from airplanes, it drops incendiary bombs over cities; and through gas warfare the aura is abolished in a new way.

"Fiat ars—pereat mundus", says Fascism, and, as Marinetti admits, expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception that has been changed by technology. This is evidently the consummation of "l'art pour l'art. Mankind, which in Homer's time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, now is one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicizing art.

Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), the English novelist, biographer, and literary critic, is one of the most important writers of the twentieth century. Her fiction includes *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), and *To the Lighthouse* (1927). "A Room of One's Own" (1929) is possibly her most famous essay. As the text indicates, it began as a series of lectures on women and fiction. This essay became one of the most widely used points of reference for postwar feminism, particularly among academic and literary feminists who had to balance the demands of family and work with those of the creative life. Woolf's delicately powerful, though fictional, description of a woman's experience on the manicured lawns of Oxbridge, like the female

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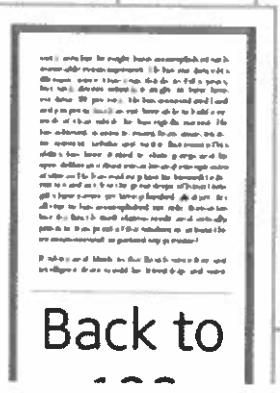
protagonist's plight in Charlotte Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892), is a fictionalized but powerful attack on the not-so-subtle forces of patriarchal culture. It is theory that requires no further explanation.

A Room of One's Own*

Virginia Woolf (1929)

But, you may say, we asked you to speak about women and fiction—what has that got to do with a room of one's own? I will try to explain. When you asked me to speak about women and fiction I sat down on the banks of a river and began to wonder what the words meant. They might mean simply a few remarks about Fanny Burney; a few more about Jane Austen; a tribute to the Brontës and a sketch of Haworth Parsonage under snow; some witticisms if possible about Miss Mitford; a respectful allusion to George Eliot; a reference to Mrs. Gaskell and one would have done. But at second sight the words seemed not so simple. The title women and fiction might mean, and you may have meant it to mean, women and what they are like; or it might mean women and the fiction that they write; or it might mean women and the fiction that is written about them; or it might mean that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together and you want me to consider them in that light. But when I began to consider the subject in this last way, which seemed the most interesting, I soon saw that it had one fatal drawback. I



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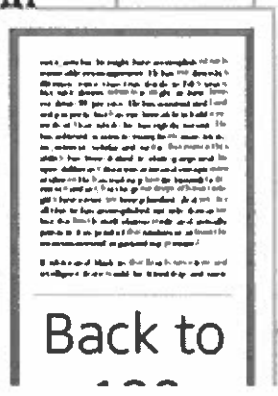
should never be able to come to a conclusion. I should never be able to fulfil what is, I understand, the first duty of a lecturer—to hand you after an hour's discourse a nugget of pure truth to wrap up between the pages of your notebooks and keep on the mantel-piece for ever. All I could do was to offer you an opinion upon one minor point—a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leaves the great problem of the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction unsolved. I have shirked the duty of coming to a conclusion upon these two questions—women and fiction remain, so far as I am concerned, unsolved problems. But in order to make some amends I am going to do what I can to show you how I arrived at this opinion about the room and the money. I am going to develop in your presence as fully and freely as I can the train of thought which led me to think this. Perhaps if I lay bare the ideas, the prejudices, that lie behind this statement you will find that they have some bearing upon women and some upon fiction. At any rate, when a subject is highly controversial—and any question about sex is that—one cannot hope to tell the truth. One can only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold. One can only give one's audience the chance of drawing their own conclusions as they observe the limitations, the prejudices, the idiosyncrasies of the speaker. Fiction here is likely to contain more truth than fact. Therefore I propose, making use of all the liberties and licences



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of a novelist, to tell you the story of the two days that preceded my coming here—how, bowed down by the weight of the subject which you have laid upon my shoulders, I pondered it, and made it work in and out of my daily life. I need not say that what I am about to describe has no existence; Oxbridge is an invention; so is Fernham; "I" is only a convenient term for somebody who has no real being. Lies will flow from my lips, but there may perhaps be some truth mixed up with them; it is for you to seek out this truth and to decide whether any part of it is worth keeping. If not, you will of course throw the whole of it into the wastepaper basket and forget all about it.

Here then was I (call me Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael or by any name you please—it is not a matter of any importance) sitting on the banks of a river a week or two ago in fine October weather, lost in thought. That collar I have spoken of, women and fiction, the need of coming to some conclusion on a subject that raises all sorts of prejudices and passions, bowed my head to the ground. To the right and left bushes of some sort, golden and crimson, glowed with the colour, even it seemed burnt with the heat, of fire. On the further bank the willows wept in perpetual lamentation, their hair about their shoulders. The river reflected whatever it chose of sky and bridge and burning tree, and when the undergraduate had oared his boat through the reflections they closed again, completely, as if he had never been. There one

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might have sat the clock round lost in thought. Thought—to call it by a prouder name than it deserved—had let its line down into the stream. It swayed, minute after minute, hither and thither among the reflections and the weeds, letting the water lift it and sink it, until—you know the little tug—the sudden conglomeration of an idea at the end of one's line: and then the cautious hauling of it in, and the careful laying of it out? Alas, laid on the grass how small, how insignificant this thought of mine looked; the sort of fish that a good fisherman puts back into the water so that it may grow fatter and be one day worth cooking and eating. I will not trouble you with that thought now, though if you look carefully you may find it for yourselves in the course of what I am going to say.

But however small it was, it had, nevertheless, the mysterious property of its kind—put back into the mind, it became at once very exciting, and important; and as it darted and sank, and ~~flashed hither and thither, set up such a wash~~ and tumult of ideas that it was impossible to sit still. It was thus that I found myself walking with extreme rapidity across a grass plot. Instantly a man's figure rose to intercept me. Nor did I at first understand that the gesticulations of a curious-looking object, in a cut-away coat and evening shirt, were aimed at me. His face expressed horror and indignation. Instinct rather than reason came to my help; he was a Beadle; I was a woman. Thus was the turf; there was the path. Only the Fellows and Scholars are

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allowed here; the gravel is the place for me. Such thoughts were the work of a moment. As I regained the path the arms of the Beadle sank, his face assumed its usual repose, and though turf is better walking than gravel, no very great harm was done. The only charge I could bring against the Fellows and Scholars of whatever the college might happen to be was that in protection of their turf, which has been rolled for 300 years in succession, they had sent my little fish into hiding....

Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) was born in Sardinia. He studied at the University of Turin, where he became active in the Italian Socialist Party. By 1924 he became a founder and leader of the Italian Communist Party. Gramsci's literary, journalistic, and political activities eventually led to his arrest in 1926. He spent most of the balance of his life in prison, where he wrote his famous *Prison Notebooks*, from which the following selections are taken. Gramsci greatly broadened Marxist thinking on the role of intellectuals in the political process and the social hegemony, both of which would influence later social and cultural theory.

Intellectuals and Hegemony*

Antonio Gramsci (1929–1936)

All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals.**

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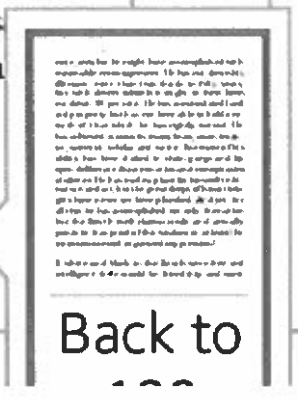
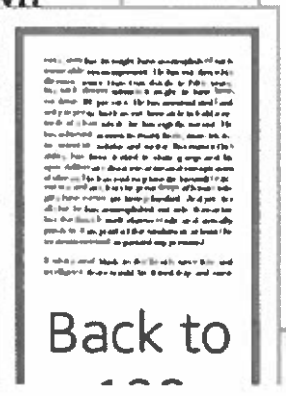
When one distinguishes between intellectuals and non-intellectuals, one is referring in reality only to the immediate social function of the professional category of the intellectuals, that is, one has in mind the direction in which their specific professional activity is weighted, whether towards intellectual elaboration or towards muscular-nervous effort. This means that, although one can speak of intellectuals, one cannot speak of non-intellectuals, because non-intellectuals do not exist. But even the relationship between efforts of intellectual-cerebral elaboration and muscular-nervous effort is not always the same, so that there are varying degrees of specific intellectual activity. There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: *homo faber* cannot be separated from *homo sapiens*. Each man, finally, outside his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a "philosopher," an artist, a man of taste, ~~he participates in a particular conception of the~~ world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought....

It is worth noting that the elaboration of intellectual strata in concrete reality does not take place on the terrain of abstract democracy but in accordance with very concrete traditional historical processes. Strata have grown up which traditionally "produce" intellectuals and these strata coincide with those which have



specialised in "saving," i.e. the petty and middle landed bourgeoisie and certain strata of the petty and middle urban bourgeoisie. The varying distribution of different types of school (classical and professional) over the "economic" territory and the varying aspirations of different categories within these strata determine, or give form to, the production of various branches of intellectual specialisation. Thus in Italy the rural bourgeoisie produces in particular state functionaries and professional people, whereas the urban bourgeoisie produces technicians for industry. Consequently it is largely northern Italy which produces technicians and the South which produces functionaries and professional men.

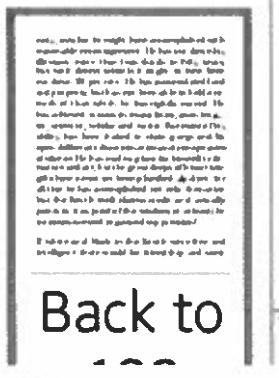
The relationship between the intellectuals and the world of production is not as direct as it is with the fundamental social groups but is, in varying degrees, "mediated" by the whole fabric of society and by the complex of superstructures, of which the intellectuals are, precisely, the "functionaries." It should be possible both to measure the "organic quality" [*organicità*] of the various intellectual strata and their degree of connection with a fundamental social group, and to establish a gradation of their functions and of the superstructures from the bottom to the top (from the structural base upwards). What we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural "levels": the one that can be called "civil society," that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called "private," and that



of "political society" or "the State." These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of "hegemony" which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of "direct domination" or command exercised through the State and "juridical" government. The functions in question are precisely organisational and connective. The intellectuals are the dominant group's "deputies" exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government....

The philosophy of praxis does not tend to leave the "simple" in their primitive philosophy of common sense, but rather to lead them to a higher conception of life. If it affirms the need for contact between intellectuals and the simple, it is not in order to restrict scientific activity and preserve unity at the low level of the masses, but precisely in order to construct an intellectual moral bloc which can make politically possible the intellectual progress of the mass and not only of small intellectual groups.

The active man-in-the-mass has a practical activity, but has no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity, which nonetheless involves understanding the world in so far as it transforms it. His theoretical consciousness can indeed be historically in opposition to his activity. One might also say that he has two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with all his fellow-workers in the practical transformation of



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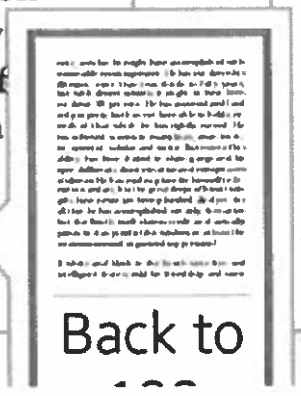
the real world; and one, superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed. But this verbal conception is not without consequences. It holds together a specific social group, it influences moral conduct and the direction of will, with varying efficacity but often powerfully enough to produce a situation in which the contradictory state of consciousness does not permit of any action, any decision or any choice, and produces a condition of moral and political passivity. Critical understanding of self takes place therefore through a struggle of political "hegemonies" and of opposing directions, first in the ethical field and then in that of politics proper, in order to arrive at the working out at a higher level of one's own conception of reality. Consciousness of being part of a particular hegemonic force (that is to say, political consciousness) is the first stage towards a further progressive self-consciousness in which theory and practice will finally be one. Thus the unity of theory and practice is not just a matter of mechanical fact, but a part of the historical process, whose elementary and primitive phase is to be found in the sense of being "different" and "apart," in an instinctive feeling of independence, and which progresses to the level of real possession of a single and coherent conception of the world. This is why it must be stressed that the political development of the concept of hegemony represents a great philosophical advance as well as a politico-practical one. For it necessarily supposes an intellectual unity and an ethic in



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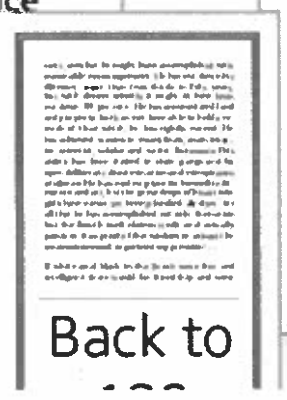
conformity with a conception of reality that has gone beyond common sense and has become, if only within narrow limits, a critical conception.

However, in the most recent developments of the philosophy of praxis the exploration and refinement of the concept of the unity of theory and practice is still only at an early stage. There still remain residues of mechanicism, since people speak about theory as a "complement" or an "accessory" of practice, or as the handmaid of practice. It would seem right for this question too to be considered historically, as an aspect of the political question of the intellectuals. Critical self-consciousness means, historically and politically, the creation of an *élite* of intellectuals. A human mass does not "distinguish" itself, does not become independent in its own right without, in the widest sense, organising itself; and there is no organisation without intellectuals, that is without organisers and leaders, in other words, without the theoretical aspect of the theory-practice nexus being distinguished concretely by the existence of a group of people "specialised" in conceptual and philosophical elaboration of ideas. But the process of creating intellectuals is long, difficult, full of contradictions, advances and retreats, dispersals and regroupings, in which the loyalty of the masses is often sorely tried.

Mao Tse-tung [Zedong] (1893–1976) was a founding leader of the Chinese Communist Party. After completing his formal studies in



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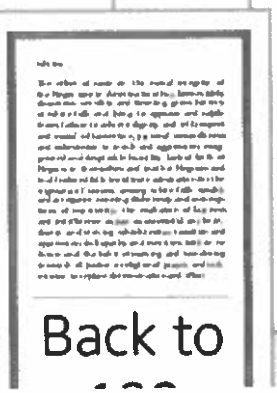
1918 at the First Teachers' Training School in Changsha, Mao began a long career as writer, teacher, journalist, political organizer, and politician. He was one of the original twelve delegates to the First Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. In 1927, he led the peasant uprising in Hunan, after which he retreated into hiding. He then led the famous "long march" to Shensi Province. Thus began his role in the long Chinese revolution that culminated in the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek in 1949. After that, Mao was chairman of the People's Republic until his death in 1976. "Identity, Struggle, Contradiction" (1937) reveals Mao the theorist at his most brilliant. Here, he joins a sharp philosophical rendering of Marxist-Leninist philosophy with his direct knowledge of China's revolutionary situation. Perhaps more than anyone, including Lenin, Mao managed to unite theory and political practice into a coherent philosophy of life. In the selection, one can see the fresh meaning given to Marx's idea of contradiction in reference to China's place in the world conflicts of the interwar period.

Identity, Struggle, Contradiction*

Mao Tse-tung (1937)

.... The contradictory aspects in every process exclude each other, struggle with each other and are opposed to each other. Such contradictory aspects are contained without exception in the processes of all things in the world and in



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PART THREE

The Golden Moment: 1945–1963

At the end of World War II, no one was left standing—except the United States. Wherever the war had been fought, there was ruin. Germany, England, Russia, Japan, France, Italy, parts of Africa, most of Europe, and much of Asia lay wasted. Their industries were either destroyed or exhausted in the war. Their economies had long since overspent real wealth. Their people were devastated, physically and spiritually. The Soviet Union alone had lost 20 million people, compared to fewer than 300,000 by the United States. Such was the magnitude of loss and confusion, everywhere but in America.

The one power still standing stood taller than before, taller than any other in the modern era. Where the war had crushed others, the USA was lifted. Before the war, the US gross national product had not yet recovered from the collapse of 1929. But in 1945, it had more than doubled pre-Depression levels. After the war, steel production alone was four times greater than during the Depression, while the other steel-producing giants (Japan, Germany, Western Europe) were crippled. By one estimate, at the end of the war, the average American enjoyed an income fifteen times greater than that of any foreigner.

The United States produced half or more of the world's steel, oil, and electricity and three-quarters of the automobiles. In production sectors related to the war effort, no rivals existed. The United States possessed wealth of every kind—real capital and income, industrial capacity and know-how, spiritual self-confidence, and intellectual and technical capital developed in the war effort.

If there could be a single symbol of American might in 1945, it might be the bomb. When the United States unleashed the atomic bomb in the summer of 1945, it did more than level Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It signaled that the world had changed definitively. The older powers were lesser. The USA was greater. The political and economic globe was restructured. At that moment, only one nation had succeeded where others had tried. Only the United States was able to invent, produce, and deploy the ultimate weapon. Scientific knowledge, inventive genius, productive capacity, and moral force—no other nation but the United States could then lay claim to such wonderful national strengths—possessed all at once and demonstrated. To those who then admired America, its willingness to kill in such great numbers was, itself, a perverse sign of moral power. In 1945, it could have been said that the United States was the perfect fulfillment of the modern world. Knowledge set free was power. Power unleashed freed the world of war and evil. The bitter horror of those burned to death was, as always, the price of progress.

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There was only one flaw. The war had taught that it was too late to pretend the destructive side of progress would disappear. Still, millions pretended.

Timeline: 1942–1970

Social Theory		*Wider World*
	1942	
Talcott Parsons, *Sex Roles in the American Kinship System* 1943		
	1945	
Winston Churchill, *Sinews of Peace/The Iron Curtain* 1946 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex: Woman as Other* 1949		
Jacques Lacan, *The Mirror Stage* 1949 Robert Merton, *Manifest and Latent Functions* 1949		
Erik Erikson, *Youth and American Identity* 1950 David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: The Other-Directed Personality* 1950 Edwin Lemert, *Social Pathology* 1951	1950	
Aimé Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism. Between Colonizer and Colonized* 1955	1955	

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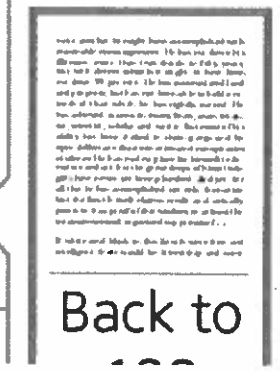
Social Theory		Wider World
Martin Luther King Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom: Montgomery Action* 1958	1958	John Kenneth Galbraith publishes *The Affluent Society* 1958 Algerian rebels declare government buildings in Algiers 1958 Charles de Gaulle elected president of France 1958 Chinese Communists Great Leap Forward 1958 Fidel Castro's revolution seizes power in Cuba 1959 Tibet unsuccessfully rebels against Chinese occupation 1959
Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Structural Study of Myth* 1958		
C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* 1959	1960	Olympics in Innsbruck 1960 Jazz concert in 1960 Belgian Congo gains independence; Patrice Lumumba takes over Congo 1960 Nelson Mandela elected African National Congress 1960 John F. Kennedy elected US president 1960 Vietnam begins civil war against US-backed South Vietnam 1960 Communists killed, protests by agents of Western powers 1961 Yuri Gagarin first astronaut, puts Sputnik I first American astronaut 1961 Berlin Wall erected 1961 East Germans build Berlin Wall 1961 Sean Connery plays James Bond in *Dr. No* 1962 Andy Warhol paints Campbell's Soup Can paintings 1962 Bob Dylan's Blowin' in the Wind, Rolling Stones first performance 1962 James Baldwin's *Another Country* 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis 1962 Rachel Carson, *The Silent Spring* 1962 Pope John XXIII gets, pricing Mass performance 1963 Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech 1963 John Kennedy assassinated; Lyndon B. Johnson becomes president 1963 Cuban Communists 1963 Cassius Clay becomes heavyweight champion 1964 Nelson Mandela sentenced to life imprisonment 1964
Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique: The Problem That Has No Name* 1963		
Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology* 1964		
	1965	Vietnam War escalated 1965 President Johnson escalates bombing in North Vietnam 1965 Black voters begin fight for civil rights in Montgomery 1965 Leonid Brezhnev rules USSR as General Secretary 1965 Mao Zedong and Cultural Revolution begins in China 1966 Black Panthers formed in Oakland 1966 Cuban Che Guevara Marxist Che Marshal Fears of Solitude 1967 Israel captures Palestinian lands from Egypt and Jordan 1967 Che Guevara killed in Bolivia 1967 Alexander Dubcek leads Prague Spring 1967 US Marines burn hamlets, civilians against Vietnam War 1968 Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy assassinated 1968 Georges Pompidou becomes French president as de Gaulle resigns 1969
Louis Althusser, *Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses* 1969		
	1970	Vietnam sends troops into Cambodia, and Vietnam Moratorium rallies 1970 Students protesting War in Vietnam killed at Kent State University 1970 Anwar Sadat, Egypt's president upon death of Nasser 1970 US invades Laos 1971 Pentagon Papers reveal truth of US War policy in Vietnam 1971 Bangladesh emerges as India defeats Pakistan 1971 SALT treaty limits anti-ballistic missiles 1972
Talcott Parsons, *System of Modern Societies* 1971		

The Short American Century

This was the Golden Age of America. This was the "American Century." Everything had come together at once. It was as though all the stars



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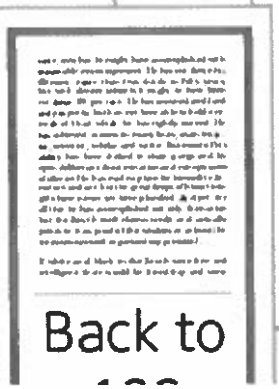
and moons in the Western sky had aligned—pulling the waters high, making the land shine. In this respect, the United States finally seemed to have fulfilled the poetic prophecies of George Berkeley, in 1752:

> Westward the course of empire takes its way;
> The four first acts already past,
> A fifth shall close the drama with the day;
> Time's noblest offspring is the last.

For two centuries, Europeans in great numbers had seen in America the realization of their own dreams and cultures. From the first English settlers who had preceded Berkeley by a century, through Alexis de Tocqueville a century later and the millions of European immigrants through the nineteenth century, to the final reliance of the last European powers on the United States in the war, Europe had increasingly, if warily, looked to the West. It is easily forgotten that the United States had been, and had invented itself as, a new race of European people. The historical idealization of the West was, in part, an effort to redefine European culture to include its Western diaspora.

Thus, the triumphs of the United States at the end of World War II were, in some basic sense, a European triumph. It was at least possible to dream, even as Europe itself lay in tatters, that the original values of modern culture, born in Europe, were proven in and by the Americans. Not all Europeans liked this idea. Nor should they have. But as the summer of 1945 ended



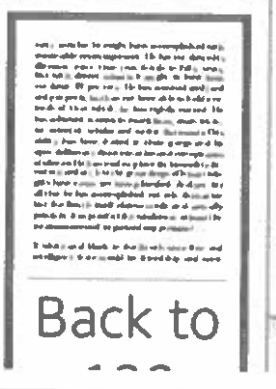
and Europeans had to look about for help to rebuild, there were not many choices. It was clear, in those months, to whom they must turn, like it or not. Americans in great numbers liked it, of course. But as Walter Russell Mead rightly says, George Berkeley's eighteenth-century vision of time's noblest offspring is better read against the words of a twentieth-century American skeptic, Robinson Jeffers:

> You making haste haste on decay; not blameworthy;
> life is good, be it stubbornly long or suddenly
> A mortal splendor: meteors are not needed less than
> mountains: shine, perishing republic.

If, at the end of the war, America seemed the splendid mountain built on the achievements of European culture, observers of the night sky might be forgiven for having failed to detect the meteors among the stars. They were there to be seen.

The brilliant Golden Age of European culture in the West was to last but a moment. American triumphs were real, but their exceptional qualities were exaggerated by the leveling of every rival. Economically, US industry was humming at full speed; the rest of the world was its marketplace. Morally, America had triumphed; others, even the Allies, were beaten down, one way or another. But these conditions were artificial and passing. In March 1946, only months after the end of the war, Winston Churchill, speaking

in the heartland of America, made public the phrase that would help define Western politics for nearly half a century: the Iron Curtain. With Franklin Roosevelt dead (he died the year before), only Churchill knew as well what Stalin and the Soviets intended. The fragile partitioning of Europe at Yalta in February 1945 is often said to have come about due to FDR's mortal illness. The more likely cause was a world distracted by Hitler and war—a world that failed to realize the full implications of its own internal divisions. It was not even the deep ideological rivalry between the United States and the USSR—between, as they said, "freedom" and communism. We now know that the two Cold War powers were built on ideologies composed out of a common culture that included modernity's willful refusal to look at itself. Each system looked to the other in order to account for the evil. Neither had the courage to consider its own complicity in the destructive forces of the modern world. The Iron Curtain stretched taut between the two powers was a prophylactic against self-examination. The Soviets attacked American imperialism and promised, in Nikita Khrushchev's word, to "bury" the United States. The Americans did much the same. Just weeks before Churchill's 1946 speech, US diplomat George Kennan, in his famous long telegram from Moscow, defined the moral basis for US Cold War policy. The Soviets were possessed of a "neurotic view of world affairs" that drove their own imperialist impulses. In response, he said, the United States



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"must have courage and self-confidence to cling to our own methods and concepts of human society." This was on February 22, 1946—not even two years after Americans and Soviets had joined hands over Hitler's defeat.

How brief that golden moment had been. In late summer and early autumn 1945, nothing seemed impossible to the Americans. Now, they were advised to have courage enough to "cling" to their own ways. For good reason. Soon, they would learn that the Soviets, too, had the bomb. America was no longer the manifest exception. In 1948, Berlin was blockaded, cementing the Soviet hold on Eastern Europe. By the end of the decade, communist parties were organized in Western Europe, China had fallen to Mao's communist forces, and no part of the world was considered "safe" from communism. By 1950, the United States was at war again, now against communism in Korea, and Senator Joseph McCarthy had begun his crusade of domestic terror. Within a decade, in 1957, the Soviets successfully launched the first earth satellites. Sputnik seemed proof that the Soviets had surpassed the United States in the area of its greatest strength. By 1959, the year Cuba fell to Castro, Vice President Richard Nixon was in Moscow arguing with Soviet President Nikita Khrushchev that America's washing machines were the true signs of progress, that they should rather compete over the quality of their domestic economies, not their military technologies. It seemed reasonable. Today, it is evident that the Soviet system

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was, indeed, unable to satisfy the divergent demands of military and domestic needs. But then, at the height of the Cold War, Nixon's argument was a pathetic reminder of just how far America had fallen—and how fast.

Senator McCarthy's reign of terror lasted nearly five years. He was censured by the US Senate in 1954. Still, nothing so represents the frustrations of America in its Golden Age. Somehow—no one could quite say how—this splendid world society, the perfection of modern dreams, was unable to prevent communism from winning the world, abroad or at home. So, Americans attacked themselves. McCarthyism was able to exercise its threats at home because the Americans, like the Soviets, were unable to look honestly at themselves. When they did, they saw only the outsider lurking within, not their own capacity for destruction. Both nations were postwar states built squarely on the moral psychology of modernity: progress conquers the evil ~~without, purifying the good intentions within.~~ The Cold War, in its way, was no less a form destroying eruption of the good than was Hitler. We now know that as many died in Stalin's Gulags as in Hitler's Holocaust. No one has ever thought to count those who died in McCarthy's terrorism. But everyone who lived through it knew someone whose life was taken, or ruined, by the American fear of its own capacity for evil. In different ways, both systems destroyed their own to avoid facing what lay within. Today, the one has collapsed; the other struggles on, trying

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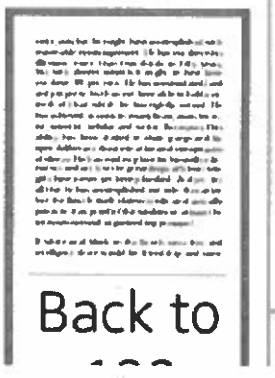
in its way to recapture its Golden Age.

The Cold War was a world struggle between two systems still clinging to the most elemental of nineteenth-century doctrines. Though social theorists since World War I, at least, had begun to rethink the founding ideas of modernity, the Cold War effectively wiped out much of what was gained. In the public discourse in the United States, the Cold War was seen as a struggle between the basic truths of mankind: freedom versus slavery. *Better dead than Red!* Nineteenth-century Enlightenment and Marxist philosophies had changed by the middle of the twentieth century, but in the popular mind—and to a large extent in public policy—thinking had regressed. Then popular social theory took its rawest form and must be taken seriously as such.

In some ways, the debate during and after McCarthy's "Red Scare" could hardly be considered a serious version of the original political philosophies themselves. Rather, at least in the United States, the debate was much more the attempt of ordinary people to make some sense of the most overwhelming social fact of the day. America was supposed to have it all, but in fact, it had only a quarter section of the world's moral territory. Apart from the facts of Soviet brutality in Eastern Europe, what must have most distressed the American mind was the Socialist boast of moral superiority. Americans considered themselves exceptional, most of all because they were the moral superiors.



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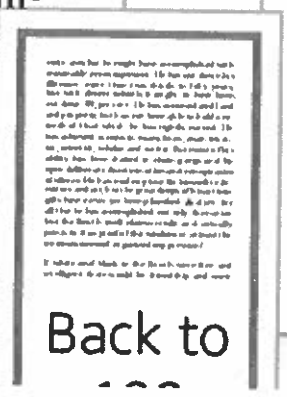
In 1941, Henry Luce, then publisher of *Life* and *Time* magazines, proclaimed the twentieth century the American Century. He began his editorial: "In general, the issues which the American people champion revolve around their determination to make the society of men safe for the freedom, growth and increasing satisfaction of all individual men." America served the moral good of humankind! This was 1941, before the Cold War. As Gunnar Myrdal would state in 1944, at the beginning of *An American Dilemma*, the Americans were always a moralistic people. Indeed, he argued, this is why their failures in race relations could be considered America's unique moral dilemma. Such a people were likely to be unnerved when others whom they considered bullies proclaimed themselves the true champions of the world's oppressed. Socialism's moral claims were, of course, central to Marx's social theory. But in the mid-twentieth century, they were particularly troubling to Americans who could not have missed the fact that, indeed, communism was making its deepest inroads among the poorer, most oppressed people of the world—not just in China and Cuba but also in Africa and the Middle East. In 1956, when Egypt's Abdel Nasser seized the Suez Canal, he struck at American wallets. Two years later, when he accepted a loan from the USSR for construction of the Aswan Dam, he struck their moral hearts. This was but the most dramatic of the moral and diplomatic struggles throughout the Third World in which the Communists were



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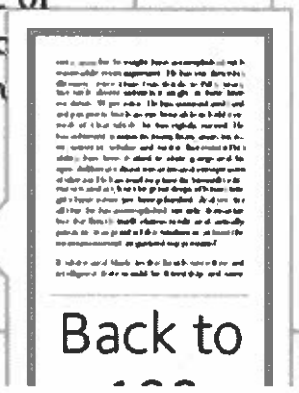
either winning or drawing even.

The Cold War was far from a debate over abstracts, or a debate over who had the better rockets and kitchen tools. It reflected a deep wrenching in the guts of ordinary people. In the mid-1950s in America, many men and women just settling back into a normal life had likely been born in the early 1920s and thus brought up through the Depression. Very probably, they had either fought in World War II or worked in the war effort at home. Their deepest need was to enjoy the fruits of those years of courageous suffering. People thought they had good reason to believe in the moral value of what they had done, especially in war. They believed, even more urgently, in their right to enjoy the abundant life they had earned.

The Other America and the Coming New World

In fact, many enjoyed a new life of relative luxury. Life in the 1950s was good for working and middle-class white people in the United States. But not for everyone. American Blacks returned from military service to encounter the same old story. Many suburban wives stuck out in the Levittowns and other new suburban developments, far from friends and family, wondered just what happiness really was. Yes, they had husbands and kids and those new kitchens, but something was wrong. Yet on the surface of the life photographed for *Life* and *Time* magazines,



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all was good. Except for those Communists. People living luxuriously middling lives could not be blamed for buying Senator McCarthy's line. He told them the Reds were right there, in their schools and churches, even in the army. The Reds were the enemy within. To people who had had enough of disruption in their personal lives, it must have seemed at least a plausible claim. Whatever they thought, they surely *felt* that what was wrong was not far away. Then, later, there was Elvis. Clearly, something was wrong indeed.

What was wrong was that the culture they had trusted to give them the good society excised a hidden tax. Everyone had to pay the price of joining the enforced silence. Evil in the world did not die with Hitler. There was enough to spare. Better to think it was the commies in the schools and churches than to face the half-truth Western culture had been built on. Progress was not a necessary condition of modern life. There was plenty of the good life to go around, but this could never suffice for a people taught that, soon enough, *all* social evil would recede. The Red Scare was real. The Soviets did intend to win. They did their own evil to their people and to those they tried to crush with tanks. But for Americans, then the standard-bearers of European culture, it was simply too much to consider the notion that social evil was deeply structured *into* the American way of life. Better to blame the Reds, or Elvis's gyrating pelvis.

In early December 1955, the civil rights strug-

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gle began in Montgomery, Alabama. The year-long Montgomery bus boycott made Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks American cultural heroes. More fundamentally, the social movements that followed Montgomery sounded an alarm that no one could fail to hear a decade later. Though it could be said that, between 1955 and 1963, the American Civil Rights Movement failed to achieve the full social equality it sought for Blacks, it cannot be denied that this was the first and most shocking of a series of events that changed, perhaps forever, how Americans thought about their society.

Through the 1950s, those Americans with a strong determination to see the best could still believe in the virtues of their way of life. One of the most remarkable passages in Ambassador Kennan's 1946 telegram conveyed the attitude perfectly:

> It was no coincidence that Marxism, which had smoldered ineffectively for half a century in Western Europe, caught hold and blazed for [the] first time in Russia. Only in this land which had never known a friendly neighbor or indeed any tolerant equilibrium of separate powers, either internal or international, could a doctrine thrive which viewed economic conflicts of society as insoluble by peaceful means.

Kennan was no McCarthy. He was a learned and cultured man. In 1946, he brought the best American wisdom to bear on the reality behind the fantasy of the Soviet menace. Still, he was absolutely sure that what set the American way

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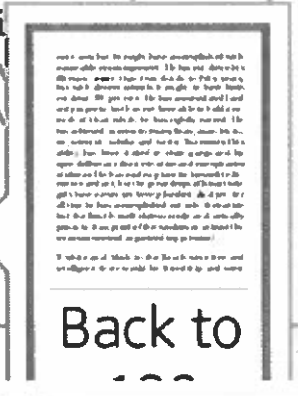
apart was its capacity to solve conflict by peaceful means. This was the West's hedge against communism—again, its moral superiority. But from 1955 onward, as the struggle of American Blacks moved quickly toward open confrontation, it gradually dawned that the United States might be among those world societies unable to solve conflict by peaceful means. Here, of course, lay the power of Martin Luther King Jr.'s strategy, taken from Gandhi. The early movement used the force of nonviolence to expose the violence in the oppressor. But the movement eventually forced more than the hands of Bull Connor, Ross Barnett, and George Wallace. The Southern, white segregationists used all the violence of their disposition—hoses, arrest and detention, beatings, bombs, dogs, and murder. Then, force came from another quarter. The problem was *not* regional. When President Eisenhower, then presidents Kennedy and Johnson, reluctantly brought the force of federal law and troops down on the side of the oppressed, it was natural to hope that this would be the end of it. Again, the thought was: put the visible evil away and progress would assert its righteous way. It was not to be.

Still, this was the reasonable hope of people of goodwill in the United States and around the world when John F. Kennedy took up the reins of world power after the 1960 elections. In passing the torch to a younger and different political leader, people believed that their Golden Age would recover its luster. It seemed, as if by



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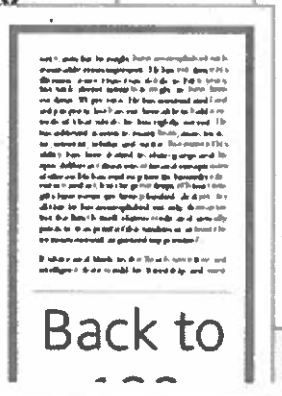
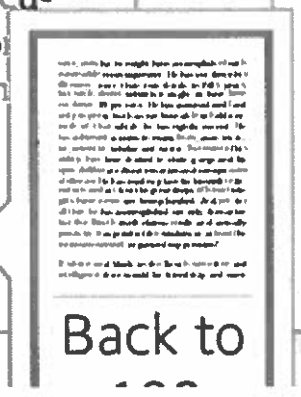
some improbable miracle, that JFK had brought the stars back into line. He, the Beatles, John Lennon, Pope John XXIII, and Dr. King conjured up the vision of a new day dawning. Little did anyone imagine then that Dr. King and all three Johns would be dead before their time or that the sweeping changes they represented would falter, weaken, or reverse themselves. But it is easy to see why people would go with the times. Perhaps the ugly contradictions of the 1950s—abundance marred by frustration—would be resolved. They were not.

After early gains culminating in the Civil Rights and Voting Rights acts of 1964 and 1965, the Civil Rights Movement turned in a different direction. Martin Luther King Jr. took the movement beyond the South, beyond voting rights. But when he turned his eye to broader issues of social justice in a speech accepting the Nobel Prize in late 1964, he was told to keep to his specialty. The war in Vietnam started in earnest several months later, in February 1965, just days before another hero would be assassinated. One year earlier, white people began to notice Malcolm X, who took a very different line from King. In one of his most memorable speeches, Malcolm X declared the American Dream his American Nightmare. There were those—J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI, and others—who tried at that late date to explain away the Black uprisings as still another communist plot. Though the accusations did damage, they did not have the force they once had. When young people who had



marched with King turned in other directions—Blacks often to Black Power, whites to the anti-war movement—the crisis spread far and wide. No one could quite be convinced, however much he or she wanted to believe it, that the world and America would have been saved from the troubles of the 1960s had the Kennedys and King not been killed.

What happened between 1963 and 1968 in the United States was but part of a world drama. What was wrong in the United States was structural, as Myrdal, Niebuhr, and others had been saying. What was wrong in the world was structural, too. In the latter years of the 1950s, beginning with the uprisings in Kenya, then Ghana's independence from Britain in 1957 and the Algerian revolt against French rule in 1958, African people threw off European colonial rule. In 1959, Fidel Castro threw out America's lackey, Fulgencio Batista—just a decade after Gandhi and Mao turned India and China away from Western control. But the most telling years were 1954 and 1955, when McCarthy was ruined and Rosa Parks refused to move any more and the French lost their colonial grip on Vietnam in a humiliating defeat at Dien Bien Phu. If only the Americans had learned the lesson from the French defeat. But then, they were still struggling with their own frustrations. They were still hoping for a return to the Golden Age. As it turned out, JFK was not the beginning of a new day but the last bright glow of a meteor falling red through thick air.



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Soon after the bright days of the early 1960s in the West, a long-building global quake was beginning to make itself felt on the surface. America's ill-considered venture into Vietnam would soon emerge as a major national crisis that was anything but confined to the United States. It was in fact another warning that the world was changing even more so than it had in the troubled times of world war and economic collapse in the first half of the century. The decolonizing struggles in India and much of Africa, the Cuban rejection of American imperialism in the Caribbean, and the victory of Mao's communists over nationalism in China were numbered with the failures of Western intervention in Southeast Asia. Soon enough, it was easy to feel the global movements that by 1968 would turn back again on the core states in the West, rocking them with international as well as domestic challenges.

Affirmation and Doubt in Social Theory

Between 1945 and 1963—the Golden Age—the social theories that exerted the greatest influence fell into three categories: those affirming and developing the principles of the Golden Age; those reflecting the doubts and reservations of the time; and those openly objecting.

In the 1950s, the social sciences were brought into full partnership with the political and economic powers that were. Notwithstanding the jarring effects of the decade's contradictions, professional social scientists in all fields took up positions at or near the reins of power. These

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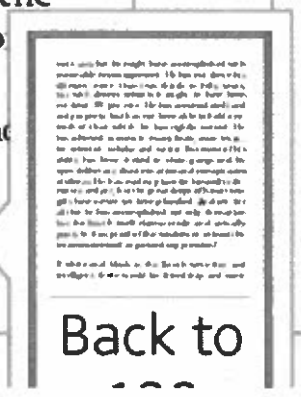
were the years when the American system of higher education grew by leaps and bounds; when the promise of a college education was seriously extended to nearly all qualified students. Following suit, European societies loosened the gates of their elite university systems to young people of working-class origins. These were the years in which, in the new universities and the research centers allied with them, the modern social sciences took the shape we recognize today. Though the emergence of the modern university goes back to the 1860s in the United States, it took a full century for that modern research university to become what it is, for better or worse, today. Only in the Golden Age was there sufficient public support for a full governmental investment in building so many costly institutions of higher learning, devoted equally to teaching the young and mastering the world through science. Between the 1940s and the 1960s, the number of Americans going to college increased at least fourfold. In 1940 the United States spent $500 million on higher education; in 1970 the figure was nearly $16 billion! There was, obviously, a happy coincidence. Veterans returning from World War II and the Korean War used the GI Bill to pay their tuition bills. The demand for college education rose sharply. At the same time, the need for social knowledge to build the postwar society was felt to be great. In real terms, however, the actual need for college graduates was artificial. There were never enough positions in US or European economies



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to occupy all the newly educated elite.

The ideal of higher education as a necessity and a right was, no doubt, encouraged by the boost in intellectual self-confidence gained in the war. Many academics, like Ruth Benedict, had been active in the planning, administering, and informing of the war machine. After the war, there was a widespread and reasonable belief that scientific knowledge about social reality was much more than a nicety. It worked. So, in the 1950s, particularly in the United States, it was widely believed that social knowledge was the most powerful weapon. The social sciences stepped to the fore, for a while, as professional social theory enjoyed its own Golden Age, financed by the social hopes of most Americans. George Kennan's idea that the West—the United States—was able to solve its problems without conflict was an early version of the thinking that predominated for a short while in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Daniel Bell was one of those who eloquently defended the proposition that the West had already won the struggle with Marxism, which had somehow become synonymous with the East or at least with other-than-the-West—the "uncivilized." Proponents of the end of ideology in the West made a strong theoretical claim: ideology's day was past because social knowledge's day had come. Bell announced the day of the scholar—the man of scientific objectivity, freed from the passion of the ideologue. Though Daniel Bell, like George Kennan, was a man of superior culture and refined intellectual

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tastes, his vision of the end of ideology was a quite thickly veiled version of the popular view that politically passionate intellectuals were, after all, essentially Marxists—or worse. Earlier, in his 1952 campaign against Adlai Stevenson, Dwight Eisenhower had pronounced intellectuals "eggheads." Either way, among those in power in politics and the university, room had to be made for the trustworthy use of knowledge—by scientists and scholars, not intellectuals and ideologues. The line between was that between objectivity and passion.

The writings of Daniel Bell were just one example of the conviction that social science could be the basis for better explaining the social world in order to make it better. The key was keeping it all objective. W. W. Rostow's theory of modernization's five stages was the most influential applied version of this world theory. To all appearances, Rostow's analysis of human economic history is scientific economics at its best. The elaboration of Weber's ideas is obvious: Societies can be shown to move from traditionalism to a period of readiness for change. If the conditions are right, take-off, maturity, and something like old age follow. The argument was persuasive because it was logical, comprehensive, and empirically valid—or so it seemed. The idea behind it seemed self-evident in the late 1950s. Was it not obvious that there were "mature" modern societies (of which the United States was the standard) and others that were less mature, just taking off or getting ready or still stuck in tradi-

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tion? As a social scientific classification, the theory was one thing. As a master philosophy of human history, it was another. It was presented and received—for the most part in its former guise—as science. Today, one wonders if no one stopped to ask how such a philosophy might look to the African colonial people then in revolt against modernized rulers. Nor, in 1966, when Rostow was one of President Lyndon Johnson's advisers, did anyone seriously wonder how an uncritical application of a philosophy that defined America as the end of history might promote the passions that led to Vietnam. The line between science and ideology, between objective truth and political passion, was blurred—and not just in the Kremlin.

Social science, in its finest hour, moved with a bold confidence. Nothing less could explain the theoretical self-confidence of Talcott Parsons, who, in the *age d'or* of sociology, felt himself utterly free to pursue his theory of the social system into every minute detail of thinkable social space. He thus felt himself authorized to say whatever followed from the theory. One measure of just how different things are today is that it would be hard to find anyone willing to make the statements Parsons made about "dependent" and "neurotic" women in his 1943 "Sex Roles" article. People still think this way, but fewer say what they think, and fewer still would make a social theory out of gratuitous observations. But Parsons was not a man of evil intent. He was writing good sociological theory, following the

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