

INTRODUCTION

Ungrateful offspring on one hand, unnatural and tyrannical parent on the other - the United States and Great Britain retain in their relationship something of the love/hate quality characteristic of family ties. In choosing as the topic of its 1985 colloquium (held at the Château de la Source on the 27th and 28th of September) "US and GB: How Far? How Close?" the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur la Culture Anglo-Américaine de l'Université d'Orléans was inviting the participants to analyze the nature of the "double bind" that has linked the two nations over the past two hundred years. The present publication, edited by the Groupe de Recherches Anglo-Américaines de Tours, contains a number of papers given on that occasion - marking in this manner the continuation of a policy of cooperation between (to extend the family metaphor) the two sister universities, a policy inaugurated by the establishment in 1985 of a doctoral program run jointly by Tours, Orléans and Le Mans.

How far? How close? But with what sort of a yardstick does one go about measuring the distance between two cultures? It would seem that three sorts of measuring are at work. The first is the very act of registering similarities and differences; before any explanatory schema comes into play the process of comparing and contrasting exercises its fascination, each culture acquiring its distinctiveness by what it seems to have left out as well as by what it contains. This approach appeals to the eye (the cut of a figure, the lay of the land) and to the ear; its privileged locus is the voyage abroad. The second measuring attempts to weigh influence, to assign origins, to assess the degree of domination that one country exercises over another. The issues in this case are those of relative strength, of precedence in chronological terms, of model and

imitation. The tone is more combative; imperialism and resistance are the opposing poles of the debate. The third aspect is more complex since it introduces the dimension of the collective imagination: the *idea* that one culture forms of another and the ways in which this image functions within the given society to reinforce the sense of its own identity. Here we deal with expectations, projections, and (inevitably) with misinterpretations - in short, with the ways in which differences are managed and lived. The papers in this volume, wide-ranging in terms of focus, touch on all three of these modes of taking stock of distance.

The first three contributions trace the relationship an individual figure (British in each case) and a culture (American). Richard Martin chronicles Matthew Arnold's aversion for the United States, the "immense Victorian condescension" with which he approached a nation mired (already) in a midriff culture. If Arnold's voyage to America did little to change his mind it is because of his prior assumption that democracy and culture were (in Martin's words) "antithetical elements in an unwilling dialogue." Not even Emerson escaped Arnold's strictures; yet in the very terms that the Englishman used to criticize the American thinker Martin detects a reluctant admission of likeness that belies the initial distaste. Jean-Paul Pichardie evokes quite a different America, D.H. Lawrence's "continent of the soul" that served as grounds for the projection of his many-sided desires. We are struck by the constantly shifting richness of these imaginary explorations in which intense internal struggle, utopian social currents, and religious imagery vie for ascendancy. The promise of the New World is incorporated into a highly complex mythology, at once cosmic and personal, a mythology of excess and hyperbole, a mythology to which Lawrence committed his whole being but which ended by terrifying him. Françoise Marquerlot's concerns are of another order; convinced of the underservedness of Herbert Spencer's reputation in the United States, she first challenges the very notion of "social darwinism" which cannot be considered as referring to a coherent body of doctrine since from the start it has been used in exclusively polemical terms; and she then invites us to set

aside caricatural images of Spencer as the father of a philosophy of unbridled capitalism and to read his works with a new eye.

Jean-Claude Sergeant's paper, tracing the evolution of the Anglo-American dialogue in the domain of politics and defense serves as an excellent introduction to the contemporary problems that the major portion of this volume will deal with. His analysis lays bare the fragility of the concept of a "special relationship" between the United States and Great Britain, concept that is repeatedly sacrificed once the political and military chips are down. Yet his reading of the Anglo-American dialogue also reveals the strategic uses to which this "convenient myth" is put, and its central role in the history of understanding - and misunderstanding - between the two nations. The two papers that follow deal with business and economic policy. Françoise Pavlopoulos ("Le Monde des Affaires au Royaume Uni et aux USA") finds that despite the apparent contrasts between American dynamism and British laggardness (contrasts, which, she points out, require considerable qualification) there exists an underlying "economic complicity" within which both systems operate, herald perhaps of a new world economic order. Christopher Leeds focuses on governmental policies, on those economic doctrines made up of right-wing belief in the virtues of market forces and the rationality of monetary theory personalized by political leaders in the two countries as Reaganomics and Thatcherism. Although more than aware of the differences in the political and social contexts in which these two doctrines evolved, he nonetheless argues their essential similarity, one proof of which he notes - with what an American would characterize as a British sense of irony - is that neither produced the expected results! The statistics that Robert Tatham brings to bear on the question of American influence on British broadcasting are all the more welcome in that he has first taken pains to distinguish three separate areas - broadcasting policy, financial investment, and programming. If his conclusions are guardedly optimistic (American interests have not swamped British broadcasting) it is not only because there exists in England a healthy preference for financial and cultural autonomy, but because, as his analysis brings out, safeguards against takeover were early on built into the system. The lesson is a timely one.

The examination of British-American crosscurrents ends on a comparative analysis of police practices. How were the guardians of order in the two countries to reply to the challenge of the 1960s characterized on both sides of the Atlantic by the emergence of militant ethnic urban communities intent on claiming their rights, and the demand from the majority for more crime repression? Roland Voize-Valayre analyzes how the British police, unwilling as yet to face up to changed conditions, have allowed professionalization and centralization to work to limit their community function, a function that paradoxically has been a traditional component of the bobby's performance. Outside pressures for reform will have little chance for success until the police themselves become convinced of the failure of their present policies. Laura Maslow-Armand is more sanguine about the American case. Black political strength in the cities has, after a period of hesitation, forced the choice of cooperation over that of confrontation; but the principle of local responsibility that has in recent years operated successfully to bring citizen and policeman together is not without its dangers. As public demands for reform ease off there may well remain within the country "an anarchical patchwork of varied police conduct."

How far? How close? The replies are as varied as the gamut of approaches here is broad. In the last analysis it is up to the reader to judge. Yet I think that throughout these papers we can detect - to twist a phrase used by Edmund Wilson as a title - the "shock of unrecognition." So much is assumed to be held in common by the two nations that share the same language and many of the same traditions, that the rifts when they do occur appear as sudden chasms. It is perhaps this passage from similarity taken for granted to startled awareness of difference (and back again) that best characterizes GB-US relations. (Are not family relations at once the most intimate and the most unstable?) Certainly the comparative perspective adopted in these papers enriches our understanding of what, for want of a better word, we could term the in-betweenness of two cultures. "Comparaison n'est pas raison," wrote Etienne, but his is not

the last word.

Following on "Protest and Punishment" and "Stratégies de la Métaphore," this volume is the third issue of the annual review G.R.A.A.T. launched in 1984 on the initiative of Pierre Gault. Our intention is to open our pages to a wider circle of participants - to encourage work on interdisciplinary topics and to serve as a sounding board for new themes and new approaches to the study of Anglo-American literature and culture. The next issue will be devoted to papers from the 1986 colloquium organized jointly by Tours and Orléans: "Le Sport en GB et aux USA: Faits, Signes et Métaphores."

In the preparation of this volume Ahmed Daraou, Maryvonne Menget, Andrée Shepherd and Jean-Paul Régis rendered valuable editorial assistance, and Annick Seigné has contributed bilingual typing skills - for all of which I am grateful.

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OPENING REMARKS

Dear friends and colleagues,

In the name of the ordeal our non-French-speaking foreign friends may possibly undergo in the following hours, I trust all present native academics will forgive me if I endeavor to address this meeting in English, and very briefly. These few words will be to welcome one and all in a city that was once famously freed from Great Britain by a diminutive and inspired virgin, and from which a much taller individual, but clearly no less imbued with a mystical sense of the hallowed nature of this land, of a bearing and disposition of mind no less heroic, saw fit to remove all remaining traces of American military presence in a period closer to this happy reunion. You may well think, of course, upon contemplating the center of our prospective interest for the coming two days, that all this goes to prove is that one, indeed, either never learns or never has enough. I would invite you rather to believe that a cordial disregard for boundaries and a craving for seamlessness is all that moved the collective responsible for this hopefully heated but altogether peaceful gathering.

You may recall that the original text announcing this colloquium - "The United States and Great Britain: How Far? How Close?" - voiced a genuine concern for such misunderstandings in such proximity. It may well be - and language here rears its fascinating and problematic mien once again - that my own difficulties with having been for years what has come to be called a "mid-atlantic" man, had something to do with such anxieties: a mere Frenchman trained in British English and dumped in the heart of the heart of the midwestern heartland at an eminently plastic age, I noticed that what twang it had

taken me all of two osmotic months to acquire had demanded six years of harrowing efforts to be gotten rid of; back on square one of British English with a view to meeting the requirements of the refined and excruciating rack we call Agrégation, I had no cease till I was in California and acquired yet another method for making myself misunderstood. Vituperated as a "Brit" or a "limey" as I taught in America, my masochism required that I should make all efforts to go back to England and become known to my Norfolk students as that "bloody Canadian." Happily, traces of seventeenth-century parlance left in these latter parts most recently helped me meet the challenge of Virginia mountains and backwoods speech. Due to the foreseeably renewed peregrinations I owe to an equal attachment to both strange places, the struggle, my friends, let me tell you, is far from over... "Français," compared with my predicament, is a problem solved.

The celebrated division of the United States from Great Britain by "a common ocean" has, therefore, more than a familiar ring to my sore ears and you may take this colloquium to be but quite a comprehensible expression of my desire not to remain too much alone for too long.

I hope, therefore, the following moments we shall have the pleasure to share with you, will make me understand either that I was all wrong and that what differences I had grown oversensitive to were pure paranoia on my part or that the basic schizophrenia of your traditional French "angliciste/americaniste" is indeed, and doubly, as one would naturally expect, "la chose du monde la mieux partagée" when it comes to making eagle's heads or lion's tails from cultures often considered as germane.

Bernard d'Hellencourt and Bernard Vincent, my very dear colleagues who helped make this meeting the unadulterated success it cannot fail to be, and myself, as well as the entirety of the English Department of this university welcome you and thank you for having found time in your busy schedules to prepare your thoughts, and more time, still, and energy, to come, sometimes from very far, and share them with us.

Even though most of the proposed papers are comparative in their structure, I hope we can concentrate our discussion of them somewhere on the space between two cultures which, by dint of some eerie continental drift of the mind, seem to grow every

day further apart at the same time as their respective legacies get more intertwined. I mourn the absence of a British colleague who had every intention to deliver a paper explaining why there is no such thing as what we French are fond of calling an "anglo-saxon" but was unfortunately kept from coming over to enlighten us on this crucial issue.

Finally, I want to thank publicly the British Council, the University of Orléans and the Faculté des Lettres for the very kind support they gave us in this enterprise, a support without which you could not have come from *this far* to get *this close* and I could not have had the pleasure I now have in declaring this session open.

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Université d'Orléans

CULTURE AND DEMOCRACY
Matthew Arnold in America

RICHARD MARTIN

RHEINISCH-WESTFALISCHEN
TECHNISCHEN HOCHSCHULE (AACHEN)

"...one of the dudes of literature."
(Walt Whitman on Arnold¹)

When asked by his friend Traubel whether he considered using vellum as a material for the cover of his new book of poems, Walt Whitman is reported to have replied, "Vellum? pshaw! hangings, curtains, finger-bowls, chinaware, Matthew Arnold!"² The American poet's aversion to the English apostle of culture was deep-ingrained and of long standing; Traubel reported an earlier judgement,

My own criticism of Arnold - the worst I could say of him - the severest... would be, that Arnold brings coals to Newcastle - that he brings to the world what the world already has a surfeit of: is rich, hefted, lousy, reeking, with delicacy, refinement, elegance, prettiness, propriety, criticism, analysis: all of them things which threaten to overwhelm us.³

If the American poet was deeply prejudiced against the English man of letters, so, too, had Arnold long made up his mind what was characteristic of America and the Americans. As early as 1848, he had remarked in connection with the Trafalgar Square riots of March of that year, that the behavior could be seen as a forewarning of "a wave of more than American vulgarity, moral, intellectual, and social, preparing to break over us."⁴ Some years later, in a letter to his mother, Arnold reported with characteristic self-satisfaction and condescension:

I have just seen an American, a great admirer of mine, who says that the three people he

