver complained to me the other day that when he was younger he contributed all his energy and everything he had to Maoism and to 'Socialist Construction.' But now he is forty-five or fifty and suddenly he is asked to go into the market. 'Is it fair,' he is asking of the government, 'that I devoted myself to whatever you asked of me for decades and now suddenly you forget me, you push me into the market when I get older? It is not fair. I have done nothing wrong. I have always followed your instructions, dear government, but now your instructions are to forget about the government.' [This driver] enjoys working here with us. He does not want to become a taxi driver and lose all his benefits. He does not want to go into the market."

You don't have to have been a communist worker bee to feel this way. Peter Schwartz, chairman of the Global Business Network, a consulting firm, once told me about a conversation he had before being interviewed in London for an economics program on the BBC: "The British reporter for the show, while escorting me to the interview, was asking me about some of my core ideas. I alluded to the idea that Britain was a good example of the takeoff of the entrepreneurial economy—particularly compared to the rest of Europe—and that the best indicator of the difference was the difference in unemployment in the U.K. and continental Europe. At that point he said to me: 'Isn't that terrible? Unemployment benefits are now so low in Britain it isn't worth staying on the dole anymore and people have to go to work.' "

Schwartz then added: "There are people who see this transformation [to globalization] as a big loss, not a gain. They are losing not just a benefit but something they perceived as a right—the notion that modern industrial societies are so wealthy that it is the right of people to receive generous unemployment insurance."

If you want to see this war between the protected and the globalizers at its sharpest today, go to the Arab world. In 1996, Egypt was scheduled to host the Middle East Economic Summit, which was to bring together Western, Asian, Arab and Israeli business executives. The Egyptian bureaucracy fought bitterly against holding the summit. In part, this was politically inspired by those in Egypt who did not feel Israel had done enough vis-à-vis the Palestinians to really merit normalization. But in part it was because the Egyptian bureaucrats, who had dominated the Egyptian economy ever since Nasser nationalized all the big commercial

institutions in the 1960s, intuitively understood that this summit could be the first step in their losing power to the private sector, which was already being given the chance to purchase various state-owned enterprises and could eventually get its hands on the state-controlled media. The Islamic opposition newspaper *al-Shaab* denounced the economic summit as "the Conference of Shame." For the first time, though, the Egyptian private sector got itself organized into power lobbies—the American-Egypt Chamber of Commerce, the President's Council of Egyptian business leaders and the Egypt Businessmen's Association—and tugged President Mubarak the other way, saying that hosting a summit with hundreds of investors from around the world was essential to produce jobs for an Egyptian workforce growing by 400,000 new entrants each year. President Mubarak went back and forth, finally siding with the private sector and agreeing to host the summit, and bluntly declaring in his opening speech: "This year Egypt joined the global economy. It will live by its rules." But the Egyptian bureaucracy, which does not want to cede any power to the private sector, is still fighting that move, and every time there is a downturn in the global economy, such as the Asian collapse in 1998, the Egyptian bureaucrats go to Mubarak and say, "See, we told you so. We need to slow down, put up some new walls, otherwise what happened to Brazil will happen to us."

For a long time, I thought that this Egyptian reluctance to really plug into the globalization system was rooted simply in the ignorance of bureaucrats, and a total lack of vision from the top. But then I had an eye-opening experience. I did an author's tour of Egypt in early 2000, meeting with students at Cairo University, journalists at Egyptian newspapers and business leaders in Cairo and Alexandria to talk about the Arabic edition of this book.

Two images stood out from this trip. The first was riding the train from Cairo to Alexandria in a car full of middle- and upper-class Egyptians. So many of them had cell phones that kept ringing with different piercing melodies during the two-hour trip that at one point I felt like getting up, taking out a baton and conducting a cell-phone symphony. I was so rattled from ringing phones, I couldn't wait to get off the train. Yet, while all these phones were chirping inside the train, outside we were passing along the Nile, where barefoot Egyptian villagers were tilling their fields with the same tools and water buffalo that their ancestors used

in Pharaoh's day. I couldn't imagine a wider technology gap within one country. Inside the train it was A.D. 2000, outside it was 2000 B.C.

The other image was visiting Yousef Boutrous-Ghali, Egypt's M.I.T.-trained minister of economy. When I arrived at his building the elevator operator, an Egyptian peasant, was waiting for me at the elevator, which he operated with a key. Before he turned it on, though, to take me up to the minister's office, he whispered the Koranic verse "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." To a Westerner, it is unnerving to hear your elevator operator utter a prayer before he closes the door, but for him this was a cultural habit, rooted deep in his tradition. Again, the contrast: Mr. Boutrous-Ghali is the most creative, high-tech driver of globalization in Egypt, but his elevator man says a prayer before taking you up to his office.

These scenes captured for me the real tension at the heart of Egypt: while its small, cell-phone-armed, globalizing elites were definitely pushing to get online and onto the global economic train, most others feared they would be left behind or lose their identity trying to catch it. Indeed I was struck, after a week of discussing both the costs and benefits of globalization, how most Egyptians, including many intellectuals, could see only the costs. The more I explained globalization, the more they expressed unease about it. It eventually struck me that I was encountering what anthropologists call "systematic misunderstanding." Systematic misunderstanding arises when your framework and the other person's framework are so fundamentally different that it cannot be corrected by providing more information.

The Egyptians' unease about globalization is rooted partly in a justifiable fear that they still lack the technological base to compete. But it's also rooted in something cultural—and not just the professor at Cairo University asked me: "Does globalization mean we all have to become Americans?" The unease goes deeper, and you won't understand the backlash against globalization in traditional societies unless you understand it. Many Americans can easily identify with modernization, technology and the Internet because one of the most important things these do is increase individual choices. At their best, they empower and emancipate the individual. But for traditional societies, such as Egypt's, the collective, the group, is much more important than the individual, and empowering the individual is equated with dividing the society. So

"globalizing" for them not only means being forced to eat more Big Macs, it means changing the relationship of the individual to his state and community in a way that they feel is socially disintegrating.

"Does globalization mean we just leave the poor to fend for themselves?" one educated Egyptian woman asked me. "How do we privatize when we have no safety nets?" asked a professor. When the government here says it is "privatizing" an industry, the instinctive reaction of Egyptians is that something is being "stolen" from the state, said a senior Egyptian official.

After enough such conversations I realized that most Egyptians—understandably—were approaching globalization out of a combination of despair and necessity, not out of any sense of opportunity. Globalization meant adapting to a threat coming from the outside, not increasing their own freedoms. I also realized that their previous ideologies—Arab nationalism, socialism, fascism or communism—while they may have made no economic sense, had a certain inspirational power. But globalism totally lacks this. When you tell a traditional society it has to streamline, downsize and get with the Internet, it is a challenge that is devoid of any redemptive or inspirational force. And that is why, for all of globalization's obvious power to elevate living standards, it is going to be a tough, tough sell to all those millions who still say a prayer before they ride the elevator.

This tug-of-war is now going on all over the Arab world today, from Morocco to Kuwait. As one senior Arab finance official described this globalization struggle in his country: "Sometimes I feel like I am part of the Freemasons or some secret society, because I am looking at the world so differently from many of the people around me. There is a huge chasm between the language and vocabulary I have and them. It is not that I have failed to convince them. I often can't even communicate with them, they are so far away from this global outlook. So for me, when I am pushing a policy issue related to globalization, the question always becomes how many people can I rally to this new concept and can I create a critical mass to effect a transition? If you can get enough of your people in the right places, you can push the system along. But it's hard. On so many days I feel like I have people coming to me and saying, 'We really need to repaint the room.' And I'm saying, 'No, we really need to rebuild the whole building on a new foundation.' So their whole dialogue

with you is about what color paint to use, and all you can see in your head is the whole new architecture that needs to be done and the new foundations that need to be laid. We can worry about the color of paint later! Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, they now have that critical mass of people and officials who can see this world. But most developing countries are not there yet, which is why their transition is still so uncertain."

In Morocco, the government is privatizing simply by selling many state-owned enterprises to the same small economic clique tied to the royal palace that once dominated the state monopolies. This is why 3 percent of Morocco's population controls 85 percent of the country's wealth. Morocco's universities, which uniquely combine the worst of the socialist and French education systems, each year turn out so many graduates who cannot find jobs, and have no entrepreneurial or technical skills suited for today's information economy, that Morocco now has a "Union of Unemployed University Graduates."

As more countries have plugged into the globalization system and the Fast World, still another new backlash group has started to form—the wounded gazelles. This group comprises people who feel they have tried globalization, who have gotten hammered by the system, and who, instead of getting up, dusting themselves off and doing whatever it takes to get back into the Fast World are now trying artificially to shut it out or get the rules of the whole system changed. The poster boy for this group is Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir. Hell hath no wrath like a globalizer burned. On October 25, 1997, in the midst of the Asian economic meltdown, Mahathir told the Edinburgh Commonwealth Summit that the global economy—which had poured billions of dollars of investments into Malaysia, without which its spectacular growth would never have been possible—had become "anarchic."

"This is an unfair world," Mahathir fumed. "Many of us have struggled hard and even shed blood in order to be independent. When borders are down and the world becomes a single entity, independence can become meaningless."

Not surprisingly, in 1998 Mahathir was the first Asian globalizer to impose capital controls in an effort to halt the wild speculative swings in his own currency and stock market. When Singapore's Minister for

Information, George Yeo, described Mahathir's move at the time, he said, "Malaysia has retreated to a lagoon and is trying to anchor its boats, but the strategy is not without risk."

Indeed it is not. If you think you can retreat permanently into an artificially constructed third space, and enjoy all the rising living standards of the Fast World without any of the pressures, you are really fooling yourself and your people. Nevertheless, Mahathir's retreat, which proved to be only temporary, was received with a certain amount of sympathy in the developing world—although it was not copied by anyone. As we enter this second decade of globalization, there is an increasing awareness among those countries that have resisted the Golden Straitjacket and the Fast World that they cannot go on resisting. And they know that a strategy of retreat will not produce growth over the long run. For several years I would meet Emad El-Din Adeeb, editor of the Egyptian journal *Al Alam Al Youm*, at different World Bank meetings and other settings, and for several years he would express to me strong reservations about Egypt joining this globalization system. When I saw him in 1999, at the Davos Forum, he said to me, "O.K., I understand we need to get prepared for this globalization and that is partly our responsibility. There is a train that is leaving and we should have known this and done our homework. But now you should slow the train down a bit and give us a chance to jump on."

I didn't have the heart to tell him that I had just come from a press lunch with Bill Gates. All the reporters there kept asking him, "Mr. Gates, these Internet stocks, they're a bubble, right? Surely, they're a bubble. They must be a bubble?" Finally, an exasperated Gates said to the reporters: Look, of course they're a bubble, but you're all missing the point. This bubble is going to attract so much new capital to this Internet industry that it is going to drive innovation "faster and faster." So there I was: in the morning listening to Bill Gates telling me that the Fast World was about to get even faster and in the afternoon listening to Adeeb tell me he wanted to hop on but could someone just slow it down a bit.

I wish we could slow this globalization train down, I told Adeeb, but there's no one at the controls.

I was once having coffee at the Internet cafe in Amman, Jordan, which is called Books@Cafe and is just down the street from the incredibly

well-preserved ruins of one of the great Roman amphitheaters in the Middle East. I visited there in September 1997, and the owner, Madian al-Jazerah, stopped by my table to introduce himself. He insisted that I have a piece of banana cream pie on the house. Why banana cream pie? I asked. Well, he explained, it was made by the wife of the Israeli deputy ambassador in Amman.

"Let me get this straight," I said, "the banana cream pie at the Internet cafe in Amman is made by the wife of the Israeli deputy ambassador! That's great. I love it."

Well, it wasn't so great for everyone, he explained. When the Islamic fundamentalists in Amman found out that the banana cream pie at the Internet cafe in Amman was made by the wife of an Israeli diplomat, they called for a boycott of the Internet cafe until it removed the pie from the menu. "And they called for the boycott on the local Internet," the owner said. (Obviously, the boycott failed and the pie is still on the menu!)

The anti-Israeli-made banana cream pie fundamentalists represent still another backlash against globalization. It is the backlash of all those millions of people who detest the way globalization homogenizes people, puts Israeli-made banana cream pie in the face of a Jordanian Muslim, brings strangers into your home with strange ways, erases the distinctiveness of cultures and mercilessly uproots the olive trees that locate and anchor you in the world. Many people obviously are ready either to abandon a lot of their local culture in favor of an Americanized-globalized consumer culture or to juggle the two together in their lives, clothes, eating habits and outlook. And people's capacity for juggling these sorts of things should never be underestimated. If people weren't such good jugglers, McDonald's and Disney would not enjoy such worldwide popularity. But some people are not into juggling. In fact, they are ready to go to war to protect their local culture from the global. Their war cry is: "I don't want to be global. I want to be local." For globalizers, hierarchy is about those who are most connected. For fundamentalists, hierarchy is about those who are most disconnected—from anything but their one source of truth.

Where this cultural backlash becomes the most politically destabilizing is when it gets married to one of the other backlashes—when groups that are economically aggrieved by globalization merge with those who

are culturally aggrieved. This phenomenon is most apparent in the Middle East, where fundamentalists of many stripes have become highly adept at weaving the cultural, political and economic backlashes against globalization into one flag and one broad political movement that seeks to take power and pull down a veil against the world. The first flag of the Algerian opposition was an empty sack used to hold couscous, the popular North African grain, which symbolized the frustration of Algerian workers, and particularly young people, at not having any work. Slowly, though, those carrying that empty couscous sack made common cause with Islamic fundamentalists opposed to the Westernizing, secularizing ways of the Algerian regime, and together they produced a powerful backlash, under the green Islamic fundamentalist flag, against those in Algeria who wanted to link the country to the globalization system.

Benjamin Netanyahu's election to Prime Minister of Israel in 1996 was partly a political backlash against the problems of the Oslo peace accords, but it was also a cultural backlash against the globalization and integration implicit in Israel's peacemaking with the Arabs. Israeli religious scholar Moshe Halbertal once remarked to me that Shimon Peres's vision that his grandchildren and Yasser Arafat's grandchildren "would all make microchips together" was something fundamentally threatening to many religious Jews in Israel. They feared that if the ghetto walls fell around Israel and Israel assimilated into the Middle East—the same way American Jews assimilated into America—it would not be good for Judaism. They worried at some level that "Peace Now" and "Jewish Now" could not really coexist—particularly when peace seemed to mean more globalization, more integration, more Blockbuster Video, more smut-ridden cable stations and Pizza Huts. Hence the signs that appeared in ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods on the eve of Netanyahu's 1996 election: "Vote for Bibi. He's good for the Jews." In Israel too, though, the cultural backlash against globalization has merged with the economic and political one. In the wake of the peace agreement with Jordan, Israeli textile manufacturers began doing the logical thing, which was moving their low-skilled textile jobs from Israeli development towns, such as Kiryat Gat, across the river to Jordan, where wages are a fraction of what they are in Israel. Suddenly, Israeli textile workers, who are not ready for the Intel factory that is also being built in Israel, find their jobs going to Jordan—a place where their jobs could never have moved without peace

and globalization. The workers in Kiryat Gat worry that "Peace Now" and "Jobs Now" won't go together, and, since many of them are Oriental Jews, they react by throwing their political support to Shas, the ultra-Orthodox Sephardi party, which is opposed to globalization on religious-cultural grounds and is mostly interested in "Messiah Now." So Messiah Now, Jewish Now and Jobs Now all get merged together into one protest movement that is hostile to globalization.

To be sure, there is nothing wrong with trying to anchor your society on a foundation of religious and traditional values. These are important olive trees that anchor a society. Not everyone advocating such values is somehow engaged in violent fundamentalism. But when this fundamentalism is driven not by real spirituality but by a backlash against globalization it often lapses into sectarianism, violence and exclusivity. And the more noninclusive you become, the less networked you are, the more you will fall behind, and the more you fall behind, the more you will want to retreat and reject the outside world with more exclusivity.

But you don't have to be a Muslim or Jewish fundamentalist to want to join the backlash against globalization because of how it can make you feel like a stranger in your own backyard. This is a universal phenomenon. I was touring Asia when the Australians held their 1996 national election and was struck by how much of their campaign revolved around biscuits and bathing suits. Yes, the issue in Australia was this: John Howard, who was then head of Australia's Conservative Party, claimed that Paul Keating's ruling Labour Party, in its zeal to have Australia integrate with the global economy and become more open to foreign investment, had created a situation in which Australia's most cherished companies were being bought up by global corporations based abroad and owned by foreigners. Howard charged that Australians were losing their national icons, indeed their very sovereignty and identity, to the global marketplace, even though they were improving their economy. In particular, he pointed to the fact that Arnott's Biscuits, which every Australian schoolchild grew up with, had been sold to a U.S. company (Campbell's Soup, no less!), which would probably start tampering with its recipe for Iced Vo-vos—Australia's most famous cookie, made of marshmallows and coconut. The same was true, Howard said, of Australia's famous Speedo bathing suits, which, he complained, had been sold to a U.S. firm. What happened to Iced Vo-vos and Speedo bathing

suits actually became a hot topic of one of the election debates. And these olive-tree-hugging arguments helped Howard defeat the Lexus-loving Keating in a landslide.

A year later I was riding through the farmland of Indiana in the spring of 1997 on my way to Purdue University, being driven by a very thoughtful Purdue history professor, John Larson. As we got near Lafayette, I saw a huge factory looming on the horizon. "What is that?" I asked. "It's the Subaru factory," Professor Larson explained as we got closer. Then he added that this Subaru factory was Indiana's "first experience as a Third World country."

"How so?" I asked.

"For the generation, like mine, that grew up in the 1950s, it was America that was doing all the outreaching," said Larson. "We did all the globalizing. But when the Japanese car people were looking for a site for the Subaru factory, they came in here the way Americans go into India, asking all these questions: 'Can we have what we want? Do we trust you people? Do you have a stable workforce? What is the education level here? Will we get tax breaks?' The community leaders here were eager for the investment, but some people asked: 'Who are these Japanese to ask about our schools?' "

Once the Subaru people decided to put their factory in Lafayette, someone suggested that they rename the highway that ran in front of the factory something like "Subaru Highway," in honor of this company that was coming in and bringing all these jobs. "But then the local VFW heard about it and they raised a huge fuss," explained Larson. "They said you can't rename that highway. Don't you know what its name stands for?" The highway was already called Bataan Highway—named in honor of the peninsula in the Philippines where thousands of Americans died on a death march after being captured by the Japanese in April 1942.

"The Subaru people were very sensitive and said that by all means we shouldn't rename the Bataan Highway 'Subaru Highway,' " said Professor Larson. "Since then, people have gotten quite used to the Japanese and they have been well accepted. Japanese managers rotate in and out of here with their families. Their kids go to the local schools—except on Saturday when the Japanese kids also go to their own schools to keep up with their language and because they don't think our math training is rigorous enough."

Immanuel Wallerstein, After Liberalism (NY: New Press, 1995)

CHAPTER ONE

THE COLD WAR AND THE THIRD WORLD: THE GOOD OLD DAYS? (1991)

Shall we be nostalgic so soon? I fear we must. We have come out of the era of U.S. hegemony in the world-system (1945–1990) and into a posthegemonic era. However difficult the position of the erstwhile Third World in that era was, I believe it is in for far more difficult times. The time just past was a time of hopes, no doubt of hopes oft deceived, but of hopes nonetheless. The time just forward is to be a time of troubles, and of struggles born more of desperation than of confidence. To use old Western symbolism, which may under the circumstances be inappropriate: it will be a time of purgatory, the outcome always uncertain.

I shall outline my views in two parts: a brief sketch of the era out of which we have come; and a projection of what it is I think we may anticipate, along with an argument as to the historical alternatives we face.

I

I believe the essential features of the period 1945–1990 may be summed up in four statements.

1. The United States was the hegemonic power in a unipolar world-system. Its power, based on an overwhelming edge in economic productivity as of 1945 and an alliance system with Western Europe and Japan, reached its apogee circa 1967–73.
2. The United States and the U.S.S.R. engaged in a highly structured, carefully contained, formal (but not substantive) conflict, in which the U.S.S.R. acted as a subimperialist agent of the United States.
3. The Third World forced itself upon the unwilling attention of the United States, the U.S.S.R., and Western Europe by demanding rights more fully and earlier than the countries of the North anticipated or desired. Both its political strength and its ultimate weakness was its belief in, and optimism about, the twin objectives of self-determination and national development.
4. The 1970s and 1980s were a period of global economic stagnation, resistance by the United States to its impending decline, and disillusionment in the Third World with its own strategy.

Let me elaborate on each of these statements.

1. The overwhelming economic advantage of the United States in 1945—in production and productivity—was the consequence of three conjoined factors: the steady concentration of the national energy of the United States since 1865 on improving its capacity for both production and technological innovation; the freedom of the United States from serious military expenditures, at least until 1941, efficacious wartime mobilization from 1941 to 1945, and the absence of wartime destruction of its infrastructure; the enormous destruction of infrastructure and human lives over the whole of Eurasia from 1939 to 1945.

The United States was able quite rapidly to institutionalize this advantage, that is, create a hegemony that made it possible for the United States to control or dominate virtually all significant decisions in the world political and economic arenas for some twenty-five years. Its hegemony was ideological and even cultural as well.

The two key pillars on which this hegemony was consolidated were a system of alliances with the important, already industrialized countries of the world on the one hand, and a nationally integrating welfare state at home, on the other. In each case, the arrangement was economic and ideological, and nominally political.

The economic carrot for Western Europe and Japan was economic reconstruction, accompanied by a significant rise in real income of the middle strata and the skilled working classes in the United States. This guaranteed both political satisfaction and a significant market for United States productive enterprises.

The ideological package was the commitment to implementing fully for the first time the two-century-old promises of political liberalism: universal suffrage and a functioning parliamentary system. This was done within the framework of a struggle with

Communist "totalitarianism," and meant therefore a de facto exclusion of Communists from political rights.

The nominal political promise was participation of Western Europe and Japan as countries, and of the working classes as strata, in collective decision making. In reality, for some twenty-five years all major political decisions in the world-system were made by a small elite in the United States. This was called United States leadership. Western Europe and Japan were client states. The working-class movements were for the most part client movements.

2. The relationship of the United States and the U.S.S.R. was similarly one thing on the surface with another reality underneath. On the surface, the United States and the U.S.S.R. were ideological enemies, locked in a cold war not merely since 1945 but since 1917. They represented alternative visions of the social good, based on quite divergent readings of historical reality. The structures of the two countries were quite disparate, and in some aspects fundamentally different. Furthermore, they both proclaimed quite loudly the depth of this ideological cleavage and called on all nations and groups to opt for one side or the other. Remember the famous declaration of John Foster Dulles: "Neutralism is immoral." Equivalent statements were made by Soviet leaders.

Nonetheless the reality was quite different. A line was drawn in Europe, more or less where Soviet and U.S. troops met at the end of the Second World War. East of this line was a zone reserved for Soviet political dominance. The arrangement between the United States and the U.S.S.R. is well known and quite simple. The U.S.S.R. could do as it wished within its east European zone (that is, create satellite regimes). There were two working conditions. First, the two zones would observe absolute interstate peace in Europe and would abstain from any attempt to change or subvert the governments in the other zone. Secondly, the U.S.S.R. would neither expect nor obtain aid from the United States in its economic reconstruction. The U.S.S.R. might take what it could from Eastern Europe, while the U.S. government concentrated its financial resources (vast but not unlimited) on Western Europe and Japan.

This arrangement, as we know, worked marvelously well. Peace in Europe was absolute. There was never a threat of Communist insurrection in Western Europe (except in Greece, where the U.S.S.R. undermined and abandoned the Greek Communists). And the United States never gave any support to the multiple efforts of Eastern European states to loosen or end Soviet control (1953, 1956, 1968, 1980–81). The Marshall Plan was reserved for Western Europe, and the U.S.S.R. constructed a cocoon called Comecon.

The U.S.S.R. may be considered a subimperialist power of the United States because it functioned to guarantee order and stability within its zone on conditions that in fact enhanced the ability of the United States to maintain its worldwide hegemony. The very ferocity of the ultimately not very meaningful ideological struggle was a great political plus for the United States (as it was, to be sure, for the leadership of the U.S.S.R.). We shall see that the U.S.S.R. served as an ideological shield for the United States in the Third World as well.

3. The Third World was never asked, either in 1945 or since, whether it liked or approved the world order established by the United States in collusion with the U.S.S.R. It was certainly not accorded a very desirable position in this world order. In 1945, it was offered very little in the political arena, and even less in the economic arena. As the years went by, the offers improved somewhat, but always grudgingly and only because of Third World militance and rambunctiousness.

In 1945, no one took the Third World seriously as a political actor on the world scene—neither the United States nor the U.S.S.R. nor the old colonial powers of Western Europe. Any complaints were received with surprise, and the complainers were counseled patience, on the basis of a world-level version of the "trickle down" hypothesis.

To be sure, the United States had a program for the Third World. It had been proclaimed by Woodrow Wilson in 1917, and it was called the self-determination of nations. Eventually, in the fullness of time, each people was to receive its collective political rights to sovereignty, analogous to each citizen's receiving his individual political rights to suffrage. These political rights would then afford the opportunity for self-improvement, something that after 1945 acquired the name of national development.

Leninism as an ideology was presumably the antinomy of Wilsonianism. In fact, in many ways it was its avatar. The Wilsonian program for the Third World was translated by Lenin into Marxist jargon; it emerged as anti-imperialism and the construction of socialism. This obviously reflected real differences about who would control the political processes in the periphery of the world-system, but the actual program had the identical form: first a political change that would establish sovereignty (for the first time ever in colonies, for the first time *really* in already independent Third World states); then an economic change involving establishment of an efficacious state bureaucracy, the improvement of productive processes ("industrialization"), and the creation of a social infrastructure (particularly in education and health). The outcome, promised by both the Wilsonians and the Leninists, was "catching up," closing the gap between the rich countries and the poor.

The Third World countries bought this Wilsonian-Leninist package. But they were understandably impatient. Since the package involved two steps, they quite reasonably took the first step first. This was the path of anticolonial struggle in the colonies, and of analogous political revolutions in what were once called quite aptly the semicolonies. After 1945, the Third World forced the pace, everywhere. The Chinese Communists marched into Shanghai. The peoples of Indochina and Indonesia refused to welcome back their colonial overlords. The Indian subcontinent said independence immediately. The Egyptians ousted the monarchy and nationalized the Suez Canal. The Algerians refused to accept the idea that they were part of France. There was a "downward sweep" of African liberation starting in the 1950s. Political revolution was on the march in Latin America, most notably advanced by the triumph of the 26th of July Movement in Cuba in 1958. And, of course, in 1955 there was the Bandung Conference.

The essential element to observe about this whole political push is that it was, from the outset, totally indigenous in origin and in opposition to the North. The colonial powers were strongly opposed to this forcing of the pace and did all they could to stop

it or slow it down. Of course, they varied in their tactics, the British being notably more flexible than the others, and the Portuguese dragging up the rear. The United States, despite its theoretical Wilsonian anticolonialism, tended to support this European slowdown as long as it could, but it eventually called for decolonization to "moderate" leaders at a moderate pace. Nor was the attitude of the U.S.S.R. very different. Leninism presumably represented a more strenuous and combative form of anticolonialism than Wilsonianism did. And of course the U.S.S.R. did give material and political support to many anti-imperialist movements. But, at very many crucial movements, it too sought to constrain or restrain the pace. Its role in Greece and its counsel to Mao Zedong are notorious. But around the world, anyone who has followed closely local struggles knows that Soviet support was never in the lead and often was obtained only with difficulty; frequently the Soviet Union refused to extend it at all.

Still, of course, as we also know, the basic political battle was won by the Third World. By the late 1960s, decolonization (or its equivalent in already independent states) had been achieved almost everywhere. It was time for the second step, national development. In fact, however, just as the moment had come for the second step, the world-system entered into a Kondratieff B-phase. The second step was never to be achieved in most places.

4. By 1970, the United States had reached the apogee and the limits of its power. Its declining gold reserves forced it off the fixed gold-dollar parity. The economic growth of Western Europe and Japan had been such that they now matched and were beginning to outstrip U.S. levels of productivity, at the very moment that the Kondratieff B-phase set in. Or rather, the global expansion of production was itself the major source of the downturn. Vietnam was demonstrating not only that the United States had to accede to its own Wilsonian credo even when it didn't approve of the group making the demands but also that the cost of not doing so was weakening the legitimacy of the U.S. government at home. And the world revolution of 1968 undermined the entire ideological consensus that the United States had constructed, including even its reserve card, the Soviet shield.

The United States was at first stunned by this maneuver, and then decided to try to cover up this conscious dismantlement of the U.S. world order by crying victory. This last bit of advertising puff might have carried the United States for five more years had not the Third World once again pulled the plug, this time in the person of Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein saw the weakness of the United States, particularly as manifested in the collapse of Communist regimes in the Soviet bloc and in its inability to impose on Israel the process of regional settlements (in Indochina, southern Africa, Central America, and the Middle East) that are part of the liquidation of the cold war. Saddam Hussein decided that this was the moment for boldness. He invaded Kuwait and was quite possibly preparing to proceed further south.

I believe four variables entered into his calculation. One was the world debt crisis; Suddam Hussein knew there would be no serious relief for the Third World from the debt crisis. He at least had a solution at hand—seize the Kuwaiti accumulated rent. The second variable was Israel's ending the peace talks with the PLO. Had the talks been ongoing, an invasion would have hurt the Palestinian cause, still the focal issue of Arab popular sentiment. Once the talks were dead, Hussein would appear as the last hope of the Palestinians and harness Arab popular sentiment, as he seems to have done. But these two variables were ultimately minor.

The collapse of the Communisms was far more important. This had a double meaning from a Third World perspective. First, Saddam Hussein knew that the U.S.S.R. would *not* support him, which liberated him from the automatic constraints of the United States-Soviet settlement of all disputes that threatened nuclear escalation. And second, the collapse of the Communisms was the final collapse of the ideology of national development. If even the U.S.S.R. couldn't make it, with the full Leninist model at its disposal, surely neither Iraq nor any other Third World state was likely to catch up by a program of collective self-help within the framework of the existing world-system. The Wilsonians had lost at last the Leninist shield, which had channeled Third World impatience into a strategy that was, from the point of view of the dominant forces in the world-system, the strategy least threatening

to the system the Third World would undertake.

Disabused of all alternatives, and certain of United States weakness, Saddam Hussein took into account the fourth variable. If he invaded, he had a fifty-fifty chance of succeeding. But the United States had a one hundred percent chance of losing. The United States would find itself without viable options. If it acceded, it became a paper tiger. And if it resisted, the political fallout of the carnage had to be negative for the U.S. position—in the Middle East, in Europe, at home, and ultimately everywhere.

II

Where are we heading now? Since I believe the world-system is moving into an even greater North-South polarization than heretofore, I will first present what I believe will be the restructuring of the North and its consequences for the South, and then present what I believe will be the political options of the South. Finally, I shall try to put this in the context of the future of the capitalist world-economy as such.

We are presently at the tail end of a Kondratieff B-phase that has been going on since 1967–73. We are entering the final and probably most dramatic dip down. It is analogous to the 1893–96 dip in the Kondratieff B-phase that ran from 1873 to 1896. Its impact will vary on different parts of the North, but it will probably be very great for most parts of the South. However, the world-economy, once thoroughly shaken down, will come out of it, and we shall be in for another big A-phase. It will be fueled initially, as has long been predicted, by a new product cycle of new leading industries (microchips, biogenetics, etc.); the three strong loci of such production will be Japan, the EEC, and the United States. They will be in sharp competition to gain the quasi-monopolistic control of the world market for their particular technical version of these products, and they can't all get it.

There is much talk these days of a three-way breakdown of the world market. I don't believe it, because, in this kind of acute competition, triads give way to a binary split. The stakes are high, and the weakest of the three competitors will seek an alliance with one of the other two for fear of being squeezed out altogether. Today,

The two decades since have been United States patchwork. Each patch has been efficacious in that it slowed down the fraying, but eventually the whole framework would look tattered. Nixon went to China, a brilliant stroke, pulling the Chinese back into the world order arrangement. He cut U.S. losses by accepting defeat in Vietnam. And in another brilliant stroke, the United States connived in (perhaps even arranged) the rise in OPEC oil prices. Paraded as evidence of Third World militance, the OPEC initiative served to funnel much of the available world surplus (and surely any that the Third World had) into Western (largely U.S.) banks via the oil-producing states (who no doubt took their rent cut). The money was then sent right back to the Third World (and the Soviet-bloc states) in the form of loans to states, which enabled these states momentarily to balance their budgets and continue importing Western manufactures. The bill would come due in the 1980s.

The United States sought during the 1970s to keep everyone calm. It offered the Western Europeans and the Japanese trilateralism—that is, a promise of more consultation in world policy-making. It offered the Soviet Union détente—that is, a lowering of the ideological decibels, which served as balm for the Brezhnevian bureaucracy in the wake of the shock wave of 1968. It offered the U.S. public a relaxation of cold war tensions as well, a kind of cultural consumerism that included more liberal mores and affirmative action. And, to the Third World, it offered the post-Vietnam syndrome, which concretely meant such gestures as the Church Committee's report on the CIA, the Clark Amendment on Angola, and the withdrawal of support to Somoza and the Shah.

I believe we should see the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations as following a single policy, which we can term the "low posture," and which President Carter spelled out in his famous address to the U.S. public on accepting the limitations of U.S. power. These policies seemed to be working reasonably well until, once again, the Third World pulled the plug. The "low posture" foundered on the unexpected rock of the Ayatollah Khomeini. He was not to be fooled. Low posture or not, the United States was still the number one Satan (and the U.S.S.R. number two).

Khomeini's strategy was quite simple. He refused to accept the rules of the game—both the rules of the U.S. post-1945 world order and the rules of the interstate system, which had been in place for five centuries. The net result was equally simple. The United States was profoundly humiliated, Carter was ousted, and Reagan came to power on a platform of rejecting the "low posture" in every way possible. The Reagan(-Bush) strategy was to substitute fake machismo for the low posture—tough with allies, tough with the Soviet Union, tough at home, and of course tough with the Third World.

Economically, the world had to face the bill for the patchwork of the 1970s—the debt crisis, first manifested in Poland in 1980 and officially recognized in Mexico in 1982. The result was a downward economic spiral throughout the Third World and the Soviet-bloc countries, with the exception of the East Asian NICs, which managed to corner the industries devolving from core to semiperiphery because of their lower rate of profitability. Now that OPEC pump priming of the sagging world-economy had exhausted its possibilities, Reagan relied on U.S. military Keynesianism and massive borrowing from its former allies, now its economic rivals—Japan and Western Europe. It was clear by mid-decade that this bill would soon come due, as had the Third World loans of the 1970s.

Were there any patches left? The first to decide that there probably weren't was Mr. Gorbachev. The U.S.S.R. was a superpower primarily because of its special arrangement with the United States, which was called the cold war. If the United States could no longer play the role of hegemonic power, the cold war served no function, and the U.S.S.R. risked being treated as just one more semiperipheral state in the capitalist world-economy. Gorbachev sought to save the possibility of Russia/the U.S.S.R.'s remaining a world power (at the very least, a strong semiperipheral state) by a threefold program: unilateral liquidation of the cold war (highly successful); unburdening the U.S.S.R. of its now irrelevant and burdensome quasi empire in Eastern Europe (highly successful); and restructuring the Soviet state so that it could function efficaciously in the posthegemonic era (not successful).

The United States was at first stunned by this maneuver, and then decided to try to cover up this conscious dismantlement of the U.S. world order by crying victory. This last bit of advertising puff might have carried the United States for five more years had not the Third World once again pulled the plug, this time in the person of Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein saw the weakness of the United States, particularly as manifested in the collapse of Communist regimes in the Soviet bloc and in its inability to impose on Israel the process of regional settlements (in Indochina, southern Africa, Central America, and the Middle East) that are part of the liquidation of the cold war. Saddam Hussein decided that this was the moment for boldness. He invaded Kuwait and was quite possibly preparing to proceed further south.

I believe four variables entered into his calculation. One was the world debt crisis; Suddam Hussein knew there would be no serious relief for the Third World from the debt crisis. He at least had a solution at hand—seize the Kuwaiti accumulated rent. The second variable was Israel's ending the peace talks with the PLO. Had the talks been ongoing, an invasion would have hurt the Palestinian cause, still the focal issue of Arab popular sentiment. Once the talks were dead, Hussein would appear as the last hope of the Palestinians and harness Arab popular sentiment, as he seems to have done. But these two variables were ultimately minor.

The collapse of the Communisms was far more important. This had a double meaning from a Third World perspective. First, Saddam Hussein knew that the U.S.S.R. would *not* support him, which liberated him from the automatic constraints of the United States-Soviet settlement of all disputes that threatened nuclear escalation. And second, the collapse of the Communisms was the final collapse of the ideology of national development. If even the U.S.S.R. couldn't make it, with the full Leninist model at its disposal, surely neither Iraq nor any other Third World state was likely to catch up by a program of collective self-help within the framework of the existing world-system. The Wilsonians had lost at last the Leninist shield, which had channeled Third World impatience into a strategy that was, from the point of view of the dominant forces in the world-system, the strategy least threatening

to the system the Third World would undertake.

Disabused of all alternatives, and certain of United States weakness, Saddam Hussein took into account the fourth variable. If he invaded, he had a fifty-fifty chance of succeeding. But the United States had a one hundred percent chance of losing. The United States would find itself without viable options. If it acceded, it became a paper tiger. And if it resisted, the political fallout of the carnage had to be negative for the U.S. position—in the Middle East, in Europe, at home, and ultimately everywhere.

II

Where are we heading now? Since I believe the world-system is moving into an even greater North-South polarization than heretofore, I will first present what I believe will be the restructuring of the North and its consequences for the South, and then present what I believe will be the political options of the South. Finally, I shall try to put this in the context of the future of the capitalist world-economy as such.

We are presently at the tail end of a Kondratieff B-phase that has been going on since 1967–73. We are entering the final and probably most dramatic dip down. It is analogous to the 1893–96 dip in the Kondratieff B-phase that ran from 1873 to 1896. Its impact will vary on different parts of the North, but it will probably be very great for most parts of the South. However, the world-economy, once thoroughly shaken down, will come out of it, and we shall be in for another big A-phase. It will be fueled initially, as has long been predicted, by a new product cycle of new leading industries (microchips, biogenetics, etc.); the three strong loci of such production will be Japan, the EEC, and the United States. They will be in sharp competition to gain the quasi-monopolistic control of the world market for their particular technical version of these products, and they can't all get it.

There is much talk these days of a three-way breakdown of the world market. I don't believe it, because, in this kind of acute competition, triads give way to a binary split. The stakes are high, and the weakest of the three competitors will seek an alliance with one of the other two for fear of being squeezed out altogether. Today,

and surely a decade from now, the weakest of the three, in terms of efficiency of production and national financial stability, is and will be the United States. The natural alliance is with Japan. The trade-off is obvious. Japan is now strong in production processes and in capital surplus. The United States is strong in research and development capacity and potential, the service sector generally, military power, and accumulated wealth for consumption. A reunited Korea could join the Japan-United States arrangement, as would Canada. Japan and the United States would bring into the arrangement their links in Latin America and Southeast Asia. And they would make a strong bid to find the appropriate niche for China.

Europe has seen this coming for a long time. That is why the 1992 arrangements have not only never been derailed but also are surely going to be augmented, now that Germany is reunited and Thatcher has been disposed of. Europe has to work out its detailed strategy; either piecemeal expansion of the EC or wide-ranging confederation. The key is Russia, which must be included if Europe is to have any strength vis-à-vis a Japan-United States arrangement. Europe will work hard to counter a disintegration of the U.S.S.R., and since Japan, China, and the United States for other reasons are also fearful of the same process, the U.S.S.R. will probably weather the storm somehow.

The second stage will be for each of the two Norths to develop their main semiperiphery (China for the one, Russia for the other) so that it can be an adjunct producer, a major market, and a supplier of migrant labor. At the moment, the core zones are terrified of the prospects of Russian and Chinese outflow. But in 2005, with booming economies and continued demographic decline, *Gastarbeitern* will seem highly desirable, provided it is an "orderly" process.

What will happen to the erstwhile Third World? Little that is good. Of course, there will be many enclaves linked to one of the two Norths, but the overall share of the South in world production and world wealth will go down, and I believe we will see an actual reversal on the social indicator curves (that is, education and health), the one set of curves on which the South has been doing reasonably well during the 1945–90 period. Furthermore,

the South will have been deprived of its major political instrument of the 1945–90 period—the national liberation movements. The ANC in South Africa will be the last great movement to have come to power. These movements have all served one historical purpose—to achieve self-determination—and they have all failed to achieve the other historical purpose—national development. The current passing fantasy that the "market" will give them what state-led industrialization could not, will not survive the acute downturn of the next five years. The fall of Mazowiecki presages the widespread impotence regimes will feel.

What choices are then available? Actually quite a few, though none of them fit in with the Weltanschauung that has governed the world in the Wilsonian-Leninist era. We may start with the choice that is the nightmare of the North precisely because they can think of no way to respond to it. This is the Khomeini option. This is usually phrased as the menace of Islamic fundamentalism but that is entirely the wrong emphasis. It is not particularly an Islamic phenomenon. And it is not particularly fundamentalist, if by that is meant some reversion to ancient religious practices.

The Khomeini option is primarily the culmination of anger at the horrors of the modern world-system, and it focuses the anger on its chief beneficiaries and instigators, the Western core of the capitalist world-economy. It is the denunciation of the West, including, and even especially, its Enlightenment values, as the incarnation of evil. If these were merely tactics, modes of popular mobilization, they could be dealt with. To the extent that they represent a genuine option, there is no avenue for communication or for resolution.

How long can such explosions last? How far can they go? It is hard to say. Khomeini's Iran seems to be on the path of passions calming down, of reentry into the cultural orbit of the world-system. If tomorrow, however, other movements erupt in other countries around the South, and more of them simultaneously, within a less stable world-system, may they not last longer or go further? Could they not substantially advance the disintegration of the current world-system, of which process they are themselves the consequence?

The second option is the Saddam Hussein option. Here again we must be clear about what it is. This is not total rejection of the values of the modern world-system. The Baath was a typical national liberation movement and a thoroughly secular one. I believe the Saddam Hussein option is nothing but the Bismarck option. It is the sense that since economic inequities are the outcome of political *rapports de forces*, economic transformation requires military strength. The Iraq-U.S. confrontation is the first genuine North-South war. The wars of national liberation (say Vietnam) all had a limited and quite clear objective: self-determination. From the South's point of view, all these wars were started by the North and could be ended by the North's letting the South alone. In the Persian Gulf crisis, the war was started by the South with the intent not of achieving self-determination but of transforming the world *rapport de forces*. This is really quite different.

Saddam Hussein may well lose the battle and be destroyed, but he has shown the way to a new option—creation of larger states, armament of these states not at the second level but at the top level, willingness to risk real warfare. If this is an option whose time has come, what will be the consequence? Terrible carnage, of course, doubtlessly including the use of nuclear warfare (and quite possibly chemical and biological). From the point of view of both North and South, the Saddam Hussein option is more dreadful than the Khomeini option. Perhaps you will wonder whether this is so different from the older wars between North and South, which were integral to the historic expansion of the boundaries of the modern world-system? The answer is, from a moral point of view, it is the same phenomenon. But, from a political and military point of view, it is quite different. The old colonial wars were one-sided militarily, and confidence lay on the side of the Northern aggressors. The new set of wars will be two-sided militarily, and confidence is now lacking in the North. It may be that the period 1945–1990 will be remembered as the period of relative North-South peace (despite Vietnam, despite Algeria, despite the multiple anticolonial struggles) between the wave of the wars of European expansion and the wave of twenty-first-century North-South wars.

The third option is what I call the option of individual resistance by physical relocation. In a world of increasing North-South polarization, with Northern demographic decline and Southern demographic expansion, how will it be politically possible to stem massive unauthorized South-to-North migration? I believe there will be no way to do this, and this South-to-North migration will come on top of authorized and unauthorized migration from Russia and China. Of course, this has been occurring already. Still, I think the scale will significantly escalate, and will thereby transform the structure of social life in the North. It is sufficient to note two things. The South within the North may well reach the thirty to fifty percent mark by 2025. And there may well be an attempt to deny them political rights, which means that after two hundred years of social integration of the working classes in the North, we would be back to the situation of the early nineteenth century—the disenfranchisement of the bulk of the lower occupational strata. This is surely not a recipe for social peace.

The triple scenario of options for the South no doubt poses political dilemmas for the ruling elites of the world-system, who will react as they will react. But it poses fundamental dilemmas for the world Left as well, the antisystemic forces both in the North and in the South.

We can already see the confusion among the movements of the Left in the North. They did not know how to react to Khomeini. They do not know how to react to Saddam Hussein. They have never had a clear position on unauthorized migration. In each case, they have not wanted to offer total support, but they have not wanted to support unconditionally Northern repression. The consequence is that the Northern Left has been voiceless and irrelevant. They were quite comfortable in engaging in solidarity with national liberation movements. In 1968 they could chant, "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh." But that was because the Vietminh and the NFL appealed to Wilsonian-Leninist values. Once Wilsonianism and Leninism are both dead, once it is recognized that national development is an illusion (even a pernicious illusion), once we have given up on the basic strategy of transformation pursued for

the last 150 years, is there anything remaining for the Northern Left other than patchwork?

Is it any easier for the Southern Left? Are they ready to enlist in the ranks of Khomeini or Saddam Hussein, to invest their energies in the migration option? I think it is doubtful. They have the same hesitancies as the Northern Left. They too wish to shake the world-system and recognize that these options all do shake the world-system. But they too have doubts that these options lead to the world of equality and democracy that the Southern Left stands for just as much as the Northern Left does.

The serious and quite open question before us, as we move into the first half of the twenty-first century (when the capitalist world-economy will be in full and acute crisis), is whether new transformatory movements with new strategies and agendas will in fact emerge. It is quite possible, but far from sure. The reason is that no one has put forward new strategies and agendas to replace the now defunct Wilsonian-Leninist strategies for the Third World, themselves a mere extension of the nineteenth-century strategy of achieving state power employed by both the socialist and the nationalist movements.

This, however, is the very concrete challenge for the world Left. If it does not respond seriously or soon, the collapse of the capitalist world-economy in the next fifty years will simply lead to its replacement by something equally bad. In any case, the North-South confrontation will be at the center of world political struggle from now on. It must therefore be at the center of analyses by both historical social scientists and political activists.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

A TALE OF THREE LOGOS

The Swoosh, the Shell and the Arches

Dozens of brand-based campaigns have succeeded in rattling their corporate targets, in several cases pushing them to substantially alter their policies. But three campaigns stand out for having reached well beyond activist circles and deep into public consciousness. The tactics they have developed – among them the use of the courts to force transparency on corporations, and the Internet to bypass traditional media – are revolutionizing the future of political engagement. By now it should come as no surprise that the targets of these influential campaigns are three of the most familiar and best-tended logos on the brandscape: the Swoosh, the Shell and the Arches.

The Swoosh: The Fight for Good Jobs

Nike CEO Phil Knight has long been a hero of the business schools. Prestigious academic publications such as *The Harvard Business Review* have lauded his pioneering marketing techniques, his understanding of branding and his early use of outsourcing. Countless MBA candidates and other students of marketing and communications have studied the Nike formula of "brands, not products." So when Phil Knight was invited to be a guest speaker at the Stanford University Business School – Knight's own alma mater – in May 1997, the visit was expected to be one in a long line of Nike love-ins. Instead, Knight was greeted by a crowd of picketing students, and when he approached the microphone he was taunted with chants of "Hey Phil, off the stage. Pay your workers a living wage." The Nike honeymoon had come to a grinding halt.

No story illustrates the growing distrust of the culture of corporate branding more than the international anti-Nike movement – the most publicized

Naomi Klein, No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies (NY: Picador, 1999)

and tenacious of the brand-based campaigns. Nike's sweatshop scandals have been the subject of over 1,500 news articles and opinion columns. Its Asian factories have been probed by cameras from nearly every major media organization, from CBS to Disney's sports station, ESPN. On top of all that, it has been the subject of a series of Doonesbury cartoon strips and the butt of Michael Moore's documentary *The Big One*. As a result, several people in Nike's PR department work full time dealing with the sweatshop controversy – fielding complaints, meeting with local groups and developing Nike's response – and the company has created a new executive position: vice president for corporate responsibility. Nike has received hundreds and thousands of letters of protest, faced hundreds of both small and large groups of demonstrators, and is the target of a dozen critical Web sites.

For the last two years, anti-Nike forces in North America and Europe have attempted to focus all the scattered swoosh bashing on a single day. Every six months they have declared an International Nike Day of Action, and brought their demands for fair wages and independent monitoring directly to Nike's customers, shoppers at flagship Nike Towns in urban centers or the less glamorous Foot Locker outlets in suburban malls. According to Campaign for Labor Rights, the largest anti-Nike event so far took place on October 18, 1997: eighty-five cities in thirteen countries participated. Not all the protests have attracted large crowds, but since the movement is so decentralized, the sheer number of individual anti-Nike events has left the company's public-relations department scrambling to get its spin onto dozens of local newscasts. Though you'd never know it from its branding ubiquity, even Nike can't be everywhere at once.

Since so many of the stores that sell Nike products are located in malls, protests often end with a security guard escorting participants into the parking lot. Jeff Smith, an activist from Grand Rapids, Michigan, reported that "when we asked if private property rights ruled over free speech rights, the [security] officer hesitated and then emphatically said YES!" (Though in the economically depressed city of St. John's, Newfoundland, anti-Nike campaigners reported that after being thrown out of a mall, "they were approached by a security guard who asked to sign their petition."[1]) But there's plenty that can be done on the sidewalk or in the mall parking lot.

SLOGANS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ANTI-NIKE MOVEMENT:

Just Don't Do It Just Don't Nike, Do It Just Justice. Do it. Nike.

Campaigners have dramatized Nike's labor practices through what they call "sweatshop fashion shows," and "The Transnational Capital Auction: A Game of Survival" (the lowest bidder wins), and a global economy treadmill (run fast, stay in the same place). In Australia, anti-Nike protestors have been known to parade around in calico bags painted with the slogan "Rather wear a bag than Nike." Students at the University of Colorado in Boulder dramatized the difference between the legal minimum wage and a living wage by holding a fundraising run in which "participants pay an entrance fee of $1.60 (daily wages for a Nike worker in Vietnam) and the winner will receive $2.10 (the price of three square meals in Vietnam)."[2] Meanwhile, activists in Austin, Texas, made a giant papier-mâché Nike sneaker piñata, and a protest outside a Regina, Saskatchewan, shopping center featured a deface-the-swoosh booth. The last stunt is something of a running theme in all the anti-Nike actions: Nike's logo and slogan have been jammed so many times – on T-shirts, stickers, placards, banners and pins – that the semiotic bruises have turned them black and blue (see list below).

Tellingly, the anti-Nike movement is at its strongest inside the company's home state of Oregon, even though the area has reaped substantial economic benefits from Nike's success (Nike is the largest employer in Portland and a significant local philanthropist). Phil Knight's neighbors, nonetheless, have not all rushed to his defense in his hour of need. In fact, since the *Life* magazine soccer-ball story broke, many Oregonians have been out for blood. The demonstrations outside the Portland Nike Town are among the largest and most militant in the country, sometimes sporting a menacing giant Phil Knight puppet with dollar signs for eyes or a twelve-foot Nike swoosh dragged by small children (to dramatize child labor). And in contravention of the principles of nonviolence that govern the anti-Nike movement, one protest in Eugene, Oregon, led to acts of vandalism including the tearing-down of a fence surrounding the construction of a new Nike Town, gear pulled off shelves at an existing Nike store and, according to one eyewitness, "an entire rack of clothes... dumped off a balcony into a fountain below."[3]

Local papers in Oregon have aggressively (sometimes gleefully) followed Knight's sweatshop scandals, and the daily paper *The Oregonian* sent a reporter to Southeast Asia to do its own lengthy investigation of the factories.

The Swooshtika Just Boycott It Ban the Swoosh Nike – Fair Play?

to manufacture its products outside the U.S., both in high unemployment rates and in the erosion of the community tax base (which sets the stage for the deterioration of local public schools).

Instead of jobs for their parents, what the inner-city kids get from Nike is the occasional visit from its marketers and designers on "bro-ing" pilgrimages. "Hey, bro, what do you think of these new Jordans – are they fresh or what?" The effect of high-priced cool hunters whipping up brand frenzy on the cracked asphalt basketball courts of Harlem, the Bronx and Compton has already been discussed: kids incorporate the brands into gang-wear uniforms; some want the gear so badly they are willing to sell drugs, steal, mug, even kill for it. Jessie Collins, executive director of the Edenwald-Gun Hill Neighborhood Center in the northeast Bronx, tells me that it's sometimes drug or gang money, but more often it's the mothers' minimum-wage salaries or welfare checks that are spent on disposable status wear. When I asked her about the media reports of kids stabbing each other for their $150 Air Jordans she said dryly, "It's enough to beat up on your mother for... $150 is a hell of a lot of money."[8]

Shoe-store owners like Steven Roth of Essex House of Fashion are often uncomfortable with the way so-called street fashions play out for real on the postindustrial streets of Newark, New Jersey, where his store is located.

> I do get weary and worn down from it all. I'm always forced to face the fact that I make my money from poor people. A lot of them are on welfare. Sometimes a mother will come in here with a kid, and the kid is dirty and poorly dressed. But the kid wants a hundred-twenty-buck pair of shoes and that stupid mother buys them for him. I can feel that kid's inner need – this desire to own these things and have the feelings that go with them – but it hurts me that this is the way things are.[9]

It's easy to blame the parents for giving in, but that "deep inner need" for designer gear has grown so intense that it has confounded everyone from community leaders to the police. Everyone pretty much agrees that brands like Nike are playing a powerful surrogate role in the ghetto, subbing for everything from self-esteem to African-American cultural history to political

power. What they are far less sure about is how to fill that need with empowerment and a sense of self-worth that does not necessarily come with a logo attached. Even broaching the subject of brand fetishism to these kids is risky. With so much emotion invested in celebrity consumer goods, many kids take criticism of Nike or Tommy as a personal attack, as grave a transgression as insulting someone's mother to his face.

Not surprisingly, Nike sees its appeal among disadvantaged kids differently. By supporting sports programs in Boys and Girls Clubs, by paying to repave urban basketball courts and by turning high-performance sports gear into street fashions, the company claims it is sending out the inspirational message that even poor kids can "Just Do It." In its press material and ads, there is an almost messianic quality to Nike's portrayal of its role in the inner cities: troubled kids will have higher self-esteem, fewer unwanted pregnancies and more ambition – all because at Nike "We see them as athletes." For Nike, its $150 Air Jordans are not a shoe but a kind of talisman with which poor kids can run out of the ghetto and better their lives. Nike's magic slippers will help them fly – just as they made Michael Jordan fly.

A remarkable, subversive accomplishment? Maybe. But one can't help thinking that one of the main reasons black urban youth can get out of the ghetto only by rapping or shooting hoops is that Nike and the other multinationals are reinforcing stereotypical images of black youth and simultaneously taking all the jobs away. As U.S. Congressman Bernie Sanders and Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur stated in a letter to the company, Nike has played a pivotal part in the industrial exodus from urban centers. "Nike has led the way in abandoning the manufacturing workers of the United States and their families.... Apparently, Nike believes that workers in the United States are good enough to purchase your shoe products, but are no longer worthy enough to manufacture them."[10]

And when the company's urban branding strategy is taken in conjunction with this employment record, Nike ceases to be the savior of the inner city and turns into the guy who steals your job, then sells you a pair of overpriced sneakers and yells, "Run like hell!" Hey, it's the only way out of the ghetto, kid. Just do it.

That's what Mike Gitelson thought, anyway. A social worker at the Bronx's Edenwald-Gun Hill Neighborhood Center, he was unimpressed with the swoosh's powers as a self-help guru in the projects and "sick of seeing kids wearing sneakers they couldn't afford and which their parents couldn't afford."[11] Nike's critics on college campuses and in the labor movement may be fueled largely by moral outrage, but Mike Gitelson and his colleagues simply feel ripped off. So rather than lecturing the kids on the virtues of frugality, they began telling them about how Nike made the shoes that they wanted so badly. Gitelson told them about the workers in Indonesia who earned $2 a day, he told them that it cost Nike only $5 to make the shoes they bought for between $100 and $180, and he told them about how Nike didn't make any of its shoes in the U.S. – which was part of the reason their parents had such a tough time finding work. "We got really angry," says Gitelson, "because they were taking so much money from us here and then going to other countries and exploiting people even worse.... We want our kids to see how it affects them here on the streets, but also how here on the streets affects people in Southeast Asia." His colleague at the center, youth worker Leo Johnson, lays out the issue using the kids' own lingo. "Yo, dude," he tells his preteen audiences, "you're being suckered if you pay $100 for a sneaker that costs $5 to make. If somebody did that to you on the block, you know where it's going."[12]

The kids at the center were upset to learn about the sweatshops but they were clearly most pissed off that Phil Knight and Michael Jordan were playing them for chumps. They sent Phil Knight a hundred letters about how much money they had spent on Nike gear over the years – and how, the way they figured it, Nike owed them big time. "I just bought a pair of Nikes for $100," one kid wrote. "It's not right what you're doing. A fair price would have been $30. Could you please send me back $70?" When the company answered the kids with a form letter, "That's when we got really angry and started putting together the protest," Gitelson says.

They decided the protest would take the form of a "shoe-in" at the Nike Town at Fifth Avenue and Fifty-seventh Street. Since most of the kids at the center are full-fledged swooshaholics, their closets are jam-packed with old Air Jordans and Air Carnivores that they would no longer even consider wearing. To put the obsolete shoes to practical use, they decided to gather them together in garbage bags and dump them on the doorstep of Nike Town.

When Nike executives got wind that a bunch of black and Latino kids from the Bronx were planning to publicly diss their company, the form letters came to an abrupt halt. Up to that point, Nike had met most criticism by attacking its critics as members of "fringe groups," but this was different: if a backlash took root in the inner cities, it could sink the brand at the mall. As Gitelson puts it, "Our kids are exactly who Nike depends upon to set the trends for them so that the rest of the country buys their sneakers. White middle-class adults who are fighting them, well, it's almost okay. But when youth of color start speaking out against Nike, they start getting scared."[13]

The executives in Oregon also knew, no doubt, that Edenwald was only the tip of the iceberg. For the past couple of years, debates have been raging in hip-hop scenes about rappers "label whoring for Nike and Tommy" instead of supporting black-owned clothing companies like FUBU (For Us By Us). And rapper KRS-One planned to launch the Temple of Hip Hop, a project that promised to wrest the culture of African-American youth away from white record and clothing labels and return it to the communities that built it. It was against this backdrop that, on September 10, 1997 – two weeks before the shoe-in protest was scheduled to take place – Nike's chief of public relations, Vada Manager, made the unprecedented move of flying in from Oregon with a colleague to try to convince the center that the swoosh was a friend of the projects.

"He was working overtime to put the spins on us," says Gitelson. It didn't work. At the meeting, the center laid out three very concrete demands:

1. Those who work for Nike overseas should be paid a living wage, with independent monitoring to ensure that it is occurring.
2. Nike sneakers should be sold less expensively here in America with no concessions to American workforce (i.e. no downsizing, or loss of benefits)
3. Nike should seriously re-invest in the inner city in America, especially New York City since we have been the subject of much of their advertising.[14]

Gitelson may have recognized that Nike was scared – but not *that* scared. Once it became clear that the two parties were at an impasse, the meeting turned into a scolding session as the two Nike executives were required to listen to Edenwald director Jessie Collins comparing the company's Asian sweatshops with her experience as a young girl picking cotton in the share-cropping South. Back in Alabama, she told Manager, she earned $2 a day, just like the Indonesians. "And maybe a lot of Americans can't identify with those workers' situation, but I certainly can."[15]

Vada Manager returned to Oregon defeated and the protest went off as planned, with two hundred participants from eleven community centers around New York. The kids – most of whom were between eleven and thirteen years old – hooted and hollered and dumped several clear garbage bags of smelly old Nikes at the feet of a line of security guards who had been brought in on special assignment to protect the sacred Nike premises. Vada Manager again flew to New York to run damage control, but there was little he could do. Local TV crews covered the event, as did an ABC news team and *The New York Times*.

In a harsh bit of bad timing for the company, the *Times* piece ran on a page facing another story about Nike. Graphically underlining the urgency of the protest, this story reported that a fourteen-year-old boy from Crown Heights had just been murdered by a fifteen-year-old boy who beat him and left him on the subway tracks with a train approaching. "Police Say Teenager Died for His Sneakers and Beeper," the headline read. And the brand of his sneakers? Air Jordans. The article quoted the killer's mother saying that her son had got mixed up with gangs because he wanted to "have nice things." A friend of the victim explained that wearing designer clothes and carrying a beeper had become a way for poor kids to "feel important."

The African-American and Latino kids outside Nike Town on Fifth Avenue – the ones swarmed by cameras and surrounded by curious onlookers – were feeling pretty important, too. Taking on Nike "toe to toe," as they said, turned out to be even more fun than wearing Nikes. With the Fox News camera pointed in his face, one of the young activists – a thirteen-year-old boy from the Bronx – stared into the lens and delivered a message to Phil Knight: "Nike, we made you. We can break you."

What is perhaps most remarkable about the Nike backlash is its durability. After four solid years in the public eye, the Nike story still has legs (so too, of course, does the Nike brand). Still, most corporate scandals are successfully faced down with a statement of "regret" and a few glossy ads of children playing happily under the offending logo. Not with Nike. The news reports, labor studies and academic research documenting the sweat behind the swoosh have yet to slow down, and Nike critics remain tireless at dissecting the steady stream of materials churned out by Nike's PR machine. They were unmoved by Phil Knight's presence on the White House Task Force on Sweatshops – despite his priceless photo op standing beside President Clinton at the Rose Garden press conference. They sliced and diced the report Nike commissioned from civil-rights leader Andrew Young, pointing out that Young completely dodged the question of whether Nike's factory wages are inhumanely exploitative, and attacking him for relying on translators provided by Nike itself when he visited the factories in Indonesia and Vietnam. As for Nike's other study-for-hire – this one by a group of Dartmouth business students who concluded that workers in Vietnam were living the good life on less than $2 a day – well, everyone pretty much ignored that one altogether.

Finally, in May 1998, Phil Knight stepped out from behind the curtain of spin doctors and called a press conference in Washington to address his critics directly. Knight began by saying that he had been painted as a "corporate crook, the perfect corporate villain for these times." He acknowledged that his shoes "have become synonymous with slave wages, forced overtime and arbitrary abuse." Then, to much fanfare, he unveiled a plan to improve working conditions in Asia. It contained some tough new regulations on factory air quality and the use of petroleum-based chemicals. It promised to provide classes inside some Indonesian factories and promised not to hire anyone under eighteen years old in the shoe factories. But there was still nothing substantial in the plan about allowing independent outside monitors to inspect the factories, and there were no wage raises for the workers. Knight did promise, however, that Nike's contractors would no longer be permitted to appeal to the Indonesian government for a waiver on the minimum wage.

It wasn't enough. That September the San Francisco human-rights group

Global Exchange, one of the company's harshest critics, released an alarming report on the status of Nike's Indonesian workers in the midst of the country's economic and political crisis. "While workers producing Nike shoes were low paid before their currency, the rupiah, began plummeting in late 1997, the dollar value of their wages has dropped from $2.47/day in 1997 to 80 cents/day in 1998." Meanwhile, the report noted that with soaring commodity prices, workers "estimated that their cost of living had gone up anywhere from 100 to 300 per cent."[16] Global Exchange called on Nike to double the wages of its Indonesian workforce, an exercise that would cost it $20 million a year – exactly what Michael Jordan is paid annually to endorse the company.

Not surprisingly, Nike did not double the wages, but it did, three weeks later, give 30 percent of the Indonesian workforce a 25 percent raise.[17] That, too, failed to silence the crowds outside the superstores, and five months later Nike came forward again, this time with what vice president of corporate responsibility Maria Eitel called "an aggressive corporate responsibility agenda at Nike."[18] As of April 1, 1999, workers would get another 6 percent raise. The company had also opened up a Vietnamese factory near Ho Chi Minh City to outside health and safety monitors, who found conditions much improved. Dara O'Rourke of the University of California at Berkeley reported that the factory had "implemented important changes over the past 18 months which appear to have significantly reduced worker exposures to toxic solvents, adhesives and other chemicals." What made the report all the more remarkable was that O'Rourke's inspection was a genuinely independent one: in fact, less than two years earlier, he had enraged the company by leaking a report conducted by Ernst & Young that showed that Nike was ignoring widespread violations at that same factory.

O'Rourke's findings weren't all glowing. There were still persistent problems with air quality, factory overheating and safety gear – and he had visited only the one factory.[19] As well, Nike's much-heralded 6 percent pay raise for Indonesian workers still left much to be desired; it amounted to an increase of one cent an hour and, with inflation and currency fluctuation, only brought wages to about half of what Nike paychecks were worth before the economic crisis. Even so, these were significant gestures coming from a

company that two years earlier was playing the role of the powerless global shopper, claiming that contractors alone had the authority to set wages and make the rules.

The resilience of the Nike campaign in the face of the public-relations onslaught is persuasive evidence that invasive marketing, coupled with worker abandonment, strikes a wide range of people from different walks of life as grossly unfair and unsustainable. Moreover, many of those people are not interested in letting Nike off the hook simply because this formula has become the standard one for capitalism-as-usual. On the contrary, there seems to be a part of the public psyche that likes kicking the most macho and extreme of all the sporting-goods companies in the shins – I mean *really* likes it. Nike's critics have shown that they don't want this story to be brushed under the rug with a reassuring bit of corporate PR; they want it out in the open, where they can keep a close eye on it.

In large part, this is because Nike's critics know that the company's sweatshop scandals are not the result of a series of freak accidents: they know that the criticisms leveled at Nike apply to all the brand-based shoe companies contracting out to a global maze of firms. But rather than this serving as a justification, Nike – as the market leader – has become a lightning rod for this broader resentment. It has been latched on to as the essential story of the extremes of the current global economy: the disparities between those who profit from Nike's success and those who are exploited by it are so gaping that a child could understand what is wrong with this picture and indeed (as we will see in the next chapter) it is children and teenagers who most readily do.

So, when does the total boycott of Nike products begin? Not soon, apparently. A cursory glance around any city in the world shows that the swoosh is still ubiquitous; some athletes still tattoo it on their navels, and plenty of high-school students still deck themselves out in the coveted gear. But at the same time, there can be little doubt that the millions of dollars that Nike has saved in labor costs over the years are beginning to bite back, and take a toll on its bottom line. "We didn't think that the Nike situation would be as bad

as it seems to be," said Nikko stock analyst Tim Finucane in *The Wall Street Journal* in March 1998.[20] Wall Street really had no choice but to turn on the company that had been its darling for so many years. Despite the fact that Asia's plummeting currencies meant that Nike's labor costs in Indonesia, for instance, were a quarter of what they were before the crash, the company was still suffering. Nike's profits were down, orders were down, stock prices were *way* down, and after an average annual growth of 34 percent since 1995, quarterly earnings were suddenly down 70 percent. By the third quarter, which ended in February 1999, Nike's profits were once again up 70 percent – but by the company's own account, the recovery was not the result of rebounding sales but rather of Nike's decision to cut jobs and contracts. In fact, Nike's revenues and future orders were down in 1999 for the second year in a row.[21]

Nike has blamed its financial problems on everything *but* the human-rights campaign. The Asian currency crisis was the reason Nikes weren't selling well in Japan and South Korea; or it was because Americans were buying "brown shoes" (walking shoes and hiking boots) as opposed to big white sneakers. But the brown-shoe excuse rang hollow. Nike makes plenty of brown shoes – it has a line of hiking boots, and it owns Cole Haan (and recently saved millions by closing down the Cole Haan factory in Portand, Maine, and moving production to Mexico and Brazil).[22] More to the point, Adidas staged a massive comeback during the very year that Nike was free-falling. In the quarter when Nike nose-dived, Adidas sales were up 42 percent, its net income was up 48 percent, to $255 million, and its stock price had tripled in two years. The German company, as we have seen, turned its fortunes around by copying Nike's production structure and all but Xeroxing its approach to marketing and sponsorships (the political implications of that will be dealt with in Chapter 18). In 1997–98, Adidas even redesigned its basketball shoes so they looked just like Nikes: big, white and ultra high tech. But unlike Nikes, they sold briskly. So much for the brown-shoe theory.

Over the years Nike has tried dozens of tactics to silence the cries of its critics, but the most ironic by far has been the company's desperate attempt to hide behind its product. "We're not political activists. We are a footwear manufacturer," said Nike spokeswoman Donna Gibbs, when the sweatshop

scandal first began to erupt.[23] A footwear manufacturer? This from the company that made a concerted decision in the mid-eighties not to be about boring corporeal stuff like footwear – and certainly nothing as crass as manufacturing. Nike wanted to be about sports, Knight told us, it wanted to be about the idea of sports, then the idea of transcendence through sports; then it wanted to be about self-empowerment, women's rights, racial equality. It wanted its stores to be temples, its ads a religion, its customers a nation, its workers a tribe. After taking us all on such a branded ride, to turn around and say "Don't look at us, we just make shoes" rings laughably hollow.

Nike was the most inflated of all the balloon brands, and the bigger it grew, the louder it popped.

The Shell: The Fight for Open Space

In North America, Nike has been at the forefront of the burgeoning political movement taking aim at the power of multinationals, but in Britain, Germany and the Netherlands, that dubious honor has belonged to Royal Dutch/Shell.

It began in February 1995 when Shell finalized its plans to dispose of a rusted and obsolete oil-storage platform, known as Brent Spar, by sinking it in the Atlantic Ocean, 150 miles off the coast of Scotland. The environmental group Greenpeace was against the plan, claiming the 14,500-ton rig should be towed to land, where the oil sludge could be contained and the rig's parts recycled. Shell countered that land disposal was unsafe, not to mention impossible. Then, on April 30, just as Shell began towing the platform to its watery grave, a group of Greenpeace activists showed up in a helicopter and tried to land on the Brent Spar. Shell fended off the aircraft with water cannons, but the entire episode was captured on videotape, and the images were sent via satellite to TV stations around the world.

It was vintage Greenpeace, ever the made-for-TV activists. But the impact those images from the Brent Spar had on the European public took even Greenpeace by surprise. Before the Brent Spar incident, the group was teetering on the brink of obsolescence – the eco movement had been under attack, and appeared to be sputtering out in the wake of recession, and

Greenpeace itself had lost credibility because of internal divisions and questionable financial and tactical policies. When Greenpeace decided to launch a campaign against the sinking of the Brent Spar, it had no idea that this rather arcane issue would become a cause célèbre. As Robin Grove-White, chairman of Greenpeace U.K., readily admits, "No one, and certainly not people within Greenpeace, anticipated the profound and continuing reverberations."[24]

Unlike the environmentally disastrous *Exxon Valdez* oil spill four years earlier (a clear-cut case of negligence involving a drunken captain), it wasn't as if Shell was doing anything illegal. The plan had received full approval from John Major's governing Conservatives, and sinking had become a standard way of disposing of old platforms. Besides, it was even debatable whether Greenpeace's land-disposal alternative was more ecologically sound than Shell's proposed deep-sea dunk. But the image that Greenpeace generated – of an ugly, giant, rusted pollution generator fending off the good green activists that were buzzing it like dogged mosquitoes – caught people's attention, and gave them a timely and rare opportunity to stop and think about what was being proposed. And much of the public decided that Shell wanted to sink its hunk of metal and sludge because the most profitable corporation in the world was too cheap to come up with a better plan to dispose of its garbage. This view was reinforced by a damning study that found that land disposal of the Brent Spar would cost Shell US$70 million, while sinking it would cost a mere US$16 million. Coming from a $128 billion company, this apparent penny-pinching did not impress the gasoline-buying public at all.

That Shell's actions were legal and Greenpeace's were not seemed to be entirely beside the point. In the eyes of many Europeans, Shell was morally wrong. Thousands of people protested outside its gas stations, and in Germany the Shell office reported a sales drop of between 20 and 50 percent after the scandal began – "the worst we have experienced," said the oil multinational's German head, Peter Duncan.[25] A firebomb exploded at a Shell station in Hamburg ("Don't sink the Brent Spar Oil Platform" was the message left behind), and there was a drive-by shooting at a Frankfurt outlet. (No one was injured.) The unofficial boycott also spread through Britain to Denmark, Austria and the Netherlands.

Four months after the protests began, on June 20, 1995, something unprecedented happened: Shell backed down. It would spend the extra millions to tow the platform to Norway, where it would be dismantled on land. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, it was "a humiliating and painful U-turn."[26] Grove-White articulates the extent of the Brent Spar victory: "For the first time, an environmental group had catalyzed international opinion to bring about the kind of change of policy that unsettled the very basis of executive authority. However briefly, the world turned upside down – the rule book had been rewritten."[27]

Before the Brent Spar campaign was launched, there had been internal battles within Greenpeace about whether the group could "sell" the disposal of an old industrial hunk of junk as a galvanizing, media-friendly issue. Dutch Greenpeace campaigner Giys Thieme recalls the concerns inside the organization: "It wasn't an oil campaign, it wasn't an atmosphere campaign, it wasn't a chlorine campaign."[28] Neither was it a fight for fish, or whales, or even cute baby seals. Brent Spar, it turns out, was about the idea of preserving untouched space, just as the anti-logging protests in British Columbia's Clayoquot Sound a year earlier had been about protecting one of the last remaining stands of ancient, virgin forest. Clayoquot was about biodiversity, but it was also about preserving the idea of wilderness, and Brent Spar was much the same. Although Greenpeace presented scientific studies on the ecological impact the oil platform would have on the ocean floor (getting some of its facts wrong along the way), the fight was not so much about environmental protection in the traditional sense as it was about the need to keep the Atlantic Ocean floor from being used as a junkyard. Shell's plans to bury the monstrosity in the depths of the sea resonated in the public psyche worldwide: here was proof that if multinationals were left to their own devices, there would be no open space left on earth – even the depths of the ocean, the last great wilderness, would be colonized.

Shell, the British government and much of the business press pointed out that this reaction was entirely irrational. "Science Loses to Joe Six-Pack" a headline in *The Wall Street Journal* announced, while *The Economist* declared "A Defeat for Rational Decision Making." They were right, in a way. This concept of protecting the unknowable – for no empirical reason in the

short term except that it comforts us that it is there—was indeed amorphous, but it was also powerful. As *Guardian* columnist Suzanne Moore wrote, Brent Spar had at least as much to do with mysticism as with science: "In the depths strange species lurk, and though we may never ever see them, we feel in our hearts that they should be left alone. Why must they share the great dark deep with bits and bobs from a dismembered oil platform?"[29]

The lesson Greenpeace took away from its Brent Spar victory, writes Grove-White, was about the sanctity of "the global commons"—places not named on any map, not owned by any private interest and thus belonging to everybody. The group also learned another lesson, something the anti-Nike campaigners had also discovered: targeting a big, rich, ubiquitous multinational corporation is to the late nineties what saving the whales was to the late eighties. It is populist and it is popular, and it was enough to bring Greenpeace back from the brink of death. After Brent Spar, the group was showered with members and money and, as *The Guardian* reported, it was even bequeathed estates. "One woman had phoned to say she had changed her will. 'Left all estate to Greenpeace,' says the note. Wants us to 'buy an inflatable with it and bash Shell.'"[30] In its Brent Spar postmortem *The Wall Street Journal* noted gravely that in the current climate, "economic warfare may be the best way to wage eco-warfare."[31]

Shell's capitulation also provided activists with another lesson. After going to the wall defending the appropriateness and inescapability of Shell's original plan, Prime Minister John Major was left looking like a corporate lap dog—and an unloved one at that. When Shell reversed its position, Major could only mutter that the executives were "wimps" for caving in to public pressure. His position was so compromised that it may well have played a role in his decision, only two days after Shell's U-turn, to step down as head of the Conservative Party and force a vote on his leadership. In this way, Brent Spar proved that corporations—even a notoriously cagey and cloistered company like Royal Dutch/Shell—are sometimes as vulnerable to public pressure as democratically elected governments (occasionally more so).

The lesson proved particularly relevant in the next Shell challenge—the need to focus world attention on the multinational's role in the despoliation of Nigeria, under the protection of the corrupt government of the late

General Sani Abacha. If the general wasn't vulnerable to pressure, Shell certainly was.

From the Ocean as Trash Pit to the Land as Oil Slick

Since the 1950s, Shell Nigeria has extracted $30 billion worth of oil from the land of the Ogoni people, in the Niger Delta. Oil revenue makes up 80 percent of the Nigerian economy—$10 billion annually—and, of that, more than half comes from Shell. But not only have the Ogoni people been deprived of the profits from their rich natural resource, many still live without running water or electricity, and their land and water have been poisoned by open pipelines, oil spills and gas fires.

Under the leadership of the writer and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Ken Saro-Wiwa, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) campaigned for reform, and demanded compensation from Shell. In response, and in order to keep the oil profits flowing into the government's coffers, General Sani Abacha directed the Nigerian military to take aim at the Ogoni. They killed and tortured thousands. The Ogoni not only blamed Abacha for the attacks, they also accused Shell of treating the Nigerian military as a private police force, paying it to quash peaceful protest on Ogoni land, in addition to giving financial support and legitimacy to the Abacha regime.

Facing mounting protests within Nigeria, Shell withdrew from Ogoni land in 1993—a move that only put further pressure on the military to remove the Ogoni threat. A leaked memo from the head of the Rivers State Internal Security Force of the Nigerian Army was quite explicit: "Shell operations still impossible unless ruthless military operations are undertaken for smooth economic activities to commence.... Recommendations: Wasting operations during MOSOP and other gatherings making constant military presence justifiable. Wasting targets cutting across communities and leadership cadres especially vocal individuals of various groups."[32]

On May 10, 1994—five days after the memo was written—Ken Saro-Wiwa said, "This is it. They [the Nigerian military] are going to arrest us all and execute us. All for Shell."[33] Twelve days later, he was arrested and tried for murder. Before receiving his sentence, Saro-Wiwa told the tribunal, "I and my colleagues are not the only ones on trial. Shell is here on trial.... The

company has, indeed, ducked this particular trial, but its day will surely come." Then, on November 10, 1995 – despite pressure from the international community, including the Canadian and Australian governments, and to a lesser extent the governments of Germany and France – the Nigerian military government executed Saro-Wiwa along with eight other Ogoni leaders who had protested against Shell. It became an international incident and, once again, people took their protests to their Shell stations, widely boycotting the company. In San Francisco Greenpeaceniks staged a re-enactment of Saro-Wiwa's murder, with the noose fastened around the towering Shell sign (see image, page 364).

As Reclaim the Streets' John Jordan said of multinationals: "Inadvertently, they have helped us see the whole problem as one system." And here was that interconnected system in action: Shell, intent on sinking a monstrous oil platform off the coast of Britain, was simultaneously entangled in a human-rights debacle in Nigeria, in the same year that it laid off workers (despite earning huge profits), all so that it could pump gas into the cars of London – the very issue that had launched Reclaim the Streets. Because Ken Saro-Wiwa was a poet and playwright, his case was also claimed by the international freedom-of-expression group, PEN. Writers, including the English playwright Harold Pinter and the Nobel Prize–winning novelist Nadine Gordimer, took up the cause of Saro-Wiwa's right to express his views against Shell, and turned his persecution into the highest-profile free-expression case since the government of Iran declared a *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie, offering a bounty on his head. In an article for *The New York Times*, Gordimer wrote that "to buy Nigeria's oil under the conditions that prevail is to buy oil in exchange for blood. Other people's blood; the exaction of the death penalty on Nigerians."[34]

The convergence of social-justice, labor and environmental issues in the two Shell campaigns was not a fluke – it goes to the very heart of the emerging spirit of global activism. Ken Saro-Wiwa was killed for fighting to protect his environment, but an environment that encompassed more than the physical landscape that was being ravaged and despoiled by Shell's invasion of the delta. Shell's mistreatment of Ogoni land is both an environmental and a social issue, because natural-resource companies are notorious for

lowering their standards when they drill and mine in the Third World. Shell's opponents readily draw parallels between the company's actions in Nigeria, its history of collaborating with the former apartheid government in South Africa, its ongoing presence in the Timor Gap in Indonesian-occupied East Timor and its violent clashes with the Nahua people in the Peruvian Amazon – as well as its standoff with the U'wa people of the Colombian Andes, who threatened in January 1997 to commit mass suicide if Shell went ahead with its drilling plans.

In Saro-Wiwa, civil liberties came together with antiracism; anticapitalism with environmentalism; ecology with labor rights. The bright yellow bulbous logo of Shell – Saro-Wiwa's Goliath of an opponent – became a common enemy for all concerned citizens, to the extent that their governments around the world were required to put the matter on the international agenda. PEN protested against Shell, as did the campaign department at the Body Shop, the activist shareholders who placed the Ogoni plight on the agenda of three consecutive Shell annual meetings and thousands upon thousands of others. In June 1998, Owens Wiwa, Ken's brother, wrote this of the company's situation:

> For centuries, corporations have declared huge profits from evil practices like the trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, Apartheid and [from] dictatorships whose actions are genocidal. They have often gotten away with their loot, leaving governments to apologize. In this case, at the twilight of the 20th century, Shell has been caught in the triangle of ecosystem destruction, human rights abuse and health impairment of the Ogoni people. An apology will not be enough. We anticipate a clean-up of our soil, water and air; adequate, fair and equitable compensation for (a) the environmental damages, (b) human rights abuses due directly and indirectly to Shell activities and (c) the negative health impacts their services have on the people.[35]

To hear Shell tell it, these reparations are already well under way. "Shell continues to invest in community and environmental projects in Nigeria," R.B. Blakely, a spokesperson for Shell Canada, informed me. "Last year, Shell spent $20 million establishing hospitals, schools, educational programs and

scholarships" (MOSOP put the figure at closer to $9 million, and says only a fraction of this amount was spent on Ogoni land). The company has also, according to Blakely, revised its "statement of business principles. These principles, which include the company's environmental performance as well as its responsibilities to the communities where we operate, apply to all companies in the Shell Group in all parts of the world."[36]

To arrive at these principles, Shell has looked deep into its corporate psyche and has focus grouped and deconstructed itself into a pulp. It has put its employees through a kind of New Age–consultancy boot camp, resulting in some awfully silly displays from such a grand old firm. In the interest of reinvention, Shell executives, according to *Fortune* magazine, have "helped each other climb walls in the freezing Dutch rain. They've dug dirt at low-income housing projects and made videotapes of themselves walking around blindfolded. They've tracked their time to figure out whether they're adding any value. They've even taken Myers-Briggs personality tests to see who fits in at the new Shell and who doesn't."[37]

Part of Shell's image overhaul has involved reaching out to black communities in Europe and North America, a strategy that has created bitter divisions in poor neighborhoods that are desperate for funding but suspicious of Shell's motives. For instance, in August 1997, the Oakland School Board in California hotly debated the ethics of accepting a donation from Shell worth $2 million – $100,000 for scholarships and the rest for the creation of a Shell Youth Training Academy. Since Oakland has a large African-American population that includes exiled Nigerians, the debate was wrenching. "Children in Nigeria don't have an opportunity to get a scholarship from Shell," said Tunde Okorodudu, an Oakland parent and a Nigerian pro-democracy activist. "We really need money for the children but we don't want blood money."[38] After months of stalemate, the board (like the Portland School Board that debated whether or not to accept Nike's donation) eventually voted to accept the money.

But even as the new Shell goes Zen, tossing around trendy management terms like the "new ethical paradigm," "change agents," the "third bottom line," and the "stakeholder economy," and even as Shell Nigeria speaks of "healing the wounds," the old Shell remains.[39] Although it has not yet succeeded in returning to Ogoni land, Shell continues to operate in other parts of the Niger Delta, and in the fall of 1998 tensions in the area once again erupted. The issues were all too familiar: communities complained of polluted lands, devastated fisheries, gas fires and flaring, and of seeing enormous profits pumped out of their oil-rich land while they continued to live in poverty. "You go to the flow stations, you see they are very well equipped, with all modern facilities. You go to the neighboring village, there is no water to drink, no food to eat. That is bringing about the protests," explained Paul Orieware, a local politician.[40] Only this time, Shell was up against foes far less committed to nonviolence than the Ogoni. In October, Nigerian protestors seized two Shell helicopters, nine Shell relay stations and a drilling rig, halting, according to Associated Press, "the transfer of some 250,000 barrels of crude a day."[41] More Shell stations were stormed and occupied in March 1999. Shell denied any wrongdoing and blamed the violence on ethnic conflicts.

The Arches: The Fight for Choice

At the same time as the anti-Shell campaigns were breaking out, the McLibel Trial, which had been in the docket for a few years already, was turning into an international situation. In June 1995, the trial was coming up to its first anniversary in court, when the two defendants, Helen Steel and Dave Morris, held a press conference outside the London courthouse. They announced that McDonald's (which had sued them for libel) had made a settlement offer. The company offered to donate money to a cause of Steel and Morris's choice if the two outspoken environmentalists on trial would stop criticizing McDonald's; then everyone would leave the whole messy nightmare behind them.

Steel and Morris defiantly refused the offer. They saw no reason to give in now. The trial, which had been designed to stem the flow of negative publicity – and to gag and bankrupt Steel and Morris – had been an epic public-relations disaster for McDonald's. It had done almost as much as mad cow disease to promote vegetarianism, had certainly done more to raise the issue of labor conditions in the McJob sector than any union drive and had sparked a more profound debate about corporate censorship than any other free-speech case in recent memory.

The pamphlet at the center of the suit was first published in 1986 by London Greenpeace, a splinter group of Greenpeace International (which the hard-core Londoners deemed too centralized and mainstream for their tastes). It was an early case study in using a single brand name to connect all the dots on the social agenda: issues of rain-forest depletion (to raise the cattle), Third World poverty (forcing peasants off their farms to make way for export crops and McDonald's livestock needs), animal cruelty (in treatment of the livestock), waste production (disposable packaging and litter), health (fried fatty foods), poor labor conditions (low wages and union busting in the McJob sector) and exploitative advertising (in McDonald's target marketing to children).

But the truth is, McLibel was never really about the contents of the pamphlet. In many ways, the case against McDonald's is less compelling than the ones against Nike and Shell, both of which are supported by hard evidence of large-scale human suffering. With McDonald's the evidence was less direct and, in some ways, the issues more dated. The concern about litter-producing fast-food restaurants reached its peak in the late eighties and London Greenpeace's campaign against the company clearly came from the standpoint of meat-is-murder vegetarianism: a valid perspective, but one for which there is a limited political constituency. What made McLibel take off as a campaign on a par with the ones targeting Nike and Shell was not what the fast-food chain did to cows, forests or even its own workers. The McLibel movement took off because of what McDonald's did to Helen Steel and Dave Morris.

Franny Armstrong, who produced a documentary about the trial, points out that Britain's libel law was changed in 1993 "so that governmental bodies such as local councils are no longer able to sue for libel. This was to protect people's right to criticize public bodies. Multinationals are fast becoming more powerful than governments – and even less accountable – so shouldn't the same rules apply? With advertising budgets in the billions, it's not as though they need to turn to the law to ensure their point of view is heard."[42] In other words, for many of its supporters, Steel and Morris's case was less about the merits of fast food than about the need to protect freedom of speech in a climate of mounting corporate control. If Brent Spar was about loss of space, and Nike was about the loss of good jobs, McLibel was about loss of voice – it was about corporate censorship.

When McDonald's issued libel writs against five Greenpeace activists in 1990 over the contents of the now-notorious leaflet, three members of the group did what most people would do when faced with the prospect of going up against an $11 billion corporation: they apologized. The company had a long and successful history with this strategy. According to *The Guardian*: "Over the past 15 years, McDonald's has threatened legal action against more than 90 organizations in the U.K., including the BBC, Channel 4, the *Guardian*, the *Sun*, the Scottish TUC, the New Leaf Tea Shop, student newspapers and a children's theatre group. Even Prince Philip received a stiff letter. All of them backed down and many formally apologised in court."[43]

But Helen Steel and Dave Morris made another choice. They used the trial to launch a seven-year experiment in riding the golden arches around the global economy. For 313 days in court – the longest trial in English history – an unemployed postal worker (Morris) and a community gardener (Steel) went to war with chief executives from the largest food empire in the world.

Over the course of the trial, Steel and Morris meticulously elaborated every one of the pamphlet's claims, with the assistance of nutritional and environmental experts and scientific studies. With 180 witnesses called to the stand, the company endured humiliation after humiliation as the court heard stories of food poisoning, failure to pay legal overtime, bogus recycling claims and corporate spies sent to infiltrate the ranks of London Greenpeace. In one particularly telling incident, McDonald's executives were challenged on the company's claim that it serves "nutritious food": David Green, senior vice president of marketing, expressed his opinion that Coca-Cola is nutritious because it is "providing water, and I think that is part of a balanced diet."[44] In another embarrassing exchange, McDonald's executive Ed Oakley explained to Steel that the McDonald's garbage stuffed into landfills is "a benefit, otherwise you will end up with lots of vast empty gravel pits all over the country."[45]

On June 19, 1997, the judge finally handed down the verdict. The courtroom was packed with an odd assortment of corporate executives, pink-haired vegan anarchists and rows of journalists. It felt like an eternity to most of us sitting there, as Judge Rodger Bell read out his forty-five-page

ruling – a summary of the actual verdict, which was over a thousand pages long. Although the judge deemed most of the pamphlet's claims too hyperbolic to be acceptable (he was particularly unconvinced by its direct linking of McDonald's to "hunger in the 'Third World'"), he deemed others to be based on pure fact. Among the decisions that went in Steel and Morris's favor were that McDonald's "exploit(s) children" by "using them, as more susceptible subjects of advertising"; that its treatment of some animals has been "cruel"; that it is anti-union and pays "low wages"; that its management can be "autocratic" and "most unfair"; and that a consistent diet of McDonald's food contributes to the risk of heart disease. Steel and Morris were ordered to pay damages to McDonald's in the amount of US$95,490. But in March 1999 an appeals court judge found that Judge Bell had been overly harsh and sided more forcefully with Steel and Morris on the claims "concerning nutrition and health risks and on the allegations about pay and conditions for McDonald's employees." Still finding that their claims about food poisoning, cancer and world poverty were unproven, the court nonetheless lowered the amount of damages to $61,300.[46] McDonald's has never tried to collect its settlement and has decided not to apply for an injunction to halt the further dissemination of the leaflet.

After the first verdict, McDonald's was quick to declare victory, but few were convinced. "Not since Pyrrhus has a victor emerged so bedraggled," read *The Guardian*'s editorial the next day. "As P.R. fiascos go, this action takes the prize for ill-judged and disproportionate response to public criticism."[47] In fact, while all this was going on, the original pamphlet had gathered the cachet of a collector's item, with three million copies distributed in the U.K. alone. John Vidal had published his critically acclaimed book *McLibel: Burger Culture on Trial*; *60 Minutes* had produced a lengthy segment about the trial; England's Channel 4 had run a three-hour dramatization of it; and Franny Armstrong's documentary *McLibel: Two Worlds Collide* had made the rounds of the independent film circuit (having been turned down by every major broadcaster because of – ironically – libel concerns).

For Helen Steel, Dave Morris and their supporters, McLibel was never solely about winning in court – it was about using the courts to win over the public. And judging by the crowds outside the McDonald's outlets two days after the verdict came down, they had every right to be declaring victory. Standing outside their neighborhood McDonald's in North London on a Saturday afternoon, Steel and Morris could barely keep up with the demand for "What's wrong with McDonald's?" the leaflet that started it all. Passersby requested copies, drivers pulled over to get their McLibel mementos and mothers with toddlers stopped to talk to Helen Steel about how difficult it can be for a busy parent when her child demands unhealthy food – what can a mother do?

Across the United Kingdom, a similar scene was playing itself out at more than five hundred McDonald's outlets, all of which were simultaneously picketed on June 21, 1997, along with thirty in North America. As with the Nike protests, every event was different. At one British franchise, the community put on a street performance featuring an ax-wielding Ronald McDonald, a cow and lots of ketchup. At another, people passed out free vegetarian food. At all of them, supporters handed out the famous leaflet: 400,000 copies that weekend alone. "They were flying out of their hands," said Dan Mills of the McLibel Support Campaign, amused at the irony: before McDonald's decided to sue, London Greenpeace's campaign was winding down, and only a few hundred copies of the contentious leaflet had ever been distributed. It has now been translated into twenty-six languages and is one of the hottest properties in cyberspace.

Lessons of the Big Three: Use the Courts as a Tool

It's a good bet that many brand-name giants besides McDonald's have paid close attention to the goings-on in that British courtroom. In 1996, Guess dropped a libel suit it had launched against the L.A. women's group Common Threads, in response to a poetry reading about the plight of garment workers sewing Guess jeans.[48] Similarly, though Nike consistently accuses its critics of fabrication, it has stayed away from trying to clear its name in court. And no wonder: the courtroom is the only place where private corporations are forced to open shuttered windows and let the public look in.

As Helen Steel and Dave Morris write,

If companies do choose to use oppressive laws against their critics then court cases do not have to only be about legal procedures and verdicts. They can be turned into a public forum and focus for protest, and for the wider dissemination of the truth. This is what happened with McLibel... Maybe for the first time in history, a powerful institution (it just happened to be a fast-food chain, but in some ways could've been any financial organization or state department) was subject to lengthy, detailed and critical public scrutiny. That can only be a good thing![49]

The message has not been lost on Steel and Morris's fellow activists around the world; everyone who followed McLibel saw how effective a long, dramatic trial could be at building up a body of evidence and stoking sentiment against a corporate opponent. Some campaigners, not waiting to be sued themselves, are taking their corporate opponents to court instead. For instance, in January 1999, when U.S. labor activists decided they wanted to draw attention to the ongoing sweatshop violations in the U.S. territory of Saipan, they launched an unconventional lawsuit in California court against seventeen American retailers, including the Gap and Tommy Hilfiger. The suit, filed on behalf of thousands of Saipan garment workers, accuses the brand-name retailers and manufacturers of participating in a "racketeering conspiracy" in which young women from Southeast Asia are lured to Saipan with promises of well-paid jobs in the United States. What they get instead is wage cheating and "America's worst sweatshop," in the words of Al Meyerhoff, lead attorney on the case. A companion lawsuit further alleges that by labeling goods from Saipan "Made in the U.S.A." or "Made in the Northern Marianas, U.S.A.," the companies are engaging in false advertising, leaving customers with the impression that the manufacturers were subject to U.S. labor laws, when they were not.[50]

Meanwhile, the Center for Constitutional Rights has taken a similar tack with Royal Dutch/Shell, filing a federal lawsuit against the company in a New York court on the first anniversary of Ken Saro-Wiwa's death. According to the Center's David A. Love, "The suit – filed on behalf of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the other Ogoni activists who were executed by Nigeria's military regime in November 1995 – alleges that the executions were carried out with 'the knowledge, consent, and/or support' of Shell Oil." It further alleges that the hangings were part of a conspiracy "to violently and ruthlessly suppress any opposition to Royal Dutch/Shell's conduct in its exploitation of oil and natural gas resources in Ogoni and in the Niger Delta." Shell denies the charges and is challenging the legitimacy of the suit. At the time of writing, neither the Saipan case nor the Shell case had been settled.[51]

Lessons of the Big Three: Use the Net to Shine a McSpotlight

If the courts are becoming a popular tool to pry open closed corporations, it is the Internet that has rapidly become the tool of choice for spreading information about multinationals around the world. All three of the campaigns described in this chapter have distinguished themselves by a pioneering use of information technologies, an approach that continues to unnerve their corporate targets.

Each day, information about Nike flows freely via E-mail between the U.S. National Labor Committee and Campaign for Labor Rights; the Dutch-based Clean Clothes Campaign; the Australian Fairwear Campaign; the Hong Kong–based Asian Monitoring and Resource Centre; the British Labour Behind the Label Coalition and Christian Aid; the French Agir Ici and Artisans du Monde; the German Werkstatt Okonomie; the Belgian Les Magasins de Monde; and the Canadian Maquila Solidarity Network – to name but a few of the players. In a September 1997 press release, Nike attacked its critics as "fringe groups, which are again using the Internet and fax modems to promote mistruths and distortions for their own purposes." But by March 1998, Nike was ready to treat its on-line critics with a little more respect. In explaining why it had just introduced yet another package of labor reforms, company spokesman Vada Manager said, "You make changes because it's the right thing to do. But obviously our actions have clearly been accelerated because of the World Wide Web."[52]

Shell was similarly humbled by the mobility of both the Brent Spar campaign and the Ogoni support movement. Natural-resource companies had grown accustomed to dealing with activists who could not escape the confines of their nationhood: a pipeline or mine could spark a peasants' revolt in the Philippines or the Congo, but it would remain contained, reported

only by the local media and known only to people in the area. But today, every time Shell sneezes, a report goes out on the hyperactive "shell-nigeria-action" listserve, bouncing into the in-boxes of all the far-flung organizers involved in the campaign, from Nigerian leaders living in exile to student activists around the world. And when a group of activists occupied part of Shell's U.K. headquarters in January 1999, they made sure to bring a digital camera with a cellular linkup, allowing them to broadcast their sit-in on the Web, even after Shell officials turned off the electricity and phones.

Shell has responded to the rise of Net activism with an aggressive Internet strategy of its own: in 1996, it hired Simon May, a twenty-nine-year-old "Internet manager." According to May, "There has been a shift in the balance of power, activists are no longer entirely dependent on the existing media. Shell learned it the hard way with the Brent Spar, when a lot of information was disseminated outside the regular channels."[53] But if the power balance has shifted, it is May's job to shift it back in Shell's favor: he oversees the monitoring of all on-line mentions of the company, responds to E-mail queries about social issues and has helped to establish Shell's on-line "social concerns" discussion forum on the company Web site.

Big companies are big targets... Thousands of companies are or have been the targets of anti-corporate activism online. With WeberWorks/Monitor powered by eWatch, not only will WeberWorks/Monitor clients be alerted when they become a target, they will also receive critical insights for how to effectively handle the situation.

—James M. Alexander, president of eWatch, an Internet monitoring company, May 1998

The Internet played a similar role during the McLibel Trial, catapulting London's grassroots anti-McDonald's movement into an arena as global as the one in which its multinational opponent operates. "We had so much information about McDonald's, we thought we should start a library," Dave Morris explains, and with this in mind, a group of Internet activists launched the McSpotlight Web site. The site not only has the controversial pamphlet on-line, it contains the complete 20,000-page transcript of the trial, and offers a debating room where McDonald's workers can exchange horror stories about McWork under the Golden Arches. The site, one of the most popular destinations on the Web, has been accessed approximately sixty-five million times.[54]

Ben, one of the studiously low-profile programmers for McSpotlight told me that "this is a medium that doesn't require campaigners to jump through hoops doing publicity stunts, or depend on the good will of an editor to get their message across."[55] It's also less vulnerable to libel suits than more traditional media. Ben explains that while McSpotlight's server is located in the Netherlands, it has "mirror sites" in Finland, the U.S., New Zealand and Australia. That means that if a server in one country is targeted by McDonald's lawyers, the site will still be available around the world from the other mirrors. In the meantime, everyone visiting the site is invited to give their opinion on whether or not McSpotlight will get sued. "Is McSpotlight next in court? Click on yes or no."

Once again, the broader corporate world is scrambling to learn the lessons of these campaigns. Speaking in Brussels at a June 1998 conference on the growing power of anticorporate groups, Peter Verhille of the PR firm Entente International noted that "one of the major strengths of pressure groups—in fact the leveling factor in their confrontation with powerful companies—is their ability to exploit the instruments of the telecommunication revolution. Their agile use of global tools such as the Internet reduces the advantage that corporate budgets once provided."[56] Indeed, the beauty of the Net for activists is that it allows coordinated international actions with minimal resources and bureaucracy. For instance, for the International Nike Days of Action, local activists simply download information pamphlets from the Campaign for Labor Rights Web site to hand out at their protests, then file detailed E-mail reports from Sweden, Australia, the U.S. and Canada, which are then forwarded to all participating groups.

A similar electronic clearinghouse model was used to coordinate both the Reclaim the Streets global street parties and the picketing outside McDonald's outlets after the McLibel verdict. The McSpotlight programmers posted a list of all 793 McDonald's franchises in Britain and in the weeks before the verdict came down, local activists signed up to "adopt a store (and teach it some respect)" on the day of protest. More than half were adopted. I had been following all of this closely from Canada, but when I finally got a chance to see the London headquarters of the McLibel Support Campaign—the hub from

which hundreds of political actions had been launched around the world, linking up thousands of protestors and becoming a living archive for all things anti-McDonald's—I was shocked. In my mind, I had pictured an office crammed with people tapping away on high-tech equipment. I should have known better: McLibel's head office is nothing more than a tiny room at the back of a London flat with graffiti in the stairwells. The office walls are papered in subvertisements and anarchist agitprop. Helen Steel, Dave Morris, Dan Mills and a few dozen volunteers had gone head to head with McDonald's for seven years with a rickety PC, an old modem, one telephone and a fax machine. Dan Mills apologized to me for the absence of an extra chair.

Tony Juniper of Britain's environmental group Friends of the Earth calls the Internet "the most potent weapon in the toolbox of resistance."[57] That may well be so, but the Net is more than an organizing tool—it has become an organizing model, a blueprint for decentralized but cooperative decision making. It facilitates the process of information sharing to such a degree that many groups can work in concert with one another without the need to achieve monolithic consensus (which is often impossible, anyway, given the nature of activist organizations). And because it is so decentralized, these movements are still in the process of forging links with their various wings around the world, continually surprising themselves with how far unreported little victories have traveled, how thoroughly bits of research have been recycled and absorbed. These movements are only now starting to feel their own reach and, as the students and local communities profiled in the next chapter will show, their own power.

THE OCEANIC FEELING AND THE REGIONAL IMAGINARY

Christopher L. Connery

see citation in Sekula, fn. 21 (page 26)

The "spatial turn" has been increasingly evident in a variety of disciplines, political positions, and analytical frameworks during the last twenty years. The critique of historicism, the disappearance of depth, the general flattening out, and other intimations of the spatial are indeed defining features of our putative new era. New geographies and new cartographies have arisen to map it; the Pacific Rim is one newly imagined space. I have argued elsewhere[1] that during the late cold war years, roughly 1975–1989, the mythology of the Pacific Rim was symptomatic of the particular crisis of self-imagining faced by the United States in that era. This was an era when the cold war binary had fundamentally lost its meaning, when the great postwar U.S. expansion had met its first significant downturn, and when capitalism's success in one area of the Other (Japan and the East Asian NICs) had problematized the once easy identification of successful capitalism with the West.[2]

The Pacific Rim served the needs of its period in a particular way. Consider the rim. Its circularity conveyed at once the universality of the last horizon and the final Emersonian Circle, yet its linearity served less to contain than to exclude: the Third World, the U.S. "rust belt," and even Europe—front line of the old, tired, cold war binary and still only groping toward Maastricht—were all, like the moribund socialist world in the post-Vietnam era, off the rim. The Pacific Rim was the geo-imaginary of the postoriginary, where source or destination of commodity or capital counted less than circulation, pure flow. The challenges to the concepts of both "the West" and "the nation" created a need for new spaces within which history could take place. The Pacific Rim was the "spatial fix" (David Harvey's coinage in *The Limits to Capital*) for the perceived despatializing tendency of multi- or transnational capitalism.

James O'Connor, one of the first Marxist theorists of the mid-seventies' crisis, points toward one facet of the national problematic in his notion of the roles of legitimation and accumulation in the capitalist state.[3] Certain aspects of the way the state legitimates the system of capital (education and welfare, accommodation to labor, etc.) will come into conflict with the state's function in supporting capital accumulation, and this conflict is one source of fiscal crisis. The emerging dominance of transnational corporations problematizes the spatiality of legitimation. Accumulation occurs more and more beyond the parameters of the state, but ideological apparatuses and other organs of the legitimation function cannot be so easily deracinated.[4] The imagination of the Pacific Rim can be read as one attempt to conceptualize—and it is important to note that this conceptualization is primarily for U.S. consumers—an arena for a hoped-for legitimation through the false promise of spectacularity provided by common Pacific Rim tropes of the dynamic, the new, the revivified, and the miraculous. As Bruce Cumings mocks "Rimspeak," "[t]ropes of dynamism and miracles also say this: Capitalist universalism is the only thing I can see; thus I discover the Pacific Rim."[5]

The myth of free-market capitalism has always implied a teleology of equilibrium. The Pacific Rim's putative dynamic yet equalizing flows, wherein everyone on the Rim benefits, is in one respect the imagining of postnational equilibrium (Pacific Rim discourse was always antiprotectionist; President Clinton's trip to Asia in the autumn of 1994 reactivated many of the discourse's tropes and concluded with plans for a Pacific free-trade zone similar to that provided for by NAFTA). Yet a fundamental character of the Pacific Rim as spatial image—its exclusivity—reveals the disequilibrium and differentiation that Marxist and non-Marxist geographers recognize as fundamental to the spatiality of capitalism. The Pacific Rim as "growth region" within a global disequilibrium thus partakes of the character of regions as they have come to be understood since the onset of capital's postwar "restructuring" (variously termed post-Fordist, postmodernist, etc). For the Pacific Rim to exist, there must be differentiated regions that are off the rim, in stagnation or decline.

The region (the term as commonly used in this period refers primarily to the subnational region) has emerged as a primary category in postmodern geography and political economy. The promise and contemporaneity of regionalism is stated most forcefully by Edward Soja:

> At present, the relatively new field of regional political economy and a reinvigorated and reoriented regional industrial geography seem to be the

most insightful and innovative areas for analyzing the macro-, meso-, and micro-political economies of restructuring. Both can be called flexible specializations, for they are less concerned with old boundaries and disciplinary constraints and are thus more open to timely adaptation to meet new demands and challenges. The regional perspective facilitates the synthesis of the urban and the global while remaining cognizant of the powerful mediating role of the national state even as this role dwindles somewhat in the current era. The mutually responsive interplay of regionalization and regionalism provides a particularly insightful window on to the dynamics of spatialization and geographically uneven development, gives greater depth and political meaning to the notion of spatial divisions of labor, and abounds with useful connections to the revamped social ontologies discussed earlier. Just as important, its openness and flexibility, its inclination to try new combinations of ideas rather than fall back to old categorical dualities, makes *critical regional studies* [emphasis in original] the most likely point of confluence for the three streams of contemporary restructuring. Here is where our understanding of post-fordism, postmodernism, and a post-historicist critical social theory may most bountifully take place.[6]

The critical turn toward regionalism began in the mid-seventies. The *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, where much of the important theorization and conceptualization of regionalism has taken place, began publication in 1977. Although this coincides roughly with the onset of Pacific Rim discourse, the Pacific Rim is articulated as region only in journalism and in late capitalist boosterism for popular audiences, such as in the work of Alvin Toffler, Kenichi Ohmae, and others.[7] Though it must be emphasized that scholars in the field of "critical regionalism" would never take seriously the idea of the Pacific Rim as an area of analysis,[8] I believe that Pacific Rim discourse is a displaced version of a similar problematic. One of the factors that stimulated the growth of critical regional studies was the emergence of new regions of economic growth, such as the U.S. Sun Belt, southern Germany, the "Third Italy," or Silicon Valley, and the decline of other regions, particularly ones that one would associate with an earlier industrial era. This process made it impossible to ignore the materiality of capitalist space. But critical regionalism's origination in the binarisms of developed/underdeveloped, expansion/contraction, or growth/stagnation is significant. The concept of region, arising as it does within a binary logic of difference, is a semiotic utopia, a "spatial fix"

for those faced with analyzing the always differentiating but always concealing logic of capital. The region, less encumbered by the various ideological or mythical mystifications that pervade the state, will be where history and analysis take place. Regions, saturated as they are with the always signifying real, are models of flexible semiogenesis. Soja's enthusiasm for the field of critical regional studies, as noted in the passage quoted above, is one indication of a general hunger for the spatial fix during the period under discussion.

Most of the important critical regional studies incorporate a logic of disequilibrium and take seriously the disjunctive and contingent character of regional differentiation. The restiveness of the category of region and the recognized dangers of its reification are evident in the following passage by Storper and Walker:

> We prefer the term "territory" to "region." Territory is less theory-laden and more open to fresh connotation; it can refer to any geographical scale, as it denotes functional interaction rather than bounded spaces; a fabric of related places with some coherent linkages may constitute the territory of an industry, or a "territorial complex." The concept of region suffers from being unduly identified with sub-national regions, whereas the developmental processes we are concerned with take place at the sub-national, national, and international scales at once. The concept is further handicapped by a long tradition of treating areas as self-evident units, such as the Mississippi River basin, the state of Georgia, or the northeastern manufacturing belt. It is, moreover, often taken to be a natural rather than a socially constructed and reconstructed fabric.[9]

Storper and Walker prefer the "territorial industrial complex" as their unit of analysis. Built into the notion of the territorial industrial complex, though, is flexibility, instability, and the certainty of eventual change. It is the geography of a more fluid, post-Fordist capitalism.

By decentering a particular industry or corporation from the position as sole defining element of a region, the dynamism and disequilibrium that account for regional change are spatialized and made an essential character of the unit of analysis. Recent work in critical regionalism and industrial geography has clearly had great value in allowing a more complete analysis of the workings of industrial capitalism, though we have seen that even radical geographers like Storper and Walker are not immune to the Rim's signifying seduction. Contingent spatialities, dynamic space, or spatialities with built-in resistance to reification have also become commonplace in cultural theory, wherein every

field of analysis is now a "site of contestation," where the putatively false teleologies of market equilibrium or world socialism are suspended in the pure dynamism of the present resistance-saturated moment.

Both critical cultural theory and critical regionalism can survive with the always continuing spatial fix of flexibility, contingency, or self-negation. Pacific Rim discourse functioned in a different way. It was an attempt to supply a restructuring global capitalism with its spatial fix, but by being a trope for capitalist universalism, it had to incorporate into its mode of discursive existence the related tropes of teleological equilibrium and end of history. As such it could never be truly localized or regionalized and still retain its mythological promise. The Pacific Rim, like the ever-expanding Emersonian Circle, had to transcend itself and enclose the entire developed world—thence Pacific Rim booster Alexander Besher's use of the term "global rim"[10] or "management guru" Kenichi Ohmae's notion of the ILE (Interlinked Economy), which he elaborates in his recent book *The Borderless World* (1990):

> An isle is emerging that is bigger than a continent—the Interlinked Economy of the Triad (the United States, Europe, and Japan), joined by aggressive economies such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. . . . It is becoming so powerful that it has swallowed most consumers and corporations, made traditional national borders almost disappear, and pushed bureaucrats, politicians, and the military toward the status of declining industries.[11]

Ohmae's swallowing image is significant, because only on the scale of the whole world can "localizable" ideological elements be disappeared; only in the final circle can capital operate with total transparency.

The Pacific Rim is a mythological region, but as I have argued above, its creation and historical logic partake of certain elements of the regional imperative. This is particularly evident in the binarism implied in the Rim's very precariousness. It was never merely the Rim, though, but rather the Pacific—the Last Ocean—that allowed this pseudo-region to function as a space for revel at the shore of the economic sublime. A rim encircles, and its interior, in rimspeak, is the void that gives substance to what surrounds it. Within the Rim, the Pacific, rather than being simply the largest expanse of the world ocean, becomes subordinate to the Rim's dynamic, though still fundamentally insubstantial, terrestriality.

In addition to functioning as U.S. capital's spatial fix, a critical regionalism

for uncritical universalists, the Pacific Rim was the culmination of capitalist Western European and U.S. mythological orientation toward the ocean, which, as we will see below, floated binarisms, ambiguities, and sublimities of its own kind. Modernity arose out of the world ocean, first made appropriately spatial in Magellan's westward journey across the Pacific. Ocean as source and ocean as destiny figure in the ocean's mythological temporality; it is both life-giving mother and final frontier. The conquest of the world ocean being coterminous with the rise of Western capitalism, it is natural that the ocean has long functioned as capital's myth element, down to the postfrontier of Pacific Rim discourse. Tropes of oceanic sublimity, as in the "oceanic feeling" discussed below, need to be read against ocean as created,[12] mythological space, and it must always be borne in mind whose and what interests are served by that mythology. It is to Ocean as myth element and telos that I will devote the rest of this paper.[13]

The Oceanic Feeling

The "oceanic feeling" is invoked by Romain Rolland, novelist, biographer of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, and Indophile devotee of the *Baghavad Gita* in a letter to Freud following a reading of Freud's *The Future of an Illusion.* Freud reports that for Rolland, the oceanic feeling was "a sensation of 'eternity,' a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded—as it were, 'oceanic.' . . . One may, he thinks, rightly call oneself religious on the ground of this oceanic feeling alone, even if one rejects every belief and every illusion."[14] Freud could not feel it. He could see in the oceanic feeling only a survival of an infantile stage of ego development. For Freud, this childlike "oceanic feeling" of limitlessness and boundlessness becomes sublimated in the adult ego's adaptation to the neurosis of "civilization,"[15] although the Kantian and Romantic claims for an aesthetic sublime provide an always renewable source for a "fictive experience of self-empowerment."[16]

The ocean is a prime activator of the trope of the sublime: limitless, unfathomably deep, indefinite. As Melville writes in *Moby Dick,* "[i]n landlessness alone resides the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God."[17] In the language of Western expansionism, whether of empire or of consciousness, whose oceanic moves I will discuss further below, this oceanic sublime is an oft-invoked source of inspiration. Emerson, in "Circles," writes that "the only sea is limitation," whose shores will always disappoint and deject, but goes on to

invoke a universal ocean, "fluid and volatile," the "flying Perfect." Rob Wilson has cogently analyzed the *pragmatic* character of the sublime in the context of U.S. expansionism, in terms which apply easily to its oceanic version:

> This trope of the sublime proved habitually pragmatic: immensity implied an (imagined) vacancy, and emptiness the possibility of strong and various deeds (great poems) to be outdone. Converting fullness into emptiness and vacancy into possibility, the American sublime helped generate its own sublime consequences and works—transport, aggrandizement, achievement on a Euro-competitive scale. Circularity was not so much a logical problem (tautology) or way of over-imagining (hyperbole) to be avoided, but an identity-consolidating tactic to circulate fresh transport, surplus, and self-empowerment.[18]

Perhaps, though, the ocean is *too* external: its assimilability, even to the flexible and contingent pragmatism of American sublimity, is always in doubt. The solidity of even the vastest American prairie or deepest Adirondack mountains allows conversion into images of sublimity that the ocean does not. Even for mythographer Roland Barthes, the ocean resists signification: "Here I am before the sea; it is true that it bears no message."[19] Yet signify it does, although in a manner beyond resolve. Is it the void beyond and outside of the terrestrial real? a blank interstitial element? Is it a pure void that activates the terrestrial symbolic system? Is it the real beneath the floating discontinuousness of land; the universal syntax? The ambiguity that inheres in the ocean's very liquid element renders it uncertain whether it is "another vast metaphor or an indifferent energy flatly separated from human discourse."[20]

The Element

Liquid is always the problem element—shapeless but not abstract; temporal; changeable. Bachelard writes: "Water is truly the transitory element. It is the essential ontological metamorphosis between heaven and earth. A being dedicated to water is a being in flux."[21] Bachelard's meditation on water, "a substantial nothingness," is on its surface antisublime. Only fresh water—living water, as in the magical springs and rivers of Homeric Greece—functions as a real mythological element. For Bachelard, the sea is "inhuman water, in that it fails in the first duty of every revered element, which is to serve man directly."[22] Beyond the human, beyond daily life and thus beyond dreams—apprehensible only to the iterable, narrative faculty, rather than to the oneiric, poetic power of

the psyche—Bachelard finds that sea water is beyond theory and unworthy of analysis. "Natural dreams create a fable about what has been seen, touched, and eaten by the dreamer. . . . The sea-oriented unconscious is . . . a spoken unconscious, an unconscious too dispersed in adventure tales, an unconscious that never sleeps. . . . It is less profound than that unconscious which dreams about common experiences."[23]

Bachelard's ocean is the inhuman sea of the "Book of Revelation," also invoked by W. H. Auden: "The sea, in fact, is that state of barbaric vagueness and disorder out of which civilization has emerged and into which, unless saved by the efforts of gods and men, it is always liable to relapse. It is so little of a friendly symbol that the first thing which the author of the Book of Revelation notices in his vision of the new heaven and earth at the end of time is that 'there was no more sea.' "[24]

The categorical difficulty and ontological uncertainty that we find in Bachelard's ocean resurfaces in a recent article on the sublime and slime, "Philosophy (and Sociology) in the Wetlands: The S(ub)lime and the Uncanny." In slime—the dark ooze of swamps, wetlands, female genitalia, and all else that belongs to the uncanny obverse of the sublime—author Rod Giblett has found a figure that tropes the capitalist/masculinist will to fill in, "[a]nd so attain to the sublime heights of capitalism, theory, and the super-ego in which men (I don't exclude myself) can calculate themselves as independent of nature and repudiate their connections with their mothers, their own bodies, and with mother earth . . . and can continue to exploit the natural environment with impunity a highly dubious, masculinist, and (self) destructive enterprise—through the triumph of capitalist modernization and of modernity."[25] Giblett needs slime as the fecund, intermediate element, much as Bachelard locates paste, the combination of water and a solid, as the basic component of materiality itself. Part of Giblett's article is a criticism of Sartre's antislime, pro-river excesses in *Being and Nothingness*, whose unreflective masculinism Giblett exposes to notable effect. But where, and what, is the ocean? Even in Giblett's brilliant chart, his inclusive "geocorpography of modernity," ocean does not appear, although sun, fire, earth, city, land, and mass all do. The bottom of the chart groups in one category primeval slime, wetland, abjection, soft, writing, trace, feminine, unconscious, id, Hell, infinite temporality, eternity, and cloaca, and, in another, liquid, water, river, depth, flow, masculine, conscious(ness), and temporarity.[26] Slime must function, in the logic of this system, as the crucial middle element because it can be filled in and thereby function as the object of the masculinist, capitalist subject. But it is uncanny, it must be stressed, and thus only a tempo-

rary return of the repressed. The ocean, though, can never be filled in. Like a mother, it can never be forgotten; it is as primary and extensive an element as sky.

The identification of the ocean with a strictly maternal femininity, and there is scarcely a single piece of Western writing on the ocean that does not make this identification, is certainly one source of the ocean's unassimilability for Giblett and other theorists of slime (he cites Zoe Sofoulis and Jane Gallop). But in order for ocean to function as maternal presence on the elemental level, it cannot be the "substantial nothingness" which nonetheless nourishes, as do Bachelard's *eaux vivantes*. To de-aquify sea water, Bachelard invokes Jules Michelet, for whom ocean water was not water per se, but more than water. Michelet's chapter on the character of water is called "The Sea of Milk" ("La mer de lait"). His sea water is mucus: slimy and teeming with life. The ocean is sublime slime, uncanny and sublime at once.

Jules Michelet's *La Mer* was published shortly after Melville's *Moby Dick*, and the two works have much in common. Both ascribe critical significance to the whaling industry in stimulating the earliest voyages into the far reaches of the ocean; both reflect the rapid mid-nineteenth-century advances in marine biology and oceanography, the product of those voyages of scientific exploration which followed upon Western expansionism and world conquest; both find common to Western humanity a kind of "oceanic feeling," as seen in Melville's silent ocean-gazing crowds at the Battery and in Michelet's descriptions of beachgoers. Both books are filled with the materiality of ocean water. Melville's ocean varies in shape and color, has local characteristics, and shows the tracks of surface-swimming whales. Although Michelet begins his book with an evocation of the ocean's primitive fearsomeness, its nonbreathable, alienating difference, this is merely to prepare the reader for the rhetorical reversal to come in his eulogy for the sea of milk. The mucus, the viscosity which one feels on one's hands as sea water courses through them, the slipperiness that makes fish shine, is "l'élément universel de la vie."[27] And this element is not simply a nutritive Outside, but a reorganized, chaotic version of the body itself, where bones, blood, marrow, and human energy are simply divided up and redistributed among the various life elements of the sea.[28] Michelet's ocean is far from the dead inhumanity ascribed to the oceans of the New Testament or Douglas MacArthur. This living, always nourishing ocean is "la grande femelle du globe, dont l'infatigable désir, la conception permanente, l'enfantement, ne finit jamais" [the globe's great female, whose tireless desire, ceaseless procreation, and childbirthing never end].[29] Could the ocean, then, be a kind of maternal sublime, a horizon that is also a source?

Michelet condemns ocean voyages of conquest and violence, and ends his book with a chapter called "*Vita Nuova* des nations," containing pleas for aquaculture and seaside sanatoria. Just as he ends *La Peuple* with a plea for universal love as the answer to class conflict, so does he in the final section of *La Mer* prescribe partaking of the oceanic universal life energy as a cure for the ills of nations. Michelet is a man of the shores, a bather, a breather of ocean air. He prefers tide pools to the wild and endless open sea. Here he shares ground with Bachelard, who goes beyond Michelet in seeing all movement far into the sea as will to power. Identifying the sea as in no way a body, as an always beyond, a realm of pure struggle, Bachelard's ocean is "a dynamic environment that responds to the dynamic quality of our assaults,"[30] Bachelard identifies the Swinburne complex as an activation of the ambivalent dualities of human and ocean. "More than anyone else, the swimmer can say: the world is my will; the world is my provocation. It is I who stir up the sea."[31] Bachelard wrote *Water and Dreams* during the Nazi era. Perhaps he had made a connection between the Swinburne complex and the horrors that arose from late Weimar and post-Weimar Germany, which, as was documented in the photography of Kurt Reichert and the films of Leni Riefenstahl, was obsessed with swimming and diving. "[H]e who would be a superhuman very naturally rediscovers the same dreams entertained by the child who would be a man. To govern the sea is a superhuman dream. It is both an inspired and a childlike will."[32] Bachelard was not an ocean swimmer; Michelet was, as one would expect of an historian of his kind. Michelet had greater company among the swimmers, whalers, traders, conquerors, regressives, and other activators of history who went into the ocean.

Ariston Men Hydōr[33]

The popularity of Western naturalism's commonplace hypothesis of an aquatic origin for all life added a new mythic dimension to oceangoing. It becomes not just a journey into the beyond, into a future—an exploration[34]—but a journey back to the source. Ocean as origin serves many purposes: it stakes a claim; it universalizes, by humanizing the inhuman element and thus overcoming that Emersonian dread of limits, wherein earth's ocean could function as an absolute horizon rather than a "flying Perfect." The watery way to origins gets read

in nearly all registers of human temporality: in phylogenesis, in ego development, and in the political, social, and economic history of the West.

Sir Alister Clavering Hardy, a twentieth-century marine biologist who wrote on plankton, evolution, and the connections between natural science and religion, is the best known of those evolutionary biologists who suggested that human anatomy itself was shaped by amphibious living; that erectness, symmetry, hairlessness, the streamlinedness of remaining hair tracks, the proportions of limbs to trunk and arm to legs, and the layer of subcutaneous fat so conducive to buoyancy were all adaptations to a life of swimming.[35] Carl Sauer, a distinguished twentieth-century U.S. geographer, went even further than Hardy, hypothesizing that Stone Age beach culture was the origin of social life and that not only physical, but social features of "humanity" originated in the nature of amphibian life on the beach:

> In swimming and diving there is no significant advantage of sex and least of age. When European discoverers got overseas they were amazed to see the aquatic skill and enjoyment of the inhabitants of warm and temperate coasts. Whether very primitive like the Tasmanians and natives of the gulf of California or of advanced cultures like those of the South Seas and the Caribbean, both sexes were adept swimmers and divers. They swam for a purpose, and for the pleasure it gave. Everyone, young and old, went into the water. Such joint activity, referred back to primeval times, would provide for the participation of the males in getting food and in sharing responsibilities.
>
> Settling inland—whether in savanna, forest, or desert—required other skills and offered reduced satisfaction.[36]

The physical and intellectual satisfactions offered by swimming and diving were (re)acquired fairly recently by Westerners. The first major swimming treatise of the modern era—Everard Digby's *De Arte Natandi* of 1587 (translated from Latin into English a few years later)—argues that swimming ("art" and "science") is "natural" to humankind. Yet the strangeness of its suggested means for entering the water indicate that the conceptual boundary between terrestrial and aquatic activity is still somewhat mysterious: "laying his hands on his neck and forcibly running to [the] bank, where declining his head downwards and turning round over with his heels, he may light into the water upon his back."[37] Swimming as transcendental experience—a spiritual, originary, mystical, or purifying exercise—is a later development, corresponding in the West nearly exactly to the high period of industrial capitalism—romanticism and modernism. Before the nineteenth century, swimming was comparatively rare; many of the best-known ocean explorers were in fact nonswimmers. The connection between early-nineteenth-century Byronic swimming, Michelet's ocean bathing, Swinburne's S and M by the sea, Goethe's cold baths (which "transformed bourgeois sensual exhaustion into a fresh and vigorous existence"[38]), and the triumph of the will captured on film in the swimming and diving sections of Leni Riefenstahl's "Olympia" (1937) all mark an era when swimming provided a primary avenue to self-fulfillment or self-transcendence.

England, first in empire and industry in the nineteenth century, was also first in swimming. Swimming was intimately connected to the classicism that also served the imperial mission so well. The ancient Greeks were not prolific pool builders, but British romantics, so fond of evoking Greek nymphs and water deities, often used Greek sources for their natant lyricism. Imperial Rome, however, was one of the great ages of swimming and pool construction. So central was swimming to Roman life that Rome was unequaled in pool construction until the industrial revolution. The perceived shared passion for swimming was not a negligible factor in the metaphoric equivalence of imperial Rome and imperial Great Britain as viewed by several generations of scholars, civil servants, and swimmers.

While England dominated swimming in the nineteenth-century, the breast stroke was most common, and all swimming tended toward maximum immersion, which maximized the amphibian or ichthyal connection. The rare Elizabethan swimmers used dogs for models for strokes, but by the nineteenth century, under the influence of the naturalists, frogs were often kept in pool-side basins as models for proper kicking technique and for the correct posture of the chest.[39] Overarm strokes, inspired by techniques observed by South Sea Island and Caribbean swimmers, became fashionable at the end of the century, but were first thought too crude because they were noisy and because much of the body was outside the water.[40] In the overarm stroke, swimming had left the Romantic era and entered a more fully human-centered, but still imperial[41] modernism. German idealism also inspired a great love for swimming, and particularly for diving. Germans and Scandinavians dominated diving in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the swallow dive was the dive of choice from the high board. The German diver bears the same relation to the English long-distance swimmer as does German orientalism to its more practically imperialist English version.

Western romantic swimming, from Byron to Swinburne and Valéry, who

extolled "fornication avec l'onde," partook of a masculinst sexual character that retained phallic penetration while maintaining a power-conferring outside that was at once the realm of origin, extratemporality, and maternality. The male coital return to maternal water, sex as swimming, is traced, with all the excesses of phylogenetic parallelism, in Sandor Ferenczi's *Thalassa: A Theory of Genitality.* Ferenczi follows Freud's work on eros and the death instinct,[42] holding that every act of (male) intercourse is an attempted return to the intrauterine situation, whose waters are phylogenetic holdovers of Michelet's mucus, the ocean. The phylogenetic parallel is due to the fact that reproduction through sexual union is a consequence of the move out of the water:

> the penis in coitus enacts not only the natal and antenatal mode of existence of the human species, but likewise the struggles of that primal creature among its ancestors which suffered the great catastrophe of the drying up of the sea.
>
> The possession of an organ of copulation, the development within the maternal womb, and the circumvention of the great danger of dessication—these three thus form an indestructible biological unity which must constitute the ultimate basis of the symbolic identity of the womb with the sea and the earth on the one hand, and of the male member with the child and the fish on the other.[43]

The memory of an initial liquid state, a watery oneness with nature that is precisely the oceanic feeling, is conceptually well beyond Emerson's liquid imagery in "Nature." Ferenczi also goes beyond Freud in making phylogenetic claims for a kind of "oceanic feeling." In that swim which is the return of the intrauterine,[44] homeostasis/death and life/eros are united.

Just as this union happens as man enters the ocean, so does Western history itself. Norman O. Brown, combining Hegel and Freud, has shown the connection, in Hegel, between history and the death instinct. Freud's theory of aggression, the result of an extroversion of the death instinct that drives humans to seek mastery over nature and their fellow humans, is related to Hegel's master-slave dialectic, "a transformation of the consciousness of death into a struggle to appropriate the life of another human being at the risk of one's own life: history as class struggle."[45] This fundamental dialectic with externalized death is what makes time, and thus history. The dynamic relationship between humans and the ocean—the assault on the sea, the risks taken in all ocean voyages—activates history according to a similar logic of master-slave. Oceangoing activates Western history, and proximity to the sea is one of several primary "natural" factors separating those regions that entered world history from those that did not:

> The sea gives us the idea of the indefinite, the unlimited, and the infinite; and in feeling his own infinite in that Infinite, man is stimulated and emboldened to stretch beyond the limited: the sea invites man to conquest, and to piratical plunder, but also to honest gain and to commerce. The land, the mere Valley-plain attaches him to the soil; it involves him in an infinite multitude of dependencies, but the sea carries him out beyond these limited circles of thought and action.[46]

The oceangoing trader is a gambler. He risks all in an element that, like a slave, is "treacherous, unreliable, and deceitful," though the ocean often looks "boundlessly innocent, submissive, friendly, and insinuating." All of Hegel's historical actors, Greeks and Western Europeans foremost, were people who took to the sea in a move beyond human limitations. For Schumpeter, the high capitalist embodies the heroism of "navigare necesse est, vivere no necesse est" [seafaring is necessary, living is not necessary].[47]

The identification of Western civilization as an oceanic civilization was strong in Hegel and continued to be made as the idea of "Western" civilization was constructed and canonized. Hegel, Michelet, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century British classicists made much of the identification between Greeks and the sea. The word θάλασσα (thalassa) conjured up for generations of classicists the passage in Xenophon's *Anabasis* where the army of 10,000, retreating from Persia, reached the Black Sea and made that cry of return to their safe passage home;[48] the affinity for the sea became one of the markers of Greek civilization. The swimming career of Lord Byron, and the motto of the Eton swimming society, which is the title of this section of the present article, are evidence of the nineteenth-century classical urge that drove so many young men into the water to swim. Classics and empire-building were water sports. Michelet had condemned the Middle Ages for the pervasive horror of ocean water, a horror that would be relieved only with the rise of ocean trade and the revival of the Roman tradition of swimming.

George Kennan, the primary liberal Hegelian of the twentieth-century, was a thalassophile who distrusted all landed interiors. He was one of the last diplomats to have, like Hegel, a geographically distinct concept of Western civilization: Western Europe was the source and origin. Kennan wrote often of the Soviet national character as having been determined less by Marxism than

by its vast open plains—its terrestriality. American isolationism had always found its greatest support in the U.S. interior, and it was indeed the interior that was last integrated into the world capitalist system. Kennan feared the insular tendencies that periodically surfaced in the United States almost as much as that landlocked tyrannical illiberality spawned on the Russian steppe.[49] Kennan's containment was containment of the awesome landedness of the Eurasian continent. We can read the cold war on one level, as Orwell did in *1984* with the names of his world powers, as Ocean vs. Land.

The idea of the West as trade-borne land of the free has a long history. Long before the world actually became unified through the operation of multi- and transnational capital, capital adopted a myth of a world unified through oceangoing trade, whose unity was presenced in the liberality and putative limitlessness of the free market. The market, according to this mythology, not only promised a telos of utopian equilibrium, but made *visible*, through its abundance of merchandise, a market form of global unity. A claim was made very early in the history of capital that the sea-trade emporium was synecdochic for the entire world and that the market was subject to a preexisting and natural global logic. Joseph Addison, in a 1711 essay extolling the Royal Exchange in London entitled "Trade as a Civilizing Force" writes: "Nature seems to have taken a particular Care to disseminate her Blessings among the different Regions of the World with an Eye to this mutual Intercourse and Traffick among Mankind, that the Natives of several Parts of the Globe might have a Dependance upon one another, and be united together by their common Interest."[50] Trade as a means toward a kind of original unity in the Ferenczian sense is described by psychoanalytic anthropologist Géza Róheim, in *The Origin and Function of Culture*. The original traders were medicine men, skilled wooers of the Other, and "the phantasy of an exchange of body contents, a mutual mother-child situation, underlies trade."[51] Original ocean trade is then a purely fluid trade. The thalassal regressive trend is enacted in both sexual intercourse and ocean commerce.

Both Michelet and Melville saw whaling as an oceanic activity of a particular kind and located in both its global scope and its violence a marker of a new phase in the relationship between humans and the ocean. (That the whale was originally a land mammal, which shed its limbs and returned to the ocean in what could be read as a successful Ferenczian gesture of phylogenetic regression, may or may not add to the whale's mythological importance.) Michelet's chapter on the whale is the central chapter of his book; whales are the ocean's finest denizens. He opens his section on the conquest of the sea with whaling,

and matter-of-factly describes the whale hunt as the source of European man's first venture into the far seas.[52] Melville writes of the whaling ship as the first U.S. factory, with a division of labor and a proletarianized crew that prefigured later nineteenth-century factories: the Pacific as Ur sweat shop. That whales were hunted for their oil, which was used in industry, is another reason to link whaling to the industrial, rather than to the agricultural economy with which one would normally associate fishing.[53] Whaling was also the U.S.'s first truly global trade. U.S. whalers were the first Westerners to hunt the sperm whale, which took them all over the Pacific. Melville's Pacific Ocean—the industrialized ocean of U.S. whalers—is the first evocation of the American Pacific, from which it is only a short conceptual distance to the Pacific Rim.

The Last Ocean

The Pacific Ocean as temporal destiny is an American idea; Western history as constant westward motion would of course not appeal to any countries east of the Atlantic. The temporality of the westward telos replaces, in the United States, the language of the world ocean that accompanied earlier Western European oceangoing trade, which arose coterminously in all oceans. Repressed in early U.S. Pacific discourse, of course, is the role of Western Europe's Pacific trade in the world system prior to 1800. Spain's trans-Pacific silver trade, which linked several major economies, is one notable example. America's Pacific[54] is an extension, temporally and geographically, of the "American West," but nineteenth-century U.S. expansionists and imperialists spoke not solely in the language of expansion outward and beyond into the new. The globe's finite circularity made the expansion into the final frontier also a return to putative origins. William Seward, Lincoln's secretary of state, saw in the geographical position of the United States, between the Atlantic and the Pacific and thus in a sense "between" Western Europe and East Asia, in Hegelian terms: as originally an impediment to, but finally a catalyst for a life-renewing completion of a temporalized circle. The putatively millennia-old logic of pure expansionism posited an eternal westward movement, "until the tides of the renewed and the decaying civilizations of the world meet on the shores of the Pacific Ocean"[55] or, as John Hay would write later in the century, "where the Far West becomes the Far East."[56] The physical presence of North America, found unexpectedly in Western Europe's great oceanic gamble, becomes installed into a crucial position in the dialectic which pushes history to completion. Fused in the overflow of the land of the new, the two old continents are regenerated.

But for the United States to function as pure synthesis, various old binaries had to end. The Pacific, as extension of the U.S. western frontier, had to become something less than, or unlike, an ocean. Mid-century writers such as Melville or Fenimore Cooper made much of the connection between the inland prairie and the ocean (as did Carl O. Sauer a century later). This move is both a projection of the interior into the exterior and a claim for U.S. capacity to absorb its newly prairied outside, just as the terrestrial prairies had been conquered, graded, and apportioned. The rhetoric of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century U.S. expansionists is full of efforts to make the Pacific less than an ocean, as in Whitelaw Reid's use of the term "American Lake," or less than water, as in Admiral Alfred Mahan's terrestrializing logic in his enormously influential advocacy of increased U.S. naval power at the end of the nineteenth century.

Mahan's ocean was an ocean over which land powers communicated. Throughout *The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660–1783*, first published in 1890, he uses a language that suggests, according to a particularly U.S. logic, many fundamental equivalences between sea and land. For example:

> The first and most obvious light in which the sea presents itself from the political and social point of view is that of a great highway; or better, perhaps, of a wide common, over which men may pass in all directions, but on which some well-worn paths show that controlling reasons have led them to choose certain lines of travel rather than others. These lines of travel are called trade routes; and the reasons which have determined them are to be sought in the history of the world.[57]

Mahan's notion of sea-lanes, and the importance of their control, influenced U.S. strategy in Asia and the Pacific through the cold war, long after long-range weapons had made such strategic considerations totally irrelevant. It was the strength of Mahan's terrestrializing vision, his notion of an ocean crisscrossed by highways and bridges, that ensured his continued influence on U.S. Pacific strategy.

Douglas MacArthur recalled his expansionist predecessor Whitelaw Reid in referring to the Pacific as an "Anglo-Saxon lake." MacArthur's Pacific is totally terrestrialized: MacArthur the cold war warrior saw the chain of islands from Japan, through Taiwan, and down to the Philippines as the forward line of the cold war frontier; MacArthur the World War II strategist saw the chain of U.S. possessions from the Philippines, through Midway and Hawaii not simply as a projection or extension of U.S. power, but also as a line of vulnerability

leading back into the heartland. Colonies conceived as liabilities to the colonial power is an old imperialist trope, of course, but MacArthur's early ambivalence about just what was happening on the "Anglo-Saxon lake" is symptomatic of a particularly American form of imperialism, which never sees itself as a colonial power. Rather, the U.S. colonial mission is always limited in time and merely an agent in the greater logic of commerce and development. This was an imperialism that adopted some of the logic of transparency that we have seen in the language of ocean trade. That the U.S. imperial project in the Pacific would center on commercialism, rather than overt pursuit of possession, was recognized frankly by William Seward. U.S. expansionist policy in the Pacific and in East Asia was justified by its liberal defenders as not an extension of the U.S. as political power, but of the extension of the idea of open access and free trade as embodied in the United States as a political and ideological unit. The terrestrializing of the Pacific thus had as its obverse a Pacification of Asia and the Pacific islands: a borderless proto-rim where free access reigned.

The American completion of the circle and the ushering in of the age of deliverance was a myth that served imperial and expansionist interests well. It also served anti-imperialist, antinationalist, and antifascist internationalist tendencies. Late-nineteenth-century anti-imperialists in the United States saw clearly the connection between the U.S. moves in Hawaii and the Philippines and the oppression of African Americans at home, and saw both as atavistic holdovers.[58] During the first half of the twentieth century, there was a belief among socialists and left liberals that a democratic U.S. tradition could be strengthened and fulfilled by the right kind of international behavior. The Asia scholars associated with the Institute for Pacific Relations and the journal *Amerasia*, represent a tradition that is *pre*–cold war—antifascist, left-wing humanist. As E. H. Norman, Canadian founding editor, wrote in 1937, in the first issue of *Amerasia:*

> We are also united in striving to attain the ultimate objective of promoting among all peoples inhabiting the periphery of the Pacific Ocean a harmony of relationships which transcend the merely legalistic concepts of justice with its emphasis on property over human rights or upon specious national honor or sovereignty over the economic welfare and the spiritual needs of the 700 million people who live on the islands or in the countries bordering the Pacific.[59]

The Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco, held on Treasure Island (especially constructed for that purpose) in 1939–1940, also partook

of this liberal internationalist spirit. The exposition has been condemned by exposition connoisseurs for its crass commercialism, but this might be in part because its aesthetic instincts were more populist. Structures such as the exhibition's Elephant Towers, a cubist vision of a Mayan-Cambodian hybrid, were far less monumental and imposing than the Beaux Arts aesthetic that dominated the more consciously imperial Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915, though the same architects were in charge of both projects. This 1939 vision of the Pacific, a cross between WPA populist aesthetics and Trader Vic's, prefigured the postwar boom of the South Pacific style which swept Los Angeles, particularly the white suburbs of the San Fernando Valley, in the 1950s and 1960s. This was a time of tikis and tiki torches, and of barbecues in orchidean backyard lanais, where, to the "exotic" sounds of Martin Denny's Hawaiian combo, newly arrived southern Californians could imagine themselves part of a transpacific postwar paradise of pure relaxation, where the Polynesian bliss of "interchangeable days" extolled in Melville's *Typee* could be enjoyed at least on weekends.[60]

The last major U.S. prophet of an oceanic vision is Charles Olson, who published his study of Melville, *Call Me Ishmael*, in 1947.[61] Many of the various strands of oceanic thinking I have been exploring thus far come together in this book, as well as in *The Mayan Letters* and certain of the *Maximus Poems*. Much of Olson's creative life was devoted to a search for origins: he studied Mayan, Sumerian, Egyptian, and Babylonian myths and just prior to writing *Call Me Ishmael* had begun to read Freud, whom he claimed as a major influence. Olson's search for origins was a search for deliverance, as in political Freudianism. For Olson, that deliverance was found on the Pacific.

Olson read Freud and worked on *Call Me Ishmael* while serving during the war at the Office of War Information, in its early years a bastion of liberal antifascist idealism that was a direct descendant of the federally supported writers projects of the New Deal.[62] Olson had become an admirer of Mao Tse-tung (who later would emerge as the twentieth century's foremost heroic swimmer; his river swims were emblematic to many Chinese of the power of the revolutionary will). *The Mayan Letters* and poems from the 1950s such as "The Kingfisher" quote Mao with approval and partake of a sense of a trans-Pacific deliverance for Mexico and the West in general. Mao was an appropriate icon for Olson's posthumanist, postsubjective projectivist aesthetic, and Olson seems to have thought at one time that there was a real chance that the United States' China policy, swept up in an antifascist tide, could be oriented toward Mao, reflecting a Henry Wallace-ite social democratic triumph internally. The

right-wing U.S. China lobby triumphed in its efforts to turn U.S. policy against Mao Tse-tung and the CCP, though, specifically by the cancellation of Vice President Henry Wallace's planned visit with Mao in 1944.[63] The cold war was beginning to emerge from World War II. For Olson and like-minded antifascists, the U.S. wrong turn became more clear with the dumping of Henry Wallace in favor of Harry Truman for vice president at the 1944 convention and the gradual ascent of anticommunism over antifascism.

Olson, like many U.S. leftists, had eschewed the search for an electoral political cure for Western culture's sickness as the national security state consolidated at the end of World War II. He chose poetry and vision, and an early version of the spatial fix that would resurface later, as we have seen, in various forms. Olson subscribed to a westward-moving teleology of Pacific circle-completion that was purely American but gave it a projectivist twist that promised to leave its place-boundedness behind, while retaining the spatiality that was so essential to his projectivist poetics. "Space has a stubborn way of sticking to Americans, penetrating all the way in, accompanying them. It is the exterior fact. The basic exterior act is a BRIDGE. Take them in order as they came: caravel, prairie schooner, national road, railway, plane. Now in the Pacific THE CARRIER. Trajectory. We must go over space, or we wither."[64] The progress is from bridge to carrier; from a journey that begins and ends in terrestriality to a pure trajectory, a pure oceanic deliverance.[65] In the final Pacific trajectory, of which Olson's Melville was a prophet, Western exploration, and the humanist-individualism that it both depended upon and engendered, is over, and the posthumanist, postindividualist imaginary that had been temporarily corrupted by fascism can finally be lived authentically. Olson's mythology of the Pacific as site of trajectory depended, however (and here he shared ground with U.S. imperialists and expansionists), on the Pacific as empty space, a void whose conscious crossing would de-terrestrialize and render void the finished inland expanses. U.S. citizens could live the collectivity that was their destiny: "The Pacific is the end of the UNKNOWN which Homer's and Dante's Ulysses opened men's eyes to. END of individual's responsibility only to himself. Ahab is full stop."[66] The last section of *Call Me Ishmael*, from which both of the above passages are quoted, is called "Conclusion: Pacific Man."

The Body of Pacific Man

Ferenczi's thalassal regressive trend is dependent on a logic of autotomy, the reflexive dropping off of an irritating, painful, or traumatized organ, such as

the commonly observed phenomenon of the lizard dropping its tail. This antecedent stage of repression in reptiles and lower organisms surfaces in the male erection, which for Ferenczi represents the male desire to detach the penis from the rest of the body. Ferenczi's phallus, a miniaturized version of the ego itself, is striving to be a fish swimming in the intrauterine sea.[67] Pacific man, egoless, posthumanist, collective, constantly nourished by the sea of milk, filled with the oceanic feeling, is a fish. The phylogenetic journey from land to sea was made before, by whales, whose autotomy was nearly complete. Ahab's hunt was after devolution.

Many of the swimmers in Sprawson's book speak of the "feel for water" necessary in successful competitive swimming. Early English swimmers, until Victorian times, resisted wearing clothes; pre-Victorian, like most Weimar swimmers, were mostly nude, presumably to avoid interference with the feeling. The practice of body shaving began with Australian swimmers in the 1950s and spread to the United States in the 1960s. The better times made by shaved swimmers were not due to decreased resistance—the tiny air bubbles that formed around body hair counted for nothing—but to what Olympic swimmer Murray Rose described as "the immediate sensual awareness of the water as he dived in, the feeling that he was suspended, united with the element."[68] Shaving was the first stage of the swimmer's autotomy.

Traces of regionally specific bodily modification remain in popular versions of Pacific Rim discourse. The Pacific Rim denizen par excellence, the free-floating de-corporealized "symbolic analyst" in Robert Reich's *The Work of Nations,* is the latest indication of the effort of transnational capital to appropriate a postindividual fish/cyborg to its own ends. The Pacific Rim body is most visible, naturally, in film and theater, and body modification is rarely absent in U.S. productions on trans-Pacific themes. David Hwang's *M. Butterfly* is analyzable in terms of orientalist fantasy and cross-gender politics, but also as an instancing of a new Pacific body.

The "opening of China" film and television documentaries in the 1970s devoted an inordinate amount of time to shots of large crowds of young and old practicing the fluid movements of *taijiquan* (tai chi). Pacific men like the Nick Nolte character in *Who'll Stop the Rain* (Karel Reisz, 1978) and various western kung-fu fighters show in their practice of *taijiquan* evidence of an inner, spiritual development that complements their physical power: East meets West. Peter Wang's *A Great Wall* is a trans-Pacific roots-search cum Pacific family formation film, and Leo Fang, the Chinese-American father played by the director, becomes a convert to *taijiquan* in his suburban Bay Area patio by the

film's end. The San Francisco Mime Troupe's 1993 production, "Offshore," is a critique of transnational capital's operations and a satire of Pacific Rim boosterism. One of the characters, Carlton Lee, is a Chinese-American entrepreneur who wants to help a Sacramento valley electronics firm relocate production to southeast China. His first song, "My Time," reads:

> I'm the new man, of the future
> On the brink, no illusion
> Brand new link, East West fusion
> It's my turn, it's my time
>
> Got the soul of Confucius and the balls of Donald Trump
> I do my Tai Chi work out with barbells to pump
> I like my Chinese folksongs with a country western beat
> Got a laser graphic abacus to add my balance sheet
>
> Europe's lost its luster
> America's over the hill
> The future's the Pacific
> Golden Boy's Gonna Kill.[69]

The American workers in *Gung Ho* (Ron Howard, 1985), a film about Japanese-American cooperation to revive a decaying U.S. steel-belt town, initially ridicule their new Japanese boss's insistence on Japanese-style group exercises at the beginning of each working day. At the film's end, though, with the achievement of a new and successful production style forged of Japanese cooperativeness and seriousness purged of its rigidity though an American "go for it" enthusiasm, the American workers do enthusiastic group jumping jacks, producing trans-Pacific bodies on and off the shop floor.

Autotomic loss of limbs and extremities—the Pacific Rim body as a body without extremities—figured prominently in two U.S. yakuza films that appeared at the beginning and end points of Pacific Rim discourse, *Yakuza* (Sydney Pollack, 1975) and *Black Rain* (Ridley Scott, 1989).[70] Pacific Man is formed primarily through finger loss (in both films, the yakuza custom of autodigitectomy as a sign of loyalty is given major play); the character of Charlie (played by Andy Garcia) in *Black Rain* achieves his greatest transpacific signifying power after his decapitation.

Pacific Rim body formation has been a rare filmic trope since Pacific Rim discourse began to attenuate in 1989. The iron-pumping body for men and women, revived in action films like *Terminator 2* and in music videos by Marky

Mark and Madonna, is not a body for tai chi or swimming, but for aggression or self-defense during a period whose mythology makes few appeals to the transnational or global imaginary. In the United States in the early 1990s, all regions are local, and they aren't on rims.

U.S. capital's mobilization of the Pacific Rim myth in the late cold war years, with its regional utopianism and its accretions of the self-transcendence, transformation, and interconnection promised in various versions of the oceanic feeling, was a discursive strategy that allowed the channeling of even the most liberatory Western visions into a naturalized capitalist logic. The inconsistent life of the discourse—it fades in and out—shows that capital, even as it becomes daily more invisible in its operation, is still incapable of generating a sustained and convincing global mythos. Since there is clearly some kind of need for globalist thinking, it is important that socialism not abandon the global sphere. In a similar vein, by de-nationalizing and globalizing questions of race and ethnicity in *The Black Atlantic,* Paul Gilroy rescues these critical categories from localized essentialisms. As for the Pacific, people like the King of Tonga, the Bamboo Ridge writers, Epeli Hau'ofa,[71] Rob Wilson, and some of the other authors in this volume are mounting a claim for it as a local, rather than as a universal or millenarian, ocean. This new spatialization does not merely serve to generate another "site of contestation," a new academic currency. The Pacific as Last Ocean was the final link, the totalizing telic symbol of the global saturation of capital. The Pacific as locality pulls a large part of the globe back out of the end of history, and might make it imaginable as a place where capital's hegemony could be *un*-imagined, rather than totalized.

Notes

1 See my "Pacific Rim Discourse: The U.S. Global Imaginary in the Late Cold War Years," *boundary 2* 21, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 30–56. Important critiques of the Pacific Rim idea and other late capitalist myths of the Pacific/Asia region are found in Bruce Cumings, "The Political Economy of the Pacific Rim," in *Pacific Asia and the Future of the World System,* ed. Ravi Palat (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993); Arif Dirlik, "The Asia-Pacific Idea: Reality and Representation in the Invention of a Regional Structure," *Journal of World History* 3 (Spring 1992); Masao Miyoshi, *Off Center: Power and Cultural Relations between Japan and the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) and "A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State" in this volume; Rob Wilson's essays in this volume, his book, *Reimagining the American Pacific: From* South Pacific *to Bamboo Ridge* (forthcoming, Duke University Press), and Rob Wilson and Arif Dirlik, "Introduction: Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production," in Wilson and Dirlik, eds., *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production.* I would like to acknowledge here the help and encouragement I received from Jim Clifford, Arif Dirlik, Carla Freccero, Susan Gilman, Sharon Kinoshita, Masao Miyoshi, Mary Scott, Carter Wilson, and Rob Wilson.

2 The Pacific Rim never had a totalizing claim on the geo-imaginary, nor did it come to a definitive end in 1989. It coexisted with racist and jingoist Japan-bashing, and versions of Pacific Rim discourse continue to surface today.

3 James O'Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973).

4 R. J. Johnston, "The State, the Region, and the Division of Labor," in *Production, Work, Territory: The Geographical Anatomy of Industrial Capitalism,* ed. Allen Scott and Michael Storper (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986), p. 272.

5 Bruce Cumings, "Political Economy," p. 23.

6 Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 189.

7 See Christopher Connery, "Pacific Rim Discourse," for a more complete list.

8 However, one of the major texts of critical regionalism contains within its preface (both the passage's location in the preface and its tone indicate the extraneous character of the argument) the following instancing of what can only be read as barely repressed Rimspeak:

> This book, like all human projects, grew from a particular material base set in time and place. Our good fortune has been to live and work in California. This amazing state is now to be numbered among the mightiest industrial economies on earth, and serves as the core territory for the aerospace, micro-electronics, and film industries, a troika of powers for good and ill like none other in today's world. Those living in the eastern United States and in Europe are, it must be said, often disinclined to take Californians seriously; the latter reciprocate by exporting the personal computer, Star Wars, and Ronald Reagan. Our perspective has been skewed in important ways by the view from California, on the edge of the booming northern Pacific Rim; hence the overriding emphasis given here to economic growth and geographic expansion in modern industrialization. To the observer looking out from the brutal terrain of Liverpool's docklands, south Chicago, or the slums of Kingston, this emphasis will doubtless appear to give a rosy tint to capitalism's forward march, painting a picture that does little justice to those left behind, left out, or ground beneath the juggernaut. Nevertheless, others are better positioned to depict the devastation of unemployment in the First World or underdevelopment and imperialism in the Third.

Michael Storper and Richard Walker, *The Capitalist Imperative: Territory, Technology, and Industrial Growth* (New York: Basil Blackwell 1989), p. ix. A version of Pacific Rim discourse could also be operative in Edward Soja's book, which ends with a case study of Los Angeles, illustrative of the new critical regionalism. The title of his penultimate chapter "It All Comes Together in Los Angeles," is both a celebration of critical regionalism's promise and an ironic commentary on Pacific Rim boosterism, wherein L.A. is

the capital of the Rim. One must ask, though, whether irony is sufficient armor against the interpellative power of Rimspeak?

9 Storper and Walker, *Capitalist Imperative*, p. 183.

10 Alexander Besher, *The Pacific Rim Almanac* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990), p. xxi–xxii.

11 Kenichi Ohmae, *The Borderless World* (New York: Harper Business, 1990), p. x–xi.

12 For the idea of the "created Pacific," see O. H. K. Spate, *The Spanish Lake* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), p. 1, and all of chap. 1, "The World Without the Pacific."

13 For other trajectories of the Western imagination of the ocean see: Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World 1750–1849*, trans. Jocelyn Phelps (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U.C. Press 1994); and Jean-Didier Urbain, *Sur la plage: Mœurs et coutumes balnéaires* (Paris: Editions Payot), 1994.

14 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 1962), p. 11.

15 The vagueness of Freud's notion of sublimation results, according to Norman O. Brown, in Freud's lack of sufficient analysis of the antagonism between "man and culture." What was needed was attention to social transformation. Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), pp. 139 ff. See also Norman O. Brown, *Love's Body* (New York: Vintage, 1966), chap. 8: "Boundary."

16 Rob Wilson, *American Sublime: The Genealogy of a Poetic Genre* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p. 211.

17 Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, chap. 23, "The Lee Shore" (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 111.

18 Rob Wilson, *American Sublime*, p. 12.

19 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1991), p. 112.

20 Rob Wilson, *American Sublime*, p. 56.

21 Gaston Bachelard, *Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter*, trans. Edith R. Farrell (Dallas: Pegasus Foundation, 1983), p. 6.

22 Gaston Bachelard, *Water and Dreams*, p. 152.

23 Ibid., p. 153.

24 W. H. Auden. *The Enchafèd Flood; or The Romantic Iconography of the Sea* (New York: Random House, 1950), pp. 6–7.

25 Rod Giblett, "Philosophy (and Sociology) in the Wetlands: The S(ub)lime and the Uncanny," *New Formations*, no. 18 (Winter 1992): 159.

26 Ibid., p. 147. This is a chart.

27 Jules Michelet, *La Mer*, ed. Marie-Claude Chemin and Paul Viallaneix (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1980), p. 76. For analysis of the rhetorical strategies in *La Mer*, see Linda Orr, *Jules Michelet: Nature, History and Language* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), pp. 152–174.

28 Jules Michelet, *La Mer*, pp. 193–194.

29 Ibid., p. 74.

30 Gaston Bachelard, *Water and Dreams*, p. 167.

31 Ibid., p. 168.

32 Ibid., p. 179.

33 "Water is best," first line of Pindar's *Olympian Odes* and adopted in 1828 as the motto for the Old Etonian swimming society. From Charles Sprawson, *Haunts of the Black Masseur: The Swimmer as Hero* (New York: Random House, 1992), p. 83.

34 The etymology of the word "explore"—to cry out at the sight of land—suggests that all explorations are ocean voyages whose goal is a return to land.

35 Alister Clavering Hardy, *Darwin and the Spirit of Man* (London: Collins, 1984). Also Alister Clavering Hardy, *The Living Stream: A Restatement of Evolution Theory and Its Relation to the Spirit of Man* (London: Collins, 1965). See also Carl O. Sauer, "Concerning Primeval Habitat and Habit," in Carl O. Sauer, *Selected Essays 1963–1975* (Berkeley: Turtle Island, 1981), pp. 109–110.

36 Carl O. Sauer, "Concerning Primeval," p. 111.

37 Digby's entire text, with woodblock illustrations, is reprinted in Nicholas Orme, *Early British Swimming: 55 B.C.–A.D. 1719* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1983). This passage is from page 126.

38 Quoted in Charles Sprawson, *Haunts*, p. 207.

39 Ibid., p. 23.

40 Ibid., p. 22.

41 As evidenced partly in the unacknowledged appropriation of Third World technical resources. The stroke became popularly known as the "Australian" crawl rather than by a name that reflected its true origins.

42 The most useful work on eros and the death instinct remains Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History*. See especially chap. 8, "Death, Time, and Eternity," and chap. 9, "Death and Childhood."

43 Sandor Ferenczi, *Thalassa: A Theory of Genitality*, trans. Henry Alden Bunker (New York: Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 1938), pp. 49–50.

44 Sprawson mentions that all of the famous male swimmers in his book were reported to have had strong attachments to their mothers and alienation from their fathers. This is of course the claim made about nearly all marginalized groups in contemporary western society. Sprawson, *Haunts*, p. 145.

45 Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death*, p. 102.

46 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 90.

47 Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1950), p. 160.

48 The significant identification of Greeks with ocean trade is made everywhere, and the passage in the *Anabasis* was such a common school text in England that it remained in the memory of nearly every English bourgeois who had received a classical education. For a representative text on the oceanic character of the ancient Greeks, see Alfred

Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth: Politics and Economics in Fifth Century Athens* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1931), p. 318 and pp. 24–35, 314 ff.

49 Anders Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 203–204.

50 Quoted in Mary Layoun, *Travels of a Genre: The Modern Novel and Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 252.

51 Géza Róheim, *The Origin and Function of Culture* (New York: Nervous and Mental Disease Monographs, 1943), p. 52.

52 Herring and cod, however, were probably more important than whales in voyages to Greenland and northeastern North America before 1600.

53 This is one of the points in A. R. Michell's article "The European Fisheries in Early Modern History," quoted in Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, vol. 2. (New York: Academic Press, 1980), p. 39.

54 This is Rob Wilson's usage.

55 William Seward, quoted in Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-hating and Empire-building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), p. 271.

56 Quoted in Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 24.

57 Alfred T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660–1783* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1918), p. 25.

58 See Philip S. Foner and Richard C. Winchester, eds., *The Anti-Imperialist Reader: A Documentary History of Anti-Imperialism in the United States, vol. 1: From the Mexican War to the Election of 1900* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1984), particularly the chapters on the Philippine war and the annexation of Hawaii.

59 Quoted in John W. Dower, ed., *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E. H. Norman* (New York: Pantheon, 1975), 38–39.

60 For an earlier playing out of Pacific identities, see Beth Bailey and David Farber, *The First Strange Place: The Alchemy of Race and Sex in World War II Hawaii* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

61 Although Robinson Jeffers could lay claim to being the United States' most important twentieth-century poet of the Pacific, Jeffers's sublime Pacific was a call to the final inhuman; it was the Pacific from which the early Robert Frost fled, as evidenced in Frost's "Once By the Pacific."

62 Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942–1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 21. Tom Clark, *Charles Olson: The Allegory of a Poet's Life* (New York: Norton, 1991), pp. 84–107.

63 Tom Clark, *Charles Olson*, p. 85.

64 Charles Olson, *Call Me Ishmael* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947), p. 114.

65 Recalling also the Walt Whitman of "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," "O Pioneers," and "Out of the Cradle, Endlessly Rocking."

66 Charles Olson, *Call Me Ishmael*, p. 119.

67 John Cowper Powys, in *A Philosophy of Solitude* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1933),

writes at length of the ichthyosaurus ego, a devolutionary retreat from the vulgarity and horror of contemporary life. Needless to say, the ichthyosaurus ego lived aquatically.

68 Charles Sprawson, *Haunts*, p. 14.

69 San Francisco Mime Troupe, "Offshore," 1993. Lyrics by Joan Holden, with Chung Chiao, Patrick Lee, Keiko Shimosato, and Michael Gene Sullivan.

70 See my "Pacific Rim Discourse: The U.S. Global Imaginary in the Late Cold War Years" for additional material on these films.

71 See, for example, his paper "Our Sea of Islands," in *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands*, ed. Eric Waddell (Suva: School of Social and Economic Development at the University of the South Pacific, 1993), pp. 2–16.

Between the Net and the Deep Blue Sea (Rethinking the Traffic in Photographs)

Allan Sekula

Part 1: Dear Bill

My subtitle recalls an essay I wrote twenty years ago, in an effort to understand the long-held belief that photography is a "universal language," a language legible, as one enthusiastic early American press report on the daguerreotype put it, "in the courts of civilization and the hut of the savage."[1] The wording here was quaint, even for its time, as the white-settler republic drove relentlessly westward, indifferent to the way a renegade Seminole, hiding out in the swamps of Florida, might have responded to the grim-faced daguerreotype portrait of the aged Indian-fighter Andrew Jackson. With the advent of neo-colonialism, the language became less quaint, but the naïve optimism persisted unabashed. Edward Steichen recalled the "rapt attention" with which Guatemalan peasants gazed at his travelling exhibition *The Family of Man*, not long after the 1954 CIA-backed coup that overthrew the democratically-elected government of Jacobo Arbenz: "The people in the audience looked at the pictures and the people in the pictures looked back at them. They recognized each other."[2]

This conceit, that the globalized pictorial archive benignly conscripts subjects as members of a metaphoric "human family," now seems quaint in its turn. It is hard (for many Americans, at least) not to look at *Family of Man* today without a tinge of nostalgia for an exhausted liberalism. And yet isn't this notion of mutual recognition, of global connectedness and legibility, at the heart of the promise of the internet? This promise gives a humanist gloss to the archival collecting of demographic data, much as Carl Sandburg did when he described *Family of Man* as a "multiplication table of living breathing human faces."[3] Communications technologies—photographic reproduction, linked computers—provide strong tools for the instrumental channeling of human desire. This instrumentalism can and indeed must be disguised as a benign expansion of the field of human intimacy. This is more true of communication technologies than it is of other technical forces, since, prenatal maternity excepted, contact between humans begins with the exchange of signs.

In the age of the internet, the liberalism of Steichen's humanist credo—however flawed and compromised at the time—has been deleted, but a socially-atomized version of the old idea remains. As middle-class American teenagers of the mid-1960s might have sat around, sipping cheap jug wine and listening to Joan Baez records and perusing the photographs of love and childbirth and peasants in the best-selling photographic book of all time, so today they retreat, usually in solitude, to their bedrooms, and log on to the World Wide Web, or to whatever virtual microcosm solicits their curiosity.

This brings me up against my title. Recently I wrote an letter to a man who embodies the new paradigm of the global archivist, the facilitator of the new virtual and disembodied *family of man.* He's no Steichen, since he refuses the role of the grand paternalistic editor, preferring in a more veiled manner to manage the global archive and retrieval system from which any number of pictorial statements might be constructed. In effect, he allows his clients to play in the privacy of their homes the role of mini-Steichen, perusing vast quantities of images from around the world, culling freely—but for a price—with meaning in mind.

I made a point of typing the letter on an old manual typewriter, and of sending it anonymously: both neo-Luddite gestures of sorts. The first gesture befits a world of slower communications. *In the old days,* messages contended with the weather, with "rain and snow and sleet" as the old slogan of the U.S. Post Office would have it. As you can see, my old-fashioned letter is appended to a documented action that pushes to an extreme this idea of meteorological resistance to communication:

November 30, 1999

Dear Bill Gates,

I swam past your dream house the other day, but didn't stop to knock. Frankly, your underwater sensors had me worried. I would have liked to take a look at Winslow Homer's Lost on the Grand Banks. It's a great painting, but, speaking as a friend and fellow citizen, at $30 million you paid too much.

HIGHEST PRICE EVER PAID FOR AN AMERICAN PAINTING!!!

So why are you so interested in a picture of two poor lost dory fisherman, momentarily high on a swell, peering into a wall of fog? They are about as high as they're ever going to be, unless the sea gets uglier. They are going to die you know, and it won't be a pretty death.

And as for you Bill, when you're on the net, are you lost? Or found?

And the rest of us—lost or found—are we on it, or in it?

Your friend

Figure 1
Allan Sekula *Dear Bill Gates*, 1999.

The date of the letter, possibly suspect in light of evidence yet to be introduced, underscores the neo-Luddite resort to the manual typewriter, since it marks the very day of show-stopping mass protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle, the hometown and current residence of Mr. Bill Gates.

A befuddled and slightly hysterical *New York Times* tried to minimize the significance of this new movement of resistance to corporate globalization, suggesting that the WTO talks themselves were inconsequential. The article had a revealing title, "Shipwreck in Seattle:"

> *The administration chose a spectacularly bad moment to pick this particular fight. With the exception of agriculture, few American industries have a clear agenda for trade talks now, and many no longer believe that these long, endless "rounds" of negotiations are useful anymore. They involve too many countries, rich and poor, with radically different interests.* In an age of e-mail, they move like an aging cargo ship. *The co-chairman of the Seattle host committee for the talks, Bill Gates, barely even showed up -- and his office is only 12 miles away.* [emphasis added] [4]

In other words, the smart people, who also happen to be the rich people from the richest country, sailed safely just outside the proverbial *twelve mile limit*, unperturbed by the rusting hulk that had slammed unexpectedly into the Seattle waterfront.

Throughout that week, many among the disobedient crowds in the streets, indulging in this fool's theatre of maritime anachronism, sought to protect their eyes from tear gas with swim goggles like those worn by the anonymous swimmer in the photograph. As someone observed, it was a veritable fashion show, a parade of rain gear, a liquid circus.

Figure 2
Allan Sekula, from *Waiting for Tear Gas*, slide projection, 1999-2000.

In an age that denies the very existence of society, to insist on the scandal of the world's increasingly grotesque "connectedness," the hidden merciless grinding away beneath the slick superficial liquidity of markets, is akin to putting oneself in the position of the ocean swimmer, timing one's strokes to the swell, turning one's submerged ear with every breath to the deep rumble of stones rolling on the bottom far below. To insist on the social is simply to practice purposeful immersion.

The resort to tear gas serves not only to "control the crowd," that is, to prevent the radical redefinition of the use-value of city streets, but also to produce through chemical means the exaggerated liquid symptoms of human empathy and grief. This chemically-induced parody of extreme human emotion is in itself an assertion of robotic power. The harsh discipline of tears, mucus, sudden asthma leads the citizenry back to the dry regimen of the everyday. Only the markets are allowed to be fluid.

Meanwhile, *while all this is going on*, the "citizen and friend" is either on the verge of drowning or about to descend for a desperate commando attack, treading water with a good kick in the cold dusk a couple of hundred yards from a guarded shore, waiting for an answer from the captain of disembodied industry. A brief self-portrait of the swimmer: a chilled Kilroy winks at the winking semi-submerged eye of the camera.

Inside the gigantic Big House on the shore, it is dry, *watertight*, befitting a highly computerized environment, invisibly robotic in the efficiency of its hospitality. There is no need to greet the guest at the door. The butler now resides in the databank, programmed for the visitor's taste in music and drink, turning off the lights in the guest's wake, like the grandmotherly attendants in dank Romanian museums. Our host, the Disembodied Industrialist, waits offstage, a misanthrope or recluse either theatrically timing or neurotically delaying his appearance, like Captain Nemo.

This time, leaving Jules Verne behind in the old leather-bound library of industrialism, it's no longer a matter of the submarine as the fully-appointed home of an exiled band of rebels, but of the private mansion as submarine: the villa-*Nautilus*. Verne imagined the submarine as rogue vessel, but the submarine now offers itself as one potential conference center for the powerful plotters who have been driven from the cities by the angry citizens of the shore. The plotters lurk like pirates just beyond and below the horizon. What minimum safe distance will these officials from the rich nations take from the *polis*? Twenty thousand leagues? Remote orbit? Perhaps, as they were forced to do in Genoa, they resort to less drastic measures and retire to a luxury cruise ship anchored in a barricaded port, protected from the eyes and shouts of the citizenry behind hastily erected walls of cargo containers. Nothing could be more instructive than this improvised metal barrier, for it is these mundane and omni-mobile boxes that make the global factory possible. The esoteric logos of the shipping companies painted upon the corrugated steel bespeak a hidden history of disguised extraterritorial ownership and bogus national sovereignty, the very prototype for contemporary capitalism in general. Behind the metal curtain, frogmen inspect hulls for improbable limpet mines, and police *provocateurs* prepare their costumes. This stage business clears the way for the unfolding of the drama of repression: the use of lethal weapons against protestors, illegal searches and confiscations, brutal beatings. At this juncture, Jules Verne yields to Joseph Conrad. It's *The Secret Agent* we should be reading.

Power is now defined as the ability to contain real and imagined terror. Even discursive challenges to power are reducible to the model of the terrorist threat. If the stealth of submarines has served the military, it can also serve the police, especially as the line blurs between the two. An expert in terror, Nemo sailed outside the network of communication, signaling to the world only through violent collision. The sophisticated modern submarine is tuned always to low frequency radio signals from underground terrestrial command centers, gifted with the remote eyes of satellites and drones, ever poised to launch cruise missiles against rogue cities, down the factory chimney, into the hotel lobby. *Out of sight, but in touch and in the know*: the very model of the secret agent. *Smart*, not at all the mere mechanical equivalent of a vengeful whale. That key

difference aside, the old rebellious submarine and the new villa-*Nautilus* are both refuges from the often angry surface of the sea.

The well-heeled guests, taking a cruise off Hawaii, are lulled into complacency by the smooth and silent underwater functioning of the machine. Awed by the impressive display of *their tax dollars at work*, they are shocked by the violence of the breaking of the surface, the brutal and sudden encounter with boats, swimmers, denizens of the upper waters and the dwellers of the shore. Society—*the family of man*—suddenly exists again, *on the beach*, in all its fragility. The anguished commander confesses to his laxity at the periscope: "Oh my God. We've hit—we've hit some kids." Elaborate and careful and heartfelt apologies must be made, *especially to our friends and allies*, all this without compromising the exonerating function of official inquiries.[5]

Accidents are the price of preparedness. In compensation, our friends, *who were once our enemies*, receive special invitations to the premiere of the next big military spectacle film, which weaves an insipid romantic triangle around their long-ago surprise attack on our navy. A few months later the same entertainment company will, in further compensation, open a second amusement park in their country, this one devoted to the romance of the sea:

> *Japan, long infatuated with American culture and Hollywood, is* ground zero *for the globalization of the theme park industry.* [emphasis added]....
> *Disney chose to build its first sea-theme park because of the Japanese affinity for the ocean and marine life, and the site is surrounded by water.*[6]

Anyone who has witnessed the final scene of Shohei Imamura's film *Dr. Akagi* will understand something different about this unthinking connection between "ground zero" and the "affinity for the ocean." *I will be polite enough not to give away the details.*

Meanwhile, off Pearl Harbor, the relatives of the victims are ferried by the solicitous Americans to the site of the sinking. They peer disconsolately into the blue tropical water, their grief photographed at a "respectful" distance with telephoto lenses. All of this official concern is consistent with a geopolitical objective, the lifting of constitutional restrictions on the former enemy's discrete but powerful war machine. While apologizing, don't fail to remind the Japanese that for now *their security is in our hands*. But in the long term, Japan will function yet again as a military power in the Pacific, against the vast new-old Chinese enemy to the East. A not-so-secret key to this diplomacy is that neither ally feel compelled to apologize for the atrocities committed in the last war, neither for Nanjing nor for Hiroshima.

And the submarines of the other more recent old enemy, *do they still lurk*? (The newest and most advanced Russian model has proven to be disastrously unreliable. Here also, grieving relatives are photographed peering down into the waves, a colder and darker arctic sea this time, the photographers close and intrusive, *like family.*) Are most of their submarines merely rotting radioactive hulks, maybe rented out from time to time by cash-starved officers for the filming of pornographic movies? Or, even more frightening for

the Americans, are unemployed Russian naval architects secretly working for criminal cartels, building an underwater drug-smuggling fleet, as suggested by a strange discovery in a nondescript warehouse outside of Bogota? Refusing to divulge the top-secret answers to these questions, *upon which so much congressional funding depends*, an American sonar specialist laments: "I loved the Cold War. I didn't want it to end."

Far from the sea and underground, the documents accumulate. The overwhelming desire for dryness extends to the Disembodied Industrialist's recent acquisition of a salt-mine in Pennsylvania to function as repository for all the world's *important photographs*, a category which includes, for a few months at least, the pictures of the grieving relatives. There, deep inside a mountain, is the new tomb for older and less popular photographs of anonymous citizens of the last two centuries, photographs that, not having been deemed worthy of digital rescue from the moldy or brittle materiality of paper, are not offered for downloadable sale on the internet. The selection proceeds slowly and parsimoniously, according to a logic of fame, celebrity, scandal, and greatest hits. Some pictures sell, and others don't. A picture may be important enough to preserve, but that doesn't mean anyone gets to see it.

This much can be said of some of the photographs that can be conjured up electronically, the 2.1 million of the larger inert archive of 65 million. Many depict submarines and submarine actions, including a surprising number of pictures of torpedoed ships taken through periscopes. But overall, the submarine archive is weak on history; there is a reproduction of one of Leonardo's drawings (attributed to "da Vinci") and a few pictures of nineteenth century prototypes and early U-boats The bulk of the material is taken from the copious files of contemporary military-industrial stock photographers. Under "transportation," the subcategory "most popular" offers a low-aerial head-on view of an American nuclear submarine breaking the surface of the sea. This picture can be purchased for "personal use" and sent as an electronic greeting card to friends, which suggests something of the moral economy of military Keynesianism. Pictures of whales are also popular. This may be no more than an *apparent* antithesis, since the archive is, by its very nature, undialectical. As the web page advises, with cheerful techno-economic optimism: "jump start your creativity with pictures."

The orders pour in from the web-site, resurrecting over and over the jolly submarines that leap like happy fish and the scanned picture of mighty swinging Babe Ruth launching only one of his many home runs. Other gestures, workaday gestures of less famous individuals, the anonymous history of the times, are salted away in filing cabinets in the dimly lit corridors of the mine, tended by a skeleton crew. These pictures wait like slabs of dried cod for the revivifying water of the gaze, for the laser beam of the scanner. Their rediscovery is unlikely. Researchers are forbidden to enter. Specialists in conservation applaud the care and thoroughness of the operation.

And yet, during a long drought in the usually rainy Pacific Northwest, the Disembodied Industrialist and his family and household retainers are—one hopes—embarrassed by reports in the local press that their water consumption exceeds that of any other household in the state of Washington. It is hard to escape the liquid requirements of the

human organism. And indeed it is hard, in the city of Seattle, taking a taxi from the airport for example, not to hear stories from ex-gamblers who have taken their chances on the go-for-broke halibut boats, or aboard monster trawlers in the Bering Sea. In the lull of a traffic jam, one hand gestures with the mock indifference at the fishhook scar in the palm of the other.

Does a memory of this remote everyday world, this *salty Seattle*, surfacing from the *good old days* when he used to take taxis, come to the Disembodied Industrialist as he communicates with his curators on the floor of the auction house?

Part 2: Irrational Exuberance

Thinking back to the landscapes and seascapes of a century ago, with Winslow Homer we see a profound American turn toward the sea, consistent with a burgeoning imperial project, but also with American restlessness and idealism, with the earlier literary examples of Herman Melville and Richard Henry Dana.[7] Consider D.H. Lawrence's assessment from 1923, looking back at those two seafarer writers of the "American renaissance" of the 1840s and 50s. For Lawrence, American writing lacked any tradition-bound sense of blood and soil, thus avoiding the oppressive legacy of feudal land-rights and the mire of European nationalism. (Having chosen writers whose major works were written before the slaughter of the Civil War, Lawrence avoided contrary evidence, though his argument allowed implicitly for an American capacity to go to war over abstract principles.) Lawrence's insight into American writing and the sea was echoed later by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, who spoke of the sea's offering of a *line of flight* to Melville, just as Lawrence, a romantic of an earlier late-romantic generation saw in the passion for the sea an expression of democratic idealism, a utopian longing for a perfect world.[8] Lawrence, a secret aristocrat, mocked Dana's outrage at the flogging of seafarers. It took another American writer, the poet Charles Olson, to come up with a counter-reading of the sea's connection to American business civilization, and to see Melville as the critical prophet of that connection:

> *So if you want to know why Melville nailed us in Moby-Dick, consider whaling. Consider whaling as FRONTIER, and INDUSTRY. A product wanted, men got it: big business. The Pacific as sweatshop.*[9]

This was Olson writing in 1947, looking back a century to revive Melville's radicalism with a renewed prescience, for the capitalist line of progress had not yet been traced from the Pacific sweatshops of the whale ship and copra-plantation to the assembly lines of the computer and apparel and toy industries, or the modernized indentured servitude aboard the containerized vessels that bring these products to market.

But what can Winslow Homer's modern but not yet modernist painting mean for Mr. Bill Gates of Microsoft, and for the faceless virtual power that he extols? The whole point of the *information highway* is that one is never lost. Technical command requires constant orientation within the global matrix of information flows. Through his Corbis agency, founded in 1989, Gates wants to collect, through reproduction, all the images in the

world. This is a proprietary and profit-hungry ambition, he wants to control the traffic in images, and for this rights to reproductions are sufficient. He wants to own certain images as originals, however. What is the status of these select paintings, with their aura of uniqueness, their direct connection to the artist's hand, to the larger archive of this cyber-iconographic omnivore?

A recent visit to the Corbis web site, searching under the heading "Winslow Homer" yielded the following results: 53 pictures for "personal use" and 97 for "professional" or licensed use. The majority are marine paintings. For $3.95, the home customer can download a watercolor, *West Indian Divers*, say, for use as a greeting card, a pictorial gift for the friend about to embark on a Caribbean cruise. Indeed, the entire area of the web site devoted to personal picture-shopping treats the consumerist work of purchasing and downloading images as if it were a seaside vacation, a fishing trip, or boating excursion:

> *Choose your dream yacht and experience the joy of sailing all-year-round....Reel in one of our favorite fishing prints....Transport yourself with a colorful, calming print of one of our scenic lakes.*[10]

The archive, with it presumably watertight bulkheads between iconic categories, is offered up as a space of vicarious liquid immersion, dry-land two-dimensional *thalassa therapy.*

For all that, *Lost on the Grand Banks* is nowhere to be found. Despite the communitarian promises of the web—*the archive of everything for everybody*—unalienable private property asserts itself in the last instance. Rodchenko's revolutionary call: "Soviet citizens, photograph and be photographed!" can now be updated: "Everyone a picture researcher, but keep off the grass!"

But the Seattle cabdriver with the fishhook-scarred hand is never far away. And the semantic bulkheads leak, seriously, especially if one is careless about limiting the terms of ones search. A look under the heading "Jackson Pollock" in the professional archives yields over five thousand results. There are over two hundred pictures of Andrew Jackson, including the daguerreotype by Matthew Brady with which we began our story (IH 024498). The image trail leads yet again to a nuclear submarine, the USS *Andrew Jackson*, missile-launch technicians poised at the controls (RK 001223). There are 744 pictures of Michael Jackson, before and after his remarkable change of face, and a whole host of other Jacksons from the worlds of sports, entertainment, politics. For all the global pretensions, the selection has a parochial American flavor, more or less like a file of picture clippings from high school history textbooks and *People* magazine. A mere twelve are reproductions or installation views of paintings by Jackson Pollock, six are depictions of the actor Ed Harris, who portrayed Pollock in a recent film, two are images of two very different fishes, *pollachius pollachius* and *gadus pollachius*, and a full forty-nine make up a bracing reportage on factory trawlers fishing in the Bering Sea for one of the two, commonly known as *pollack*, the not-so-secret raw material for what the seafood industry labels as "imitation crab." The web-site visitor is assured by the digital archivists at Corbis that the Seattle cabdriver's former comrades, clad in bright orange

rough-weather gear—the better to be spotted should they be swept overboard in icy waters—have all signed model releases, thus allowing them to grace the pages of corporate reports or advertisements for sundry commodities likely to be associated with the rigors of fishing on the high seas.

Every image appears on the computer screen overlaid with the anti-theft protection of the Corbis "watermark" which resembles nothing so much as a satellite-radar view of a hurricane. We are entering the territory of Borgesian delirium here, and it only the narrow instrumentalism of the picture researcher, targeted like a cruise missile on this or that category, that prevents a dive through the eye of the storm into the abyss, *the deep, full fathom five.*

Winslow Homer was working on a specific sequence of images on the North Atlantic fishery of the late nineteenth century, paintings about work. In an exhibition originating at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, Nicolai Cikovsky and Franklin Kelly reconstruct a narrative sequence, moving from the inshore herring fleet to the deep sea halibut and cod fisheries on the treacherous Grand Banks of Newfoundland, and from tranquil, productive waters to looming disaster on the high seas.[11]

The three pictures, *The Herring Net*, *The Fog Warning*, and *Lost on the Grand Banks* were all painted at the same size in 1885, and they were shown together at the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. You can see the matching of the volume occupied by the dories, despite their shifting orientation on the waves. The implicit triptych is a taxonomic series--the omnivorous and pleasing seriality of the fish market, with herring displayed here, flounder over there, and at the next stall, big green cod fish, jaws agape, waiting for the baking pan: the pseudo-disclosure of the *agora.* But it is also at the same time a narrative sequence, in which the hidden brutality of work on and against the sea is revealed. The narrative of doomed work tugs tragically downward on at the buoyant illustrative productivism of the series.

Figure 3
Winslow Homer, *Lost on the Grand Banks*, 1885.

Being lost in a dory on the Grand Banks was the dangerous outcome of specific organization of extractive industry in hazardous waters. The lostness depicted becomes purely metaphysical in its passage into Gates' possession. He finds the painting in order to lose its specificity, the depiction of lostness stands now as the antithesis of Gates' instrumental program of total global connectedness. This is the otherness, and non-identity, the makes the painting into a privileged esthetic object in Gates' hands, into truly *private* property. If I were tempted to connect this to a larger self-consciousness of contemporary elites, the finding of the painting of lostness in order to esthetically isolate lostness from the tyrannical imperative of connectedness is consistent with a number of ways in which the sea returns, in both romantic and gothic guise, to late modernity. The promotion of cruise ships, the making of films like *Waterworld* and *Titanic*, Bill Gates' purchase of *Lost on the Grand Banks*: these are all related. We are all invited to *lose ourselves* at sea. For most of us, this amounts to chump change in the supermarket of imaginary danger. But my guess is that members of financial elites, especially those

investing in the intangibles of the "new economy," imagine themselves in a special way to be venturing forth on stormy seas, lifted high by the *irrational exuberance* of the swells, only to risk being dashed down, disastrously, beneath the waves. In their bunkered isolation from the rest of us, the image of the solo sailor is paramount. And to the extent that broad sectors of the middle classes are being asked to partake on a lesser scale in the same risks, that image of the *isolato* is paradoxically rationed out for mass consumption. Market Ideology demands that everyone sail alone.

This much can be said about the visual field of the ocean swimmer, or the rower in small boat upon the open sea: in moderate to heavy seas, one is either low in the trough of the wave, or high on the bank of the swell. On the moving, folding surface then, fluctuating conditions of seeing, vertiginous, then enveloped, closed in by a shifting, sliding slope of water. Winslow Homer gives us this vantage point: not omnisciently above the waves, but high on the swell, as if sitting in another dory like the one we see in the foreground, better able to see what the fishermen in the boats depicted are straining to see, the moving haven of the schooner in the fog-shrouded distance. Nonetheless, we see effortlessly, in a state of temporal suspension, what they see only fleetingly, what will be obscured momentarily. We see their danger. And it is theirs, not ours, since they are at sea, and we are looking at a painting with our feet planted on the ground. The sympathetic bond imagined is one of civic concern, a queasy morally-troubling challenge to gustatory automatism.

There is a line then, that connects Homer's painting with the social documentary photography of Lewis Hine, two decades later, and even with contemporary documentary writers like Sebastian Junger, whose book *The Perfect Storm* narrates the contemporary working-class world of a New England fishing port and the loss with all hands of the sword-fishing boat *Andrea Gail* on the same Grand Banks in 1991. Junger appropriately begins his tale with an epigram from Walter Scott: "It's no fish ye're buying, it's men's lives."

When I wrote these lines, Junger's book had not yet been translated into a turgid and overwrought cinematic parable on the crisis of male identity, directed by *Ubootmeister* Wolfgang Pederson. To understand something of the way the sea "returns" as pure media simulation, listen to this recollection by John Seale, the film's director of photography:

> *I decided that we would probably go to Cape Town, South Africa, grab a couple of look-a-like long-liners, wrap the cameras in garbage bags and get out there amongst it. They looked at me like I was on drugs and said, "No, my boy—think Stage 16 at Warner Brothers."*[12]

So instead of renting out the frighteningly decrepit Chinese fishing boats that can be seen taking on provisions next to Cape Town's perversely gentrified waterfront, one of the world's largest sound-stage filming tanks had to be excavated in the Burbank studio floor. Above the tank, a vertical bluescreen allowed for superimposition of the digital storm. This Oz-like curtain of *deep digital blue* was larger than a football field. Despite

the DP's rueful lament for lost low-budget opportunities in the notorious seas off the Cape of Good Hope, expensive artifice is discussed in the film industry press as if it were an autochthonous triumph of the technological sublime, unrelated to nature as such. As the DP's story tells us, Hollywood isn't really interested in pursuing the challenge posed by fiction films actually shot on rough seas, such as Pierre Schoendoerffer's lament for French imperialism, *Le Crabe Tambour,* photographed by Raoul Coutard. And yet it's not as if brilliant films about the sea have not been shot entirely on sound stages: think of Hitchcock's *Lifeboat.* But the simple claustrophobic fraudulence of Hitchcock's approach is also beyond the comprehension of today's mega-directors.

The Perfect Storm is symptomatic in more ways than one, and like a hypochondriac, it borrows its symptoms from other films. The blueprint for its expensive simulation of the sea is taken from James Cameron's remake of the *Titanic* story, a film of narrative triviality and dry fraudulence bolstered not only by the painstaking auction-house authenticity of Edwardian conspicuous consumption, but the director's heroic *descent to the wreck* in a hired Russian submersible. The point-of-view of the film is ultimately that of the treasure hunt, cleverly disavowed in the film's final gesture of tossing the world's biggest diamond back into the deep. Thus *Titanic* is about nothing but the bracing discipline of the *box-office*, which bespeaks the desperate institutional narcissism of the entertainment industry, its inability to speak of anything but the economic conditions of its own existence, in what amounts to an unconscious parody of modernist self-referentiality. Love, rebellion, death, and the sea are mere pretexts. The sea is emptied of meaning. Or is it?

Part 3: TITANIC's wake

Early in 1997, I photographed the Mexican film set for *Titanic*, as part of an earlier project called *Dead Letter Office*, a title owed obliquely to Herman Meville's *Bartleby the Scrivener*. Bartleby's mysterious refusal to work may have begun with the psychic trauma of his job as a post office clerk sorting undeliverable mail. Re-reading the story, I suddenly imagined that it was difficult and even spiritually challenging to send a simple letter the short distance from Tijuana to San Diego, even if Hollywood movie-making, a much more expensive way of sending a message, had already crossed the border.

Figure 4
Allan Sekula, *Titanic set, Popotla,* (diptych) from *Dead Letter Office,* 1997

Seeking to profit from lower Mexican wages, Twentieth Century Fox built the set next to the poor fishing village of Popotla, on the Baja California coast about forty miles south of the US border. This explains the long list of Mexican names that rolls rapidly by in small type during the film's final credits. The production facility featured the largest freshwater filming tank in the world, bigger even than the one built later in Burbank to film *The Perfect Storm.* Mexican extras floated for many hours in the chill coastal winter, playing the parts of anonymous passengers on their way to an icy grave. The neighboring village, just to the south of the walls and guard towers of the set, has no running water. Efflux from the filming tanks lowered the salinity of the coastal tide

pools, damaging the traditional mussel-gathering livelihood of the villagers, and giving rise to vociferous and sustained protests by the fishermen and their families. A portion of the set has now been converted into an theme park devoted to the making of the *Titanic* story. I haven't visited, but presumably the walls between the set and the fishing village are still topped with shards of broken glass.

The lugubrious arrogance of *Titanic* intrigues me. Is it a symptom of something larger? We peer morbidly into the vortex of industrialism's early nose-dive into the abyss. The film absolves us of any obligation to remember the disasters that followed. Quick as a wink, cartoon-like, the angel of history is flattened between a wall of steel and a wall of ice. It's an easy, premature way to mourn a bloody century.

Or maybe, more innocently, the movie is a bellwether of good-hearted American neoliberalism. When James Cameron accepted the first of his academy awards for the film, he thrust his Oscar statuette into the overheated air above the podium and bellowed out a line from the film: "King of the world." (Later, looking slightly abashed after receiving what seemed to be a scathing glance from his wife, he asked for a moment of the silence for the long dead passengers and crew.) Curiously, Cameron borrowed his triumphal line from Benjamin Britten's 1951 opera based on Herman Melville's novella *Billy Budd.* Budd innocently exalts, even as he is shanghaied and set upon a path that leads to the yardarm. Could it be that Cameron secretly wanted to remake *Billy Budd*, or that he thinks of himself as the "handsome sailor" even more than he identifies with the cocky young artist played by Leonardo DiCaprio? It's a strange thought: Melville's (and Britten's) bleak, womenless, and covertly homoerotic parable--a tale of goodness flawed, evil intractable, a guilt-ridden captain--reworked to attract a repeat audience of prepubescent girls.

Five or ten years ago, I was confident that the sea had disappeared from the cognitive horizon of contemporary elites.[13] Now I'm not so sure. The sea returns, often in gothic guise, remembered and forgotten at the same time, always linked to death, but in a strangely disembodied way. One can no longer be as direct as Jules Michelet was in his 1861 book *La Mer*, which begins with a blunt recognition of the sea's hostility, its essential being for humans as the "element of asphyxia." And yet Bill Gates buys Winslow Homer's morbid *Lost on the Grand Banks* for more money than anyone has ever paid for an American painting. Frank Gehry builds a glistening titanium museum that resembles both a fish and a ship on the derelict site of a shipyard driven into bankruptcy by Spanish government policy, launching a new touristic future in the capital of one of the world's oldest maritime cultures. It was the Basques, after all, who probably discovered America, but they preferred to keep a secret and return without competition to the rich cod-fishing grounds of the North Atlantic.

Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum for Bilbao is a Los Angeles export product, a leviathan of California postmodernity beached on the derelict riverfront of the economically-depressed maritime-industrial capital of the Basques. As such, it marks the first move in a projected campaign of economic "revitalization," tied, as one might expect, to land speculation and tourist promotion. Kurt Forster, who is Gehry's biggest

defender, and who has stressed the protean, vitalist aspect of the architect's fish-buildings, has gone to some length to exempt Gehry's project from these sorts of vulgar and dismal economic associations:

> *[Beginning] with his buildings of the 1980s Frank Gehry returned to an architecture possessed of powerful corporeal qualities. He does not think of the volumes of his buildings within the confines of abstract space (which is also the space of economics); rather, he engages these volumes in intimate relationships with one another.*[14]

The bad objects here are legion: abstraction, economics, and by implication, bureaucracy and modernism. The crypto-baroque promise of redemptive embodiment —"corporeal qualities" and "intimate relationships"— is not unlike that offered by the virtual world of the internet.

One can of course travel a short distance along the Bilbao riverfront to the big city fish market, and see there evidence of the prodigious Spanish appetite for the creatures of the sea. Here the corporeal qualities of the fish that inspire Gehry are depressingly linked to the abstact space of economics: boxes of *merluza*, previously caught in great quantity off the Iberian coast, now imported from Namibia.

But like James Cameron making sure that the diamond is tossed back into the drink, Forster wants to disavow and affirm the economic at the same time: Gehry "and his collaborators made use of programs that were originally developed for the design of airplane fuselages."[15] The fish is also an airplane, as the frequent references found throughout recent writing on Gehry to titanium as an "aerospace material" attest. The implied association of titanium cladding with the skin of advanced aircraft is somewhat inaccurate, since titanium is typically used internally, alloyed with steel for jet-turbine blades that must both be lightweight and capable of withstanding high temperatures. In fact, the most radical innovations in aircraft skin design have come through plastic-polymer composites, which are crucial to so-called "stealth" technology. In fact, titanium has become a *meta-metal*, a metal that *refers* to high technology metallurgy, especially in luxury consumer products like German-designed high-end autofocus cameras.

For Forster, as for Gehry, the main breakthrough at the level of architectural practice is the collapse of the laborious mediation between drawing and executed design. On this point, Forster waxes utopian: "The age-old distinction between the hands that design and the instruments that execute has been overcome."[16] I would be delighted to see him deliver this argument with a straight face to the construction engineers and iron-workers who painstakingly translate the plan into the skewed geometry of the steel structure that is ultimately obscured beneath the glistening convoluted surface. Forster concludes by lauding the Guggenheim Bilbao as a "a monument to the productive capacities that are now at our disposal."[17] In other words: a monument to the absolute hegemony of intellectual labor afforded by computer-based manufacturing.

Figure 5
Allan Sekula, *Bilbao* (diptych) from *TITANIC's wake*, 1998-1999.

Having photographed Gehry's building, I want to venture another sort of reading. For all of its acclaimed "vitalism," its primal links to the doomed carp swimming in Gehry's grandmother's bathtub in Toronto, the Guggenheim Bilbao is more accurately likened to a gigantic light modulator. It introduces a new level of specular reflectivity into a rather drab cityscape previously restricted to tertiary hues. In effect, what it imports to Bilbao is an esthetically-controlled, prismatically concentrated version of the high specularity characteristic of the Los Angeles cityscape, the random and ubiquitous presence of shiny surfaces, glass and metal ricocheting sunlight in an inhuman, migraine-inducing glare. For this benign and restrained version of American aerospatial enlightenment, for this lighthouse and control-tower far upriver from the sea, the Basques, who pay all the bills for the museum, are entitled to feel grateful. Thus far, there are no Guggenheim's planned for Hanoi, Belgrade, Baghdad or Basra. For insights into the less restrained version of American aerospatial enlightenment, I advise the reader to see Hartmut Bitomsky's new film, *B-52*, about the venerable grey workhorse of the Pentagon.

By coincidence, one notices a certain corrosive potential. In the container transfer terminal on the downriver flank of the museum sit large cylinders of hydrofluoric acid, the extremely nasty agent used to dissolve and etch titanium and its alloys. This powerful oxidant is always a handy chemical for the aerospace industry, since it can eat away at metal without causing the heat fatigue associated with traditional machining. The touristic postcard is smudged somewhat by this reminder of Bilbao's lingering industrial kinship with Seveso and Bhopal. But there is no need to entertain apocalyptic scenarios: much to the architect's dismay, the Guggenheim's titanium cladding is already beginning to stain and darken from exposure to the relentless marine atmosphere of the Bay of Biscay. Up close, the building is beginning to resemble the wreck of an old bomber, stained with the greasy residue of burnt kerosene fuel.

Given this protean litany of resemblances, we can revise another old slogan, this one from a staple of 1950s American children's television: "It's a bird, it's a plane, it's...Supermuseum!"

Part 4: Refloating *The Family of Man*

So maybe we should be looking back, not to *The Family of Man*, but to Edward Steichen's earlier wartime project for the US Navy, *Power in the Pacific*, with its intense concentration on the cacophonous battle-platform of the aircraft carrier. Given what has already been suggested about the military-Keynesian proclivities of the Corbis collection, this would make sense. A serious reminder of the wartime work also brushes against the current tendency to resurrect Steichen as a celebrity and fashion photographer, which subordinates his global humanism and his patriotic propaganda to a more contemporary

and "fashionable" idea of the proper mission of esthetically-ambitious photography. This fashion-idea is pervasive in the artworld, and indeed can blithely take in even the most cutthroat and covert forms of military expertise, as evidenced by Vanessa Beecroft's recent performance pieces featuring US Navy SEAL commandos standing at attention in their dress whites.

Nonetheless, *The Family of Man* is more germane, since its humanism provides a prototype for the new post-Cold-War "human rights" rationale for military intervention. The exhibition, with its claims to globality, its liberal humanism, its utopian aspirations for world peace through world law, can be reread now in the context of the contemporary discourse of "globalization," the discourse being advanced by the promoters of an integrated global capitalist economic system. The official American perspective on this system is that it requires the continued vigilance and command of a single global politico-military superpower, which always acts in the healthy interests of the system at large and is thus itself more or less exempt from any overarching concept of world law. In effect, the American state claims for itself the same operational freedom in world affairs as that demanded by multinational corporations. This is an inherently unstable and even illogical discourse. For example, the old Dutch corporate doctrine of the "freedom of the seas," so crucial to the development of mercantile capitalism, is quickly invoked by US State and Defense Department planners when the supposed threat of the Chinese navy is being countered, even though the low-wage Chinese economy is crucial to the global factory system, and much of Chinese export production is capitalized through Taiwan, considered to be the principle target of the Chinese threat. A scenario in which American carrier battle groups, assisted by the Japanese, protect Chinese-crewed container ships bearing Chinese-made goods from torpedoes launched by Chinese submarines— a perverse replay of the Battle of the North Atlantic— would strain the imagination of a Tom Clancy, but I confess to not being up on my reading of that prolific and wildly imaginative writer of geopolitical airport novels.

Speaking only of the discursive level, it is clear that economic questions are now paramount in the way that political questions were paramount in the 1950s. When I wrote about *The Family of Man* twenty years ago, my overall aim was to locate universal language claims for photography within the historical context of universalized commodity exchange. Indeed, the homology between the function of the photograph as a universally exchangeable "abstract equivalent" of its worldly referent and the circulation function of paper currency had already been recognized in the 1850s, by Oliver Wendell Holmes. Today, the all-encompassing regime of the market, the global imperium of the *dismal science*, seems all the more pertinent to the discussion of archives and culture. As Margaret Thatcher so cynically and triumphantly put it, "There is no alternative."

On looking back again at *The Family of Man*, I was reminded that I had seen and noted but not yet fully comprehended that the exhibition and book are rife with images of aquatic immersion: "The final photograph in the book is quite literally a depiction of the oceanic state, a picture...of churning surf." But at the same time an image is offered of a world territorialized and exploited on strictly terrestrial lines. *The Family of Man* gives us an earthbound workaday world, so that even fishermen are depicted, not as voyagers

upon the high seas, but as peasants afloat, seemingly never far from the littoral spaces of the shore. For example, consider the striking absence of the remarkable work of the French photographer Anita Conti, an absence as striking as the fact of its current rediscovery by African scholars. There is no comparison between the rigor and intimacy and sensitivity to violence of her views of Senegalese shark fishermen, or of French cod fishers working the Newfoundland Banks, and the easy Alfred Eisenstadt photo of Gold Coast boatmen chosen by Steichen. The key to her best work is her discovery of a point-of-view closer to the fish than to the fishermen. By contrast, *The Family of Man* reserves the image of immersion for *homo ludens* and for the ultimate utopian *telos* of the story of humanity.[18]

The exhibition toured the world, thanks to sponsorship by the United States Information Agency and corporate co-sponsors such as Coca-Cola. For all its globetrotting, *The Family of Man* failed to register the actual diasporic movement of populations—largely via crowded maritime transport—in the decade after the end of the second world war. Think of the mass migration of former British colonial subjects from India and the Caribbean to Britain in search of livelihood. The invisibility of these migrants is all the more startling when one realizes that the *sea of humanity* depicted on the end papers of the deluxe clothbound edition of the book is in fact an apparently all-white, all-English crowd witnessing the coronation of Elizabeth II, a ritual not exactly linked to human progress or to concepts of citizenship. This is the *family of man*, not the *rights of man*. The invisible short people in this crowd, floating beneath the surface of this sea, could be immigrant children. But how can we know? All we can see are their handmade periscopes, searching for a submarine view of the young Queen.

Figure 6
Detail of frontispiece photo by Pat English for *The Family of Man*

Leo Lionni's abstract design for the cloth cover of the same edition bespeaks an even more programmatic adherence to earthly and racial boundaries: a more or less constructivist map-like array of embossed metallic pigmentation samples, ranging from black to silver-white through an intermediary zone of coppers, golds and greys, all floating in a sea of blue, as if the world were one contiguous continental landmass, and each race its own nation, stepping forth into the global marketplace of neocolonialism with its own coinage. Lionni gives us the prototype of the post-literate, universally-legible transnational corporate logos that would emerge more than twenty years later. It is no accident that Lionni was the chief graphic designer for *Fortune* magazine in the 1950s, where precisely this fusion of de-radicalized constructivism and the businessman's imperative had a lineage stretching back to the 1930s. His array of rectangles and trapezoids also gives us an abstracted image of the mode of installation of the exhibition itself, of the comparative and contiguous visual ensemble derived from a process of archival selection. By implication, the archive itself is treated as a kind of earthly, mineral resource, to be mined for meaning, pointing the way to the Corbis salt mine in the mountains of Pennsylvania.

The hidden *telos* of *The Family of Man* is to escape the dry compartmentalization of the archive, to imagine an erotic and utopian return to the sea, a solitary quest conducted in

the name of humanity. The model for this can be found in Alfred Steiglitz's retrospective remark on that monument of photographic modernism, *The Steerage*, a photograph that has come to stand out from all the rest as the very exemplar of the *anti-archival* image. Mixing tropes of modernism, the pastoral, oceanic rapture, and bourgeois self-loathing, Steiglitz's spoke of his "new vision...of people, the common people, the feeling of ship and ocean and sky, and the feeling of release that I was away from the mob called the rich." [19]

In *The Family of Man*, a small flotilla of images break loose from the filing cabinets on the shore. Gary Winogrand gives us a photo of lovers frolicking among bathers in the shallows, Steichen himself offers a god's-eye view of a naked child belly-flopping with a joyful splash, and Ewing Kainin portrays a blond naiad bursting to the surface, her ecstatic smile and closed eyes half-visible through a cascading veil of water. And there is the large photograph by Nell Dorr of a Venus emerging from the waves, garlanded with hibiscus flowers. The regressive longing for immersion comes at us recurrently as we move through the exhibition. It is perhaps consistent with the pan-denominational religiosity of *The Family of Man*, reinforced by text editor Dorothy Norman's predilection for pithy shards of timeless wisdom extracted from a wide range of sacred texts. Or as Steichen himself put it, "Photographs concerned with the religious rather than religions."

Figure 7
Re-installation of *The Family of Man*, Château de Clervaux, Luxembourg.
Photo: Allan Sekula

The notion of the "oceanic feeling"— of an undifferentiated ego restored to a primal sense of oneness with the world—enters psychoanalytic discourse in the late 1920s, in an exchange of letters between Romaine Rolland and Sigmund Freud. Freud recapitulates the exchange in the first chapter of *Civilization and Its Discontents*, crediting Rolland with the idea, but demurring at Rolland's suggestion, provoked by reading *The Future of an Illusion*, that *la sensation oceanique* lay at the origin of all religious sentiment. Deeply engaged in the study of the Indian nineteenth-century mystic saint Ramakrishna, Rolland was certainly familiar with a range of metaphors for immersion and dissolution of the self, particularly those centered on the mother-goddess Kali, creator and destroyer of life. Freud's intellectual bias toward the psychic logic of monotheism led him to a different notion of religious origins. Religious faith followed from the ego's encounter with a hostile world, and religion was the search for a protective, "enormously exalted" father. Steichen's overhead photograph of the diving naked child can be said to be poised between these two contrary views of religion: one monotheistic and the other polytheistic and "oceanic." The photographer-editor is the "exalted father," but he longs to become again the child merging with the liquid element. (In Lacanian terms, Rolland's "oceanic feeling" corresponds to the domain of the imaginary, while Freud's "exalted father" stands on the side of the symbolic.)[20]

Freud's earthbound predilections made him skeptical about transcendent claims for oceanic immersion. He concludes the first chapter of *Civilization and Its Discontents*

with a line from Schiller's early romantic poem "Der Taucher" (The Diver). The poem is based on the fable of a Sicilian king who, offering his daughter as a prize, commands a youth to make a second dive into the abyss. Having triumphed once over the terrors of the deep, the diver laments before his second, fatal plunge: "Let him rejoice who lives up here in roseate light." Freud, like Jules Michelet, understood that the sea, before it was anything else, was "the element of asphyxia," the archetype of the hostile world, although Michelet was more sensitive to the nurture provided by the oceans. Freud's meditation on the oceanic feeling led him, yet again, to the death instinct, already explored in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.*

But this intellectual ground had also been traversed by Freud's disciple Sandor Ferenczi, in a remarkable book called *Thalassa: A Theory of Genitality*, published in 1923 but dating back to interrupted speculations developed during his service as an army doctor during the first word war, speculations with which Freud was familiar.
Ferenczi's basic argument derives primarily from the biologist Ernst Haeckel's erroneous theory that ontogeny—the development of the individual organism from the germ cell—is a recapitulation of phylogeny—evolutionary history. Secondly, Ferenczi, like Freud, draws from the thermodynamic concept of entropy. From these source ideas the psychoanalyst, seeking the key to the formation of genital drives, intuits that the intrauterine *experience* of land mammals recapitulates their aquatic evolutionary prehistory. For male mammals, coitus is the expression of a regressive longing for an entropic return not only to the inert floating passivity of the prenatal state, but to the liquid origins of the species. The last sentence of the book sums it up, although along the way Ferenczi is forced by his own logic to admit that female psyche and sexuality are more complex, less "primitive" than that of the male:

> *The male member and its function appears as the* organic symbol *of the restoration—albeit only partial—of the fetal-infantile state of union with the mother and at the same time with the geological prototype thereof, existence in the sea.* [emphasis in original] [21]

Thus can be discovered a key to the Schillerian "infant bliss" at the heart of *The Family of Man.* As I put it long ago without having fully developed the argument, "the exhibition moves from the celebration of patriarchal authority—which finds its highest embodiment in the United Nations—to the final construction of an imaginary utopia that resembles nothing so much as a protracted state of infantile, pre-Oedipal bliss." This infantilism is consistent with the demise of political subjects in the classical enlightenment sense, and the emergence of new consumer subjects. For this reason, *The Family of Man* was received with great interest on Madison Avenue, even though it portrayed a world in which Fordist consumerism was largely invisible. The ecstatic bathers of *The Family of Man* were recruited as shills for menthol cigarettes and beer. The path that opened here has led fifty years later to Corbis.com and the non-judgmental fun of *shopping for pictures* and *taking a cruise* without an "enormously exalted father" leading the way .

Part 5: Anti-*Titanic*

Titanic, *Waterworld*, and *The Perfect Storm* tell an old story: men sacrifice themselves at sea so that women can nurture civilized values, or even revive civilization itself. The instincts, which are assigned no gender by psychoanalytic theory, are subordinated in these films to the traditional sexual division of labor. (This traditionalism cuts deeper than the superficial feminism found in *Titanic* and *Perfect Storm,* which allows bourgeois women to seek love freely and to be outspoken and prophetic patrons of the avant-garde and permits working-class women to be fishing boat skippers.) These melodramas pretend that the "male" death instinct serves the "female" life instinct, as if in optimistic rejoinder to Freud's pessimistic conclusion to *Civilization and Its Discontents*. It goes almost without saying that this traditional view, which can never be honest about the fact that its "morality" instrumentalizes the instinctual level of the psyche, has served as one of the principle ideological justifications for war, for organized aggression on a grand scale. Consider the motley crew of "smokers" in *Waterworld*, ensconced as post-apocalyptic galley-slaves and pirates aboard the rotting hulk of the *Exxon Valdez* under the command of a maniacal Dennis Hopper. On the one hand, we can be sure that this is an intentionally self-parodic projection onto the *lumpen-proletariat* of the petroleum-consumption patterns of your average successful SUV-driving Hollywood screenwriter. But the smokers also epitomize the bad habits that qualify a society for *rogue nation* status, for elevation to the target-list for the next barrage of cruise missiles. In the film the "bad" death-instinct of the smokers can only be thwarted (or, more precisely, gratified) by the "good" death instinct of the *thalassally-regressed* mutant fish-man Kevin Kostner, who is by virtue of his enhanced swimming ability a kind of human torpedo. It would be absurd for me to say that these are "militarist" films, but their therapeutic and homeostatic approach to the problem of human destructive energies puts them in line with the new rhetoric of state violence, which is always violence exercised in the interest of abstract human rights, or, more concretely, *for the future of the children.*

Not long ago I was able to see the recently-restored travelling-exhibition version of *The Family of Man* at its permanent home, the Château de Clervaux in Luxembourg, near the site of the Battle of the Ardennes. An old US Army Sherman tank, presumably a relic of that battle, welcomes the visitor at the entrance to the castle. What was most striking about the meticulous reconstruction undertaken by Steichen's natal country is that now one can see how *modest* and *slow-paced* the spectacle-culture of the 1950s was by contrast with the Hollywood blockbusters, mega-exhibitions and digital image-streams of today. By current standards, the scale of the photographs is far from superhuman, and I saw a group of German high school students slipping into a kind of solemn, attentive reverie as they moved patiently among the monochromatic panels, as if this were very different from their experience of going to the movies, playing a computer game, or clicking on a web link. Perhaps this is the ultimate museological destiny of *The Family of Man*: to become the immobilized relic of a global road show that provided the model for the travelling museum blockbusters of today. Does the very *obsolescence* of *The Family of Man* open up a plethora of possibilities?

Just for a moment, imagine that the restored *Family of Man* had been installed instead aboard a ship, and that the ship sailed around the world, visiting all the port cities that had originally taken the exhibition, from New York to Cape Town to Jakarta, and maybe a few others that weren't on the original itinerary. In some cities, a rich menu of competing cultural choices combined with general urban indifference to the waterfront would bring few visitors: maybe no more than fifty people in New York, despite the free admission. In others cities, maybe in Karachi, the ship would be so swamped with visitors that it would almost heel over and capsize at the dock: an audience of thirty thousand in one day. In the richer countries, caps and T-shirts would be sold; in poor countries these would be give way to free souvenirs. It would be a simple no-frills cargo ship, so there would be none of the connotations of protected luxury that accrue to a château or to the cruise vessel commandeered in Genoa by the frightened leaders of the rich nations. In many cities, dissident and human-rights groups would be invited to convene public forums in a conference room built into one of the holds. These same groups would provide hospitality for the crew. A web site would track the vessel's progress. The ship would fly the flag of landlocked Luxembourg, or maybe that of the United Nations, or perhaps an unrecognizable flag, unrelated to any known sovereign entity, perhaps bearing a portrait of Steichen's mother holding a freshly baked apple pie. It would not fly the flag of the United States, nor would it display the ensign of the Museum of Modern Art, and there would be no Sherman tank lashed to the hatch covers.

This would be the ghost ship imagined by the *New York Times*: *the aging cargo ship in the age of email.* What I am describing here, taking only modest license, is the 1998-2000 circumnavigation of the *Global Mariner*, an 18,000 deadweight-ton general cargo vessel carrying in its converted holds a remarkable exhibition about working conditions at sea, and—in a broader sense—about the hidden social costs and probable consequences of corporate globalization. Sponsored by the International Transport Workers Federation, a London-based umbrella organization of over 450 transport-workers' unions around the world, the ship was actually the brainchild of a group of German and British seafarer-activists who also happened to be disaffected veterans of Greenpeace, interested in the problem of an international linkage of labor and environmental struggles. Their primary concern was the system of *flag of convenience* shipping, a lawerly ruse invented by American shippers in the mid-1940s that allows wealthy ship owners to register their vessels in poor nations offering what is often termed *paper sovereignty*: a flag for a fee. The system is rife with abuses, and indeed its very purpose is abuse: shielding exploitative labor conditions and substandard vessels behind a bewildering legal maze. The ITF has been waging a campaign against this system for fifty years, trying to enforce minimum standards of pay and safety for seafarers.

The solution of the ITF activists was to connect this venerable and not always very successful fight to the broader campaign against corporate globalization. Here it is worth noting that since 1995 key working-class resistances to neoliberal policies—reduced social security, casualization of work in the name of "flexibility," union-busting, and privatization of public infrastructure—have come from workers in the transport sector: railway workers in France, dockers in Australia, Chile and Brazil, bus drivers and airline

crews in Mexico, delivery drivers in the United States. These battles against the doctrine of the untrammeled market predate Seattle.

The *Global Mariner* was a floating version of the *agit-train*, reconceived in the context of an eclectic and decidedly post-Bolshevik left-wing politics. (The ITF had its origins in solidarity actions linking Dutch and British dockers and seafarers at the end of the nineteenth century, and remained close to the traditions of the old socialist Second International for much of its history.) The quixotic *agit-ship* was nonetheless indebted to the experiments of radical productivist art in the young Soviet Union, and also to the photomontages of John Heartfield and the workers' theatre of Erwin Piscator. Remember that Steichen had already borrowed from the big-scale presentational techniques of Russian designers and photographers of the 1920s for his thematic photo exhibitions of the 1940s and fifties: there are ghostly shadows of El Lissitsky and Rodchenko in *The Family of Man.* Having witnessed the absorption of these once-radical devices into the toolkit of corporate liberalism and advertising, one could say that now the *Global Mariner* has reappropriated this tradition to forge a new-old weapon against the neoliberalism of the twenty-first century.

But before the exhibition, with its big computer-generated photomurals and its eerie post-Stockhausen soundtrack, there is the fact of the *ship and the voyage* in and of themselves, readymade-like in the subtlety of their ambiguous status as *already existing but transformed* object and context.

The *Lady Rebecca* (as "she" had been christened two decades before on the North Sea coast of Britain), had gone through five names, a series of superimposed reinsciptions of bow and stern, each prior name an increasingly obscure trace beneath the bright white paint announcing the new identity. The calculated amnesia of the world of international shipping offers a lesson to those who celebrate the postmodern flux of identity. One of the stranger stories of this common practice: in mid-passage a captain receives a telex noting that the ship has been sold and must be renamed. The captain politely asks the new name and is told to send a crewman over the side—risky business when underway—to paint out every other letter of the old name. What would Mallarmé make of this? The concrete poetry of the contemporary maritime world, the nominative magic worked out between the telex machine and the paint locker: here we return to Melville's *Benito Cereno*, but confront not the ambiguities of insurrection and mutiny but a mastery that disguises itself. Whose ship? Which ship? A palimpsest of disguises and deceits, a deliberate muddying of the waters.

Nearing the end of its/her working life, the ship formerly known as the *Lady Rebecca* entered a state of dangerous decrepitude, owned by a Hong Kong shipping company, flagged, I believe, to Panama, crewed by Filipinos, and finally—at the literal end of her ropes—moored at offshore anchorage in the bustling port of Pusan, on the southeast coast of Korea, waiting. For what? A shady buyer willing to squeeze out the last bit of profit from the laborious and plodding and dangerous journeys of an aging vessel, a *death ship* in the making. Or, the owner makes the final blunt decision, almost that of a farmer in its frank brutality, though less intimate than one based on veterinary

observation, since this is a decision made at a distance—in Hong Kong or London or Zurich —without poking at the rust breeding on the ladders and the hatch coaming, or poking at the cracks in the hull, or reading the engine room log with its depressing catalog of failing valves and pumps. From the pasture of the anchorage, the ship embarks on the long voyage to the rendering plant. Send "her" to the gently-sloping beaches of India, to be run ashore at high tide by a skeleton crew: engines full ahead onto the oily sand, to be broken by the sledges and cutting torches of vast crews of gaunt laborers, the *abattoir* of the maritime world, the ship re-manned for the last time by the last toiling victims in the cycle of oceanic exploitation.

Then miraculously–although here other metaphors, those of rescue and redemption, are also to be used as if this were fiction–the ship was purchased by the International Transport Workers Federation in the summer of 1998, reflagged to Britain and arduously refitted at the Mipo dockyards of Hyundai, just north of Pusan, and then sailed by a Croatian crew to the German port of Bremerhaven, where it was further fitted-out with the exhibition, and then, only a few months after the initial purchase—all this was done at breakneck pace— it embarked with a new name on a twenty-month circumnavigation, setting out to visit 83 cities around the world. The crew was a polyglot mix: English, German, Icelandic, Filipino, Burmese, Scottish, Croatian, New Zealander, Ukrainian, Russian, Japanese, Dutch, Irish.

Depending on the political situation of the local unions who invited the ship, the visits could be militant and combative. For example, the crew joined the dockers of Valparaiso in their fight against Chilean government plans for port privatization, demonstrated alongside exiled Burmese seafarers and other democracy campaigners outside the Myanmar embassy in Bangkok, and staged a protest in support of striking American shipyard workers in New Orleans. Two fast launches were stowed on top of the rear hatch cover, and these allowed for rapid, Greenpeace-style actions. In other instances, the ship was isolated from public contact by unsympathetic governments, as happened in Hong Kong, a city whose crypto-"market-Stalinist" chief executive happens to be the former head of an international container-shipping line. A invitation to Greece scheduled for the very last day of the millennium was rescinded at the eleventh hour by a seafarers' union unwilling to challenge powerful Greek shipowners. Faraway political events could change the tenor of the ship's reception, as happened in Istanbul a few weeks after the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization. For the first time, the ship was greeted at the dock by workers bearing banners specifically denouncing globalization. And indeed the ship's visit to Seattle in the spring of 1999 had been one of a number of local events leading up to the November protests.[22]

If, as Michel Foucault has suggested, ships are the very exemplar of heterotopias (real spaces that call other spaces into question), the *Global Mariner* was the heterotopia of heterotopias. Or if you want, this was a *meta-ship*, representing and figuring within itself, within the exhibition that was its only cargo, all the other invisible, ignored and silent ships of the world. The *Global Mariner* had to be real ship functioning in an exemplary way, to be the Good Ship that social justice demanded other ships should and could be, but it was also an *empty vessel* carrying nothing but ballast and a message. This

"emptiness" may have provoked the hostile captain of one substandard vessel targeted by the ITF to refer to the *Global Mariner* as a *toy ship*, as if it had been de-realized by the absence of heavy cargo. And yet this was a vessel of old-fashioned self-sufficiency, equipped with onboard cranes that allowed it to load and discharge cargo at terminals without dockside equipment, the sort of vessel commonly seen trading in more remote third world ports. The *Global Mariner* functioned in marked contrast to the specialized container and bulk ships of today's shipping world, which only work by being integrated into a larger machine ensemble of dockside cranes and conveyors. Its functional autonomy and versatility allowed the *Global Mariner* to become a large mobile art space that could efficiently install, transport, and display its exhibition.

Figure 8
Postcard of the *Global Mariner*

The *Global Mariner* was also embarked on what can only be seen as an ironic, counter-enactment of an older project dating back to the very origins of modern imperial dominion, namely the first circumnavigation of the globe by Magellan. This was *Magellan in reverse*. Indeed, the ritual significance of circumnavigation cannot be under-emphasized. These epochal voyages were first re-enacted in the epoch of high imperialism, serving as theatrical assertions of a naval power's emergence on the world stage, as was the case with the circumnavigation of Admiral Dewey's "White Fleet" after the decisive American victory over Spain in Manila Bay in 1898. In the American case, the grand, global naval parade, *showing the flag*, in naval parlance, put the muscle behind the geo-strategic ambition expressed earlier in the nineteenth century by the naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan.

In the later twentieth century, the solo circumnavigator ritually revitalizes the individualist underpinnings of the capitalist spirit of adventure, while simultaneously obscuring--through the drama of solitary endeavor and extreme self-sufficiency--the industrial and social dimension of the world-spanning project. The fascination with such voyages, manifested in the tragically ill-fated work of Bas Jan Ader, or more recently in a number of intriguing projects by Tacita Dean, is entirely consistent with a return to a seemingly exhausted romanticism, and an effort to divorce adventure from its historical linkage with plunder and conquest. That romanticism should only seek its survival in oceanic immersion, hyper-solitude, and the extreme extra-territoriality of the middle passage is a sign of the desperation encountered in its rescue from generalized cultural debasement. Today this postmodern, quasi-romantic "return" to the sea must be understood as fundamentally different from its Byronic precedent, since it contends with a sea that is both depleted of resources and sublimely threatening in a new way with the advent of global warming, a sea that kills and is being killed, a sea that is also subject—in the developed world—to a ubiquitous variety of hyper-real representations, from aquatic theme parks to the species-rich aquariums that have become a fixture of every urban waterfront leisure complex.

The *Global Mariner* insisted, on the contrary, in its plodding *ordinary* way on the return to social questions. Speaking with the caution of a Cold War liberal, Steichen had claimed that *The Family of Man* was about "human consciousness, not social

consciousness."[23] The great strength of the *Global Mariner* experiment was to raise the question of society from the very space that is imagined to be beyond society. Nothing special: a ship like many others, so ordinary that one Seattle resident, seeing the ship being ceremoniously welcomed by the fireboats of that strong union city, wondered what the fuss was all about. In other words, here was the sort of welcome one would expect for an aircraft carrier or the *QE2*, but not for an old *'tween decker*, presumably carrying coffee or pulp paper, or some other anonymous bulk commodity.

It is all the more profound that this ship should seek to represent the workings of empire at a time when the global economy is assumed to be entirely virtual in its connectedness, magically independent of the slow maritime movement of heavy things. The arrogant conceit of the cyber-economy, for that matter of the very idea of the *post-industrial* era, is that we disavow our dim but nagging awareness that nearly all energy—whether converted to electricity or derived from direct combustion—comes from oil or other hydrocarbon fossil fuels, or on fissionable uranium refined from yellow-cake ore: solids, liquids and gases that are extracted from the earth and transported in bulk. The very slowness of the *Global Mariner*'s voyage, the twenty months of its circumnavigation, reminds us of the duration of early-modern seafaring under sail, and also of the contemporary persistence of slow, heavy transport flows.

This was the anti-*Titanic*. The Glaswegian quartermaster aboard the *Global Mariner*, a wiry veteran seafarer by the name of Jimmy McCauley, made the point very succinctly, referring to the steady aggregate loss of life at sea, crews of twenty at a time on bulk ore carriers that mysteriously break in half, sometimes in calm seas, or the myriad Filipino passengers crammed onto decrepit ferries that capsize or burn in the Sulu Sea : "A *Titanic* happens every year, but no one hears about it." The exhibition itself brought this home with a narrative program that took the visitor from a happy and optimistic view of seafaring—a mix of shipping industry propaganda and tourist fantasy—to an increasingly dark and dismal view of calamities and dangers at sea, culminating in a meticulous model of the ill-fated Swedish ferry *Estonia* underwater in a fish-tank vitrine, This last amounted to a morbid seafarers' joke on the display techniques of maritime museums. As one descended from upper to lower holds, and moved forward toward the bow of the ship, the use of archival images—of injured seafarers and atrocious living conditions, of shipwrecks, fires and oil spills—became more and more insistent, until one climbed to the upper hold dedicated to public discussion and debate. Many of the photographs used were taken by the ITF's ship inspectors in ports around the world, who are themselves dockers and seafarers. This documentary imperative brings openness to an industry traditionally veiled in secrecy. In fact, the current tendency to extend forensic investigations to non-military shipwrecks, using deep submersibles when necessary, is largely traceable to precedents set by the ITF.

Figures 9-10
Installation views of the lower holds of the *Global Mariner*.
Photos: Allan Sekula

Miren del Olmo, chief mate aboard the *Global Mariner*, told me a story. A Basque from a poor fishing village on the outskirts of Bilbao, daughter of a retired shipyard worker,

she recalled having crossed the Nervión river on her way to English class one Saturday in the late 1980s, preparing for the *lingua franca* of a life at sea. Hearing commotion in the distance, she glanced back at the bridge, just next to the soon-to-be-closed shipyard that would ten years later provide the site for Frank Gehry's Guggenheim. The roadway and pylons suddenly disappeared in a fog of tear gas. Displaced welders and shipwrights—her father's comrades—were battling with the riot squads of the National Police. She told the story as she stood watch late one December night on another sort of bridge, as the *Global Mariner* made its way west across the Black Sea. It occurred to me that we were doubtless crossing the course taken almost a century earlier by the mutinous battleship *Potemkin*, as it zig-zagged from Odessa to Constanza seeking shelter from the Tsarist fleet.

The ship shuddered through heavy winter swells, seemingly going nowhere. After a long silence, broken only by the intermittent crackle of radio voices speaking the terse and variably accented English of the sea-lanes, Miren remarked that she had yet to spend enough time at home in Bilbao to be able to visit the new museum. But in her unprofessional opinion, speaking frankly to an American, it looked like it had been built "from every can of Coke drunk in Bilbao."

As Melville's Bartleby, broken by the post office, put it to his boss: "I would prefer not to." On August 3, 2000, having completed its mission as a good ship, an exemplary ship, a ship representing all the other invisible ships of the world, the *Global Mariner*, bearing a cargo of steel coil, was rammed and sunk at the mouth of the Orinoco River in Venezuela, not far from the fictional refuge of Robinson Crusoe, a shipwrecked *isolato* from an earlier mercantile era. Thanks to Bill Gates and his minions, I received this news by email, but not in writing. Instead, without warning, a startling picture rolled downward on the screen of my computer: a ship I knew well, sinking, photographed from a lifeboat by one of the crew.

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[1] Allan Sekula, "The Traffic in Photographs," in *Photography Against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works 1973-1983* (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design,1984), pp. 76-101. Originally published in *Art Journal*, Spring 1981.

[2] Edward Steichen, *A Life in Photography* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), n.p.

[3] Carl Sandburg, "Prologue," *The Family of Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955), p.3.

[4] David E. Sanger, "Shipwreck in Seattle," *New York Times*, 5 December 1999.

[5] "Collision at Sea: The Commander Speaks," *Dateline*, NBC News, 23 April 2001

[6] Richard Verrier and Mark Magnier, "DisneySea is Joining Wave of Theme Parks Rolling Abroad," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 July 2001.

[7] An earlier version of this section was first presented as part of the Third Annual Ian Burn Memorial Lecture, at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, May 1998.

[8] D.H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* [1923] (New York: Penguin, 1977). Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1987), pp. 186-189.

[9] Charles Olson, *Call Me Ishmael* [1947] in *Collected Prose of Charles Olson*, ed. Donald Allen and Benjamin Friedlander (Berkeley: University of California, 1997), p. 26.

[10] http://www.corbis.com

[11] Nicolai Cikovsky and Franklin Kelly, *Winslow Homer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 226-230.

[12] Quoted in Pauline Rogers, "Hell and High Water," *International Cinematographers Guild Magazine*, July 2000, p. 21.

[13] See Allan Sekula, *Fish Story* (Düsseldorf: Richter Verlag, 1995).

[14] Kurt Forster, "The Museum as Civic Catalyst," in *Frank O. Gehry: Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa* (Stuttgart: Edition Axel Menges, 1998), p. 10.

[15] Ibid., p. 11.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] See *Anita Conti: la dame de la mer* (Paris: Revue Noire, 2001).

[19] Alfred Steiglitz, "Four Happenings," *Twice A Year*, no. 8-9 (1942), p. 128.

[20] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* [1930], trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961), pp. 11-20. See Also J. Moussaieff Masson, *The Oceanic Feeling: The Origins of Religious Sentiment in Ancient India* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1980).

[21] Sandor Ferenczi, *Thalassa: A Theory of Genitality* (London: Karnac, 1989), p. 107. See also Christopher L. Connery, "The Oceanic Feeling and the Regional Imaginary," in Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, eds. *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 284-311. Responding to "Pacific Rim discourse," Connery has developed a compelling argument linking Charles Olson's idea of the Pacific as "world ocean," Anglo-American imperial ambitions, and a Ferenczian psychoanalytic reading of the cult of swimming.

[22] The visit of the *Global Mariner* to Seattle was sponsored by the West Coast dockworkers' union, the ILWU and by a number of other maritime unions. The ILWU also co-sponsored the Seattle exhibition of my project *Fish Story* at the Henry Art Gallery, in conjunction with the Labor Studies Center at the University of Washington, an unusual occurrence in American museum practice, given the hegemony of corporate patronage. Between February and May of 1999, *Fish Story* became a focal point for a series of meetings and events—including the *Global Mariner*'s visit—addressing Seattle's militant labor history and problems of working class responses to globalization. The ILWU shut down all ports on the West Coast and in Hawaii during the subsequent WTO meetings, and rank and file dockworkers—men and women—took a big role in the street demonstrations, thus earning the scorn of apologists for globalization, such as Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times*. I first visited the *Global Mariner* when it made port in

Los Angeles on its way up the Pacific coast, and subsequently sailed with it from San Francisco to Portland, from Durban to Cape Town, and from the Mediterranean up through the Black Sea and back down to the Adriatic. On the Seattle protests, see Alexander Cockburn, Jeffrey St. Clair and Allan Sekula, *Five Days that Shook the World: Seattle and Beyond* (London: Verso, 2000).

[23] Edward Steichen, "Introduction," *The Family of Man*, p. 5.