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Prison Area, Independence Valley

Rob Kroes

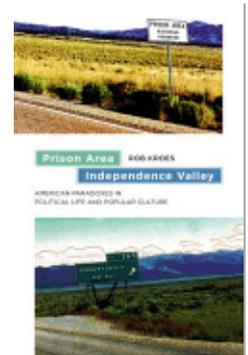
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THE GEORGE W. BUSH ADMINISTRATION
AND EUROPEAN ANTI-AMERICANISM

NOUS SOMMES TOUS AMÉRICAINS. “We are all Americans.” Such was the rallying cry of Jean-Marie Colombani, editor-in-chief of the French newspaper *Le Monde*, published two days after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack against symbols of America’s power. He went on to say: “We are all New Yorkers, as surely as John Kennedy declared himself, in 1963 in Berlin, to be a Berliner.” While Colombani himself evoked Kennedy’s historic declaration for his readers, an even older use of this rhetorical call to solidarity may come to mind. It is Thomas Jefferson’s call for unity after America’s first taste of two-party strife. Leading the opposition forces to victory in the presidential election of 1800, he assured Americans that “we are all Republicans, we are all Federalists” and urged his audience to rise above the differences that many feared might divide the young nation against itself. Clearly, there would have been no need for such a ringing rhetorical call if there had not been an acute sense of difference and division at the time. The same could be said of Colombani’s timely expression of solidarity with an ally singled out for a vengeful attack, solely because it had come to represent the global challenge posed by a shared Western way of life. An attack against the United States was therefore an attack against common values held dear by all who live by standards of de-

mocracy and the open society that it implies. But as in Jefferson's case, the rhetorical urgency of the call for solidarity suggested that there were differences and divisions to be transcended, or at least temporarily shunted aside. That sense of difference between the United States and its European allies had always been there during the Cold War, but it was contained by the threat of a common enemy. The end of the Cold War brought the felt need for a reorientation of strategic thinking on both sides of the Atlantic that, if anything, only sharpened differences and divisions.¹

Many changes that occurred during the 1990s were direct consequences of the end of the Cold War and the Soviet Union's collapse. They would likely not have occurred without the breakdown of the international balance of power and ideology and of patterns of clientage that were typical of the Cold War world. Some of the obvious examples are the expansion of the European Union (EU) and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) into areas previously under the sway of the Soviet Union; the Balkan wars of the 1990s and Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Most dramatically, perhaps, transatlantic tensions, never absent during the Cold War but contained by the imperative of a joint defense against the Soviet bloc, are now manifested as clashing visions of the post-Cold War new world order. The phrase "New World Order" was used by the elder George Bush during the first Gulf War, when briefly it seemed as if a framework of international institutions, centered on the United Nations, could finally come into its own. But the world has moved a long way from those early hopes and visions of global unity.²

Perhaps we should be asking ourselves a new question: Do the terrorist attacks on symbols of American power on September 11, 2001, represent a greater sea change than the end of the Cold War? Or were they merely the catalyst that led America to implement a foreign policy that had been in the making since the early 1990s? If the second scenario is true, and it seems likely that it is, then America's current foreign policy is clearly a response to

its position as the single hegemon in a unipolar world, intent on safeguarding that position.

The origin of that policy was a Defense Planning Guidance document drafted in 1992 by Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Paul D. Wolfowitz at the behest of then Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, entitled “The New American Century.” In 1997 a group of neoconservative foreign policy analysts coalesced around the Project for a New American Century and founded a think-tank under that name. Their thinking hardened around a view that American foreign policy should center on military strength. When the George W. Bush administration entered office in 2000, those neoconservatives came into position to implement their views. Throughout the 1990s national rituals such as the Super Bowl increasingly blended mass spectator sports with displays of military prowess and martial vigor that paralleled the gestation of the new foreign policy views.³ That trend may herald a militarization of the American public spirit, propagated through the mass media. To some the displays are eerily reminiscent of earlier such public spectacles, such as those at the 1936 Olympic Games in Nazi Germany. Those militarized rituals may have readied the American public for the later curtailment of democratic rights through the 2001 Patriot Act and the emergence of a national security state under the George W. Bush administration. In a 2004 article, the American philosopher Richard Rorty warned Europeans that institutional changes made in the name of the war on terrorism could bring the end of the rule of law in both the United States and Europe. Remarkably, he forgot to mention that many of those changes had already come to the United States, without much public debate or resistance.⁴

Much though the entire world may have changed in the wake of the Cold War, my focus shall be on the particular ways these changes have affected Europe and the United States, internally as well as in their transatlantic relationship. An important trend to notice is the way Europeans and Americans have begun to re-define each other, in response to a creeping alienation that has af-

fecting public opinion and discourse on both sides of the Atlantic. If each side increasingly sees the other as “Other,” more alien than at any point during the Cold War, then the construction of this perspective is not entirely new. It draws on older repertoires of anti-Americanism in Europe and of anti-Europeanism in the United States, as illustrated by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld’s snide reference to “Old Europe.”⁵ Yet there may be a new and more ominous ring to those revived repertoires because they may strike responsive chords among people who previously thought they were free of such adversarial sentiments.

In what follows I wish to explore that new resonance. It is partly a personal account, an attempt at introspection, tracing emotional and affective shifts in the way I perceive and experience America. Let me begin with a necessary proviso. In 2003, in *Le Monde*,⁶ Alfred Grosser reminded us that one need not be labeled “anti-American” for opposing U.S. foreign policy, nor an “anti-Semite” or “anti-Zionist” for taking Israeli government policy to task. He is not the first to make that point, nor will he be the last. The point bears making time and time again. Too often the cry of anti-Americanism or anti-Semitism is used as a cheap debating trick to silence voices of unwelcome criticism. Like Grosser, I have studied forms of anti-Americanism for years, trying to understand both what triggers it and the logic of its inner structure, while looking at it from a rather Olympian height. More often than not anti-Americanism had seemed more meaningfully connected to the non-American settings where it appeared than to America itself. But like Grosser I now feel the need to make explicit a point that had for so long seemed obvious. He and I and many others now feel a strong urge to distance ourselves from the directions America’s foreign policy is taking. Ironically we are now confronting the charge that we have become anti-American. What had been a topic of intellectual and scholarly interest has now assumed the poignancy of a private dilemma. Grosser and I and others know we have not turned

anti-American, even while we have become critical of the recent turns in American policies. We are now facing the question: When does a stance critical of specific American policies become anti-American? For the shift from criticism to anti-Americanism to occur, more is needed than disagreements, however vehement, over certain policies. Anti-Americanism typically proceeds from specific areas of disagreement to larger frameworks of rejection, seeing particular policies or events as typical of America more generally. From that perspective anti-Americanism is mostly reductionist, seeing, for example, only the simplicity of the cowboy stereotype and the Texas provincialism in President George W. Bush's response to terrorism, or only the expansionist thrust of American capitalism in Bush's Middle East policies. Entire repertoires of stereotyped Americas can be conjured up to account for any contemporary transatlantic disagreements. Later on I will return to these repertoires, in their historical configurations, in greater detail.⁷

To the extent that the topic of anti-Americanism has come home to roost for people like Grosser and me, this essay is meant to explore how my involvement with the topic has changed in the wake of September 11. It is in part a personal account of my attempts to keep my feelings of alienation and anger over recent trends in America's foreign policy from alienating me from America more generally. It is the report of a balancing act. Or better perhaps: it is an agonizing reappraisal,⁸ for indeed my inner image of America has changed, affecting my sense of affiliation and closeness to the country. *Before* that change I could study anti-Americanism with sardonic joy and intellectual distance, but *now*, for the first time, my insights have gained a new personal relevance, urging me to reappraise my inner feelings in terms of their possible anti-Americanism. That reappraisal is agonizing because, in my view and that of many others, America—as much as the historically contingent construct of anti-Americanism—has changed face.

I happened to be in the United States on the dismal day of September 11, 2001. I had flown from Washington, DC, to Logan

Airport in Boston the previous evening, only hours before knife-wielding terrorists highjacked three airplanes that had taken off from Logan. I stood transfixed in front of the television screen, impotently watching the second plane crash into the second of Manhattan's Twin Towers, then seeing them implode—almost in slow motion, as I remember it. A year later I was back in the United States, watching how Americans remembered the events of the year before in a moving, simple ceremony. The names were read of all those who had lost their lives in the towering inferno of the World Trade Center. Their names appropriately reflected the image that the words “World Trade Center” conjure up; they were the names of people from all over the world, from Africa, the Middle East, the Far East, the Pacific, Latin America, Europe, and, of course, North America—people of many cultures and many religions. Again the whole world was watching, and I suddenly realized that something remarkable was happening. The American mass media recorded an event staged by Americans. Americans were powerfully reappropriating a place where a year before international terrorism had been in charge. They literally turned the site into a *lieu de mémoire*. They were, in the language of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address—read again on this occasion—consecrating the place. They imbued it with the sense and meaning of a typically American scripture. It was the ringing language of freedom and democracy that, for more than two centuries, has defined America's purpose and mission.

I borrow the words “American scripture” from Michael Ignatieff. He used them in a piece he wrote for a special issue of the British literary magazine *Granta*.⁹ He is one of twenty-four writers from various parts of the world who contributed to a section entitled “What We Think of America.” Ignatieff described American scripture as “the treasure house of language, at once sacred and profane, to renew the faith of the only country on earth . . . whose citizenship is an act of faith, the only country whose promises to itself continue to command the faith of people like me, who are not its citizens.” Ignatieff is a Canadian.

He described a faith and an affinity with American hopes and dreams that many non-Americans share. Yet, if it was the point of *Granta's* editors to explore the question of "Why others hate us, Americans," Ignatieff's view was not of much help. In the world outside the United States after 9/11, as *Granta's* editor, Ian Jack, reminded us, there was a widespread feeling that Americans "had it coming to them," that it was "good that Americans now know what it's like to be vulnerable." For people who share such views, American scripture deconstructs into hypocrisy and willful deceit. They may well see their views confirmed now that America is engaged in an occupation of Iraq—advertised as an intervention to bring democracy—while in fact the United States carries out what may well be war crimes under the terms of international treaties that count the United States among their signers.

There are many hints from the recent past that people's views of America have been shifting in the direction of disenchantment and disillusionment. To be sure, there were fine moments when President Bush rose to the occasion and used the hallowed words of American scripture to make it clear to the world and his fellow Americans what terrorism had truly attacked: the terrorists' aim had been not just the destruction of symbols of American power and prowess but rather the destruction of the freedom and democracy that America sees as its foundation. Those were moments when the president literally seemed to rise above himself. But it was not long before he showed a face of America that had already begun to worry many longtime friends and allies during Bush's first year in office.

Even before September 11 the Bush administration had signaled its retreat from the internationalism that had inspired U.S. foreign policy since at least World War II. Ever since the administration of Woodrow Wilson, American scripture has also implied a vision of world order that would forever transcend the lawlessness of international relations. Many of the international organizations that now regulate interstate relations and give legitimacy

to international actions bear a markedly American imprint and spring from American ideals and initiatives. The elder President Bush—in spite of his avowed aversion to the “vision thing”—nevertheless deemed it essential to speak of a new world order when, at the end of the Cold War, Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait seemed to signal a relapse into international lawlessness. The younger Bush took a narrower, national-interest view of America’s place in the world. With unabashed unilateralism he moved U.S. foreign policy away from high-minded idealism and the arena of international treaty obligations. He actively undermined the fledgling International Criminal Court in The Hague, rather than taking a leadership role in making it work. He displayed a consistent unwillingness to play by international rules and to abide by the decisions of even those international bodies that the United States helped to set up. He has squarely placed the United States above or outside the reach of international law, viewing himself as the sole and final arbiter of America’s national interest.

After September 11 that outlook only hardened. The overriding tendency to view international relations from the perspective of the war against terrorism has led the United States to ride roughshod over both constitutionally protected civil rights and international treaty obligations under the Geneva Conventions in its handling of individuals—U.S. citizens among them—suspected of links to terrorist networks. Because President Bush saw antiterrorism efforts as the only way to define who is with America and who against it, he defended and justified forms of state terrorism—whether by Russia against the Chechens, or by Israel against the Palestinians—as antiterrorist efforts. He called Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon a “man of peace,” and preempted future negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis by supporting Israel’s positions on the Palestinians’ rights of return under international law, as well as on the Israeli settlement of occupied Palestinian land, which is against international law. When Europeans disagreed with those policies and wished

to take a more balanced view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Bush administration and many op-ed voices in the United States attributed the dissent to European anti-Semitism.

The debate over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reveals most starkly the dramatic, if not tragic, drifting apart of the United States and Europe, and it testifies to a slow separation of the terms of public debate. Thus, to give an example, in 2002 the chief rabbi in England, Jonathan Sacks,¹⁰ said that many of the things Israel has done to the Palestinians fly in the face of the values of Judaism—“[They] make me feel very uncomfortable as a Jew.” He had always believed, he said, that Israel “had to give back all the land [taken in 1967] for the sake of peace.” Peaceniks in Israel, such as Amos Oz, take similar views. Even more remarkably, in the wake of the May 2004 rampage by the Israeli Army in the Gaza Strip that left sixteen hundred Palestinians homeless, Justice Minister Tommy Lapid, the only Holocaust survivor in the Israeli government, declared that the house demolitions were inhumane. As the *Guardian Weekly* quoted him: “The demolition of houses in Rafah must stop. It is not humane, not Jewish, and causes us grave damage in the world. At the end of the day, they’ll kick us out of the United Nations, try those responsible in the international court in The Hague, and no one will want to speak to us.”¹¹ Many in Europe, Jews and non-Jews alike, would agree. And they have the chance to do so, because Israeli voices such as Lapid’s are being aired in the European press. Leading newspapers, in France, in England, in Germany, as well as in other European countries—and let us not forget Israel, with its exemplary *Haaretz* newspaper—do what top-notch journalism is all about: write contemporary history as it unfolds, with all its welcome and unwelcome sides. Good journalists and editorial writers are not loath to say the unwelcome things and confront their readers with all the tragic complexity of life in the Middle East.

Yet it would be hard to hear similar views expressed in the United States, other than in an American equivalent of the Soviet samizdat, or self-publication, which avails itself of the Internet

for the spirited exchange of dissenting views. In the public realm, among American Jews, the religious Right, opinion leaders, and Washington political circles, there is a closing of ranks behind the view that everything Israel does to the Palestinians is legitimate self-defense against acts of terrorism. Yet if America's overriding foreign policy concern is the war against terrorism, one element is tragically lacking in its Middle East policy: an attempt to see the United States through the eyes of Arabs, more particularly, Palestinians. A conflation seems to have occurred between the national interests of Israel and the United States, as illustrated by the actions of Richard Perle—foreign policy guru in Washington government circles and a man tellingly of dual Israeli-American citizenship—who did not see any conflict of interest (personal or national) in drafting policy documents for Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party in Israel in 1997. The two countries, at the official level, share a definition of the Israeli-Palestinian problems that blinkers them to rival views more openly discussed in Europe.

Among the pieces in *Granta's* "What We Think of America" issue is one by a Palestinian writer, Raja Shehadeh. He reminded the reader that "today there are more Ramallah people in the U.S. than in Ramallah. Before 1967 that was how most Palestinians related to America—via the good things about the country that they heard from their migrant friends and relations. After 1967, America entered our life in a different way." The author went on to say that the Israeli occupation policy of expropriating Arab land to build Jewish settlements, and roads to connect them, while deploying soldiers to protect settlers, would never have been possible without "American largesse." But American assistance, Shehadeh continued, did not stop at the funding of ideologically motivated programs. In a personal vignette, more telling than any newspaper report, Shehadeh wrote:

Last July my cousin was at a wedding reception in a hotel on the southern outskirts of Ramallah when an F16 fighter jet dropped a

hundred-pound bomb on a nearby building. Everything had been quiet. There had not been any warning of an imminent air attack. . . . Something happened to my cousin that evening. . . . He felt he had died and was surprised afterwards to find he was still alive. . . . He did not hate America. He studied there. . . . Yet when I asked him what he thought of the country he indicated that he dismissed it as a lackey of Israel, giving it unlimited assistance and never censoring its use of U.S. weaponry against innocent civilians.

The author concluded with these words: “Most Americans may never know why my cousin turned his back on their country. But in America the parts are larger than the whole. It is still possible that the optimism, energy and opposition of Americans in their diversity may yet turn the tide and make America listen.”

The Bush administration, with its preemptive strategy of taking out opponents before they could harm the United States at home or abroad—in much the same way that Israeli fighter jets assassinate alleged Palestinian terrorists, in their cars, homes, and backyards, without bothering about due process or collateral damage—was not likely to create an America that would “listen.” Who was not for Bush was against him. Well, so be it. Many Europeans chose not to be bullied into sharing the Bush administration’s view of the world. Although they could not command as many divisions as Bush, they surely were able to handle the “divisions” that Bush—the man who, in the 2000 election campaign, portrayed himself as a uniter, not a divider—inflicted on the Atlantic community, if not on Europe itself.

If today there is division between the ways many Europeans “read” the events in the Middle East and the ways many Americans do, it is surely the result of differing exposure to the daily news, which in Europe is presented less selectively, and with less bias. Even several years after President Bush declared the Iraqi mission accomplished, many American reporters in Iraq voluntarily embedded themselves for their own safety in U.S. Marine

encampments. As one correspondent, Pamela Constable of the *Washington Post*, described her experience: “I quickly became part of an all-American military microcosm.”¹² Michael Massing, in a piece in the *New York Review of Books*, argued that if U.S. news organizations truly wanted to get inside events in Iraq, there was a clear step they could take: incorporate more reporting and footage from international news organizations. Arabic-language TV stations have a wide presence on the ground. European outlets such as the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), the *Guardian*, the *Financial Times*, the *Independent*, and *Le Monde* have Arabic-speaking correspondents with close knowledge of the Middle East. Reuters, the Associated Press, and Agence France-Presse have many correspondents stationed in places where U.S. organizations do not. As Massing concluded: “In the current climate, of course, any use of Arab or European material—no matter how thoroughly edited and checked—could elicit charges of liberalism and anti-Americanism. The question for American journalists is whether they really want to know what the Iraqis themselves, in all their complexity, are thinking and feeling.”¹³ It was a charge against a blinkered and parochial American journalism that is more generally made by Europeans attempting to fathom the depths of the divide between American and European public discourse.¹⁴ A free press, as the highly regarded author and war correspondent Philip Knightley noted in the magazine *Index on Censorship*, would not reduce the post-September 11 debate to “abuse, incitement, personal attacks, inflammatory accusation and intimidation until many a commentator and intellectual, the very people whose voices we want to hear, have been cowed into silence”¹⁵ (or driven underground, we might add, into the American Internet form of samizdat dissent).

But there may also be a deeper force at work. Tellingly, the *Guardian* referred to Tommy Lapid as the sole Holocaust survivor in the current Israeli government. If World War II memories may have resurfaced in Lapid’s reading of the Gaza events, something similar may be at work among European audiences. Pho-

tographs from Palestine or Iraq may well bring back memories of German retaliatory actions against villages in Europe; they may also bring back remembered photographs of World War II atrocities used powerfully to educate Europeans about the enormity of Nazi rule. They may release a submerged reservoir of remembered images that Europeans do not share with Americans. Yet that basic difference need not drive the two sides of the Atlantic apart. Europeans saw their tragic history repeat itself in the 1990s Balkan wars, but in the end united action under NATO auspices halted the atrocities perpetrated there. Ultimately, Americans and Europeans could both read what had happened as crimes against humanity. Such a shared reading of events in the Middle East and their implications for foreign policy seems to be precisely what is lacking. A widely shared sense of outrage among Europeans, fed by the daily pictures and news reports from the Middle East, translates into impotent anger at an American Middle East policy seen as lacking balance and fairness.

There has been a resurgence of open anti-Americanism in Europe and elsewhere in the world—not least in the Middle East, the area that brought us Osama bin Laden and his paranoid hatred of America and of the West more generally. But if bin Laden can still conflate the two—America *and* the West—why can't we? If Raja Shehadeh still holds hopes of an America that one can make listen, why don't we? Let us face it: we are all Americans, but sometimes it is hard to see the Americans we hold dear in the Americans that hold sway. Those are the dangerous moments when clashing policy views may assume the contours of deeper, more fundamental differences—when difference translates into incompatibility, and the face of just one president may seem to reflect an America that has changed its face more permanently and fundamentally.

What kind of face could that be? As some see it, the United States may have begun to show the effects of long-term cultural trends that increasingly set America apart from Europe. According to the *World Values Survey*, a long-term survey research

project of the University of Michigan, the overall picture is ambivalent.¹⁶ Americans consistently score as high as, or higher than, Europeans when it comes to values dealing with political or economic freedoms. Americans and Europeans share ideas of democracy and freedom and have a common interest in defending those ideas. But the University of Michigan project also looked at a different set of values and ranked countries along a conceptual axis ranging from traditionalism to secularism. Traditionalism comprises views that give a central place to religion, family, and country. At the other end are secular-rational values that emphasize individual choice in matters of lifestyle and individual emancipation from older frameworks of affiliation such as the church or the fatherland. Americans' position on that scale is exceptional among Western countries. Americans lean much more strongly toward the traditionalist end of the scale than do Europeans (with the exception of Ireland). Americans are the most patriotic of Western nations: 72 percent claim to be "very proud" of their country, thus putting themselves alongside citizens of such countries as India and Turkey. Americans' position on the religion scale—religion being the single most important gauge of traditionalism according to the survey—puts them closer to Nigerians and Turks than to Swedes or Germans. And the differences between the Americans and people from northern and western European countries have, if anything, only increased. Since the first survey, in 1981, Americans have grown more traditional, Europeans less so. Yet in the other values, those of democracy and freedom, they have moved in tandem.

From these survey data America appears as a country of a cultural ambivalence all its own, in an evolving idiosyncratic symbiosis of traditionalism and modernism. The historical dynamics of this symbiosis, with the growing influence of traditionalism, may well have contributed to the mutual alienation between Europe and the United States. Public discourse on either side of the Atlantic is losing its shared terms of reference. America's political establishment has long been the safe haven of a

secular, Enlightenment world view that it shared with political elites in Europe. Slowly but surely, however, traditionalism has made inroads into America's centers of policy-making. Of the two main political parties, the Republican Party has targeted its political strategy toward the incorporation of the traditionalist segment among the electorate. The strategy is two-pronged. Contemporary traditionalism has thrived on the ongoing culture war against anything connected to the lifestyle revolution of the 1960s. Its antimodernism may remind us of an earlier high water mark of traditionalism in the 1920s, forever epitomized in the anti-Darwinian Scopes (or "monkey") trial. At the time it may have seemed like traditionalism's last hurrah. Yet with great organizational acumen traditionalism has made a remarkable comeback, waging a cultural war on the forces of moral relativism and libertarianism unleashed in the 1960s. Having gotten its act together politically, it offers itself as a tempting electoral bloc to the Republican Party. Yet the Republican Party is not solely the passive recipient of such support. It has chosen actively to play on the cultural fears of the traditionalists, posturing as the champion of all those who see gay marriage, abortion, divorce, euthanasia, capital punishment, and more such moral issues as defining the political agenda, while casting the Democrats as representing moral depravity. More than ever before in American history, George W. Bush's Republican administration had accommodated the agenda of the religious Right on a wide front, domestically (as in making crucial Supreme Court nominations) or in areas such as creationism and stem cell research, as well as internationally (as in vetoing development programs that include provisions for birth control).

If we can discern two different Americas—one modern and secular, the other centered on traditional values—they seem to coincide with one or the other of the two main parties. America seems to be split down the middle, with its two halves cohabiting in delicate balance. Visiting Europeans, journalists and diplomats among them, cannot fail to notice the widespread aliena-

tion from the Bush administration precisely based on a cultural rift as outlined here. This view has become common coinage in press commentaries in *Le Monde* in France, in the *Guardian* in England, and in the *Frankfurter Allegemeine* in Germany, to name just three of the more influential, opinion-forming newspapers in Europe.

Affiliating with the urbane and modern America, as many Europeans are wont to do, they may tend to exaggerate the “moral issues” divide as the single most important determining factor in the Republican Party’s electoral strength. Revisiting exit poll and public opinion data, however, the case has been convincingly argued that fear of a different sort may well have ensured Bush’s reelection.¹⁷ Against the backdrop of the war on terror, while keeping its ugly face from the general public, cynically manipulating alarm stages, casting Bush as the decisive war leader while painting the opponent as a flip-flopper, the Republican Party employed an electoral strategy that successfully managed to rally behind it all those voting on their fears. There is an Orwellian 1984 quality about this, with ongoing, low-level warfare and scaremongering preparing a population to surrender their democratic freedoms.

The highly partisan nature of such recent trends may remind Europeans that anti-Americanism is not the point. We may believe that we recognize a generic Americanism in any particular American behavior, be it cultural or political. Yet the range of such behavior is simply too wide—ranging in culture from the sublime to the vulgar, and in politics from high-minded internationalism to narrow nationalism—to warrant any across-the-board rejection. Anti-Americanism, if we choose to retain the term at all, should be seen as a weak and ambivalent complex of anti-feelings. It does not apply but selectively, never extending to a total rejection of both forms of Americanism: the cultural and the political. Thus we can have either of two separate outcomes: an anti-Americanism rejecting cultural trends that are seen as typically American, while allowing of admiration for America’s en-

ergy, innovation, prowess, and optimism; or an anti-Americanism in reverse, rejecting an American political creed that for all its missionary zeal is perceived as imperialist and oppressive, while admiring American culture, from its high-brow to its pop varieties. These opposed directions in the critical thrust of anti-Americanism often go hand in hand with opposed positions on the political spectrum. The cultural anti-Americanism of those rising in defense of Europe's cultural identities is typically on the conservative right wing, whereas the political anti-Americanism of the Cold War and the war in Vietnam typically occurred on the left. Undoubtedly the drastic change in America's position on the world stage since World War II has contributed to this double somersault. Since that war America has appeared in a radically different guise, as much more of a potent force in everyday life in Europe and the larger world than ever before.

As we all know, there is a long history that illustrates Europe's long and abiding affinity with America's daring leap into an age of modernity. It shared America's fascination with the political modernity of republicanism, of democracy and egalitarianism, with the economic modernity of progress in a capitalist vein, and with an existential modernity that saw Man, with a capital M and in the gender-free sense of the word, as the agent of history, the molder of his social life as well as of his own individual identity and destiny. It was after all a Frenchman, Crèvecoeur, who on the eve of American independence pondered the question of "What, then, is the American, this new Man?" A long line of European observers have, in lasting fascination, commented on this American venture, seeing it as a trajectory akin to their own hopes and dreams for Europe.¹⁸ Similarly, French immigrants in the United States, in order to legitimize their claims for ethnic specificity, have always emphasized the historical nexus of French and American political ideals, elevating Lafayette alongside George Washington to equal iconic status.¹⁹

But as we also know, there is an equally long history of a French, and more generally European, awareness of American

culture taking directions that were seen as a threat to European ways of life and views of culture. Whether it was Tocqueville's more sociological intuition of an egalitarian society breeding cultural homogeneity and conformism, or later views that sought the explanation in the economic logic of a free and unfettered market, the fear was of an erosion of the European cultural landscape, of European standards of taste and cultural value. As I have argued elsewhere, the French were not alone in harboring such fears,²⁰ but they have been more consistently adamant in making the case for a defense of their national identity against a threatening process of Americanization. The very word is a French coinage. It was Baudelaire who, on the occasion of the 1855 Exposition Universelle de Paris, spoke of modern man, set on a course of technical materialism, as "tellement américanisé . . . qu'il a perdu la notion des différences qui caractérisent les phénomènes du monde physique et du monde moral, du naturel et du surnaturel" (. . . as so Americanized as to have lost all sense of the differences setting apart the physical from the moral world, the natural from the supernatural).²¹ The Goncourt brothers' *Journal*, from the time of the second exposition in 1867, refers to "L'exposition universelle, le dernier coup à ce qui est l'américanisation de la France" (the Universal Exhibition, the last blow in what is the americanization of France).²² As these critics saw it, industrial progress ushered in an era in which quantity would replace quality and in which a mass culture feeding on standardization would erode established taste hierarchies. There are echoes of Tocqueville here, yet the eroding factor is no longer the egalitarian logic of mass democracy but the logic of industrial progress. In both cases, however, whatever the precise link and evaluating angle, America had become the metonym for unfettered modernity, like a Prometheus unbound.

These longer lines of anti-Americanism, cultural and political, are alive and well today. And often the two blend into one. Whenever Europeans, particularly young ones dressed in blue jeans and T-shirts, rise in protest against American interventions

on the world stage, they go out and smash the windows of a nearby McDonald's (and there is always a McDonald's nearby). As an icon of America's global presence, that fast-food chain represents in the eyes of protesters America's cultural imperialism, but it serves equally well as an emblem of political imperialism. The protest is facile and inarticulate, yet it serves to make a point against American power seen as overbearing and unresponsive. But how about the recent surge of anti-Europeanism in the United States?

Given Europe's daring post-World War II venture in the construction of a European Union, inventing profederalist forms in the search for a supranational Europe, how do we account for the recent resurgence of anti-Europeanism in the United States? Having promoted and supported this European evolution for many decades, why have so many American opinion leaders now turned anti-European? In the vitriolic vituperation that set the tone of transatlantic exchanges during the Bush years, leading American voices discarded as the "Old Europe" those countries that criticize the drift of American foreign policy, while hailing other countries as the "New Europe" that are willing to follow in America's footsteps. Robert Kagan contributed to this rising anti-Europeanism in the United States when he paraphrased the dictum that men are from Mars, women from Venus. As he chose to present the two poles, Americans now are the new Martians, while Europeans are the new Venutians. Never mind the gendering implied in his view that Europeans are collectively engaged in a feminine endeavor when they pursue the new, transnational, and cosmopolitan Europe. He does make an astute point, though, when he describes the European quest as Kantian, as an endeavor to create a transnational space where laws and civility rule. As Kagan sees it, though, the Europeans are so self-immersed that they are forgetful of a larger world that is Hobbesian, not Kantian, and is a threat to them as much as to the United States. To the extent that Europeans still involve themselves in the larger

world, they tend to emphasize peace-keeping operations rather than preemptive military strikes.²³

Kagan and many others tend to forget that it has taken the United States about a hundred years to find and test its institutional forms and build a nation of Americans from people flooding to its shores from all over the world. It could only have done so while turning its back to the world, in self-chosen isolationism, under the protective umbrella of a Pax Britannica. Europe has had only some forty years to turn its gaze inward when it engaged in shaping the contours of a new Europe. During those years it enjoyed in its turn the protection of an umbrella, provided this time by the Pax Americana. This constellation came to an end along with the Cold War. Yet only then could the European construction fully come into its own, conceiving of the new Europe on the scale of the entire continent. It is a tremendous challenge, and Europe needs time to cope with it. If it succeeds it may well serve as a model to the world, a rival to the American ideal of transnationalism, of constituting a nation of nations. If they are rival models, they are at the same time of one kind. They are variations on larger ideals inspiring the idea of Western civilization, and find their roots in truly European formative moments in history, in the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment. Larry Siedentop places the formative moment even earlier in time, coinciding with the rise of a Christian view of the universal equality of mankind vis-à-vis God. As he presents it, the formative moment consisted in universalizing a religious view that in Judaism was still highly particularist, claiming an exceptionalist relation between God and the people of Israel.²⁴ This shared heritage inspired the first transatlantic readings of what the terrorist attack of 9/11 signified. It was seen as an onslaught on the core values of a shared civilization. How ironic, if not tragic, then, that before long the United States and Europe parted ways in finding the proper response to the new threat of international terrorism.

As for the United States, the first signs of its farewell to inter-

nationalism in foreign policy—to its Wilsonianism, if you wish—and to its pioneering role in designing the institutional and legal framework for peaceful interstate relations in the world, had, as I pointed out before, actually preceded 9/11. No longer did the Bush administration conceive of the United States as the *primus inter pares*, setting the guidelines for collective action while seeking legitimacy for action through treaties and UN resolutions. As the one hegemon on the world stage it now felt free to pursue its national interest through policies that one can only describe as unilateralist. It might have seemed like a throwback to the time of nation state sovereignty, a stage of history that Europe is struggling to transcend. Unspectacular and cumbersome as the European project may seem, it is already rich in achievement. It has brought together longtime enemies—like Germany and France—it has admitted as democratic member states nations that quite recently knew fascist dictatorships—like Italy, Spain, and Portugal—or that were under the heel of military dictators—like Greece. It recently admitted nations that have lived under communist rule since World War II. Turkey, a longtime member of NATO and since 1949 a member of the Council of Europe and subscriber to the European Convention on Human Rights, is now busy getting its house in democratic order so as to qualify for membership in the European Union.

Of course, much may go wrong in the further construction of the European Union. Public opinion, in a hidebound return to the laagers of national identity and sovereignty, may rally against future daring steps in the EU's growth and development. Anti-globalist sentiments may well translate into resentment against the union's transnational powers. In 2005, in France and the Netherlands, the project for a European Constitution was voted down in referenda. But then, the construction of the union so far has never been neat. It has been a process of muddling through, of endless compromises between Europe's various national interests. Even so, the power of Europe's promise has touched even the peoples at its margins. It has redirected their gaze and sense

of national purpose by holding out the hope of eventually joining Europe's Kantian space of peace and the rule of law.

If the European project is successful—and as I see it that means the inclusion of Turkey—Europe, I strongly believe, will offer a model to the world, particularly the world of Islam, or for that matter the state of Israel, of a civil and democratic order, multinational and multicultural, far more tempting than the version of democracy brought under American auspices through preemptive military invasion. Those in support of what the United States was pursuing in Iraq blithely called it a neo-Wilsonianism. I beg to differ. If there is a neo-Wilsonian promise, it is held by the new Europe.

In the European repertoire of the cultural critique of America, one observation may have gained in poignancy. Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre in France, or Oswald Spengler in Germany, have been among those who noted an absence in America of the European sense of the tragic. In the blithe meliorism of the American project to bring democracy to the Middle East, what is lacking is the awareness that the active pursuit of good ends may well result in achieving its opposite. As in classic Greek tragedy, the Gods may strike with blindness those they wish to destroy. In the case of America's forward defense of democracy in Iraq, though, the blindness may be self-inflicted, as if its leaders were, and still may be, in a pathological state of denial. When the shocking pictures of systematic humiliation of Iraqi prisoners entered the public realm, President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld dismissed the acts as un-American. If this is what Americans did, it is not what Americans would do. America is inherently good.²⁵ Among many others, Romano Prodi, then president of the European Commission in Brussels, begged to differ. Never one to mince words, he affirmed that the Iraq tortures were war crimes, which, for him, made it difficult to see the American presence in Iraq as a peace mission. Others, of a subtler cast of mind, expressed similar views. Thus, in an interview in the *Süddeutsche*

Zeitung on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday,²⁶ German philosopher Jürgen Habermas testified to his disillusionment and disenchantment with the Bush administration and its standard bearers. The experience was all the more painful since, as he acknowledged, he could not have come into his own as a philosopher of public space and democratic debate without the impact of America's pluralist liberalism and its philosophy of pragmatism. Ever since he was sixteen, he said, his political ideas had been nourished by the American enlightenment ideals, thanks to a sensible reeducation policy in the postwar years of American occupation in Germany. But in a 2004 book on the divided West, he had this to say: "Let us not delude ourselves: The normative authority of America lies in shatters."²⁷ The official manipulation of public opinion and the rampant patriotic conformism he said he would not have deemed possible in the liberal America that he had envisioned.

Let me return to the editor-in-chief of *Le Monde*, Jean-Marie Colombani. Like Habermas, his feelings about the United States have followed a curve from affiliation all the way to alienation, only in a shorter time span. In a May 2004 editorial entitled "Are We All Un-American?"²⁸ he comments on Rumsfeld's facile dismissal of the Abu Ghraib abominations as un-American. If this implies a definition of true Americanism, it is one that Colombani refuses to share. As Colombani put it: "In the wake of September 11, we all felt ourselves to be Americans. Donald Rumsfeld would make us all un-American." I tend to agree. If the Bush administration showed us the face of a self-righteous, arrogant, and unbridled Americanism, it is an Americanism that I abhor and oppose.